ARKANSAS POST NATIONAL MEMORIAL

MONTGOMERY'S TAVERN
and
JOHNSTON AND ARMSTRONG'S STORE

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT
HISTORICAL DATA

by

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FOREWORD

This report has been prepared to provide historical background data to assist personnel of the University of Arkansas Archeological Field School in their excavation of the Montgomery Tavern and Johnston and Armstrong's Store lots.

In September of 1970 it was brought to the attention of the Master Plan Team by Management Assistant Frank Hastings that the University of Arkansas Archeological Field School was interested in investigating sites at Arkansas Post. The question was referred to personnel at the Southeast Archeological Center, and it was suggested by Archeologist John Walker that the University of Arkansas Field School might find an excavation of the Montgomery Tavern and Johnston and Armstrong's Store lots challenging and rewarding. After considerable negotiations, a contract was entered into by the National Park Service and the University of Arkansas Archeological Field School for an archeological investigation of the subject lots. To provide background information on the history of the lots and structures which were located thereon, it was agreed that the Division of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Service Center, would prepare a Historic Structure and Grounds Report on Montgomery's Tavern and Johnston and Armstrong's Store.

A number of persons have assisted with preparation of this report. Particular thanks are due Management Assistant Frank Hastings for his assistance and interest. It was he who fathered the project. My friends and colleagues of the Southeast Archeological Center, John Griffin and John Walker, read my manuscript in draft, while Archeologist Walker shared his encyclopedic knowledge of the area. Regional Museum Specialist Albert Manucy and Master Plan Team Captain James Killian successfully led the struggle to get Service funds allotted to the project. To my friends in Arkansas County, I owe a debt for assistance. Those who were especially helpful were: Bill Norsworthy, Johnny Gunnell, and Bruce Kendall at the Arkansas County Courthouse in DeWitt; Mrs. Norman Core of Almyra; Garner Allen of the Stuttgart News-Leader; and Mrs. Thelma Mattmiller of the Arkansas County Museum. Dr. John Ferguson and the staff of the Arkansas History Commission went out of their way to be helpful, as did Mrs. Margaret Ross of the Arkansas Gazette and Dr. Lonnie White, professor of history at Memphis State University. I also want to express my appreciation to Pat Martin and Dr. Michael P. Hoffman and their crew of the Arkansas Archeological Field School for undertaking this project, answering my many questions, and for the pleasent hours of conversation and speculation.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my colleague Frank Sarles for his editorial comments, Jerry Rehfuss for drawing the base map and covers, and Mrs. Beatrice B. Libys for the hours she spent skillfully typing the manuscript.

Edwin C. Bearss

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PLATE I Map of Fort at Post of Arkansas, 1807.

PLATE II Provisional Plan of Arkansas Post 1819-1840.

I. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY AND CHAIN OF TITLE

A. Certain Generalizations

One of the great difficulties in site identification at Arkansas Post National Memorial is the failure of the "city fathers" to prepare a village plat. To secure such a document to support the Historical Base Map, it has been necessary to examine, in detail, the Arkansas County Deed Books. Information obtained has been plotted on provisional Historical Base Maps by Archeologist John W. Walker and the author. But in doing so, many intangibles have had to be taken into consideration, the principal ones being: (a) the accuracy of the surveyors' field notes as to directions and distances; and (b) the possibility that some transactions and lots were not recorded.

In 1966 and '68 the site of the Arkansas State Bank was located and identified. Through the use of archeology, other sites will be identified, the documents verified or challenged, and our knowledge of this important but little-known phase of our history enriched.

B. The Montgomery's Tavern Square

1. The Ownership, 1804-25

The one-acre lot on which Montgomery's Tavern stood in 1819-1821 is first identified in an instrument of conveyance found in "Arkansas County Deed Book A," pages 45 and 46. On April 10, 1808, James Scull, as attorney for the Jacob Bright estate, in accordance with instructions from Benjamin Morgan, sold at public auction "to the highest and last bidder a house and lot containing about one acre of ground in the Town of Arkansas." Morgan, a New Orleans banker and merchant, had been a partner in Jacob Bright and Company.[1]

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1. Arkansas County Deed Book A, pp. 45-46.

The lot conveyed is further identified as having belonged to Louis Jordella, deceased, and sold by the said Jordella before his death to Bright and Company. The subject lot fronted on the property of Charles Refeld and Mrs. Dion and "extended back to the next street opposite the lots of Joseph and Baptiste Dardenne."[2]

Samuel Moseley's bid of $300 was high for the subject property. As soon as he was paid the $300, James Scull conveyed to Moseley the improvements and lot. This transaction was recorded before Andre Fagot on July 22, 1809.[3]

From 1809 until 1819 the subject property was owned by Moseley. During this period the town experienced a growth in population and economic importance. In 1812 it became the seat of government for Arkansas County and in 1819 it became the capital of Arkansas Territory. This growth was reflected in an increase in property values. Early in 1818 Moseley moved off the subject property, turning it over to Mr. and Mrs. William Drope. Some time before August 24, 1819, Moseley sold to Drope for $1,000

> a certain lott /sic/ of Ground containing one acre or thereabouts of land situated in the post (or village) of Arkansas ... together with all the houses, buildings, improvements, rights, privileges and appurtenances thereon ... belonging, which said lott of ground, houses, buildings ... hereby sold and conveyed is the same which was formerly occupied by ... Samuel Moseley, and the same which have been occupied by ... William Drope since about the beginning of 1818.[4]

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2. Ibid. Jordella, who worked for Bright and Company, was killed by Choctaws in August 1806. He had sold the subject property to Bright and Company two years before.

3. Ibid.

4. Arkansas County Deed Book C, p. 283. Samuel Moseley had married Mary King on October 22, 1818. Ibid., p. 54.

The Dropes (William and Elouisa) promptly rented the property to William Montgomery. Until moving to Montgomery's Point in February 1821, Montgomery operated on this lot a tavern. During part of this time, Montgomery rented the improvements and lot from Benjamin F. Babcock. In May 1820 the Dropes, who had moved up the Arkansas to Pulaski County, sold to Babcock of New York City for $4,000

> two certain Houses and Lotts [sic] lying and being in the village of Arkansas ..., one lott being the same lott purchased of Samuel Moseley by said Drope and occupied at this time by William Montgomery and containing one acre ... and including and forming one full and complete square; the other house and lott being the same purchased of Eli J. Lewis.[5]

The transfer of the territorial capital to Little Rock had important economic repercussions at Arkansas Post. There was an exodus of people and land values slumped. Unimproved lots were soon being sold for taxes. Babcock, an absentee landlord, was hard-pressed. In 1823 he was cited by the sheriff of Arkansas County as delinquent for taxes on his two Arkansas Post lots.[6]

Babcock held on to the subject property until May 1825, when James Scull, acting as his agent, disposed of it at a terrific loss. When he sold the lots it was to Frederic Notrebe for $350. The conveyance, which was recorded on May 25, identified one lot as containing an estimated one acre, more or less, "situated between the residence" of Notrebe and "a house built and formerly occupied as a store by one Hamilton, being the same property that was occupied in the month of May 1820 by Montgomery as a tavern."[7]

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5. Ibid., pp. 475-76, 616-17.

6. Arkansas Gazette, Aug. 26, 1823.

7. Arkansas County Deed Book D, pp. 294-95. Babcock, who now lived in New Orleans, swore that the deed by which Drope had conveyed to him the property had been left at his former residence in Connecticut, and that he was "unable to give a more full and perfect description of the property."

2. The Ownership, 1825-1930

In 1840 Frederic and Felicite Notrebe sold to the Bank of the State of Arkansas for one dollar part of the acre of ground, more or less, originally owned by Louis Jordella and conveyed by him to Bright and Company; and by James Scull, agent for Benjamin Morgan, surviving partner of the firm, to Samuel Moseley; by Moseley to William Drope; by said Drope to Benjamin Babcock; and by said Babcock to Notrebe.[8] The boundary of the real estate conveyed was to begin on the street which runs between the dwelling house and store of Frederic Notrebe and a post corner; then with said street 80 feet to the corner of the "block or square"; then with the street which passes between the dwelling house of Mrs. Mary F. Bellette and the house opposite formerly occupied by a store operated by Johnston and Armstrong to the northwest corner of said "block or square"; then 80 feet with Main Street to a post corner; and then across said "block or square" to the place of beginning. The lot conveyed was the northwest part of the square.[9]

Frederic Notrebe died in April 1849, and the subject square was inherited by his granddaughter, Mary F. Cummins, and her husband, Edward C. Morton.[10] Notrebe, at his death, left a valuable estate, but it was heavily mortgaged. During the period 1850-61, the Mortons retained possession of their inheritance, but to do so they were compelled to borrow heavily. With the coming of the Civil War, Confederate military authorities, in the autumn of 1862, erected fortifications at Arkansas Post. These were attacked by the Federals in January 1863. The Confederate stronghold and garrison were captured. The village was heavily damaged and many buildings destroyed.

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8. Arkansas County Deed Book F, pp. 390-91.

9. Ibid.

10. Arkansas County Will Record A, pp. 174-79; Arkansas County Marriage Record B.

The collapse of the Confederacy in the spring of 1865 found the Mortons broke and their slaves emancipated. Having moved to Little Rock, they made no effort to pay taxes on this square or their other property at Arkansas Post. It was presumed by county authorities that the land included in a survey of 1814 and platted as the U. S. Reservation reverted to the United States when the taxes became delinquent. It was 1927 before an individual established title to the 140-acre U. S. Reservation, which included the subject square. In that year Fred J. Quandt entered on the Arkansas Post Reservation for taxes.[11]

Quandt, on June 17, 1930, following establishment of the Arkansas Post State Park Commission, donated to that group for one dollar 20 acres off the northwest corner of the Arkansas Post Reservation. Included in the acreage conveyed was the subject square.[12]

C. The Johnston and Armstrong Store Lot

1. The Ownership, 1820-35

William and Elouisa Drope on January 12, 1820, sold to Francis and Catherine Mitchell of Arkansas County for $3,000 "two certain Houses and Lotts /sic/ on Main Street."

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11. Arkansas County Real Estate Assessment Records, 1875-1930; personal interview, Bruce Kendall with Bearss, April 1, 1971.

12. Arkansas County Deed Book 26, p. 206. The boundary of the tract conveyed by Quandt was to begin at the southeast corner of Spanish Land Grant No. 2363, the corner of which was on the edge of the bluff on the Arkansas River, as it was in 1819; then with the margin of the north bank of the river (with the meanders thereof as they were in 1903), the river having "receded south"; then north 10° east 4.20 chains; then north 1 chain; then north 5° east 5.50 chains; then north 36° west 9 chains; then north 15° west 3.50 chains; then north 30° west 8 chains; then north 15° west 5.54 chains to the south line of Spanish Land Grant No. 2344; then south 82° west with said line 10.14 chains to the northeast corner of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432; then south 30° east with the east line of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432, 18 chains; then south 33° west with the south line of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432, 4 chains to a corner on said line; then south 54° east with east line of Spanish Land Grant No. 2363, 3.63 chains to a corner; then north 37° east 4.50 chains to a corner; then south 56° east with the east line of Spanish Land Grant No. 2363 to the bank of the Arkansas River as it was in 1893; then in a southerly direction up said bank to the place of beginning.

Located on the first lot was the new house built in 1819 by the Dropes prior to their move to Pulaski County. This lot had a frontage of 90 feet on Main Street and extended back to Post Bayou. The second lot, which had a frontage of 80 feet on Main Street, had on it a house in which Joseph Dardenne had lived for a number of years. This lot likewise extended back to Post Bayou. Separating the lots was a cross street, having a width of 36 feet.[13]

Both lots had been part of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432 of 752 arpents confirmed to Joseph Dardenne. He had sold this acreage to the Dropes.[14]

In the period 1819-November 1821, Johnston and Armstrong kept a store in the two-story building on the lot they rented from the Mitchells. James Hamilton and Company in November 1821 moved into the "store lately occupied by Messrs. Johnston and Armstrong."[15] The recession which gripped Arkansas Post following the removal of the territorial capital to Little Rock forced the Mitchells to dispose of their property at a financial sacrifice. On March 11, 1825, they sold to Frederic Notrebe for $100 "a lot situated in the Village of Arkansas ... being one of the lots conveyed" by Drope to them. The subject lot had a front on Main Street of 80 feet, and extended in a southwesterly direction to Post Bayou.[16]

Colonel Notrebe on July 17, 1835, made a gift of two lots to his father-in-law, John B. Bellette (alias Enselma). This was to reward Bellette for his 25 years of faithful service. Notrebe, for one dollar, sold to Bellette and

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13. Arkansas County Deed Book C, pp. 394-96. As Elouisa Drope made her mark on the deed, it is presumed that she was unable to read or write, when the deed was recorded before Eli J. Lewis on January 14, 1820.

14. Ibid.

15. Arkansas Gazette, Nov. 3, 1821.

16. Arkansas County Deed Book D, p. 280.

"his heirs at law a house and two lots situated in the village of Arkansas, where the said Bellette resides." The subject lots fronted on Main Street, and joined Notrebe's gin lot on the east and Creed Taylor's lot on the west.[17]

2. The Ownership, 1835-1931

Arkansas Post was ruined by the Civil War. Colonel Notrebe had died in 1849, and by the mid-1860s his heirs were no longer paying taxes on the property. The Bellette lots lost their identity in the economically troubled years during and immediately following the Civil War. In 1876 Samuel Rowe was listed as owner of 160 acres in Spanish Land Grant No. 2432, valued at $2 per acre. When he failed to pay his real estate tax of $2, the property was ordered sold.[18] John Larque in 1877 was listed as owner of 320 acres in Spanish Land Grant No. 2432, valued at one dollar per acre. As he was judged delinquent for taxes of $2.60 on the tract, the land was ordered sold.[19] Seven years later, in 1884, the unknown owners of 480 acres in Spanish Land Grant No. 2432, valued at $320, were listed as delinquent for taxes. On July 25, 1885, the subject land was redeemed by the State of Arkansas.[20]

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17. Arkansas County Deed Book G, pp. 456-57. In addition, it was provided that, if Notrebe died first, "$3,000 in lawful money or the equivalent in property" be allotted Bellette. Moreover, if Notrebe's mother-in-law, Elizabeth Breville Bellette, outlived her husband and son-in-law she was to retain "the legal interest of the said donation of $3,000 for her lifetime." The Bellettes, at this time, were given for their lifetime five slaves--Tom, a Negro man, age about 30; Mary Louise, a black woman about 28, with her infant boy Henderson; Juliana, a black woman, age about 21, with her infant boy Henry. Ibid., p. 458.

18. Arkansas County Land Sale Record C, p. 182.

19. Ibid., p. 228.

20. Arkansas County Land Sale Record D, p. 103.

In 1886 the Arkansas Real Estate Company was listed as delinquent for taxes on 55 acres in Spanish Land Grant No. 2432, valued at $60. This tract was redeemed by F. Ferrell on his payment of $1.53 in back taxes.[21] Some time between 1895 and 1901, Fritz Quandt acquired this 55-acre tract in the northeast corner of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432, when Ferrell was found to be delinquent for the taxes thereon.[22] This tract, which included the site of Johnston and Armstrong's Store, was valued in 1901 at $60. In 1919 there was a reassessment of property values in Arkansas County, and the 55-acre Quandt Tract was assessed at $100.[23] Quandt died on July 19, 1924, and in the division of his real estate Mrs. Rosa Place, one of the heirs, was assigned the 55-acre tract situated in the northeast corner of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432, and Lots 7 to 12, Block 10, in Gillett.[24]

Mrs. Place and her husband, J. G., in May 1931, sold to the Arkansas Post State Park Commission for one dollar a 11.75-acre tract in the northeast corner of the 55 acres they had inherited from Fritz Quandt. The boundary of the tract conveyed was to begin at the northeast corner of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432; then south 30° west ten chains and two links to a corner on the north line of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432; then south 30° east five chains and 37 links to a corner; then south 2° west three chains to a corner;

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21. Ibid., p. 145.

22. Arkansas County Land Sale Record E, p. 19; Arkansas County Real Estate Assessment Records for 1895 and 1901.

23. Arkansas County Real Estate Assessment Records, 1895-1930.

24. Arkansas County Deed Book D6, pp. 361-62; Records of the Arkansas County Probate Court, File No. 661. Included in the Quandt Estate were: the west one-half of Spanish Land Grant No. 2363; the east one-half of Spanish Land Grant No. 2626; 10.25 acres off the west side of Spanish Land Grant No. 2339; 55 acres situated in the northeast corner of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432; 60 acres off the east end of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432; one-sixth of an acre in the northwest corner of Section 6, Township 7 south, Range 3 west; Lots 7 to 12 inclusive, block 100, in Gillett; and a 2.87-acre tract in Spanish Land Grant No. 2307, where the deceased had lived. The other Quandt heirs were Bob Quandt, Morris G. and Fritz Goff, and Mrs. Lillie Mattmiller.

then south one chain to a corner; then south 48° east two chains to a corner; then south 44° east six chains and 30 links to the most northeastern corner of Spanish Land Grant No. 2363; then north 33° east four chains to the southeast corner of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432; then north 30° west on the east line of Spanish Land Grant No. 2432 18 chains to the place of beginning.[25]

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25. Arkansas County Deed Book 26, p. 208.

II. HISTORY OF THE SUBJECT LOTS--1804-66

A. Jacob Bright and Company on the Arkansas

1. Bright and Company Come to Arkansas Post

Almost as soon as the United States took possession of the Louisiana Purchase in late 1803, Governor William C. C. Claiborne of Mississippi, who was also Governor-General and Intendant of the Province of Louisiana, was approached by Jacob Bright. Bright, the operator of a trading house at Chickasaw Bluffs, Tennessee, asked permission to establish a post on the Arkansas. Claiborne was agreeable. On February 8, 1804, he granted to Bright authority to open a store "on the Arkansaw [sic], for the purpose of carrying on trade with the inhabitants of that District, and such Indians as may still visit the Post." This franchise was to continue "in force during the pleasure of the Governor ... or until provision shall be made by Congress for regulating trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes west of the Mississippi river."[1]

To secure financial backing for his trading house on the Arkansas, Bright formed a partnership with Benjamin Morgan of New Orleans. Morgan was an important and wealthy member of the growing Anglo-Saxon community in New Orleans. In February 1804 he was one of the incorporators of the city's Bank of Discount, Deposit and Exchange, and on July 16, 1805, he was elected president of the Bank of the United States, of New Orleans. Morgan was also close to Governor Claiborne, and on September 1, 1807, he was appointed territorial secretary, an office he held until October 15. In addition to his banking interests, Morgan also owned several ships. A public-spirited individual, he took the lead in securing the paving of the New Orleans streets.[2]

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1. Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816, edited by Dunbar Rowland (6 vols., Jackson, 1917), I, 361.

2. Louisiana Gazette, July 19, 1805; Sept. 1 and Oct. 15, 1807; Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816, II, pp. 29-30. On September 7, 1808, Governor Claiborne wrote Secretary of State James Madison, pointing out "that many of my countrymen at this place [New Orleans] deserve well of their government, among whom, there are none, who have been more uniform in support of the administration, of the laws, and of good order than Benjamin Morgan, Joseph Saul, and Dr. William Flood." Ibid., IV, 228. On October 14 of that year, Governor Claiborne referred to Morgan as "my friend." Ibid., p. 229.

Jacob Bright, having secured a franchise and a wealthy partner, traveled to Post of Arkansas. There he bought out the trading house owned by Louis Jordella. Besides Jordella's good will, Bright and Company secured a one-acre lot. Located on the subject lot was a house and probably other improvements.[3] Undoubtedly, Bright and Company erected other structures on the subject lot, because it promptly became the largest and most important trading house on the Arkansas River. Jordella, having sold out, went to work for Bright and Company.

2. Bright and Company Dominate the Arkansas River Trade

a. The Establishment of the U. S. Factory

In 1805 the United States government established four new factories or trading houses to trade with the western Indians. These were located at Arkansas Post, Natchitoches, Belle Fontaine, and Chicago. John B. Treat was appointed factor for the Arkansas Post establishment by Secretary of War Henry Dearborn.

On reaching Post of Arkansas in September 1805, Treat found that the trade had been engrossed by nine or ten "persons resident at the post, and 2 or 3 Frenchmen who annually descend the Wabash, having obtained their goods at Detroit." He learned that the amount of capital employed by his rivals was nearly $50,000, "about the half of which is engaged by the House of Bright and Company (an establishment transferred from the Chickasaw Bluffs about two years ago) connected also with a House in New Orleans, and probably with another place in Philadelphia." His other competitors, Treat reported, could be divided into three classes: those who employed from $4,000 to 5,000 each; those in the $3,000 class; and finally those that annually did from $2,000 to $1,500 business.[4]

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3. Arkansas County Deed Book A, pp. 186-87.

4. Treat to Dearborn, Nov. 15, 1805, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810. Treat had reached Post of Arkansas from Washington, D. C., by way of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, on September 4, 1805.

b. Cutthroat Competition

The competition between the trading houses compelled them to extend the Indians liberal credit. This they hoped to recover when the Indians returned from their autumn hunts. Bright and Company, although at the Post less than two years, had advanced the Indians $10,000 in trade goods to be redeemed with peltries and furs.[5]

Shortly after his arrival at Post of Arkansas, Treat was distressed to learn that the Factory's only serious competitor, Bright and Company, had secured on September 27, 1805, from Secretary of War Dearborn, the right of "free trade throughout the whole extent of the Arkansas river for two years." Bright accordingly organized an expedition and prepared to start up the river to trade with the Osage.

Such action on the part of the Secretary jeopardized the success of the Factory, because Bright and Company, certain that profits from their Osage venture would be great, had drastically cut prices at Post of Arkansas. Treat feared that Bright and Company would soon be underselling the Factory. Until October 1805, the Factory's prices had been one-third less than those demanded by Bright and Company.[6]

In the spring of 1806, several vessels, including the barge Hope and the flatboat Necessity, left Post of Arkansas for New Orleans, with packs of peltries and furs. Sixty of these packs belonged to the United States Factory, which placed it fourth in quantity of packs forwarded. Bright and Company had shipped the lion's share, having loaded out 267 packs of deerskins, 1,500 pounds of beaver pelts, 930 pounds of bearskins, 12 packs of small furs, 72 packs of assorted hides, and a considerable quantity of oil and tallow. The next largest shipper had sent out about 100 packs.

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5. Ibid.

6. Treat to Davy, Feb. 27, 1806, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810. William Davy was principal agent for the Indian Factories.

Treat warned his superiors in Washington and Philadelphia that Bright and Company was continuing to engross much of the trade at the Post, and aided by their franchise would monopolize the Osage trade.[7]

Secretary of War Dearborn on April 29, 1806, assured Treat that the administration had not intended to give Bright and Company any advantages over competitors. Treat was authorized to notify the other traders that it was not proposed "to give any one any exclusive privileges," and the "old trading settlers may have licenses to prosecute their trade up the Arkansas river." Moreover, the Secretary did not believe that Bright and Company should be permitted to keep a store at the Post to trade with the Indians.

Treat was therefore authorized to grant licenses to "such of the inhabitants of Arkansas as you may judge suitable characters to trade with the Indians ... taking suitable bonds for their proper conduct, especially prohibiting the sale of any ardent spirits."[8]

The Secretary's statement that Bright and Company should not be allowed to operate a store at Post of Arkansas perplexed Treat. If this were true, Treat wanted instructions how to proceed in this matter.[9]

3. Bright's Expedition to the Osage Village

Bright with a strong force had ascended the Arkansas in July 1806 "to make arrangements to secure the trade of the Osage." It was apparent that Bright and Company had inaugurated an aggressive campaign to secure a monopoly. Credit had been advanced to traders operating on the St. Francis River at exorbitant rates. Treat knew of one Indian, not a chief, to whom Bright and Company had given

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7. Treat to Davy, April 15, 1806, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810; Louisiana Gazette, April 15 and May 6, 1806. Captain Leverque commanded Hope and Captain Charbona Necessity.

8. Dearborn to Treat, April 29, 1806, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810.

9. Treat to Dearborn, July 13, 1806, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810.

a credit of "upwards of $3,000" by which means more than 100 hunters were indebted to them.[10]

By September 1 the recipient of the $3,000 credit returned to Post of Arkansas, with about 9,000 skins for Bright and Company. Having made his delivery, he returned to the woods with 115 hunters.[11]

Meanwhile, Bright's party had ascended the Arkansas for a distance of several hundred miles. Finding a likely looking site in the country of the Osage, they landed and started to build a cabin for a trading post. On August 3, 1806, Bright and his companions stopped work when they heard two guns discharged. About one-half hour later, they sighted "a tall and soldierly looking man, with a coat faced with red" ride into view. He fired his musket into the air, and it was followed by other shots by those to his rear who could not be seen. This bold warrior followed by several hundred others approached to within 20 yards of the traders and dismounted. After the chiefs had assembled, they advanced with Clermont in front. Clermont took position on Bright's right, and gave orders for his people "to fall off right and left ... to give room for them all to come in. They then seated themselves an some skins which they had thrown on the ground for that purpose" to receive presents of tobacco and to smoke. Bright gave each Indian a dram of whiskey, which most of them drank.[12]

On Monday, the 4th, Bright conferred at length with the Osage chiefs. By the 9th all the Osage except four had returned to their village. These warriors were to guide the traders to their village and to hunt for them as they ascended the Arkansas. The keelboat had been loaded by 1 p.m., and they cast off. Bright's party tied up and camped for the night at the head of a sand bar.

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10. Treat to Dearborn, July 13, 1806, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810.

11. Treat to Davy, Sept. 1, 1806, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810.

12. Extract from Bright's Journal, Bright to Secretary of War, Dec. 20, 1806, NA, RG 107, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of War.

At dawn on August 10, they were attacked by a war party, whom some of the traders believed were Choctaw. In the first volley one of the Osage hunters was killed and the other three fled. The Choctaw kept up their fire for about 15 minutes. They then ceased shooting and withdrew. When he mustered his force, Bright found that besides the Osage, the score of attackers had killed two of his men, Louis Jordella and Augustine Strong. Jordella, in attempting to escape by swimming the Arkansas, had been shot. The loss of Jordella was a severe blow. A native of Post of Arkansas, and an experienced trader and hunter, he had been placed by Bright in charge of the Osage trading house. Jordella was in the prime of life, and possessed of both modesty and integrity, and his loss would be a blow to the community, as well as the company.[13]

Before returning to Arkansas Post in November 1806, Bright established a trading house near Clermont's village. In February 1807, when the Osage were absent, the trading house was besieged by Choctaw, angered because Bright and Company had been selling firearms and ammunition to the Osage.[14]

4. The Death of Jacob Bright

a. Bright Passes On

In the late spring of 1807, Bright left Post of Arkansas for New Orleans aboard a keelboat loaded with the winter's take of peltries and furs. He was not feeling well. He reached New Orleans in mid-May, and told his partner, Benjamin Morgan, that he planned to visit Washington, D. C., to discuss with the President and Secretary of War Indian relations and trade. Before he could complete arrangements for his trip to the nation's capital, he died. In reporting Bright's death,

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13. Ibid.; Morgan to Secretary of War, June 23, 1807, NA, RG 107, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of War.

14. Morgan to Secretary of War, June 23, 1807, NA, RG 107, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of War; Treat to Dearborn, Nov. 16, 1806, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810.

Morgan wrote Secretary of War Dearborn, "his death may be considered a public as well as a private loss. He was beloved and respected by all the Indian tribes with whom he had any connection. He was using his best efforts to attach them to the cause of the United States."[15]

b. Bright's Journal

Jacob Bright kept a detailed journal while at Arkansas Post. On December 20, 1806, he mailed an extract from his journal, covering the period August 4-12, 1806, to Secretary of War Dearborn. The Bright Journal if it could be located would prove an invaluable source of information about Arkansas Post and the Indian trade during the period 1804-07. In a futile effort to locate the Bright Journal, the author has contacted a number of historical societies and persons versed in the history of the fur trade.

B. Typical Structures

1. Arkansas Post in 1793

As yet it has been impossible to secure a description of the building or buildings occupied by Jacob Bright and Company at Post of Arkansas. We know that at the time Bright and Company purchased the square from Louis Jordella in 1804 there were improvements on the property. Jordella had engaged in the fur trade, so the improvements on the square probably consisted of a residence, skin house, and dependencies.

The buildings in all probability dated to at least 1793, when Pedro Andres Rousseau visited the Post. Rousseau, who commanded the Spanish river fleet, reached Arkansas Post aboard La Flecha on February 3. He wrote in his journal:

> The Fort of Arkansas is situated in the middle of a hill that overlooks the Arkansas River, which may be forty-five feet in height when the river is low and six feet when it over

15. Morgan to Secretary of War, June 23, 1807, NA, RG 107, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of War.

> flows. It forms a horseshoe that may be a half league on the river and extends to the north. At a half league to the north of the river there is a large prairie .... There are several inhabitants around the prairie who sow wheat .... Above the fort [upstream]there are about thirty houses, with galleries around, covered with shingles, which form two streets. Below [downstream from] the fort there are about a dozen quite pretty plots of four by four arpents, where there are very beautiful fields of wheat.[16]

2. The United States Factory Buildings

Although Bright and Company did a much larger business than the United States Factory, we may assume that its facilities were similar to those rented by John Treat in 1805 and erected by him in the period 1806-1810. If anything the facilities housing Bright and Company would have been more pretentious, because in September 1805 it handled one-half the fur trade transacted at Arkansas Post.

In October 1805, Factor Treat reported that, on arrival at Post of Arkansas, he had stored his trade goods at the fort. The first place he rented for use as a factory was a house, about 30 x 15 feet, containing two rooms, and these raised about six feet off the ground. The space below the flooring had been enclosed with "square timber," and would be used as heretofore for a skin house, it being dark and cool, and therefore well adapted to that purpose.[17]

A contract was soon executed by Treat for the construction of a factory. The frames had been cut and squared by mid-November. By mid-December 1805, he hoped the carpenters would have all the timbers ready, as well as the logs for hewing into boards and the shingles. The structure would be a single-story building, about 50 x 40 feet, with a

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16. Abraham P. Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, 1792-1796 (New Haven, 1968), pp. 165-66.

17. Treat to Davy, Oct. 6, 1805, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810.

"cellar or Skin Room below raised above the surface, otherwise in the Winter season" the room would be too damp.[18]

On July 1, 1806, Treat reported that construction of the Factory was progressing slowly. The oak framing for the story and one-half building had been cut and sawed. A large quantity of cypress logs and lumber for siding and flooring had been stockpiled, while 15,500 shingles had been rived and were on hand.

In the autumn Treat planned to erect an inexpensive building to accommodate Indians who traded at the factory during the winter. This structure could be closed in, and in the future serve as a kitchen.[19]

Work continued to drag, however, and on September 30, 1809, Treat reported that the carpenters had finally finished hand-sawing scantling and boards.[20] Before the factory and its dependencies could be completed, it was determined on May 29, 1810, to discontinue the factory at Post of Arkansas. At the time of its closing, the public improvements included: (a) a single-story dwelling, 20 x 30 feet, with pitched roof piazzas front and rear, and roof over all. The structure was painted, had eave troughs, and was shingled. There were two bedrooms, one above and one on the piazza. There were seven windows, glazed with blinds, and two windows not glazed but shuttered. The small sitting room was finished, except for the ceiling, which had laths overhead. The kitchen had a rough floor.

(b) The storehouse and skin room had not yet been completed. It had a strong oak frame, 20 x 38 feet, and the lower or skin room had been enclosed. Materials for completing the building were on hand.

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18. Treat to Davy, Nov. 15, 1805, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810. The skin room would be partly underground for coolness, as it was believed this would alleviate the threat of worms to the furs and pelts.

19. Treat to Davy, July 1, 1806, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810.

20. Treat to Mason, Sept. 30, 1808, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810.

(c) In one corner of the lot was a half finished log stable.

(d) The lot was enclosed with "strong Oak posts and rails, 7 bars high."[21]

3. James Scull and Company Builds a Trading House

The death of Jacob Bright in June 1807 resulted in the liquidation of the House of Bright and Company. Before the month was over, the surviving partner Benjamin Morgan announced plans to form a new partnership with Joseph Watson and James Scull. As before, Morgan would contribute the capital, while Watson and Scull, who were residents of Arkansas Post, carried on the trade with the Indians. In advising Secretary of War Dearborn of his plans, Morgan pointed out that the license authorizing Bright and Company to trade on the Arkansas would expire in September.[22]

For reasons that are impossible to document, Watson did not join the partnership, and on November 4, 1807, Scull and Morgan signed an agreement to exploit the Indian trade on the Arkansas. The new firm would be known as James Scull and Company.[23] On April 10, 1808, Scull as Morgan's agent sold at public auction the one-acre square and improvements that had belonged to Bright and Company. Having acquired two lots on the Arkansas River, Scull and Company on February 1, 1809, contracted with Daniel Mooney to build

> a frame house 50 feet in length, 32 feet in breadth, and twelve feet high & to erect a gallery on each side of the house 10 feet wide and to enclose the same under a good & sufficient roof, the said building to contain four rooms, six doors & eight windows, all of which building to be finished neat & workman like & with as much dispatch as the nature of the case will admit.

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21. S. Treat to Mason, Sept. 10, 1810, NA, Microcopy M-142, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, 1805-1810. Samuel Treat was John's brother.

22. Morgan to Secretary of War, June 23, 1807, NA, RG 107, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of War.

23. Articles of Partnership, "Scull Papers," Arkansas County Museum, Gillett, Arkansas.

> The said James Scull & Co. to furnish at the place all necessary timber & materials, good & sufficient to complete the said building, also to furnish the said Daniel Mooney with boarding for himself and such Journey men as he may employ to work on said building.
>
> The following species of joiners' work to be observed in finishing the said house, the two ends to be weatherboarded, the upper floor to be laid down rough, the lower floor in house and gallery to be laid neat with (illegible) to wit, gallery ceiled overhead, all doors & windows sheets panelled & cased neat, chairs and washboards throughout all the rooms, & stairs to ascend the gallery on each side with hand rails & Balustrades on each side, eave gutters and conductors on each side, for all of which work, when finished the said James Scull & Co. agrees to pay Mooney the sum of $1,500.[24]

C. The Arkansas General Assembly and Montgomery's Tavern

Samuel Moseley, who purchased the square and improvements thereon from Bright and Company, was also involved in trade with the Indians. He used the square and structures to pursue his business. As the years passed, hunters to secure pelts and furs were compelled to push farther and farther up the Arkansas and its tributaries. Profits realized by merchants based at Post of Arkansas shrank. But with more and more whites emigrating to the region in search of cheap land, the merchants catered to the wants of the newcomers. In 1819 Moseley sold the square and improvements thereon to William Drope.[25]

Drope, a land speculator and cotton merchant, had moved into the house on the square in January 1818. He did not reside there many months before renting the property to William Montgomery and moving to Pulaski County. Montgomery converted the major building on the one-acre square into a tavern.

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24. Index to Book of Records (Deeds, Commissions, Indentures) Louisiana Territory, District of Arkansas, Aug. 3, 1808-Dec. 23, 1809, pp. 76-7; copy of Contract, "Scull Papers," Arkansas History Commission.

25. Arkansas County Deed Record Book A, pp. 163, 165, 196.

The Arkansas General Assembly when it was convened by Governor James Miller in February 1820, for its first session, met in two rooms rented from Montgomery. For these rooms and sundries furnished the General Assembly, Montgomery was to be paid "a sum not exceeding thirty seven dollars."[26]

As was to be expected, during the 28 months Arkansas Post was the territorial capital, Montgomery's Tavern was a place of importance. On August 5, 1820, Peter Corsey announced that henceforth on Wednesday morning, he would offer a "fat Beef" for sale near Montgomery's Tavern.[27] James Scull, lieutenant colonel and commanding officer of the 4th Regiment Arkansas Militia, announced on November 16, 1820, that to facilitate the organization of the unit into companies, a muster would be held on Saturday, November 24, at Montgomery's Tavern.[28] For the purpose of selecting five persons to act as trustees of the village, an election was held on January 22, 1821, at Montgomery's.[29] William Montgomery and Smith Brown on February 10, 1821, announced that they were moving from Post of Arkansas to the mouth of White River. Persons indebted to them were asked to settle their accounts on or before February 20.[30]

Meanwhile, Benjamin F. Babcock had purchased the subject square from William Drope. Babcock did not live in Arkansas Territory, and it has been impossible to determine to whom he rented the subject property following Montgomery's departure from the Post. In 1821, before the removal of the territorial capital to Little Rock, Babcock was assessed $15 taxes on the two lots he owned in the village. The subject lots--the one-acre square and the one on which Col. Daniel Brearly was residing--were choice ones and valued at $3,000. The transfer of the capital caused a bust in the Arkansas Post real estate market. In 1823 Babcock's lots were valued at $600, and he was cited as delinquent for taxes on the subject property.[31] Babcock accordingly sold his Arkansas Post property in 1825 to Col. Frederic Notrebe.

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26. Laws of Arkansas Territory, "An Act making appropriations for the year eighteen hundred and twenty and part of the year eighteen hundred and twenty-one," National Archives, RG 59.

27. Arkansas Gazette, Aug. 5, 1820.

28. Ibid., Nov. 18, 1820.

29. Ibid., Jan. 20, 1821.

30. Ibid., Feb. 10, 1821.

31. Ibid., Aug. 26, 1823; Arkansas County Territorial Tax Lists for 1821 and 1823.

D. Audubon Stops at Montgomery's Tavern

1. Audubon's Visit

James J. Audubon, the great ornithologist, visited Arkansas Post in mid-December 1820. Accompanied by Joseph Mason, he took passage down the Mississippi on a flatboat belonging to Jacob Aumack. On the 10th the boat tied-up at Caledonia Point, four miles above the mouth of White River. It was decided to have a look at Arkansas Post. Audubon, accompanied by Mason, Aumack, and Anthony Badley, took a skiff through the White River Cut-Off to Duval's plantation, and from there the Frenchman guided them through seven miles of "Mud & Watter to the Post."

It was 9 p.m. when, wet, weary, hungry, and muddy, they entered Montgomery's Tavern, the only one in the village. Supper was called for and served. Audubon found "Mrs. Montgomery a handsome Woman of good Manners and rather superior to those in her rank of life."[32]

After they had eaten, Mrs. Montgomery showed the men to their quarters in a "large Building that formerly perhaps saw the great Concils of Spanish Dons." They "saw 3 Beds containing 5 men." Audubon recalled that

> all was arranged in a few moments and as the Breaches were Coming off our Legs, Mr. Aumack & Anthony slided by into one and Joseph & myself into Another, to force Acquaintance with the strangers being of course necessary [.] a Conversation ensued that Lolled Me a Sleep, and Nothing but the Want of Blankets Kept Me from Resting Well, for I soon found a place between the Tugs that Supported about 10 lbs of Wild Turkey Feathers to save [?], My roundest Parts from the Sharp Edges of An Homespun Bedstead--[33]

The next morning, Aubudon reconnoitered the area, and pronounced Post of Arkansas "a poor, Nearly deserted Village." While it once could have been called an agreeable small town, all that now gave it life was the "decripid Visages of the

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32. Donald C. Peattie, Audubon's America (Boston, 1940), pp. 145-46.

33. Ibid., p. 146.

Worn out Indian Traders and a few American famillies." The site was a handsome one, "on a high Bank formerly the Edge of a Prairie, but rendered extremely sickly by the Back Neighborhood of Many Overflowing Lakes & Swamps."[34] After breakfast on the 12th, the travelers returned to the Cut-Off.

2. Archeologist Walker's Speculations

Archeologist Walker, who called the account in Audubon's America to my attention, has pointed out

> from the description ... [it appears] that the tavern was composed of at least two buildings, one of which was used for dining and the other, which evidently was rather large, for sleeping. Since there may well have been a "summer kitchen" and a number of outbuildings, I would suspect that [personnel of the University of Arkansas Archeological Field School] will be dealing with quite a complex of buildings.[35]

E. Johnston and Armstrong's Store in the Territorial Period

The structure in which Johnston and Armstrong had their store in 1819 had been built a number of years before by Joseph Dardenne. The builder had lived in the house. On January 12, 1820, the subject property had been sold to Francis and Catherine Mitchell by William and Elouisa Drope.

From 1819 to November 1821, Johnston and Armstrong employed the two-story building and lot they rented from the Mitchells as a store. During the period July 4, 1820, to January 4, 1821, Territorial Secretary Robert Crittenden rented quarters in the store from Henry Armstrong. On January 4, 1821, Crittenden paid Armstrong $175 for:

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34. Ibid., p. 146.

35. Walker to Hoffman, June 3, 1971. Dr. Michael P. Hoffman is a professor of anthropology at the University of Arkansas.

House Rent from July 4th 1821	100.00
24 loads of wood	24.00
1 Secretary for the use of office	35.00
1 Ream Letter paper	7.00
2 Bunches Quills	2.00
4 papers Inkpowders	1.00
2 lbs. Tape, 6 lbs. Sealing Wax	2.00
16 lbs, candles	4.00
	$175.00 [36]

In the months from January 4 to July 4, 1821, Crittenden continued to occupy rooms in the store. On July 4 he paid Armstrong $175 for:

House Rent from January 4th to July 4th 1821		100.00
24 loads of Wood furnished at the same time		24.00
20 lbs Spermaceti Candles		10.00
2 7 quire Record Books	@12.50	25.00
1 Ream Letter papers		7.00
4 papers Inkpowders	@ .25	1.00
3 papers Large Office wafers	@ 1.25	3.75
2 Bunches best Quills	@ 1.00	2.00
2 prs Tape, 1 Desk Knife		1.75
1 lb Sand for office		.50
		$175.00 [37]

On November 3, 1821, a new enterprise moved into the building. James Hamilton and Company announced that it had moved its place of business into the "store lately occupied by Messrs. Johnston & Armstrong."[38]

Like Babcock, the Mitchells saw the value of their real estate skid when the territorial capital was shifted in late 1821 to Little Rock. In 1821 their real estate in the village--the lot on which Johnston and Armstrong's Store was located and the lot on the west side of the cross street--was valued at $1,600. Two years later, the subject lots were listed by the county assessor at $500. In 1825 the Mitchells sold the store lot to Colonel Notrebe for $100.[39]

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36. Crittenden to Armstrong, Jan. 4, 1821, NA, RG 217.

37. Crittenden to Armstrong, July 4, 1821, NA, RG 217.

38. Arkansas Gazette, Nov. 3, 1821.

39. Arkansas County Territorial Tax Lists for 1821 and 1823.

F. Colonel Notrebe of Arkansas Post

1. Notrebe Settles in Arkansas

In 1825 Col. Frederic Notrebe acquired two of the structures (Montgomery's Tavern and Johnston and Armstrong's Store) used by territorial officials during the months that Post of Arkansas served as territorial capital. Notrebe was born in France in 1780, and, after serving in the Imperial Army in Spain under Marshal B. A. J. de Moncey, had emigrated to the United States in 1809. As he was 29 at the time and still subject to the conscript laws of France, he had probably deserted Moncey's corps.[40]

Despite the abrupt departure from Europe and the French army, Notrebe throughout his life in the United States retained a deep admiration for the Emperor Napoleon I. When a town was platted in the early 1820s at the mouth of White River, he was one of those who insisted on naming it Napoleon. One of his grandsons was likewise christened Napoleon Notrebe.[41]

Notrebe, who probably landed at New Orleans, quickly made his way to Post of Arkansas and entered the Indian trade. A Mr. Frazier, reminiscing about early days in Arkansas, reported that his father on landing at the Post in the summer of 1810 met Notrebe. He was "conducting a French trading house, as the furs and peltries of the Indian hunt in the west was very lucrative."[42]

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40. Arkansas State Democrat, April 20, 1849. Notrebe had served as an officer in the militia; thereafter he was referred to as "Colonel Notrebe."

41. Boyd W. Johnson, "Frederick Notrebe," Historical Bulletin Grand Prairie Historical Society, V (April 1962), 26. In John Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas (Albany, 1887), p. 108, the statement is made that Notrebe had served as an officer under Napoleon during the Consultate, after having participated in the revolution which dethroned the Bourbons. "He drew his sword, as he thought, in the interest of liberal institutions, certainly not to strengthen monarchy or depotism. When the first consul in 1804 threw off the mask and put on the crown, he sheathed his sword and came to free Arkansas." The fact that Notrebe served under Marshal Moncey in Spain in 1807-08 contradicts Hallum's statements.

42. Arkansas Gazette, July 17, 1886.

The presence of Notrebe at the Post in September 1811 can be documented. On the 9th John Baptiste and Mary Gerbert sold to Frederic Notrebe for $12 their "right and title" to a lot 65 feet broad and 165 feet deep "bounded on the one side by the lot and house" of Notrebe and on the other by Main Street.[43]

2. Notrebe Marries and Raises a Family

In the same year, 1811, Notrebe married Mary Felicite, the 17-year-old daughter of John B. and Elizabeth Bellette.[44] To the couple were born at least four children, three sons and one daughter. The sons were Eugene, Charles, and John. Eugene, the eldest, was born about 1816 and died in La Habana, Cuba, in 1840; Charles was born in 1817 and died in 1841; and John, born in the late 1820s, was killed in a brawl at Post of Arkansas by Etienne Vaugine on Christmas Eve 1844.[45]

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43. Arkansas County Deed Book C, pp. 64, 469.

44. Seventh Census, State of Arkansas, Arkansas County, NA. G. W. Featherstonhaugh, who visited Arkansas in 1834 and '35, reported that Notrebe had married a Creole with Indian blood in her veins. G. W. Featherstonhaugh, Excursion Through the Slave States, from Washington on the Potomac to the Frontier of Mexico; with Sketches of the Popular Manners and Geological Notices, (2 vols., London, 1844), II, 234-35.

45. Arkansas Gazette, May 27, 1840, and Sept. 22, 1841; Minutes of the Grand Jury, April 1845 Term, State of Arkansas vs Etienne Vaugine, pp. 36-37. On Christmas Eve 1844, John Turner, V. Peeler, and several others were gathered in the rear of John Mc. Chesney's store, when young Notrebe entered. He was followed within a few minutes by Etienne Vaugine, who sat down in the corner. Notrebe walked over to Vaugine and asked, "What do you have against me?" Vaugine's got to his feet and replied, but the witnesses were unable to hear what he said.

The two men's voices got louder as they argued. Notrebe shouted as he slapped Vaugine, "Damn you fight like a man!" One of the bystanders intervened and vainly sought to lead Notrebe outside, but he broke away and slapped Vaugine again. As Vaugine stepped back, Notrebe "threw his hand down to his pocket." Peeler stepped between them, as Notrebe pulled a pistol. As Vaugine and Notrebe wrestled for the pistol, there was a bang!

Notrebe's daughter, Francine, married in 1831 William Cummins, a prominent member of the Little Rock bar. The Kentucky-born lawyer had located in Little Rock in 1824, and in 1836 he had been elected a member of the Arkansas Constutional Convention. In 1840, three years before his death, Cummins was elected to the General Assembly from Pulaski County. His wife had preceded him in death, and their daughter, Mary Felicite, was left an orphan to be raised by her maternal grandparents.[46]

3. Travelers' Journals and Recollections

a. Nuttall's Journal

Most travelers passing through Post of Arkansas in the period 1819-49 and writing of their experiences mentioned Colonel Notrebe. The British natural scientist Thomas Nuttall, who was at the Post in the last week of February 1819, reported that the principal merchants "were Messrs. Braham and Drope, Mr. Lewis, and Monsieur Notrebe, who kept well-assorted stores of merchandise, supplied chiefly from New Orleans, with the exception of some heavy articles of domestic manufacture obtained from Pittsburgh."[47]

Notrebe slumped to the floor, the pistol falling by his side. As he collapsed he exclaimed, "Boys I am a dead man, dead, pick me up and carry me away from this." Peeler knelt down, and cradled Notrebe's head. Eugene Jordellas now entered the store, and exclaimed, "Poor John are you dead?" Peeler and several others picked up the dying boy and carried him to Dr. William Price's house. By the time they reached the doctor's, he was dead.

In April 1845 the Arkansas County Grand Jury, after questioning the witnesses, held that Vaugine had killed John Notrebe in self defense, and he was released from custody.

46. Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas, 106-07; J. S. Utley, "Graves of Eminent Men," Publications of the Arkansas Historical Commission (Fayetteville, 1908), II, 275. Absalom Fowler and Albert Pike had been law partners of Cummins.

47. Thomas Nuttall, Travels into the Arkansa Territory, 1819, edited by Reuben G. Thwaites (Cleveland, 1905) p. 106.

b. Pope's Recollections

William F. Pope stopped at Arkansas Post in October 1832. Years later he recorded his impressions of the village. He recalled that there were "a few modern buildings, situated near the bank of the river, among them two brickhouses, one of which was the store and warehouse of the opulent Frederic Notrebe." Most of the other buildings were "built after the French style of architecture, with high pointed roofs and gables and heavy exterior timbers, and high chimneys."[48]

Pope was a guest in Notrebe's "beautiful home." He was impressed by the display of cut glass, china, and silverware, as well as the retinue of the servants. He did not expect to find such on the frontier. Pope recalled Notrebe as a man of commanding appearance, with jet black hair and eyes, and a dark complexion. He had large but regular features and in his younger years had undoubtedly been very handsome.[49]

c. Washington Irving Meets Notrebe

Washington Irving, the man-of-letters, on returning from his western journey stopped briefly at the Post on November 15, 1832. Aboard the steamboat with Irving on the passage down from Little Rock were Mr. and Mrs. William Cummins, Colonel Notrebe's son-in-law and daughter.

Irving noted in his journal that Mrs. Cummins' father was said to be worth $40,000 to $50,000. She had inherited from her father his temperament, and it was said she ruled "her husband with the slipper." She was a "pretty, dark, black-eyed woman." The great author observed that when Colonel Notrebe traveled, he aped the Dons, taking along a servant and his own wines because he did not like those served aboard the Arkansas and Mississippi packets.[50]

48. William F. Pope, Early Days in Arkansas, Being the Most Part Personal Recollections of an Old Settler (Little Rock, 1895), pp. 66-67.

49. Ibid.

50. Washington Irving, The Western Journals of Washington Irving, edited by John F. McDermott (Norman, 1966), pp. 160, 168.

The Post, Irving observed, was "a decayed, ruinous place--old Spanish wooden building, with piazza--outhouses--French buildings, with casement--piazzas." Enclosing Notrebe's garden, store, and house was a stockade- like fence. Near the old Spanish house were two large ruins. Irving observed that the Americans had settled to the north of the old village.[51]

Five years later, Irving published his short story, "The Creole Village," in which he perpetuated the idyllic existence of the Post. It was in "The Creole Village" that Irving first used the now familiar phrase, "the almighty dollar."[52]

It is also possible that "the old ruinous Spanish house, of large dimensions, with verandas overshadowed by ancient elms," may have been Montgomery's Tavern.[53]

d. Featherstonhaugh Stops at the Post

G. W. Featherstonhaugh, visiting the Post in the mid-1830s, reported, "The great man of the place is Monsieur Notrebe, a French emigrant, who is said to have accumulated a considerable fortune here. His house appears to be a comfortable one, and has a store attached to it, where the principal business of this part is transacted."[54]

e. General Pike Describes Notrebe

Albert Pike--poet, masonic leader, lawyer, humanitarian, and Civil War general--was well acquainted with Notrebe. He wrote:

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51. Ibid., p. 169.

52. Ibid., p. 179.

53. Ibid., 177-78.

54. Featherstonhaugh, Excursion Through the Slave States, II, 234-35.

> Mr. Notrebe, himself, was a man who ought not to be forgotten, for he was a very noble and generous man. I often dined at his house at Post of Arkansas, and his plantation below that place, on the river.[55]

4. Notrebe--Successful Merchant and Planter

Colonel Notrebe, unlike most other local businessmen, did not join the rush to Little Rock in late 1821 and '22, when the territorial capital was moved. Instead he determined to hold onto and expand his Arkansas County interests. Featherstonhaugh in 1835 described Notrebe's highly successful methods of doing business.

> Cultivating cotton himself, advancing money to other planters to carry on their business with, upon condition of taking their crops when gathered at a given price, and taking skins and peltry of every kind in payment of goods obtained at his store--of which whiskey forms no small item--he has contrived to secure a monopoly of almost all the business of the country, and after a vigorous struggle has compelled all his competitors to withdraw from the trade.[56]

Notrebe's rise to affluence can be traced in the Arkansas County Tax Assessment Books. The one for 1817 credits Notrebe with ownership of two town lots, with improvements thereon valued at $1,100, and two slaves who were more than ten years old. His county tax in that year was $4.55.[57] In 1821 the tax roll listed Notrebe as owner of five town lots with improvements, valued at $2,800, and seven slaves more than ten years old. His taxes were $17.50.[58] In 1823 his taxes were $29.50, and in 1828 he was assessed for 805 acres in

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55. Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas, p. 82.

56. Featherstonhough, Excursion Through the Slave States, II, 234.

57. Territorial Tax List for 1817 of Arkansas County.

58. Territorial Tax List for 1821 of Arkansas County. In the same year, the Mitchells who owned the lot on which Johnston & Armstrong's Store was located were credited with ownership of two town lots with improvements, valued at $1,600.

Arkansas County, ten cows, nine horses, and seven slaves. By 1836 he was credited with ownership of 14 parcels of land in the county totaling 3,496 acres, while in partnership with his son-in-law William Cummins, he owned another 4,633 acres divided into 22 parcels.

In 1848, the year before his death, Notrebe's property in Arkansas County was assessed: value of town lots, $3,000; number of slaves 71, valued at $27,400; household furniture $600; pleasure carriage $300; 28 horses and mules, valued at $1,250; 32 cattle, valued at $320; and gold watches and jewelry at $100.[59]

5. Notrebe and King Cotton

a. As a Merchant

Notrebe, having first obtained financial security in the Indian trade, sensed the proper moment to diversify. While maintaining his store, which by 1819 catered to the interests of the growing white community, he entered the cotton trade, first as a merchant, then as a gin operator, and finally as a planter.

When the third issue of the Arkansas Gazette came off the press on December 4, 1819, it contained an advertisement placed by Notrebe. "The subscriber having directions to receive all the COTTON of Mr. William Drope, for the crop of 1819, requests all persons that are to deliver cotton to Mr. Drope, to send it to the mill of Mr. James Scull."[60] Six weeks later, on January 15, 1820, Notrebe employed the Arkansas Gazette to announce, "I will give three and a half cents per pound for cotton--one-half to be paid in cash, the remainder in merchandise from my store."[61]

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59. Arkansas County Tax Lists for 1836 and 1848.

60. Arkansas Gazette, Dec. 4, 1819.

61. Ibid., Jan. 15, 1820.

To encourage cotton growing in the area, Notrebe contracted in the spring with the farmers to purchase their cotton in the autumn at a fixed price. Typical of these contracts is one he made with Peter Corsey in May 1825:

> Know all men by these presents that I Peter Corsey of the county and territory of Arkansas for and in consideration of the sum of Four dollars for each hundred pounds of seed cotton to me to be paid by Frederic Notrebe of the County and Territory aforesaid have granted bargained and sold and confirmed and by these presents do grant bargain and sell and confirm unto the said Frederic Notrebe all my crop of cotton for the year 1825. The whole crop supposed to the amount of three thousand weight more or less. his
> Peter x Corsey [62]
> mark

b. Notrebe Builds a Gin

In late 1826 and early 1827, Notrebe had a gin erected on the lots opposite the square acquired from Babcock in January 1825. One of these lots Notrebe had purchased from Samuel Rutherford in June 1822. In August 1827, Notrebe inserted the following advertisement in the Gazette:

> Cash! Cash down!
>
> The highest price, in Cash, will be paid by the undersigned for good dry, clean, merchantible /sic/ Cotton, in the seed, to be delivered at my Gin at the Post of Arkansas--(the drayage from the landing to be my expense.)[63]

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62. Arkansas County Deed Book D, p. 301.

63. Arkansas Gazette, Aug. 21, 1827. The square purchased from Babcock was the one on which Jacob Bright & Co. had operated a trading house in the period 1804-07.

Colonel Notrebe in September 1828 advertised in the Gazette:

COTTON

> The subscriber having finished the Galleries to his inclined plane Cotton Gin, for the reception of large quantities of Cotton, informs his friends and the public in general, that he will receive Cotton in the seed, Gin and Bale it in the neatest manner, at one dollar per hundred weight of neat cotton in each bale, or nine pounds of seed cotton for every hundred pounds of the same.[64]

A reporter for the Gazette on November 4, 1828, described improvements Colonel Notrebe had made in his gin. "There is," he wrote, a cotton gin

> on this improved plan, now in operation at this place (the Post of Arkansas), in the gin house of Mr. Frederick /sic/ Notrebe, the gentleman to whom the public is indebted, for this valuable improvement. It has been examined by several persons, and is admitted by all to answer the desired purpose. The improvement is simple, and in the construction of gins, will be attended with but little additional expense. It consists of giving a greater length of bar or axis to the cylinder and brush wheel, so that the gudgeons on the opposite side may work equidistant from the cylinder or box, with those on the side which receives the power, and supported by an additional frame. The gudgeons of the cylinder and brush, therefore, working outside and clear of the box, are within view of the person attending the gin, and should fire originate by friction, there is no cotton or combustible matter that can come in contact and it would be easily discovered, and could soon be extinguished, without the possibility of doing any injury.

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64. Ibid., Sept. 19, 1828.

It may not be uninteresting, to state the cause which led to the discovery of this improvement. Some time in the month of February last, fire originated by friction at one of the gudgeons of the brush wheel of Mr. N's gin, which being confined ... within the gin box communicated with the cotton in the flue, and was carried by the current of air from the brush, through the flue into the cotton room. This room being very close, and highly charged with atmospheric air, kept the flame compressed. It, however, spread over the surface of the unpacked cotton, and ... continued to burn in that compressed state without being discovered, until the stopping of the gin, when the flame ascended, accompanied by a thick volume of smoke, into the flue, and burst forth at the cylinder. The alarm was immediately given, and by the timely assistance of the citizens, the fire was extinguished, with the loss of a few bales of cotton, and some slight injury to the buildings.

This accident, which had like to have proved so serious, set the active mind of Mr. N. to work, in order to discover some mode by which similar occurences might be prevented; and having fell on the above plan, he immediately communicated his views, with a draft of the improvement, to Messrs, Caver, Washburn & Co., accompanied by an order for a new gin, to be constructed on his proposed plan. Those gentlemen, pleased with the improvement, constructed a gin, of superb workmanship, on the principle proposed, and forwarded it to Mr. N.

It will be recollected by many, that since the introduction of the flue, in the picking of cotton, several accidents have occurred by fire originating from the friction of the brush wheel, and thereby great losses have

been sustained, by the destruction of gins. It must therefore be gratifying to planters and gin holders, as well as the friends of this branch of our industry, to learn that an improvement has been made in the construction of gins, that will effectually guard against accidents of this kind.[65]

c. Notrebe as a Planter

Colonel Notrebe, as to be expected, became increasingly interested in agriculture as he expanded his landholdings. To boost the yield per acre on his plantations, he allied himself with another wealthy Arkansas County planter, Terence Farrelly. In 1840 they, at considerable expense, imported cotton seed from Mexico. This experiment failed. Next they planted several fields of "China Silk Cotton." As this strain of cotton was not acclimated to the region, the yield was a disappointing 150 pounds to the acre. But when closely examined, it was seen that the "Bolls were in clusters, firmly united together, some containing under one pod what appeared to be a half dozen bolls compressed." This staple, with the exception of Sea Island, was superior to any Notrebe and Farrelly had heretofore inspected.

It was determined to give it another trial. For two years patches of "China Silk Cotton" were planted adjacent to fields seeded with the Mexican. Cross fertilization was thus obtained. Seeds from the best plants were retained and seeded the following year.

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65 Ibid., Nov. 4, 1828. On July 17, 1835, Notrebe sold to his father-in-law for one dollar, "a house and two lots situated in the Post of Arkansas." The subject lots joined his "gin lot on the East and Creed Taylor's on the West." The lots adjoining the gin lot on the east included the one on which the Johnston and Armstrong Store had been located in 1819.

Samples of cotton produced by this cross fertilization were forwarded in 1846 to newspapers and factors in New Orleans and Little Rock.

In 1846 poor upland fields, near Arkansas Post, seeded in "silk cotton," as it was called, produced double the yield per acre of the common cotton seed. Judge Haller, who resided on the Little Rock road, three miles west of Arkansas Post, had planted his little prairie in the new seed. Although the land had been under cultivation for about ten years, Haller found on weighing his cotton in at Notrebe's gin that the improved seed had yielded 1,500 pounds per acre, despite an invasion of caterpillars. Several of his neighbors, who had used the Mexican seed, reported yields of from 500 to 600 pounds to the acre.[66]

d. Notrebe and the Arkansas State Bank

As a successful merchant and planter, Colonel Notrebe felt the need to expand the amount of money in circulation in the region. After Arkansas was admitted to the Union in 1836, Notrebe labored to secure the establishment of a branch bank of the State Bank at Arkansas Post. He was successful. On June 19, 1839, the Arkansas Gazette carried the following notice:

> Proposals for Building a Banking-House at the Post of Arkansas
>
> Sealed proposals will be received by the undersigned, till Monday the 19th day of August next, for building and finishing a Banking House, of the following dimensions: --30 feet 8 inches wide, 60 feet 8 inches long including the projection of the palasters [sic]--whole height of the walls 29 feet.
>
> The material for the building, and the workmanship and finish of said Bank to be of the first order.

66. T. Farrelly to W. E. Woodruff, Dec. 4, 1846, found in Arkansas Gazette, Dec. 18, 1846.

> The contractor will be required to give good references and ample security for the fulfilment of his contract.
>
> A plan of the building, with specifications for finishing the same, can be seen by application to the State Bank at Little Rock.
>
> Proposals to be directed to the "Post of Arkansas," and opened at the Bank on the day above named.
>
> Fred Notrebe)
> J. Mitchell)
> D. Maxwell)
> J. H. Lennox) Committee.[67]

Colonel Notrebe and his wife on April 4, 1840, sold to the Bank of Arkansas, for one dollar, a lot on which to build the branch bank. The lot sold was the northwest part of the one-acre square originally owned by Louis Jordella and sold by him to Bright and Company. The Notrebes had acquired the subject property in 1825 from Benjamin Babcock.[68]

The Arkansas General Assembly in 1843 enacted legislation to liquidate the Bank of Arkansas. On June 15, 1843, the receivers named by the legislature (Samuel Mitchell and William A. Doherty) announced,

> we the undersigned, Executor and Financial Receivers having received possession of the property, assets, and effects of the Branch of the Bank of the State of Arkansas, at Arkansas in pursuance of an act of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas entitled "an act to place the Bank of the State of Arkansas in liquidation," approved 31st January 1843, hereby give notice to all persons indebted to said Branch (whose debts are now due), to come forward, within

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67. Arkansas Gazette, June 19, 1839.

68. Arkansas County Deed Book F, pp. 390-91.

ninety days from the date hereof, (and to all persons whose debts are not now due, within ninety days after same become due), "and pay up all arrearages of interest and calls," (and interest in advance for twelve months, at seven percent on the principal debt), "and furnish such security for the payment of the principal debt as the undersigned may approve." Otherwise suit will be instituted against them.[69]

A person visiting the Post in 1857 described the former bank building as "being of brick and not at the time being used for any purpose except holding elections and stabling horses."[70]

6. Colonel Notrebe's Death and Will

Colonel Notrebe, while visiting in New Orleans, died on April 4, 1849. He was 69 years old. In reporting his death the Arkansas newspapers observed, "Few men were more proverbial for probity and strict justice in every transaction with his fellow man. As a member of society, he was unexceptionable--an affectionate parent--a kind and indulgent master, a firm and confiding friend."

His death would be a severe blow to his widow, already "bowed down" with sorrow from the loss of her four children. His only other heir was his granddaughter, Mary Felicite Cummins.[71]

Six years before on October 24, 1843, Colonel Notrebe--in the presence of Samuel Mitchell, W. A. Doherty, G. W. S. Crass, and John L. Jones--had dictated his last will and testament. In the first article of the will, he declared that his wife Mary Felicite Bellette, whom he had married

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69. Arkansas Gazette, Feb. 8 and July 5, 1843.

70. Worley to Bearss, July 1, 1964, and Atkinson to Bearss, April 24, 1964. Ted Worley was Executive Secretary of the Arkansas History Commission, while J. H. Atkinson is a member of that body.

71. Arkansas State Democrat, April 20, 1849; Arkansas State Gazette, April 29, 1849.

in 1811, was on his death to receive for her lifetime one-half of his real and personal estate. The other one-half was to be shared equally by his son John and his granddaughter Mary F. Cummins.[72] The widow, on his death, was to be given the "option and privilege in the division of the one half of all the ... estate as a life dowery, after" his just debts were paid. She was to be allowed to choose those slaves she wished for her share, and would have the choice of his "cotton plantation (3 miles below the Post) which I now cultivate or the premises at the Post of Arkansas where I now reside to make her own residence which will be valued and appraised with impartiality by my" heirs, John and Mary, if they are of age or their guardians, or by three disinterested persons.[73]

Should the widow remarry, "which is not probable," the aforementioned clauses in her favor were to be null and void, and she would receive from the estate only what she was allowed by the laws of Arkansas for her dowry. John and Mary would then be willed an additional share to be distributed in the "same proportion of one half each."[74]

The granddaughter Mary Cummins was to receive as a part of her share all the money owed Notrebe by her late father, "as cash advanced to him on several times to help him in paying his share of purchases and entries of lands made in partnership between him ... and myself as it will appear by his three notes in my favor and to my order amounting" to $12,090.18 as principal as of March 17, 1841, and bearing interest of six per cent per annum for ten years. As security for these notes, Notrebe held a mortgage on lands belonging to the deceased in Arkansas and Desha counties. In addition, the granddaughter was to receive on account as part of her share of the estate a receipt given by Notrebe to her parents for $2,741.58, representing cash advanced

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72. Arkansas County Will Record A, pp. 174-79.

73. Ibid., pp. 174-75. Should any of the slaves selected by Mrs. Notrebe as her share of the estate become "averse and refractory to her command," she was privileged to exchange them with John and Mary.

74. Ibid., pp. 175-76.

to the Cumminses "to help them in their first year of marriage."[75]

If Mary Cummins died before coming of age or before marriage, John Notrebe or his legitimate descendants would be the "sole heirs" of "all the amounts of patrimony allotted to the granddaughter." Should the granddaughter die after marriage without any lawful children, John or his legitimate heirs would inherit from her "all and singular her goods and chattels, real property, and slaves as a patrimony coming and arising" from Notrebe's estate.

Article 7 provided that should John die without lawful issue, his mother would be the executrix of all property, chattels, and slaves inherited from his father's estate, and after the death of his mother they were to pass to the granddaughter or her lawful descendants.

When the granddaughter married, to protect her in the enjoyment of her inheritance and to prevent her husband from making "bad use of her property without her consent," a contract of marriage was to be entered into between her and her spouse before a notary, and "a court of record giving a full description of the amount of cash, real and personal property, number of slaves with their names and ages" made.[76]

To protect the interest of his son John, the granddaughter and her husband were denied the right of demanding "a sale or division" of the estate without John's consent. If the estate were to be disposed of, John and Mary, assisted by two disinterested parties, would have an inventory prepared.

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75. Ibid., p. 176. Should Notrebe die before his granddaughter was of age or had married, the widow and John were to "superintend all her interest" and "have a particular care of William Cummins' three notes and mortgage" in Notrebe's favor.

76. Ibid., pp. 176-77.

Mary's spouse would be prohibited from interfering in any way with John in his business operations of the estate. John at the same time was expected to divide equally with Mary the one-half of all revenue arising from the estate. This clause Notrebe had included to prevent Mary's husband, "who may be ambitious," from forcing a "sale or division at a great sacrifice" of Colonel Notrebe's property.[77]

As his father-in-law John Bellette, to whom he had given two lots and five slaves in 1835, had died, Notrebe willed them to his mother-in-law Elizabeth Bellette for her lifetime. He urged his heirs to continue to cherish his mother-in-law in her old age.

Upon the death of his wife, the share of the estate willed to her "as a life estate" was to revert to equal shares "to my only two heirs ... or to their legitimate heirs of desents."

The executors of the estate were to be the widow, John Notrebe if of age, Terence Farrelly, Wm. B. Wait, Louis Refeld, and A. B. K. Thetford. Each executor was to receive $500 to reimburse him or her for their services. Should any of them refuse to serve, the widow was to name their replacements.[78]

7. The Division of the Estate

a. The Debits and Credits

The death of John Notrebe on Christmas Eve 1844, in a brawl, left only two heirs--the widow and granddaughter. Within hours of receipt of news of Notrebe's death, Edward Chancey Morton, age 28, on April 22, 1849, took as his wife the 16-year-old granddaughter Mary Felicite Cummins.[79] Twenty-one days later, Notrebe's

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77. Ibid. Notrebe was determined that John should be free from "all annoyance whatever from Mary's husband or anybody else in the government of the general interest" of the "estate jointly with his mother."

78. Ibid., pp. 177-79.

79. Arkansas County Marriage Record Book B. The couple was married by Justice of the Peace William Maxwell.

will was submitted to probate, and on July 17, 1849, Farrelly, Refeld, and Thedford, as executors, were bonded for $240,000.[80]

When they examined claims against the estate and its assets, the executors found that cash on hand totaled $3,606.40½ against which there were claims outstanding of $18,427.10.[81] On Captain Morton's motion, it was ordered that the clerk of the probate court have an audit made and "strike a pro-rata dividend" of the assets among the creditors.[82]

In January 1851 Farrelly and the widow appeared before the court and submitted a petition, stating that in March 1850 the widow had determined "to take dower in the estate of her late husband." She asked that the executors be ordered to pay her a proportion of the value of the rent of land and hire of slaves. The court allowed the widow's petition, and ordered the executors to pay to her a percentage of "the value of rent of land and hire of slaves not to exceed the dower interest."[83]

Six months later at the July Term of the Probate Court, Farrelly reported that the 1850 cotton crop had been shipped to New Orleans and sold by Captain Morton. Besides being absent, Morton had in his possession the accounts, so it had been impossible for the executors to make a settlement with the widow.[84]

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80. Arkansas County Probate Record A, p. 154.

81. Ibid., pp. 164, 174, 183, 185, 205. The largest claim against the estate was submitted by St. Louis banker J. H. Lucus, who held four notes dated November 8, 1843, totaling $13,333.331/3. Other claimants were Dr. A. B. Bronson for $123; S. Pierce & Co. for $1,123.46; T. Farrelly for $135; W. B. Wait for $1,851.31; Byers & Chapman for $100; F. W. Trapnall for $1,199; Thomas Langrider for $91; and F. Menard for $471.10.

82. Ibid., p. 205.

83. Ibid., pp. 222-23.

84. Ibid., p. 259.

b. The Division of the Estate

On September 10, 1850, the widow released to Mr. and Mrs. Morton "all her title and interest and estate as devised" under her late husband's will to the land and tenements, along with all slaves belonging to the estate.[85] To liquidate the claims outstanding against the estate, the Mortons secured from the firm of A. W. Walker and Company of New Orleans, a letter of credit for $10,000, payable in not less than 12 months from February 4, 1852, in their counting room in New Orleans. For this loan the Mortons were to pay a commission of five per cent and interest of eight per cent per annum, and to ship to A. W. Walker and Company all cotton raised on their plantations until the indebtness was retired. Morton then approach Albert Pike, and he agreed to become his surety for the letter of credit.

Pike was given a mortgage on a tract constituting the plantation of "the late Frederic Notrebe ... whereon he resided" and where the Mortons then lived, on the north bank of the Arkansas, three miles below Arkansas Post, and the lands on the opposite side of the river, totaling 3,546 acres.[86]

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85. Arkansas County Deed Book H, p. 14.

86. Ibid., pp. 69-74, 204-09. There were 119 Notrebe slaves, which included: Gabriel, a 25-year-old mulatto; Maria, a 26-year-old black; Adelia, a 10-year-old mulatto; Helen, an 8-year-old mulatto; Mary Magness, a 5-year-old black; Shadrack, an 18-month-old black; Anderson, a 16-year-old black; Josephine, a 14-year-old mulatto; Charlotte, a 10-year-old mulatto; Tom Lawson, a 45-year-old black; Milly, a 50-year-old black; Edward M., a 26-year-old black; James Poney, a 22-year-old black; William, a 16-year-old black; Eli, an 11-year-old black; Lucinda, a 17-year-old black; Old Henry, a 47-year-old black; Sally, a 45-year-old black; Henrietta, a 13-year-old black; Sidney, a 9-year-old black; Dinah, an 18-year-old black; Old Lucy, a 72-year-old black; Little Daniel, a 32-year-old black; Polly, a 49-year-old black; Alice M., a 26-year-old black; Big Mary Ann, a 24-year-old mulatto; William Mead, a 15-year-old mulatto; Hersille, a 13-year-old black; Nelly M., a six-year-old mulatto; Mary Frances, a 4-year-old mulatto; Georgianne, a one-year-old mulatto; Leanna, an 18-year-old mulatto; Adelina, a 14-year-old mulatto; Jack, a 27-year-old black; Harriet, a 36-year-old black; Dane, an 18-year-old black; Matilda, a 16-year-old black; George, a 59-year-old black; Old Lewis, a 39-year-old mulatto;

By May 1854 the Mortons had repaid A. W. Walker and Company, and before the year was over Albert Pike gave them a release on the mortgage which he held on their property.[87]

Old Big Daniel, a 37-year-old black; Moses, a 31-year-old black; Black Joe, a 30-year-old black; Old Alexander, a 37-year-old mulatto; Dennis, a 33-year-old mulatto; Big Emily, a 46-year-old black; James Boy, a 28-year-old mulatto; Oliver, a 23-year-old mulatto; Therese, a 31-year-old mulatto; Andy, a 4-year-old black; a black one-year old son of Therese; Old Elizabeth, a 15-year-old black; Old Rachael, a 17-year-old black; Old Margaret, a 12-year-old black; Yellow Joe, a 22-year-old Mulatto; Little Mary Ann, an 18-year-old mulatto; Old Martha, a 15-year-old black; Minerva, a 13-year-old black; Old Victoria, an 11-year-old black; Old William Franklin, a 9-year-old mulatto; Pedro, a 7-year-old black; Pleasants, a 47-year-old mulatto; Big Mary, a 44-year-old black; Pink, a 24-year-old mulatto; Henry Pleasants, a 22-year-old mulatto; Jack Pleasants, a 20-year-old mulatto; Dolly Pleasants, an 18-year-old black; Rebecca, a 15-year-old black; Eliza Jane, a 14-year-old black; Charley Pleasants, an 11-year-old mulatto; Blind Henry, a 36-year-old mulatto; Richardson, a 2-year-old black; Angelina, a 28-year-old black; Julia Ann, a 25-year-old black; Little John, a 21-year-old black; Little Tom, an 18-year-old mulatto; Paulina, a 10-year-old black; Big Judith, a 47-year-old black; Annie, a 44-year-old black; William Palmer, a 14-year-old black; President Harrison, a 9-year-old black; Fanny, a 56-year-old black; Pamela, an 11-year-old black; Vina, a 22-year-old black; Vina's Tom, a 3-year-old mulatto; James Bryon, a 24-year-old black; Little Henry, a 16-year-old black; Sally Ann, a 14-year-old black; Gibson, a 4-year-old black; Ignace, a 24-year-old black; Sam, a 49-year-old black; Victoria Money, a 56-year-old black; Little Mary, a 44-year-old black; Isaac, a 42-year-old black; Belly, a 42-year-old black; Carter, a 42-year-old black; Big John, a 30-year-old black; Phyllis, a 48-year-old black; Black William, a 37-year-old black; Lucretia, a 9-year-old mulatto; George, a 7-year-old mulatto; Sylvia, a 27-year-old black; Robert, a 5-year-old black; Patsy, a 4-year-old black; Nitey, an 18-month-old black; Priscilla, a 53-year-old black; Eliza, a 34-year-old mulatto; Phillip, a 15-year-old mulatto; Solomon, a 19-year-old mulatto; Louisa, a 17-year-old mulatto; Rosetta, an 8-year-old mulatto; Daphne, a 43-year-old black; Little Judith, a 33-year-old black; Little Sam, an 18-year-old black; Martha Goody, a 31-year-old black; Mary Violet, a 10-year-old black; Hannah, a 5-year-old black; Spencer, a 7-year-old black; and Julia's black son of 8 months.

87. Arkansas County Deed Book I, p. 17.

Meanwhile, the Widow Notrebe and the Mortons had quarrelled. In October 1851 the Chancery Court of Arkansas County, at the widow's request, named Samuel Mitchell, B. L. Haller, and J. A. Jordon court commissioners to examine the plantation of Frederic Notrebe and other lands owned by him and

> in cultivation at the time of his death with the lands adjacent and connected therewith and ascertain the quantity thereof and if the same can be divided, and the widow's dower set apart therein, and the heirs have their two-thirds, and each party receive their just rights therein without prejudice or injury to the rights of either party therein without a sale thereof.[88]

The Court, after reviewing the will of the deceased and the commissioners' report, on October 26, 1852, declared that the Widow Notrebe was entitled to her dower. She would have possession in severalty during her lifetime of the following tracts and improvements on the plantation of her late husband, on the Arkansas River, three and one-half miles below Arkansas Post: (a) all that tract fronting on Arkansas River above the lane containing 109 acres, enclosing the patrimony of Colonel Notrebe; and (b) a second tract below the tract aforementioned, fronting on the river and extending from said lane down the Arkansas 90 poles "to a stake planted as a boundary point" by the commissioners charged with laying out the widow's dowry, "and then back on a line running parallel with the lane aforesaid, containing 111 acres." Except for these two tracts totaling 220 acres, Mrs. Edward Morton and her husband were to have and retain in severalty the remainder of the deceased's real estate. In addition, Mrs. Notrebe was to have the privilege of cutting wood on the tract below the plantation.[89]

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88. Arkansas County Chancery Record A, pp. 100-01.

89. Ibid., pp. 130-32.

As her dowry, Mrs. Notrebe was also awarded 37 slaves, nine horses, and six oxen, along with all plate and silver belonging to the estate. The executors and heirs were to hold in severalty the residue of the personal effects and real estate of the deceased.

It was further ordered that the Mortons for two calendar years have use of and occupy the well and garden on the lands allotted to the Widow Notrebe, along with one Negro cabin and the plantation kitchen.[90]

Despite Frederic Notrebe's statement in his will, his widow in 1853 married William Price, a widower. In October 1854 the Prices brought suit in the Arkansas County Chancery Court against Terence Farrelly, the other executors, and Edward and Mary Morton to force a division of the estate. The court, after reviewing the case, decreed that William Halli Burton proceed "to make and state an account current in respect of the persons in pursuance of said bill and decree." He was to: (a) report the amount of all money on hand at Notrebe's death; (b) make an accounting of the expenses and profits of the plantation, slaves, and other property thereon from the death of Notrebe until January 1, 1853, the date the widow was assigned her dower right; (c) state an "account of all parts of the property of Frederic Notrebe at the Post of Arkansas and elsewhere other than the plantation"; (d) list all other sources of income from the estate "other than from the slaves ... and debts due the same"; (e) make an accounting of all money received by the executors and the Mortons from the estate; and (f) submit his report at the next term of court.[91]

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90. Ibid., pp. 131-32.

91. Arkansas County Chancery Record A, pp. 185-86.

A search of the records of the Arkansas County Chancery Court failed to locate Halli Burton's report. This report, if found, might provide valuable information on the real estate owned by Colonel Notrebe at the time of his death. It might even tell us something about Montgomery's Tavern and Johnston and Armstrong Store, provided they were still standing in 1849.

G. The Morton-Price Property, 1849-65

1. The Plantation in 1850

In 1850 Edward Morton and his wife were reported by the Seventh Census enumerator for Arkansas Township to be the owners of 3,000 acres, 700 of which were under cultivation. Morton estimated that the cash value of the plantation was $34,750, and the implements worth $1,850.

On the plantation in June 1850 were 16 horses, 16 mules, 20 milk cows, 20 oxen, 200 beef cattle, and 150 hogs, which Morton valued at $2,940. He and his wife were owners of 115 slaves.

The Mortons in 1849 had raised on the Notrebe plantation 1,500 bushels of corn, 50 bushels of oats, and 50 bales of cotton. Five hundred pounds of butter had been churned and 100 pounds of honey collected, while the value of cattle and hogs slaughtered for consumption on the plantation was placed at $500.[92]

2. The Civil War Brings Hard Times to Arkansas Post

In the period 1850-1860, the Mortons struggled in vain to pay off the debts with which the Notrebe estate had been saddled. To do so, Captain Morton periodically mortgaged the real estate, next year's cotton crop, and the slaves. Moreover, as the years passed, Morton found more and more of his time engrossed by his banking interests in Little Rock.

The secession of Arkansas in May 1861 and the Civil War cost the Mortons dearly. In the autumn of 1862

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92. Seventh Census, Schedule 4, Arkansas Township, Arkansas County, County Clerk's Office, DeWitt, Ark. The Mortons at this time listed their ages at 29 and 16. Mrs. Morton, who had been a child bride, had already given birth to a daughter, Francine.

Confederate troops were ordered to the area, and construction started on a bastioned earthen fort. This activity further disrupted the economic life of the community. Morton slaves were impressed to work on the fortifications and their fields and fences suffered. In January 1863 a powerful Union army led by Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand and gunboats commanded by R. A. David D. Porter came. There was a battle. The supporting Confederate force was defeated, and along with the fort, captured. In the marching and fighting, the Morton property suffered. Their plantation was used by the Union army as its place of debarkation; their property in the village was in the beaten zone, where projectiles from Union cannon that missed their mark struck and exploded. The two-story brick building which had housed the Arkansas Post Branch of the Bank of Arkansas, although taken over by Confederates as a hospital, was destroyed. As this building was adjacent to the family home, store, and cotton gin, these structures, along with others nearby, must have been damaged or destroyed in the fighting on January 10 and 11, and the brief ensuing occupation of the area.[93]

Mrs. Morton by this time had moved to Little Rock. There she was living with her children, when Federal forces occupied the city in September 1863. She made a display of her Confederate sympathies, for which she was called to account by Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Reynolds.[94]

3. The Reconstruction Years

Peace returned to Arkansas in the late spring of 1865. The Mortons, like many of their class who had rallied to the Southern cause, were broke. Their slaves had been emancipated, and their plantation and property at Arkansas Post destroyed or damaged. The Reconstruction Period was

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93. John W. Walker, Excavation of the Arkansas Post Branch of the Bank of the State of Arkansas (Washington, 1971), pp. 20-24; E. C. Bearss, "The Battle of Post of Arkansas," The Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XVIII (Autumn 1959), 237-79.

94. Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas, pp. 82-83. Albert Pike recalled in 1887 that Mrs. Morton "is well remembered in Little Rock in connection with the harsh and unmanly treatment which she and her little children suffered at the hands of General Reynolds during the Federal occupation of the city."

especially difficult in Arkansas Township. Crops failed in 1866, and many of the planters and farmers were unable to pay their taxes. Land had to be forfeited. At the April 1867 term of the County Court, it was ordered that $5,000 be appropriated to purchase corn "for the use of those in need who will execute a deed of trust, or mortgage, on real estate, or a sufficient amount of personal property to secure the payment for the amount of corn received by them."

The clerk of the court was authorized upon the posting of a bond of $10,000 by John G. Quertermous to issue $2,000 of the appropriation and deliver it to Quertermous, and that he proceed to negotiate for the purchase of as much corn as he could buy with that amount of scrip. Quertermous was to have 300 bushels of the corn purchased shipped to Arkansas Post and the rest to Crockett's Bluff.

Commissioner Quertermous sold the scrip to James H. Lucus, a St. Louis banker and former resident of Arkansas Post. After Lucus had provided Quertermous with the means to purchase the corn, he learned from the commissioner that "certain of the older residents were still living, and that they and their neighbors generally were impoverished" by the war. Lucus accordingly ordered a shipment of $300 worth of supplies to be forwarded to Arkansas, to be billed to his account. In addition, he donated a large percentage of the county scrip purchased from Quertermous to Mrs. Morton. These acts of kindness by Lucus were prompted by recollections of the "kindness and liberality" shown him in the 1820s and 30s by the people of Arkansas County and especially by Mrs. Morton's grandfather, Colonel Notrebe.[95]

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95. William H. Halli Burton, "Reconstruction in Arkansas County," Publications of the Arkansas Historical Association (Fayetteville, 1908), II, 481-82.

III. THE SITE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A. A Visit to the Post in 1900

1. The Correspondent Meets Madame Forreste

In December 1900 a correspondent for the Arkansas Gazette wrote of his visit to Arkansas Post. Stopping to chat with Madame Madeline Forreste, he was introduced to Mrs. Thomas Farrelly, a widow. Her late husband had been a nephew of Terence Farrelly. The correspondent listened attentively as the two ladies discussed long-dead residents of the area--the Notrebes, father, wife, sons, and daughter; the Desruisseau, one of whose daughters married James H. Lucus; the Bogys; the Barraques; the Bonnes; the Imbeaus; the Vaugines; and the Stillwells.

When the reporter asked what had happened to these families, members of whom were residing at Arkansas Post before the organization of the Territory, Madame Forreste exclaimed, they are all gone, like the town "gone in the river." Madame Forreste explained that she and the Widow Farrelly were probably the only inhabitants of Arkansas County alive who had been living in the region in 1819.[1]

2. The Correspondent Reconnoiters the Post

a. Erosion

On November 20 the correspondent explored the site of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Post. He found much of the presumed site of the village had eroded into the Arkansas. "There was not a single house standing, and no ruins of any proportions.

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1. Arkansas Gazette, Dec. 2, 1900. Madame Forreste was the daughter of Jean Jordellas and Cecile Julien. Her father's people had come over to Louisiana with the Le Moyne brothers, while her mother's ancestors had descended the Mississippi from New France. Madame Forreste had been born and had spent her childhood on her father's farm at the west end of South Bend. Terence Farrelly had settled at Arkansas Post in 1818. Subsequently, he married the Widow Moseley and moved onto her plantation. At the turn of the century, his descendants still owned the plantation, located several miles northwest of Arkansas Post.

Not a vestige of the French or Spanish town as seen by Notrebe, Phillips, and Harold and Joe Stillwell of the older days." Nor were there any structures dating to the territorial period.[2]

In the 81 years that had passed since 1819 when William Woodruff established the Arkansas Gazette at the Post, he wrote, "the caving river bank ... has carried the river over and past the original town site for a distance of more than a mile."[3]

It is apparent from this statement that the correspondent was not familiar with the location of the village in the last years of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth century. An examination of the Arkansas County Deed Books demonstrates that the Arkansas River, as its channel moved northward, claimed much of the ground on which the Towns of Rome and Arkansas were platted, but very little of the acreage on which the village of Arkansas Post was located. The Towns of Rome and Arkansas were platted in the period when Arkansas Post was the territorial capital. As the capital was moved to Little Rock in 1821, these towns never developed and were speculative in nature. Most of the lots had no improvements, and after the territorial government was moved, they were bought and sold for taxes.

Not being acquainted with information found in the Arkansas County Deed Books, the correspondent informed his readers, about 20 acres, more or less, of the village site

> is still unencroached upon by the river. The trend of the caving bank being to the east and north, what remains is rendered bare and worthless by the washing of storm water which has cut it into gullies, ridges, and flats, which resemble the desolate Colorado Canyon country in miniature.

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2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

When he searched for the Civil War earthworks, he found the northwest corner of the bastioned work defended by the Confederates in January 1863. This was located about one-fourth mile northeast of the site of the village. The rest of the fort had caved into the river. In the woods and fields west of the fort, he was able to trace the line of rifle-pits held by the Confederates on January 11, 1863.[4]

The village cemetery, he was told by Madame Forreste, had "long since gone into the river, and the remains of the old French and Spanish settlers have been washed down by the current of the Arkansas and Mississippi rivers." He was told that the bodies of United States soldiers killed in the battle of Post of Arkansas had been removed to the National Cemetery at Little Rock in the late 1860s. He visited the Confederate graves and found them "almost obliterated by time."[5]

b. Ruins

Southeast of the eroded area on the point, the correspondent saw the ruins of the Arkansas State Bank, which had "stood as late as 1863, several blocks north of the steamboat landing." Here he found a few wheelbarrow loads of brickbats. Local inhabitants told the newspaperman that in January 1863 Union gunboats had shelled the village. As the bank was the most conspicious landmark, the bluejackets had concentrated on it and knocked it "hither and yon!" In the period between January 11 when the Confederates surrendered and the 16th when Union forces evacuated the area, the Yankees, he was told, had "destroyed by fire, wantonly, many homes of respectable appearance in the town and country adjacent for a distance of several miles."[6]

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4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

c. The 1900 Village

In 1900 the village, which had a population of more than 100, was north of the historic site. There were two stores, with Henry Jones' giving a prosperous appearance and having well-stocked shelves. The adjacent country side on the Grand Prairie was fertile and good crops were grown. If the caving bank of the Arkansas could be stabilized and a good landing constructed, the correspondent believed, Arkansas Post could be revived.[7]

B. Fletcher Chenault's 1926 Visit

1. He Explores the Area

a. The Site of the Arkansas State Bank

Twenty-six years later, in the autumn of 1926, Fletcher Chenault motored down from Little Rock to Arkansas Post. Impressed with the significance of the area and distressed by what he saw, Chenault authored a feature story which appeared in the November 11 edition of the Arkansas Gazette. He informed his readers that while Arkansas Post still existed, the Post of "today is a modern settlement near the old fort and in no wise related to it." As he strolled about the area, he found, among the briers and old fields "mounds of broken and scattered brick." These, his guide informed him, marked the sites of the first territorial capitol and the Arkansas State Bank. These were the only sites that could be identified, and they, too, Chenault wrote, "will disappear unless the ruins are marked."[8]

b. Notrebe's Cistern and Well

Nearby Chenault found a cistern walled with brick, while not far off was a deep well also lined with brick.

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7. Ibid.

8. Fletcher Chenault, "Arkansas Post is Neglected Shrine," Arkansas Gazette, Nov. 11, 1926. The guide was mistaken, because the first territorial capitol (Montgomery's Tavern) was a frame structure. The brick remains seen were at the site of the State Bank.

Efforts to memorialize the site were limited to the erection of a stone tablet by the Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce, near the site of the first territorial capitol.[9]

c. The Confederate Rifle-Pits

When he called on L. S. Jones, the Indiana native and Republican who had been postmaster at the Post for 29 years, Chenault was disappointed to learn that Jones had arranged to level part of the Rebel rifle-pits to enlarge his garden. To accomplish this task, Jones had hired an old black, who prior to emancipation had been a slave on Col. James H. Moore's plantation. As the black attacked the breastworks with a spade, he exclaimed, "I neveah figgered when I holp put up 'ese breasworks I'd tear 'em down again to mek a gard'n for a Yankee."[10]

C. The Establishment of Arkansas Post State Park

1. Chenault Makes a Proposal

Zeroing on the problem of preservation of the area, Chenault informed his readers that for more than 100 years the United States government had held title to a 147-acre reservation at the village site. Since the 1819 survey much of the reservation had eroded into the river, but in the years following 1900 the Arkansas had shifted its course to the south, and its former channel was now grown up in cottonwoods and briars and was subject to flooding during periods of high water. A triangular tract of high ground remained, and as this was the site of the bank and capitol, Chenault suggested that it be deeded to the state as a park.[11]

2. The Legislature Acts

Representative Ballard Deane of Arkansas County was one of those who read Chenault's article in the Gazette, and he

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9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Chenault, "Arkansas Post is Neglected Shrine," Arkansas Gazette, Nov. 11, 1926.

determined to take action. In 1929 Deane introduced a bill into the Arkansas General Assembly to create an Arkansas Post State Park Commission. The 12-member Commission would be authorized to "accept lands, money or other things of value" to be held in the name of the Arkansas Post State Park Commission. The Commission would be authorized to spend such money as "may come into its hands for the building, rebuilding, maintenance, repair, labor, tools and materials toward the end that this Park may reflect credit on the State of Arkansas." Members of the Commission were to receive no salary or any financial return for services rendered.

The purpose of the park was declared to be the preservation and beautification of this "historic spot for future generations, thereby promoting health and pleasure, providing a recreation place, resort and play ground for the people" of Arkansas and to attract visitors and tourists to the State.

The legislation was enacted by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Harvey Parnell on February 27, 1929.[12]

3. The First Meeting of the Commission

a. The Post of Arkansas Reservation

Members of the Commission having been appointed, it held its first meeting on February 11, 1930, in the office of the Arkansas History Commission. Eight members were in attendance, in addition to Representative Deane and F. M. Quertermous, Arkansas County Surveyor. When the session was called to order. J. W. Burnett of DeWitt was elected president and Dallas T. Herndon of Little Rock secretary.[13]

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12. Acts of Arkansas, Act 57, 1929.

13. Minutes of Feb. 11, 1930, Meeting of Arkansas Post Park Commission, files Arkansas History Commission. Members in attendance besides Burnett and Herndon were: Mesdames C. J. Brain, Charles H. Miller, W. W. Lowe, and Maude B. Lewis, Miss Janie Woodruff, and Fletcher Chenault. Members not in attendance were: Mesdames J. F. Weinman, M. F. Sigmon, and J. L. Rosencrantz, and Mr. S. G. Catlett.

The first item taken up was the question of perfecting title to the site. United States Representative D. D. Glover had been contacted to see if he could determine ownership of the 147 acres at the Post, which it was reported had been confirmed by the United States as the site for Post of Arkansas. If title to this acreage was still vested in the United States, the Commission would petition the government for a donation of the subject acreage as a site for a public park. Members were told that F. J. Quandt claimed part of the subject acreage, and was willing to deed his claim of 40 acres to the Commission, as soon as it was organized and was ready to receive such a gift.

A committee was named by Chairman Burnett to pursue the matter.[14]

Representative Glover on contacting the Department of the Interior learned that on June 13, 1812, Congress had enacted legislation, providing that

> the rights, titles and claims, to town or village lots, outlots, common-field lots and commons in, adjoining and belonging to the several towns or villages of ... Arkansas, ... which lots have been inhabited, cultivated, or possessed, prior to the twentieth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and three, shall be and the same are hereby confirmed to the inhabitants of the respective towns or villages aforesaid, according to their several right or rights in common thereto. And it shall be the duty of the principal deputy surveyor for the said Territory as soon as may be, to survey, or cause to be surveyed and marked ... the out-boundary lines of the said several towns or villages so as to include the out-lots, common-field lots and commons, thereto respectively belonging.[15]

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14. Ibid.

15. Wilbur to Glover, Feb. 12, 1930, files Arkansas History Commission. Ray Lyman Wilbur was Secretary of the Interior in 1930.

Section 2 of the Act of June 13, 1812, reserved for the support of schools "all town or village lots, out-lots, or common-field lots, included in such surveys, which are not rightfully owned or claimed by any private individuals, or held as commons," provided the land so reserved did not exceed one-twentieth part of the whole lands included in the general survey.[16]

Congress on May 26, 1824, enacted additional legislation bearing on the subject. It was provided that individual owners or claimants "whose claims were confirmed by the Act of June 13, 1812, were to furnish within 18 months proof of their claims before the recorder of land titles so as to enable the Surveyor-General to distinguish the private from the vacant lots." Moreover, it was enacted that after the expiration of the allotted 18 months, the Surveyor-General "should survey, designate or set apart to the towns or villages, for the support of schools," the vacant lots, out-lots, and common-field lots not to exceed more than "one-twentieth part of the whole lands included in the general survey."[17]

An examination of the pertinent records by Interior Department personnel indicated that neither Congress, officials of the General Land Office, nor the landowners had taken any action toward the "settlement of the claims to the land in question." But by the Act of January 27, 1831, "the United States relinquished all title to all the lands within the exterior limits of all the ten other towns and villages," enumerated with Arkansas Post in the Act of June 13, 1812.[18]

Inasmuch as no action had been taken toward segregation of the lots which had been confirmed by the Act of June 13, 1812, from the vacant lots and lots reserved for the support of schools, Secretary of the

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16. Ibid. Surveys made of the area in the period 1816-20 showed only the out-boundary lines of Post of Arkansas. In addition, they failed to give the acreage involved.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur held that title to the Reservation or any "particular part thereof cannot be determined until evidence is furnished to show what lands had been inhabitated, cultivated or possessed prior to December 20, 1803."[19]

There were no plats showing property lines inside the Reservation, so no one was prepared to challenge the claim Fred Quandt had established in 1927 to the 140-acre Post of Arkansas Reservation. Quandt accordingly on June 17, 1930, donated to the Arkansas Post Park Commission, for one dollar, 20 acres at the northwest corner of the Reservation.[20]

To celebrate transfer of the 20 acres, a program featuring an "old-fashioned picnic" was held under the great oaks at the park entrance on June 17. More than 500 were in attendance and applauded as Mr. and Mrs. Fred Quandt presented the deed to the 20-acre tract to President Burnett.[21] After listening to a number of speeches, patriotic songs, and eating, members of the Commission in attendance walked across "the clovered field of the old settlement past memorials placed by the Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce and Daughters of 1812." The former had been positioned in memory of the first settlers and to commemorate the Civil War battle and the latter to honor Arkansas' 93d anniversary of statehood.

As the visitors "peered through a great variety of trees, shrubs and vines which form a background to [these] memorials," they saw the "old cistern." They then watched as Surveyor Quertermous marked the lines of the Quandt donation, and presented members of the Commission with the map of Arkansas Post in 1829, which he had compiled.[22]

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19. Ibid.

20. Arkansas County Deed Book 26, p. 206.

21. Maude B. Lewis, "Deed is Given to Ark. Post Park," files Arkansas History Commission. The Reverend Mr. Harrell gave the invocation; C. A. Jacobus, principal of the Gillett High School, welcomed the audience; Mrs. Maude Lewis made the response and read two of her poems; Arkansas County Superintendent of Schools J. M. Henderson, Representative Ballard Deane, Miss Hazel Cline of Shreveport, and Mesdames J. L. Rosencrantz and C. J. Brain all made speeches.

22. Ibid.

D. Park Development, 1931

1. Money is Voted and Plans Made

a. The Commission Secures the Services of a Landscape Architect

The Act creating the Arkansas Post Park Commission had not carried an appropriation. Expectations that the Commission would be able to develop the area with donated funds were quickly dashed, when fund-raising projects foundered. Organizations and individuals were unwilling to contribute money until land was acquired and a master plan for development prepared.

By December 1930 the Quandt tract had been accepted by the Commission, and President Burnett contacted P. C. Howson, a Pine Bluff landscape architect. On December 29 Burnett, Howson, and Quertermous visited the site and located boundary lines of the Quandt donation. Burnett asked Howson to prepare a site plan and estimates for development of the area for presentation to the Commission at the January 10, 1931, meeting to be held in Little Rock. As the Commission had no funds, Howson's work would have to be gratis until an appropriation was secured. Howson was agreeable.[23]

b. The Arkansas General Assembly Appropriates $5,000

At the meeting of the commissioners at Mrs. J. F. Weinman's home in Little Rock, on January 10, Howson submitted his plans and estimates. Ways and means of financing the project were discussed, and it was agreed to have Representative Ballard Deane introduced legislation calling for an appropriation of $5,000 to beautify Arkansas Post State Park. Deane, the father of the Park, was agreeable.

On Friday, February 20, 1931, the Arkansas Senate voted favorably on Representative Deane's bill,

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23. Annual Report of Work Accomplished at Arkansas Post State Park, 1931, files Arkansas History Commission.

previously passed by the House, appropriating $5,000 for development of Arkansas Post State Park. Even before Governor Parnell signed Dean's bill into law, work was commenced on the park, in the first week of March, when 35 men who had been receiving relief from the Red Cross at Gillett and DeWitt reported to Chairman Burnett. Working under direction of Landscape Architect Howson, the men were turned to clearing the Quandt tract of underbrush and old fences. Care was exercised to insure that no native shrubs or trees were disturbed.[24]

c. Mrs. Lowe Makes an Announcement

When contacted by the press, Mrs. W. W. Lowe of Gillett, a member of the Commission, stated that one of the first improvements scheduled would be construction of a custodian's lodge of "native timbers of rugged type." She also reported that the United Daughters of the Confederacy planned to erect a memorial in the park to honor Confederate soldiers who fought at Arkansas Post in January 1863, while the Commission planned a "gradual improvement program, including driveways, lawns, markers, and memorials." The county court would be urged to improve the road connecting Gillett with the Park.[25]

2. The April 7, 1931, Meeting of the Commission

On April 7 the Commission met in Little Rock and made a number of important development decisions, which it hoped would transform Arkansas Post within a few years into a "mecca" for tourists from all parts of the nation. A committee of five Commission members, all residents of Arkansas

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24. Grand Prairie Leader, Feb. 26 and March 12, 1931. Howson's contract with the Commission provided that he was to be paid ten per cent of the cost of labor and materials, plus mileage between his home in Pine Bluff and Arkansas Post. Ibid., April 9, 1931.

25. Ibid., March 12, 1931. At the February 1930 meeting of the Commission, it was observed that the road from Arkansas Post to the main highway near Gillett needed improvement. A committee was appointed to contact the State Highway Department and see if that agency could be prevailed upon to take action to improve this situation. The committee, however, failed in its goal. Minutes of Feb. 11, 1930, Meeting of Arkansas Post Park Commission, files Arkansas History Commission.

County, was designated a Building Committee and would be in charge of this activity.[26]

County Surveyor Quertermous reported that he had completed his survey of the Quandt tract, and there were a number of jagged lines cutting into the state land. It was determined by the Commission to make an effort to "acquire land by gift or purchase to straighten out the lines and make the park a triangle, with the old river as the base." To do this, it was agreed to allocate $150 to purchase not more than 15 acres at a price not to exceed $10 per acre.[27]

Landscape Architect Howson told the Commission of his proposal for an oval driveway, within which would be positioned historical markers locating the first territorial capitol, the Bank of Arkansas, and the site where Woodruff published the first edition of the Arkansas Gazette. Outside the oval, De Tonty's post was to be restored--with a log palisade enclosing log cabins sheltering the caretaker's house, etc. Provision would also be made for picnic grounds. An effort would be made to acquire the Scull Cemetery one mile north of the Post, in which Henry Conway was presumed to be buried. The cemetery would be "improved and the graves" landscaped.[28]

3. The April 15 and 29 Meetings of the Building Committee

At the April 15 meeting of the Building Committee, held in DeWitt, Landscape Architect Howson signed his contract to supervise construction at the site, and was authorized to commence work as soon as practicable. Bids for fencing materials having been authorized, the contract on April 29 was awarded to the low bidder, Central Hardware of Gillett.[29]

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26. Grand Prairie Leader, April 9, 1931; Minutes of April 7, 1931, Meeting of Arkansas Post Park Commission, files Arkansas History Commission. The $5,000 appropriated for Park development had been deposited in the two DeWitt banks, and the Finance Committee given authority to draw on these funds for the scheduled improvements. Members of the Building Committee were: W. J. Burnett, and Mesdames W. W. Love, George C. Lewis, C. J. Brain, and J. L. Rosencrantz.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. The Building Committee was admonished to proceed "cautiously with the money on hand to obtain as many permanent improvements as possible with the appropriation."

29. Annual Report of Work Accomplished at Arkansas Post State Park, 1931, files Arkansas History Commission.

4. Construction in 1931

During the period from May 11, 1931, when work was begun until October 31, 1931, when Landscape Architect Howson, the $5,000 appropriation exhausted, discontinued work and laid off his crew, a number of projects were undertaken and completed.

a. Land Acquisition

The Commission purchased from Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Place of Gillett a 11.25-acre tract, while L. C. Jones of Arkansas Post donated 9.75 acres. With the Place and Jones tracts, the area of the Park was increased to about 40 acres. On the Jones tract was a majestic grove of oaks.[30]

b. Fencing

Howson, after clearing a right-of-way, enclosed the Park with a fence. Steel posts, set in concrete, were erected, and a 48-inch woven wire fence, with two strands of barbed wire on top, strung.[31]

c. Caretaker's Lodge

By the last week of June, the Commission reported that considerable progress had been made on the caretaker's lodge. The structure, which consisted of two 18 x 18-foot rooms, a 12 x 18-foot breeze way, and two 12 x 18-foot porches, was constructed of logs salvaged from the Refeld-Hindman House. Workmen had to hew a number of logs to replace those that had rotted. The structure was roofed with cypress shingles, chinked, and daubed. Floors were laid, doors, windows, and ceiling put in, and chimneys built. In September a crew was turned to whitewashing the lodge, inside and out, oiling the porch floors, and painting the window sashes, doors, and casing.

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30. Ibid.; Grand Prairie Leader, June 25, 1931.

31. Ibid. Cattle guards were placed at the Park entrance.

The relocation and restoration of the Refeld-Hindman House struck a responsive chord with the community, as the lodge was representative of buildings which "formed so important a part in the history of the region." It was the Commission's desire to preserve as "a historical memorial the style of architecture that these buildings represented to be suggestive also of the romance of the early history of the state."[32]

d. Pot Hunting and Salvage at the Arkansas State Bank

Workmen partially excavated the site of the Arkansas State Bank, where they uncovered a number of objects to be placed in the Park museum. A number of the best bricks salvaged were cleaned and earmarked for use in building two pillars at the north entrance to the Park. Others were utilized in construction of walkways and an outdoor oven.[33]

e. Restoration of Cistern and Well

In July 1931 a brick mason was put to work restoring the historic cistern and well. Brickbats salvaged from the Arkansas State Bank were used. Shed-like shelters were erected to protect these historic structures from the elements.[34]

f. Picnic Facilities

Construction of camping facilities progressed rapidly. Seven concrete tables were poured; a well drilled; a pump installed; a concrete well platform laid; and a rustic bridge and restrooms built. The

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32. Ibid. The Refeld-Hindman House was located on the Quandt property. Mrs. C. J. Brain donated a mantel for one of the lodge fireplaces. Telephone conversation, Mrs. Thelma Mattmiller with Bearss, June 17, 1971. Mrs. Mattmiller, a knowledgeable local historian and curator of the Arkansas County Museum, is a gold mine of information on the Refeld-Hindman House.

33. Annual Report of Work Accomplished at APSP, 1931. At this time the Commission mistakenly believed that the rubble of the Arkansas State Bank was at the site of the first territorial capitol--Montgomery's Tavern. The bricks were in a "wonderful state of preservation, many of them being almost as perfect as when they were moulded."

34. Ibid.

Business Men's League of Gillett donated 25 benches to the Park. Two outdoor ovens for campers were constructed.[35]

g. Dam and Pond

In July, Howson put a crew to work removing trees and stumps from the ravines that criss-crossed the Park between the site of the Arkansas State Bank and the Caretaker's Lodge. A survey showed that 1,649 cubic yards of earth wereneeded to dam the gully into which the ravines drained. The dam and concrete spillway were completed in August and sodded with Bermuda. When filled, the pond, which was stocked with game fish, covered seven acres. Peninsulas extending out into the pond were landscaped.[36]

h. The "Lady of the Lake"

The statue of justice which had formerly stood atop the cupola of the Arkansas County Courthouse in DeWitt was positioned on a concrete base, near the northeastern edge of the pond. At the same time, the memorial stone was set.[37]

i. Roads

Howson in July surveyed and staked out the road system to be established in the Park, and in August they were rough graded. Cedar pilings were put in across the dam spillway to be bridged by the road. Next a concrete curb was staked, located, and poured around the "historical circle."[38]

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35. Ibid. The benches had been built locally by one of the members and were neat and substantial. Additional benches could be built and delivered to the Park for $5 each. The picnic area was enclosed with cedar posts to prevent motorists from driving onto the grounds.

36. Many local people believed, incorrectly, that the ravines and gullies had resulted from the erosion of the Civil War fortifications.

37. Annual Report of Work Accomplished at Arkansas Post State Park, 1931, files Arkansas History Commission.

38. Ibid.

j. Plantings

The Conservation Chairman had made arrangements with the state to secure many perennials to be set out under Landscape Architect Howson's direction in the autumn. With these he would be able to make the Park a "real floral treat." These would enhance the many "magnificent trees, vines, and shrubs" that had "lived uncared for all these years."

In the period November 25-December 6, Howson and several helpers set out a number of evergreens, shrubs, and trees.[39]

k. County-Wide Community Sing

On Sunday, August 16, about 500 local people converged on the Park, for a county-wide community sing, sponsored by the Gillett Home Demonstration Club. The program was well arranged and "consisted of the state song, a group of three each of patriotic, sacred, southern, and popular songs." At 5 p.m. a basket supper was served.[40]

E. Plans for 1932

Although the $5,000 appropriated by the Arkansas General Assembly for development of the area had been spent, the Commission proposed a number of improvements for 1932. Among these were: (a) acquisition of eight additional acres on the southwest side of the Park; (b) a United Daughters of the Confederacy Memorial Circle; (c) a Memorial Garden to honor Arkansas authors and composers; (d) get the State Highway Department to grade and gravel

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39. Ibid.; Grand Prairie Leader, June 25, 1931. These plantings included: 8 ligustrum lucidum, 30 pomegranates, 38 spirea reevesiana, 36 spirea van houtti, 16 spirea thunbergi, 10 spirea a waterer, 39 deutzia, 36 weiglia, 59 assorted althia, 78 climbing roses, 10 forsythia, 30 crepe myrtle, 30 stuart pecan, 10 weeping willow, 18 tulip poplars, 20 chinese elms, 20 euonymus, 32 amur river privet (sheared), 120 amur river privet, 8 bittersweet, 2 bakers astor vitae, 12 bonita arbor vitae, 8 excelas arbor vitae, and 2 lombardy poplars.

40. Grand Prairie Leader, Aug. 20, 1931. The president of the Home Demonstration Club was Mrs. W. C. Butcher.

the road from Highway #1 to the Park entrance; (e) secure state funds for the reconstruction of the Tonty fort; (f) secure through the French ambassador a monument to Tonty; (g) to memorialize early residents of the area with markers to be erected around the "historical circle"; (h) regrade and gravel the park roads; (i) to secure funds from the owners of the Arkansas Gazette to reconstruct the first home of the Gazette and to equip it with a period press; and (k) secure a Federal appropriation to commemorate the Revolutionary and Civil War battles at Arkansas Post.[41]

With the nation in the depths of a world-wide depression, the Commission was unable to get additional funds from the State for development of Arkansas Post State Park. Efforts by the Arkansas County Women's Clubs to raise funds fell far short of their goals. United States Representative Glover also failed the Commission. On January 6, 1932, at the request of the Commission, he introduced H.R. 7113, authorizing the "erection of a marker suitably marking" the sites of the battles of Arkansas Post. Glover's bill directed the Secretary of War to "cause to be erected" in the state park at the Post "a suitable marker ... at a cost not to exceed $5,000."

H.R. 7113 was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, where it was pigeon-holed.[42]

F. The State Park Board Takes Charge

Donated money was not sufficient to fund any new development at the Park. Efforts to get the owners of the Arkansas Gazette to reconstruct Woodruff's print shop and France to erect a memorial to Tonty likewise failed. By 1934 members of the Commission were ready to give up. On July 19 the group met in Little Rock to discuss the bleak financial situation. President Burnett announced that the purpose of the meeting was to decide whether to petition "the State Park Board to take over control of and to maintain" the Park. The Commission, he reminded the members, was without funds, and the only hope was the State Park Commission.

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41. Annual Report of Work Accomplished at Arkansas Post, 1931 files Arkansas History Commission.

42. 72d Congress, 1st Session, H.R. 7113; Congressional Record, Vol. 75, Pt. 2, 72d Congress, 1st Session.

If the State Park Commission had administrative responsibility for the area, it might be possible to secure Federal money for improvements. After some discussion, it was agreed to petition the Board to assume control under terms and provisions of Section 8 of Act 57 of the Acts of the Arkansas General Assembly for 1929.[43]

At its regular meeting, the Arkansas State Park Board on January 23, 1935, took up the petition and voted to assume responsibility for Arkansas Post State Park.[44]

In 1935 a detachment from the Civilian Conservation Corps was employed in the area by the State Park Board and effected a number of improvements. Among these were improvements in the existing picnic grounds, and the addition of camp sites, foot trails, a golf course, tennis courts, and baseball diamonds. The cost of these improvements was placed at $5,000.[45]

G. Halliburton's 1939 Visit to the Park

1. The Visitor Center

In January 1939 W. H. Halliburton visited Arkansas Post State Park. The last eight miles of the road leading southward from DeWitt to the Park were gravel. As he motored through the village, he saw that the houses and outbuildings were aged and needed a coat of paint. At the entrance to the Park, he drove past two brick pillars and parked in front of the caretaker's lodge, built of squared cypress logs. Its roof was hand-riven cypress shingles. Within the building was a museum, housing artifacts "common to pioneer housekeeping, hunting, and farming," along with battlefield relics. One of the more interesting objects was

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43. Minutes of July 19, 1934, Meeting, Arkansas Post State Park Commission, files Arkansas History Commission.

44. Amsler to Burnett, Jan. 26, 1935, Arkansas Post State Park Commission, files Arkansas History Commission.

45. Herndon to W. R. Hogan, Aug. 22, 1935; Report of Arkansas State Park Commission, 1936, files Arkansas History Commission. Hogan had written on August 22 that Arkansas Post State Park had been designated for CCC development.

the rusted iron door from the vault of the Arkansas State Bank.[46]

2. The "Lady of the Lake"

The pond, he found, was irregularly-shaped, with "here and there a peninsula jutting toward the middle, many with enjoyable trees." On the opposite side of the lake from the diving tower, was a statue of a woman in classic Greek garb, positioned on a stone base. One hand was uplifted, as in benediction. She was referred to by local residents as the "Lady of the Lake." The figure once known as the statue of justice, had originally been positioned on the cupola of the Arkansas County Courthouse at DeWitt, which was razed in 1931.[47]

H. Archeology at Arkansas Post in 1966 and 1968

In 1960 Arkansas Post was established by Congress as a National Memorial. With the objective of locating building sites from the main period of American occupation, 1804-63, Rex L. Wilson, National Park Service archeologist, conducted a series of limited archeological tests at Arkansas Post National Memorial in 1966. Four structures of this period were located. Wilson tentatively identified these as: (1) Frederic Notrebe's Cotton Gin, (2) Frederic Notrebe's Residence and Store, (3) Frederic Notrebe's Warehouse, and (4) the Arkansas Post branch of the Bank of the State of Arkansas. However, later research indicates that only the latter was correctly identified, although the other three were, as Wilson suggested, the property of Notrebe.

In 1968, John W. Walker, also a National Park Service archeologist, completed excavation of the Bank, a 30'8" by 60'8" structure, which was built of brick with cut stone trim and roofed with metal shingles. His excavation recovered artifactual evidence, which, in combination with historical information, indicates that the building was used as a hospital by the Confederate Army in 1862-63 and that it was destroyed by Union artillery during the battle which occurred at the Post of Arkansas on January 11, 1863.[48]

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46. W. H. Halliburton, "An Arkansan Visits Arkansas Post," Arkansas Gazette, Jan. 22, 1939.

47. Ibid. The scales of justice had been torn from the statue's upraised hand many years before by a tornado.

48. Summary statement prepared by Archeologist Walker for the author, May 27, 1971.

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PLATE I

Map of Fort at Post of Arkansas, 1807, National Archives, RG 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Unregistered Letters Received. This fort was built by the Spanish in the late Eighteenth Century.

Town of Arkansas

Bayou

Arkansas River

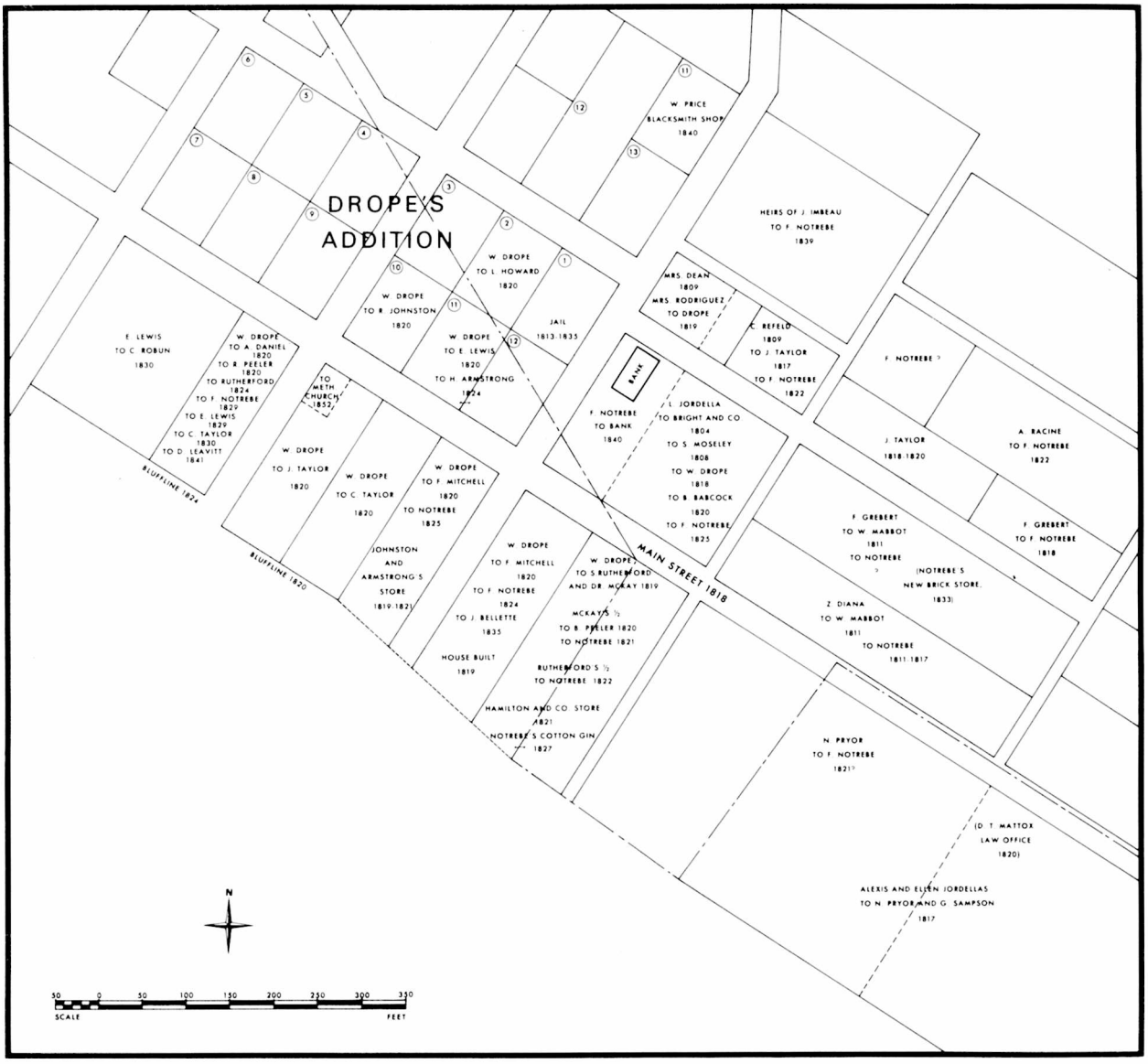
100 yards

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PLATE II

Provisional Plan of Arkansas Post 1819-1840, based on Historical Data Compiled by E. C. Bearss and Archeological Data Compiled by J. Walker.



PROVISIONAL

PLAN OF ARKANSAS POST 1819-1840

BASED ON

HISTORICAL DATA COMPILED BY E. BEARSS

AND

ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA COMPILED BY J. WALKER .

PLATE II