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# *Preserve Our Past*

## *2014 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Winners*

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### **What is the Preserve Our Past Invitational?**

The 23rd annual *Preserve Our Past Art and Essay Invitational* celebrates National Historic Preservation Month and Arkansas Heritage Month. The purpose of the invitational is to teach students about local and state history, and to foster an interest in preserving historic places. Winning entries are exhibited at Department of Arkansas Heritage museums in Little Rock. In 2014, student work will be exhibited at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center during May. The contest is open to all Arkansas 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Submissions must relate to a historic Arkansas property that is 50 years old or older.

The 2014 contest attracted 326 entries from 19 schools across Arkansas. Winning entries will be on display at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center museum from May 2 to June 4.

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## **ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Little Rock, AR  
72201

PHONE: (501) 324-9880

E-MAIL:

[educationoutreach@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:educationoutreach@arkansasheritage.org)

Visit our website at

[www.ArkansasPreservation.org](http://www.ArkansasPreservation.org)

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# This Old House

By Tori Pack, Atkins Middle School, First Place

I've guided a lot of trains through the wonderful, quiet little town of Atkins over the last 143 years. For you see, I am the railroad tracks. I was here before the trains or the town itself because years ago, men had a vision and my tracks were placed here. At first, I thought I might be lonely, but as soon as the railroad tracks were laid, the town started coming together. I've seen stores, businesses, and houses spring up all around me. Also, I've seen many of those things, including a pickle plant, slowly disappear. Ecclesiastes says, "There is an appointed time for everything. A time to give birth and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted; a time to tear down and a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh." I must say I have seen it all, but I would like to share with you a story of one house in particular that stands right to the south of where I lie. This house has seen the seasons of life too, and even experienced them.

In 1871, a man named Colonel Benjamin Taylor Embry built the first home in Atkins, a beautiful house surrounded by oak trees. The Colonel built this house for his son, Aylette Taylor Embry, and his bride. In 1907, Dr. Montgomery purchased the property. He was one of the best known physicians in this part of the state. He added a second story to the home in 1914 for his wife and six daughters. Sadly, Dr. Montgomery died at his home of a heart attack in 1934. After a long illness, Mrs. Montgomery died in 1951. Mrs. Lucille Dowdell, one of his daughters, occupied the house until she died in 1981. After that another daughter owned the residence. The house is still known as the Dr. W.A. Montgomery house. In 1994, the house was purchased by the present owner, Mrs. Betsy Hays. The house was in need of much repair by this time. Mrs. Hays and her husband spent much time and energy extensively restoring and remodeling this old house. Because of their love for this house, they did most of the work themselves such as refinishing the woodwork.

The reason this old railroad track has chosen to share the story of this old house is because I have seen firsthand the wonderful people who have lived there. Like I said before, I have seen many buildings come and go but this special house is still standing just as beautiful as ever. If a house could feel love, I think this one would. As you can see, this old house holds many memories: memories from a Colonel of the Civil War and his son, then a physician and his family, and now a school teacher. They have made it the beautiful home it is today; filled with love and precious memories. "Memories are a way of holding on to the things you love, the things you are and the things you never want to lose."

# A Little House, A Big Story

**Kaelyn Pearson, Pottsville Junior High, Second Place**

Segregation was a common practice in the 1900s. African Americans didn't always have the same freedoms and equality as they do today. A simple activity like traveling from town to town was an extremely complicated task. They constantly worried about where they would stay the night because many motels wouldn't accept them. "According to the 1949 edition of The Negro Motorist Green Book, the Latimore Tourist Home was the only known overnight accommodations for African-Americans between Little Rock and Fort Smith." This house opened to the public in the 1940's and functioned until the 1970's. It provided shelter for travelers that happened to be going through Russellville, no matter the skin color.

The owner of one of these residences obtained not only extra money but also exciting stories from travelers that have been all over the state of Arkansas. "It is not known exactly when the Latimore Tourist Home was built, but according to the Sanborn maps for Russellville, it was already in place when the first map was done in 1913." The house was owned and run by Eugene Latimore. His wife, Cora, and his daughter, Anna, regularly helped him. When the house started accepting visitors is unknown, but we do know that it was before Latimore's son-in-law joined the military in 1944.

These homes rented out their rooms for short periods of time. Many railroad workers and travelers stayed at Latimore's home for the convenience and acceptance. Even after laws were passed that were supposed to stop racism, the home stayed in business for many years. Whether it's because the house had a reputation with the African Americans, or because other people were still reluctant to give these people a place to stay, it meant that they had a comfortable and hospitable temporary home.

Not long before the 1900s, it was legal and rather expected of you to own slaves. So African Americans went from having no rights as an enslaved person to having few rights as a "free" black figure. They would be called names and people would demean and disrespect them for years to come. Eugene probably got called names also; considering he was the only one who would give service to this frowned-upon race. There are no facts that he did it because he cared for the people, or because he felt bad for them. No other citizen from Little Rock to Fort Smith opened their arms to these people, and so why would he unless he cared for them?

The Latimore Tourist Home still stands today but is vacant. It represents the African Americans and their freedom, and also for open arms. Only a few people know the story of this house, but touched the lives of many in the 1900s. It reminds many people in the state of Arkansas about how we have become a more unified nation. Life has never been perfect, but with enough willpower, we can do anything.

# The Beauty of Artist's Point

Shea Franklin, Pottsville Junior High, Third Place

Have you ever been to Artist's Point?

Artist's Point is in the Boston Mountains. On highway 71, it falls between the towns of Fayetteville and Mountainburg, Arkansas. The route was once the site of major traffic, but was bypassed by Interstate 540. This makes for a beautiful drive through the mountains to get to Artist's Point.

Named for its popularity among artists and photographers alike, Artist's Point was used by Confederate soldiers in the American Civil War as a natural fort. The terrain near the site made it difficult for Union soldiers to locate the southern forces as they moved around the mountains. This made it very secure and opened up an opportunity for southern forces to move around as they pleased. The mountains were large parts of the Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove campaigns in the early 1860s.

The overlook at Artist's Point makes for an amazing view of the mountains and valleys surrounding the point. A paid telescope allows for visitors to get a close look at neighboring White Rock Mountain, a local Ozark National Forest scenic spot, and also Lake Shepard Springs. The Artist's Point overlook also shows off 'the vine that ate the South,' or kudzu, that grows at the bottom of the mountain. The whole mountainside below Artist's Point is covered with the foreign plant.

The store at Artist's Point has many hummingbirds that like to visit the feeders on the back deck. Seeing as it is family owned, crafts sold at the store are hand-made for traveling visitors. Among many items are homemade dolls, Indian artifacts, and homemade jams and jellies. Along with the store, there is also a small museum housing artifacts from old Indian sites.

Just behind the store, the trail to Artist's Point Falls begins. A .6 mile trail winding through the mountains passes by memorable places like Lover's Leap and a crop of kudzu, leading to the Artist's Point Falls. The falls start with a 15-foot cascade, also including a series of smaller waterfalls. The trail is very steep and tiring, but it is worth it to see the gorgeous waterfalls. Tour guides and former visitors warn to watch your step on the rocks around the falls, seeing as they are very slick, and the trail is not suggested for anyone with medical problems.

Sometime you should go out to see Artist's Point. No one will ask you to pay to play witness to this beautiful piece of Arkansas.

# Lone Rock Chimney

**Jessica Taylor, Pottsville Junior High, Honorable Mention**

Pottsville, Arkansas was shaped around a little museum and the family that once lived there. Our special building is known as Potts Inn. It was built to be a stagecoach stop in the 1850s. Countless travelers stayed the night there on their treks across the country, usually having to share a bed with a stranger or two. There are four main chimneys at Potts Inn. If you have been there, you may have noticed that only one is made of rock, while the other three are made of brick. At one time, they were all the same and the brick all matched. During an atrocious storm, the front left chimney fell. Sadly, the remnants were not salvageable.

Mr. Potts decided to have it redone, so he hired a well-known carpenter to replace the fallen one. The man took exact measurements of one of the remaining chimneys so he would know how big the new one would need to be and how much supplies he would need. The carpenter that was hired was very much liked by the people in the Pottsville community because of his explicit work.

Once he had all of the measurements he thought he would need, he went to a mountain near his house and chipped off the amount of rock that would be needed for the completion of this task. Using his incredibly accurate measurements, he laid out the rocks in the perfect shape and size for the chimney. With the help of his children, he numbered off all the rocks in the order that they were in the outline. I'm sure this was a difficult and frustrating task, considering that they weren't all in perfect rows like bricks are.

Using a wheelbarrow, he hauled all of the numbered rock slabs to Potts Inn. He may have brought a little bit extra, but he would not have needed much if he did. Slowly, he built a new chimney to replace the one that fell. Since he had specifically numbered off all of the rock he would need, he had very little waste. Because of this, he also didn't have to spend quite as much money as most other carpenters of that time. It did take a lot of time, possibly a considerable amount more than most other carpenters, but in my opinion, that shows dedication.

Potts Inn is once again able to stand with four lovely chimneys. Next time you get a chance, visit Potts Inn and be amazed at the beauty and intrigued by the wonderful stories behind the little museum. You will be able to bewilder your friends and family by pointing out the single rock chimney and an incredible story of the building that shaped Pottsville, Arkansas.

# Arkansas Post

## Cara Monk, Pottsville Junior High, Honorable Mention

Arkansas Post, the first establishment in Arkansas, was built in 1686. The post was founded by Henri de Tonti, Jean Couture, Jacques Cardinal, and four other Frenchmen. It was built as a trading post to trade with the native Indians. They would exchange goods from France for beaver furs. This was one of the most significant European establishments in Arkansas.

Arkansas Post got its name from the Quapaw Indians. The Quapaw were also called the Arkansas. Since the post was to be used to trade with the Quapaw, it was named after them. Therefore the name, Arkansas Post. The original name of the post was "Poste de Arkanssea." It was also called "Aux Arcs," which meant "at the home of the Arkansas." The Quapaw welcomed the post eagerly, wanting the French alliance and trades. Without the Quapaw, the Arkansas Post would not have survived.

At the beginning, fur trading did not go well. The Quapaw were deer hunters, not beaver hunters. They weren't keen on changing their ways of hunting, either. There was little trading during the Arkansas Post's primary years.

The Arkansas Post has also been moved several times. On May 10, 1749, the Arkansas Post was attacked by the Chickasaw. In response, the Post was moved up the Arkansas River away from the Chickasaw. The Post was moved to bluffs called Ecores Rouges. Then, before the Seven Year's War, the French moved it closer to the Mississippi River so they would be able to see the oncoming British soldiers. It was built about 10 miles away from the Mississippi River. In 1778, the Post was moved once more, back to Ecores Rouges. This move was to avoid flooding.

In the early 1800s Napoleon Bonaparte sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States. This included Arkansas. After the United States gained Arkansas, Arkansas became a territory in 1819. The first territorial capital was Arkansas Post. Only two years later, the capital was changed to Little Rock, but Arkansas Post was still used as a significant trading location. It was also used as a port for shipping cotton.

The Arkansas Post was also a part of many wars. After the French and Indian War, Spain gained control of the Louisiana Territory, which included the Arkansas Post. It then became the primary target of the British. April 17, 1783, the last battle of the American Revolution was fought at this location. Arkansas Post was also a major Confederate post during the Civil War. On January 10-11, 1863, it was attacked by the Union. The Union won this battle. The Confederates had 4,800 prisoners taken, 60 souls lost, 80 injured.

Today, the Arkansas Post Memorial is found at Ecores Rouges. It is a National Park that displays the history and archaeology of this historical site.