

Walks through History

Cane Hill

Begin at Cane Hill College, 14219 College Road, Cane Hill

October 10, 2015

By Rachel Silva



Intro

Good morning, my name is Rachel Silva, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Welcome to the “Walks through History” tour of Cane Hill. I’d like to thank our co-sponsor organization, Historic Cane Hill, Inc., as well as its executive director, Bobby Braly, for his help with the tour.

For any architects in the audience, this tour is worth two HSW continuing education credits through the American Institute of Architects. Please see me after the tour if you’re interested.

For those of you who haven’t been here in a while, you’ve probably noticed that there has been a lot of work going on at Cane Hill. In 2013 the Cane Hill College Association evolved into a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization called Historic Cane Hill, Inc. Bobby Braly, who grew up at Lincoln, was named executive director and tasked with overseeing the restoration of historic buildings and creating a plan for the interpretation of these resources. Who’s paying for all of this? The bulk of the money for restoration is provided by Tim Leach, CEO and president of Concho Resources, an oil and gas corporation headquartered at Midland, Texas. Leach has family ties to the Cane Hill area. Historic Cane Hill also benefits from other private donations and grants.

The Cane Hill community contains 17 properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Most of these were listed in 1982 under a multiple resource nomination entitled, “Historic Resources of Cane Hill.” We will walk past nine of those National Register-listed properties today, and you will have the option to drive to the Cane Hill Cemetery and the Pyeatte-Moore/Moore-Buchanan Mill site.

Brief History of Cane Hill

Washington County was created by Arkansas’s territorial legislature on October 17, 1828, from the easternmost part of Lovely County, which was formally established in 1827 and actually extended into Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma—achieved statehood in 1907). Washington County was named in honor of George Washington, Revolutionary War leader and the first president of the United States.

Cane Hill was the earliest white settlement in Washington County. In 1827 a group of Cumberland Presbyterians moved from Crystal Hill, which is seven miles northwest of Little Rock on the north side of the Arkansas River, to a series of ridges and valleys watered by natural springs and covered by extensive canebrakes. This area, which was about seven miles long and three miles wide, was designated by the Washington County Circuit Court in 1829 as Cane Hill Township.

By the 1830s, present-day Cane Hill was known as Steam Mill because of the abundant mills in the area. In the early 1840s, the name changed to Boonsboro in honor of pioneer hero Daniel Boone (also spelled Boonsborough). In 1901 the name of the Boonsboro post office became Canehill (one word).

Many early residents settled a couple miles north of present-day Cane Hill and established the Cane Hill post office. This community was later known as White Church. In fact, the Cane Hill Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the first Cane Hill School were not located at present-day Cane Hill,

causing much confusion for historians. In the early 19th century, they were located north of here at Cane Hill post office, later White Church. In 1850 the Cane Hill School moved about three miles southwest to the community of Boonsboro and became the Cane Hill Collegiate Institute. After that time, Boonsboro became the center of activity, and as I just told you, in 1901 Boonsboro became Canehill.

Boonsboro's/Cane Hill's economy relied on subsistence farming and light industry. The community was home to several mills, thus the early name "Steam Mill," as well as canning and evaporating companies for the preservation and shipment of apples. Early mills ground wheat into flour and corn into cornmeal. The Pyeatte-Moore/Moore-Buchanan Mill south of town also processed lumber and wool.

Apples were harvested at Cane Hill as early as the 1830s and became an important cash crop. Three apple varieties originated at Cane Hill—the Shannon, Howard Sweet, and Wilson June. Granville Shannon planted apple trees from Indiana south of Cane Hill and grew large apples with a smooth, yellow skin that sometimes slightly blushed—these became known as Shannon apples. After the Civil War, a Mr. Howard transplanted some of Earle Holt's apple trees at the nearby community of Cincinnati, Arkansas, and produced sweet apples that became known as Howard Sweet. Finally, in the 1860s, Albert and A. J. Wilson transplanted more of Mr. Holt's trees northwest of Lincoln and produced yellow apples with dark, crimson stripes that ripened in late June, thus the name Wilson June. Apple production reached its peak at Cane Hill in 1907 but remained an important industry until about 1920.

The apple industry was also important in the nearby town of Lincoln, which has been hosting the Arkansas Apple Festival since 1976; however, Cane Hill shipped apples long before Lincoln. In 1901 the Ozark & Cherokee Central Railway came through Prairie Grove, providing an easier way to ship produce, grain, timber, and livestock. The Ozark & Cherokee Central hooked onto the St. Louis-San Francisco (Frisco) Railway at Fayetteville and extended southwesterly through Farmington, Prairie Grove, Lincoln, Summers, and into Oklahoma, where it terminated at

Okmulgee. It followed the present-day route of Hwy. 62. In 1907 the O & CC was purchased by the Frisco Railroad, which operated the line until 1942.

Cane Hill was bypassed by the railroad. The towns along the rail line prospered, while Cane Hill's economy stagnated. This may or may not have been a bad thing—Cane Hill remains a rural community of about 200 people with very little modern in-fill, making it ideal for interpreting the area's early history. And that's what Historic Cane Hill is all about! The Cane Hill Harvest Festival, held on the third weekend in September each year, celebrates Cane Hill's pioneer heritage.

Individual Properties

Cane Hill College (NR-listed 11/17/1982)—

Cane Hill has long been known as an educational center. The Cane Hill Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized in August 1828 and initially met in a log building on the site of the Cane Hill Cemetery. In the early 1830s, the church moved to a new building about three miles north at Cane Hill post office/White Church. In 1834 members of this congregation organized the Cane Hill School, which opened in 1835. This was the first formally organized school in northwest Arkansas. While the Cane Hill School was only for males, the Elm Grove School for Girls was organized about 1840 at the present-day community of Clyde. In the early 1850s, this became the Cane Hill Female Seminary.

In 1850 the Cane Hill School (for males) relocated to Boonsboro and was chartered as the Cane Hill Collegiate Institute, licensed to grant two-year college degrees. The Collegiate Institute occupied a two-room, brick house. In 1852 the Arkansas General Assembly granted a charter to Cane Hill College, changing the institution's name once again and putting it under the control of the Arkansas Synod of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. At this time, the college had the power to grant four-year college degrees, making it the second four-year college in Arkansas (Arkansas College at Fayetteville—not associated with the U of A—

was chartered one month earlier). Additional buildings were constructed in 1854 and 1858, bringing the total number of buildings to three. A two-story, wood-frame building located south of the college campus was used to house students. After the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Cane Hill College closed its doors for the duration of the conflict.

Engagement at Cane Hill (Cane Hill Battlefield; NR-listed 3/7/1994)—

Cane Hill was the site of an all-day skirmish on November 28, 1862, nine days before the Battle of Prairie Grove. Confederate brigadier general John S. Marmaduke led 2,000 men from the Arkansas River Valley north to Cane Hill to get much-needed supplies and food, but this was the second time in a matter of weeks that the Confederates had made the supply run to Cane Hill. Union brigadier general James G. Blunt refused to let them get away with it for a second time and moved 5,000 men toward Cane Hill from his position in western Benton County. Union forces surprised the Confederates, resulting in a 9-hour running battle that stretched 12 miles, going from the Cane Hill Cemetery south to Clyde and east to Cove Creek. Blunt's cavalry outnumbered and outgunned Marmaduke's men, but Marmaduke's supply train escaped intact. Blunt returned to Cane Hill and established his headquarters in the old Methodist Manse. The Cane Hill College dormitory south of campus was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers after the skirmish at Cane Hill and ensuing Battle of Prairie Grove. In 1864 Union troops burned many buildings at Cane Hill, including the three main buildings at Cane Hill College, leaving only the dormitory (which was destroyed by fire in 1937).

In 1865 Cane Hill College reopened in the old dormitory building. A two-story, wood-frame building was constructed in 1868 on the foundation of a brick building destroyed during the war. In 1875 Cane Hill College merged with the female seminary to become a co-educational institution. On October 10, 1885, the college's lone classroom building was destroyed by fire. According to local legend, the building was burned by an angry moonshiner who had been run out of town by the church.

The College Board met a few weeks after the fire and decided to rebuild. The contract was let to engineer and Cane Hill College professor Jacob P. Carnahan for \$5,750. The two-story, brick building was completed in December 1886 and had four school rooms on the first floor and an auditorium on the second floor (for use by the college and the Salem Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church). This is the present Cane Hill College Building (NR-listed 11/17/1982).

Due in part to competition from the Arkansas Industrial University, which began holding classes at Fayetteville in 1872, Cane Hill College never regained its pre-war prestige. Cane Hill College closed in 1891. Its charter was taken to Clarksville, where the Cumberland Presbyterian Church opened Arkansas Cumberland College in a more central location. In 1920 this institution was renamed the College of the Ozarks, and in 1987 it became the University of the Ozarks.

The Cane Hill College Building was later used as a public school and accommodated grades 1-12. In 1931 the school building was drastically altered with new window and door openings and interior floorplan changes in order to provide more classrooms. The last high school graduation from the Cane Hill Consolidated School took place in spring 1949. Seventh through twelfth grades were then transferred to Lincoln. First through sixth grades remained at Cane Hill until December 1956, when they were also moved to Lincoln. Once it was empty, the old college building began to deteriorate. In 1983 the building received a grant from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and some restoration work was completed. The college building housed the Cane Hill Museum until 2014, when it was relocated to the Shaker-Yates Grocery Building on Hwy. 45 to protect the exhibits during the current restoration. The college building also served as a community gathering place, which has temporarily been relocated to the newly-restored A. R. Carroll Drugstore.

Restoration—

The Cane Hill College Building is currently undergoing a \$1.2 million restoration. As you can see from the “before” pictures, the alterations that happened in the early 1930s altered the original window and door openings using newer brick and

mortar that was not compatible with the existing historic materials. And settling of the foundation contributed to structural instability and cracking of the exterior brick walls. Work began earlier this year under the direction of Little Rock architectural firm Witsell Evans Rasco. Phase I involved stabilization of the building's foundation. The project is currently in Phase II, which consists of exterior brick work, installation of new custom-made windows (John Amos) and doors to match the originals, reconstruction of the chimneys, and installation of a new wood shingle roof. Phase III will be completion of the interior and work on the exterior grounds (including restroom facility, bell tower, driveway, sidewalks, etc.).

Bell—

The bell was donated to Cane Hill College about 1852 by a steamboat captain who knew the Rev. John Buchanan. The bell came from the steamboat "Grapeshot," which sank in the Arkansas River at Van Buren. Cane Hill resident John Rankin Pyeatte retrieved the bell from the wreckage and brought it overland to Cane Hill, where it was installed in one of the college buildings. The bell was badly damaged in 1864 when the Union Army burned the college buildings. It was later shipped to Cincinnati, Ohio, to be recast. When the bell was returned to Cane Hill, it was placed in a free-standing belfry. The current belfry was constructed about 1886.

Fountain—

This stone water fountain was originally located in the middle of Main Street (Hwy. 45). Water from the spring near the college was piped to the fountain.

Cafeteria building—

Constructed ca. 1946 with concrete blocks made on site. Before this cafeteria was constructed, a house north of the college served as a lunchroom.

Old playground equipment

Walk to south on foot path toward A. R. Carroll Drugstore.

Picnic shelter south of church—

Historic Cane Hill recently acquired this property, which was an old plumbing shop. They removed the walls, added new wood beams, and turned it into a picnic shelter.

Historic Cane Hill has worked with the Arkansas Forestry Commission to replant native tree species throughout Cane Hill, like these redbud seedlings.

The hard-packed trails were completed in August 2015, just in time for the Harvest Festival.

And HCH also constructed the cedar split-rail fences to visually tie everything together and help guide people.

Restroom facility—

In 2003 the Cane Hill Masonic Lodge, which historically met upstairs in the A. R. Carroll Building, constructed a concrete block building to serve as the lodge. In 2009 the lodge disbanded and went in with the Masonic Lodge at Lincoln. The concrete block building was later donated to Historic Cane Hill, which installed board-and-batten siding over the concrete block to make the utilitarian building look like a barn with a hay loft. This was completed in early September 2015 and now houses restroom facilities.

A. R. Carroll Drugstore (NR-listed 11/17/1982)—

Constructed ca. 1900 by A. R. Carroll to serve as a drugstore on the first floor and the Cane Hill Masonic Lodge on the second floor. The building features walls of native stone and a pressed metal upper facade and cornice. The pressed metal facade imitates rough-cut stone blocks and includes shell and garland designs. In recent memory, this building had a one-story, shed-roof addition across the front and extending to the north, and it housed a barbeque restaurant.

Historic Cane Hill bought the building in 2013 and began to clean it up. The back wall had collapsed, and the entire building needed to be tuck-pointed. And the original windows had been replaced. So the addition was removed, the back wall was rebuilt and the entire building tuck-pointed (Clancy McMahan), and custom windows were installed (John Amos). Restoration was completed in 2014. In

January 2015 Prairie Grove stone mason Clancy McMahon received an Arkansas Preservation Award for Outstanding Work by a Craftsperson for his excellent work on this building. The A. R. Carroll Building now serves as a community center and offers studio space for artists on the second floor (\$15/month). Go inside.

Continue south along Hwy. 45.

Shaker-Yates Grocery—

The Shaker-Yates Grocery Building was constructed in the mid-1940s on the site of two earlier wood-frame structures. The building was constructed with ornamental concrete block and features rock-face and smooth blocks. These blocks are alternated at the building's front corners to create the appearance of quoins. The building housed the Shaker-Yates Grocery and sold feed in the back. The post office was located in the front corner of the building as well.

This building was restored by Historic Cane Hill in 2014 and now houses the Cane Hill Museum. Let's go inside!

When the museum was on the second floor of the old college building, it was only open three days a year during the annual Harvest Festival. Now it is open every Saturday from 10 to 2. It is staffed by seven rotating volunteers.

- In the mid-to-late-19th century, J. D. Wilbur produced pottery in a stone kiln south of town. This was known as Wilbur pottery or Boonsboro pottery.
- Apple industry: Cane Hill residents transported apples by wagon, often padded with hay to prevent bruising. They were taken to canning factories to be dried and shipped by barrel. These canning factories later processed tomatoes.
- Cane Hill Mill/Pyeatte-Moore Mill/Moore-Buchanan Mill: In the early 19th century, John Rankin Pyeatte built a mill on Bush Creek about one mile northwest of Cane Hill. In the 1860s, he partnered with his son-in-law, William S. Moore, to run the mill. In 1868 Moore purchased steam machinery for the mill, which was then capable of processing wheat, corn, timber, and wool. After John Pyeatte's death

in 1895, Moore partnered with his son-in-law, Walter Buchanan. In 1902 the Moore-Buchanan Mill moved to its current location on Jordan Creek between Cane Hill and Clyde. A stone mill dam was constructed on Jordan Creek north of the mill and directed water into a mill race. The water traveled down to a narrow chute, which emptied above the mill wheel. This was an overshot water wheel, meaning that the water came from above the wheel, filled the paddles, and turned the wheel. This mill operated until the early 1930s. If you drive south on Hwy. 45, you can still see the mill dam on the east side of the highway right as you pass County Road 441. Continue south, and you'll see the stone foundation of the mill building and the 36'-diameter mill wheel. The Moore-Buchanan Mill Site was NR-listed 11/17/1982.

- **Bank of Cane Hill:** The Bank of Cane Hill was built in 1907. The 1 ½-story stone building with chamfered corner entry had pressed metal above the storefront and a decorative metal cornice. It was located just south of us. The bank was constructed on the previous site of the 1870 Mann Hotel, which had been moved in 1904 to a location slightly west of Main Street (you can see it behind the bank in the old photo). In 1926 the bank was purchased by the Bank of Lincoln and closed its doors the following year. The bank building was heavily altered in the 1960s to house Jenkins Grocery. You will be able to see a portion of the bank's stone wall when we walk outside.

Bank of Cane Hill/Jenkins Grocery—

Built in 1907 as the Bank of Cane Hill. Extensively altered in the 1960s to house Jenkins Grocery. See the stone wall on the north side of the building. This building is also owned by Historic Cane Hill and is used for equipment storage.

Point to east side of Hwy. 45.

Zeb Edmiston House (NR-listed 11/17/1982)—

Built ca. 1872 for Zebulon Brevard Edmiston and his wife, Eunice Jane Gray Edmiston. Zeb Edmiston was born in 1830 at Hempstead County, Arkansas, and later moved to the Washington County community of Morrow. He was a farmer, merchant, and member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Edmiston served as a corporal in the 34th Arkansas Infantry during the Civil War. He and his wife had four children: James Pulaski (1853 – 1927), David Noah (1855 – 1928), John Sanford (1856 – 1916), and Nina Elizabeth (1860 – 1950). Zeb Edmiston died in 1891, followed in 1907 by his widow. They are buried in the Edmiston Cemetery at Morrow. The Zeb Edmiston House was designed in a vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style with a symmetrical façade and a central portico crowned by a triangular pediment. The fretwork or gingerbread on the porch is not original. This property was recently acquired by Historic Cane Hill.

Site of Edmiston Brothers General Merchandise (south of Zeb Edmiston House)—
In 1884 brothers James and John Edmiston assumed ownership of their father's general store at Cane Hill. They continued to operate the J & J Edmiston Store out of a wood-frame building on the east side of Main Street (Hwy. 45) until 1902, when they constructed a two-story, stone building south of the Zeb Edmiston House. The Edmiston Brothers General Merchandise Building was very similar in appearance to the A. R. Carroll Building. The first floor housed their general store, and the second floor was used as a lodge hall for the Woodmen of the World and the International Order of Odd Fellows. John Edmiston retired in 1908 due to poor health. At this point in time, James Edmiston may have gone into business with his eldest son, Ivy Russell Edmiston, prompting the name change to Edmiston and Son General Merchandise. Sadly, the top floor of this building was crumbling by the mid-1970s, and it was in total ruin by the early 1980s. It has since been demolished and the site cleared.

Methodist Manse (NR-listed 11/17/1982)—

According to local histories, the Methodist Manse was built in 1834 to serve as a Methodist Church. In the 1850s, a wood-frame church was constructed near the site of Cane Hill College, and this brick building became the manse, or pastor's residence. During the Civil War, Union brigadier general James G. Blunt

established his headquarters at the Methodist Manse. After the war, Professor Harrison M. Welch occupied the manse. He was responsible for the reopening of the female seminary after the war and directed it until 1875, when it merged with Cane Hill College. The Methodist Church disbanded at Cane Hill in the early 20th century, and the old manse became a private residence. It was the home of Mary Pyeatte, granddaughter of early Cane Hill settler John Rankin Pyeatte.

In spring 2015 the Arkansas Archeological Society held its annual Spring Break Dig at the Methodist Manse. This kicked off a long-term research program at Cane Hill aimed at gaining a better understanding of historic properties in the area. The Society's findings will help to correctly interpret Cane Hill's history for future generations. Led by Drs. Jamie Brandon and Jodi Barnes, volunteers and staff found evidence of a major fire in the late 19th century and massive landscaping in the early 20th century. They uncovered the stone walkway during the project and now estimate the construction date for the manse to be ca. 1859. Further investigations are planned in 2016.

Walk north to Carroll Building and take pathway around to rear entrance of Cane Hill Presbyterian Church.

Cane Hill Presbyterian Church (historically the Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church, U.S.; NR-listed 11/17/1982)—**Thank Betty Colburn! Go inside.**

In 1844 a group of Cumberland Presbyterians from Boonsboro split from the Cane Hill Congregation (1828) and formed the Salem Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The Salem Congregation met in a log cabin at Boonsboro until 1850, when the Cane Hill School moved to Boonsboro. The Salem Congregation then used a portion of the college building. In 1889 the Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church, U.S., was established at Boonsboro (an early 19th century division in the Presbyterian Church pitted pro-slavery—mostly southerners; Presbyterian Church, U.S.—against anti-slavery—mostly northerners; Presbyterian Church, U.S.A).

In 1891 the Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church, U.S., constructed this Gothic Revival-style building. They occupied the church until 1919, when the

congregation dissolved. By that time, the Salem Congregation had become associated with the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and moved into the 1891 church building. Shortly thereafter, the Salem Congregation changed its name to the First Presbyterian Church, which is now known as the Cane Hill Presbyterian Church.

Exit from rear of church and continue north to see Blackburn and D. N. Edmiston houses.

Southernmost house on west side—Dr. Thomas Welch Blackburn House (NR-listed 11/17/1982)—

This house was built in 1898 for Dr. Thomas Welch Blackburn, a charter member of the Washington County Medical Association. The house represents a transition between the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles of architecture. It exhibits Queen Anne massing and features patterned shingles in the gable ends, but its hipped roof and almost symmetrical front porch reflect the growing popularity of the Colonial Revival style. Dr. Blackburn operated a medical clinic out of his home. Patients entered through the door on the north side of the house.

David Noah Edmiston House (NR-listed 11/17/1982)—

Built in 1886 for David Noah Edmiston, second son of Zeb and Eunice Edmiston. He and his wife, Annie Elizabeth Lacy, had five children, four of whom survived to adulthood. According to the 1900 Census, David Noah Edmiston took care of his mother, Eunice, after his father's death. She lived with his family at that time. D. N. Edmiston was also a merchant and operated a general store at Cane Hill. This house exhibits some restrained vernacular elements of the Italianate style with brackets under the eaves, hood molding above the windows, and turned brackets at the top of each porch column. This house is currently being restored by Historic Cane Hill. The modern garage is being covered with board-and-batten to make it look like a barn. HCH hopes to rent this house to university faculty.

House in ruin on east side of Hwy. 45—James C. Kirby House—

The James C. Kirby House was built ca. 1890. It features decorative fish-scale shingles in the gable end. According to the 1900 Census, Kirby was a "stock

dealer,” meaning he grew and sold livestock. This was later the home of Paris Colburn.

Walk back toward College Road and head north to J. S. Edmiston House.

John Sanford Edmiston House (NR-listed 11/17/1982)—

This Queen Anne-style home was built in 1896 for John Sanford Edmiston at a cost of \$3,000. John Edmiston was the third son of Zeb and Eunice Edmiston. John and his wife, Alice Lee Lacey, lived here with their children. I already told you that John partnered with his older brother, James, to operate the Edmiston Brothers General Merchandise Store. John was also the president of the Cane Hill Canning and Evaporating Company and vice president of the Bank of Cane Hill. He retired in 1908 because he was in bad health. He and his wife later moved to Washington, D.C., where better medical care was available. Edmiston died there in 1916 and is buried in the Edmiston Cemetery at Morrow.

Architecturally, this house is an example of Eastlake design, which was influenced by British architect and furniture designer Charles Eastlake. Characteristics include the wrap-around porch, intricate fretwork, multiple chamfered bays, and finials. This is now the office for Historic Cane Hill.

James and Clementine “Clem” Pyeatte House—

Built in the 1940s in the Craftsman style for James Henry Pyeatte and his wife, Clementine “Clem” Edmiston Pyeatte (she was the daughter of John S. and Alice Edmiston). This house was likely a catalog home, meaning that the plans were ordered from a catalog, probably Sears. This home will be restored beginning in late fall or early winter 2015.

Dairy barn—storage for HCH

Option to drive to Cane Hill Cemetery.

Cane Hill Cemetery (NR-listed 11/17/1982)—

The earliest graves date to the 1830s and were associated with the original site of the Cane Hill Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which was organized in 1828 and met in a log building on this site. The church moved north of town a few years later. This became the main cemetery by the mid-19th century.

Point out interesting funerary art/symbolism/epitaphs.

Show triple grave marker belonging to William, Pleasant, and James Buchanan.

These brothers died on February 21, 1864. I've heard a couple stories about their deaths. One—they got caught stealing horses from a Union stockade and were killed. Two—they were killed by "Pin Indians." Pin Indians were hostile pro-Union Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole during the Civil War. They were so named because of crossed pins they wore on their shirts. Pin Indians waged guerilla warfare against the Confederacy in northwest Arkansas and Indian Territory.

The AHPP will host a free cemetery preservation workshop at the Cane Hill Cemetery on Saturday, October 24.