



Arkansas Battlefield Update

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First sesquicentennial marker remembers crisis at Arsenal

The first Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission historical marker was placed at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History in February, and other markers are in the process of being created.

The commission has approved markers on the skirmish at Lunenburg in Izard County and on DeValls Bluff in the Civil War. Several other applications are being considered. Anyone wishing to apply for an ACWSC historical marker can download the application at <http://www.arkansascivilwar150.com/historical-markers/> or write the ACWSC at 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street, Little Rock, AR 72201.



The Commission also has added a comprehensive database on Civil War battles in the state to its website, featuring information on more than 770 offensive actions that
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New Roundtable established in Lonoke

By Rick Meadows
CACWHT Chair

The Grand Prairie Civil War Roundtable met for the first time on Tuesday, March 9 at the Lonoke County Museum. About a dozen folks attended the initial session. Those who attended came from Cabot, Lonoke, England, and DeValls Bluff. Thanks to Cheryl Miller, Linda Curey and Shirley McGraw for providing refreshments.

Some of the discussion was focused on the Sesquicentennial of the

Civil War and the marker program. Two possible locations for signs include "Hicks Station" near the ballfields east of town on Highway 70 and at Brownsville, just north of Lonoke. The group felt Camp Nelson Confederate Cemetery in Cabot has sufficient signage. However, one possible long-term goal would be to erect a marker identifying the Texas troops who were stationed in the Cabot/Austin area but died of disease in 1862.

Future discussion will relate to heritage tourism. When improvements are made on Interstate 40 between Brinkley and
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Foundation's Durnett award set for writers

The Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trails Foundation voted at its annual meeting to fund a prize for the best paper on Civil War Arkansas during each year of the sesquicentennial of the conflict.

Rick Meadows of the CACWHT proposed the award for papers on Arkansas Civil War topics during the sesquicentennial for five years from 2011-2015 with a cash prize of \$250 per year. Foundation Treasurer Mark Kalkbrenner noted that the treasury had \$1,080 on hand for such purposes. Some members immediately made cash donations that brought the fund over the needed \$1,250 for five-year funding. After some discussion, the attendees voted to accept the proposal unanimously and to name the award the Charles Olin Durnett Award. Durnett was a former CACWHT chairman and a member of the Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission before he passed away.

Mark Christ proposed to take the award to the Arkansas Historical Association board meeting in April for approval to make the award presentation at the annual meetings of the Arkansas Historical Association during the
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For Information

General Information

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The Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail is a network of regional private, nonprofit, volunteer organizations seeking to identify, protect, interpret and promote Arkansas properties related to the state's Civil War experience. General guidance for the groups is provided by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, a Department of Arkansas Heritage agency.

Northwest Arkansas CWHT

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The Northwest Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail serves Benton, Carroll, Boone, Marion, Washington, Madison, Newton, Searcy and Van Buren counties.

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The Southwest Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail serves Polk, Montgomery, Garland, Howard, Pike, Clark, Hot Spring, Dallas, Sevier, Little River, Grant, Hempstead, Nevada, Ouachita, Calhoun, Miller, Lafayette, Columbia and Union counties.

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The Southeast Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail serves Jefferson, Grant, Arkansas, Phillips, Cleveland, Lincoln, Desha, Bradley, Drew, Ashley and Chicot counties.

Central Arkansas CWHT

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The Central Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail serves Conway, Perry, Saline, Faulkner, Pulaski, White and Lonoke counties.

Northeast Arkansas CWHT

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The Northeast Arkansas Civil War Trail serves Baxter, Fulton, Izard, Stone, Cleburne, Independence, Sharp, Randolph, Clay, Lawrence, Greene, Jackson, Craighead, Poinsett, Mississippi, Woodruff, Cross, Crittenden, Prairie, Monroe, Lee and St. Francis counties.

Groups active regionally

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Sesquicentennial years.

Treasurer Mark Kalkbrenner presented his financial report for 2009, and it was approved and accepted unanimously.

In regional roundups, NWACWHT Chair Alan Thompson reported that one marker is up at Cane Hill in northwest Arkansas. The northwest group has plans for markers for the nitre mines and McGuire's store, where both Marmaduke and Hindman stayed. The Heritage Trail Partners group in the area has money, and it may be possible to buy part of the red dirt mine at Cross Hollows.

WCACWHT Chair Larry Puckett reported that plans include markers for headstones and a Massard Prairie reenactment suitable for school field trips. In the Ozark area a group is working on a Confederate campsite and Roseville Ferry. They hope for markers. They also plan to raise funds for 30 acres at Devil's Backbone Ridge. Finally, Larry asked for a resolution requesting that Wal-Mart rethink the purchase of property near the Wilderness Battlefield in Virginia.

CACWHT Chair Rick Meadows reported that central Arkansas has a new roundtable in Lonoke chaired by Emmett Powers and that there are books on Lonoke and Searcy/White county battles.

SWACWHT Co-Chair Peggy Lloyd reported a well-received Civil War weekend at Historic Washington State Park in November. She is continuing research on Civil War sites in the southwest region. Interested locals are in the

process of forming a 501(c)3 for preserving Elkins' Ferry. She has been working as contact person with Tom Gilmore of the Civil War Preservation Trust toward purchasing some of the battlefield property in Nevada County.

SWACHT Co-Chair Tom Beam has been working with groups interested in the Jenkins' Ferry and Marks' Mills sites. Tom is also trying to organize a cleanup group for Jenkins' Ferry and has discussed it with the superintendent of Lake Catherine State Park. This park is charged with caring for Jenkins' Ferry, but their staff is quite far from the site. This might be a good opportunity for interested volunteers.

NEACWHT Chair Danny Honnoll reported a reenactment of the L'anguille Ferry battle scheduled for August 3 and that Craighead County also has plans for markers.

SEACWHT Chair Mark Kalkbrenner reported that Pine Bluff Economic Development wants to revitalize Pine Bluff and would like to use the Sesquicentennial as a springboard. They have funds and would like to create an outdoor interpretive center near the courthouse with sesquicentennial and wayside markers. He also noted that there are plans afoot for the erection of an Arkansas marker at Chickamauga pending approval of the National Park Service.

The next ACWHT Foundation annual meeting will be held February 12, 2011.

Heritage tourists are targeted

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Lonoke, the group hopes to attract visitors along Highway 70, a major highway that will see an increase of traffic. At future meetings, plans will be presented on how to attract these tourist and travelers.

One possible event could be to have a day trip that would begin in DeValls Bluff and end in Lonoke. Beginning in DeValls Bluff, the

importance of Devalls Bluff in the Civil War could be discussed. Stops could be planned at Ashley's Station and Jones Station, where the running battle led by Confederate General J. O. Shelby against Federal troops cutting hay in 1864 occurred.

The group plans to meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 at the Lonoke County Museum. Anyone is welcome to attend.

NWACWHT reports on recent activities

By *Danny Honnoll*
NEACWHT Chair

The Northeast Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trails Committee held its annual meeting in December at the Fishboat Restaurant in Jonesboro. Twenty-two attended this meeting. Our group, along with the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans, had an auction to raise money for the NEACWHTC and the NEASHF. Donations were over \$1,300 to help with the preservation of local history before and after the Civil War.

President W. Danny Honnoll and M. Ray Jones, III, attended the annual Arkansas Civil Heritage Trails Foundation meeting at the Cox Building in Little Rock on February 20. Honnoll was elected to another term as president of the Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trails Foundation. The other officers elected were: Vice President Rick Meadows, CACWHT; Treasurer Mark Kalkbrenner, SEACWHT, and Secretary Peggy Lloyd, SWCWHT.

On February 25 a presentation was given to Southland School's fourth-grade class at Cardwell, Missouri. Over 50 students were in attendance as they learned about the Civil War from board members M. Ray Jones and W. Danny Honnoll.

The Southern Confederate Heritage Park in Jonesboro is currently flying the 50-star American flag, the

Mississippi state flag, a Hardee-pattern Confederate battle flag, and an Irish regimental flag.

Members of the NEACWHTC helped dedicate a marker to some of the soldiers that died in the Battle of Paroquet Bluff. On March 20 Bobbie Barnett, Dale Barnett, W. Danny Honnoll, M. Ray Jones, III, Joe May, Mary Miller, and Jimmy Stevens helped honor five soldiers that died on July 9, 1862. The honored soldiers were members of Col. George H. Sweet's 15th Texas Calvary Regiment. Members of the 15th Texas Cavalry attacked Col. Powell Clayton's 5th Kansas Cavalry regiment as they crossed the Black River at Paroquet Ferry just north of Jacksonport. Col. Sweet wrote that he had led a scouting party of 150 men from his regiment and at first thought the Clayton force only numbered about 250 men. When Sweet's scouts reached the Black River, it was late in the day, and most of the Kansas troops had already crossed the river. They had left wagons in the road to block the approach to the ferry. The Texans came up and fired from a distance of 200 yards, but it was too far away for their fire to be effective. They charged the group of Kansas troops hiding under the bluff bank on the west side of the river, but everything was in a complete jam at the river bank.

They then discovered Clayton

had an entire regiment, Sweet's horse was shot from under him, and the scouts fell back 200 yards. The Kansans poured artillery fire upon the confused Texans, and then withdrew beyond range. Sweet's loss was seven killed and seven wounded. The 5th Kansas did not pursue, as their main objective was to cross the river into Jackson County, but before the last troops went over they were seen to deliberately shoot a wounded Texas private in the head as he lay in the road. One of the men killed was Ephraim A. Dickson of Fort Worth, Texas.

The Texans killed were buried at the ferry landing until the summer of 1901 when as a riverbank caved in, exposing the graves. At that point, the remains were collected and reinterred at Walnut Grove Cemetery in Newport, under the solemn watch of four members of the Thomas C. Hindman Camp No. 318 United Confederate Veterans and a monument was placed on the grave.

You can email Honnoll at danny@honnoll.com, call him at (870) 926-2985 or write me at 216 Hillpoint Cove, Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401-5992 if you have any information on any Civil War happening that you would like the NEACWHTC to help with.

The next meeting of the NEACWHTC will be on August 17 at 6:00 p.m. at the Fishboat Restaurant in Jonesboro. See you there!

Podcasts, battle database added to website

Continued from Page 1.

took place in Arkansas during the war. Located at <http://www.arkansascivilwar150.com/research-education/chronology/default.aspx>, the database can be searched by county, by month and by year.

In addition, The Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission has added podcasts about the state's Civil War history to its website and will include additional materials in coming months.

"The first podcasts deal with some of the issues surrounding Arkansas's secession from the Union and how the people of the state felt about them," ACWSC Chairman Tom Dupree said. "The Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission will continue to add podcasts that will explore little-known aspects of the state's involvement in the Civil War."

The podcasts are being created in cooperation with the School of Mass Communication

at the University of Arkansas. The podcasts can be accessed at <http://www.arkansascivilwar150.com/podcasts/>.

The commission also is moving forward with a passport program that will encourage tourists to visit Civil War-related sites around the state. There will be 23 locations where the passports can be stamped, and each booklet also will include information on dozens of other related sites in each region of the state. The passport is currently in the design stage.

Old State House seeking donations to help conserve Arkansas Civil War battle flags

By Bill Gatewood
OSH Director

Next year the Old State House Museum will mark the American Civil War Sesquicentennial with four years of exciting exhibits, reenactments and programs. The Museum will commemorate this transformational event by hosting five exhibits from 2011 to 2015. Exhibit planning has begun and includes the conservation of two newly acquired Arkansas Confederate battle flags. We need your help to preserve these irreplaceable artifacts

This past fall, the Old State House Museum and the Missouri State Museum exchanged ownership of Civil War battle flags, returning them to the appropriate states. The Old State House Museum received two Arkansas flags and transferred a Missouri flag from its collection to that of the Missouri State Museum.

One of the two flags is a Confederate Second National pattern battle flag carried by the Consolidated 6th & 7th Arkansas Infantry Regiment. It is significant as the only famous "Stars and Bars" pattern in existence with Arkansas provenance that displays battle honors, from "Shiloh," "Perryville" and "Murfreestown." With the acquisition of the 6th & 7th Arkansas Second National pattern flag, the Old State House Museum's collection is unique – containing examples of all three major patterns of flags distributed to units of the Confederate Army of Tennessee.

The Old State House Museum also acquired a Confederate First National pattern flag attributed to "Hart's Battery," otherwise known as the "Dallas Artillery" as it was organized at Dallas, Arkansas (Polk County), in August 1861. Apart from Hart's and Key's (already in the Museum's collection) flags, no other flags of Arkansas artillery units are known to exist. These two impressive additions now



The Old State House recently acquired the Dallas Battery flag (above).

expand the museum's Civil War battle flag collection to include twenty flags. However, both the 6th & 7th Arkansas Infantry flag and Hart's Battery flag require substantial conservation treatment before they can be exhibited. The total estimated cost of proper cleaning and stabilization of both flags is \$26,000. The museum's goal is to conserve the flags by 2012, in time for our second exhibit commemorating the

Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War.

You can help the Old State House Museum protect these flags, ensuring their survival for future generations. To learn more about contributing to the flag conservation effort, visit <http://www.oldstatehouse.com/support-the-museum/flags-campaign.aspx>.

Reed's Bridge groups placing two new cannon on battlefield

Two cannons have been purchased and are being set in place on the Reed's Bridge battlefield. Our thanks go to the Jacksonville Advertising and Promotion Commission and our local VFW Post #4548 for providing most of the funds. A special thanks also goes to Steve Shore and Mike Kish for fund raising and promotion of the project.

March 12, 13, and 14, saw a camporee by the Boy Scout Thunderbird District. This was the second year in a row for the district to use the battlefield for this campout. Attendance increased from 63 scouts in 2009, to 91 scouts in 2010. There was a total attendance of 140 adults and scouts for 2010. Reed's Bridge Battlefield Preservation Society, Inc. has enjoyed hosting the event and

we hope that this relationship will last for years to come.

Ongoing projects include building a walking trail and putting in three new panels on the southwest side of the bridge, developing a website, and remodeling a rock house for a tourist information center as well as an interpretive center. Two new log structures are being started at the homestead site and the plan is to have them completed by our fall reenactment.

Visit the Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission website at www.arkansascivilwar150.com for information on upcoming activities!

Power plant work nears historic fortifications

By Peggy Lloyd
And Tom Beam
SWACWHT Chairs

Work continues on the controversial coal-powered plant at McNab, Arkansas. Recently workmen were working very close to the Civil War earthworks just north of Fulton, Arkansas. The earthworks are still intact and were built to guard the Washington to Fulton Road, now Highway 195 South. Workers were recently dismantling a power line that ran quite close to the earthworks.

Joe and Maria Brent of Versailles, Kentucky, have finalized the American Battlefield Protection Program plan in Nevada County. The grant provided for a study of Civil War sites in the county, including the Elkins Ferry National Historic Landmark, Prairie D'Ane National Historic Landmark and Moscow Church and Cemetery. Joe Brent reported that there was excellent integrity in the preservation of sites in Nevada County and good potential for heritage tourism. Mary Godwin, Nevada County economic development officer, served as director of the grant.

One of the goals of the Sesquicentennial Commission is to discover the experience of black soldiers in Arkansas. Southwest Arkansas has two examples of black Union soldiers as a result of recent research. Absalom and Ezekiel Dimery were both born in Tennessee and came to Arkansas with their father Stephen Dimery via Louisiana about 1840. By 1850 Absalom was a blacksmith and living with the family of a county official at Paraclifta in Sevier County. Ezekiel was still in Washington with his father in Hempstead County. The Dimerys were free persons of color, but under an 1858 law they were forced to leave Arkansas by January 1, 1860, or go back into slavery.

The Dimerys, like many others from the region, moved to Kansas and were initially in the Fort Scott area in southeastern Kansas. Later they moved to Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas—a center of abolitionist sentiment. Both men eventually joined the Kansas Colored

Troops, and, ironically, came back to Arkansas. Absalom served in Little Rock and Ezekiel served in Camden. Both returned to Lawrence and spent the bulk of their lives there. Both are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Lawrence. Research is on-going on these former Arkansans and others like them.

The Prescott/Nevada County Depot and Museum has received a grant for Arkansas Heritage Month in May. The grant funds will pay for developing brochures for driving tours of the upper and lower portions of Nevada County and for putting out markers number-coded to the brochures. Guided tours will be provided on two Saturdays in the latter part of May. Transportation and guides will be provided. The guides will be Ronnie Vandiver, a Civil War enthusiast and museum board member, and Peggy Lloyd, the archival manager of the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives and museum board member. The guides will give a running commentary on sites and roads in Nevada County associated with the Civil War and early Arkansas. Nevada County contains two National Historic Landmarks—Prairie D'Ane and Elkins Ferry—as well as other important sites and early roads. For further details,

WCACWHT planning events to mark sesquicentennial

By Larry Puckett
WCACWHT Chair

There will be many activities in the River Valley this year leading up to the sesquicentennial. In April, the Sons of Confederate Veterans will assist other volunteers at Oaks Cemetery, Fort Smith in erecting seven new headstones recognizing Civil War veterans. The dedication will be held May 15 and 16.

The Fort Smith Historic Site will have Civil War weekends on April 17 and May 24 and May 31 for Memorial Day, as well as the Frontier Fest to be held October 22 -24.

The Sons of Union Veterans met the first weekend in March at the

contact the Depot Museum at Prescott at (870) 887-5821 or curator@depotmuseum.org.

Bobby Downs of Arkadelphia has been hospitalized with heart problems but is now much improved and recovering at home. Bobby has been an active and interested participant in SWACWHT and has been responsible for placing many historic markers in Clark County.

SWACWHT Co-Chair Tom Beam enjoys visiting the Civil War sites in Dallas County. He has reported that Dallas County Judge Jimmy Jones has been very supportive of SWACWHT's activities in his county and very generous with his offers of assistance. Tom has also been coordinating plans for a future cleanup at the Jenkins' Ferry site in conjunction with SEACWHT.

Transition: Melody Jacobs Housley of Hot Springs died suddenly and unexpectedly while on a visit with friends to Historic Washington State Park on November 18, 2009. Melody enjoyed the SWACWHT meetings and Historic Washington. SWACWHT plans to plant a tree in her honor in the park. Tom Beam is working with Historic Washington Supt. Joe Buckley on this memorial.

MacArthur Museum in Little Rock. The group was organized as the General James B. McPherson Camp #1 with Sam Wang, a long-time member, elected as commander. Anyone seeking additional information or an application please contact Larry Puckett Jr., vice commander, at (479) 996-0383 or larrypuckett@email.com

Friends of Devil's Backbone Ridge are looking for all interested parties to contact us as we are trying to come up with a plan to raise the first \$1,000 to participate in the sesquicentennial historical marker program. Then we are working on raising the \$150,000 to secure another 30 acres of our historic battlefield.

Fourche Bayou listed on Arkansas Register

The Fourche Bayou Battlefield was listed on the Arkansas Register of Historic Places on April 7, 2010. The text of the nomination for this battle site follows.

In the weeks after the signal Confederate defeat at the Battle of Helena on July 4, 1863, Union officials became concerned about rumors that Maj. Gen. Sterling Price was planning to invade his home state of Missouri with an army of 19,000 men. Unaware that the Confederate army was bleeding deserters in the wake of the Helena disaster and was totally incapable of such an offensive, Brig. Gen. John Wynn Davidson crossed the St. Francis River at Chalk Bluff (NR listed 10-29-71) on July 29 and headed down Crowley's Ridge at the head of 6,000 cavalrymen and a handful of Iowa infantry troops to head off the invasion.

As Davidson headed down the Ridge, Union officials realized that Price was not going to attack Missouri and decided that the time was right to move against Little Rock with the goal of capturing the state capital and gaining control of the rich Arkansas River Valley. Troops idled by the July 4 capitulation of the Rebel stronghold of Vicksburg, Mississippi, were shipped to Helena for the campaign, which veteran Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele would lead. Davidson's hungry troopers reached the area around present-day Marianna in early August, received supplies from Helena, then headed west, reaching Clarendon on August 9, 1863.

Steele led the 6,000-man infantry component out of Helena on the evening of August 10 through the oppressive heat of a Delta summer amid swarms of disease-bearing mosquitoes and barely drinkable water. By the time they reached Clarendon five days later, Steele reported one thousand men, including many officers, on the sick list. Steele decided on August 23 to move his infantry from the malarial bottoms at Clarendon to higher ground at DeValls Bluff, which also was the railhead for the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad. The railroad would later provide a crucial means of carrying supplies from the White River to Little Rock at periods when the Arkansas River was too low to use.

Davidson, meanwhile, continued west and began meeting Confederate resistance, skirmishing heavily around Brownsville on August 25 and fighting a heavy engagement on Bayou Meto at modern-day Jacksonville on August 27 (Bayou Meto (Reed's Bridge) Battlefield, NR

listed 12/31/02). The Yankee infantry followed, with the bulk of the troops arriving at Brownsville by September 2. Bolstered by reinforcements, Steele's army contained between 14,500 and 15,000 men supported by forty-nine cannon. Price's Rebel force, by comparison, contained 7,749 men, the majority of who occupied strong fortifications in the area where Park Hill is located in modern North Little Rock.

As his cavalry scouted the area, Steele considered the best route from which to attack Little Rock. He quickly dismissed the road running south from Bayou Meto, which he said "passed through a section impracticable for any military operations—swamp, timber, and entanglements of vines and undergrowth—and was commanded by the enemy's works." After Davidson's troopers scouted the area he determined to advance via Ashley's Mills near present-day Scott, taking the Shallow Ford Road to the Arkansas River on September 6, the same day Confederate generals John S. Marmaduke and L.M. Walker fought a duel in which Walker was mortally wounded. Price placed Marmaduke under arrest.

As Steele's juggernaut gathered north of the Arkansas, the defense of the southern bank was left in the hands of about 1,200 Rebel cavalry under the command of Col. Archibald Dobbins, a former planter from the Helena area. His thin grey line had the unenviable task of protecting a twelve-mile stretch of river with a dozen fords.

On the evening of September 9, 1863, Davidson gathered his officers at his headquarters at Ashley's Mills to tell them that the final attack on Little Rock would take place the next morning. Steele had decided to lay a pontoon bridge at a bend of the Arkansas and send his cavalry across, hitting Little Rock from the east and flanking the Confederate infantry out of their daunting works on the north side of the river. "It was announced by [Davidson] that early the next morning the whole available force of the army would move; the infantry, under General Steele, to assault the enemy's strong works on the north side of the river, while our cavalry division was to cross the Arkansas River 8 miles below, and move to the capture of Little Rock," Col. J.M. Glover reported. "He stated that no ordinary obstacle was to be allowed to defeat the purpose of the division; that we were to make a dash upon the city and capture it, and either hold or destroy the enemy's bridges, though it cost us one of our regiments."

Federal pioneers began constructing the pontoon bridge that night as the Fifth, Eleventh and Twenty-fifth Ohio Artillery Batteries and a section of the Second Missouri Light Artillery took up positions from which they could lay converging fire on the wooded salient across the river.

Archibald Dobbins, arriving from a diversionary attack upriver at Buck's Ford, arrived at 3 a.m. and ordered C.B. Etter's battery to advance and fire on the Union engineers. The Rebels opened fire shortly before daybreak, scattering the workers with their second shot. However, the well-placed Yankee gunners quickly retaliated. "Before the smoke of the first discharge of their guns had scarcely reached the tops of the trees, which concealed their movements, twenty guns belched forth from their Concealment on the north side of the river a stream of shell into the midst of their battery," Capt. Julius Hadley, Davidson's artillery chief, reported.

Around 10 a.m., the bridge was completed and the Fortieth Iowa and Fortieth Illinois Infantry Regiments dashed across the span to establish a foothold on the sandbanks along the southern shore. They were followed by the eight howitzers of Capt. Gustave Stange's Missouri artillery, who would accompany the Union right as it advanced toward Little Rock.

Col. J.M. Glover's Second Brigade—consisting of the First Iowa Cavalry, Tenth Illinois Cavalry and Third Missouri Cavalry, in addition to Stange's cannoners—would comprise the Union right, and they were the next across the pontoon bridge. Col. Lewis Merrill's First Brigade crossed the river at a ford and would deploy to the left of Glover. Merrill sent the Seventh Missouri Cavalry to support four cannon of the Twenty-fifth Ohio Battery—which effectively removed them from the battle—then dismounted the Eighth Missouri Cavalry and ordered them forward, supported by a section of the Twenty-fifth Ohio. Merrill held his own regiment—the Second Missouri Cavalry, or "Merrill Horse," a unit mounted on white horses—in reserve. Steele's infantry, meanwhile, headed toward the Confederate works on the north shore of the river.

The fighting at Fourche Bayou would be somewhat confusing because of the terrain. The bayou meandered through the area, effectively severing the combat into two separate battles. Glover, on the Union right, would have to advance through heavy timber between the bayou and the Arkansas River. Opposing him was Col. William Jeffers

Battle was last of Little Rock Campaign

commanding the Eighth Missouri Cavalry (C.S.), Colton Greene's regiment, Burbridge's regiment and Young's battalion – all tough, veteran Missourians.

Merrill, on the Union left, would advance through the tall corn in Fletcher's field, moving forward against Col. Robert C. Newton, who placed his troops along the bayou levee across from the cornfield. Newton commanded Sam Corley's regiment of dismounted Arkansas cavalry, Bull's Missouri regiment, Denson's Louisiana squadron and Morgan's Texas Cavalry, in addition to Etter's and Pratt's batteries. These troops were bolstered by a volunteer battery under W.E. Woodruff; because of a shortage of horses and mules, Woodruff's battery was pulled by oxen, lending an exotic element to the battlefield.

As Glover's Second Brigade, led by the Tenth Illinois Cavalry, entered the woods they immediately ran into Jeffers' skirmishers, who fell back. The Illinois troops charged "to a point where a deadly fire was poured in upon [them] from an overwhelming force of the enemy, dismounted and in ambush." The horsemen fell back in disorder, leaving Lovejoy's Missouri battery exposed. Glover ordered Stange's gunners to open fire on the Rebels, but "instead of obeying orders, he fell back, and even failed to fire from where he was, which was an excellent range for grape and canister." Lt. Col. James Stuart of the Tenth Illinois Cavalry ordered Stange's artillerists "to run [the guns] out by hand, but they all got under the gun carriages and did not obey." The jubilant Confederates rushed forward and captured Lovejoy's beleaguered cannon.

Glover decided to change tactics. "I now determined to fight him in his own way, and brought up the Tenth Illinois and Third Missouri, and dismounted them to fight on foot, in three lines," with skirmishers leading, and a second line following in a solid row between the bayou and the river. The grim Yankees moved forward, "and in a few moments a terrific and deadly fire prevailed along the whole line from friend and foe" as the Rebels were forced steadily back.

On the Union left, Merrill's First Brigade moved forward, led by the dismounted Eighth Missouri Cavalry. Confederate Colonel Newton reported that "I directed Pratt to reserve his fire until they advanced in some force and came into easy range, when he was to ply them vigorously with grape and canister." As the Yankees advanced, "Pratt opened with his two guns

and quickly drove them back," Newton reported. "Moving to our right, they attempted to force a crossing of the bayou, but were met and handsomely driven back by Bull's command, assisted by Pratt's trusty guns, which continued to rake them with canister and grape until Fletcher's field, which was immediately in my front, was cleared of them." Captain Albert DeMuth of the Eighth Missouri Cavalry (U.S.), who was in the cornfield, wrote that "we dismounted and proceeded about a quarter of a mile when the grape and canister came rattling among us like hail, one man belonging to company 'L' was shot in the stomach right in front of me. We then got into a corn field. Here they gave us *Hail Columby*- for a short time, we squatting down in the weeds and grass as close to mother earth as possible, but nevertheless the enemy's shells bursted immediately over us wounding several of our men." A gunner with the Twenty-fifth Ohio Battery wrote that "our right section under Lt. Hubbard advanced to the left of the Bayou in a cornfield and for a short time had a hot time. The rebs had a battery planted and had the exact range of us, shells bursting all around us." The Ohioans soon fell back and began a long-range fire.

Merrill's troops began taking fire from their rear, which led the colonel to make a personal reconnaissance to ensure he wasn't about to be flanked. He found that Fourche Bayou was full of water, which eliminated the possibility of a flanking movement from the right, and that "the left of Glover's line of skirmishers was very considerably in rear of my right, and was overshooting the enemy into my line." What Merrill had feared was an effort to turn his right was actually friendly fire. His flanks secured, Merrill "immediately sent an order to the whole of my line to move forward and drive the enemy from his position. . . . The line moved forward as directed, driving the enemy from the corn-field and across the bayou."

Frederick Steele's decision to split his troops proved beneficial around 1 p.m. as Brig. Gen. J.O. Shelby's Iron Brigade rushed to reinforce Jeffers's Rebels. Col. G.W. Thompson reported that they "formed in line of battle in an open field; but the enemy, running up their batteries on the opposite side of the river, opened an enfilading fire, which swept up and through our lines in a most unsatisfactory manner, compelling us to change our positions every few moments,

and without being able to go return the fire with any effect."

Ultimately, the stubborn defense failed to save the capital. Maj. Gen. Sterling Price, the memory of the loss of Vicksburg fresh in his mind, ordered his troops north of the river to immediately evacuate their works and march toward Arkadelphia. He ordered all Rebel supplies, rolling stock for the railroad, steamboats and the partially completed gunboat C.S.S. *Pontchartrain* burned to keep them out of Union hands. Price then ordered the Confederate cavalry to fall back and cover the retreating army. By 5 p.m. the last of the Rebels had left town and John Wynn Davidson reported that "at 7 p.m. the capital of Arkansas was formally surrendered by the acting civil authorities, and the United States arsenal, uninjured, with what stores remained in it, was repossessed."

Merrill was ordered to pursue the retreating Rebels the next day with a makeshift cavalry division, but the Missouri colonel's advance was tepid, allowing Price's army to escape unscathed. Steele characterized the pursuit as "not as vigorous as it should have been" and Davidson suggested a court of inquiry, but nothing transpired.

The fight at Fourche Bayou was the finale of the Little Rock Campaign. Official reports put Union combat losses in the campaign at 18 killed, 118 wounded and 1 missing, while incomplete Rebel reports put theirs as 12 killed, 34 wounded and 18 captured or missing. Confederate losses were almost certainly higher, and neither of the accounts include the hundreds of losses to disease during the campaign. In addition, dispirited Rebels abandoned the army by the hundreds; historian Carl Moneyhon estimated Confederate desertions after the fall of Little Rock at 1,900 men in addition to 650 sick and wounded troops who were left behind.

The combat at Fourche Bayou resulted in a fourth Confederate capital falling into Union hands and creating conditions to establish a loyal Unionist government. The Confederate army fell back into southwest Arkansas, where it effectively remained for the duration of the war. The capture of Little Rock, combined with other Union victories at Fort Smith and in the Indian Territory, led to nominal Federal control of the Arkansas River valley for the rest of the Civil War.

Cane Hill tour project moving forward

By Allan Thompson
NWACWHT Chair

The big project of the NWACWHT, the Battle of Cane Hill Driving Tour project, is getting kick started again. For the time being we're seeking approval from the county road department to put posts up with numbers attached that will correlate to information in the driving guide. This way folks can go ahead and at least have the guide and take the tour even though the interpretive panels won't all be in place. Heritage Trail Partners, Inc. has offered to let us use their signs on the posts as well which will increase the visibility of the signs and alert others that they are driving on a heritage trail.

I met with the interpreter from Buffalo National River and he is interested in getting interpretive panels describing the issues on the home front in that area.

In preservation-related news, the site of the February 17, 1862 Battle of Dunagin's Farm is for sale. As Union General Samuel R. Curtis chased Missourians under Sterling Price into Arkansas, Confederate troops formed a line of battle here in an attempt to delay the advance of Curtis. The 121 acres is being offered for \$1,212,600.00.

There are a number of events coming up the public should take advantage of. On June 12 Pea Ridge National Military Park will host the annual Battle of Pea Ridge Heritage

Festival. Details weren't available as of press time. You can contact the park at (479) 451-8122 for more information. June 18-20, a camp of instruction for re-enactor types or those interested in becoming re-enactors will be held at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. For information and guidelines please visit <http://1861coi.com/> Also at Prairie Grove, Heritage Trail Partners will sponsor the "Bullets, Bandages and Ballads" lecture at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park on June 26. Local historian Steve Burgess will speak on the Battle of Cane Hill at noon. Musical entertainment will be provided by The Back Porch Players from 1:15-2:15 followed by a program by Doug Kidd at 2:30 on the "Life of a Civil War Surgeon."



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The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program is an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. Other DAH agencies are the Arts Council, the Old State House Museum, the Historic Arkansas Museum, the Delta Cultural Center in Helena, the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center and the Natural Heritage Commission.

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