

**Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial
Commission Meeting**
October 29, 2008
MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History
Little Rock, Arkansas

Members Present

Richard Davies, Director, Department of Parks and Tourism
Mark Christ, Designee, Department of Arkansas Heritage
Dr. George Lankford, Batesville, Senate Pro Tem Designee
Tommy Dupree, Jacksonville, Governor Appointee
Mark Kalkbrenner, Arkansas Division – Sons of Confederate Veterans
Don Hamilton, Governor Appointee
Danny Honnoll, President – Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trails Foundation
Dr. Jamie Brandon, Governor Appointee
Jim Branson, House Speaker Designee
Bill Gatewood, Director – Old State House Museum
Ellen Lewis, Senate Pro Tem Designee
Ernest Cunningham – Governor Appointee
Carolyn Ashcraft – Director, Arkansas State Library
John Scott, NPS – Pea Ridge National Military Park
Dr. Wendy Richter – Arkansas History Commission
Dee Lois Lawrence, President – Arkansas Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy

Members Absent

Sam Wang – Sons of Union Veterans
Dushun Scarbrough – Martin Luther King Commission
Laura Miller – President, Arkansas Historical Association
Jerry Armstrong, North Little Rock, House Speaker Designee

Visitors

Cathie Matthews, Director, Department of Arkansas Heritage
Paul Robinson – Martin Luther King Commission
Jack E. Hill – TeleVision for Arkansas
M. Ray Jones – Sons of Confederate Veterans
Suzie Rogers – Buffalo National River
Keith Jefferson – Buffalo National River
Glenn Jones – Northwest Heritage Trail Partners

Jamie Brandon called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. He introduced and welcomed new member Dee Lois Lawrence, United Daughters of the Confederacy.

He then called for approval of the minutes from the July 30, 2008 commission meeting. Mark Kalkbrenner stated that he did not move for approval of the April 22, 2008, minutes in the last meeting as recorded in the July 30, 2008 minutes. George Lankford moved and Mark Kalkbrenner seconded the approval of the July 30, 2008 minutes. The motion passed.

Report on Budget Request and

Cathie Matthews stated that the initial submission of the budget which asked for a staff person, was turned down. The budget has now been submitted to capital projects for capital funding.

Marynell Branch presented the two-year budget for July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2011. Under section E, movable equipment, furnishings, and exhibits represent the Historic Markers program at \$100,000. Section G1, advertising, is comprised of 4 components. They are the opening event - \$40,000, design and published materials - \$40,000, University of Arkansas press publication - \$20,000, and web updates and podcasts - \$6,000. Section G5 pertains to grants and is broken up into two categories. They are \$300,000 for battlefield preservation and \$100,000 for grants for local events. The last section is \$14,000 for meetings.

Marynell stated that if there are any questions, the commission members can refer to Mark Christ.

George Lankford asked if the budget amount was negotiable and Richard Davies responded that it is. The budget could also be accepted for a smaller amount that the commission is asking for. In this case Marynell Branch suggested seeking support from individual legislators.

Richard Davies asked Cathie Matthews if she had spoken with incoming Speaker of the House Robbie Wills and she stated that she has not but needs to do so.

John Scott asked about letters to support the budget. Marynell Branch suggested the Governor or Senate Pro Tem Bob Johnson. She stated that she would get a list of legislators to make contact with to the commission members.

Richard Davies asked for key talking points and a laundry list of battlefields that could use some help, along with locations for each.

Tom Dupree suggested planning to make a comprehensive list of fields all around the state.

Carolyn Ashcraft asked Cathie Matthews when her budget hearing was scheduled. Cathie replied that it occurred the previous week, but that the subcommittee hearing is on Friday, October 31, 2008.

Richard Davies stated that the subcommittee hearing would not deal with the ACWSC budget.

Tom Dupree stated that Mike Wilson agreed that the ACWSC budget is comprehensive.

Richard Davies stated that the general improvements are handled differently. They sometime release funds in pieces at time. Ernest Cunningham agreed.

Cathie Matthews asked that the commission let her know about any new ideas that they come up with.

Richard Davies asked Ernest Cunningham if he thought a joint budget committee capital bill is a good idea for the ACSWC budget. Ernest Cunningham replied that a legislator has to present the bill and that it is a good idea. Richard went on to explain that individual bills can be introduced by individual legislators and sponsored by the legislator. A joint budget committee bill would mean that there would be about 40 legislators as sponsors, but the commission can still do a member bill.

Jamie Brandon stressed talking with local legislators regarding the ACWSC budget and let them know who the ACWSC is and what the commission does.

Jamie Brandon acknowledged another visitor. Paul Robinson introduced himself and stated that he was sitting in for commission member Dushun Scarbrough of the Martin Luther King Commission.

Report on Website Launch and Status

Mark Christ stated that the press conference at the Old State House to officially announce the launch the ACWSC website was without press, as they left to cover a bank robbery in North Little Rock before the press conference started. It was September 6, 2008, at 10:30 a.m. The web address is www.arkansascivilwar150.com. A press release was sent out through Aristotle. Mark Christ spoke with Leslie Greenwood earlier and the service used to send out the press release failed to put trackers on the website that allow them to show how much coverage the release received. Aristotle will resend it today. As soon as Leslie gets the information to Mark, he will get it to the ACWSC members.

Jamie Brandon urged commission members to help get as much information on the site as possible because the site lacks a great deal of content. Richard Davies urged everyone to get links to other websites done on the ACWSC website. Carolyn Ashcraft asked about the linking process. Ellen Lewis stated that Mark Christ had sent an email regarding the process.

Mark Christ listed several improvements that he and Leslie Greenwood believe need to be made to the website this year. They include for the sites page: Aristotle will integrate Google maps into the Civil War sites page, when coming to the page site visitors will see

a Google map with clickable icons marking the various Civil War sites in Arkansas. The icons will bring up a short description of the location and will link to the full description. Calendar of events – they will develop a regional map of the state of Arkansas and place it on the calendar of events page. Site visitors will have an option of clicking on a region of the state to view events within that particular region. Aristotle will set up the Civil War commission's site in a program that will allow content management capabilities for all pages that do not currently have administration tools. This will allow the commission to update any pages at any time without any assistance of Aristotle, which means that it will not cost the commission to make these adjustments. There are two video streaming options that Aristotle can provide. One is progressive streaming, which can be downloaded to the site visitor's computer, and the other is real time streaming, which plays in real time and does not download to the user's computer. The progressive streaming option allows for 5 minutes of pre-edited video. The real time streaming option involves a monthly charge based on usage. One video with average viewing traffic should run the commission about \$10 a month. The cost may increase if additional videos are added or if there is unusually large amount of viewer traffic.

Richard asked about when the charges started on the website. Mark stated that they began the day of the press conference. However, the Department of Arkansas Heritage had budgeted for this activity.

Richard suggested real time streaming because it is better, but it will cost the commission. Carolyn Ashcraft mentioned that people are cautious about downloading information to their computers. The commission agreed to real time streaming.

She asked if there is a resource for contacting other organizations. Mark Christ stated that he and Bill Gatewood had discussed that issue. If commissioners have any information to add, just contact Mark Christ. Carolyn Ashcraft stated that she thought it may be helpful for commission members to be proactive in asking other organizations if there is something they want put on the website or calendar.

George Lankford suggested sending an email to county historical societies and maybe adding information to the ACWSC site. Jamie Brandon suggested that the outreach committee should be responsible for contacting the historical societies.

Wendy Richter has a list of Historical Societies on her website per Richard Davies.

Ellen Lewis stated that the site could be the central location to other websites

Richard Davies stated that the success of the ACWSC should be measured by how many people visit our site and go to other sites from ours.

Mark Christ stated that a bibliography is on the website and he will continue to build on to it. At a recent meeting of the Arkansas Historic Association we talked about the commission and the U of A at Fayetteville had a grad student to create a bibliography of every Civil War article that appeared in the *Arkansas Historic Quarterly*. It will probably go live on the AHA website at some point soon and that is something we can link to and possibly bring to the ACWSC site as well.

Jack Hill stated that he does have some video already prepared for use on the website if the commission is interested and Jamie Brandon stated that it could be a good tool.

Bill Gatewood took a minute to introduce Frances McSwain, AHPP director, and Frances introduced guests Susie Rogers and Keith Jefferson of Buffalo National River, whose headquarters is in Harrison, Arkansas. Susie is a historian at Buffalo National River and Keith is an education specialist. Jamie asked if there were anymore visitors that would like to introduce themselves. Glenn Jones from the Pea Ridge National Military Park Foundation attended the meeting with John Scott.

Carolyn Ashcraft stated that Ellen has married since the last meeting and has a new last name, which is Lewis.

Mark stated that he has a list of CC people that he sends information to regarding the ACWSC and if anyone has someone he should add, they can let him know. He has added Buffalo National River, Ft. Smith National Historic Site and Arkansas Post National Historic Site.

Ellen stated that she will send an email with her new email address

Preserve America Grant

Mark Christ has secured a Preserve America Grant for \$50,000 to establish a Sesquicentennial Commission historic marker program. This will be a state-wide program. Once the commission receives the money, we will contract to get the program designed so that we will have some rules to follow, which will probably take up about half of the funding. The rest will go for putting markers on the ground. The ACWSC may be able to get another grant later. He hopes to have everything ready in about a year.

Richard asked if someone will be able to pay for a marker.

Jamie Brandon mentioned that the committee members should mention this program to legislatures when talking to them about the budget.

Everyone thanked Mark Christ officially for his work on the Preserve America Grant.

Richard Davies suggested establishing a cash fund for maintenance.

Danny Honnoll mentioned the vandalism that occurs at numerous sites.

Mark Kalkbrenner stated that placing markers has been a challenge.

John Scott spoke about the element of vandalism and maintenance.

Mark Christ stated that the hope is that this will start a real statewide permanent marker program. Richard spoke about what has happened in the past with markers that are placed by a stand alone commission that is no longer active and they are sometime inaccurate and there is no ownership.

Report on National Park Service Sesquicentennial Meeting – Laura Miller

Mark Christ reported that he and Laura Miller (who did not attend the meeting because she had just started a tour as acting superintendent of Ulysses S Grant National Historic Site in St. Louis) went to a four day meeting of the Civil War Sesquicentennial Action Plan Workshop in St. Louis, Missouri. The Midwest was picked as the guinea pig. The Midwest consists of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri. Oklahoma mentioned having an annual scholarly symposium in a different state each year.

Oklahoma as part of their plan was talking about having an annual scholarly symposium. The states have decided to have a regional symposium with each state hosting it in a different year. Oklahoma wants to do the first one 2010 and then one in 2015, Missouri would be in 2012, Arkansas in 2013, and Kansas in 2014. There will be more discussion on the topic in a couple of months to iron things out to decide how to proceed.

John Scott mentioned the traveling exhibit similar to the Lewis & Clark traveling exhibit would address more than just battles.

Mark Christ agreed and said that this had been talked about.

(Laura Miller's report on the St. Louis meeting is included at the end of the minutes.)

Report on ACWSC Video

Mark Christ stated that he and Melissa Whitfield at the Department of Arkansas Heritage talked to the video people at CRJW and he thought they had discussed the project with Richard Davies. Richard Davies stated that the only discussion he had was regarding the first script. He thought they would pull things together from there. Jack Hill stated that he received a call from Debbie Grace on Monday, October 27, 2008, and she is looking for four documentary pieces to see what she can draw from them. Richard Davies stated that she was given a rough draft, which is supposed to introduce the commission and its work to the general public in about 8 minutes. Richard said that he will take care of moving the process along.

Discussion of themes and ASWSC events

Richard Davies asked for a recap of the annual themes.

Ellen Lewis mentioned that people are asking about funding their sesquicentennial event. Jamie Brandon stated that the commission could possibly sanction their events. Ellen stated that it may be possible to get them on the website. Mark Christ stated the commission may have some small amount of funding for these events if the budget is approved.

Jamie Brandon did a recap of the themes:

2011 Causes of Civil War; Why the Civil War (Little Rock) 1861

2012 A divided Arkansas (Northwest Arkansas) 1862

2013 Arkansans Abroad Focusing on Helena (Southeast Arkansas) 1863

2014 Camden Expedition and home front (Southwest Arkansas) 1864
2015 Emancipation (Old State House - Little Rock) 1865

George Lankford gave his list:

2011 Why Commemorate the Civil War? (OSH/PBS) 1861
2012 Living on the Front Line (Pea Ridge) 1862
2013 Big War, Little War (Helena) 1863
2014 Back in the Union (Old Washington) 1864
2015 The End of Slavery (Little Rock) 1865

Ellen Lewis stated that Southeast Arkansas is not delineated in George's list.

Richard Davies asked Mark Christ if he knows about a paperback book about the war on the rivers. He believes it should be in the bibliography.

Mark Christ likes Big War, Little War title and Jamie Brandon likes Why the Civil War. Richard asked if reconstruction could be added to the 2015 events. Jamie asked if the commission has the question why answered by the 2015 event.

George Lankford thinks that law school should do some type of program constitutional legal questions that are involved in the Civil War. Ellen Lewis stated that this can open the idea up to other careers and how the Civil War affected those areas. Mark Kalkbrenner stated that UAMS has a great Civil War archive on medicine. Ellen Lewis suggested encouraging graduate students to help with these types of research projects. Jamie Brandon agreed.

John Scott is working on programs that would involve the Arkansas Naturals and the Springdale Cardinals. The idea is to bring attention to the upcoming Civil War sesquicentennial celebration his idea is to have local businesses sponsor a Civil War baseball game to be played in outfield an hour before each regular game. The teams could represent different regimes. Actual team members and re-enactors could make up the team members. The rules of the game were different and children may really like this. The ACWSC logo could be used on the uniforms. Jamie Brandon thinks that the sports angle is good.

Ellen Lewis moves and Jim Branson seconds the adoption of John Scott's Civil War baseball idea. The motion passed.

The commission thought it would be good for a children's program to show how people can have differing view points and still remain friends.

The meeting is adjourned for lunch at 11:39 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 1:09 p.m.

John Scott stated that his idea hopes to accomplish making the American Civil War relevant to all people. We fail to honor soldiers at the expense of what we believe is right or wrong. People enlist for certain reasons. Children should understand that we are going to have differing view points and it is okay to question the government, but should be civil. This program will hopefully address that in a non-violent way.

Jack Hill asked John Scott about what age group he is speaking of when he speaks of children. John Scott stated that it was a good question and that this is where educators come into play because they would be a better judge of that. This is just his idea and it would need more planning with the help of educators.

Jack Hill mentioned a puppet show he saw at a church as a suggestion for reaching younger children about the Civil War in Arkansas. Ellen believes that the commission should keep an open mind about these ideas. John Scott remembered the centennial anniversary of the Civil War and now believes it wasn't very memorable and he wants the sesquicentennial to be better. Jamie Brandon stated that the commission needs the correct partner or teacher for these programs. Carolyn Ashcraft agrees that the commission should keep an open mind and be creative. Mark Kalkbrenner stated that the commission would have to work with the state Department of Education. Arkansas history is taught, 5th and 7th grades and United States history has been taken out of junior high completely. Students can get in half of the 5th grade year or in the 11th grade. The Civil War is touch on in the 5th grade year and maybe the 7th. Teachers have to meet every framework for their subject and there is no room for anything extra. It is a challenge.

Suzie Rogers stated that she works with her area's middle school program in the spring. She believes the Buffalo National River can integrate the Civil War conflicts into this program. They can work in something they have already established with schools.

Ellen Lewis stated that in the past the parks worked with the school programs. On the coming weekend Degray Lake Resort State Park is having a Civil War weekend. Ellen's organization is addressing about 600 school children at this event. They have been informed that Degray will no longer be participating in this program. School teachers were very upset. Ellen wants to address the state park issue with Richard Davies, but he is absent for the afternoon. Mark Kalkbrenner stated that he had spoken with Richard Davies and Degray is dropping their program because Civil War doesn't fit into their mission. Degray is not a Civil War park and there are other state parks that are Civil War related parks, plus it is costing the park money.

John Scott stated that the Civil War is only taught through history, but it is associated with other aspects of life. It is a symbol. Tom Dupree suggested including the Arts Center.

Ellen Lewis stated that Pine Bluff has a heritage group called the Jefferson Guard. They participate in Civil War weekend and they also work with cemeteries and discovering historical aspects of Pine Bluff. Can more school do this as an extra curricular school activity?

Jack Hill stated that there are historical records of bands from the Civil War that perhaps high school bands can utilize.

Ellen Lewis stated that the Art Center has Arts and Education (sponsored through grants). A performer can spend 3 to 5 days in a classroom teaching a particular subject matter in their area of expertise. Some examples are math, music, or crafts of the Civil War. She stated that there are ways to get through to the children, but you have to be creative.

Jamie Brandon again stressed finding people to partner with for these activities.

Mark Kalkbrenner expressed his concerns about reaching out to the 99.5% of people that don't care about the scholarly Civil War information. Jim Branson stated that the commission should target people who are interested in this program and provide some in-service training. John Scott stated that the events should not just be limited to children.

Tommy Dupree asked Ellen to talk to Richard Davies about park interpretation of Civil War events. Ellen Lewis stated that the country is dealing with cutbacks and maybe this is part of the reason why schools are not participating in programs that involve travel.

Carolyn Ashcraft spoke with someone at UACCH in Hope about interactive video in Old Washington. They can do podcasting from Historic Washington State Park to schools. This reduces liability and addresses the current economic conditions. Ellen Lewis asked the commission members if a rewards system could be established (i.e. teacher of the year) as incentive.

Dawn Burton-Washington stated that working with the drama department on the high school level may help reach some of the older children. The drama department of some of the local high schools usually puts on plays or productions that the public can attend. Maybe the school drama departments can do a play based on scripts from Civil War events.

Jamie Brandon asked if there are people that can be contacted in the school district to get the ACWSC ideas to. Ellen Lewis suggested bombarding the schools with media (bookmarks, brochures, book bags, etc.) in order to inform them of the upcoming events and obtain their participation. Tom Dupree suggested distributing books to the school regarding the Civil War in Arkansas. Carolyn Ashcraft has distributed books to the public library in the past. Tom stated that there is not enough information on Arkansas history in the school libraries.

Ellen Lewis stated that she had donated a book about a female Civil War figure in the past with the inclusion of a media event. This would be an idea to encourage schools to participate with the ACWSC school related events. Carolyn Ashcraft suggested that brochures could be linked to the ACWSC website and people can print them out from their own computers.

George Lankford said he was hard pressed to deal with the education department in his area because the teachers are locked into their curriculum. He stated that in Cave City they are trying to experiment with having every student do a living history person presentation in class. Jim Branson stated that a theatre class could use George's idea. Mark Christ suggested that the subcommittees get together and try to contact some people of interest to the commission. Jamie Brandon agreed that the commission needs to put the idea into operation.

Changing the subject, Danny Honnoll reported the he had spoken to Stephen McAteer about the Dodd marker move to take place in the coming weekend onto the grounds and there will be some sort of ceremony. McAteer also told Danny that there is a National Lee/Grant exhibit going around. It was in St. Louis in September and is currently in New York. Danny has seen it and it is an excellent exhibit and is very informative. There is a scaled down version of the exhibit coming to the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History next year.

Ellen Lewis asked for an update on the committees and their members. Mark Christ stated that he would email the list to the commission members when he returns to his computer and suggested appointing a chairperson to each committee to be responsible for getting things done.

Mark Kalkbrenner stated, in thinking about the previously mentioned tentative road show for in 2011, he spoke with someone in Pocahontas and they are building a new archive onto the museum to house road show findings. Jamie Brandon stated that Louisiana did a similar road show the last week in September.

George asked where the commission is on the 5 themes. He suggested having it ready to present to legislators. Tom Dupree stated that the quicker these are finalized they can be put on the website. Jamie Branson stated that the ACWSC is certain that the 2011 and 2015 events will be at the Old State House. Mark Christ stated that Bill Gatewood is committed to the 2011 and 2015 events at the Old State House. Jamie Brandon stated that the middle three events need developing. John Scott will commit to the Northwest Arkansas 2012 event, but doesn't know where yet. John Scott stated that he is at the service of the ACWSC until he retires. Jamie Brandon stated that the 2014 event should be in Washington or Camden. Mark Kalkbrenner agreed that Washington was the best bet because it has the proper facility. Jamie Brandon suggested approaching the Delta Cultural Center for an event. George explained that he would like to be able to take his 5 sesquicentennial themes to an organization and ask them if they have any programs they can plug into those themes. Jamie Brandon asked about a handbook on how to get your event sponsored. Tom Dupree advised the commission members to let Mark Christ take the information from here and work on coming up with a final title for each theme as well as dates. He can email the information to each commission member. Tom Dupree asked for motion to accept loose slate that the ACWSC has currently. Carolyn Ashcraft repeated the list of the 5 themes.

Ellen Lewis moved and Jim Branson seconded the motion to accept the loose slate that the commission has. The motion passed.

Ellen Lewis asked for these things to be put on website and Mark Christ agreed that they would be added to the website once he finalizes the theme titles.

Ellen Lewis asked if AETN has a news report segment to present the ACWSC ideas to the public since the commission seems to have a relationship with the station. Then she suggested the Community Access Channel.

Discussion of other legislative issues surrounding ACWSC

Mark Christ stated that legislature will meet before the next ACWSC meeting. He wanted to know if there was anything else that he may need to ask legislature regarding the needs of the commission. He also suggested getting more diversity such as a Black History Commission appointee.

Jamie Brandon inquired about the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center and Mark Christ explained that they are an agency in the Department of Arkansas Heritage. George Lankford suggested checking with the Delta Cultural Center regarding the 2013 event. Jamie suggested maybe having several people in an advisory position to avoid having to possibly change the legislation that created the ACWSC. Ellen Lewis suggested other groups such as the Native Americans. Tommy Dupree suggested Dr. Dan Littlefield. Wendy Richter mentioned the Trail of Tears Association. Mark Christ will explore this further. Carolyn Ashcraft asked who sponsored the legislation for the ACWSC and several commission members stated Robbie Wills.

ACWSC Subcommittee Duties Reports

Sanctioning events around the state (re-enactments, symposia, etc.) that are appropriate observances of the Sesquicentennial

Jim Branson stated that the sanctioning committee has not met, but they do have some information to present. Mark Christ asked everyone to refer to the copy of the email from Jim Lair. It is the first official request for sanctioning by ACWSC. Jim is requesting sanctioning for a four volume series of books about the Civil War in Arkansas. The first volume is in the review process with the publishing company at this time with plans to be in book stores in early 2009. The other 3 volumes should follow as they are going to be represented by the same publisher. Carolyn Ashcraft stated that this is the type of thing that the committee needs to sanction, but a format is needed. Ellen Lewis asked about the process for sanctioning. Tom Dupree suggested that the books need to be reviewed for accuracy. Tom Dupree asked how the commission is supposed to determine accuracy of the information that people are asking to be sanctioned by the ACWSC. Jamie Brandon suggesting soliciting a group of people for peer review. Carolyn Ashcraft suggested asking for reviewed copy of the volume. Wendy Richter asked if there is a difference in using the ACWSC logo and a sanctioning. Tommy Dupree asked about the process for books or other written material. Arkansas History Association already has an advisory board and we need qualified people based on material to read the material before it is sanctioned by the ACWSC. John Scott suggested that a monetary fee be set for sanctioning. Jamie Brandon suggested having a loose working document by next ACWSC meeting regarding the ACWSC

sanctioning process. George Lankford suggested granting sanctioning after publication and review. Mark Christ stated that perhaps the commission is not prepared at this time to sanction this series of books and he would inform Jim Lair. Carolyn Ashcraft added that the commission also needs an official sanctioning logo since people are already using the ACWSC logo. Jamie Brandon and Mark Christ asked who was using the commission's logo because they are not authorized to do so. Ellen Lewis stated that the Civil War Roundtable has used the logo as a spacer in their newsletter. Carolyn Ashcraft stated that the official sanctioning logo should not be used without permission. Jamie Brandon suggested having information about proper use of the commission's logo and Ellen Lewis stated that the sanction application downloadable online.

Promoting historic sites around the state that are connected to the Civil War through educational efforts (brochures, websites, etc.)

Nothing new to report

Promoting publications and archival collections connected to the Civil War in Arkansas and advocating donations of materials to appropriate repositories

Nothing new to report

Promoting local observances that tell the local story

Mark Christ stated that he would get a list of organization, museum associations, and Historic Societies that the ACWSC will want to reach out to. Jamie Brandon suggested that good subcommittee for initial contact is a good idea.

Supporting efforts to teach and research Arkansas Civil War history in the state's schools and universities

Nothing new to report

Supporting efforts to preserve and interpret the state's Civil War sites and documentary heritage and artifacts

Jamie Brandon explained antiques road show process, which will help the commission collect artifacts. Mark Christ stated that as far as site preservation goes, The Civil War Preservation Trust is discussing purchasing Estevan Hall and 50 or 60 acres of core battlefield land in Helena.

Develop a plan and procedure to secure funding and appropriations, and to secure, accept, and spend donations, and develop a legislative package for the 2009 Arkansas General Assembly

Jim Branson advised members to speak to their legislators

Explore ways to ensure that the Sesquicentennial celebration is inclusive of all Arkansans

Nothing new to report

New Business

Jack Hill asked how the work on the Civil War Sesquicentennial in Arkansas compared to other states. Mark Christ stated that Arkansas is ahead of most states. Pennsylvania, Iowa and Michigan are interested in what Arkansas is doing.

Carolyn Ashcraft asked Mark Christ to bring more brochures to the state library. Tom Dupree suggested mailing ACWSC brochures to legislators.

Tom thanked our guest for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned by Tom Dupree at 3:00 p.m.

REPORT ON ST. LOUIS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MEETING

National Park Service – Midwest Region
Civil War Sesquicentennial Action Plan Workshop
October 14-17, 2008
St. Louis, MO

Background

Over the past two years, a small working group of National Park Service (NPS) staff developed a draft action plan for the Civil War Sesquicentennial. The draft plan includes several key components:

- That the key idea is “relevance.” Whatever the NPS does to commemorate the Civil War Sesquicentennial, it should help visitors understand the relevance of the war to their own lives today.
- The issues discussed as part of the commemoration should extend beyond a discussion of the role of the military to include such issues as the causes of the Civil War and the legacy of the war.
- Individual parks and historic sites should focus on themes relevant to that particular site or area.

The Midwest Region of the NPS (which includes Arkansas) is the first region to begin development of a region-wide action plan for the commemoration. This meeting in St. Louis was the first step. In addition to the components above, the region has determined that its activities should:

- Move forward in conjunction with events at the national level.
- Be inclusive of all stories
- Include the importance of legacy sites—sites with civil rights and human rights themes, like Brown v. Board National Historic Site, and Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

Key Concepts

After extended discussion, the working group agreed that the primary elements of the Midwest Region’s action plan should reflect how the war played out in the region and discuss the Trans-Mississippi West stories, including the Missouri Compromise and Bleeding Kansas. These events in particular are key to the turmoil that led up to the war. Participants agreed that the region needs to develop a working list of the things that make this area unique. Participants also agreed that we should work with states outside of the region—Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma, in particular—that also are included in the Trans-Mississippi West, but are not part of the NPS Midwest Region.

After further discussion, participants began focusing on several key themes:

- That the states of the Midwest Region represent a “fault line” that lead up to the war.
- The uniqueness of the experience in the Trans-Mississippi West
- The idea that many of the states represented a “Contested Promised Land” that differed for different groups—Indian Territory for American Indians, places like Nicodemus for freedmen, homesteaders, and ultimately several key civil rights battlegrounds.

State Reports

Partners representing Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri also were present for the workshop and presented updates on what the various states were planning. All participants agreed that the elements of the action plan should include working with partners at the state and local level and coordinating efforts across the region. Participants were impressed with the level of work already completed by the states.

Workshop Results and Timeline for Further Development

Participants agreed that the region’s commemoration events should help visitors reach a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the Civil War and how it relates to contemporary issues of civil rights.

Participants supported the idea of a signature event, such as a traveling exhibit that could move throughout the region and stop at participating parks and partner sites. Participating stops would augment the exhibit with site-specific events, exhibits, programs, living history, etc. A key component could be facilitated discussions with community members about what the war meant and how it relates to their lives today.

Other elements of the plan could include:

- Special publications, such as a travel guide
- Education programs and curriculum for teachers
- Transportation grants for schools
- National website with links to sites and partner organizations
- Funding for battlefield and historic site preservation

All participants agreed that a full-time coordinator is needed to fully develop and implement the region’s plan and coordinate with other regions and partners. This action plan should contain recommendations of skills necessary for the Regional Director to consider.

The draft regional action plan will be complete by the end of this calendar year and will be submitted to the parks and partner organizations. In addition, parks also will solicit comments and feedback from other partners to reflect a broad cross-section of the public and stakeholders’ interests. The completed plan should be ready to submit to the regional director in early 2009.