
ALHA

ARKANSAS LIVING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Volume 6, Issue 3

Spring 2012

Jenkins Ferry Day 2012

Lindsey Stanton
Grant County Museum

In becoming a member of the Grant County Museum (GCM) Family, I have the opportunity to be surrounded not only by pieces of American and Arkansas' history, but also pieces of Grant County's foundation and development. It is the history of Grant County that we find a most crucial gem in the Battle of Jenkins Ferry.

As we are unable to bear witness to the actual Civil War era, the next best thing was available, the Battle of Jenkins Ferry 2012. The event was celebrated on the grounds of the Grant County Museum, on Saturday, April the 28th, and was sponsored by the Friends of Jenkins Ferry Battlefield. This is a day that the staff of GCM has prepared for and anticipated for several months. I was particularly eager as this would be my first account of Civil War re-enactment and living history presentations.

The day began with the front lobby of the museum being filled with prize winning artwork by Ms. Pat McClains' Sheridan High School students. This is the second consecutive year that GM has been afforded the opportunity to display these colorfully diverse pieces of art on Jenkins Ferry Day. Talent is definitely alive and well in these students, as any observer of the day could see.

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Civil War Themed Living History at Grant County Museum in Sheridan, Arkansas

Also held inside the museum complex, Mr. Roy Wilson gave his power point presentation of the Red River Campaign/Battle of Jenkins Ferry. This was located in the museum's Activity Room, with presentations shown at 11am and 1pm. Both presentations were marketed with high attendance. Mr. Wilson took observers back to before the Battle of Jenkins Ferry, and to what decisions caused the battle to take place there. Colorful facts were put on display, and a generous history lesson played out for about an hour. Mr. Wilson said that his goal was to have each person learn at least one fact about the Battle of Jenkins Ferry that they did not know before they sat in his presentation. I am sure most walked away with not just one fact learned, but many.

As I was sitting at my desk in the museum lobby, I could look out and see the day begin to take form. About 9:30am re-enactors began to arrive, turning our present day into April of 1864. The museum grounds came alive with the allure of the times. Dressed in impressive period clothing, both women and men took on their roles with pride. The Battle of Jenkins Ferry was in the air.

At precisely 10am, the Grant County Museum unveiled its latest exhibit, the Post Office. The Post Office is held in the McDonald House on Heritage Square. The exhibit consists of many donated artifacts, such as postal scales, uniform

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 16, 2012; 9am – 5pm

Arkansas Statehood Commemoration: 1836
Presidential Campaign
Historic Arkansas Museum and
Old State House Museum

The Historic Arkansas Museum and the Old State House Museum hope to give visitors a glimpse of what life was like in Arkansas during these momentous events. The everyday experiences of common Arkansans will be interpreted with the backdrop of the 1836 presidential race. Visitors will have a chance to experience the politics, entertainment, and commerce of the period through hands on programs given by costumed living historians. At noon, visitors and participants alike will parade from the Historic Arkansas Museum to the Old State House Museum, waving flags and banners for their candidate of choice. Visitors will also get the opportunity to cast their vote, and see if their choices match up with those Arkansans made one hundred and seventy-six years ago.

Admission: Free.

CONTACT:

Ian Beard

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501-324-8642

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June 21, 2012; 12pm – 1pm

Brown Bag Lecture – The Cement Sculptures of
Dionicio Rodriguez in Arkansas
Old State House Museum

Rachel Silva will deliver a presentation titled, “The Cement Sculptures of Dionicio Rodriguez in Arkansas.” Silva’s program details the life of Mexican sculptor Dionicio Rodriguez and his distinctive faux bois technique as well as his National Register-listed sculptures in Arkansas, including works at Crestview Park, Lakewood Park, and the Old Mill in North Little Rock and the Couchwood Historic District near Hot Springs. Rodriguez’s work was so realistic and precisely detailed that many people mistake it for petrified wood.

Admission: Free.

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Jenkins Ferry Day in Color!



Volunteer come out to help put on programs remembering the Civil War past at the Grant County Museum.



All ages take part in the events at Jenkins Ferry Day at the Grant County Museum in Sheridan, Arkansas.

July 6-8, 2012; 9am – 8pm

“A Capital Weekend”

Hot Springs National Park

Come and learn about the American Civil War in Arkansas and the Hot Springs area. Bands playing Civil War era music and tours of sites around Hot Springs are included. An evening ball will take place Saturday evening, July 7.

Admission: Fees for some events

CONTACT:

Gail Sears

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hosp_interpretation@nps.gov

July 19, 2012; 12pm – 1pm

Brown Bag Lecture – The Best Idea Arkansas Ever

Had, B.T. Jones of Petit Jean State Park

Old State House Museum

The Petit Jean State Park program “The Best Idea Arkansas Ever Had” is about the rise of parks, beginning shortly after the Civil War under the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant. In 1872, Yellowstone National Park became the world’s first national park and a benchmark in the setting aside of vast natural areas as public lands. In 1912, British Ambassador James Bryce declared the park “the best idea America ever had.” “The Best Idea” program traces the roots of conservation from the Transcendentalist movement of New England in the mid 1800s into the present day. “The Best Idea” program follows the path of conservation into the present at Petit Jean State Park. It concludes with the idea that if British Ambassador James Bryce was correct in saying the national parks were “the best idea America ever had,” then the formation of Petit Jean State Park might well have been “the best idea Arkansas ever had.”

Admission: Free.

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August 11, 2012; 2pm

Refugee of the Civil War

Mammoth Spring State Park

Ellen Lewis will give a talk on Civilian refugees during the Civil War.

Admission: Free.

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patches, and a stamp machine from the 1950s. Photographs of post offices from the early 1900s to present day line the walls. Combination postal boxes, along with a handmade sorting table with wooden mail slots by C. N. Glover, and a postal desk from World War II are all housed in the exhibit. Letters and postcards dating back to the late 1800s can be observed, as well. GCM is proud of our latest display, and if you missed it, we invite you to come and take in the historical ambiance of the Post Offices that were developed in and around Grant County.

Joe Walker was on Heritage Square to sign copies of his latest book, “Harvest of Death, the Battle of Jenkins’ Ferry, Arkansas.” I have read Mr. Walker’s account, and find it most interesting. His descriptions are deeply illustrating and give a detailed vision not only of the battle itself, but of the participants, timeline, and the journey. GCM was glad to host Joe Walker on Jenkins Ferry Day 2012, and we wish him much success.

Throughout the day, “Fire in the hole!” could be heard, followed by thunderous cannon roars. Several children were delighted to be chosen to fire the large artillery. The artillery tent was set up near the cannons and visitors could observe re-enactors William Hardage, Michael Lee, Charles Wilson, Mike Hardage, Edgar Colvin and Hays Swayze demonstrating the artillery and ways of usage. Some of the large artillery was moved up and down Heritage Square throughout the day.

Visitors enjoyed several battle sequences played out right on Heritage Square. Rex Norris, Andy Taylor, Tony Woodruff, Ron Kelley, Guy Taylor, Joel Simmons, Mike Kinslow, Edgar Colvin, and several other illustrating re-enactors, portrayed gun battles and nose to nose combat with precise and professional demonstration. With soldiers moving up and down Heritage Square, observers could get a close encounter of the exchanged dialogue, gunfire, and smoke. The crowd joined in the cheers as the fights carried on.

With us graciously once again were Mike and Dot Hardage, who had set up a Civil War encampment. They were all dressed most impressively in their Civil War era clothing, even down to the smallest of re-enactors in their infant granddaughter, who wore a little yellow cotton dress. Flo Swayze also joined in the festivities with us again. She represented a Civil War widow, donning a black period dress complete with a hoop skirt and petticoat, accessorized with a black bonnet, and completed with black fingerless lace gloves and handkerchief.

Other ladies dressed exquisitely for the times were, Karen Woodruff in a pretty blue ensemble with matching hair ribbons, Dutchie Wilson in a full pink dress topped off with a black bonnet adorned with pink flowers,

August 30, 2012; 12pm – 1pm

Brown Bag Lecture – Jacksonport in the Civil War,
Mark Ballard of Jacksonport State Park
Old State House Museum

Learn about the role of Jacksonport, Arkansas, in the U.S. Civil War.

Admission: Free.

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September 28-30, 2012

Historic Encampment

Mount Magazine State Park

Mount Magazine State Park will host a living history event September 28 – 30. The Historic Encampment will not be a typical rendezvous. Our goal is to interpret various types of people that could have inhabited or visited the Mount Magazine area before statehood in 1836. Personas could include markets hunters exploring up from the Arkansas River, fur traders, soldiers from the garrison at Fort Smith, American veterans of the War of 1812, professional naturalists, settlers in the valley, Osage, or Cherokee.

Clothing, camp gear, and firearms must be period and regionally correct. Teepees will not be welcomed. All firearms should be flintlocks.

Squirrel season will be open and our encampment will be within a short drive to some of the finest squirrel woods in Arkansas. Demonstrations will be held for tourist on that Saturday. So, we can hunt in the mornings and clean guns and cook squirrels as demonstrations. No pets will be allowed. However, canine hunting companions and pack animals will be permitted.

The site is very shady. Trekkers will be allowed to camp in adjoining woods. This will be a good event for beginning trekkers. There are two permanent booters on site. There is no tap water in the area. Participants should bring their own water supplies and vessels. Firewood will be provided by nature. Early arrival is encouraged for Friday, September 28th.

CONTACT:

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**Put your event or program in the ALHA
Calendar. Send your Fall Event submissions
for the Summer newsletter by**

August 15.

and Julia McElrath in a long navy dress with a golden coin pattern, complete with a ribbon lined net bonnet. All of these ladies represented the Civil War era with grace and style.

Marde Clardy entertained the younger generations of the crowd by inviting them to participate in a march and drill ceremony. Young “soldiers” were taught how to load, fire, and care for their weapons. These proved to be popular demonstrations throughout the day. It was wonderful to see the little ones so eager to be involved.

Doyle “Doc” Taylor was back with his representation of a Civil War medical encampment and supply of surgical tools and remedies. I observed “Doc” showing the use of needles and the variations in size and quality than of those used today. I was even privy to see an era version of a suppository. Needless to say, I am glad in some ways, to live in present day! Many visitors were intrigued by “Doc” Taylor’s medical display.

A bus tour to Jenkins Ferry State Park ran twice during the day. It took visitors from the museum grounds of the park. Mr. Richards Jenkins with the Friends of Jenkins Ferry Battlefield served as tour guide as visitors observed the memorials and walked around the site. Visitors could look over the river bank and surrounding areas, and try to imagine the battle that raged there on April 29-30, 1864. It is hard to go to Jenkins Ferry and not notice the solemn atmosphere, in knowing that within a few feet, so many gave all for the causes they believe in. Jenkins Ferry is an intriguing place filled with rich history and treasures still untold, those treasures resting as they should, entombed in the place they were spent. We were proud to see the bus full for both tours, and that it allowed some visitors to tour Jenkins Ferry State Park for the first time.

Grant County Museum was privileged to have our resident blacksmith, Larry Layne, back for his popular demonstrations. He was in the Blacksmith shop on Heritage Square repairing army equipment, horse shoes, and artillery. Mr. Layne always interests the crowd, and catches the younger visitor’s attentions by drawing theme close into his work area and explaining his procedures with precise detail.

Overall the day went very well. The staff of Grant County Museum would like to take a moment and just say how appreciative we are of everyone who participated in Jenkins Ferry Day 2012. It takes a lot of hard work and dedication and the commitment does not go unnoticed. Jenkins Ferry Day 2012 was a wonderful success!

WANTED!

Articles needed for the
Arkansas Living History
Association Newsletter!



If you have a living history
topic or event you would like
to share write an article and
send it to
josh.williams@arkansas.gov



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SEE PICTURES FROM THE RECENT 2012 ALHA CONFERENCE

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THE CONFERENCE ON
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Arkansas Living History Association 2012 Membership Registration

Name: _____
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Phone: _____ Email: _____
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Type of Membership:

___ **Individual: \$12** Any adult, 18 yrs of age or older. The member shall have full voting privileges in the ALHA as a general member.

___ **Institutional: \$50** This includes 5 members with full voting privileges. \$10 per additional member over the first 5.

_____ Number of Additional Members X \$10 = _____

Please list the 5 members to receive the newsletter and their email addresses:

1. _____
2. _____
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Help us learn more about you.

Periods of Interest: _____

Areas of Interest: _____

What you would like to receive from ALHA: (this will help us develop training opportunities, meetings, workshops, etc.)

Please make Checks Payable to: ALHA

Please send Registration along with Payment to:

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118 West Johnson Avenue
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