
ALHA

ARKANSAS LIVING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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Spring 2011

Arkansas Secedes!

Ian Beard

District II Representative

At 3 pm on the afternoon of May 6, 1861, the Arkansas Secession Convention reconvened in the House of Representatives chamber of the State House in Little Rock. Earlier in the day they had commissioned a committee to draw up an ordinance to end Arkansas's ties to the United States of America. The committee's work now done, the crowded chamber listened closely to the arguments for political separation expressed in the document. A last ditch effort to postpone secession was attempted by the staunchest of Union men, and an amendment was offered to schedule an earlier date for the statewide vote on secession the convention had agreed to in March. This failed, though, and without any debate the roll was called. Passage of the ordinance was now a forgone conclusion, and the Secessionist delegates felt no need to say anything more. A few of the leaders of the pro-Union delegates took it upon themselves to explain why they were now voting for secession. At the end of the roll, sixty-five delegates had voted for secession while five had stood against it. David Walker, elected a Unionist



1860 Election Campaign Event at Historic Washington State Park leading up to the event of Secession in Little Rock on May 6, 1861.

himself, pleaded with the five remaining men to provide the convention with unanimity. One by one, and each with an explanation, they obliged. When Isaac Murphy was called upon to change his vote, he claimed he could not do it in good conscience. By the vote of 69-1, Arkansas seceded from the United States and tied its destiny with the doomed confederacy of Southern slave states.

This pivotal moment in Arkansas history was the focal point for the kickoff of Arkansas's Civil War Sesquicentennial commemoration at the Old State House Museum on April 30. Living historians and re-enactors from around the state, many of them ALHA members, helped bring that fateful day one hundred and fifty years ago to life. The state militia prepared for war while women's sewing circles made uniforms and flags for their use. In the evening they joined forces for a ball. Debates were held on whether Arkansas should secede from the union of states, or cooperate with other border states in the hopes of a peaceful solution. A new museum theater group supplemented the day's activities with a production of Julius Caesar cleverly edited to reflect the prevailing spirit in Arkansas towards President Lincoln. The centerpiece of the event was the recreation of the final vote on secession. A mix of visitors and living historians—many representing their home counties—

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 4, 2011; 10am & 1pm

Starting of the Summer with a Bang!
Fort Smith National Historic Site

At 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 4 the Fort Smith National Historic Site will have free Civil War artillery programs. Park volunteers and staff dressed as Confederate soldiers will demonstrate firing a replica 12 pound napoleon cannon on the historic parade grounds. Come and learn how it took teamwork to be in the artillery in the 1800s and experience the smells and sounds of this fascinating part of our history.

Admission: Free.

CONTACT:

Jeremy Lynch

PO Box 1406, Fort Smith, AR 72902

479-783-3961

jeremy_lynch@nps.gov

June 11, 2011; 10am – 4pm

Arkansas Statehood 175th Anniversary
Commemoration

Old State House Museum

Visit Arkansas at the time of statehood as living historians recreate both everyday and political life in the summer of 1836. Merchants, entertainers, politicians, lawyers, doctors, and assorted other characters from Arkansas past will be present to interact with in a historical setting.

Admission: Free.

CONTACT:

Ian Beard

300 W. Markham, Little Rock, AR 72201

501-324-8642

ian@arkansasheritage.org

June 15, 2011; 5:30pm—8pm

Arkansas' 175th Birthday Party

Old State House Museum

The Old State House Museum is the ideal setting for the state's birthday bash because it is located in the oldest surviving state house west of the Mississippi River and was Arkansas's original state capitol building. The Birthday Party, held in the Historic 1885 House of Representatives Chamber, is sponsored by the Old State House Museum Associates and benefits exhibits and collections at the Old State House Museum.

Admission: Tickets are \$75.00 per person.

CONTACT:

Sammye Johnston

501-664-1879

SammyeJohnston@sbcglobal.net

Conference Visions II!



Representatives from the Arkansas History Commission are part of the Vendor Area during the 2011SEALHFAM Conference.



Randal and Kristyn Watts enjoy being the winners of the Best Dressed Competition at the evening banquet.



Ian Beard congratulates Moriah Istre on her certification.

June 18, 2011; 7:30pm – 9pm

Music in the Park: An Evening of Jazz
Historic Washington State Park

*Come and enjoy an evening on the lawn of the 1874 Courthouse at Historic Washington listening to Jazz music from the past to the present. The first evening listen to the nineteenth century roots of Jazz through the music of Scott Joplin with Mr. Dennis Kobray speaking to us as a friend of Mr. Joplin. The second evening enjoy the modern strings of Jazz music with Legoria Payton and Friends from White Hall, Arkansas. On the last evening listen to local and upcoming performers of the genre of Jazz music with the Hope High School Jazz Cats. Bring your own lawn chair. During inclement weather, activities will be moved inside the 1874 Courthouse. Williams' Tavern Restaurant and the 1874 Courthouse Gift Shop will be open for all that wish to enjoy an evening meal or shop before the event
Admission: FREE.*

CONTACT:

*Billy Nations
PO Box 129, Washington, AR 71862
870-983-2860
Billy.nations@arkansas.gov*

July 9, 2011, 7pm –9pm

Historic Dance Workshop
Historic Washington State Park

Did you know there was once a specific dance to pick your next dance partner? Learn this dance and other common dances of the mid-19th century. Enjoy favorites such as the Virginia reel, patti-cake polka, and many more. Dance experience is not required for this evening workshop. Refreshments furnished. Class limit is 30. A minimum of 6 people is required for the workshop.

Admission: \$18 per couple or \$10 single

CONTACT:

*Billy Nations
PO Box 129, Washington, AR 71862
870-983-2860
Billy.nations@arkansas.gov*

July 16, 2011; 6pm – 9pm

Trial by Jury Dinner
Historic Washington State Park

Justice is served and you are the jury. After enjoying an evening meal at Williams' Tavern Restaurant, guests will proceed to the 1836 Courthouse. There they will take part in a living history drama where they judge the guilt or innocence of a man accused of murder. The drama is based upon an actual 1844 trial that took place in the same courtroom. Dress casual or wear your favorite 19th century costume. Reservations are required.

Admission: \$25 Adults and \$20 children under 14.

CONTACT:

*Billy Nations
PO Box 129, Washington, AR 71862
870-983-2860
Billy.nations@arkansas.gov*

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played the parts of each of the seventy delegates present for the vote, and transcripts of the event were adapted to again let the words spoken in 1861 fill the House of Representatives chamber. To complete the experience, the Arkansas History Commission displayed the original secession ordinance signed by the convention delegates, and the 1861 Arkansas Constitution that the same men would later draft.

As Unionist delegate John Campbell described it, “the die is cast” and Arkansas is on its way to explore how the Civil War still affects and influences us today. But while the vote of the convention was celebrated by many in the spring of 1861, those of us with modern hindsight must also consider what Isaac Murphy warned as “the untold evils that would assuredly follow in the train of secession.” What lessons will we learn about the Civil War this time around?

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CIVIL WAR?**

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**ARKANSAS CIVIL WAR
SESQUICENTENNIAL
COMMISSION**

Current ALHA Membership: 84

Tell more people about ALHA!!!

July 23, 2011; 9am– 8pm

5th Annual Red River Heritage Symposium:

“The Gathering Storm”

Historic Washington State Park

Historic Washington State Park is holding its 5th Annual Red River Heritage Symposium on July 23, 2011. This year the symposium will focus on “The Gathering Storm” of the Civil War in the Great Bend Region of the Red River. A Teachers Workshop and luncheon will be offered in the morning on resources for the classroom for studying the beginning years of the Civil War. The cost is \$15 per person if you would like to attend the workshop. We also encourage you to attend the symposium. The cost is \$30 which includes supper. If you attend both we are offering a discount price of \$40. A total of 6 credit hours can be earned by teachers attending the event. If you would like to come, please register with the park by July 20th.

Admission: \$30 per person and \$40 for both workshop and symposium

CONTACT:

Billy Nations

PO Box 129, Washington, AR 71862

870-983-2860

Billy.nations@arkansas.gov

August 4, 2011; 7:30 pm

Johnny Cash Music Festival

Arkansas State University Convocation Center

We are pleased to announce that the first annual Johnny Cash Music Festival will occur on August 4th at the Convocation Center in Jonesboro, AR at 7:30pm. Each entertainer, including talents such as Kris Kristofferson, George Jones, and several Cash family members, have agreed to perform for no cost at this benefit concert. Therefore, 100% of the proceeds will go directly to the restoration and establishment of Arkansas State University's heritage site, Historic Dyess Colony: Boyhood Home of Johnny Cash. Plans include not only restoring his hometown, but also the house he grew up in [1935-1950]. More information at www.johnnycashmusicfest.com

CONTACT:

Elista and Moriah Istre

moriah.istre@smail.astate.edu

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

August 15.

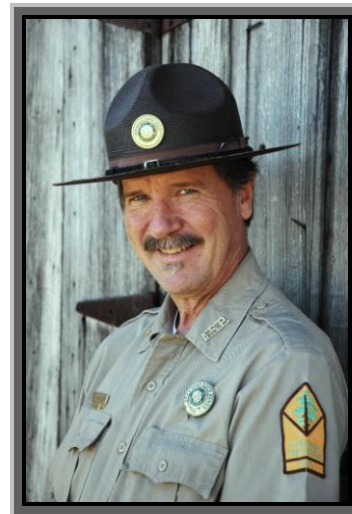
Who's Who!!!

Ben Swadley

District I Representative

Ben Swadley was born on September 25, 1957 in Fort Worth Texas and grew up in Arlington Texas where he attended Sam Houston High School. From 1977 to 1980, Ben attended Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas where he majored in Park Administration with an emphasis in Interpretation. He is married to author Janita Hall-Swadley.

After completing college, Ben worked a series of seasonal positions for the US Army Corps of Engineers at the Greers Ferry Lake Project. He also served as a seasonal interpreter for Texas State Parks at Lake Brownwood State Park. In 1983, he began his career with Arkansas State Parks.



Twenty of those years were at Plantation Agriculture Museum where he oversaw gallery expansions, the building of a collection management facility, the salvage, conservation and reconstruction of the Dortch Cotton gin, expansion of the museum grounds and facilities and the documentation, restoration and installation of exhibits at the museum's Seed Warehouse No. 5, a National Register of Historic Places structure. While at Plantation Ag., Ben developed living history characters based on sharecroppers and joined the Arkansas Living History Association. Ben is now the Superintendent of Parkin Archeological State Park. Welcome our Region 1 Representative.

Greetings from your District IV Representative



Hello, Region IV! My predecessor, George Staples, has moved to eastern China. I have been acting representative since March 2011 and was officially elected at the quarterly meeting on May 16th. I am currently employed by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism at Historic Washington State Park and have been a member of ALHA since 2009. I work out of my office Saturday through Wednesday, five days a week, when I'm not out in the park assisting with interpretation programs and special events. I'm currently developing a Region IV workshop for late summer 2011 and I'm looking forward to hearing your ideas, questions and concerns about the future of historic interpretation in our region. Please contact me anytime at my office at 870-983-2862 or by e-mail at sarah.wade@arkansas.gov.

JOIN THE NEW ALHA FACEBOOK PAGE!



SEE PICTURES FROM THE RECENT JOINT ALHA/SEALHFAM CONFERENCE

POST YOUR OWN PICTURES OF
THE CONFERENCE ON
FACEBOOK AND BECOME A
FRIEND!!!

2011 ALHA Officers

President	Kristyn Watts kristyn.watts@arkansas.gov
Vice President	Barbara Ward barbara@arkansasheritage.org
Secretary	Brooke Malloy brooke@arkansasheritage.org
Treasure	Debra Browning histreenactors@wmconnect.com
Comm. Dir.	Josh Williams josh.williams@arkansas.gov

District Representatives

District 1	Ben Swadley ben.swadley@arkansas.gov
District 2	Ian Beard ian@arkansasheritage.org
District 3	Pody Gay pgay@springdaleark.gov
District 4	Sarah Wade sarah.wade@arkansas.gov

Arkansas Living History Association 2011 Membership Registration

Name: _____
Institution: _____
Position: _____
Street: _____
City, State, ZIP: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
FAX: _____ Web site: _____

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. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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:

Kristyn Watts, Secretary

PO Box 93

Powhatan. AR 72458