



NEWS FROM THE PRAIRIE

SPRING 2022

—
PRESERVING OUR REGION'S HISTORY

National Memorial Hosts GPHS Spring Meeting

Grand Prairie Historical Society members were guests of Arkansas Post National Memorial on the evening of April 21 when the group of some 30 attendees enjoyed a program by Superintendent Ron Fields, who presented *Richness of Native American Culture History, Spear and Atlatl Technology, and Early Plant Domestication in North America*. The multimedia offering covered various archeological eras. Fields, who is also an archeologist, passed around several handmade artifact replicas, with explanations of the contexts and usages.

President Raeann Refeld Braithwaite informed us that our Facebook page now has over 6,700 followers. We have had 440 visits to our website, and our email list has grown to around 340. A report from Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie was given by Jessie Walsh. She also introduced new museum director Fara Foster. Pres. Braithwaite reported for Arkansas Post Museum State Park. In old business, Braithwaite reported that the Battle of Arkansas Post marker plaque, in need of paint, was picked up by Harlan Cox of Arkansas County Collision in Stuttgart. He will repaint the marker and return it to its position near the Arkansas Post Museum State Park. The Holman School marker is still in process of being typeset at the manufacturer. An update on the estimated time of delivery and date of dedication should be available soon and will be communicated to members.

Director Glenn Mosenthin reported that in the first two years (2020–2021) of offering premium memberships, the Society has realized considerable additional revenue which has proved helpful in supporting our efforts. He also reported that GPHS Director Bill Shrum's second term on the Arkansas Historical Association's board of trustees has ended. Mosenthin was nominated for and voted on to that board at AHA's recent business meeting. Rachel Silva Patton, a friend of our organization, was elected president of AHA. Our Society was the winner of the AHA's Walter L. Brown Award for Best Newsletter published in 2021 by a group promoting the study of Arkansas history. Glenn Mosenthin attended the group's awards dinner at Little Rock the following evening to accept the honor as editor. This is our organization's 25th publication award from the statewide organization.

Our members were very pleased to be able to convene once again at Arkansas Post National Memorial. Because of the pandemic we were forced to meet mostly online the past couple of years. The Memorial, long advocated by past and present GPHS leaders and members, has always been a special venue for our gatherings. Our next meeting will be held July 21 at the DeWitt campus of Phillips Community College/University of Arkansas. We are planning a potluck dinner to begin at 6:00, unless public health concerns dictate otherwise. Our program, which will be announced beforehand via the press and Facebook, will start at 7:00. Our autumn meeting will be held October 20 at Bayou Meto Schoolhouse Lodge. All citizens are encouraged to attend our meetings. And as always, we welcome and appreciate your membership and involvement!

The Arkansas Historical Association

by a vote of the Committee on Awards presents the

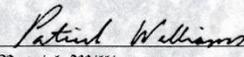
Award for Best Newsletter

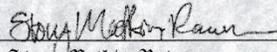
Published in 2021 by a group promoting the study of Arkansas history to

News from the Prairie

the publication of the Grand Prairie Historical Society
Glenn Mosenthin, Editor

April 22, 2022
Little Rock, Arkansas


Patrick Williams
Secretary-Treasurer


Story Matkin-Rawn
President



Left: President
Raeann Refeld
Braithwaite.

Right: Arkansas Post
National Memorial
Supt. Ron Fields.

April 21, 2022.

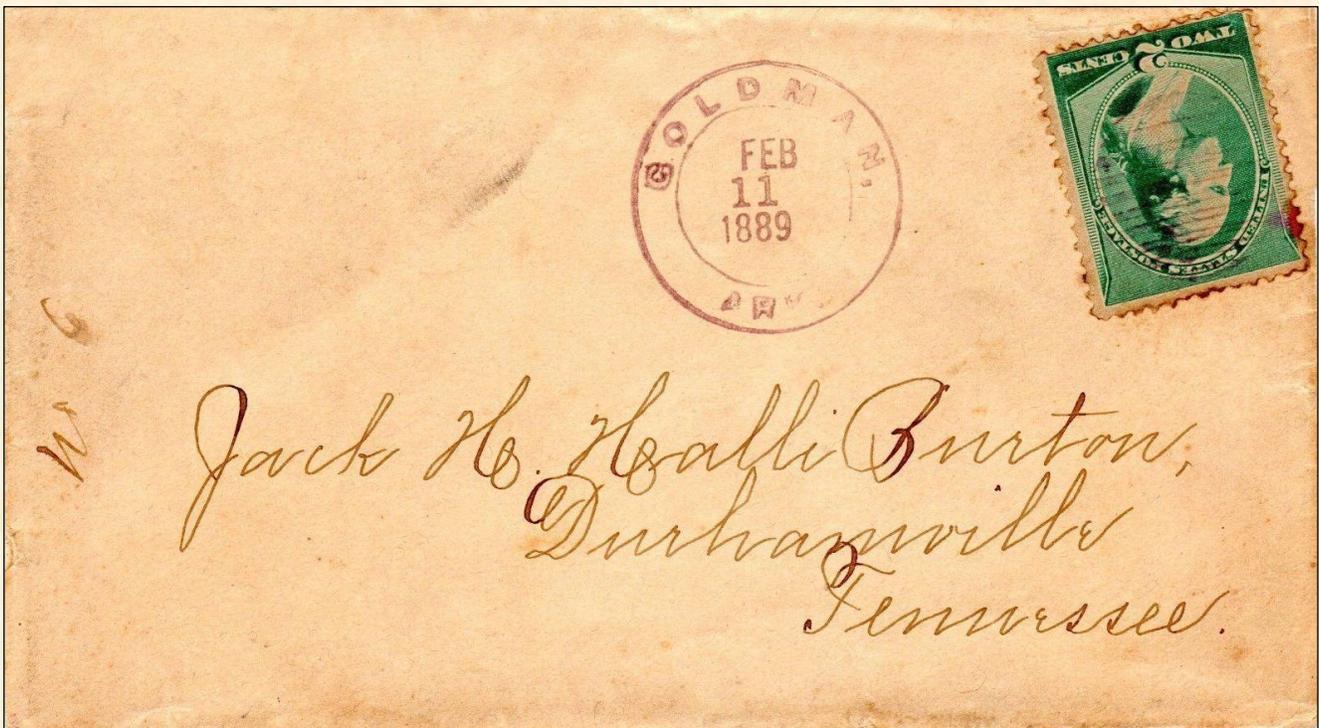


National Memorial Plans Interpretation of Arkansas Post African American Experience

Arkansas Post National Memorial is planning field investigations to locate structures associated with the late 19th and 20 century African American community at the Post. This project will gather data on the involvement of African Americans in historic developments at Arkansas Post National Memorial. Census data indicates a significant proportion (more than half) of the local population is African American; this, and the prevalence of intergenerational continuity (for both African- and Euro-American communities) in Desha and Arkansas Counties suggest that the local African American community has significant historic connections to cultural resources at ARPO. This project initiates an ethnographic, historic, and archeological study to identify connections, assess significant gaps in the data, and develop interpretation of the African American experience at Arkansas Post.

A recent ethnographic overview highlighted a series of African American resources at the Memorial Unit. This project will test connections in the archeological record by attempting to locate historic structures in order to protect and preserve them within the park. This work will involve conducting a field survey to locate a series of historic structures that include the former site of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and the Rena Bass, Emma Battles, and Richard Stovall homesteads. Little is known about the appearance of the homesteads. Presumably they were small, plain, frame or log structures that reflected regional building traditions. Upon identification of these structures, targeted excavations of portions of them will occur, prioritizing the Rena Bass homestead due to Rena's status as the local landowner and a person of prominence within the community.

It is hoped that this work will involve local community leaders, educators, and local stakeholders in these investigations. Lesson plans and distance learning modules will result, and the park will incorporate results of the overall project into museum exhibits that speak to the African American experience at ARPO in the late-19th and early 20th centuries. If you would like to be involved in the project or learn more, we would welcome you to join us for a planning meeting prior to the beginning of the survey. Please contact Kirby McCallie @nps.gov, Ron_fields@nps.gov, or David Watts@nps.gov.



This envelope bears a rare Goldman postmark from 1889. The town was named for a prominent St. Louis cotton buyer.



Written on reverse, ca. 1910: "These scenes are very common at the present time, for when one farmer has two hundred acres of rice, he has to have quite a number of binders to cut his crop if he wants to save all of it, for the fall is stormy and rainy sometimes, which might make the ground soft and cause the rice to lay down, so it is best to cut it as fast as possible when ripe." *Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie.*



"Notice the large straw pile. They thresh as long as three weeks on one man's crop, and then the straw pile is several times larger than you see . . . and that means about 200 to 350 acres of rice." *MAGP.*

Thanks to James Waggoner for submitting these images: "In the 1930s and early 1940s during the summer months, my father Alfred Waggoner and his brother Roger Waggoner, accompanied by their mother Alice Dell Waggoner, would go to St. Louis to visit their maternal grandparents. Their mother would always get tickets on the evening train so that the boys would sleep all the way (possibly to keep them out of trouble during the trip). Below is a two-page letter that seven-year-old Alfred wrote to his father Eustace Rubel Waggoner in June 1937. The photo is of my father Alfred Waggoner (left) and Roger Waggoner (right) circa 1937."



June 1937

Dear daddy

I am feeling fine.

The dog likes coffee cake she eats the icing off the top and leaves the cake.

The wind blew the tent over so to it new milhausen sewed it up now it is fine.

Granddaddy brought us each a box of candy saturday night.

Mather ^{bought} us six big little books, m. a. reads them to us when she has some spare time.

Grandma and Aunt Lina are feeling fine.

Uncle George bought three new yard chairs he put them together granddaddy painted one and got tired and Uncle George had to finish them.

Love Alfred

TEXAS & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY.

W. R. WOODARD, Receiver and Gen. Manager; A. C. SHELDON, Gen. Passenger Agent, St. Louis, Mo.

NEW MADRID BRANCH.—Leave Paw Paw Junc. for New Madrid at \$7 50 A.M., \$10 42 P.M. 7 miles.		Ac.	Exp.	M.	Oct. 28, 1883.	Exp.	Ac.	(Daily.)		M.	L'VE]	[ARR.	(Daily.)		
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MAGNOLIA BRANCH.—Leave McNeil for Magnolia at 1 30 P.M. Time, 30 minutes.

* For Connections, see Index of Railway Stations, at end of GUIDE. † Telegraph Stations. § Runs daily. The time from 6 00 in the evening to 5 59 in the morning is printed in dark type.

This Texas & St. Louis (Cotton Belt) Railway timetable was issued October 1883, shortly before Stuttgart was able to establish a post office and depot along the right-of-way. Goldman, named for St. Louis cotton buyer Jacob D. Goldman, was meant to be "the town."



THRESHING RICE NEAR ALMYRA, ARK.

Reports and Upcoming Events at Area Museums

Arkansas Post Museum State Park

Programs are back in action. Every Saturday the museum will offer hands-on programming activities or guided tours. To keep up with the calendar of events, please visit <https://www.arkansasstateparks.com/events>. The new textile exhibit is open to the public and is a work in progress. This exhibit is in the main house. Work will begin soon to repaint porches of the main house and carriage house, along with trim work on all the brick buildings. Maria Jackson has been tasked with filling in for the Cane Creek Office Manager while he is on an extended leave of absence. She will be assisting with administrative tasks every Tuesday and every other Monday. Spring planting for the herb garden and flower gardens will begin soon. If anyone has any heirloom plants they would like to donate, then please contact the museum. Submitted by Maria Jackson.

Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie

It is an exciting time to be at the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie! On April 13, the Museum hosted a living history program performed by members of the National Buffalo Soldiers Association's Kansas City Chapter. The program, "From Slave to Soldier," was about the life of Cathay Williams, the only known female Buffalo Soldier. Unfortunately, while public interest was fairly high, attendance was low due to severe weather. But it was a wonderful program. If anyone is interested in the subject, we can connect you to more information. As of April 1, we have a new director, Fara Foster. She is full of good ideas and we have many plans in the works for this year. Gena Seidenschwarz has been acting director for the last few years, but in recent months has needed time to care for her parents. Gena is still an essential part of the museum. With Fara here, we have a really good team. Upcoming events include a "Spud-tacular Lunch" fundraiser on May 9. Tickets are \$12 and you get a baked potato, "fixins," and soup. Our summer youth program is also in the works. "Projects on the Prairie" will be on Tuesdays from June 14 to July 26. We have many other projects in the works, so keep an eye out. We'll be publicizing events and posting details on our Facebook page soon. Submitted by Jessie Walsh.

Arkansas Post National Memorial

On April 23, 2022 Judge Morris Arnold spoke at Arkansas Post National Memorial on Colbert's Raid and the history of the Post. The event was followed by a book signing. Judge Arnold is an amazing speaker. He shared many details of his years of continued research. We are so fortunate to have someone with his expertise share his knowledge with us! Our next upcoming event is the Fishing Derby on June 11, 2022 from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. The Fishing Derby is an annual event for children up to the age of 16 and also their families. Prizes are given at the end and water safety is taught by the Corps of Engineers. Submitted by Teresa Donaldson.

Be sure to check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/grandprairiehistory.

Grand Prairie Historical Society

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Officers

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Secretary: Gena Seidenschwarz
Treasurer: Carol Roberson

Newsletter Editor

Glenn Mosenthin

GPHS is a 501(c)(3)
organization.