

**Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial  
Commission Meeting**

December 12, 2007

MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History  
Little Rock, Arkansas

**Members Present**

Richard Davies, Director, Department of Parks and Tourism  
Dora Kate Lee, President, Arkansas Chapter - United Daughters of the Confederacy  
Ernest Cunningham, Helena  
Jim Branson, Stuttgart  
Jerelyn Duncan, Interim Chairman, Martin Luther King Commission  
Troy Banzhoff representing John Scott from Pea Ridge National Military Park  
Bill Gatewood, Director, Old State House Museum  
Tommy Dupree, Jacksonville, Reed's Bridge Battlefield Preservation Society  
Wendy Richter, Director, Arkansas History Commission  
Mark Christ, Designee, Department of Arkansas Heritage  
Dr. George Lankford, Batesville  
Don Hamilton, Central Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail and Civil War Roundtable of Arkansas  
Ellen DiMaggio, Little Rock  
Jamie Brandon, Arkansas Archeological Survey at Southern Arkansas University  
Carolyn Ashcraft, Director, Arkansas State Library  
Danny Honnell, President, Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trails Foundation

**Members Absent**

Tom DeBlack not present, giving finals, Bill Stanley at trial, and Charles Durnett, out sick.

**Visitors**

Ray Jones, Jonesboro, Northeast Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail  
Holly Hope, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
Rufus Buie and Louise Mitchell, Cleveland County Historical and Genealogical Society  
Carl Drexler, archeologist

**Report of nominating committee for nomination and election of officers by Jamie Brandon**

Tom Dupree as Chairman  
Tom DeBlack as Vice Chariman  
Ellen DiMaggio as Secretary  
Don Hamilton moved to accept slate and George Lankford seconded. Motion passed.

President Tom Dupree asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2007 commission meeting.

Richard Davies moved and Danny Honnoll seconded to accept September minutes.

### **Civil War Activities Update by Mark Christ**

The Civil War Preservation Trust will hold its annual convention in Springfield, Missouri, next year in April. Information on the conference is available at [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org).

The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) is revising a 1992 study that started the battlefield preservation movement in Arkansas. Tony Feaster and Mark Christ will be doing field work for that in January and February.

Initial study was done for a congressional commission that sunsetted out and established priorities for battlefield preservation around the country. Since then, the ABPP has learned that some sites were missed, significantly the Reed's Bridge battlefield. Because of that they have not been able to apply for federal funding for acquisition. They will be included in the restudy and they will then be eligible to look for federal funding as soon as the study is posted.

The revised study will look at core areas initially studied in 1992 and will include campgrounds and approach routes. Tony Feaster, AHPP GIS coordinator, will digitize nineteenth-century maps and overlay on modern maps to look for sites for restudy.

Christ sent an e-mail to the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers website to inquire about Civil War Sesquicentennial events in other states. Responses were included on handouts given to members.

### **Request for Commission Endorsement of C.S.S. *Arkansas* Project by Mark Christ for Charles Durnett.**

A proposal was included in the handouts for commission members. The Arkansas Maritime Inland Museum in North Little Rock is proposing to build a scaled-down replica of the Confederate Navy ram *Arkansas* that served during the Vicksburg campaign. It will be an educational display. They are not asking for funding; they want the endorsement of the commission for a replica as an official Arkansas Sesquicentennial project.

Based on the mission statement adopted at the September meeting, Christ thought it would fit in with the commission's educational goals. Even though the vessel wasn't in Arkansas it is closely associated with Arkansas.

Richard Davies suggested that it might be interesting to include an exhibit and information on the construction of the Confederate ram since they used what materials they had. The *Arkansas* was covered in railroad iron.

Don Hamilton asked for a brief history on C.S.S. *Arkansas*. Richard Davies stated it was built on the Yazoo River to break the Union blockade. It had engine problems and they had to beach and blow it up to keep the Yankees from getting it.

George Lankford asked about the definition of an endorsement from the commission. Christ stated that the commission will be able to give approval of events around the state as official Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial projects.

Jim Branson inquired about a logo and commission-sanctioned wording of signage. Christ said there was no official signage but asked if anyone had any proposals. He also suggested the museum include something on waysides about the ironclad *Pontchartrain* that never saw any action but was burned near the modern maritime museum in North Little Rock when Steele took Little Rock in 1863.

Tom Dupree called for a vote on endorsement of C.S.S. *Arkansas*. Richard Davies moved to make the C.S.S. *Arkansas* project an ACWSC-sanctioned project. Jim Branson seconded. Motion passed.

### **Discussion of Sesquicentennial License Plates**

An application for a specialty license plate in Arkansas was included in handouts for members. Christ suggested looking at it and discussing at next meeting. He thought it might be a good way to raise money for the commission and activities and get out the word about the Sesquicentennial.

Danny Honnoll stated that the negative aspect of the plates is that Arkansas has reduced the logo on specialty plates and they are small and hard to read. New applicants are being told they cannot put a logo on the plate.

Tom Dupree inquired about the cost of a specialty plate. Danny Honnoll said they cost \$25 but you have to guarantee you will raise \$3,000. Richard Davies said you have to pay the \$25 fee every year.

Jamie Brandon moved that the commission go to the next topic on the agenda and table discussion on the plates until the next meeting.

Tom Dupree moved to discussion of logos.

Bill Gatewood suggested that the commission determine whether the logo will be color or black and white. Richard Davies offered that the commission needed to decide whether to use different logos for letterhead, banners and license plates. He felt it needed to be a design that could be both color and black and white.

Tom Dupree called for volunteers for a committee of four to determine the logo design and report back by the next meeting.

Bill Gatewood agreed to be chairman; other committee members named were Danny Honnoll, Jim Branson and Richard Davies.

Danny Honnoll moved that any further discussion of the specialty plates be tabled until determination of the logo and discussion with legislators regarding the plates could be undertaken. George Lankford seconded. Motion passed.

### **Discussion of priorities and timeframes for Commission**

The commission needed to decide how to achieve the mission decided on at the September meeting, what the priorities of the Commission should be and what they want to achieve between now and 2011.

Richard Davies suggested that the commission should collect information and put out a release to historical societies to inform the state about the commission. Perhaps they should implement a database and website.

Carolyn Ashcraft, Richard Davies and Mark Christ discussed the need for a website, suggesting a distinct website for the commission to collect information. Mark Christ agreed to release a media release through the AHPP e-mail newsletter regarding commission activities. Richard Davies suggested that Mark solicit information from historical societies about any Civil War-related events, activities and research.

Ellen DiMaggio suggested creating a main e-mail address for satellite organizations to send monthly newsletters to Mark Christ. (The e-mail address [acwsc@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:acwsc@arkansasheritage.org) has been created to handle commission e-mails.)

Mark Christ summed up the discussion on priorities in a list including Civil War-related events, seminars, research, speaker's bureau and publications. He also suggested adding to the Civil War reading list as well.

Ellen DiMaggio asked for contact information of other members, Mark Christ said he would e-mail information to each member.

George Lankford introduced some new goals he felt should be discussed and included in the priorities, including how to make it an inclusive celebration of Civil War. He wanted to explore how African Americans could think positively about the Civil War and how the community could get involved in commemorating the Civil War.

Richard Davies, Danny Honnoll, Ellen DiMaggio and Dora Kate Lee offered further discussions on societal issues that could be addressed by the commission. George Lankford felt that the commission should ask the African-American community to help think the commemoration through.

Jamie Brandon moved to nominate a committee to look into issues of inclusion. Chairman Dupree nominated Jamie Brandon, Jerelyn Duncan, Carolyn Ashcraft and George Lankford to the committee.

Richard Davies suggested filling in holes in history using graduate students to research missing information as theses. George Lankford offered that there could be a subcommittee that could offer a list of thesis and dissertation topics to further research.

George Lankford felt that the commission should also emphasize the unique nature of the Civil War in Arkansas through its projects. He encouraged the commission members to push James Johnston of Fayetteville to finish his book on the Arkansas Peace Society movement. He also mentioned that members should encourage other people with similar projects to have them done for the Sesquicentennial.

Richard Davies suggested setting up repositories across the state to copy Civil War material from descendants of Civil War soldiers, similar to an "Antiques Roadshow," perhaps at Prairie Grove or the Old State House.

Ellen DiMaggio offered the idea of an oral history project for people who have stories of the Civil War.

Don Hamilton felt the commission should focus on the events and personalities of the war and draw out the significance and lessons to be learned from obscure events and people involved, to make young people aware of the Civil War and form an organized overview of events and important personalities.

Discussion followed between Don Hamilton, Jim Branson and Tom Dupree about the lack of Arkansas-specific research on the Civil War through the 1950s.

George Lankford suggested asking the editor of the University of Arkansas Press to a meeting and talk about how the Press can work with the commission on the publication of Civil War-related books. Carolyn Ashcraft felt the Encyclopedia of Arkansas should also be involved and Richard Davies proposed that a bibliography be included in the website with available Civil War books and collections.

George Lankford thought the commission should push for a "museum-idea book" of suggestions for museums to compile interesting and unique exhibits for the Sesquicentennial commemoration.

Visitor Rufus Buie informed the commission about a new booklet, "The Battle of Mt. Elba." Buie passed out copies to the members and offered that historical societies could be major contributors of local histories.

Tom Dupree discussed how Civil War histories can link researchers to people that might not be aware of their family connection to the war and war sites in Arkansas.

Don Hamilton felt it would be important to compile a list of local historians who will write and speak on regional histories and lead bus tours. Seminars at Old State House should be included in the list.

Ellen DiMaggio felt the commission should send out mailers to mayors encouraging local people to research their Civil War connections. Also the commission should send mailers out to schools for Civil War days. Richard Davies thought the Arkansas Press Association should be involved and there should be a tie in with the Department of Education.

George Lankford mentioned a speaker's bureau organization. He felt there should be a list of historians who could address controversial issues related to the war. Bill Gatewood encouraged the formation of the website to facilitate lists and information on speakers.

George Lankford suggested the commission ought to help fund speaker's transportation to various places or campaign for someone else to fund travel.

George Lankford moved that the commission break for lunch and Mark Christ seconded. Motion passed.

### **Continue Discussion of Priorities and Timeframes for commission.**

Chairman Dupree opened discussion of how the commission should explore execution of the priorities discussed before lunch and the makeup of committees that would carry out the work.

George Lankford felt there needed to be one or two statewide focal point celebratory events. The commission should form a subcommittee to work on that to pull people to Little Rock for a state event for PR and attention to the commemoration. Mark Christ and Tom Dupree discussed the need for a state event every year during the Sesquicentennial. Carolyn Ashcraft mentioned that elected officials should be involved and Jim Branson emphasized the use of period structures as headquarters for events.

Discussion ensued between Jim Branson, Tom Dupree and George Lankford about using events as fundraisers for the Sesquicentennial. Mark Christ said that the commission can't solicit funds but the Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trails Foundation can obtain funds for the use of the commission. He reminded the commission that they needed to get organized for presentation of a legislative package during the next session of the General Assembly. Carolyn Ashcraft suggested that a preemptive visit to the Governor might help.

George Lankford inquired about commemorative events in the corresponding year for 1865. Mark Christ mentioned events at Prairie Grove and Pea Ridge in 2012. Richard Davies suggested moving events around the state for yearly commemorations. Mark Christ inquired as to whether the first committee formed should be one to determine

where events would be held across the state each year of the Sesquicentennial. The Commission agreed that committees should be formed at the end of the discussion.

George Lankford reminded the commission of the legislatively mandated mission that they promote a positive sense of the overall event and offered that the commission encourage the Arkansas Historical Association to do seminars or a set of papers about lessons learned from the Civil War that the commission could point to as a fulfillment of the legislative mandate. Mark Christ mentioned that the Arkansas Historical Quarterly's editors are in discussion about publishing Civil War articles during the sesquicentennial. He also suggested that the Arkansas Historical Association could form a conference topic around the lessons imparted by the war.

Chairman Dupree moved to the next committee discussion.

George Lankford offered discussion on a committee for publications. Richard Davies pointed out that there is a difference between scholarly publications and website research so there should be a breakdown between the different types and perhaps a committee for each.

Chairman Dupree moved to discuss next committee.

Richard Davies suggested local observances. Carolyn Ashcraft pointed out the similarity in meaning to the earlier suggested mailouts so the commission termed it outreach. George Lankford discussed the difficult logistics of compiling information from historical societies for a single mailout. George suggested a consulting team that could go to mayors and gather information on observances.

Mark Christ said the commission should wait until replies come back from initial mailouts to form a committee for outreach.

Dora Kate Lee asked if there was a list of websites with historical society and genealogy society addresses. Wendy Richter said there was a list available from the History Commission.

Discussion followed between Tom Dupree, Richard Davies, Mark Christ and Carolyn Ashcraft about whether to have six committees or one with subcommittees. Chairman Dupree wondered if they would all have to be active at the same time or finish with the tasks at hand and go to next projects. Richard Davies thought it should be incremental and interactive. Jim Branson suggested subcommittees that report on findings to the main commission. There was general agreement for this configuration among the commission members.

Richard Davies suggested forming the subcommittees based on the priorities established in the ACWSC mission statement. Further discussion centered around those priorities.

**Promoting Historic Sites around the state connected to Civil War through educational efforts, brochures.**

Richard Davies felt this would be covered by mailouts. Mark Christ said the commission should look at heritage tourism. Mark informed the commission that the AHPP will reprint the Guide to the Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail and suggested the commission add some things to a later version. Richard Davies thought the commission should offer suggestions for tourism promotion through bibliographies, videos and photography; he suggested that the commission solicit photos and videos to give ad agencies. Davies felt the commission should contact cities large enough to have advertising promotion commissions to take part in Sesquicentennial.

**Promoting Publications and archival collections connected to Civil War in Arkansas and advocating donations of materials to appropriate repositories.**

Carolyn Ashcraft offered that the libraries in the state would be the obvious repositories and she suggested that the Arkansas State Library could host speakers or do posters that offer information about available publications regarding the Civil War in Arkansas and what the Sesquicentennial would be about.

George Lankford asked Wendy Richter about a list of archives in the state and about publications that describe the holdings of the archives. She replied that there was an older publication by the Society of Southwest Archivists that offered an overview of every archival facility in the state; however, it needed updating. Carolyn Ashcraft mentioned that such publications could be updated and offered for sale to be used as a fundraising source for the commission.

Chairman Dupree moved to next topic.

**Promoting Local Observances that Tell the Local Story.**

George Lankford reminded the commission that this would be tied in with the initial mailouts encouraging groups to take part in the Sesquicentennial.

Chairman Dupree moved to next topic.

**Supporting Efforts to Teach and Research Arkansas Civil War History in the State's Schools and Universities.**

George Lankford inquired whether there was any "covering organization" for Arkansas history courses in junior high and high schools. If there was such an organization he felt they should be involved in planning to meet this priority. Discussion ensued about such organizations between Jim Branson, Richard Davies, Dora Kate Lee and Carolyn Ashcraft. Mark Christ and Carolyn Ashcraft said that the Department of Education might be useful. Further discussion was needed about contacts so Chairman Dupree moved to next topic.

## **Supporting Efforts to Preserve and Interpret the State's Civil War Sites and Documentary Heritage and Artifacts.**

Richard Davies felt it should be a function of the Arkansas Museums Association. Davies also felt that the ABPP Civil War battlefield re-study could be a useful tool. Mark Christ thought it would be good for major battlefields but for smaller sites it would not be pertinent; however, it would be a good starting point for the commission to focus its efforts.

Discussion ensued between Mark Christ, Richard Davies and Carolyn Ashcraft on timing of the restudy and its significance to the projects of the commission.

Chairman Dupree moved to next topic.

## **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.**

Mark Christ summed this up as a decision on what to ask the legislature for and a deadline for their request. Richard Davies suggested that the commission compile a ten-year business plan for the legislature. Chairman Dupree offered that the commission would need regional political support to persuade the legislature.

Carolyn Ashcraft asked if the Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trails Foundation could accept donations for the commission activities and if there were a federal source for grants could the commission apply for such funds. Mark Christ replied that the foundation could accept donations to be used toward commission activities but there could be no direct fiscal link to the commission and the foundation could also apply for grants for the commission.

Richard Davies reminded the commission that there were less than six months to submit 2009 and 2010 budgets so funds required for the first two years of the Sesquicentennial needed to be ready by May.

Mark Christ commented that all subcommittees needed to have their findings by the next meeting. Richard Davies responded that they should decide what they wanted to do then apply financial considerations to their findings. The decision was made to form a Finance and Legislative Committee.

Chairman Dupree moved to next topic.

Carolyn Ashcraft suggested that Mark Christ send an e-mail to the commission members regarding volunteering for involvement in the committees discussed.

Richard Davies suggested that the commission meet monthly rather than quarterly until they have their budget together in order to be prepared.

Mark Christ offered to send out a synopsis of the meeting via e-mail, request for committee volunteers and the commission would meet in a month to formally decide on which members would be appointed to the committees discussed.

Mark Christ called for volunteers from those present for membership in the subcommittees. Carolyn Ashcraft volunteered for the committee to promote publications and archival collections connected to the Civil War in Arkansas and advocating donations of materials to appropriate repositories.

Richard Davies volunteered to be on the committee to promote historic sites around the state that are connected to the Civil War through educational efforts.

George Lankford offered to work with Jamie Brandon and Jerelyn Duncan on the committee to ensure that the Sesquicentennial Celebration is inclusive of all Arkansans.

Jim Branson volunteered for the committee to develop an official logo for the ACWSC and the committee to 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 General Assembly.

Ellen DiMaggio volunteered for the “inclusion” committee.

Discussion ensued between Carolyn Ashcraft, George Lankford and Mark Christ on first task of inclusion committee regarding contacts for initial information. Mark Christ said he would send something out after the New Year.

Richard Davies asked Mark Christ if he had asked Aristototele what type of URL's are available.

**Discussion on next meeting date.**

Mark Christ made a motion to meet on January 30<sup>th</sup> and meet the last Wednesday of every month thereafter. Tom Dupree seconded.

Discussion ensued between Richard Davies, Carolyn Ashcraft, Tom Dupree and Mark Christ about timing of budget compilation. Richard said the commission should contact the Governor in the summer of 2008.

George Lankford inquired as to the attitude of the Governor toward the ACWSC and the Sesquicentennial celebration. Mark Christ said he was not aware of whether he had expressed an opinion either way.

Carolyn Ashcraft asked if anyone on the commission knew where a friend of hers might make a memorial contribution to the Jenkins' Ferry Battlefield site. Richard Davies said Arkansas Parks and Tourism was the owner and discussion ensued regarding types of contributions they could make.

Chairman Dupree made a motion to adjourn, George Lankford seconded. Motion passed.

(The next meeting of the ACWSC will be held on January 30, 2008, at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History.)