

OCTOBER 2011

# Post Rider

*Newsletter of the*  
**Natchez Trace Parkway  
Association**

**EXPLORE•COMPLETE•SUPPORT•PROTECT**



**Tracing the Journey of Southern Discovery**

## “Strike While the Iron is Hot”

Last October, the Association developed a plan to revive the organization with a focus on helping the Park Service complete the park portion of the Parkway. We knew that it would take a few years to return to the same level of effectiveness the organization had when it pushed for completion of the road. This first year, a lot of the foundation has been established for the new effort. We have held meetings along each section of the Parkway and there is a renewed interest.

The internet gives us new tools of a web site, Facebook page and email to stay in contact with members and to reach out to people beyond our area who want to support our efforts. We joined the Partnership for National Trails Systems where we can work with other national trails groups to increase the Parkway visibility. The Parkway and the Association were featured in its summer Journal.

Progress was made in planning to assist in two major Parkway events that will draw national attention to the Parkway: the 75th anniversary of the Parkway and the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. Work on the bicentennial is linking us to new partners in the southeast we can work with in the future to support our efforts. It is also supporting the development of a new living history program on the Parkway.

We have made good progress the first year toward the goals, but the main goal of completing the park portion of the Parkway remains. In the upcoming year, we need to develop the chapters in each sec-

tion of the Parkway to build an effective network of supporters. The chapters should also focus on strategies to generate support to complete the major interpretive facilities in their areas. The Association should broaden its support groups to people outside our area as well, particularly as we convert to a 501 (c) (3) organization and begin to raise funds to provide support for the Parkway. Besides those interested in the economic benefits of the Parkway, people with interests in history, recreation and nature are natural supporters we need to recruit.

Although the economic climate may be challenging, the bicentennial and the anniversary provide great opportunities to capture the attention of people who will be natural supporters of completing the Parkway. Combine those rare opportunities with a Parkway administration working hard and effectively toward the same goals and it becomes obvious this is the time for all communities along the Parkway to renew their efforts to push for full completion of the Parkway.

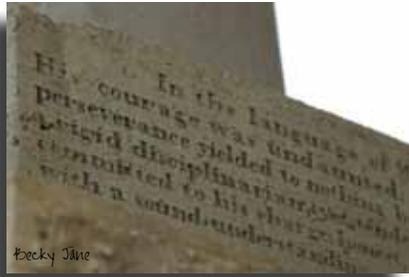
People who traveled the old Trace would phrase it, “Strike while the iron is hot.” I encourage you to be part of the annual meeting this month and to take an even more active role in the Association next year. Encourage people who share our goals to join.

This is an exciting time to be part of the Natchez Trace Parkway Association. It is a time when your efforts can make a difference.

~ Tony Turnbow, Association President



# From the Natchez Trace Parkway Superintendent



Above, Meriwether Lewis monument quote, "His courage was undaunted..."  
Below, new fencing at the Meriwether Lewis site, cabin restorations, background.

This August marked my 2nd anniversary as the superintendent of the Natchez Trace. It truly has been my privilege to work with so many outstanding partners and organizations and together we have made some very significant improvements. In 2010 alone, a total of \$46 million was spent on operating, maintaining, and improving the Natchez Trace Parkway. This is the largest amount spent on the Parkway since it was completed. Roughly \$13 million was spent on operations, another \$17 million on road improvements, and \$16 million on one-time investment and deferred maintenance projects.

Here are a few highlights:

**MERIWETHER LEWIS SITE** - As of this summer, we have completed nearly all phases of the Meriwether Lewis Death and Burial Site rehabilitation. We are in the final stages of completing the indoor/outdoor education exhibits and plan on having a public meeting in Tennessee later this year to solicit comments on how to make these exhibits better. We continue discussions with the Association, National Scenic Byways Program, Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, and other partners on building a visitor contact and education center at the site. This decision will be funding dependent.

**NEW RECREATIONAL TRAILS** - In January, we opened 5.2 miles of recreational trails in the Ridgeland/Madison Mississippi section. These trail segments have been outstanding community connectors and ultimately will stretch from the Ross Barnett Reservoir down to Clinton. Two more sections are currently

under construction and due to be completed next year. We continue dialogue with communities along the Parkway to do similar projects in other locations in the future.

**EMERALD MOUND PROJECT** - In partnership with the State of Mississippi, we have nearly completed an 86-acre land acquisition to provide better visitor access at the Emerald Mound Site, a National Historic Landmark, and second largest Native American mound in the country. Once this land is acquired, we plan to build a new one mile access road from the Parkway to the mound including a new parking lot, visitor exhibits, and trail.

**SCENIC RESOURCE PROTECTION** - We've begun an outstanding partnership with the Land Trust for Tennessee working to create a comprehensive scenic resource protection strategy. In that regard, we planted 15,000 trees last year to improve the scenic resource in-

tegrity of the Parkway in various sections. We've also set a goal to plant 100,000 more trees by 2016.

**NEW PARKWAY INTERPRETIVE FILM** - We received funding from the National Scenic Byways Program this year to fund development of a new Parkway interpretive film. This process will begin later this year and take about three years to complete.

**INCREASED EDUCATION AND OUTREACH** - We increased our education and outreach program significantly this past year reaching over 10,000 youths. We initiated formal partnerships with four Mississippi schools and plan on partnering with another ten schools in the upcoming years including schools in Alabama and Tennessee.

*EVENTS* - We have some major events coming up in the next few years as most of you know. In partnership with Tony and the Association, we have worked up preliminary plans for several War of 1812 events and also have the Parkway's 75th anniversary coming up in 2013. These events will be very important to helping us commemorate the history of the Trace and its role in American history.

*STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN* - We're in the final stages of completing a 3-5 year strategic business and operations plan for the Parkway. This process has taken us over one year to complete and the document is due to be published next month. It serves several purposes: 1) markets the Parkway in a way that has never been done before; 2) outlines operations, visitation trends, economic impacts, and partnership efforts; and 3) most importantly articulates our financial condition – what we're doing with our current funding, potential impacts of reductions, and strategies for increasing capacity in the future. This document will provide everyone with a very transparent look into the Parkway's operational and financial condition.

This is a brief sampling of some of the great work going on. We look forward to sharing more with you in the future. In closing, I thank you again for your tremendous support of the Natchez Trace and as always, don't hesitate to contact me or the staff if there is anything you need or if you have new ideas or suggestions.

Sincerely,



Cam Sholly

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## *Annual Meeting October 21-22*

Plan to be part of the 2011 Annual Meeting in Tupelo on October 21 and 22. In addition to the annual updates by Superintendent Sholly and the Association, the meeting will focus on the upcoming bicentennial of the War of 1812, the 75th Anniversary of the Parkway, development of the Chickasaw Cultural Center and the development of living history on the Parkway.

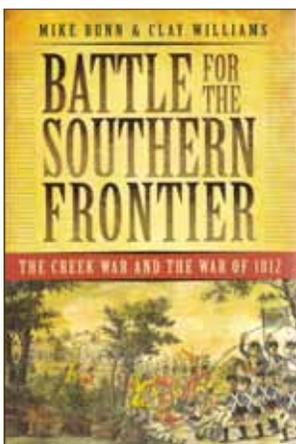
The annual meeting returns to a two-day format. The opening Friday evening session generously sponsored by BanCorpSouth will feature authors Mike Bunn and Clay Williams, whose book Battle for the Southern Frontier is one of the newest books on the war in the South. The authors speak passionately about the effect the war had on the country and why it needs to be remembered.

One session Saturday will discuss plans for commemorating the bicentennial along the Natchez Trace Parkway and how communities can be involved. Workshops on Saturday will foster our living history efforts. The regular "Pioneer Days" living history event at Parkway Headquarters will also be taking place at the time of the annual meeting.

The Chickasaw Nation's plans to build a major cultural center on the Parkway will be explored Saturday. The Nation plans to send representatives to discuss the project. The Nation is looking at a five to seven year timeline.



Re-unite yourself with our beautiful Natchez Trace this month when you attend the Annual Meeting October 21-22 in Tupelo.



Other topics on Saturday will include the 75th Anniversary of the Natchez Trace Parkway and our efforts to commemorate it. Members also will get an opportunity to preview the new film that is being created for the visitor center by photographer Mark Meunch.

Members and guests are encouraged to R.S.V.P. to [tonyturnbow@bellsouth.net](mailto:tonyturnbow@bellsouth.net) to help give us a good count for planning purposes.

## *Muster Day on the Natchez Trace -1812*

### *May 21, 22, 23, 2012*

The observance of the bicentennial of the War of 1812 on the Natchez Trace begins Memorial Day weekend 2012 at the Gordon House at mile marker 407.5. 1812 events in Tennessee and Alabama leading up to the war will be recreated and visitors should get a good understanding of the causes of the war.

In 1812, militia units met once or twice a year to train. Once the training was completed, the assembled soldiers and their families spent the time together with their neighbors in a festival atmosphere. Settlers took advantage of the crowds to sell their wares. Politicians and preachers did not pass on the opportunity to address a crowd. Reenactments and interpretations of all those elements will provide a historically accurate, educational and fun event. Recreations of actual speeches given by George Colbert, Col. Henderson and Andrew Jackson will be presented, along with debates among historical figures as to whether the country should go to war.

The U.S. 7th Infantry Living History Association, the "Cottonbalers," is expected to bring between 50 and 100 participants to recreate the military. This group conducts the annual War of 1812 reenactment at the Chalmette Battlefield in New Orleans. More information about the group can be found at [www.cottonbaler.com](http://www.cottonbaler.com).

John Gordon, who operated a ferry for Natchez Trace travelers on the Duck River at the site, served as one of General Jackson's Company of Spies and he often took the lead in the military actions. He was sent as the sole spy into Spanish-controlled Pensacola. The intelligence he gained led to the American invasion of Pensacola. Gordon will be honored as part of the event. The Association will assist in creating new interpretation about John Gordon.

On Memorial Day, participants are expected to conduct a ceremony in Leiper's Fork at mile marker 428 on the Benton home site. Thomas Hart Benton was General Jackson's aide-de-camp during the 1813 Natchez Expedition. The Daughters of the War of 1812 will unveil a bicentennial marker as part of the ceremony. The Daughters of the War of 1812, as well as the Daughters of the American Revolution, placed markers along the old Trace to preserve its memory, prior to the enactment of the legislation creating the Parkway.

Plans for subsequent events are being developed for Natchez in 2013, Colbert Ferry in 2014 and cities along the entire Trace in 2015. The commemoration along the Trace will lead to a July 4, 2015 event at the Hermitage, which will be the concluding event of the national bicentennial.

The bicentennial provides an excellent opportunity to tell one of the key stories of the importance of the Natchez Trace.



## *Natchez Meeting*

The June meeting in Natchez focused on reactivating interest in completing Natchez Trace interpretation and increasing support for the Association. District Ranger Daniel Kimes appeared in character as an 1812 Tennessee Volunteer, as plans were discussed for the 2013 and 2015 bicentennial events in Natchez. Discussion included scheduling the 2013 event to coincide with the annual Natchez Pilgrimage to make the events available to the visitors from around the world who travel to Natchez for the pilgrimage.

In 1813, soldiers camped near Jefferson College in anticipation of a British invasion of the Gulf Coast. Two years later, the Washington and Natchez, Mississippi areas were hubs of support for the military action in New Orleans. At the conclusion of the war, both towns held celebrations for Andrew and Rachel Jackson. Recreating the period balls was also discussed.

The role of Brandon Hall Plantation in the 1938 opening gala for the Parkway was explored in relation to plans to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Parkway. The Association will organize an anniversary event at Brandon Hall.

## *Colbert Family Reunion*

Colbert's Ferry was only one of several enterprises operated by the Chickasaw Colbert family on the old Natchez Trace. The annual September reunion of the Colbert family in Tuscumbia provided a good forum to discuss the important role the Colbert family played in the War of 1812 and to discuss ideas for the Colbert Ferry site to suggest to the Parkway.

The reunion is held in conjunction with the annual Oka Kapassa festival in Tuscumbia. An Elder and governing board member from the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma attended the festival.

The family expressed an interest in helping restore signs at the site of Colbert's house. It is also hoped that new research will lead to additional interpretation on the Colbert family at the site.



Historic photo of Colbert home site

## *Website*

Visit the new Natchez Trace Parkway Association web site at

**[www.natcheztraceinfo.com](http://www.natcheztraceinfo.com)** Content is still being developed for several sections.

Members are also encouraged to get involved in helping develop sections on recreation and nature. Further development of the web site will be discussed at the annual meeting.

## *Natchez Trace Myths* *New Discoveries About Inns*

Recently discovered documents present a clearer picture of the operations of inns, often called "stands" along the old Trace. Until now, accounts written by early travelers from the late 1700s to the early 1800s have been used to define the image of the stands as crude hostelries, where travelers may have been fed a bowl of corn mush from a common pot and directed to throw their bed rolls on the floor to share space with strangers. Documents from a lawsuit between the owners of Young Factor's Stand, near Lower Glenrock, in 1818 provide a different picture of what travelers experienced in the stands as the Trace developed.

The Young Factor's partners were two Natchez Trace post riders who saw the profitable operation of the inn as a good business opportunity. Tennessee pioneer and Chickasaw Agent James Robertson had said that Young Factor's was a "fine house of entertainment," another term used at the time to describe the inns.

Furniture for the stand was brought from Nashville rather than made on the farm. Beverages were served in china coffee cups and glass tumblers rather than tin cups. Tea spoons were provided for sugar, still considered a luxury at the time. The stands were often called “taverns” and whiskey and peach brandy were also served. Natchez Trace taverns may have been little different from most other inns travelers would have found across the country, and just as today, inn owners may have worked to meet a common basic standard the traveling public expected to find from Washington to New Orleans.



Dunham's Station, an original Natchez Trace Inn in Nashville

Like many stands along the Trace, the owners of Young Factor's also operated a farm to raise food for their guests, and they sold food for travelers to take on their journey. The word “stand” has more commonly been associated with stores or trading posts. Knowing that the inns also sold provisions for travelers to carry on the next leg of their trip makes use of the word “stand” less mysterious.

Not surprisingly, the documents paint a picture of meals cooked over the fire in a large kettle or other kitchen utensils. Pork that could be cured and stored was a staple. Large quantities of corn meal and flour also suggest that biscuits and corn bread were regularly served. Fresh vegetables and game would have been served when available.

Though rarely discussed in many accounts of the old Trace, slave labor was used in the kitchens and stables. In fact, the Young Factor's partners planned to rely solely upon their slaves to run the operation. Their plans went awry when the cook became pregnant. The owners sent her to Nashville to have the child and the cook's husband, the farm supervisor, soon disappeared and showed up in Nashville to be with his wife.

The Trace and its inns reflected the changes the road helped bring to what was then the southwestern U.S. frontier. Just as the old road evolved over the years, travelers' experiences on the road changed over time as well. The history of the old Trace may be better understood in phases of development rather than through the lens of one period.

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**Remember the Association now has a FACEBOOK page. If you have not already, be sure to “Like” it and encourage your Facebook friends to like it, too. In addition to newsletters, we can use Facebook to keep you informed of events and meetings.**



*Ask how you can be a part of the development of our new web site*

**www.NatchezTrace.info**

# JOIN THE ASSOCIATION

If you are not already a member or if you have not renewed your membership, please complete the form below and mail it to the Treasurer. As you can see, we have a lot of work in progress, and we need your help. Together we can help the Park Service make the Natchez Trace Parkway the destination park that was envisioned in the 1930s when work began. This is the last stage of development as the visitor amenities are completed.

*Clip, complete and return with payment to:*  
**Natchez Trace Parkway Association Treasurer**  
**P. O. Box 156**  
**Franklin, TN 37096-0156**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please select one:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Individual

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For Office Use Only: RDC \_\_\_\_\_ CK# \_\_\_\_\_ AMT \_\_\_\_\_ ENT \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your support of the Natchez Trace Parkway!*

THE NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY ASSOCIATION IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION CHARTERED IN MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA AND TENNESSEE DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING THE NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY.

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