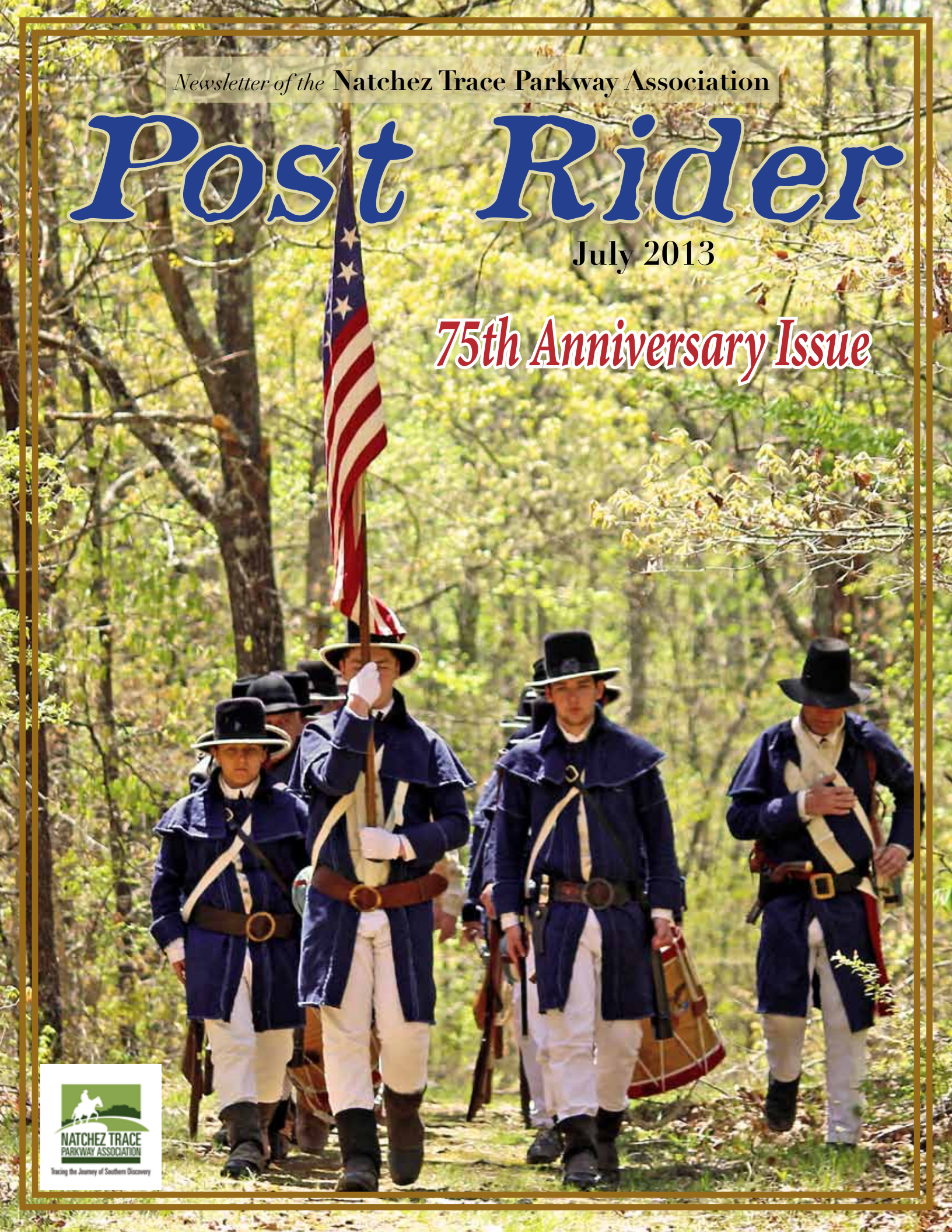
Newsletter of the Natchez Trace Parkway Association

Post Rider

July 2013

75th Anniversary Issue



NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY ASSOCIATION
Tracing the Journey of Southern Discovery

A Message From The President

Bryant Boswell

It has been a full first six months. I want to bring you up to speed on developments.

On February 8, there was a meeting in Florence, Alabama, of the chairs of the Chapter Recreation Committees, the NPS, and other interested parties. While all recreational activities were discussed, the primary focus was on cycling. There were 16 in attendance. Great ideas on cycling safety were openly discussed from both the cycler's perspective and the motorist. The potential for the Gary Holdiness Recreation Fund and its perpetuation by some great cycling events was discussed. Look for positive movement on these issues. In this age of faster cars, cellular phones, multitasking lives and different modes of recreation, we need to remind ourselves that the Parkway is not a highway, but a Park - A SHARED PARK – shared by two types of vehicles – motorized and non-motorized.

In March, member Cary Spence donated 1,000 static cling auto decals of the NTPA logo. We will be distributing those throughout the year. Also in March, an enclosed trailer and tents were purchased to operate the first Living History of the association. Look for the trailer with the Natchez Trace Parkway Association Living History decals on the side.

In April, the NTPA had the first 444 mile Living History educational initiative, "Expedition Natchez 1813: Becoming Old Hickory," over a ten day period. It began in Natchez and ended at the Hermitage in Nashville. Twenty-two events were held, and 2,000 eighth grade students heard of Andrew Jackson and his Tennessee Militia's 1813 survival march from Natchez to Nashville.

I want to thank all of you who helped with this. Wonderful food, beautiful evening events and great support by many of you kept the 30 re-enactors, who came from all over the U.S., energized for the mission. Education of the next generation will always be the mission for the Living History component of our association. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Chickasaw Nation sent representatives who helped with the educational stations, and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians sent a representative to interpret Tuscumbia Landing.

In May, the National Park Service celebrated their 75th Anniversary of Parkway oversight with a gala affair at the headquarters building in Tupelo. Thanks goes to Board member, Karen Geddie, for her hard work in organizing the NTPA hot dog stand, and to Dot Ward, Lester Senter Wilson, Brad Prewitt, Bud Pride and Tom Watts for making our participation a success.

Please mark your calendars for September 13 and 14. It is the annual Oka Kappasa Festival in Tuscumbia, Alabama. The Alabama Chapter will be our host as we hold our Annual Meeting in conjunction with the Festival. Please support your association by attending. Touring Tuscumbia Landing is a must and something you will always remember.

Our Executive Director Tony Turnbow is doing a fantastic job. He will be the "continuity" needed so badly as the presidency passes from state to state.

The NTPA has so much going for it and has so much potential. Please help us recruit members. Dale Wilkerson and his National Park Service staff are wonderful. Our National Park bonds the three states together; the bonds have never been stronger. Our association has never had more energy from its officers and Board.

Let me know how you could be involved. What is your passion? Is it educating the next generation of our history, or is it cycling, or hiking, or jogging, or nature study? Or is it simply providing these opportunities for your state? There is a place for everyone.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your president. Please feel free to contact me at mtcreeklodge@aol.com or call at 601-845-7994.

Bryant Boswell,
Association President

Message from the Acting Superintendent

Dale Wilkerson

Over 1200 visitors, staff and special guests celebrated the 75th anniversary of Natchez Trace Parkway on May 18th.

The event included over 80 classic cars from different eras in parkway construction, living history reenactors, children's activities and educational exhibits. The parkway was also pleased to host a number of dignitaries, including Melisa Ridenour (Division Engineer, Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division), Gordon Wissinger (Acting Southeast Regional Director), US Representative Alan Nunnelee and US Senators Roger Wicker and Thad Cochran.

After opening ceremonies, the festival shifted into high gear, with hundreds of children earning a special 75th anniversary patch by interacting with living history participants and exhibitors throughout the day. Park partners, including the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area, the Tupelo Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Natchez Trace Compact and ladies from the Mary Stuart Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, were on hand to educate visitors about their relationships to the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Living history participants highlighted individuals and societies important to Old Trace history, including the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Meriwether Lewis, a War of 1812 soldier, a "Kaintuck" (boatman), early pioneers and soldiers representing both Union – a United States Colored Troops representative – and Confederate forces.

Children had a chance to understand more about the parkway's archeological resources through the very popular mock archeological dig, tried on period uniforms and posed for pictures with their families, and "drove" decorated cardboard "cars" along the Beech Springs Nature Trail.

Over 80 classic car enthusiasts from the local area had a wide variety of vehicles on display, with a 1955 black and silver Chevrolet earning the "Kid's Choice" award for favorite car.

Area music groups donated their time and talent to take visitors on a musical journey through history – starting with dulcimers, moving on to bluegrass and gospel, and finishing up with a nod toward Tupelo's native son, Elvis Presley.

The Natchez Trace Parkway Association played a critical role in the success of the event by serving up food at 1938 prices – 10 cent hot dogs and 5 cent drinks had visitors lining up for a budget-friendly meal. Donations from Eastern National funded supplies and materials for the overall event. This is a great example of how, working together, we can accomplish big things.

Happy Birthday, Natchez Trace Parkway!

~Dale Wilkerson,
Acting Superintendent

Post Rider

Newsletter of the
Natchez Trace Parkway Association

July 2013

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Chickasaw Nation
Choctaw Nation
To be appointed

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY ASSOCIATION
Tracing the Journey of Southern Discovery

EXPLORE•COMPLETE•SUPPORT•PROTECT

Post Rider is the newsletter of the Natchez Trace Parkway Association, P.O. Box 412, Star, Mississippi 39167. The Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. As a park support organization, it encourages people to Explore, Complete, Support and Protect the Natchez Trace Parkway. For more information about the Association, visit our website www.natcheztrace.org. To contact us, you may also email us at info@natcheztrace.info or send correspondence to the address listed above.

Happy 75th Anniversary Natchez Trace Parkway

Early parkway promoters predicted that the Natchez Trace Parkway would become to the South what Yellowstone was to the West. That prediction has come true. The number of visitors to the parkway now exceeds Yellowstone visitors by more than two million people per year. In the latest statistics, the parkway ranks as the seventh most visited national park unit. The benefit is not just the millions of dollars visitors pump into local economies - the national park provides a resource for education and recreation to a local population base of more than 2,000,000 people. It preserves and interprets history important to the early period of our nation's history. It conserves what has often been described as a "ribbon of green" through a growing commercialized landscape.

Last October, the Association took the opportunity of the 75th anniversary of the inaugural of the Natchez Trace Parkway to acknowledge Association leaders and political leaders who worked tirelessly to promote the parkway. The 75th Anniversary of the Natchez Trace Parkway becoming a national park unit is a good opportunity to recognize the National Park Service personnel who have helped make the parkway what it is.

Early National Park Service historians were given the job of presenting a study defining the Natchez Trace and making a recommendation to Congress of what history should be preserved. The young historians soon discovered that they were the first to attempt writing a comprehensive history of the Trace. Before the age of computers and the Internet, they had to travel to court houses and archives and search for records no one had uncovered. With the limited resources available to them, they did an excellent job. Their Natchez Trace Survey still stands as one of the most complete histories written about the Trace.

Surveyors not only were required to determine where the old Trace was located. They had to work through deeds in over twenty counties to determine who owned the land. That work may have seemed easy compared to laying out the boundaries. Surveyors talked of leaving early in the morning for hot days in the woods in the Deep South, and returning late in the evening with ticks, chiggers, and occasional snake bites and dog bites.

Engineers were given the job of designing a modern highway to meet the contours of the terrain. Construction workers tied themselves to the sides of hills to begin construction on some of the steeper slopes. Landscape architects discovered that some landowners cut all their timber in advance of the road. Rangers began a community education process of how a parkway would differ from other public roads.

At the center of it all, the superintendent and his staff had to respond to the needs of personnel, demands of bosses at higher levels, and requests from local politicians and groups who each wanted their own areas or projects to be completed first. Most superintendents handled the balancing act with the political diplomacy the job required.

On the 75th, we honor the men and women who made, and who continue to make, the Natchez Trace Parkway their work. They each contributed a part of themselves in the effort to make the parkway one of the nation's great national parks.

Preservation of natural resources along the parkway is evidenced by an abundance of wildlife. This hen turkey strutted her brood of poults across the Natchez Trace Parkway in view of oncoming cyclists.

Donations Welcome!

The Association has always been a non-profit organization, but now it also has the official IRS determination as a 501(c)(3) public charity. Contributions to the Association may qualify donors for tax deductions. The new status will also qualify the Association for additional grants.

The decision to change the tax status reflects a major shift in the focus of Association work. Since 1934, the Association worked effectively to encourage state governments to buy the land and the federal government to complete and support the parkway.

Economic realities have changed, and many national park support groups have been able to provide greater assistance by helping provide private support to accomplish the mission. When a facility needs repairs or funds are needed for education programs or brochures, the park support group is able to help. Through private donations, individuals are able to have a greater impact on programs that are important to them.

NPS regulations govern fundraising for specific projects in a park. NPS Director's Order 21 mandates that fundraising projects for the benefit of a park, among other things, must show that they support priorities established for the park and not create additional costs.

In addition to supporting the parkway directly, the Association needs funds to support its own goals. Association projects such as the cell phone tour, living history, cycling safety awareness, just to name a few, are beginning to gain support. Eventually, the Association should be able to raise support for larger parkway projects when those are approved.

To make donating easier, the Association web site has linked with PayPal to accept PayPal and credit card payments through our website, www.natcheztrace.org. Making the giving process more convenient should also provide an opportunity for the six million non-local visitors to the parkway to help support to the work of the Association.

If you love the Natchez Trace and you appreciate how it enriches your life, consider making a gift to make a difference. Association dues cover basic membership expenses. Additional contributions make it possible for the association to lend valuable assistance to the parkway.

Current projects:

Cycling Safety-The Gary Holdiness Recreation Fund has been established to promote cycling safety. Recreation chairs have met to begin a discussion of what projects would be most effective. A forum will be held at our annual meeting.

Living History-Bringing history to life is an effective means to teach. The ten-day Expedition Natchez 1813 reached over 2,000 students and the general public from Natchez to Nashville. Equipment has been donated. Additional equipment, clothing and other items are necessary to build an effective program. Funds are needed to sponsor future events and locations on the parkway.

Cellphone Tour and App– A cell phone tour of the parkway is under development to provide new layers of information about sites along the parkway. Funds are needed for the development of the program and quarterly maintenance costs.

Continued Web Site Improvements-The web site continues to be upgraded. Our goal is to create an on-line source of information to help visitors understand and appreciate the Natchez Trace and its resources, based upon their own level of interest. Eventually it should become a type of Natchez Trace encyclopedia, as well as an interactive educational tool.

Association President Bryant Boswell presiding at an Alabama Chapter meeting in Florence.

Remembering Marty Owens

Photo NPS

Marty Owens

The Natchez Trace Parkway may never have a more ardent supporter than Marty Owens. Marty's death on April 25, 2013 leaves a void. She served as Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent for over two decades. As administrations and staff changed, Marty was a constant.

At Marty's memorial service, Acting Superintendent Dale Wilkerson made a posthumous presentation of the Post Rider Award, the parkway's highest recognition. He said that he had planned to award it to Marty upon her retirement.

Marty's minister commented that Marty thought the parkway was one of God's greatest gifts to mankind and she wanted to share it.

Just recently, Marty commented that she never dreaded going into her office because taking care of business for the parkway did not seem like work. Her dream retirement was to work as a volunteer in the park at the future Meriwether Lewis Education Center.

Marty took pride in being a behind-the-scenes person. She said that if anyone noticed her work, she was not doing her job. Behind the scenes, she had opportunities in subtle ways to influence the parkway, as a large portion was developed during the time that she worked for the parkway. In some ways, the parkway will always reflect her subtle influence.

Marty was also a great supporter of the Association. The Association is creating a memorial fund in honor of Marty to assure that the example of her enthusiastic support will continue to promote excellence on the parkway.

Malcolm Gardner

It is easy to assume that the parkway was always envisioned to become the park we know today. In 1938, even NPS leaders at the highest levels were still unsure what a history-based parkway was or what business they had in building a road. It fell to the first superintendent Malcolm Gardner to take broad concepts for something that had never been done and create a plan on the ground. Each decision created precedent as one section built on another.

Superintendent Gardner was first assigned to the parkway as historian. It was soon determined that one person should head the unit as superintendent, and Gardner became the acting superintendent prior to being appointed superintendent in 1942.

As the first superintendent, Gardner had the opportunity to shape what became the Natchez Trace Parkway. He often referred to it as three legs of a stool- history, nature/science and recreation. By the time of Garner's retirement in 1970, over half the parkway had been completed and important precedents had been set.

Malcolm Gardner's son Malcolm Gardner, Jr. and Steve Harriman, whose father Claude Harriman was the first parkway Chief Ranger, were present at the 75th Anniversary celebration. They lived at the headquarters complex as children, when the parkway was in its formative stages. Both agreed to help the Association continue to piece together the early history of the parkway. As first-person witnesses of that history, their help will be invaluable.

Association Living History Program Takes A Major Step

Over 2,000 students along the parkway listened as re-enactors portrayed Natchez Trace historic figures. More than 100 historians and history enthusiasts traveled from across the country at their own expense and almost half donated over a week of their time to bring history to life for the students. It was part of the first living history event on the parkway stretching from Natchez to Nashville, as the 1813 Natchez Expedition was reenacted.

Living history is an effective method to spark a student's interest in history. It is also enables volunteer groups to use the resources of a national park to help the park accomplish its mission of interpretation.

Living history is one facet of interpreting a the history of a site, but it makes an impression that may last a lifetime.

Many people who love national parks as adults can recall experiences as children where the seeds of that interest were planted. Reaching out to the next generations is one of the main goals of the living history program.

Association president Bryant Boswell brings years of experience in living history to his position. He was one of the impressionists who portrayed explorer Meriwether Lewis during the multi-year bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Dr. Boswell has donated tents to be used in the program and made a trailer available to transport equipment.

Reaction from students and the general public was widespread and positive. The sights and sounds of 1813 attracted their attention in a way that text in a history book could not.

Development of an improved living history program is one of the long-range goals of the Association War of 1812 commemoration.

Volunteers spent ten days presenting living history from Natchez to Nashville.

Improving Cycling Safety On The Parkway

When automobiles and cyclists share the same road, whether the driver of the automobile sees the cyclist in time to avoid disaster depends on a number of variables. Modern distractions such as cell phones increase the risks, but even sunlight at a low angle can make it difficult for motorists to see riders on the parkway curves. Drivers who are unaware that cyclists are likely to be on the road are even less likely to be alert for them. Commuters (heavy users of the Parkway) are likely to be aware that cyclists also use the Parkway.

Suggestions for improving cycling safety on the parkway was the focus of a meeting of the recreation chairs in Florence on February 8. Mrs. Donna Holdiness, whose family and friends established the Gary Holdiness Recreation Fund to honor her late husband, participated in the discussion.

The parkway exists as a national park in part to encourage recreational use as well as to educate and to preserve historic and cultural resources.

The parkway was also created to provide a scenic drive. Its lower speed limits are intended to create a leisurely driving pace. Unlike other types of public roads and rather than maintaining a constant flow of traffic as on a regular highway, the parkway was designed to encourage motorists to slow down and make frequent stops to view the scenery.

People living near the Parkway have found it to be the most convenient way to get from one point to another. For a lot of commuters, speed of arrival is likely to be more important than slowing to view the surroundings. When a driver never considers the parkway as a national park, a slow vehicle, pedestrian or cyclist can be viewed as an obstacle impeding traffic rather that a visitor using the park for its intended purpose. Conflicts arise, and safety becomes an important issue.

Planners used frequent curves to improve the scenic quality rather than to provide a road safe for high-speed travel. Some early planners stated that the northern portion near Nashville was designed specifically with sharper curves, limited access and a lower driving speed to discourage commuter traffic.

Two cyclists' deaths on the parkway in a year have prompted calls ranging from prohibiting cycles on the parkway to lowering the speed limit below 50 mph as in other national parks or to close the parkway certain days out of the year to vehicular traffic. Similar debates are taking place across the country where autos and cycles are sharing the same space.

Among the issues raised for further discussion at the Annual Meeting:

1. How to improve motorist awareness of shared use. Signs at entrances and stenciling on the pavement are two ideas that were discussed.
2. Additional patrolling to enforce speed limits was suggested to make the parkway safer for recreational use.
3. Safety gear such as high visibility colors, 180 degree LED lights and flags were considered.
4. Whether a bicycle should be treated as an automobile, requiring a motorist to pass a cyclist in the opposite lane and whether single file riding makes single-file riders less visible and creates a greater danger were two additional topics opened for consideration.

Annual Meeting In Tuscumbia

Save the dates, September 13-14, for the 2013 Annual Meeting in Tuscumbia. Whether you love the parkway for history, recreation or nature, the Annual Meeting will give you a chance to explore your interests and to meet other members who share your interest. Though plans are still in development, the weekend will include a special bike ride to the parkway, a forum on cycling safety, information about new discoveries in history along the parkway and nature walks.

The event will take place in conjunction with Tuscumbia's Oka Kapassa Festival - a meeting of Chickasaw, Choctaw and Creek Indians. The festival will include a 1700-1800 Indian hunter's camp, flint knapping, basket making, Indian flute and dances, just to mention a few highlights.

If you have never attended an annual meeting, plan now to join us to learn about developments along the parkway and to be part of making it better.

Second War Of 1812 Bicentennial Event:

Andrew Jackson's 1813 Natchez Expedition Re-Created From Natchez To Nashville

Re-creating Jackson's 1813 march on the old Natchez Trace near Fort Dearborn at Natchez.

The story of Andrew Jackson and the 1812 Tennessee Volunteers was recounted with a series of War of 1812 bicentennial events from Natchez to Nashville along the Natchez Trace in April. The Natchez Trace Parkway Association joined with the 7th US Infantry Living History Association and several other partners to use living history to bring to life accounts of the 1813 Natchez Expedition.

The commemoration began as over one-hundred re-enactors marched up the old Natchez Trace and assembled at Propinquity, home of Fort Dearborn commander Lt. Col. Leonard Covington, to remember the soldiers who were quartered at Fort Dearborn. The parade of Jackson's troops through Natchez was re-created, followed by a period reception at the Prentiss Club. The encampment of the troops was portrayed adjacent to the Fort Dearborn site. At a period dinner in Natchez, toasts from Jackson's 1812 Fourth of July officer's dinner were re-created, and Washington Jackson's descendant William Farrell accepted public acknowledgment of his ancestor's supply of hundreds of pairs of boots for the soldiers' return march on the Natchez Trace. Nashville bankers Washington Jackson and James Jackson also helped finance the military expedition and lent money to Jackson for food and medicines for the troops.

The following week, a detachment of 40 living history participants portrayed the returning soldiers through Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. Mississippi middle school students were introduced to the story in camps set up along the old Natchez Trace. Grinder's Stand, located at the 1813 recognized Chickasaw Nation/Tennessee border provided a Tennessee homecoming and dismissal area.

Re-enactors from the Regency Society portrayed Tennessee families welcoming home their sons and husbands. The same group that had portrayed the Tennessee Volunteers from Natchez to Nashville, ended their journey at President Jackson's grave at the Hermitage, where they lay a wreath.

Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice and former Brigadier General of the Mississippi National Guard William Waller addressed Andrew Jackson's military leadership in a ceremony at the old Mississippi State Capitol. General Bufford Blount, who led U.S. troops, including the 7th U.S. Infantry, into Iraq in 2001 was also in attendance, along with Kevin Parker, vice-chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Grant Hardin, who portrays Jackson, read the speech Jackson prepared to give at the building on the 25th anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans.

Ceremony at the War of 1812 Memorial Site on the Parkway.

A ceremony in Tuscumbia, Alabama honored the contribution of the Chickasaw Nation to the soldiers on the 1813 march. The Chick-

Re-enactors portraying Thomas Hart Benton, Major General Andrew Jackson, Chief George Colbert and Colonel John Coffee.

asaws used their stores of winter food supplies to feed Jackson's troops to prevent starvation. Descendants of cavalry commander John Coffee and Chickasaw chiefs George Colbert and Levi Colbert participated in the ceremony. Peyton "Bud" Clark, direct descendant of William Clark, who served as Indian agent in the west and who worked with the Chickasaws, represented his ancestor at the ceremony.

Tennessee Army National Guard Major General Robert Harris spoke at a ceremony at the new War of 1812 Memorial site on the Natchez Trace Parkway. Major General Harris told the audience that Jackson showed extraordinary leadership in refusing to abandon his men and by leading them home on the Natchez Trace. Dr. Sam Gant of the General Society of 1812 commented that the Natchez Trace is hallowed ground because of the men who sacrificed and died on it during the War of 1812.

Representatives of the Chickasaw Nation, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians participated in the events to broaden the perspective of the commemoration and to tell the stories of their own people. Through discussions on the contributions of the American Indians in assisting Jackson's troops and later in serving under his command, as well as the consequences of the war and Indian Removal, the groups began a fresh examination of the period when American Indians partnered with the U.S. army to defend the nation against foreign invasion.

The War of 1812 was discussed in lectures in one of the old classrooms at the c. 1802 Historic Jefferson College. Speakers included Dr. Tom Kanon of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, James Parker, Director of Fort Toulouse, Clay Williams, Director of the Old Capitol Museum in Mississippi, and Bud Clark.

The bicentennial event accomplished several Association goals and raised awareness of the organizations work, as well as providing an educational experience students will not forget. The Association plans to re-create the end-of-war victory celebrations in 2015.

A gallery of photos is posted on the web site at www.natcheztrace.org.

Bicentennial Hickory Trees

Tree Planting at French Camp

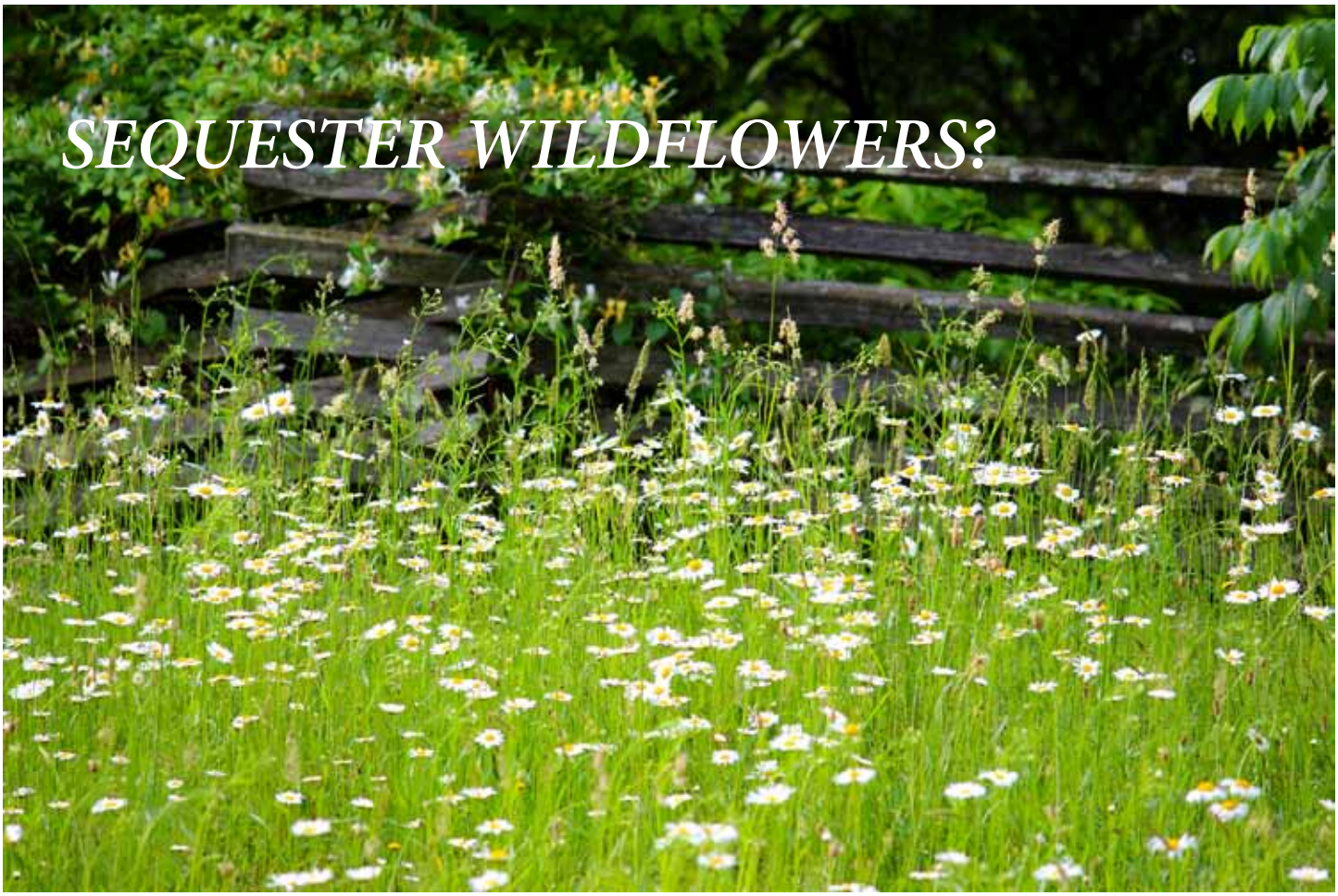
A lasting memorial to the bicentennial of the War of 1812 will be Bicentennial Hickory trees that were planted from the bluff of the Mississippi River in Natchez to the Hermitage, and at sites associated with the Natchez Expedition.

Andrew Jackson earned the name "Old Hickory" on the 1813 return march when he refused to abandon his men as ordered and walked with them all but the first twenty miles on the arduous march back to Tennessee on the Natchez Trace. He earned that name with help of the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations that provided crucial food and forage for his troops.

Rebecca Cravat Chapter DAR joins with the Living History participants to plant Bicentennial Hickory Tree at French Camp.

We thank the following partners for the donations that made the trees possible:

DAR Chapters: Natchez Chapter, Pathfinder Chapter, James Gilliam Chapter, Rebecca Cravat Chapter ,Samuel Hammond Chapter and George Colbert Chapter, Tennessee Society DAR, Pontotoc Historical Society and Tennessee Society U.S. Daughters of 1812.



The reduction in mowing along the parkway this spring due to Washington-mandated cost-cutting led to an unexpected benefit. Miles of wildflowers sprang up. For several years, maintenance crews have delayed some spring mowing to allow wildflowers, but this year the additional reduction in spring mowing have added miles of wildflowers.

Still, some visitors prefer the manicured, urban-park appearance they have become accustomed to seeing along the parkway to the less-maintained growth that allows wildflowers to flourish.

New Membership Levels of Support

Basic Membership: Annual (January 1 – December 31)

$25 Basic Family Membership (3 year - $65)
$50 Basic Business, Government or Organizational Membership

Life Membership: Age adjusted, Listed in newsletter

$500 Life Membership (Senior, 65y/o+)
$750 Life Membership (45 – 64y/o)
$1,000 Life Membership (Birth – 44y/o)

General Donations: Includes one year basic membership

Listing optional on Website and in Newsletter.
$500 - $999 Silver Level Donor
$1,000 - $2,499 Gold Level Donor
$2,500 - $4,999 Platinum Level Donor
$5,000 - $10,000 + Diamond Level Donor

Join the Association!

Support Your Parkway by becoming a member of or making a donation to the Natchez Trace Parkway Association. Learn more online at www.NatchezTrace.org

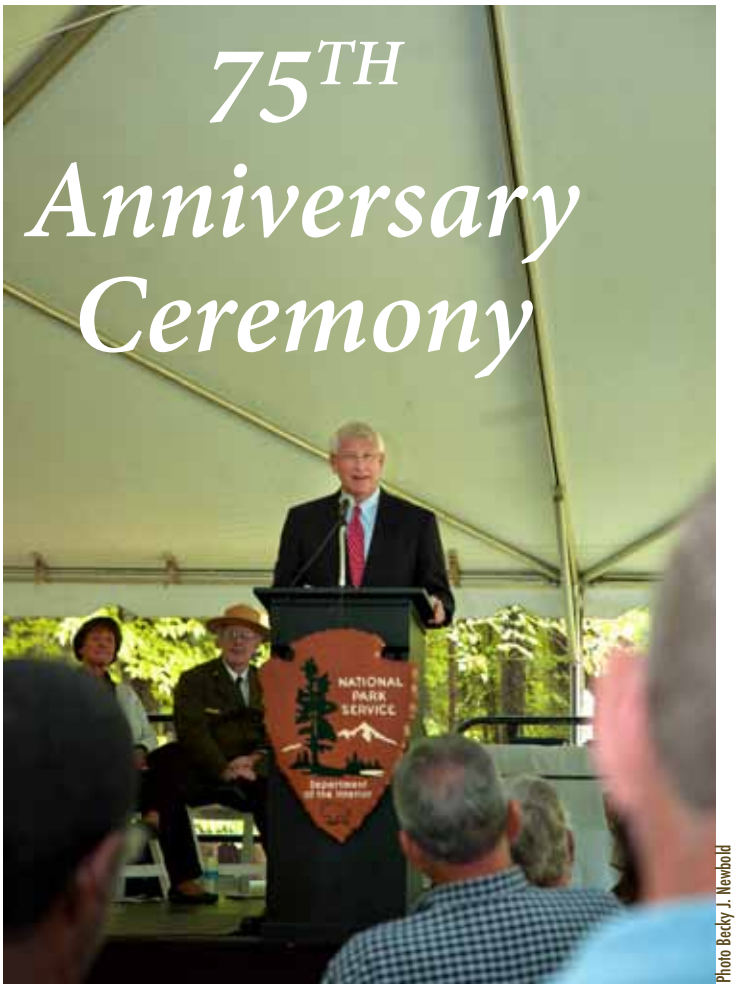
Mail donations to:
Natchez Trace Parkway Association,
P.O. Box 412,
Star, Mississippi 39167

The Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Natcheztrace.org

Check out our updated Website at www.natcheztrace.org. Still under development, the new site adds photo galleries of our events over the past two years and new information on sites along the parkway.

75TH Anniversary Ceremony



U.S. Senator Roger Wicker

Photo Becky J. Newbold

The 75th Anniversary ceremony was a milestone in parkway history. Parkway leaders, community leaders and legislators who were often told that the Parkway would never be completed, met at headquarters on May 18, to observe the 75th anniversary. It was exactly 75 years to the day that the Natchez Trace Parkway became a separate unit of the National Park System, and almost 50 years after the 25th anniversary was observed by the opening of the Visitor Center in Tupelo.

Senator Thad Cochran, who made completing the parkway one his goals from the time he began running for office in 1972, was present to reflect on the importance of continuing support for the parkway.

Senator Roger Wicker told the crowd that his first car sported one of the Association's "Finish the Trace" bumper stickers.

Congressman Alan Nunnelee recalled traveling on the unfinished

Young representatives of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Image, left, taken in 1963 during the 25th anniversary ceremony at the parkway headquarters in Tupelo. Right, 75th anniversary meal 2013.

In addition to the official ceremony, visitors also enjoyed viewing class cars from the seventy-five year parkway era, Choctaw interpretation, living history portrayals of a War of 1812 soldier and Meriwether Lewis.

NPS succeeded in making the 75th anniversary, a day to remember.

U.S. Senator Thad Cochran

parkway with his grandfather.

Acting Regional Director Gordon Wessinger, a former parkway Chief Ranger. and Acting Superintendent Dale Wilkerson spoke on behalf of the National Park Service to recognize the NPS role over the years in the stewardship of the parkway. Both acknowledged the importance of their partnership with groups such as the Association to help further the mission of the park.

Former Association president Dot Ward was awarded the Park Service Post Rider Award for her years of contribution. In accepting the plaque, Mrs. Ward acknowledged the role of parkway pioneer Roane Fleming Byrnes. She also emphasized the importance of protecting the scenic view of the parkway, and she thanked Mississippi State Representative Steve Holland for his work on preventing a relaxing of laws protecting the view in Mississippi.

President Bryant Boswell acknowledged that this is a new chapter in parkway history. He said it is one that will focus on interpreting the parkway for the next generation. He mentioned the cell phone tour project and the development of living history as two major Association initiatives. Dr. Boswell stressed the importance of creating a safe environment for recreational use of the parkway, including cycling.

The Association sponsored hot dogs and soft drinks at 1930's prices as part of it co-sponsorship of the ceremony.

Acting Regional Director Gordon Wissinger and Tom Berryhill.

Congressman Alan Nunnelee greets Past President Harry Martin.

Plan NOW to Attend the 2013

Natchez Trace Parkway Association's

Annual Meeting

September 13-14, 2013

Held in conjunction with the

Oka Kapassa Festival

www.NatchezTrace.org
for registration information

Celebrating Southeast American Indian Culture in *Tuscumbia, Alabama*

History

Special talks about the Natchez Trace
1700-1800 Era Indian Hunter's Camp
Flint Knapping
Indian Flute Performances and Dances

Recreation

Bike Ride to the Natchez Trace Parkway
Cycling Safety Forum

Nature

Nature Walk