



National Society United States Daughters of 1812

Sharon Stanley Wyatt, Arkansas State President

National website: <http://members.usdaughters1812.org>

State website: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~arsd1812/arkansas1812/>

Simon Bradford website: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~arda1812/SimonBradford1812/>

Baseline-Meridian website: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~arbmcsud/baselinemeridian1812/>

Thomas H. Flippin website: <http://rootsweb.ancestry.com/~arsod1812/flippin1812/>

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Special Pictorial Report

Arkansas

Sheila Beatty, Editor

Bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase Land Survey Plus grave marking and dedication for Andrew Bush – Marvel, AR; Hamilton Jones, Marianna, AR October 16-17

State President Sharon Wyatt and State Markers Chair Sheila Beatty traveled to the Mississippi River State Park at the invitation of the Park Service to man a table for U.S.D. 1812 to inform the public about the significance of the Baseline-Meridian survey point and the bounty lands granted to War of 1812 Veterans. Sheila, as Markers Chair, located two Veterans of the War of 1812 buried in the area whose graves needed marking and our State Prez agreed it would be a good opportunity to honor them.

Sheila picked up Sharon in Pine Bluff and they proceeded to Marvel, AR. The plan was to eat lunch before locating and marking the grave of Andrew Bush. We, who live in areas where McDonald's, Cracker Barrel, etc., are the norm, do not remember sometimes "eating lunch" can be a real challenge in small towns.



Touted as the best food in town, we entered with trepidation. No worry, it was the best food in town and the only restaurant in town, excluding the two gas stations. While there we asked for directions to the Marvel-Eventide Cemetery. The cook tried to give us directions but probably noticed the blank look on our faces and offered to lead us there. We were grateful for her perception.



We arrived at the cemetery and had visions of us walking the whole cemetery to locate his grave. Using her inbred radar, our esteemed Prez walked directly to his grave. We then proceeded to place the marker in cement. Not wanting her Rolex to get dirty, Prez instructed me how to mix the cement. [Note: cement is poured into the hole to secure the marker and deter theft.]



We then dedicated the marker and Sharon read scripture: We left the great metropolis of Marvel and headed for Marianna. We quickly found the cemetery where Veteran Hamilton Jones is buried and again, marked his grave and held a ceremony:



By now it is 3:00 and time to set-up the display at the Mississippi River State Park a few miles out of Marianna. After set-up we left for Forrest City to find a motel. We originally hoped to stay at a motel in Marianna, but there was only one and we came to the conclusion they might rent by the hour. It was a wise decision.



Saturday morning we were at the Park and ready for visitors by 8:15. There were reenactors and other exhibitors, including professional surveyors, at the four venues: The Mississippi River State Park Visitor Center (where we were and the 1815 living history Village was located); the Louisiana Purchase State Park where living historians recreated the 1922 resurvey of the base line and where reenactments of the 1926 monument dedication was held; the Mississippi River State Park Base Line Trail; and the Confluence of the St. Francis and the Mississippi Rivers where the Aux Arc, a 40 foot keelboat replica was located and where living historians portrayed 19th century surveyors.



Sharon had never been to the Louisiana State Park to see the monument and took the tour bus while I “manned” the table. The monument was placed by the DAR in 1926. Reenactors of the 1926 dedication below.



In the afternoon we both toured the living history Village.





The gentleman above showed us how ropes were made and we helped make 2 small ropes for ourselves.



The reenactors actually slept in the tents the night before.

Our table was visited by approximately 150 people, including some of the reenactors and many children:



This young man and his father are descendants of Benjamin Franklin Aunspaugh, a Veteran of the War of 1812 buried in White County. We obtained their contact information.

On October 27, 1815, for the first time west of the Mississippi, two surveyors, Prospect K. Robbins and Joseph C. Brown, began the daunting task of surveying an enormous two million acre area by compass and chain. The purpose of the Louisiana Purchase Land Survey was to create parceled land for private ownership. In the United States Public Land Survey System, a baseline is the principal east-west line (i.e., a parallel) upon which all rectangular surveys in a defined area are based. The baseline meets its corresponding principal meridian at the point of origin, or initial point, for the land survey.

It was a very successful trip. We marked two graves of War of 1812 Veterans and held dedication services. We again got the word out about U.S.D. 1812 and educated people about the War of 1812 and the 6,000 War of 1812 Bounty land grants awarded in Arkansas and made possible by the Survey. We also made contact with a descendant of a War of 1812 Veteran buried in Arkansas. Sharon and I both are very glad U.S.D. 1812 was asked to take part of this historic event. And I learned something new – when the Baseline-Meridian was resurveyed around 2005, using modern equipment and GPS, it was found the original survey was only 1 inch off!

Total miles driven over the two days: 505 r/t.

Sheila

Note: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

The Fifth principal meridian, often denoted the "5th Meridian" or "PM 05," is a principal meridian survey line used in the United States for land claims in the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). It was first surveyed in 1815. The meridian, a north-south line, starts from the old mouth of the Arkansas River and runs north. Another survey line related to it is the base line running west from the old mouth of the St. Francis River. These survey lines govern all land surveys in four states and a large portion of the land surveys for two more. Monuments have been erected where the two lines meet at $34^{\circ}38'44''\text{N } 91^{\circ}3'42''\text{W}$, and the surveyors' skill has been commemorated at the Louisiana Purchase State Park in eastern Arkansas. The Fifth principal meridian is nearly coincident with $91^{\circ} 3' 42''$ longitude west from the Greenwich meridian.

In Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, and North Dakota, it is the sole principal meridian used in the PLSS. It is used in Minnesota west of the Mississippi River and west of the third guide meridian north of the river. In South Dakota the meridian covers roughly the eastern half of the state: all land east of the Missouri River plus the surveys on the west side of the river to a limiting line following the third guide meridian of the sixth principal meridian system, White River, and the west and north boundaries of the Lower Brule Indian Reservation.



This was the first meridian of the new Louisiana Purchase, which covered about 2,000,000 acres. There was much discussion regarding where the baseline would be, with the primary candidate originally being an extension of the Third principal meridian baseline. However, it was **ultimately decided to use the confluence of the St. Francis River and the Mississippi River for the base line, and the confluence of the Arkansas and Mississippi for the meridian. Two survey teams started on the same day and proceed north (led by Prospect K. Robbins) and west (led by Joseph C. Brown), respectively. The initial point was located as the place where these surveyed lines intersected (this is one of many examples where the meridian line and base line determined the initial point, rather than the other way around).** As a result the initial point is in the middle of a high water swamp, on land that belonged to the Davidsons of Marvell, Arkansas. The family made this portion of their farm available to the state, and today the site, Louisiana Purchase State Park, consists of a 900-foot boardwalk leading from a parking lot into the swamp. At the terminus of the boardwalk there is a granite monument which reads, "This stone marks the base established Nov. 10, 1815 from which the lands of the Louisiana Purchase were surveyed by United State Engineers, the first survey from this point was made to satisfy the claims of the soldiers of the War of 1812, with land bounties. Erected by the Arkansas Daughters of the American Revolution.

Sponsored by the L'Anguille Chapter." Not only is this spot well-preserved, but it also provides an excellent opportunity to see the interior of a swamp.