History in Black & White

Arrow Rock has redefined itself from a thriving antebellum river town supplying nearby plantations and westward travelers on the Santa Fe Trail into a state and national historic treasure, preserving its structures and archaeological remains and using its historic status to teach tourists and school groups about the past.

Historical archaeology has been and continues to be a vital player in Arrow Rock’s preservation and heritage tourism efforts. First used to fill in gaps of time and for reconstruction, historical archaeology now serves as a research tool to understand the town’s cultural diversity connecting the past to the present community. The prognosis for Arrow Rock’s historical and economic survival into the 21st century is excellent. The town’s heritage continues to be overseen by the watchful eyes of the Arrow Rock State Historic Site (ARSHS), the Friends of Arrow Rock (FAR), the Historic Arrow Rock Council (HARC), and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to preserve the past for the future.

In 2006, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) honored Arrow Rock as one of its Dozen Distinctive Destinations, which recognizes communities that “offer an authentic visitor experience by combining dynamic downtowns, cultural diversity, attractive architecture, cultural landscapes and a strong commitment to historic preservation and revitalization” (National Trust for Historic Preservation 2008). In 2008, First Lady Laura Bush named Arrow Rock as a Preserve America Community, which identifies communities that “protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization; and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs” (Preserve America 2008). The FAR and its officers have also been recognized for their preservation work with numerous awards from the Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation (MAHP). In particular, the current director and two past presidents of FAR and their spouses have been honored with the Elizabeth and George Rozier Award, which is the highest award given in Missouri to an individual for his/her historic preservation efforts.

Some of this recognition has come from recent work to expand Arrow Rock’s interpretation to address African-American heritage, but history continues to be seen in “black and white” in this village. The legacy of slavery and racism still impacts how and where history is interpreted. African Americans are both inclusive and exclusive to Arrow Rock’s heritage. As enslaved citizens, they often worked and lived as domestic servants and laborers in Arrow Rock homes, in industrial pursuits and steamboat commerce, and on neighboring plantations. Spatially, the detached kitchen behind the “big house” visibly represents this juxtaposition as being both in and out at the same time. Economically, enslaved African Americans were part of the plantation as cooks, servants, and field hands, but socially were segregated, both spatially and mentally, from the white planter family.

After the Civil War in Arrow Rock, African Americans continued to be the primary labor force, but they struggled to obtain equal citizenship, which included property ownership (Baumann 2001). In 1880, over half of Arrow...
Rock’s African Americans were still living in white households. In was not until 1900 that all African Americans were living in their own homes outside of white control. In the 1870s, African Americans were first sold land on the north end of Second Street and immediately outside the city limits (Northwest Publishing Company 1896:30). Similar to the detached kitchen, this African-American neighborhood was part of Arrow Rock, in that its occu-

site in the 20th century, African Americans continued to be either ignored or segregated. Three examples of inequity in historic interpretation can be seen in the home of George Caleb Bingham, the Huston Tavern, and the ARSHS museum & visitors center. Guided tours of Bingham’s home continue to focus on the celebratory history of George Caleb Bingham as an artist and his connections to this Arrow Rock residence. Interpretations of his wife, family, and everyday life are limited. This is ironic, since Bingham’s work is best known for depictions of daily life on the Missouri River, like the Fur Traders Descending the Missouri (1845), The Jolly Flatboatmen (1846), and Shooting for the Beef (1850). Bingham’s paintings are rich with social imagery, which have been underutilized by the FAR and the ARSHS to explain life in antebellum Arrow Rock and Missouri. Many of the characters in Bingham’s pieces are based on real people and events that he encountered in Arrow Rock. His art work can also be used as an interpretative tool to address those disenfranchised citizens that

pants were still needed by the local white community as laborers and domestic servants, but it was segregated outside the official village boundary. As in most parts of the United States, Arrow Rock was a microcosm of segregation where African Americans were not permitted to attend or patronize white congregations, businesses, or institutions. This even included places of African-American employment, like the Huston Tavern. In response, African Americans created their own mirroring community, schools, churches, businesses, and fraternal lodges.

As Arrow Rock transformed itself into a heritage tourism
are often absent from these paintings. In particular, African Americans and women are rarely seen in Bingham’s large genre paintings, even though together they constituted more than half of the population in Arrow Rock and the Little Dixie region.

Bingham’s political genre paintings provide the best insight into the role of African Americans and women during the antebellum period. Besides being an artist, Bingham was also very active in politics, serving in the 1840s as a Missouri State Representative for the Whig Party, as the State Treasurer from 1862 to 1865, and he often considered running for Missouri Governor after the Civil War (Rash 1991). Bingham’s political art pieces depict the entire election process with Stump Speaking (1853-1854), The County Election (1851-1852), and The Verdict of the People (1854-1855). The third piece illustrates the announcement of election results to a large crowd of white men. Unlike the first two, The Verdict of the People carried specific political messages about temperance and slavery in the 1850s because they were linked by immorality and the repression of freedom (Humphrey 1828). Bingham has been described as a “teetotaler” and had close friends among temperance leaders in Missouri (Rash 1991:145). The temperance movement is referenced in the painting by a banner upheld by women on a balcony that states “Freedom for Virtue [Re]striction for Vice.” It is important to note that despite their inability to vote, women were active participants in the temperance debate and in other political/social matters of antebellum Missouri.

The Verdict of the People was also created in reaction to Senator Stephen Douglas’ Nebraska-Kansas Act of 1854, which recognized the sovereign rights of territories to vote on slavery. This negated the Missouri Compromise of 1820 that prohibited slavery in the former Louisiana Territory north of the parallel 36° 30’ N except within the state of Missouri. Bingham was vehemently against Douglas’ bill, and he foreshadowed the Border War between Kansas and Missouri, which then led to the Civil War (Rash 1991:146). At one time, Bingham and his family were slave owners, but by the 1850s he held a strong anti-slavery stance, which resulted in his move from the Whig to the Republican Party in 1855. Slavery is symbolized in The Verdict of the People by one African-American male, who is presented in the foreground with a wheelbarrow, serving the white, male crowd with refreshments as they exercised/celebrated their citizenship right of suffrage. Together the women and their temperance banner and the African-American male bookended the large white, male crowd and the election process. The African-American male is moving toward a white male that is sitting on the ground in a Dying Gaul position and below a large American flag, hanging over the crowd (Rash 1991:147). The Dying Gaul is one of the most celebrated and copied works of ancient Rome that depicts a naked captive fighting against death and refusing to accept his fate. Bingham’s depiction symbolizes the pro-slavery faction’s slow demise and his antislavery viewpoint, supporting a unified nation under one flag. A second version of this painting was created after 1855, which adds an African-American woman and child also sitting below the American flag and above the Dying Gaul figure, reinforcing his antislavery stance. He also adds a large church steeple between the temperance banner and the American flag, emphasizing the immorality of slavery and drinking.

Arguably Bingham’s most famous piece is Order No. 11 (1865-1870), which was created to illustrate the tragedy of the Civil War in Missouri. On August 25, 1863, Union officer Major General Thomas Ewing enacted Order No. 11, which “decreed that all farm residents in the border counties [between Kansas and Missouri] must abandon their homes and property within a fortnight,” except for those that Ewing deemed loyal to the Union (Shapiro et al. 1990:42). Bingham traveled to Jackson County, Missouri, and confronted Ewing and attempted to have him rescind the order, but with no success. Bingham then warned Ewing that “I will make you infamous with pen and brush as far I am able” (Shapiro et al. 1990:43). The painting Order No. 11 was Bingham’s weapon, which depicts the eviction of a Missouri farm family with one man shot dead and with enslaved African Americans consoling the white family and covering their faces in horror. This painting offers an interpretive opportunity to discuss the Border War between Kansas and Missouri, the Civil War that followed, and the social relationship between master and slave. Regarding the latter, the second restoration of the Bingham home in 1963 reconstructed a detached kitchen that was likely used by an enslaved African-American cook and/or servant. Unfortunately, the current narrative of Bingham’s home does not address the existence of African Americans at this residence nor are any of the complex topics of slavery, racism, and gender roles, which are symbolized in his paintings, presented to the public on these tours.

In 2008, the Huston Tavern is part museum and part restaurant, which the Missouri Division of State Parks believes to be the oldest continuously operating eatery
west of the Mississippi River. The museum component highlights Joseph Huston, the founder, and the Santa Fe Trail with restored and furnished period hotel rooms, a ballroom, a mercantile, and a detached kitchen. Sadly, there has been little interpretation of the hotel guests/residents or the African-American employees that worked in the tavern as enslaved and then as paid cooks and servants until the 1970s. In particular, the original detached kitchen has been refurbished as a period room, representing an antebellum kitchen utilized by enslaved African-American cooks. A doorway and stairwell also leads from the kitchen to a second story loft, which was used as living quarters by the tavern’s African-American employees. The kitchen is no longer detached, and the second story loft has been removed by later additions that engulf this space within the restaurant’s dining room. The kitchen has been appropriately refurbished, but it has no historic signage for tavern patrons and formal tours give only a brief discussion of an African-American presence or history.

In 1991, the ARSHS opened a new museum and visitor center with nine thousand square feet of exhibit space. The exhibits were designed to place Arrow Rock’s heritage within the broad history of central Missouri, beginning with prehistoric Native Americans, to historic tribes of the Osage and Missouria, and the settlement of the Little Dixie region by American immigrants. One glaring absence was that African Americans were not represented in this historical narrative. When this error was recognized, a low budget and temporary exhibit was installed at the end of the gallery, literally as an afterthought. The physical placement of this exhibit panel at the end of the museum gallery parallels the inclusive/exclusive nature of the detached kitchen behind the “big house” or the postbellum African-American community that was placed immediately outside of Arrow Rock’s city limits. The ARSHS is currently working with the FAR for a more inclusive renovation of their exhibits to include Arrow Rock’s African-American heritage. This began in 1999, when the ARSHS created a draft plan for this exhibit restoration, but they are still waiting for additional funding from the state to accomplish this project. The first step to this revisionist process has already begun with a new orientation film, *Arrow Rock: Frontier Town in Boone’s Lick Country*, which provides a balanced interpretation of Arrow Rock’s heritage, including its African-American culture from slavery to current African-American heritage events (Missouri Department of Natural Resources 2001). Without the complete renovation and reinterpretation of ARSHS exhibits and historic sites, why would the African-American descendant community want to come back to Arrow Rock? History will continue to be segregated into black and white, perpetuating the racial ideology that began with slavery.
IN 2011, ARROW ROCK will mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of renowned Missouri artist George Caleb Bingham with a yearlong series of activities, including a symposium, exhibition, lectures and a new book.

The celebration kicks off with the First Saturday Lecture Series beginning on January 8. Topics and presenters include “Bingham and the Civil War” by Arrow Rock State Historic Site Administrator Mike Dickey; “Bingham and His Art” by Moberly Area Community College history professor Dr. Maryellen McVicker; and “Bingham and Politics” by historical reenactor Raymond Starzmann. The lecture series, which is free and open to the public, is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

On April 2, the Friends of Arrow Rock will present “Bingham in the Boonslick,” a day-long symposium featuring Dr. Margaret Conrads, Samuel Sosland Curator of American Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City; Dr. Joan Stack, Curator of Art for the State Historical Society of Missouri; and Roger Robinson, historic researcher for a forthcoming book on Bingham.

The symposium will coincide with the launch of an exhibition of Bingham’s art that will run from April 2 to July 30 at the Arrow Rock State Historic Site Visitors Center and then move to the Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art at Central Methodist University in Fayette from August 14 through October 30. In conjunction with the exhibition, the Friends of Arrow Rock and the Ashby-Hodge Gallery are commissioning an accompanying catalog that is being written by Dr. Maryellen McVicker.

The new book on Bingham, entitled “But I Forget That I Am a Painter and Not a Politician”: The Letters of George Caleb Bingham, is being co-published by the State Historical Society of Missouri and the Friends of Arrow Rock, with support from the Harriet Pillsbury Foundation of Frontenac, Missouri.

Much of what we know visually about life in the mid-1800s comes from Bingham’s genre paintings and.
for that alone we are deeply indebted to him. Not only was he an eminently talented artist, his life story is inspirational as he rose from poverty and obscurity to become a politician, statesman and gifted speaker who opposed injustice wherever he encountered it. He was also the first Professor of Art at the University of Missouri and did much to pave the way for later artists in Missouri. For these and many other reasons, his life and the circumstances that shaped him are well worth remembering.

→ MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND SAVE THE DATES FOR THESE EVENTS.

Prairie Park

*Dates and details are tentative. Watch for additional information. **The First Saturday Lecture series, funded by a grant from NEH, is free and open to the public.
Friends Benefit from Federal Grant for Preservation Projects

This past spring Missouri Governor Jay Nixon announced that the village of Arrow Rock, a Certified Local Government, would receive a $21,960 grant through the federal Historic Preservation Fund. This grant was used for preservation work on six historic properties that contribute to the town’s National Historic Landmark designation, including five Friends of Arrow Rock properties.

As storms broke out all around Arrow Rock on September 18th, 97 Sip and Stroll participants made it safely through the tour of homes and to the Stolberg-Jackson Schoolhouse Community Center for the picnic supper before the rain came. Even then, Arrow Rock missed the brunt of some vicious rain and hail storms.

While guests kept one eye on storm clouds, they were delighted with visits to the homes of Marty and Sandy Selby, Judy and Ernest Smith, David and Laura Jackson, and Day and Whitney Kerr, all located in or near Arrow Rock on Hwy. TT. Time and again guests commented on the lovely homes and furnishings and the beautiful rural surroundings, reminding everyone of the unique charm of Arrow Rock and its environs.

At the schoolhouse, participants were treated to supper and bid on both silent and live auction items that included antiques, home-baked goods, jewelry, furniture and a number of special event dinners. An added feature this year was a Tag Sale held at the Miller-Bradford house. Sip and Stroll participants were given the first chance to purchase items. That sale continued on Sunday and the following weekend.

The majority of the sale items came as gifts from Mrs. Ira B. Hyde, a longtime Kansas City antique collector, and Arrow Rock residents Mandy Dorrance, Bruce Satterlee and Keith and Leslie Anderson. We extend to them our thanks.

Sip and Stroll Events Net $14,700

Special thanks to our homeowners and the following who made this fund raising event so successful:

Event Fund Raising Committee
Donna Huston
Pat Cooper
Jan Hinnah
Grayson Kabler
Kathy Diggles
Sarah Riddick
Lucy Fletcher

Invitations
Lucy Fletcher
Grayson Kabler

Check-In & Cashiers
Pam Parsons
Tempe McGlaughlin
Jan Hinnah
Kevin Riggs
Ed McCloud

Tag Sale Workers
Chet Breitwieser
Pat Cooper
Judy & Ernest Smith
Chuck Pettry
Pam Parsons
Marty Selby
Ruth Scherer
Tempe McGlaughlin
Jan Hinnah

Elaine Breshears

Caterer
Shellie Peuster & Floodman Hospitality Services
Missouri Valley College

Beverages
Bill True

Loan of Tables
Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre

Donors of Auction Items
Leslie & Keith Anderson
Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre
Tim Baumann
Toni and George Blackwood
Kathy Borgman
Chet Breitwieser
Mary Burge
Kathy Cary

1830s
1850s
Village Hall
Friends of Arrow Rock
Post Office

Friends properties included an 1850s storefront building that now serves as the office of the Friends of Arrow Rock, and a second storefront building that houses the Post Office (both rebuilt following a 1901 fire), the 1868 Masonic Lodge Hall, the 1871 Brown’s Chapel (Arrow Rock’s first African-American church and school) and the 1872 Christian Church. The sixth property was an 1830s vernacular building located north of the Country Store recently purchased by the village for use as a village hall. The Town Board insulated, replaced all clapboard siding and painted the structure.
All projects have now been completed and the Village of Arrow Rock awarded the Friends of Arrow Rock $11,400 for work completed on their projects, which consisted of painting, repairs and tuckpointing brick. As a matching grant, this total represented 60% of the total cost of the FAR projects with the Friends of Arrow Rock paying the additional 40% from gifts raised through the 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign.

Arrow Rock is one of Missouri’s 49 Certified Local Governments, i.e. a community that has established historic preservation guidelines and programs. Such communities are considered partners with the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service in the nation’s historic preservation program. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorizes a program of federal matching grants, known as the Historic Preservation Fund to assist communities such as Arrow Rock in carrying out historic preservation activities.
Record Crowd Attends 42nd Heritage Craft Festival

This event truly brings to life the Friends’ mission of sharing the Missouri frontier experience.

Perfect weather welcomed Arrow Rock’s 42nd Annual Heritage Craft Festival Oct. 9 – 10 with more than 5,000 people in attendance. Sponsored by the Historic Arrow Rock Council and the Arrow Rock State Historic Site, every organization in Arrow Rock pitches in for the town’s largest event of the year.

The Friends of Arrow Rock’s contribution is opening several of its historic buildings to the public on these two days and providing shuttle service with our golf cart tram.

The Sites House was expertly staffed by Friends of Arrow Rock interpreters Chuck Petty and Elaine Breshears, along with volunteers Mary Burge and Leslie Anderson.

President Tom Hall, along with volunteers Jim Bird, Jim Duncan and his mother, Josephine Duncan, were on hand to educate visitors about the Sites Gun Shop. Cindy Nold demonstrated in the Print Shop, and Nancy Finke and Leslie Anderson covered in the office along with Executive Director Kathy Borgman. Marty Selby, Kathy Borgman and Chuck Petty drove the shuttle.

Thanks to all our volunteers and everyone who attended this year’s Heritage Craft Festival.
Children’s Craft Festival Offers Hands-On Learning About Daily Frontier Life

Arrow Rock was bustling on Thursday, September 23, as 734 students, accompanied by 195 adults, experienced multiple facets of frontier life in Missouri at the biennial Children’s Craft Festival.

Arrow Rock is the perfect setting for students to immerse themselves in the daily activities of life during the westward expansion, such as spinning, weaving, hunting, cooking and doing the wash. Other highlights included visits to the gunsmith and his home, voting in the courthouse, and shopping at Mr. Huston’s store.

Sponsored by the Friends of Arrow Rock and the Arrow Rock State Historic Site, more than 74 volunteers made this a memorable day for students from 16 public and private schools and several home schools.

“Education is the reason we do what we do,” said Executive Director Kathy Borgman, “And this is education at its best...learning that is engaging and fun. I can’t thank our volunteers and staff enough for making this another wonderful event.”

We would like to thank the schools who attended the Children’s Craft Festival. Numerous volunteers along with the staff commented on the exceptionally well-behaved young people here this year. You are to be commended!
NEWSLETTER REDESIGN  This issue marks the inaugural edition of the newly redesigned Friends of Arrow Rock newsletter. A huge thank-you goes to design consultant Dan Auman and the staff at Draw the Line of Overland Park, Kansas, for donating their graphic design services. We’d like your feedback, so let us know how you like the new look by writing to us at office@FriendsAR.org.

Memorial:
Our apologies for not including an earlier memorial gift for Karen Murray from Robert & Donna Kateman.

Thank you to
Emily Bird for volunteering 125 hours this year entering 859 names in our new membership database software program.
Jill & Leland Shurin who made a gift in honor of the retirement of Dr. Daniel Toubes.
Tom Hall for a copy of the book, Millie Cooper’s Ride by Marc Simmons.
Judy Fitzsimonds for an antique doll ready for repair.
Elaine & Danny Breshears for washing and waxing the golf cart tram.
Mike & Mary Duncan for an antique school slate.
Rosemary Kelly for keeping the museum shop open during the tag sale.

The Friends of Arrow Rock thanks the Mason L. Dean Foundation and the Edward F. Swinney Foundation for underwriting our four 2010 quarterly newsletters through their 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign gifts. The Bank of America serves as trustee for each of these foundations.

On the cover: Miss Sarah or Sallie Thomas 1849/50 by George Caleb Bingham. From the collection of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas B. Hall III. Photo credit: E.G. Schempf.