

The Initial Point News

Lee, Monroe and Phillips Counties, Arkansas

LOCAL D.A.R. CHAPTER HOSTS DEDICATION CEREMONY



Dedication October, 1926

Pictured: left to right, Tom Jacks, Mrs. David Wall, State Senator James Robertson, Mrs. T. H. (Hattie) Caraway, Mrs. James Robertson, Mrs. Paul Benham, David Wall (boy), Martha Douglass (girl), Mrs. Sam Harrington, Eldridge P. Douglass, Mrs. Russell Dupree, U.S. Senator T. H. Caraway (speaker of the day), Mrs. Alan Cox (State Regent of Arkansas State Society DAR) and Frances Lynch (who is sitting).

THIS STONE MARKS THE 5th PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN INITIAL POINT

The inscription carved onto this boulder reads: "This stone marks the base established November 10, 1815, from which the lands of the Louisiana Purchase were surveyed by United States Engineers. The survey from this point was made to satisfy the claims of the soldiers of the War of 1812 with land bounties. Erected by Arkansas Daughters of the American Revolution by: L'Anquille Chapter."



Marking the point of intersection of the 5th Principle Meridian and its Base line, there stands a boulder of Arkansas granite 4 feet high and 3 feet wide that weighs 3,300 pounds.

On October 27, 1926, after years of planning, the monument marking the Initial Point of the Louisiana Purchase Land Survey was unveiled at a dedication ceremony hosted by the L'Anquille Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Attended by many, the event was emceed by Mrs. Paul Benham, who was regent of the L'Anquille chapter.

Mrs. Alan Cox, State Regent, represented the Arkansas State Society of the D.A.R.

The program opened with the national anthem; Edwin Potts was the flag bearer. Dressed to represent George and Martha Washington of the American Revolutionary times were Miss Martha Douglas and young David Wall.

Martha is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eldridge P. Douglass. Eldridge Douglass, along with Tom Jacks, was the court-appointed surveyor who re-surveyed the Base line in 1922.

David Wall is the son of Dr. and Mrs. E. David Wall. Mrs. Wall, who has served as historian of the L'Anquille Chapter, was instrumental in the campaign to get a permanent marker for the Initial Point.

James Robertson, senator in the Arkansas State legislature, attended with his wife. Senator Robertson was representing Arkansas and his District.

U. S. Senator T. H. Caraway, accompanied by his wife "Hattie", represented the national government. At the end of the ceremony, Senator Caraway, who was the keynote speaker, was presented with deeds to eight acres of land in hopes that the United States government would establish a bird sanctuary or a park to commemorate the Louisiana Purchase Land Survey.

These acres of land, situated in the three counties: Lee, Monroe and Phillips surrounding the marker, were donated by Mrs. A. T. Lynch, S. Davidson, W. H. Porter and Mrs. Margaret Cannon.

An elderly woman of the community furnished the refreshments for the occasion: hot baked sweet potatoes and butter.

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WAR CHANGES JOB FORCE CREATES VOTING RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

In a letter dated March 31, 1776, future First Lady Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, John Adams, that she would like him to “remember the ladies” and that the ladies will not hold themselves “bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.”

141 years after Abigail Adams’ plea, the women of the United States still had not been given the right to vote in all elections in every state.

This would change in April 1917 when the United States entered into the worldwide conflict known at that time as The Great War.

As men left their jobs to serve their county in the military, women filled these workplace vacancies. Many of these positions were in jobs that had not traditionally hired women.

In January 1917, women seeking the right to vote picketed the White House, an action that had never before happened.

Realizing their importance to the war effort, President Woodrow Wilson addressed the Senate and called for the approval of the suffrage amendment. He said, “We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice ...and not to a partnership of privilege and right?”

In November 1917, the Arkansas legislature granted its women citizens the right to vote in the state primary elections.

Arkansas held a special session in July 1919 to ratify the 19th Amendment

August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution became law giving U.S. women the right to vote.

From Forgotten to a Monument The Douglass-Jacks Re-Survey

On November 10, 1815, Deputy Surveyors Brown and Robbins established the Initial Point for the 5th Principle Meridian. For over a hundred years, the wooden stake and the two Tupelo Gum trees that were used to mark the Initial Point stood forgotten.

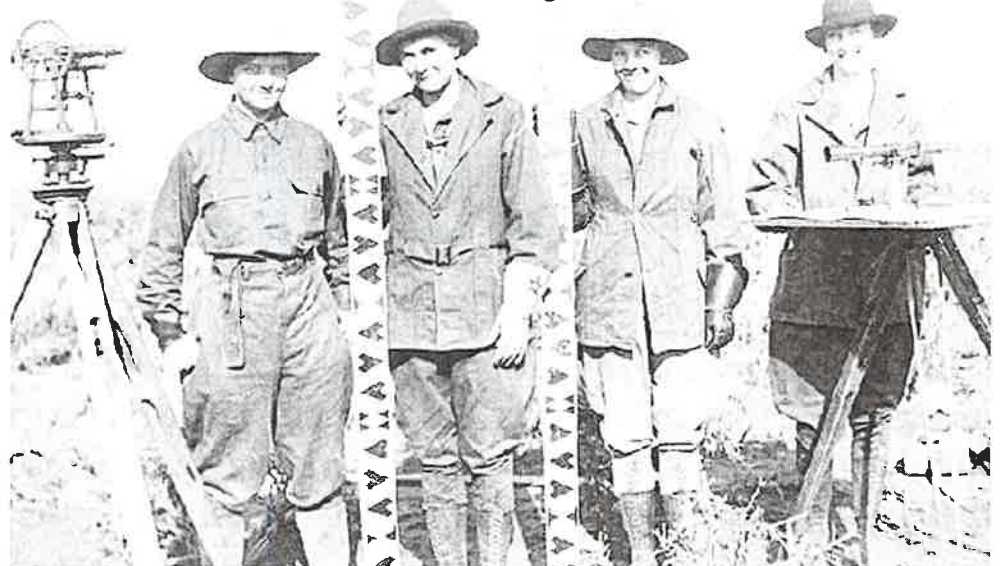
To establish the Initial Point, Brown started west from the confluence of the St. Francis and the Mississippi Rivers while Robbins started north from the confluence of the Arkansas and the Mississippi Rivers. Where these two lines intersected became the Initial Point.

When Brown and Robbins set the post for the Initial Point in 1815, there was no State of Arkansas and no Lee, Monroe and Phillips counties. Then in 1921, after constant bickering of Lee and Phillips county landowners over property lines, a judge commissioned surveyors Eldridge P. Douglass and Tom Jacks to re-survey the Base line and re-establish the Initial Point.

Times do change - the trees, the course of rivers, and the equipment of surveyors. Douglass and Jacks determined that the best approach would be to use survey equipment similar to that used for the original 1815 survey rather than the 1920s type equipment. Instead of a transit and tape, they used a compass and chain and with that they were able to re-discover the witness trees and reestablish the Initial Point.

To assure that the Initial Point would not be forgotten again, the L’Anguille Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a large granite monument to mark its location.

All-Women Survey Crew - 1918



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The Initial Point is only a minuscule part of the 530,000,000 (five hundred and thirty million) acres that comprised the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. This small point, though, became the corner stone to the Louisiana Purchase Land Survey. All land parcels in Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, North Dakota and parts of South Dakota and Minnesota are referenced by township and range to this Initial Point, which references more land area than any other in the U.S. Public Land Survey System. This historic event started here - in the middle of a backwater cypress swamp in what became eastern Arkansas.

Louisiana Purchase State Park

1803 - With the Louisiana Purchase, this land became property of the United States

1815 - November 10th, the crews of Deputy Surveyors Joseph Brown and Prospect Robbins set a post marking the Initial Point of the Louisiana Purchase Land Survey

1926 - October 27, The L' Anguille Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution hosted a ceremony to dedicate a monument marking the Initial Point.

1961 - September, Act 174 was passed by the state legislature authorizing a state park on the Initial Point site.

1972 - February 23, the Louisiana Purchase Survey Marker was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1972 - June 25, a grand ceremony was held to commemorate the opening of the Park.

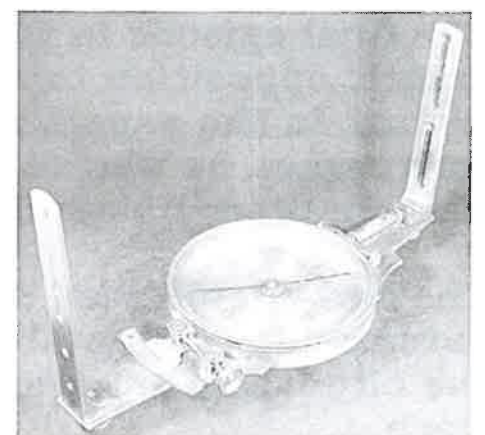
1977 - In April 1977, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission added the swamplands surrounding the marker to the Arkansas Registry of Natural Areas.

1981 - In June, the site was designated a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Interior Department

1993 - was designated a National Historic Landmark



The 5th Principal Meridian Initial Point



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Barber Who Refused To Bob Women's Hair

Although bobbed hair was the trend, not everyone liked the new hairstyle. Many felt that younger girls should still be in braids although these young girls longed so for the style that they put their lives in jeopardy. On occasion, a girl would hold her hair too close to the fire in an attempt to singe it enough that it would have to be bobbed. Of course, there were people who really didn't like bobbed hair as in the following article:

BARBER WHO REFUSED TO BOB WOMEN'S HAIR PUT IN INSANE HOSPITAL

Knoxville, Tenn., Oct. 30 -

The final episode in the barber whose fanatic opposition to bobbed hair got his picture in the papers was enacted here today when he was admitted to the Eastern Stars Hospital for the Insane.

The barber collapsed Monday and entered into a mental spree that kept the city jail in an uproar throughout the week.

Woman Judge Says Wider Use of Cotton Cloth Would Decrease Number of Divorces

Birmingham, Ala., Oct 28, 1926

The adoption of more cotton clothing by southern women would decrease work for the divorce courts is the opinion of Judge Virginia Henry Mayfield of the Domestic Relations Court of Jefferson County.

Judge Mayfield, the only women jurist in the South, believes a return to the styles of the past would serve a double purpose - contentment in the home and aid to the cotton planter - by using more cotton and less silk in the fashions of Southern women.

Judge Mayfield gave this advice in a speech to business club women, who are organizing to promote home industries in the cotton territory.

