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# History of library cannon

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# HISTORY

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CLARK COUNTY CHRONICLE

# History of library cannon

By Wendy Richter  
For the Siftings

Today, relatively few Arkadelphians know the history behind the cannon that sits on the lawn of the Clark County Library on Caddo Street.

Manufactured by the Confederate Army at the foundry/arsenal here in Arkadelphia in the early 1860s, it never fired a shot at an opposing army. Interestingly, the weapon also served as hitching post after the war, before being placed on the library grounds.

The cannon's story began with its manufacture at the Confederate foundry and arsenal facility at what is now Sixth and Main streets. J.H. O'Baugh directed the work: O'Baugh also served as mayor and was a brick manufacturer.

Confederate General Sterling Price originally planned to use the gun in defense of Arkadelphia in

1863, after the occupation of Little Rock by the U.S. Army. However, Union forces under General Frederick Steele far outnumbered the Confederates, and Price decided to leave Arkadelphia—and the cannon. Before doing so, he ordered the cannon spiked, so that it would be useless to the Union Army.

But, in actuality, the cannon continued to be useful for many years. According to local historian and journalist W. H. Haliburton, after the war was over, it was used as a hitching post at the corner of Fifth and Clay streets, next to the Smoker Merchandise Company. It was a couple of years after the store burned in 1925 that Ouachita Baptist College student and student teacher at Arkadelphia High, Wilford Horne, along with his students, moved the weapon to the library lawn. There, Boy Scout Troup 23, under

scoutmaster and high school principal Vere Huddleston, set the gun in mortar and stone.

According to local lore, O'Baugh not only made the existing cannon, but two more just like it. While the fate of one of the cannons is unknown, Mr. Haliburton wrote in 1949 about the demise of the other: "Before there ever was a Ouachita College, the high bluff bank of the Ouachita River where the school is now situated was a good place to celebrate the Fourth of July and Christmas. One Yuletide the 'grown-up boys' took that cannon to the bluff and fired it to celebrate the occasion. Likely as not the weather was cold and the boys needed the 'sperits' to warm them up for the rite they were about to perform. The hilarious gun crew thought the old muzzle-loader could carry as big a load as they were taking care of. The super



COURTESY OF THE CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## The cannon at the Arkadelphia branch of the Clark County Library.

charge of black powder blew the cannon into fragments."

For additional information about Clark County

history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum ([www.clarkcountyhistory.org](http://www.clarkcountyhistory.org) or (870) 230-1360) or the Clark County

Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library ([www.obu.edu/archives](http://www.obu.edu/archives) or (870) 245-5332).