



The Ozark tourists pose with the tour trucks in 1934.

Trigg's Trails, Tours and Detours

PART TWO: 1931 - 1934 OZARK TOURS

Todd A. Carr

In the 1930s, southern Illinois was depending on the National Forest Reservation Commission to approve purchase units in the region for a national forest. The Harrisburg Kiwanis Club foresaw the need of a local group to spearhead the establishment of the forest. The Illinois Ozarks Reforestation Unit, a nine-member committee of men from Saline, Hardin, Pope, and Gallatin Counties, was formed. Newspaper Publisher L.O. Trigg served as vice-president of the organization and chief promoter.

"Captain" L.O. Trigg led annual three-day excursions into the forest known as Trigg's Ozark Tours and later Trigg's Trails, Tours, and Detours. This series of articles is based on newspaper accounts and the travelogues of L.O. Trigg.

Second Ozark Tour: August 8, 9, 10, 1932

At 8:10 a.m. 15 men set out on the second annual Ozark Tour from the Hudson-Essex Garage on East Poplar Street in Harrisburg, Illinois. As in the previous year, the three-day excursion would be into the four southeastern counties of the proposed Illinois forest purchase unit. Later it would come to be known as the Shawnee Purchase Unit.

As in the previous tour, the Ozarkers sat with their feet dangling off the back of a flatbed truck traveling 35 miles per hour on what is now U.S. Route 45. The group turned off the "slab" into Ozark, Illinois, and on to the home of Rob

Ross, camp attendant for Camp Pakentuck. Camp Pakentuck was the summer camp for the Boy Scout Council of Paducah, Kentucky. The site is now part of the 983-acres of Camp Ondessonk, a Catholic youth camp operated by the Belleville Diocese. At the scout camp the group saw Cedar Falls, reportedly the tallest free-falling waterfall in the state of Illinois. Trigg noted that locally it was known as Lay Falls or Lawrence Falls. Camp Ondessonk refers to it as Pakentuck Falls in honor of the former scout camp. The pool of water formed at the bottom of the falls served as a boating and swimming hole for the boy scouts.

Returning to the "slab" the tour continued on U.S. Route 45 to Tunnel Hill road and to the Big Four Railroad Tunnel.

The tunnel, shortened in 1929 to its current size after a partial collapse, is no longer a railway and is now a feature of the Tunnel Hill Bike Trail. The group left Tunnel Hill and proceeded on to Ferne Clyffe or Rebman Park. Lunch was served at the park prepared by the Rendleman Café for \$.40 per person. The group spent three hours touring Emma Rebman's private park. The site became Ferne Clyffe State Park in 1949.

The tour retraced their route back through Tunnel Hill and crossed U.S. Route 45 traveling past Reynoldsburg Church to Gum Springs where the group viewed Buffalo Rock, a pictograph of a bison believed to have been left by Native Americans traveling the nearby trace. The Ozarkers continued to Cotton Hill (now the location of Trigg Tower) and a nearby lookout point before continuing on through Robbsville and Glendale to Dixon Springs. Dinner and breakfast the next morning were served at the Dixon Springs Hotel (now Dixon Springs State Park) at \$1.50 each. Most of the group slept outdoors under the stars on the hotel grounds.

James E. Lawson, an attorney in the legal department of the United States Forestry Department, happened to be in Harrisburg with car trouble and was brought to the Dixon Springs Hotel to visit with the Ozarkers and gave a dinner

presentation on the proposed reforestation unit. He stated he felt it was feasible to establish a national forest in the area.

After breakfast, the second day began with a hike of the Dixon Springs area including a formation called Balanced Rock. A twelve-year-old boy who had guided the group to the rock climbed to the top and by walking across it was able to cause the rock to teeter over 12 inches on its base even though the rock was estimated to weigh 30 tons.

The group left Dixon Springs and proceeded to Golconda to view Dam 51 on the Ohio River. They left Golconda and travelled to Humm's Wye and on to "Bucks Branch" where they turned right onto a dirt road to Hick's Town. From Hick's Town they continued southeast past the remains of Wolrab's Mill on Goose Creek to the site of the Illinois Iron Furnace where the tour had made a stop the previous year. From the Illinois Furnace they proceeded to the Elizabethtown and Karber's Ridge road (Bassett Road) and north to the Big Creek crossing where Cal Weideman and wife had lunch prepared. This is the same spot lunch had been served the second day of the 1931 Ozark Tour. After lunch the group proceeded to "The Pounds" (now Rim Rock National Recreation Trail) to view the "stone fort," Indian graves, and impoundment there.

The Fairy Cliff Cafe was one of the stops on the 1933 tour.



Heading north on the old Ford's Ferry Road (Illinois Route 1) through Gibsonia, the trucks turned right and crossed the Island Ripple bridge following the road to Junction where they rejoined the "slab" of Illinois Route 13 to Shawneetown and to Big Lake Hotel where Mr. Weideman's cooking crew provided dinner. Due to rain the group "camped" indoors.

Mr. Weideman provided breakfast the following morning and at 8:45 a.m. the group departed for Round Pond and on to Boyd's Mound, said to be the largest Indian Mound in southern Illinois. The tour continued on the New Haven Road following it south to Shawneetown and then to Westwood Cemetery. Westwood Cemetery was established in 1818 with the death of General Thomas Posey when he was visiting his daughter and son-in-law's home and was buried in the family orchard. Gen. Posey was President George Washington's aide de camp during the Revolutionary War and later was governor of the Indiana Territory.

The group traveled back through Shawneetown to the intersection with Illinois Route 1 and turned south to Salt Well Road to visit the spring used for salt production by Native Americans, the French in the 1700s and early American settlers in the 1800s. The group followed Salt Well Road past old coke ovens and railroad depot south of Equality and onto the "slab" of Illinois Route 13 for their return to the Hudson-Essex garage in Harrisburg. In the three days the Ozarkers covered 195 miles.

Third Tour: August 15, 16, 17, 1933

The third Ozark Tour saw 15 men leave Harrisburg early Tuesday, August 15, using the usual flat-bed truck for transportation. The group consisted of a forester, an agriculturist, attorneys, a resort owner, insurance salesman, newspaper editors, school teachers, an undertaker, coal mine manager, and merchants. Others would join or leave the tour over the course of the three days with a total of 20 men participating. Each of the participants contributed \$10 toward the cost of the trip. By Trigg's accounting the 1933 Ozark Tour's total cost was \$150.

The group headed southeast out of Harrisburg on Illinois Route 34 to Herod and stopped at the Fairy Cliff café, a favorite restaurant of Captain Trigg. They stopped at the farm of John Howard Norman west of Williams Hill and examined a rattlesnake he had killed the previous day. The snake was 67 inches long and had nine rattlers with signs that more might have been torn away. The Normans planned to treat the snake skin and stuff it for display. The group hiked to the top of Williams Hill. At 1,064 feet, it is the second highest point in the state of Illinois and the highest in southern Illinois.

After leaving Williams Hill the group proceeded to the James Thornton farm occupied by Ernest Parsons, brother of Congressman Claude V. Parsons. The point of interest for the visit was Burden Falls, although at the time of the visit in mid-August, Burden Creek was not flowing.

The tour continued to Bell Smith Springs for the noon meal consisting of squirrel, fish, mutton, six vegetables, watermelon, pie, cake, and homemade ice cream. After the meal, those on the tour and residents from the area heard a talk on reforestation by L.E. Sawyer of Urbana, a University of Illinois Extension Forester and William F. Lodge of Monticello, president of the Central States Forestry Congress.

*Illinois Ozark Reforestation unit
3rd annual tour.
August 1933,*

A. W. Milligan, ladder	\$1.00
Ray Vineyard	2.50
Seth Rumbey	2.00
Jack Roberts	2.00
Jas. Crow	2.00
Cosby Ptg. Co.	3.00
M. E. Ludie, Residence	16.00
Dixon Shgs	11.05
Boat trip	5.00
Home oil Co.	4.85
Distributors Co.	10.00
Weideman	50.00
	<hr/> 129.40
Register Ptg. Co.	3.00
Weideman	25.00
	<hr/> 137.40
Weideman	12.00
20	60.00
	<hr/> \$150.00

After lunch and exploring Bell Smith Springs the group traveled to the second tunnel of the Edgewood Cutoff on the Illinois Central Railroad. Running 219 feet under Mt. Zion church and cemetery and nearly 7,000 feet in length, it is the largest of the three tunnels. For the 1934 Ozark Tour, Trigg arranged for the group to ride a car through the tunnel, but at the last minute it was cancelled due to railroad regulations.

The group continued toward Ozark and Camp Paken-tuck (Camp Ondessonk) to see Cedar Falls. They left Ozark and traveled by the Reynoldsburg Church and noted that the church had recently celebrated the hundredth anniversary of its founding. After stops at Gum Springs and Buffalo Rock the group traveled to Dixon Springs by way of Cotton Hill, Robbsville and Glendale as on the previous year's tour.

The tour camped at the Dixon Springs Hotel the first night and had dinner and breakfast at the hotel. On Wednesday, the group traveled to Golconda and visited Dam 51 before traveling north out of Golconda and on to War Bluff near Raum and Eddyville. War Bluff is the site of one of the 11 "stone forts" in southern Illinois. It was noted that several Indian graves at the site had been pilfered by treasure hunters.

The tour continued over back roads through Thacker's Gap (Herod) and on to the Anvil Rock region of Mountain Township of Saline County (now Garden of the Gods Recreation Area). Here they saw rock formations such as Anvil Rock, Devil's Divan and Big Rock. Oddly, there's no mention of Camel Rock which today is the most well known rock formation at the site. Trigg paid \$1 to a nearby farmer for the use of a ladder to climb the rock formations.

The tour continued on through Karber's Ridge and past High Knob to the Casey farm in Grindstaff Hollow. Here at Coulter Springs another luncheon was served with local residents invited to hear Sawyer and Lodge's remarks on reforestation of the area. They were joined by Walter W. Williams of Benton, president of the State Chamber of Commerce. In 1937 Trigg purchased the Casey farm and named it Resthaven.

By that evening the group had traveled to Rosiclare where they camped overnight near ex-Senator A.A. Miles'

home. Dinner and breakfast the following morning were served at the Y.M.C.A. building (now the Masonic Lodge) by the ladies of the Methodist Church.

The last day of the tour began with the group traveling by truck to Elizabethtown for a trip up the Ohio River to Cave-In-Rock aboard the packet boat Kathryne. Near Tower Rock the group stopped at Ebb and Flow Spring. The spring was unique in that it flowed sporadically throughout the day. Before it would begin its flow a rumbling under the earth could be heard. The spring is no longer visible today due to the increased height of the Smithland Pool of the Ohio River.

After viewing the river pirates' cave at Cave-in-Rock, the group returned to the truck and traveled north to "The Sinks," a large lake that mysteriously disappears when the "bottom drops out of the lake." It was said the lake sometimes remains filled three to five years before emptying. The group stopped at Birch Springs (Decker Springs) for lunch and then proceeded to the Pounds (Rim Rock Recreation Trail) to view the "stone fort" similar to the one viewed the previous day at War Bluff. The group also hiked to the corral or "impoundment" on the north face of the bluff that gives the hollow its name.

From The Pounds the group returned to Harrisburg late in the afternoon reportedly sunburned and insect-bitten. The August 18, 1933, *Daily Register* reported, "the trip was

The tour camps at Cave-In-Rock.





The tour visited the College in the Hills in Pope County. Penny Cent — artist and instructor at the college — stands to the left of the man on crutches.

dedicated to the principal project of the club [Kiwanis], the reforestation of this section, on which the club members have been laboring for the past three years."

Before the end of the month, the Illinois Purchase units were approved by the federal forest commission. In October the first personnel arrived in southern Illinois to begin making land acquisitions for the Shawnee Purchase Unit in Gallatin, Hardin, Pope and Saline Counties and the Illini Purchase Unit in Jackson and Union Counties.

Fourth Tour: July 16, 17, 18, 1934

The fourth tour left the Harrisburg Square at 8:50 a.m. on Monday, July 16. For the first time, the tour required two trucks to haul the men and equipment. Sidewalls and benches for sitting were installed on the truck beds and tarpaulins were carried for cover in case of rain. The fourth tour included newspaper publishers, photographers, a state forester, local and regional forestry service personnel, geology and soil scientists, chamber of commerce representatives, the Big Four Railroad representatives, attorneys, merchants and business owners. In all 33 men participated. Each "Ozarker" was again asked to contribute \$10 toward the cost of the tour. For the 1934 Ozark Tour, Trigg included visits to the newly established Civilian Conservation Corp camps throughout southern Illinois.

The group's first stop was at the remains of the Indian

"stone fort" near Stonefort. From there the group traveled to the Eddyville CCC camp for lunch and on to Golconda for fishing off of Dam 51 and entertainment and dinner at the Riverside Hotel given by the Golconda Rotary Club. Speakers for the evening were William L. Barker of Milwaukee, federal forestry service; R.B. Miller of the state department of conservation; C.A. Radford of the Big Four Railroad; John Morris, the Illinois Central Railroad; Dr. M.M. Leighton, chief of Illinois Geological Survey and Walter Williams of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce.

On Tuesday the group traveled to the Anvil Rock region (Garden of the Gods Recreation Area). While exploring the rock formations, Dr. Leighton presented a talk on how the unique bluffs were formed and were now exposed through erosion. Trigg had originally not included the site since it had been covered on the previous year's tour, but he decided to add it due to Dr. Leighton's presence on the tour.

The tour made a brief stop at the College in the Hills where a group of mostly Northwestern University graduates started a liberal arts college in Hardin County. According to one source the college provided ten-week sessions for \$28, another source stated the first session was eight weeks for \$10. [See Mildred McCormick's *Springhouse* articles, April and June 1989, for a more thorough discussion.] The college was in operation about three years. One somewhat mysterious instructor at the college, artist Penny Cent, was a later participant in the Ozark Tours.

The group had lunch at the Hicks CCC camp before traveling on to the Illinois Iron Furnace where one of the participants had the unfortunate accident of stepping on a nest of yellow jackets. The group also stopped at Birch's Spring (Decker Springs). The evening of the second day found the group in Cave-In-Rock where they camped in the mouth of the Cave along the river bank. Dinner was served at the home of W.H. Herrin at Cave-In-Rock.

At the time of the 1934 Tour silt that had filled the back of the Cave was being removed as a project under the State Department of Public Works and Buildings. The project had begun as a Civil Works Administration project to return the Cave to its former size. The two side chambers in the back of Cave were discovered during these excavations. Dynamite was used to loosen the soil before it was hauled to the mouth of the cave by mule and mining cart. Several bones had been uncovered and were collected by the workers in a wheel barrow. It was presumed they were the remains of river pirate victims. Due to the blasting, none of the skeletons were found intact. It was also reported antlers had been found.

After breakfast the final day, the group boarded the packet boat *Kathryne* for a 14-mile trip up the Ohio River from Cave-in-Rock through Dam 50 to Caseyville, Kentucky. They then traveled back across the river to meet the trucks at Sellers' Landing, the site of a pre-Civil War paper mill. The

landing was a land prospect project of George Escol Sellers who hoped to settle a city to rival Pittsburg and Cincinnati on the lower Ohio River. Sellers is sometimes referred to as a friend of Mark Twain. However, Sellers shared the name of an unflattering character in Mark Twain's book *The Gilded Age*. Twain stated he wasn't acquainted with Sellers, but a collaborator of Twain's evidently was, and it was he who suggested the name. Subsequent editions of *The Gilded Age* had the name of the character changed to Mulberry Sellers due to a lawsuit filed by Escol Sellers.

After leaving the riverfront, the trucks traveled to the Kedron CCC camp for lunch and returned to Harrisburg arriving around 5 p.m. The 1934 Ozark Tour covered a total of 156 miles with all three lunches served at CCC camps. It was noted several of the side roads had been improved by the Civilian Conservation Corp.

In each of the subsequent years the Ozark Tours would continue to visit scenic and historic sites in southern Illinois, but during each tour improvements by the C.C.C., forest service personnel and conservation efforts were included as well.

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PART THREE: 1935-1937

Ozark tourists boarded the *Kathryne* on an Ohio River from Cave-In-Rock to Caseyville, Ky.

