

Members of the 1947 Ozark Tour and dogs gather about the truck at the Horning Hotel in Harrisburg.

## Trigg's Trails, Tours and Detours

### PART SIX: 1945 – 1949 OZARK TOURS

Todd A. Carr

Photos courtesy of the Trigg Collection curated by Charles Hammond

In the 1930s, southern Illinois was counting 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 Gallatin, Hardin, Pope, and Saline 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.

#### 1945

As had been the case the previous two years, war-time restrictions caused a modified schedule for the fifteenth annual Ozark Tour. Approximately 30 Ozarkers gathered in Elizabethtown on Monday, September 24, 1945. No set schedule was followed and no trucks were used.

The Ozarkers boarded the ferry Cave-In-Rock and left Elizabethtown about 11 a.m.

The Ohio River excursion began by traveling on the Kentucky side of the two-mile long Hurricane Island. This island is where local folklore says river pirates awaited unsuspecting flatboaters. The ferry continued



to the site of Ford's Ferry, Kentucky, where the Ford's Ferry gang operated an inn and the notorious James Ford met his demise in the early 1800s.

Lunch was served in Cave-In-Rock before heading downstream to Golconda. They arrived a little late for a scheduled meeting with the Golconda Rotary Club and an evening meal provided by the ladies of the Presbyterian Church.

After supper the group continued downstream to Bay City for their overnight stay. During the trip from Golconda it began to rain. Some tried to sleep under a tent on the barge while others sought shelter in a vacant store building. The rain turned into a thunderstorm that continued throughout the night. The following morning the Ozarkers boarded the ferry for Smithland, Kentucky, where breakfast was served.

Due to the rain and storm the previous night, the Ohio River was swollen with water and debris. The ferry fought a swift current trying to return upstream. The Ozarkers were due in Rosiclare at noon for lunch and a tour of a fluorspar mine. By 5 p.m. the ferry had just reached Golconda several miles downstream of Rosiclare. With several hours still to go, many of the group disembarked at Golconda and took a bus back to Elizabethtown where their cars had been left. Those that stayed with the ferry reached Elizabethtown at 10:25 that evening. The Ozarkers decided to try another river excursion for 1946 with a tent large enough to cover the entire barge.

[Author's Note: The 1945 Ozark Tour is the least documented of the Ozark Tours. If Trigg prepared an Ozark News for that year, it doesn't survive. There was no mention of the trip in the 1946 edition other than the dates of the excursion. The specifics of the trip that have been presented here are from a single article published

in Harrisburg's *The Daily Register* a few days after the trip.]

## 1946

The sixteenth annual Ozark Tour was to feature a three-day excursion down the Ohio River from old Shawneetown to Fort Massac State Park near Metropolis. The tour was to be conducted the third week of July as was the norm. Trigg initially had difficulty obtaining a barge or boat large enough to accommodate the group. He also had trouble securing restaurants or church

groups willing to feed the 30 to 40 people expected to go on the tour. Because of these difficulties, the tour was cancelled.

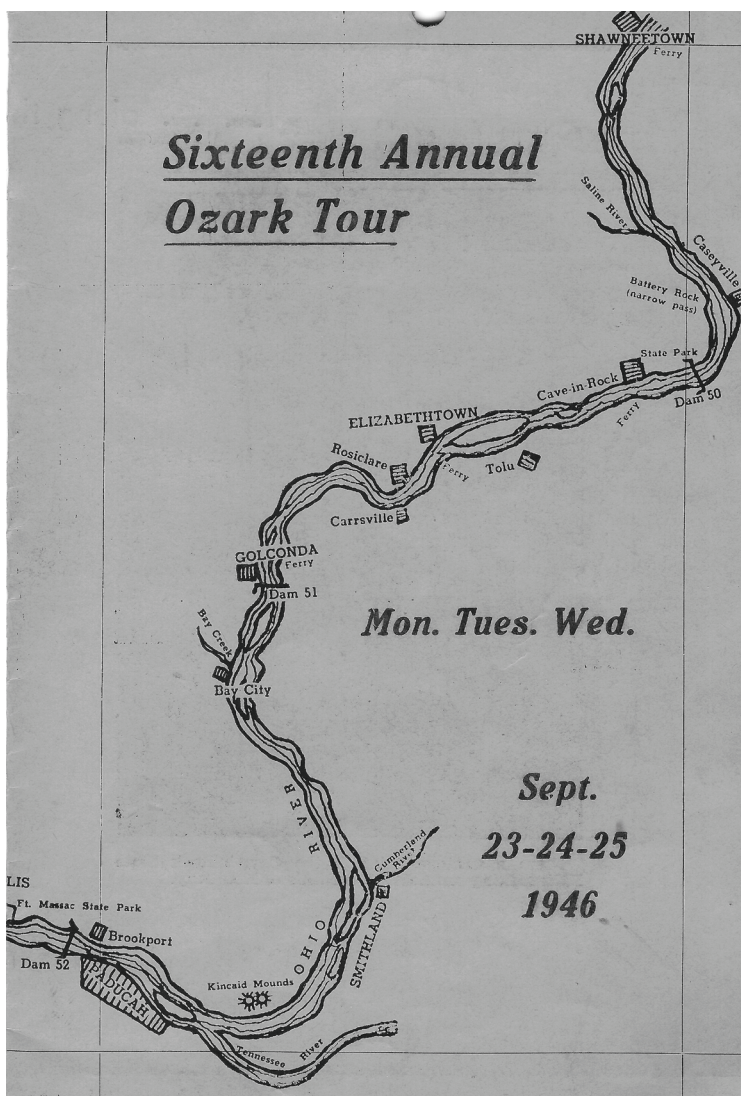
Later that summer arrangements were such that a fall Ozark Tour seemed possible. The river transportation was to consist of two small barges with a small tug boat. Overnight accommodations, sites of interest and meal sites were arranged by the tour planning committee.

Days before the scheduled tour, Capt. William Hale of the Str. Hobo Bill was warned "not to attempt the trip without meeting some drastic requirements which he could not meet for weeks, even under favorable conditions." These "requirements" were regulations that had been put in place during World War II and were still in effect.

This was the only year from 1931 through 1949 there wasn't a

Trigg Ozark Tour. Thirty-two people were signed up to participate in the trip. Trigg's Ozark News that went out at Christmas was filled with letters of regret from the various Ozarkers who said it didn't seem right ending the year without the annual trip.

L.E. Sawyer, Director of the Indiana Coal Producers Association, attended the first Ozark Tour in 1931 as a forester with the University of Illinois Extension. He went on to attend many of the subsequent tours and had this to say: "Needless to say, I missed the trip last sum-





mer more than I can say. Those trips have become a habit with me and to miss one seems like leaving a chapter out of a good story. I am looking forward to another year in hopes that our reunion trips may be resumed."

### 1947

The Ozarkers gathered for the 16th Annual Ozark Tour at the Horning Hotel in Harrisburg on Monday, August 11, 1947. Two canopied trucks with benches lining the bed were used to convey the 28 Ozarkers across southern Illinois. Alden Scott Boyer, owner of the Boyer Museum of American Curiosities in Chicago, followed the trucks in his station wagon with his six dogs: Zipper, Whiskers, Peanuts, Garbo, Popcorn and Doughnuts.

The group left Harrisburg and made their first stop climbing the hill to view Old Stone Face taking pictures of the rock formation and the Saline River valley beyond. Trigg had sulfur on hand to rub the Ozarkers legs to prevent bug bites. The cavern on Cave Hill was bypassed due to lack of time, but was pointed out on the journey to Shawneetown.

The Ozarkers traveled on to Old Shawneetown for a fried chicken lunch served in the Posey Building. After

lunch the group boarded the trucks and crossed the Shawneetown Ferry for a tour of small river towns along the Kentucky side of the Ohio River. The group made stops at Caseyville, Dam 50 and Ford's Ferry before crossing back to Illinois on the Cave-In-Rock Ferry.

The first night ended at the hill-top pavilion of the Cave-In-Rock State Park. A fish fry was prepared by Trigg's wife Inez, son-in-law and daughter. The Ozarkers spent the night on cots under the stars or under the pavilion. A treat the following morning was seeing the sun rise while looking upstream of the Ohio River from the top of the river bluff.

After a brief visit to the pirate's cave, the Ozarkers left Cave-In-Rock by truck for Elizabethtown and breakfast at the Rose Hotel. The group enjoyed biscuits, bacon, eggs and all the trimmings. Introductions were conducted here of all participants of the tour. The Ozark Tour crossed the Ohio River to Kentucky on the Elizabethtown Ferry. They visited the Indian mounds at Tolu, Kentucky, and the remains of the Old Ford Farm and the family burial plots. Stone slab markers erected over the graves had been upturned by vandals, but the inscriptions on the markers were still visible. At Tolu, the group boarded the small mail and passenger boat Joco piloted by James Tinsley and traveled to Carrsville, Kentucky. In Carrsville at the home of Edgar Ferrill the Methodist

L.O. Trigg, seated with the walking staff, and fellow Ozark tourists relax at the Rose Hotel at Elizabethtown.





ladies served ice-cold lemonade before the tour again boarded the trucks.

At noon the tour had reached Harold Hale's People's Cafe in Smithland, Kentucky, where a banquet was prepared with 38 different kinds of food in large bowls and platters scattered up and down the table. Mrs. Hale instructed the Ozarkers to "Help yourself—if you don't see what you want, call for it." While in Smithland the Ozarkers toured the Gower House, once a riverside hostel who counted such famous former patrons as Marquis Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson.

After touring Smithland, the Ozarkers returned to the trucks and traveled to the Paducah, Kentucky, riverfront. Some chartered a boat to visit Owen's Island at the mouth of the Tennessee River while others shopped in the downtown area. The tour continued by crossing the bridge to Illinois at Brookport and overnight camping at the Ft. Massac State Park in Metropolis. Dinner that evening was served by the Metropolis Lutheran Church ladies.

Two presentations were made at the park pavilion. John Foster made a presentation showing various outdoor scenes in Saline County during each of the seasons of the year. The second presentation was by Trigg who talked of scenic and natural curiosities of southern Illinois.

It was an extremely hot and humid summer night and sleeping was difficult. Early Wednesday morning the trucks drove back to Brookport where the Christian Church ladies prepared breakfast in the church dining room. After breakfast the tour continued to the Kinkaid Mounds. The Kinkaid's home was built on the largest of three remaining mounds and a barn on another. Former Vice President and Nobel Prize winner Charles Dawes was a one-time owner of the property and leased the farm to the University of Chicago for

archaeological digs the summer of 1936 and 1937. The 1936 Ozark Tour visited the mounds during those digs.

Leaving the mound site, the tour travelled through New Liberty and Hamlettsburg where the Ozarkers "raided" the two eateries in town for drinks before continuing on. The midday lunch was served in the tree-shaded yard of Mrs. Della Warfield in Bay City. The meal had been prepared 20 miles away by Mrs. Glen Smith and Mrs. Claude McCandless of the Pope County Farm Bureau and trucked to the Ozarkers. Here they were treated to iced watermelons and peach cobbler for dessert.

At Bay City the Ozarkers again caught the Joco mail boat for a trip up the Ohio River to Rosiclare. Several of the men took the opportunity to remove their shoes and socks and dip their feet in the river as the boat pushed upstream. The highlight of the trip was locking through Dam 51 at Golconda. At Rosiclare they rejoined the trucks and returned to Harrisburg around 5 p.m.

#### 1948

The 31 men of the 1948 Ozark tour met at the Horning Hotel in Harrisburg, Illinois on July 19, 1948. The 18th Annual Trigg Ozark Tour returned to the previous format of a three-day excursion into the Shawnee National Forest riding in the bed of trucks. An "office of the tour" tent was set up on the grounds of the hotel complete with signage and flags to collect the registrations of the men as they arrived for the

tour. The tour was promoted as a visit to five of the nine stone forts across southern Illinois. Today there are 11 recognized stone fort sites.

The Ozark Tour traveled to the easternmost stone fort at the Pounds [Rim Rock National Recreation Trail]. Ozarker Alden Scott Boyer of Chicago had brought his troupe of show dogs. "Congo," a wild dog from Africa



L.O. Trigg, left, and Joe Thomas stand upon the two-story Kerr Bluff in 1948.



who had come to America by airplane, went through the Fat Man's Misery of the trail and became stuck on a ledge of rock and had to be rescued. The Ozarkers stopped at Love's General Store and Post Office at Sparks Hill and at Trigg's farm, Resthaven, just north of High Knob on the Hardin and Gallatin County line.

Lunch the first day was served at the Fairy Cliff Café in Herod (Thacker's Gap) where the fried chicken and hot coffee were noted to be the best. The Ozarkers sought shelter from a summer rain by eating their lunch in the adjoining cave. Two hours were spent here letting the rain showers pass over.

The Ozarkers resumed the tour through rural Pope County stopping for refreshments at Otto Kunath's store in Raum. Next they visited the stone fort at War Bluff. Trigg had had a half mile of road cleared through the forest the week before so that the trucks could drive as close as possible to the stone fort site. A visit to the Indian Kitchen stone fort was cancelled due to road conditions. Supper was prepared by ladies of two of the churches in Eddyville under the direction of the Home Bureau. The group camped overnight at Olive Church just west of McCormick.

Breakfast the second day was in the basement of the Seventh Day Baptist Church southeast of Stonefort in "Old Town." The tour continued visiting the stone forts on Murray Bluff and Stonefort Bluff. The Stonefort stone fort was described by the first land surveyors to Illinois in the 1800s and is where we get the best information on its original size and shape, 6 feet tall and 6 feet wide at the base, closing off one side of a bluff-top escarpment, the other three sides of the bluff forming natural barriers. As settlers came to southern Illinois in the early 1800s many of the stones in the forts were scavenged for foundations and chimneys.

Along the drive, Trigg pointed out his boyhood home in Ozark including the old smokehouse where the first Ozark News was printed on a homemade printing press in 1901. Lunch was served at Beauman Fruit Farm near Tunnel Hill. Mrs. Doris Pickering and assistants served what was called a "sumptuous lunch" complete with a hamper full of fresh ripe peaches. The group stayed two hours at this location for another summer shower to pass over. Because of the road conditions, a trip to the Trigg stone fort was abandoned.

The Ozarkers made their way to the Trigg Hill Look-out Tower and picnic area. Today this tower is the last remaining look-out tower in the Shawnee National Forest. It was named in Trigg's honor in 1936. From Trigg Tower the Ozarkers traveled to Robbsville for refreshments and the University of Illinois Experimenting Station [Dixon Springs Ag Center] where they received a lecture from a Mr. Webb. The Ozarkers briefly stopped at Lake Glendale before heading to the American Legion Hut west of Vienna where a chicken supper was served by Mrs. Grace Cox and Mrs. Pearl Spann.

After the evening meal the Ozarkers made their way to Jonesboro to the old fairgrounds, the site of the third Lincoln-Douglas debate and the home of a Shawnee National Forest Ranger Station. Some of the Ozarkers camped on cots under the stars while others set their cots up indoors in the machinery building.

Breakfast the last day was served in Anna at the Spires Café. After breakfast the group made their way to the home of Joe Thomas in Cobden where the amateur archaeologist exhibited his large collection of Indian relics. Leaving Cobden they travelled east to the site of the Thomas brothers digs at Garner and Kerr Bluffs, the latter a "two-story" shelter bluff where signs of



The Ozark tourists visit the Thomas Brothers digs at Garner Bluff in 1948.





Friends promote L.O. Trigg, right, from the honorary rank of captain to colonel at Fairy Cliff in 1948.

habitation had been found on both levels of the bluff. Another stone fort was also in the area. It was thought the stone fort may have been built by the people who occupied the shelter bluffs below.

The Ozarkers traveled to Cedar Grove Church and cemetery near the base of Cedar Bluff west of Goreville. The cemetery is where 35 grave stones were lined up in a row all bearing the inscription: "In God I Trust." No one was buried at the grave markers and today there are only five or six of the "Phantom Graves" remaining in the cemetery. People have been buried where many of them once stood. The final lunch was served on the grounds of the church on a long banquet table under the direction of Mrs. Mina Crawford.

On the hill behind the church, half way to the top of Cedar Bluff, stood an old schoolhouse. No roads led to the school building. An older man in the nearby town of Buncombe told the group that he went to school there as a boy on horseback. The shelter bluff behind the school building served as a barn for the horses during the school day and was used to store the coal for the heat stove in the school. At 3:45 the trucks departed Cedar Bluff for Harrisburg via Buncombe where the 1948 tour disbanded at the Horning Hotel.

In August of 1948 a group of Ozark Tour supporters

gathered at the Fairy Cliff Café in Herod to honor L.O. Trigg for his contributions in promoting southern Illinois. Dr. John B. Ruyle, president emeritus of the Illinois State Archeological Society, Champaign, was in charge of the event. Attorney Walter Williams of Benton was the principle speaker of the evening. Eldorado Mayor John David Upchurch gave a biological sketch of Trigg's life and his wife, children, and their families were all introduced. Roy Olson, superintendent of the Shawnee National Forest, read letters from men who had been on Trigg's Ozark Tours but were unable to attend.

Dr. Ruyle read from a hand lettered scroll of linen parchment where Mr. Trigg was promoted from the rank of "captain" to "colonel" of the "Army of the Ozarks." Several Ozarkers were on hand to make personal remarks. William H. Farley of Harrisburg read a list of memorials of Ozarkers who had passed on. Finally, Col. Trigg was presented a leather briefcase as a token of appreciation for his efforts in promoting southern Illinois.

## 1949

The 19th annual and final Ozark Tour under Trigg's direction met at the Horning Hotel in Harrisburg,







continued throughout the night so the Ozarkers slept on cots in Dr. Keith's barn, garage and his home. Dr. Keith's farm is now the location of The Blue Boar Restaurant.

The next morning breakfast was served at the Spires Cafeteria in Anna. After breakfast a brief tour of the Union County State Forest and Nursery was conducted. This is now the Trail of Tears State Forest. The tour proceeded south out of Jonesboro to the gravel road to Dongola and the Len Hingate Farm. Here the Ozarkers made a long walk overland to the underground river known as Roaring Spring.

After returning to the trucks the tour proceeded to Vienna by way of Morgan Pond, Cypress and West Vienna to the American Legion Hut where the Ladies Auxiliary provided lunch. After lunch the tour proceeded to Simpson, but learned the roads to the Trigg stone fort were impassible due to the rain. The Ozarkers instead stopped at the home of the late Dr. Charles Trigg for lemonade and iced tea served by his three daughters.

After a long rest, the tour proceeded to the newly crowned Dixon Springs State Park. Several previous Ozark Tours had visited the property when it was a private mineral springs resort under frequent Ozarker Charles Wheeler. A brief tour was made before heading to the shelter house at Lake Glendale where Mrs. Helen Guard and the Home Bureau ladies provided the evening meal. The shelter house also served as the overnight campsite although the roof was found to be rather leaky.

The final day the tour travelled to Eddyville by way of Waltersburg where breakfast had been prepared by Mrs. Ras Barger at her home. Leaving Eddyville by the Eddyville gravel road to Illinois Route 34, the Ozarkers travelled north to Humm's Wye for refreshments at Drumm's Café. Just south of the Wye, near Soward Cemetery, the Ozarkers explored an underground river where it enters a cavern under a high hill. This feature was later demolished from work at the nearby quarry.

Returning to the trucks, the Ozarkers made a brief trip to the Charles R. Cochran farm where the underground stream emerged on the opposite side of the hill. Using flashlights, the Ozarkers entered the cavern and took pictures of the interior.

The tour continued to the final stop at the Fairy Cliff

Café at Herod where Mrs. Fulta Thurmond and daughters prepared the final lunch of the tour. The Ozark Tour spent four hours at the café recalling their experiences over the three days. At 4:30, Bro. Fred Wasson gave a dismissal prayer and the Ozark Tour returned to the Horning Hotel.

On November 30, 1949, L.O. "Colonel" Trigg passed away at Ferrell Hospital in Eldorado. He was 70 years old. Trigg's funeral was held at the Calvary Baptist Church in Eldorado. After the service, several of the Ozarkers gathered in the church basement to discuss what would become of the Ozark Tours. It was decided to continue the legacy by fulfilling Trigg's plans for the 1950 Ozark Tour of going "River to River." Cedar branches were gathered at Trigg's Resthaven farm and fashioned into boughs. One was placed in the river at Battery Rock on the Ohio River and another in the Mississippi River at Grand Tower. These sites would later become the trailheads of the original River-to-River Trail. [A more accessible trailhead in Elizabethtown is

now the preferred eastern terminus of the trail.]

During the 1955 Ozark Tour a memorial to Col. Trigg was placed south of U.S. Route 45 near Ozark. The plaque dedicates a planned Trigg Memorial Highway which would have traveled the Ozark Uplift between Grand Tower and Battery Rock. Side roads and signage would have been provided so tourists could travel to many of the scenic wonders Trigg had spent nearly 20

years promoting. The Trigg Memorial Highway was never made a reality, but the memorial stone can still be seen on U.S. Route 45 just southwest of the turn to Ozark. The Ozark Tours continued under the direction of William Farley of Harrisburg and Dan Malkovich of Benton until the late 1970s.

In 2013 to remember the legacy of Col. Trigg and remind the public of how the Shawnee National Forest came to be, a group was formed to bring back the Ozark Tours. Each Spring and Fall one-day Ozark Tours are conducted through a partnership of the Shawnee National Forest, River-to-River Trail Society, and tourism groups in Hardin, Gallatin and Saline Counties—three of the original four counties that formed the Illinois Ozarks Reforestation Unit.



Inez and L.O. Trigg relax at Resthaven after the 1948 Ozark Tour.