In 1962, the Jackson County Historical Society donated funds. Restoration began the next year. In 1964, a portion of the town including the courthouse square and the steamboat landing, was bought by the Society. Jacksonport became a State Park in 1965. The Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism has continued restoration and development of the park with the support of the Historical Society. In 1970, the courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

STORIES OF A RIVER TOWN

Due to its location near the confluence of the Black and White Rivers, the Jacksonport area was an important trade center in early Arkansas. Two trappers, Cartwright and Leausateau, established a camp on the banks of nearby Jacks Creek in the early 1820s. In 1831, Thomas Todd Tunstall was the first steamboat pilot to venture up the White River to Batesville. Later in 1839, Tunstall purchased land and established the town of Jacksonport.

As the area prospered and grew, it developed into a busy steamboat port. Burly stevedores loaded timber, bear grease, cotton bales, and wild game on the steamboats. The county seat moved to Jacksonport from Augusta in 1854. The peak of Jacksonport's influence came in the decades before and after the Civil War. Steamboats from the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers landed at the town year-round.

During the Civil War, Jacksonport was occupied by both Confederate and Union armies due to its strategic position. Five Major Generals used the town as their headquarters. On June 5, 1865, Confederate General Jeff Thompson, "Swampfox of the Confederacy," surrendered 6,000 troops to Lt. Colonel C. W. Davis at the Jacksonport steamboat landing.

The courthouse, constructed from 1869-72 by John A. Schnabel, is made of brick manufactured in Jacksonport. The courthouse, constructed from 1869-72 by John A. Schnabel, is made of brick manufactured in Jacksonport. The courthouse served as the county seat until 1892, when the county seat was moved to Newport.

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The "Jacksonport" gallery shows the essence of Jacksonport's rich life as a steamboat town, and the challenge as an occupied town during the Civil War. The tower's struggles to rebuild and regain its identity after the war are emphasized. The "Clerk's Office" gallery traces the influence of county government on everyday life of the average citizen through court records and documents. The era is visualized by the display of a typical clerk's office with historic furnishings. "The Gallery" features original artifacts from the everyday life of the average citizens. Rotation of exhibits from the museum collection offers changes periodically.

The "Post Script" gallery interprets the struggles of the courthouse and the community decline as a river town emphasizing the choices that were made to bring us where we are today. The "Courtroom" gallery allows you to step back in time to experience the drama of court in the 19th century. All courthouse exhibits offer you the opportunity to see and experience Jacksonport's rich cultural history in a unique and exciting way.

Camping • Jacksonport offers a unique camping experience. Twenty Class "A" campsites with 50/30 amp electric and water hookups are set along the banks of the White River. The campground rest room/shower facility, and one campsite are barrier-free.

LOCATION

Traveling north on State Highway 67 into Newport take exit 83 and turn left (west) on Highway 384 and travel one mile to Highway 367. Turn left (south) onto Highway 367 and travel 2 miles to Highway 69 and turn right (north). Travel Highway 69 three miles to Jacksonport.

For further information on park hours and fees, contact:
Jacksonport State Park
205 Avenue Street
Newport, AR 72112
(870) 523-2143
jacksonport@arkansas.com

For information on Arkansas’s other fine state parks, contact:
Arkansas State Parks
One Capitol Mall, 4A-900
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682-1191
www.ArkansasStateParks.com

Arkansas State Parks 2013

COURTHOUSE

The courthouse opened for business in 1872. The main entrance faced the White River and the town's business district on Jefferson Street. The ground floor housed county offices.

Upstairs, nine-foot double doorways, surmounted by beautiful fanlight windows, open onto wrought iron balconies at each end of the building. A matching doorway leads into the courtroom from the hall. Golden-tongued oratory once rang through these halls, and political "speaking's" were given from the balconies. With benches pushed back, the courtroom was and still is used for balls and celebrations.

COURTHOUSE

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Other Facilities • A shaded picnic area within a stone's throw of the White River offers a fun place for family and friends. Rest rooms are nearby and a pavilion is available for rent. A visitor center in the courtyard provides visitor information, grocery items, and a gift shop where visitors can find souvenirs of their trip to historic Jacksonport. A boat ramp provides access to the White River and the half-mile Tunstall Riverwalk allows visitors to leisurely walk along the banks of the White River.

NOTE: Campers must register at the visitor center before occupying a campsite. All sites are reservable and may be reserved up to one year in advance. Please call to check availability. The pavilion must be reserved at the visitor center before being used (fee and deposit required).

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Visitor Center GPS: 35°38’22"N/91°18’37"W

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Jacksonport State Park

Notice! To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and supervision of your children are required while visiting these areas.