

### ***Why is this project important?***

This Heritage Project is an important link between the Army and the surrounding community that focuses on our common history. Only through awareness and education can we ensure that our cultural history remains relevant and sustainable for future generations.

### ***How can I get involved?***

- ✓ Commit to share your time, ideas, and your family's past with the Heritage Project staff and others
- ✓ Become involved in one or more Heritage Project actions such as quilt-making, recipe books, canning demonstrations, plowing, homestead construction techniques or other initiatives that promote the understanding of the past.
- ✓ Share your family reunion dates with us and others so they may be published. Invite Heritage Project staff to visit at your reunion, to explain the benefits of participating in the program, and our progress to date.
- ✓ Help identify unknown burials in our cemeteries
- ✓ Become an active participant in the annual Heritage Day celebration each November and at other venues throughout the year
- ✓ Help us make this project meaningful, community based and sustainable beyond the immediate future
- ✓ Spread the word. Engage your family. Get involved.



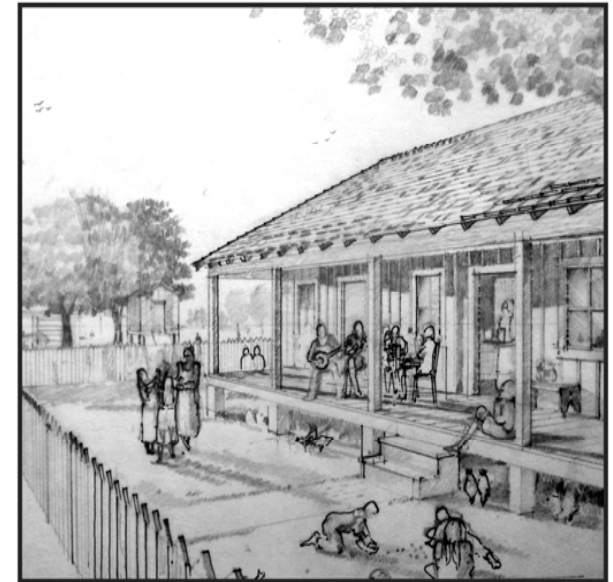
The Heritage Project staff is attempting to compile an historic archive of pictures and documents related to each of the families and homesteads. If you have pictures or other pertinent documents that would be valuable to the Heritage Collection, our professional staff can make digital copies of them and return them safely to you. For more information, contact Heritage Project Staff at (337) 531-0916.

## **JRTC & Fort Polk**



## **THE FORT POLK HERITAGE PROJECT**

*Recognize, Honor, and Memorialize*



*We will not forget our Heritage Families for they are unsung heroes who surrendered their homes and way of life for the sake of this nation.*

### **Heritage Project Points of Contact:**

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**Check out our Website at:**

**polkhistory.org**

## *What is the scope of this program?*

The Heritage Family Project recognizes, honors, and memorializes the sacrifices made by families that formerly occupied land that is now Fort Polk. It serves as a regional outreach effort to capture, archive, and share their rich cultural past.

## *Who is included?*

The Heritage Project includes those displaced persons who are still living, their families, and the descendants of anyone who previously lived on Fort Polk lands between 1820 and 1941.

## *What is needed?*

- Recorded **Oral History Interviews** detailing daily life in west central La.
- **Photographs** of people, places, and activities of everyday life to copy into the archives
- Pre-1945 **Documents and Records** of: military service, marriages, taxes, deaths, businesses, land purchases, etc
- **Artifacts** that could be made available for temporary loan and display
- Cemetery **Burial Information** for any unidentified burial
- **Family Trees** that show relationships over multiple generations
- Favorite **Stories/Oral Traditions** handed down or told by a member of the family
- **Sketches** of homesteads with the house in relation to other outbuildings, wells, fences, and agricultural lands
- Favorite family **Recipes** you are willing to share
- **Family Reunion** dates and locations so the Heritage Project staff can distribute information
- Your **Ideas and Help** to enhance the understanding and to educate others about our historical past

## Harriet Price Gill Cemetery Investigation

Here is a sample of how Heritage Family Members can help our progress on this journey. The Harriet Price Gill Cemetery (Fort Polk #15) is located in the northwest corner of the installation. Members of the Gill family shared information about the burial location of Harriet Price Gill and her son. In her family history, Eloise Gill Cavanaugh (great-granddaughter of Reuben R. and Harriet Price Gill) states, "These two graves were visible in 1927-." However, time and the passing of the generation led to the graves being lost. Eloise Gill Cavanaugh later reports that, "In 1973, with the help of Lyndon Smith, who located the exact spot and C.J. Cavanaugh who made the stone, the graves were marked-."

In February of 2009 Lyndon Smith confirmed this family history. Recent discussions suggested that there may have been a total of five individuals buried on the homestead. Based on the photographic evidence and oral discussions given by the family descendants, the cultural resources staff conducted a non-invasive investigation of the area using ground penetrating radar (GPR). Since the family communicated this story, the homestead is now being more fully documented and sketched to show the spatial relationship of the buildings, the cemetery, and landmarks.

## Harriet Price Gill Cemetery (Continued)

The field data is being evaluated at present to verify the location of existing burials and determine if others have been located. Access to information from the family is crucial to capturing the historical context of these sites. As this investigation concludes, the commitment to share the results will remain high. It is only then that the access, communicate, and educate triangle can be closed.



Are you willing to become involved? To communicate what you know? To help preserve the past for future generations? Heritage Project staff are available through email and telephone.

