

**Dr. Edmund A.
Babler Memorial
State Park**

River Hills Current

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Fall 2011

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Autumn Artistry: The Beauty and Science of Fall Foliage

Every autumn, one question surfaces in the minds of many people. This question is brought to the forefront as the Missouri hillsides turn from the lush green canvas of summer to the splendid stained-glass mosaic of fall. Many people not only relish the turning of the leaves, but will travel great distances to view one of the best nature "shows" on earth. All the time, though, the question lingers: What makes the leaves change color?

This question seems fitting in the fall, but many do not realize the process actually starts with the first day of summer. This day marks the longest day of the year, after which we start the downward swing toward winter. Once past the summer solstice, the days become shorter and the earth receives less direct sunlight. This not only affects our daily temperatures, but also the color of the leaves. Many plants contain pigment-producing chemicals such as chlorophyll, carotin, and xanthophylls.

Chlorophyll is the chemical that makes plants green. During the summer months, plants produce vast amounts of chlorophyll which mask the yellow pigments-carotin and xanthophylls. As the days get shorter and cooler signaling the approach of winter, chlorophyll



color. Tulip poplars and birches start off the spectrum of yellow with a clear, paler color, while hickories tend to fall into the golden-yellow tones.

The beautiful russet color of the maples and blackgums develop in a slightly different way. Sugars and other compounds mix together within the leaves of these trees to form anthocyanins or red pigment. Bright, sunny days and cool nights help intensify these red pigments. Much like their golden-leaved counterparts, the chlorophyll production ceases in the fall unmasking the anthocyanin pigments. These trees can be bright red, orange, and even maroon depending on the amount of red and yellow pigments within the leaves.

production stops. The last remaining green pigments break down inside the leaf allowing their autumn colors to shine through. Although some trees, and even some individual leaves, might have multiple fall colors (such as sassafras), most species of plants have a characteristic fall leaf



(Continued on Page 6)

Babler State Park's Historic Past

Part Two

Babler State Park represents a bond between two brothers, Jacob and Edmund Babler, which is rooted not only in family ties, but also in a desire to serve their fellow man. Although their interests lay in different professions, their commitment to service gave us the urban oasis we have here today.

The Love of Land and Family

The Bablers, Swiss immigrants who moved to Missouri from Wisconsin in the late 1800s, became an important St. Louis family in the early 1900s. Of this prominent family, two brothers, Jacob and Edmund, made their own unique marks on Missouri.

Dr. Edmund A. Babler was a leading intestinal and reconstructive surgeon in the St. Louis area. After graduating from Washington University in 1902, Edmund became a general surgeon for the Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital. Later, Dr. Babler established one of the largest private practices in St. Louis. Edmund was well known and respected among his colleagues and was also said to have spent three-fourths of his time serving the unfortunate and poverty-stricken. His deep personal interest in each patient was reflected at his funeral in 1930. At the age of 55 Edmund died suddenly of pneumonia and thousands of people turned out to pay tribute to his memory, making it one of the largest funerals ever held in St. Louis.

His older brother, Jacob L. Babler, was a successful businessman. He was a lawyer for ten years before starting a career in the insurance industry. He also made lucrative investments



Dr. Edmund A. Babler

throughout his life including forming and serving as president of the Babler Investment Co. of St. Louis. Due to Jacob's financial success and his work with the Republican Party, Jacob was one of the most influential Missourians of the time.

Also an advocate of land preservation, Jacob often expressed his

firm belief that Missouri's geographical location and natural beauty made it one of the most outstanding recreation states in the country. Jacob's love for Missouri's landscape and for his brother came together to create a unique gift to the people of this state. In the early 1930s after his brother's death, Jacob began to buy tracts of land with the intention of turning it into a living monument that would

celebrate Edmund's generous spirit. In 1934, Jacob and his younger brother Henry donated 868 acres of land to be established as "Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park". In the following years the Babler family made more gifts of land to the park, bringing the total holdings to 2,439 acres.

Due to the limited resources of the Missouri State Park Board, Jacob looked to other powers for help with building and funding the park. With the help of

Conrad L. Wirth, Director of the Na-

tional Park Service, Jacob developed plans to establish a trust fund that would provide for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the park. Since the park was eligible for federal aid, Jacob also requested help through Congressman John J. Cochran. Aid was granted to the park in the form of two companies of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers, or "boys" as they were affectionately nicknamed.

The CCC Boys of Babler

Jacob's plans to develop the park coincided with one of the most active periods of development for both state and federal

lands. In the 1930s, the Great Depression had spread across America, affecting a large majority with poverty and economical ruin. In an effort to jump start the nation's mired economy, Pres. Franklin Roosevelt began to develop what he called New Deal programs that would create jobs in these desperate times. One of the most popular of these programs was the Civilian Conservation Corps implemented in 1933. Founded to help young men obtain critical employment, the CCC also provided for the conservation of national and state forests and soils.



Stone underpass on Guy Park Drive



CCC "boys" working at main entrance

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Program and Special Event Schedule

All programs are FREE and open to the public

Please contact the visitor center at (636) 458-3813 for more program details!

September 2011

Get Out & Play Day!

Saturday Sept. 24

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

River Hills Visitor Center

Get out and play at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park with fun activities for the whole family. Activities will include making nature bandanas and kites, scavenger hikes, orienteering, and mini-habitat exploration!

October 2011

Hiked It, Liked It!

Saturdays in October

9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Scheduled Trail's Trailhead

Cool, Crisp Air...the turn of leaves to crimson and gold...enjoy Babler State Park in all its beauty on these Saturday morning hikes! Hikes will last approximately 1 1/2 hours and vary in degree of difficulty. All ages are welcome!

Trail Schedule:

- Oct. 1 - Hawthorn Trail
- Oct. 8 - Virginia Day Trail
- Oct. 15 - Woodbine Trail
- Oct. 22 - Paved Bike Trail
- Oct. 29 - Dogwood Trail

Night Sky Over Babler

Saturday Oct. 8

6 p.m. - 10 p.m.

River Hills Visitor Center and Monument Field

Join Babler State Park and the St. Louis Astronomical Society (SLAS)

for a fun evening under the stars to celebrate International Observe the Moon Night. The evening will kick off at 6 p.m. with a "virtual tour" of Earth's orbit with a fun, interpretive program at the visitor center. Then we will move the celebration outside at 7 p.m. where SLAS members will have telescopes available for viewing the moon, Jupiter and its moons, and double stars, clusters and galaxies. Please bring your binoculars, lawn chairs, blankets, and flashlights! Fun crafts and prize drawings will occur throughout the event at the visitor center as well.

"Falling" for Photography

Saturday Oct. 15 & 29

1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

River Hills Visitor Center

Are you interested in preserving your outdoor experiences in photographs? Do the buttons and knobs on your camera confuse you? Come learn the "ins and outs" of nature photography and how to get the best quality pictures out of your camera! Part of this class will be set indoors learning how to take great nature photos, then we will hit the trail to try out our new skills! This class will be offered two Saturdays to accommodate as many attendees as possible. Advance registration is required, space is limited. Please contact the visitor center at 636-458-3813 to reserve your spot!

A Peek at the Past

Saturday Oct. 22

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Historic Stables

Join Babler State Park and Rockwoods School District for a fun afternoon of historic crafts, skills and games. Enjoy the opportunity to learn more about what is offered in the park and view the historic riding stables. Take a walking tour to meet "ghosts" from the area's past and learn what daily life was like before this land was a park!

November 2011

Campfire Cooking

Saturday Nov. 5

2 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Campground Amphitheater

Campfire cooking doesn't have to mean hotdogs on sticks or s'mores. Experience Dutch oven cooking for more than stew as we make a variety of yummy treats! For food preparation purposes, this program will require advance registration. Please contact the visitor center at 636-458-3813 to reserve your spot!

THE MOST EXTREME:

Missouri Mammals

Saturday Nov. 19

2 p.m. - 3 p.m.

River Hills Visitor Center

Who needs television and exotic animals from far away places. We have some amazing and EXTREME mammals right here in Missouri! Join a park naturalist for a fun afternoon counting down Missouri's Most Extreme mammals...you will be astounded by the answers!

Babler State Park's Historic Past *(continued from page 2)*

By 1934, Missouri had more than 4,000 CCC men working on 40,000 acres of state park land. Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park was one of several beneficiaries of these CCC activities. Due to Jacob's influence, two compa-



Quarry located in park

nies, Co. 2729 and Co. 3763, comprised of 200 men each and another 200 Works Progress Administration (WPA) men worked at Babler State Park cutting roads through the hilly countryside as well as building scenic viewpoints, trails, and many structures still in use today.

The buildings and structures of stone and timber in this park are superb examples of sturdiness, simplicity, and exquisite craftsmanship. Placement of buildings at wide intervals in inconspicuous locations, with screening from hillsides and trees blended them with both their settings and each other. This harmony was achieved by using natural colors and native materials, emphasizing horizontal lines, and avoiding an overly sophisticated appearance. Limestone rock quarried from the park was used



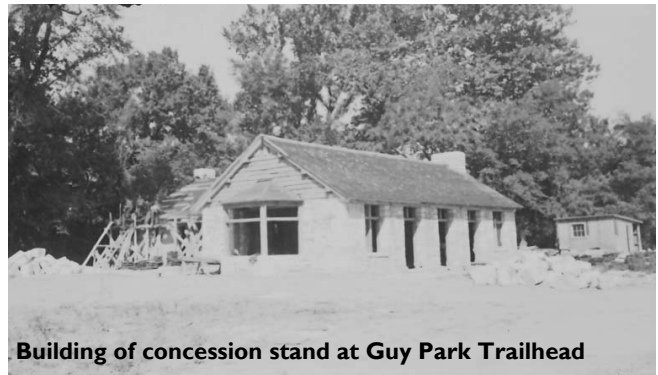
Park Dedication Oct. 10, 1938

for foundations, walls and bridges. The park road is notable for its meandering design and rustic stone curbing and guttering, leaving the views of the park uninterrupted.

Because of the legacy from the CCC enrollees, Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park has 22 structures in the National Register of Historic Places. All were added to the register in 1985 under a mass state nomination entitled "Emergency Conservation Work (E.C.W.) Architecture in Missouri State Parks, 1933-1942, Thematic Resources".

Park Dedication and Beyond

Along with developing the park, Jacob commissioned renowned New York sculptor, Charles Keck, to design a statue of his late brother. The bronze statue mounted on a pedestal of granite remains the focal point of the park even today. Carved into the pedestal are the figures of two



Building of concession stand at Guy Park Trailhead

mothers, their children, and two young men—a tribute to the time and skills the renowned surgeon spent helping those less fortunate. On Oct. 10, 1938, the park was ready for the public. At the dedication ceremony U.S

Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes praised the Missouri State Park system and Jacob Babler in particular. He expressed the hope that Babler State Park would become a "delightful playground combining natural landscape vistas with urban recreation."

In addition to donations for Babler State Park, Jacob also donated money to purchase the remaining land needed for the 1,007-acre Big Oak Tree State Park near Cape Girardeau. Jacob's interest in and support of state parks earned him the nickname "Father of Missouri's State Parks."

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park still has many secrets to reveal. The history presented through these newsletters just scratches the surface. Much research still needs to be completed on the families who settled this area and the locations and assignments of the CCC camps. Other aspects of the park's past need full investigation, such as the historic use of the land by Native Americans, two schoolhouse

foundations within the park, and the use of the park as a POW camp from 1942 to 1943. Clues to the park's past do not come along often, but when they do they are priceless. These clues frequently come from park visitors and even from newsletter subscribers, so if you would like to share your knowledge of Babler State Park's history please contact our interpretive staff!

Park Notes

Babler State Park is on Facebook!

In August, the park developed its own Facebook page! It is a great way to stay up-to-date on current program offerings, stay in contact with park staff, and post comments about the park. Please check us out on the social networking site at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park and "Like" us.

Bug Day/Open House a Success

Babler State Park's annual Bug Day and Open House provided a day of fun, "buggy" games, crafts, and activities for



Dancing Bees at Talent Show

the whole family. A reality tv-inspired talent show, *Insects Got Talent* was presented at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. with some visitors staying for both shows! Approximately 150 people attended the event this year. Plans have already begun for next year's event. Hope to see you all there!

Virginia Day Memorial Trail Re-route

Although all hiking trails were open this summer, the Virginia Day Memorial Trail has had one section closed since the late winter storm damage. A re-route has been determined and, pending approval, the trail work will occur this October/November.

Gift Shop Perfect for Holiday Shopping-

From t-shirts to toys and puzzles to pocket tools, the gift shop at the River Hills Visitor Center has a lot to offer. There are great gifts for all ages and in a variety of price ranges. Prices on most items were reduced over the summer and a clearance table has been

added for the savvy shopper! New items will soon be arriving— park post-cards, a new patch and items from local, Missouri artisans.

Service Projects Available for Scouts

Park staff have recently compiled a new list of potential Scout projects for the park. These projects include a variety of skill and time requirements, from a couple hours to full days, ongoing, group and individual projects. We even have Eagle Scout projects available.

Contact the visitor center for more information!

Volunteer Spotlight: Paul Oldham

Paul Oldham came to the park last fall looking for a way to renew his passion for history and the VIP (Volunteer In Parks) program. He had started with Missouri State Parks at Watkins Woolen Mill State Park & Historic Site in 2003 as a retiree looking for a part-time job. It was here he discovered his love of history, which he often shared with visitors. Paul worked and volun-

teered at Watkins Woolen Mill for the next seven years, until he moved to the St. Louis area to be closer to family. For the past year he has volunteered his time every week here at Babler helping to organize and record the numerous documents and artifacts



in our archives. To date, Paul has filled two full notebooks with detailed information on accessioned items to be added to the artifact database! For someone who states, "I don't care much for nature," Paul has been an invaluable addition to the park staff.

Ask the Interpreter!

Q: What are these crumpled paper like things around the base of some plants?

A: The white tissuelike substance at the base of some plants in autumn is called a frost flower. Frost flowers are neither frost nor flower, but ice instead. They form when water inside a plant stem freezes and expands, pushing thin ice layers

through cracks in the stem. During



late September and October, this phenomenon is often found on cold mornings in weedy fencerows, ditches and low-lying valleys. These "flowers" are associated with late-maturing plants such as yellow ironweed, and white crownbeard, whose pithy core can hold excess water.

Questions for "Ask the Interpreter" can be submitted via e-mail to kendra.swee@dnr.mo.gov or on Facebook!



**Missouri Department
of Natural Resources**

Visitor Center Hours

April - October: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Wed - Sun.
 March & November: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sat - Sun
 December - February: CLOSED

Park Hours

April - October: 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. Daily
 November - March: 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Daily

**DR. EDMUND A. BABLER
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We're On The Web!

www.mostateparks.com/babler

Save The Date!

(more information will be available in the Winter 2011/2012 newsletter)

- *Even though the visitor center will be closed, stay tuned for the winter newsletter. We will offer some weekend programming in December, January and February!*

In The Next Issue:

Furbearers of Missouri

A Peek at 2012: Astronomical events and nature-related activities

Check out Missouri State Parks newly renovated website and Babler State Park's new webpage at www.mostateparks.com

&

Follow us out on Facebook!

Looking for a place to share your talents and time? Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park is looking for volunteers! Please feel free to stop by or call the visitor center to learn more about the opportunities available.

Autumn Artistry *(continued from page 1)*

Not all trees produce beautiful fall color. The tannin found in oak leaves cause most of them to turn brown without a fancy show. The oak is just beating the other woody plants to the finish line; all of the fall leaves eventually lose their pigments, turn brown, and fall to the ground.

The bright and splendid color of fall foliage helps to enliven the spirit and indulge the eye. Make plans to view the fall color before a killing frost brings this nature show to an end.



To experience the Missouri in its grandest splendor, please join us for a variety of fall foliage hikes. These hikes will be held on Saturdays throughout October and free for all ages. Please see the program descriptions in the newsletter for hike dates, locations and times.

