# University of Arkansas, Fayetteville [ScholarWorks@UARK](https://scholarworks.uark.edu/)

[Graduate Theses and Dissertations](https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd) 

12-2023

# Tree-Ring Reconstruction of Ouachita River Streamflow

Keaton Cade Jenkins-Joyce University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd](https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd?utm_source=scholarworks.uark.edu%2Fetd%2F5173&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages)

Part of the [Fresh Water Studies Commons,](https://network.bepress.com/hgg/discipline/189?utm_source=scholarworks.uark.edu%2Fetd%2F5173&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages) [Geology Commons](https://network.bepress.com/hgg/discipline/156?utm_source=scholarworks.uark.edu%2Fetd%2F5173&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages), [Hydrology Commons](https://network.bepress.com/hgg/discipline/1054?utm_source=scholarworks.uark.edu%2Fetd%2F5173&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages), and the [Water](https://network.bepress.com/hgg/discipline/1057?utm_source=scholarworks.uark.edu%2Fetd%2F5173&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages) [Resource Management Commons](https://network.bepress.com/hgg/discipline/1057?utm_source=scholarworks.uark.edu%2Fetd%2F5173&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages) 

### **Citation**

Jenkins-Joyce, K. C. (2023). Tree-Ring Reconstruction of Ouachita River Streamflow. Graduate Theses and Dissertations Retrieved from [https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/5173](https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/5173?utm_source=scholarworks.uark.edu%2Fetd%2F5173&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact [scholar@uark.edu, uarepos@uark.edu.](mailto:scholar@uark.edu,%20uarepos@uark.edu)

Tree-Ring Reconstruction of Ouachita River Streamflow

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Geology

by

## Keaton Cade Jenkins-Joyce University of Arkansas Bachelor of Science in Geology, 2018

## December 2023 University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

David W. Stahle, Ph. D. Thesis Chair

Song Feng, Ph. D. Committee Member

Katia De Avila Fernandes, Ph. D. Committee Member

\_

\_

\_

### **Abstract**

The Ouachita River drains the Ouachita Mountains and Upper Coastal Plain in Arkansas and Louisiana. The Ouachita River is used for navigation, power generation, recreation, water supply, and wastewater treatment. The river has been prone to low flows during drought and extreme flooding, which were principal justifications for the construction of three large multipurpose dams on the stream. It is likely that the use of the Ouachita River will be stressed by future population growth, economic expansion, and climate change. For this study, tree-ring chronologies from various locations in and near the Ouachita River drainage basin were used to reconstruct instrumental measurements of water year (October-September) and summer discharge (June-August) for the past 253- to 352-years, respectively. These reconstructions provide an extended long-term perspective on drought, periods of surplus water, and the potential modifications of Ouachita River streamflow due to reservoir management.

The construction of the Blakely Mountain Dam and the impoundment of Lake Ouachita may constitute the largest anthropogenic impact to the river. Dam construction began in 1947 and Lake Ouachita was completely filled by 1952. The reconstructions of June-August discharge, when compared with the instrumental measurements of summer low flows, suggests that the regulation of the Blakely Mountain Dam has not strongly impacted the summer high and low flow extremes recorded at the Camden streamflow gauge. Additionally, no major changes in water year extremes were detected that might be related to reservoir management. Water year and summer discharge have both increased in the late  $20<sup>th</sup>$  and early  $21<sup>st</sup>$  century, which may be part of a trend toward increased precipitation over the eastern United States recorded in instrumental observations and proxy precipitation reconstructions.

Keywords: Ouachita River, discharge, tree-ring chronology, streamflow reconstruction

©2023 by Keaton Cade Jenkins-Joyce All Rights Reserved

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank all the people who have provided crucial support to me during this time of finishing up Graduate School along with my thesis. Without the support of my peers, my professors, along with my friends and family, my thesis would not have been completed. I would like to thank my committee members for being there for me during this time, offering support and help, and for providing their guidance to me. I would also like to give thanks to Ian Howard, Max Torbenson, and Dorian Brunette for their assistance and support on my thesis. Finally, I would like to especially thank Dr. Stahle for being as available as he could for me during COVID, along with believing in me when I did not and providing so much support to me, not only for my thesis, but to me personally as well.

I also need to extend my thanks to my friends and family for their support and faith in me completing my thesis. Their support and confidence in me was such a stable force that helped motivate me and push me to completion.

## **Table of Contents**





# **Table of Figures & Tables**



#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 The Question**

The objective of this research project is to use proxy tree-ring data to reconstruct the history of the changing water levels in the Ouachita River, Arkansas. Existing tree-ring chronologies previously developed by the University of Arkansas Tree-Ring Laboratory will be used in this research to help accomplish that goal. The existing tree-ring data are expected to be well correlated with seasonal precipitation and evapotranspiration in the study area. These climate variables also influence water runoff into rivers. Therefore, the tree-ring data are expected to be correlated with water level variation in the river. In short, rainfall has a direct influence on both stream flow and tree growth, meaning that tree growth and streamflow are also correlated.

This research project has addressed two main questions:

- 1. Is it possible to develop skillful tree-ring reconstructions of water year to seasonal discharge for the Ouachita River stream gauge at Camden, Arkansas?
- 2. Has the construction of the Blakely Mountain Dam or other impoundments had a major impact on Ouachita River discharge?

#### **1.2 Importance**

The goal of this project is to provide a detailed history of changing discharge in the Ouachita River over the past 250- to 350-years. The extended streamflow reconstruction will be a useful contribution to water resource and wildlife management and may provide insights for reservoir management purposes. This project will document drought and wet episodes in the

recent past and may also help determine whether river discharge has been impacted by reservoir development.

#### **1.3 How We Did What We Did**

This project has utilized existing tree-ring chronologies that were previously developed by the University of Arkansas Tree-Ring Laboratory for the Ouachita River basin study area. The instrumental record of the Ouachita River flow was obtained from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) stream gauge measurements at four stations along the river. The longest USGS record of monthly discharge has been recorded at Camden, Arkansas, and was used in this analysis. Utilizing the existing tree-ring chronologies along with the instrumental stream gauge data, statistical methods were then used to calculate estimates of water year and summer discharge for the Ouachita River for the past 250- to 350- years. The reconstructions provide a more detailed history of changes in water year to seasonal discharge in the Ouachita River. The reconstructions were also used to help determine if the Blakely Mountain Dam and other impoundments have had large impacts on the variability of seasonal to water year flow in the natural flow of the Ouachita River at Camden.

#### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Tree-Ring Reconstructions of Streamflow**

Moisture variations can have a direct influence on both streamflow and tree growth, which means tree growth and streamflow are indirectly correlated. In developing moisture sensitive tree-ring chronologies, dendrochronologists are able to reconstruct certain hydrologic conditions for centuries prior to the instrumental era. With this information, dendrochronologists can then reconstruct the "dates for the occurrence of such hydrologic events as floods, droughts, and fluctuations of glaciers" (Stockton, 1975). Meko et al. (2007) were able to reconstruct droughts during the Medieval Climatic Anomaly in the Upper Colorado River Basin through the use of hydrologic data extracted from tree-rings. Dendrochronologists can also create "a paleoclimatic record that may be useful for extending hydrologic records or estimating trends and variability of precipitation and streamflow records" (Stockton, 1975). These paleoclimatic records or "reconstructions of streamflow", "that are derived from moisture-sensitive trees extend, in both time and magnitude, the variability provided by relatively short gauge records" (Woodhouse et al., 2006).

The chronologies, that are created from moisture-sensitive trees and are used to make reconstructions of streamflow, are statistically calibrated with the instrumental discharge data. The reconstructions of streamflow are then compared with other instrumental or documentary observations of flow to confirm the accuracy of the reconstructed values. This "verification" process is necessary to demonstrate the correlation between the two sets of data to ensure that the hydrologic estimates from the tree-rings are an accurate reflection of the measured hydrologic data. Stockton and Jacoby (1976) reconstructed the annual runoff of the Colorado River at Lee Ferry with two different sets of gauging data along with two sets of semiarid tree-ring

chronologies. They were able to calibrate 78% and 87% of the Colorado River's runoff variance with their semiarid tree-ring chronologies (Stockton et al., 1976). The two reconstructions were then averaged, and thus indicated that the relatively short gauging data did not accurately represent the long-term variations in the mean flow (Stockton et al., 1976). Woodhouse et al. (2006) created multi-century reconstructions of streamflow for the Upper Colorado River and the South Platte River located in Colorado. They concluded that their reconstructions were able to explain 63% to 76% of the variance in the stream gauge records (Woodhouse et al., 2006). They also found that the analyses of their reconstructions indicate that the  $20<sup>th</sup>$  century gauge record does not fully represent the range of streamflow characteristics seen in the prior two to five centuries (Woodhouse et al., 2006). Cleaveland and Stahle (1989) reconstructed streamflow of the White River, Arkansas, from tree-ring chronologies in the drainage basin to analyze the history of surplus and deficit flows. They compared the tree-rings data with the data they retrieved to gauged measurements taken from the White River at Clarendon, both during the calibration period of 1930-1980 and the validation period of 1900-1929 (Cleaveland et al., 1989). Cleaveland and Stahle (1989) found that long periods without surplus flow occurred before the instrumental period. They were able to conclude that the gauge data were not fully representative of long-term hydrologic regimes of the White River at Clarendon, Arkansas (Cleaveland et al., 1989).

With a deeper understanding of what happened in the past, scientists are then able to monitor and predict what could happen in the future based on what has been observed through time. The management of water resources depends on the understanding of the natural variability in streamflow over numerous time scales, which is why the extension of the hydrologic record is so important. One of the driving factors behind Woodhouse et al.'s (2006) study for creating

multi-century reconstructions of streamflow for the Upper Colorado River and the South Platte River in Colorado was for water resource planning. Recent severe drought conditions have motivated water resource managers in Colorado to use tree-ring reconstructions of streamflow in water resource planning. Woodhouse et al.'s (2006) reconstructions of streamflow were input into water system models to assess the reliability of Colorado's water supply systems under a much broader range of conditions that the gauge record could not provide. Harley et al. (2017) reconstructed the flow variability of the Suwannee River, Florida, from the use of tree-ring data and gauge records. The hydrologic records and results they produced were given to water resource managers, so that they could have a more comprehensive view of the flow history of the river to accurately model the water flow of the Suwannee River for the future (Harley et al., 2017).

Dendrochronologists are also able to discern anthropogenic impacts by comparing climate or streamflow during modern times with reconstructed climate during pre-settlement conditions. Stahle et al. (2001) observed how an anthropogenic impact, reservoir storage and the export of freshwater for human purposes, was changing the salinity levels in the water of San Francisco Bay through the use of tree-rings. Cleaveland (2000) was able to identify numerous instances of anthropogenic impacts on the White River's flow in his 963-year reconstruction of streamflow. He found that "the twentieth century is over-represented in short spans of consecutive above- and below-median summer flows", which "suggests that human modification of the watershed may be responsible for the anomalous twentieth-century low-flow hydrology of the White River" (Cleaveland, 2000). He then argued that these changes tend to reduce infiltration and speed up overland flow of runoff, increasing the frequency of small floods, which causes low flows to worsen by reducing the baseflow of the river (Cleaveland, 2000).

### **2.2 Climatic Variability**

Natural and anthropogenic changes in climate may also impact streamflow reconstructions created from moisture sensitive tree-ring chronologies. This is why tree-ring data have been used to reconstruct long-term natural changes in climate and also anthropogenic impacts on climate change. It has been suggested that anthropogenic changes could impact the high-frequency characteristics of hydrologic time series, while climate tends to dominate the lower-frequency characteristics, such as extreme floods and presumably extreme low flows (Cleaveland, 2000). Stahle et al. (2020) found that there are significant 200- to 500-year trends toward increased precipitation over the eastern United States. These trends have been detected in both their cool and warm season reconstructions that were made from 439 tree-ring chronologies correlated with December through April totals and 547 different chronologies correlated with May through July totals (Stahle et al., 2020). Stahle et al. concluded that these seasonal precipitation changes appear to be part of the overall positive moisture trend for both the cool and warm season that has been recorded in other paleoclimate proxies (Stahle et al., 2020). They believe that the positive moisture trend is a result of not only natural forcing prior to the industrial revolution, but also a result of the recent enhancement by anthropogenic climate change (Stahle et al., 2020).

#### **2.3 Dendro Tools Software**

Historical Observations Tools (HOB Tools, Burnette and Stahle, 2013) and Dendro Tools (Burnette, 2021, personal communication) are collections of specialized computer programs that were created by Dr. Dorian J. Burnette for the processing and analysis of historical

meteorological data and tree-ring data. The Dendro Tools software is available at the djburnette.com web site and is particularly valuable for reconstructing and analyzing past climate and streamflow from tree-rings. Dendro Tools software is written in a combination of Visual Basic.NET and R, with the main interface in Visual Basic.NET (Burnette, n.d.). Dendro Tools takes prewritten R script files, facilitates editing, runs R in the background, ingests the output from R, and displays it all in a user-friendly interface (Burnette, n.d.). Dendro Tools contains three main groups of tools that can be utilized by the user. The first group concerns dataset management and includes tools that check data for gaps and to estimate missing values for datasets. Dendro Tools can extract data from both the Global Historical Climatology Network and the United States Historical Climatology Network, transform monthly data available from various sources, compute averages and totals, and compute adjusted latewood chronologies using simple linear and robust regression (Burnette, n.d.). The second group of tools perform statistical analyses, from basic descriptive statistics to double mass analysis, contingency table analysis, linear regression, multiple linear regression, principal components analysis, and principal components regression modeling (Burnette, n.d.). Lastly, Dendro Tools can perform a selection of time series analyses, including tools that compute cublic smoothing splines and return time analysis (Burnette, n.d.). The Dendro Tools software was used to compute and analyze the treering reconstructions for two different seasons of Ouachita River streamflow reported in this thesis.

## **2.4 Principal Components Analysis and Regression**

Principal component analysis (PCA) is performed on the correlation (or co-variance) matrix computed on a set of variables such as several cross-correlated tree-ring chronologies

from a given region (e.g., the Ouachita River basin) for a period of time in common to all chronologies. In this case, for example, PCA was computed on twelve tree-ring chronologies from the Ouachita River basin for the common time period of 1779-1980 as an initial step in the reconstruction of water year discharge. PCA is defined as "a mathematical algorithm that reduces the dimensionality of the data while retaining most of the variation in the data set" (Ringnér, 2008). By identifying directions, known as principal components, the modes of variation in the data are maximized to accomplish this reduction (Ringnér, 2008). By using just a few components, the large variation in the original variable set can be represented by fewer variables (Ringnér, 2008).

The data reduction power of PCA is valuable for regression modeling because it can simplify the models and reduce potential for spurious co-linearity among the predictor variables included in regression models. Enright (1984) noted the success of Peters, Jacoby, and Cook's use of principal components analysis in their study and creation of a 225-year tree-ring chronology for the Yukon area (Peters et al., 1981; Jacoby et al., 1981). "Peters et al. (1981), found that using the principal components analysis for constructing the chronology resulted in similar results to using the standard tree-ring analytical methodology for constructing the same chronology", along with the fact that using PCA produced not only a better summary of the ring width data, but also a better "climate correlation" (Enright, 1984). Enright (1984) also states that this comparison between the two different methods of principal components analysis and the standard tree-ring analytical methodology producing similar results was noted by both Fritts (1976) and Graybill (1979). The principal component scores, which are time series output from PCA for each component or mode of variability, can then be used as independent variables in a principal component regression for the reconstruction of climate or streamflow.

Fritts et al. (1971) were among the first to introduce principal components regression (PCR) to dendroclimatology in their study of "Multivariate techniques for specifying tree growth and climate relationships and for reconstructing anomalies in paleoclimate". The idea of principal component regression is to replace the predictors, also known as the individual proxies or in this case the individual tree-ring chronologies, with fewer objectively determined variables that are linear combinations of the original proxies (National Research Council, 2007). The newly created variables are then designed to contain as much information as possible from the original proxies (National Research Council, 2007). By using uncorrelated variables, the principal components, problems that are due to variable intercorrelation (co-linearity) can thus be circumvented by this transformation of the predictor variable into a new set of variables (Fritts, 1976). In running a PCR analysis, the transformation ranks the new variable in order of their importance, which thus allows for the selection of the most significant variables (Fritts, 1976).

#### **Chapter 3: Study Area**

#### **3.1 Geological Setting & Physical Geography**

The Ouachita River begins in the Ouachita Mountains initially as a mountain stream, located just west of Eagleton, Arkansas in Polk County. The river then flows in a southeasterly direction through 11 counties in Arkansas and 6 parishes in Louisiana. The Ouachita River then empties into the Red River, which is located 35 miles above the confluence of both the Red River and the Mississippi River. In total the Ouachita River runs a length of 605 miles and drains in an area of about 24,790 square miles.

The Ouachita Mountains Region of Arkansas is comprised of folded and faulted Paleozoic age sedimentary rocks that were originally deposited, mostly, in deep marine environments. The southern Gulf Coastal Plains Region of Arkansas is dominated by both Tertiary marginal marine deposits and coastal plain continental deposits, along with a layer of both Quaternary terrace and alluvial deposits. The Ouachita River flows through the Ouachita Mountains Region's Paleozoic age sedimentary rocks, through the Gulf Coastal Plains Region's Quaternary age alluvium, and continues into Louisiana's Holocene aged alluvium.

#### **3.2 Other Tributaries and Reservoirs in the Ouachita River Basin**

The drainage basin of the Ouachita River, which is approximately 25,000 square miles, lies within the upper Coastal Plain of Arkansas and Louisiana. A few of the chief tributaries for the river include the Saline River from the north in Arkansas, the Boeuf River, Bayou Bartholomew River, and Tensas River that both enter from the east. Another chief tributary would include the Caddo River that is located near Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and Little Missouri River that joins the Ouachita River downstream. South of the Saline River, the Ouachita River

flows into Lake Jack Lee, which is part of the Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge (FNWR) in Felsenthal, Arkansas. Below the Felsenthal Dam the Ouachita River continues to flow into Louisiana. In Louisiana, as the Ouachita flows beyond the Tensas River, it is no longer referred to as the Ouachita River, but as the Black River. As the Black River, the Ouachita continues to flow through the Catahoula Parish and Concordia Parish, where the Ouachita then merges with the Red River.



Figure 3.1: Image of the Ouachita River Basin (USDA-SCS, 1979). The green polygons represent areas that are under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, while the yellow polygon represents an area that is under the Resource Conservation & Development Program.



Figure 3.2: Image of the Ouachita River. The black circles represent areas where the USGS stream gauges are located, the black triangles represent areas where the tree-rings used in the study were sampled, while the red squares represent the areas where the three dams impound the Ouachita River. The light blue shaded area represents the Ouachita River watershed, while the dark blue line represents the Ouachita River.

## **3.3 History of the Ouachita River**

The meaning of the word "Washita" ("Ouachita") is "good hunting grounds", which is why various Native American tribes lived along the river (USFS, 1937). Some of the Native American tribes that called the river home, were the Osage, the Quapaw, and the Caddo tribes (Berry, 2003; Sloan, 1992). The earliest known historical accounts of the Ouachita River and the Native Americans that lived along it, came from the Hernando de Soto expedition of the 1530's (Sloan, 1992). The Hunter-Dunbar expedition was one of the first scientific explorations of the Ouachita River region. President Thomas Jefferson commissioned and sent George Hunter along with William Dunbar to explore the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase territory of 1803. The expedition began on October  $6<sup>th</sup>$ , 1804, and concluded on January  $27<sup>th</sup>$ , 1805 (Berry, 2003). The expedition covered a total of 450 miles from the mouth of the Ouachita River to Hot Springs, Arkansas (Berry, 2003). The expedition resulted in some of the earliest scientific studies conducted on the Ouachita River and offered an environmental description of both Arkansas and Louisiana. Hunter and Dunbar also provided observations of various plant and animal species found along the Ouachita, as well as various cultural groups (e.g., the Caddo, Quapaw, and Osage; Berry, 2003; Sloan, 1992). A French trader named LeFevre provided detailed accounts of the "place names, river sources, and adjacent regions, as well as European/Indian relations" in his journal (Berry, 2003). French traders had lived along the Ouachita River prior to the Louisiana Purchase and had already established various settlements along the river (Berry, 2003; Sloan, 1992). Those French settlements would later become cities in both Arkansas and Louisiana, like the Ecore a Fabri settlement which would become the city of Camden in Arkansas, and the Prairie de Canots settlement which would become the city of Monroe in Louisiana (Berry, 2003). With this population of French inhabitants, it resulted in the evolution of the word "Washita" into "Ouachita", as "Ouachita" comes from the French way of spelling the sound of the Native American word "Washita" (USFS, 1937).

## **3.4 Navigation**

The Ouachita River has been a navigation route since the late 18th century (Britannica Academic, n.d.). In 1819 the steamboat traveled up the river, and this trend of steamboat travel played an integral part in the history of the Ouachita River (Gore, 2014). From 1819-1910, the Ouachita River was a great highway of commerce and transportation for the entire river valley in Arkansas, but the development of railroads led to the decline in river traffic (Gore, 2014). Moderate barge traffic continues today on the Ouachita River, carrying cargo like ammonia and crushed rocks (Gore, 2014).

There are a total of six lock and dams that were built on the Ouachita River prior to 1924 (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, n.d.). In the later years after 1924, some of the locks were replaced and decommissioned. There are now currently four locks and dams on the Ouachita River (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, n.d.; Figure 3.2 only shows 3). Each of the locks, have lock chambers that are 84 feet wide and 600 feet in length, and have from three to five tainter gates (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, n.d.). The locks and dams also have a lift from 12 feet to 30 feet, a minimum depth of 9 feet, and a 100 foot wide navigation channel (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, n.d.). This then allows for the accommodation of barge traffic from the Red River north to Camden, Arkansas (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, n.d.).



Figure 3.3: Photo of Columbia Lock and Dam located in Columbia, Louisiana (Image from KNOE 8 News).

## **3.5: The Camden Gauge**

The selected stream gauge site at Camden, Arkansas, is maintained, and currently operated, by the USGS Arkansas Water Science Center. On August 8, 1928, the Geological Survey established this gauging station by installing a chain gauge at the present site and datum (NAD83). The site was continued from September of 1929 to December of 1929. In December of 1929, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of the Vicksburg District, reestablished and maintained the gauging station until September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1979. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers installed a wire-weight gauge, a staff gauge, continuous recording gauge, an auxiliary waterstage recorder, and a data collection platform with a rainfall recorder downstream of the present datum. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1979, the Geological Survey started maintaining the gauge, making discharge measurements, and computing daily discharge. The Geological Survey installed a new auxiliary gauge (water-stage recorder and wire-weight gauge) about 300 feet downstream from the old site, on the intake structure of Arkansas Electric Co-Op Corporation plant on the same

bank at the present datum. The index velocity meter was removed in 2018 and the site transitioned to stage and discharge.

### **3.6 Large Dams on the Ouachita River**

Arkansas has been impacted by floods throughout the state's history with some of the more damaging floods occurring in the years 1927 and 1937 (American National Red Cross, 1929; American National Red Cross et al., 1938). To combat flooding, Congress passed the Flood Control Act in 1917, later the Flood Control Act of 1923, and then the Flood Control Act of 1928 (Pearcy, 2000). As a result of the Flood Control Acts, various dams were constructed on rivers throughout Arkansas to mitigate this hazard. Some of those dams were constructed on the Ouachita River, which has a total of three multipurpose dams located in the upper portion of the river within the Ouachita Mountains area. The purposes of the three dams, other than flood control, include being used for hydroelectric power and as places that facilitate recreational activities such as fishing, boating, and other activities. Those three multipurpose dams that impound the Ouachita River are the Remmel Dam, the Carpenter Dam, and the Blakely Mountain Dam.

The company, Arkansas Power & Light (AP & L), now known as Entergy, was the first to construct a dam on the Ouachita River for hydroelectrical power production (Wilson, 1986). Construction of the dam started in May of 1923 and began operation in December of 1924 (Wilson, 1986). The Remmel Dam is located at Jones Mill, which is in Hot Springs County, Arkansas. The Remmel Dam impounds Lake Catherine, which produces hydroelectric power alongside the Entergy operated Remmel Dam (Wilson, 1986). Entergy retains a minimum flow of 200 to 400 CFS for Remmel Dam continuously under their FERC license (Entergy, n.d.).

FERC is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which is a "federal agency that grants authority to private interests to dam public waterways and use those impoundments for hydroelectric generation" (Entergy, n.d.). The flow requirements for the Remmel Dam vary per month under Entergy's FERC license. The monthly flow requirement for January and February is 300 CFS, for March it is 400 CFS, for April it is 350 CFS, for May and December it is 250 CFS, and for June through November it is 200 CFS (Entergy, n.d.). The drainage area of the Ouachita River at the Remmel Dam is about 1,516 squared miles and the total storage capacity of Lake Catherine is only 35,370 acre feet. It is unlikely that Lake Catherine has a significant effect on peak flows at the Camden stream gauge, but power generation regulates normal flow.



Figure 3.4: Photo of the Remmel Dam located at Magnet Township, Arkansas (Image from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program).

The Carpenter Dam is Entergy's second dam on the Ouachita River (Wilson, 1986). Construction began in February of 1929 and commenced operation in 1931 (Wilson, 1986). The Carpenter Dam is located closely to Hot Springs in Garland County in Arkansas. The dam also

impounds Lake Hamilton, which is another Entergy lake that was created by the construction of the Carpenter Dam (Wilson, 1986). Entergy manages both the lake and the dam for hydroelectric power (Wilson, 1986). Since Entergy manages this dam, it also retains a certain minimum flow for the Carpenter Dam under their FERC license (Entergy, n.d.). The drainage area of the Ouachita River at the Carpenter Dam is about 1,441 squared miles. The total storage capacity of Lake Hamilton is only 190,100 acre feet. It is, again, unlikely that Lake Hamilton has a significant effect on peak flows at the Camden stream gauge.



Figure 3.5: Photo of the Carpenter Dam located near Hot Springs, Arkansas (Image from Entergy Arkansas, LLC.).

After the construction of both the Remmel Dam and the Carpenter Dam, Entergy planned to build a third dam at the site of the, now, Blakely Mountain Dam, but construction did not occur (Richter, 2005). Instead, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of the Vicksburg District were able to take over the project (Richter, 2005). The Corps of Engineers began construction of the dam after they were provided funding from the government in 1946 as a result of the Flood

Control Act of 1944. The dam portion of the project was completed in the summer of 1952, flood control operations began in the spring of 1953, and the power plant operation began in August of 1955 (Blytheville Courier News, 1952; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1965). The Blakely Mountain Dam is located roughly 10 miles northwest of Hot Springs, Arkansas in Garland County. The dam also impounds Lake Ouachita, and the initial purpose of Lake Ouachita was to be utilized as a means of flood control and hydroelectric power. This was later amended by Section 4 of the Flood Control Act of 1944 to include public recreation (FCA, 1944). On July 4, 1956, the official dedication of the dam took place, and began the Blakely Mountain Dam's and Lake Ouachita's service of providing hydroelectric power, flood control, and benefits to recreation, agriculture, forestry, and fish and wildlife conservation (Hope Star, 1956; Arkansas State Archives, 1949). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of the Vicksburg District continues to operate the Blakely Mountain Dam to this day. In the past, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers retained a maximum regulated outflow of 15,000 CFS out of the dam (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1952). The drainage area of the Ouachita River at the Blakely Mountain Dam is about 1,105 squared miles, which is located upstream of Lake Catherine and Lake Hamilton. The total storage capacity of Lake Ouachita at flood pool elevation (592 feet) is only 2,768,000 acre feet.



Figure 3.6: Photo of Blakely Mountain Dam located at Mountain Pine, Arkansas (Image from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

### **Chapter 4: Methodology**

## **4.1 Stream Gauge Data**

Monthly stream gauge data for the Ouachita River were obtained from the only four USGS's stream gauge stations located on the river in both Arkansas and Louisiana. These four recording stations are located at Mount Ida, Camden, and Felsenthal in Arkansas, and Monroe in Louisiana. The monthly stream gauge data obtained from USGS for all four of the stations were input into Microsoft Excel in order to parse and prepare the data to be utilized by the Dendro Tools software as well as to plot the data for initial analysis. Times series of the seasonal and annual discharge totals were constructed for each gauge station as well. The stream discharge data were then log transformed for the water year (WY; October-September) and the summer (JJA; June-August) period prior to regression modeling in the Dendro Tools software. Due to the short length of the discharge records at the Mount Ida, Felsenthal, and Monroe stations, the Camden station was chosen for reconstruction as it had the most extended discharge record out of the four.

Plots of the water year mean discharge (October-September) for each year (time series), as well as the mean discharge for December, January, and February (DJF), March, April, and May (MAM), June, July, August (JJA), and September, October, and November (SON) for each gauge station were constructed to get a better understanding of the discharge of the Ouachita River for each of the seasons. The summer discharge was chosen for focus of this study because it is the main tree growing season and thus better correlation will often be found between the discharge measurements and the tree-ring data. A hydrograph was also constructed for each gauge station, in order to illustrate the average stream level for each month of the year and the wet and dry seasons. With the Camden stream gauge data, plots were constructed that displayed

the mean discharge for the following seasons for the full period of record that were created for October through September (WY), March, April, and May (MAM), and June, July, and August (JJA). Time series of the year-to-year streamflow data for those annual and seasonal averages were constructed as well. The time series were then inspected for drought and wet years, decadal regimes, and potential trends over time.

#### **4.2 Tree-Ring Chronologies**

A total of thirty-two tree-ring chronologies previously developed by the University of Arkansas Tree-Ring Laboratory, were correlated with both water year and summer discharge on the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. The available tree-ring chronologies were collected near the vicinity of the Ouachita River drainage basin, which include locations in Arkansas, Louisiana, northeast Texas, and eastern Oklahoma. Correlation based screening was used to select the tree-ring chronologies that were significantly correlated with the water year or summer discharge. Eight tree-ring chronologies were significantly correlated with water year discharge at Camden. Those eight chronologies are listed in Table 4.1, along with the location, species, length, and additional details, and are not significantly correlated with summer discharge. Only those chronologies that were significantly correlated with June-August discharge, and were not well correlated with water year discharge, were used for the summer reconstruction. The four tree-ring chronologies for the reconstruction of summer discharge are listed in Table 4.1 as well. The two tree-ring reconstructions are based on separate tree-ring predictors.

Table 4.1: The tree-ring chronologies used to reconstruct water year (October-September) and summer (June-August) discharge for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas, are listed along with the species, location (latitude/longitude in degrees and minutes), and the dating range of the chronology. The type of chronology used is also listed ( $EW =$  earlywood width;  $LW =$  latewood width; RW = total ring width). The species abbreviations are TADI (Taxodium distichum), PIEC (Pinus echinata), JUVI (Juniperus virginiana), and QUST (Quercus stellata).



#### **4.3 Principal Components Regression**

To perform the principal components regression, the seasonal windows used in this study needed to be determined for reconstructing streamflow for the Ouachita River. For this study, the water year period (WY), which includes the entire annual flow average that begins in October and ends in September, and the summer period (JJA), which represents just June-August average

flow were chosen. A correlation function analysis was conducted for individual streamflow months of the current growing season with the twelve total tree-ring chronologies previously developed and available from the University of Arkansas Tree-Ring Laboratory. Further correlation coefficients were computed in order to identify the relationships between streamflow and the various tree species' growth. The relationships being tested were between the tree-ring width indices from the twelve tree-ring chronologies and the monthly mean Ouachita River streamflow records for the Camden station for the WY and the JJA period. The autocorrelation often found in tree-ring and streamflow data were then investigated using autoregressive modeling (Stockton and Meko, 1983; Cook, 1985; Cook et al., 2013).

A principal components regression model was then used to reconstruct water year and summer discharge based on the period of time in common to all tree-ring chronologies used for each reconstruction (1767-1980 for the water year and 1671-1980 for the summer season). The regression models were then calibrated over the period 1929-1955 and used to reconstruct the predicted series over the full length of the different tree-ring data for the two periods. The principal components regression modeling and the spline computation for this study were both conducted in the Dendro Tools software.

#### **4.4 Dendro Tools Reconstructions**

For both the WY period and the JJA period, Dendro Tools' regression modeling was carried out with the log transformed instrumental data. Eight tree-ring chronologies were used as the predictor input data for the WY period, and four tree-ring chronologies were used as the predictor input data for the JJA period. There was no prewhitening of the predictor input data, (the respective tree-ring chronologies used), for either the WY and the JJA period. One lead and

lag versions (+1 and –1) were entered into the forward stepwise regression as potential predictors for the WY and the JJA reconstructions. The predictand data used for both the WY and the JJA period were the log transformed stream discharge measurements for the respective periods of the Ouachita River at the Camden gauge station.

It is important to note that there was no record of flow for the year 2007 in the instrumental record of discharge measurements taken from the Camden gauge station. Autoregression in the predictor and predictand time series during the calibration period (1929- 1955) was identified using the minimum Aikaike Information Criteria (AICc). The minimum AICc was used because it includes a penalty term for increasing the number of predictors in the model (Maxwell et al., 2011). The tree-ring chronologies for each period were calibrated with the instrumental log transformed discharge measurements for the Camden gauge station using PCR for the 27-year common period (1929-1955). The regression residuals of the calibration model were tested with the adjusted R-squared ( $R^2$ <sub>adj;</sub> coefficient of determination adjusted downward for the loss of degrees of freedom), the standard error of the estimates (SE), and the Durbin-Watson statistic (DW; Draper and Smith, 1998). The independent log transformed discharge data available for the Camden gauge station for the verification period (1956-1980) were used to test the derived reconstructions for the WY and JJA period, and the Pearson correlation (*r*), reduction of error (RE), and coefficient of efficiency (CE) statistics were used to measure the degree of fit between the observed and reconstructed values (Cook et al., 1999). Ten-year smoothing splines were then fit to the instrumental data and to the back-transformed reconstructions of water year and summer discharge to highlight decadal variability.

#### **Chapter 5: Results**

#### **5.1 WY Reconstruction & JJA Reconstruction**

The observed and tree-ring reconstructed water year and summer discharge time series for the Ouachita River time series are illustrated in Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, panels a-d. The calibration and verification statistics are presented in Table 5.1. The eight tree-ring chronologies represent approximately 41.1% of the variance in the instrumental water year discharge data during the calibration period (1929-1955) and are significantly correlated with the instrumental data during the verification interval (1956-1980) with a Pearson correlation of  $r = 0.417$ . The four tree-ring chronologies explain 58.3% of the variance in the instrumental summer discharge data during the calibration period (1929-1955) and are also significantly correlated with the instrumental data during the verification interval (1956-1980) with a Pearson correlation of  $r =$ 0.584 (Table 5.1). Based on the calibration and verification statistics in Table 5.1, the tree-ring data appear to represent skillful proxies for both the water year and summer season mean flows during the calibration and verification periods, and by inference during the pre-instrumental period of reconstruction.

The water year discharge reconstruction from the eight tree-ring chronologies for the Ouachita River extends from 1767 to 2019, and the summer discharge reconstruction from the four tree-ring chronologies for the Ouachita River extends from 1668 to 2019 (Figure 5.3b,d). These two discharge reconstructions are not correlated with each other, and, in fact, estimate very different conditions during certain episodes over the recent past (250 to 350 years). The most notable difference would be the extreme summer low flow event that took place during the 1830's and 1840's. That event was more severe and sustained for the summer season discharge than is now estimated for the water year discharge based on the various tree-ring chronologies

from in and near the Ouachita River drainage basin (Figure 5.3a,d). Other major differences between the water year and summer discharge reconstructions include (1) the extended duration of low flow in the late 1800's for the summer season, (2) the extended duration of low flow in the early 1900's to 1950's for the summer season, and (3) the surplus flow of the 1970's for the water year (Figure 5.3a-d). Decadal drought in the summer season is also estimated to have been more severe and sustained than for the water year during the 1930's and 1950's in the instrumental observations at Camden (Figures 5.1 & 5.2).

Periods of surplus flow for the water year at the Ouachita River include 1862-1880, 1940-1952, and 1971-1981 (Figure 5.3b). The periods of exceptional deficit flow for the water year include 1818-1832, 1850-1865, and 1950-1972 (Figure 5.3b). The periods of exceptional surplus flow for the summer include around 1740-1750, 1815-1824, 1845-1867, and 1902-1913 (Figure 5.3d). The periods of exceptional deficit flow for the summer include around 1707-1735, 1823-1848, 1868-1879, 1880-1891, and 1912-1957 (Figure 5.3d).

The instrumental and reconstructed summer discharge time series recorded low flow events after 1960 that were not as extreme as previously recorded in the reconstruction of summer season streamflow (Figure 5.3c,d). This period of decreased low flow events experienced in the Ouachita for the summer period after 1960 could be the result of either recovery from the 1930's and 1950's droughts or the regulation of discharge by the Blakely Mountain Dam. The most positive summer flows after 1960 do not appear to have equaled many of the summer flow extremes in the reconstruction (Figure 5.3d), which might be due to natural variability or perhaps to regulation or other anthropogenic modifications to Ouachita River flow during the summer. The positive trend in summer discharge during the last 90 years could be due
to recovery from the 1930's and 1950's droughts or the regional wetting trend over the eastern United States (e.g., Stahle et al, 2020).



Figure 5.1: The instrumental (blue) and tree-ring reconstructed (red) water year discharge (CFS) are plotted for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas from 1929-2019. The tree-ring data were calibrated with the instrumental water year data from 1929-1955  $[R^2_{adj}]$  and SE of the regression estimates (=0.583 and 0.402)] and were verified with instrumental log transformed water year discharge data used for calibration from 1929-1955. Note the drought events registered for the Ouachita River's water year discharge during the 1930's, 1950's, and 1960's. The statistics for the calibration and verification of the reconstructions for the water year are reported in Table 5.1. There are missing instrumental discharge data for the year 2007.



Figure 5.2: The instrumental (blue) and tree-ring reconstructed (red) summer discharge (CFS) are plotted for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas from 1929-2019. The tree-ring data were calibrated with the instrumental summer data from 1929-1955  $[R^2_{adj}]$  and SE of the regression estimates (=0.411 and 0.496)] and were verified with instrumental log transformed summer discharge data used for calibration from 1929-1955. Note the drought events registered for the Ouachita River's summer discharge during the 1930's and 1950's. The low flow of discharge for the 1950's and could reflect the severe 1950's drought and potentially the impact of the Blakely Mountain Dam. The slight positive trend in the instrumental and reconstructed summer discharge since the mid-1950's reflects in part either the Ouachita River's recovery from the severe 1930's and 1950's drought or the regional wetting trend over the eastern United States. The statistics for the calibration and verification of the reconstructions for the summer period are reported in Table 5.1. There are missing instrumental discharge data for the year 2007.



Figure 5.3: Instrumental water year (October-September) discharge (CFS) is plotted from 1929- 2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas (a). Tree-ring reconstructed water year (October-September) discharge (CFS) is plotted from 1767-2019 and the water year instrumental time series is appended from 1981-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas (b). Instrumental summer (June-August) discharge (CFS) is plotted from 1929-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas (c). Tree-ring reconstructed summer (June-August) discharge (CFS) is plotted from 1668-2019 and the summer instrumental time series is appended from 1981-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas (d). The slight positive trend in the instrumental and reconstructed summer discharge since the mid-1950's reflects in part either the Ouachita River's recovery from the severe 1930's and 1950's drought or the regional wetting trend over the eastern United States. There are missing discharge data for the year 2007.

Table 5.1: Calibration and verification statistics computed for the reconstruction of the water year (October-September) and summer (June-August) discharge for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. The calibration interval is listed first (e.g., 1929-1955), followed by the verification interval (e.g., 1956-1980) for each reconstruction. The variance explained  $(R^2_{adj} =$ coefficient of determination adjusted downward for the loss of degrees of freedom), the standard error of the estimates (SE), and the Durbin-Watson statistic (DW) are listed for each reconstruction. The Pearson correlation coefficient comparing reconstructed with instrumental discharge data during the statistically independent verification periods are shown for the reconstructions, along with the reduction of error (RE) and coefficient of efficiency (CE) statistics calculated on observed and reconstructed data in the verification period. All tests indicate successful verification.



## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

The various species of trees found in and near the Ouachita River drainage basin preserve a long tree-ring record of discharge that can be used to reconstruct the water year and summer flow for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas for the past 253- and 352-years. The result of running principal component regression with the Dendro Tools software, which used eight treering chronologies and the log transformed discharge data for the water year (October-September) and four tree-ring chronologies and the log transformed discharge data for the summer (June-August) period, resulted in successful reconstructions for both water year and summer discharge back to 1767 and 1668, respectively. The successful reconstructions are documented by the calibration and verification statistics in Table 5.1. Both the water year and summer reconstructions were back transformed to the original discharge units and identified historical drought events that occurred in the United States in the past 250- and 350-years.

The new reconstructions of water year and summer flow for the Ouachita River can be used with the instrumental time series for both periods to help document anomalies in the river's discharge record. The resulting graphs (Figure 5.3a-d) of the instrumental and reconstructed WY and JJA discharge for the Ouachita River at Camden are thus a significant product that can be utilized to study past surplus and deficit water year and summer flow. Reviewing Ouachita River water year and summer season discharge, certain periods of exceptional surplus and deficit flow of the river correlate to historical drought events that occurred in the past. Drought and wet regimes are also measured using the Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI). PDSI uses instrumental temperature and precipitation data to estimate the soil moisture balance of an area (Dai, 2019). The North American Drought Atlas (NADA) used hundreds of tree-ring chronologies to reconstruct the summer (June-August) PDSI on a 0.5-degree grid across North

34

America for the past several centuries (Cook et al 2007). Several periods of deficit water year flow on the Ouachita River correspond with pre-instrumental droughts identified in the NADA, including the Civil War era drought of the 1850's and 1860's (Figure 6.1). The droughts of the 1930's and 1950's which are identified in both the instrumental and reconstructed data for the Ouachita River (Figure 5.3a-d) also corresponded with widespread dryness over North America (Figures 6.2 & 6.3), based on composite mapping of the instrumental summer PDSI developed for the NADA and the mapping tools provided by Dr. Dorian Burnette, University of Memphis. Additionally, the droughts of the 1930's and 1950's which are identified in both the instrumental and reconstructed data for the Ouachita River (Figure 5.3a-d) also corresponded with low precipitation over South Central Arkansas, where a significant portion of the Ouachita River flows through, (Figures 6.4  $\&$  6.5), based on plotting near real-time analysis of monthly precipitation developed for Climate at a Glance Divisional Time Series and the graphing tools provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Centers for Environmental Information.



Figure 6.1: The average of reconstructed summer (JJA) PDSI is mapped for the Civil War Drought from 1855-1865 using the North American Drought Atlas (Cook et al., 2007). The NADA was derived from 1,845 tree-ring chronologies across North America (dry conditions are negative, wet estimates are positive). This figure was prepared using the mapping tools created by Dr. Dorian Burnette (drought.memphis.edu).



Figure 6.2: Instrumental summer PDSI is mapped for the Dust Bowl Drought (1928-1942) over the United States for the summer period (June-August; dry conditions are negative, wet estimates are positive). Figure created using the tools and data available at: drought.memphis.edu.



Figure 6.3: Instrumental summer PDSI is mapped for the 1950's Drought (1949-1957) over the United States for the summer period (June-August; dry conditions are negative, wet estimates are positive). Figure created using the tools and data available at: drought.memphis.edu.



Figure 6.4: The precipitation (green) and century trend (blue) are plotted for the for Arkansas, Climate Division 8 (South Central Arkansas) from 1895-2023 for the water year (October-September). Note the decrease in precipitation registered in the 1930's, 1950's, and 1960's. Figure created using the tools and data available at: ncei.noaa.gov.



Figure 6.5: The precipitation (green) and century trend (blue) are plotted for the for Arkansas, Climate Division 8 (South Central Arkansas) from 1895-2023 for the summer period (June-August). Note the decrease in precipitation registered in the 1930's and 1950's. This figure was prepared using the tools created by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (ncei.noaa.gov).

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion & Implications**

The Ouachita River is an important water and power resource to the states of Arkansas and Louisiana. This study used ring-width chronologies to reconstruct the flow history of the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas for both the full water year and summer season. This was done to better understand the natural flow history of the Ouachita River and what anthropogenic impacts could be affecting river flow. The resulting reconstructions will thus provide valuable information to water resource managers that will, hopefully, assist with the management of the river.

This study utilized the USGS stream gauge data at Camden, Arkansas, along with selected tree-ring chronologies that were well correlated with the flow data. To measure the changing flow of the Ouachita River two seasonal intervals were chosen for comparison with the tree-ring data. These intervals were the water year, which includes the mean annual flow that begins in October and ends in September, and the summer period, which includes the months of June, July, and August. After the data collection, statistical analyses were used to explore the relationships between the discharge measurements and the tree-ring chronologies. The software program Dendro Tools was used to develop the reconstructions of the flow history in the Ouachita River for both the water year and summer period. The tree-ring reconstructions recorded the effects of past droughts and pluvials on water year and summer streamflow. Many of these climate extremes identified in the water year and summer stream flow reconstructions also impacted very large areas of Arkansas and the southern United States during the past 250- to 350-years.

The water year and summer low flows exhibit a long-term trend from the relatively dry 1930's and 1950's into higher water year and summer flows in the late  $20<sup>th</sup>$  and early  $21<sup>st</sup>$ 

41

centuries (Figures 5.1, 5.2,  $\&$  5.3a-d). Many instances when the water year and summer season discharge were below average correspond to known historical drought events, for example during the mid-1850's to mid-1860's (Civil War Drought), the 1930's (Dust Bowl Drought), the 1950's, and additionally, for the summer season, the historical drought events that occurred during the 1700's. After the 1960's, the instrumental and reconstructed summer low flow were not as low as previously recorded or reconstructed low flow events (Figure 5.3c,d). This period of decreased summer low flow events experienced on the Ouachita River after the 1960's may be due in part to recovery from the severe 1930's and 1950's droughts. However, the lack of low flows might also be due to flow regulation by the Blakely Mountain Dam. It is important to note that the instrumental JJA discharge data do not extend back before 1929, which means that the first three decades of the instrumental record were observed during the severe droughts that occurred in the 1930's and 1950's. Thus, we cannot conclude with certainty whether the summer season flow for the Ouachita River was impacted by the construction and operation of the Blakely Mountain Dam, due to the presence and effects of those severe and sustained droughts. Conversely, when looking at the instrumental precipitation data the water year has a strong decadal positive trend, while the summer period did not have as strong of a positive trend (Figures 6.4 & 6.5). From that information, there is a possibility that dam operation may have had some impact on trend for the summer period flow of the Ouachita River. Furthermore, the high summer flows after 1960 do not equal many of the positive extremes in the reconstruction (Figure 5.3d) and might also reflect some degree of artificial regulation of stream flow. Alternatively, the absence of extreme high summer flows during this interval after 1960 might simply be due to natural variability.

The positive trend in the summer discharge after the mid 1950's could be the result of the Ouachita River's recovery from the droughts the river has experienced in the early  $20<sup>th</sup>$  century or a result of climate variability. This positive trend may correspond with the long-term wetting trend over the eastern United States. In the article, "Dynamics, Variability, and Change in Seasonal Precipitation Reconstructions for North America" Stahle et al. (2020) state that their seasonal reconstructions indicate a significant positive trend in both the cool and warm season precipitation that has impacted most of the eastern United States (Stahle et al., 2020). Additionally, the cool and warm season "may have been enhanced in recent decades by anthropogenic activity" and "the dynamics responsible for these moisture trends may involve a combination of factors related to anthropogenic warming" (Stahle et al., 2020). It is important to note that "the reconstructions indicate that cool- and warm-season precipitation trends began well before the industrial revolution and may also involve internal climate variability" (Stahle et al., 2020). The instrumental and reconstructed summer discharge data for the Ouachita River do indicate a positive trend since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 5.3a-d) which may be related to the larger scale trends in precipitation over eastern North America.

## **References Cited**

American National Red Cross. "The Mississippi Valley Flood Disaster of 1927: Official Report of the Relief Operations." Washington, D.C.: The American National Red Cross, 1929.

American National Red Cross, and Norman H. Davis. "The Ohio Mississippi Valley Flood Disaster of 1937: Report of Relief Operations of the American Red Cross." Washington, D. C, 1938.

Berry, Trey. "The Expedition of William Dunbar and George Hunter along the Ouachita River, 1804-1805." The Arkansas Historical Quarterly, vol. 62, no. 4, 2003, p. 386. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.2307/40023081.

Blakely Mountain Lake, Map0297, Map collection, Arkansas State Archives, Little Rock, Arkansas. "Blakely Mountain Lake (Side 2)." Historic Maps Collection, Dec. 1949, https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/maps-collection/17.

Burnette, Dorian J., n.d., "Dendro Tools." Dorian J. Burnette, http://www.djburnette.com/dendrotools/. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021.

Cleaveland, Malcolm K., and David W. Stahle. "Tree Ring Analysis of Surplus and Deficit Runoff in the White River, Arkansas." Water Resources Research, vol. 25, no. 6, June 1989, pp. 1391–401. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.1029/WR025i006p01391.

Cleaveland, M. K. "A 963-Year Reconstruction of Summer (JJA) Stream Flow in the White River, Arkansas, USA, from Tree-Rings." The Holocene, vol. 10, no. 1, Jan. 2000, pp. 33–41, doi:10.1191/095968300666157027.

Cook, Edward R. "A Time Series Analysis Approach to Tree Ring Standardization" (Dendrochronology, Forestry, Dendroclimatology, Autoregressive Process), ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1985.

Cook, Edward R., et al. "Drought Reconstructions for the Continental United States." Journal of Climate, vol. 12, no. 4, 1999, pp. 1145-1162.

Cook, Edward R., et al. "Five Centuries of Upper Indus River Flow from Tree Rings." Journal of Hydrology, vol. 486, Apr. 2013, pp. 365–75. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1016/j.jhydrol.2013.02.004.

Cui, Tong, et al. "Development of a Comprehensive Framework for Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change and Dam Construction on Flow Regimes." Journal of Hydrology, vol. 590, Nov. 2020, p. 125358. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1016/j.jhydrol.2020.125358.

Dai, Aiguo & National Center for Atmospheric Research Staff (Eds). Last modified 12 Dec 2019. "The Climate Data Guide: Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI)." Retrieved from https://climatedataguide.ucar.edu/climate-data/palmer-drought-severity-index-pdsi.

Draper, Norman R., and Harry Smith. Applied Regression Analysis. 1st ed., Wiley, 1998. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1002/9781118625590.

"Encyclopedia of Arkansas." Encyclopedia of Arkansas, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/ouachita-river-2392/. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021.

Enright, N. J. "Principal Components Analysis of Tree-Ring/Climate Relationships in White Spruce (Picea Glauca) from Schefferville, Canada." Journal of Biogeography, vol. 11, no. 4, July 1984, p. 353. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.2307/2845008.

FERC License | Entergy | We Power Life. https://www.entergy.com/operations\_information/hydro/ferc/. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021.

Flood Control Act of 1944, Public Law 534, 78th Congress, Chapter 665, 2nd Session, H.R. 4485, sect. 7. Codified at 33 USCA §709.

Fritts, Harold C., Terence J. Blasing, Bruce P. Hayden, and John E. Kutzbach. "Multivariate Techniques for Specifying Tree-Growth and Climate Relationships and for Reconstructing Anomalies in Paleoclimate." Journal of Applied Meteorology and Climatology, vol. 10, no. 5, Oct. 1971, pp. 845-864. doi:10.1175/1520- 0450(1971)010<0845:MTFSTG>2.0.CO;2>.

Fritts, H.C. *Tree Rings and Climate*. The Blackburn Press, 1976.

Graybill, D.A. "Revised Computer Programs for Tree-Ring Research." Tree-Ring Bulletin, vol. 39, 1976, pp. 77-82.

Groisman, P. Ya., R. W. Knight, T. R. Karl, D. R. Easterling, B. Sun, and J. H. Lawrimore, 2004: Contemporary changes of the hydrological cycle over the contiguous United States: Trends derived from in situ observations. J. Hydrometeor., 5, 64–85, https:// doi.org/10.1175/1525-7541(2004)005,0064:CCOTHC.2.0.CO;2.

Jacoby, G. C., and E. R. Cook. "Past Temperature Variations Inferred from a 400-Year Tree-Ring Chronology from Yukon Territory, Canada." Arctic and Alpine Research, vol. 13, no. 4, Nov. 1981, p. 409. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.2307/1551051.

Maxwell, R. Stockton, et al. "A Multispecies Tree Ring Reconstruction of Potomac River Streamflow (950-2001): POTOMAC RIVER STREAMFLOW RECONSTRUCTION." Water Resources Research, vol. 47, no. 5, May 2011. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1029/2010WR010019.

Meko, David M., et al. "Medieval Drought in the Upper Colorado River Basin." Geophysical Research Letters, vol. 34, no. 10, May 2007, p. L10705. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1029/2007GL029988.

Mittal, Neha, et al. "Impact of Human Intervention and Climate Change on Natural Flow Regime." Water Resources Management, vol. 30, no. 2, Jan. 2016, pp. 685–99. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1007/s11269-015-1185-6.

National, Research Council, et al. "Surface Temperature Reconstructions for the Last 2,000 Years." National Academies Press, 2007, doi:10.17226/11676.

O'Connor, Jim E., and John E. Costa. "Large Floods in the United States: Where They Happen and Why." U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1245. Washington DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 2003.

Ouachita-Black River. https://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Ouachita-Black-River/. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021.

Ouachita National Forest.

http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/handbooks/ouachita/sec2.htm. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021. "Ouachita River." Britannica Academic, Encyclopædia Britannica, 1 Oct. 2008. academic-eb-com.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/levels/collegiate/article/Ouachita-River/57701.

"Ouachita Rover Power House Building to Begin." Blytheville Courier News Newspaper, 18 Sept. 1952, p. 14. *Newspaperarchive*.

Pearcy. Matthew T. "A History of the Ransdell-Humphreys Flood Control Act of 1917." Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, vol. 41, no. 2, 2000, pp. 133–159. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4233654. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021.

Peters, K., G. C. Jacoby, and E. R. Cook. "Principal Components Analysis of Tree-Ring Sites." Tree-Ring Bulletin, vol. 41, 1981, pp. 1-19.

Richter, Wendy. "Swallowed Up in One Gulp: Lost Communities of the Upper Ouachita River Valley." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2005.

Ringnér, Markus. "What Is Principal Component Analysis?" Nature Biotechnology, vol. 26, no. 3, Mar. 2008, pp. 303–04. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1038/nbt0308-303.

Sloan, David. "The Expedition of Hernando De Soto: A Post-Mortem Report Part II." The Arkansas Historical Quarterly, vol. 51, no. 4, 1992, pp. 297-327.

Stahle, David W., et al. "Ancient Blue Oaks Reveal Human Impact on San Francisco Bay Salinity." Eos (Washington, D.C.), vol. 82, no. 12, 2001, pp. 141-145, doi:10.1029/EO082i012p00141.

Stahle, David W., et al. "Dynamics, Variability, and Change in Seasonal Precipitation Reconstructions for North America." Journal of Climate, vol. 33, no. 8, Apr. 2020, pp. 3173–95. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1175/JCLI-D-19-0270.1.

Stockton, Charles W. *Long-Term Streamflow Records Reconstructed from Tree Rings*. University of Arizona Press, 1975.

Stockton, C. W. and Jacoby, G. C.: 1976, Long-Term Surface Water Supply and Streamflow Levels in the Upper Colorado River Basin, Lake Powell Research Project Bulletin No 18, Inst. of Geophysics and Planetary Physics, University of California, Los Angeles, 70 pp.

Stockton, C W. and D M. Meko. "Drought Recurrence in the Great Plains as Reconstructed from Long-Term Tree-Ring Records." Journal of Climate and Applied Meteorology, vol. 22., 1983, pp. 17-29, doi: 10.1175/1520- 0450(1983)022<0017:DRITGP>2.0.CO;2

United States. Army. Corps of Engineers. "Flood-control outlet works for Blakely Mountain Dam, Ouachita River, Arkansas: Hydraulic model investigation." U.S. Waterways Experiment Station, 1952.

United States. Army. Corps of Engineers. "[Arkansas 1965 Water Resources Development Report]; Water resources development in Arkansas." Corps of Engineers, Lower Mississippi Valley, 1965.

United States. Army. Corps of Engineers. Southwestern Division. "[Arkansas 1975 Water Resources Development Report]; Water resources development in Arkansas." Corps of Engineers, Southwestern Division, 1975.

Wilson, Stephen. *Harvey Couch: An Entrepreneur Brings Electricity to Arkansas*. Little Rock: August House, 1986.

Woodhouse, Connie A., and Jeffrey J. Lukas. "Multi-Century Tree-Ring Reconstructions of Colorado Streamflow for Water Resource Planning." Climatic Change, vol. 78, no. 2–4, Sept. 2006, pp. 293–315. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.1007/s10584-006-9055-0.

"\$31 Million Project is Dedicated." Hope Star Newspaper, 5 July 1956, p. 2. *Newspaperarchive*.

## **Appendix**

Table  $4.1 - 1$ : The tree-ring chronologies used to reconstruct summer (June-August) and water year (October-September) discharge for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas, are listed along with the species, location (latitude/longitude in degrees and minutes), and the dating range of the chronology. The type of chronology used is also listed (EW = earlywood width;  $LW =$ latewood width; RW = total ring width). The species abbreviations are TADI (*Taxodium distichum*), PIEC (*Pinus echinata*), JUVI (*Juniperus virginiana*), and QUST (*Quercus stellata*).



Table  $5.1 - 2$ : Calibration and verification statistics computed for the reconstruction of the water year (October-September) and summer (June-August) discharge for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. The calibration interval is listed first (e.g. 1929-1955), followed by the verification interval (e.g. 1956–1980) for each reconstruction. The coefficients of the regression models, the variance explained  $(R^2_{adj} \equiv \text{coefficient of determination adjusted downward for the})$ loss of degrees of freedom), the standard error of the estimates (SE), and the Durbin-Watson statistic (DW) are listed for each reconstruction. The Pearson correlation coefficient comparing reconstructed with instrumental discharge data during the statistically independent verification periods are shown for the reconstructions, along with the reduction of error (RE) and coefficient of efficiency (CE) statistics calculated on observed and reconstructed data in the verification period. All tests indicate successful verification.



Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	<b>May</b>	Jun
1928						
1929	16,420	11,210	13,120	5,387	8,338	3,576
1930	31,260	16,120	5,341	1,578	35,340	1,786
1931	1,565	5,189	7,572	3,906	2,332	727.3
1932	41,420	29,720	11,610	9,150	1,674	922.9
1933	18,810	7,377	7,913	8,425	10,740	882.9
1934	5,284	2,136	13,180	16,380	2,796	713.3
1935	22,500	10,320	13,910	13,560	32,280	16,120
1936	2,363	1,542	2,662	1,804	1,786	411
1937	46,610	9,518	11,450	4,779	7,281	2,306
1938	35,740	36,250	10,860	28,270	3,728	2,228
1939	8,747	34,050	17,820	32,560	4,516	2,348
1940	686.1	1,798	2,160	8,021	8,693	4,566
1941	6,959	12,110	12,730	12,110	13,520	3,020
1942	6,787	8,945	15,660	26,660	13,390	4,522
1943	5,841	3,359	13,620	11,370	4,605	4,013
1944	3,065	8,577	21,870	21,730	30,180	2,901
1945	19,500	12,630	45,110	48,110	17,930	21,890
1946	34,930	29,540	17,980	20,280	41,060	9,736
1947	7,605	3,037	8,601	7,827	17,140	1,924
1948	11,040	19,650	27,510	8,586	7,735	1,093
1949	33,500	20,770	22,380	9,940	7,942	7,855
1950	34,450	40,110	13,450	4,652	20,790	3,127
1951	14,450	21,730	6,765	10,340	4,523	3,658
1952	11,780	10,950	13,990	31,800	7,631	1,893
1953	9,378	11,090	13,790	14,460	45,760	3,016
1954	4,790	3,976	1,742	2,662	9,060	1,203
1955	3,697	6,955	13,690	9,284	4,230	2,964
1956	838.8	19,140	4,719	3,775	7,209	1,143
1957	2,593	12,630	9,140	32,550	32,970	16,840
1958	11,770	4,681	8,678	11,180	50,000	3,834
1959	4,705	14,970	9,141	7,453	1,945	8,122
1960	16,140	12,220	13,770	2,735	6,046	4,197
1961	7,231	10,230	13,440	24,540	9,793	2,223
1962	19,560	16,560	20,340	8,881	3,654	2,592

Table 1 – 3: Camden stream gauge discharge data (CFS) for each month (January-December)

from 1928-2019 with the mean monthly discharge for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas.











Table 2 – 4: Camden stream gauge discharge data in (CFS) and log transformed units for the water year (September-October) from 1929-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. There are missing instrumental discharge data for the year 2007.





2012	82493.9579	11.3204803
2013	68902.2333	11.1404439
2014	103545.232	11.5477638
2015	171144.415	12.050263
2016	137519.067	11.8315179
2017	53360.8072	10.8848318
2018	88765.267	11.3937507
2019	181235.48	12.1075525

Table 2 – 5: Camden stream gauge discharge data in (CFS) and log transformed units for the summer months (June-August) from 1928-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. There are missing instrumental discharge data for the year 2007.







Table 5 – 6: Instrumental Camden stream gauge discharge data in (CFS) and log transformed units for the water year (October-September) from 1929-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. There are missing instrumental discharge data for the year 2007. Reconstructed Camden stream gauge discharge data in (CFS) and log transformed units for the water year (October-September) from 1767-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. There are missing reconstructed discharge data for the year 2007.














Table 5 – 7: Instrumental Camden stream gauge discharge data in (CFS) and log transformed units for the summer (June-August) from 1929-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. There are missing instrumental discharge data for the year 2007. Reconstructed Camden stream gauge discharge data in (CFS) and log transformed units for the summer (June-August) from 1668-2019 for the Ouachita River at Camden, Arkansas. There are missing reconstructed discharge data for the year 2007.

















