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Fort Smith First Television Station — KFSA

At 4:22 p.m. on Sunday, July 19, 1953, KFSA went on the air with a live broadcast for the first time. It was the first television station to broadcast from Fort Smith, and it did so on UHF channel 22. Donald W. Reynolds — owner of the station, KFSA radio and the Southwest American and Fort Smith Times Record newspapers — had hoped and worked for a Fort Smith television station for 14 years.

From 4:22 p.m. to 5 p.m., ceremonies and public remarks took place and were transmitted through the first broadcast. Mayor H.R. Hestand and city commissioners Jack Hough and Jay Medlen congratulated the company live on television. Pat Porta, the station's program director, was the master of ceremonies. Weldon Stamps, KFSA manager, was the last person to appear and reported that viewers from outlying towns like Poteau, Mountainburg and Booneville said the signal was clear. At 5 p.m., an hour-long feature starring Jane Wyatt called "Girl From God's Country" began airing.

Because other network affiliates were so far away in Tulsa and Little Rock, KFSA was able to affiliate with more than one broadcaster, carrying regular programming from NBC, ABC and the Dumont networks. Two Dumont programs on the station were Bishop Fulton J. Sheen's "Life Is Worth Living" and "Blind Date." The "Cisco Kid" and "Boston Blackie" also were slated in those first months. NBC programs like "Dragnet" and "Dangerous Assignment" were seen as well. A live progam originating from KFSA was a 5 p.m. Saturday "auction party" show.

The first day of broadcasting ended with "The Hairy Ape" starring William Bendix and Susan Hayward. Sign-off followed that. The broadcasting did not begin again until 4 p.m. Monday. For some time, the station maintained a 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. or midnight schedule. Fifteen minute news broadcasts were made from the KFSA studio at 6:15 p.m. and 9:45 p.m.

In time, KFSA would change it's channel frequency to channel 5 in the VHF band, and its call letters to KFSM. KFSM channel 5 is a CBS network affiliate that still broadcasts today from Fort Smith and northwest Arkansas.

Source: "Television Goes On Air For First Time in City," *Southwest American*, July 20, 1953, p. 1; several news features in a special section of the *Southwest-Times Record*, July 12, 1953, 2-A, 3-A, 18-A, 19-A, 21-A.

Camp Chaffee Brochure

records (classical and popular), religious literature, snack bar, shave material, shine material, showers, sewing machine, telephone booths, typewriters, table games, voice recordings, writing materials, wives' activities.

In addition the Salvation Army USO has sleeping quarters for 35 cents a night, free doughnuts and coffee, a notary public, photographic dark room, and will lend you a bicycle for errands.

The South 12th and "A" USO has dances every Saturday night, feature movies on week-ends, and lets you use its cooking equipment. The South 14th and B USO has a dance every Saturday night.

Tilles Park on Grand Avenue off North 36th Street has a picnic ground, playground and wading pool for children.

Lake Fort Smith, with good fishing and a large swimming pool is 28 miles north of town off U. S. Highway 71.

Boys Club at 215 Wheeler Avenue has a modern gym, athletic equipment and swimming pool.

SHOPPING AREA

The downtown shopping district is pricipally along Garrison and Rogers Avenues between 5th and 12th Streets, and South along Towson Avenue.

TRAVELERS AID

For real help with tough problems—this is the place—Court and Rogers Avenue—also a desk at the bus station, 11th and Garrison. They'll give you information on recreation, housing, location of persons, transportation, community resources, employment opportunities.

They have travel service: Assistance with travel plans, arrangements to meet travelers at change points enroute or at destination, and they have the answers for those in temporary financial difficulty, those confused or ill, young people with personal problems, newcomers needing guidance in adjusting to a new community.

CALVERT-McBRIDE PRINTING CO., FT. SMITH, ARK.

We welcome you to Camp Chaffee. We sincerely hope your training period here will be a pleasant one. You can be assured that each individual on our staff is making every possible effort toward that end.

We are aware of your recent experiences and can envisage your future problems. Our mission is to assist in every way possible.

This pamphlet has been prepared in order to help orient you to Camp Chaffee. The following pages highlight and direct you to some of the things we believe will be of interest.

WILLIAM H. COLBERN,
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

LOCATION

Camp Chaffee is located about ten miles east of Fort Smith, Arkansas, or near the West Central border of the State.

We don't want to disillusion you but you won't recognize any hill billies in the vicinity.

CAMP ADMINISTRATION

The 1850th Service Unit under Eighth Service Command is the administrative organization of the Camp. They are the housekeepers who handle the housing, procure all the food, supplies and equipment before you get them. They operate the hospital, chapels, exchanges and service clubs. They also control the camp stockade and the downtown MPs.

Included in the 1850th Service Unit is the Station Hospital staff—doctors, nurses and enlisted men. Then there is the WD Personnel Center serving Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and part of Texas. There is also a PW Camp with German prisoners. You may see many of the docile ones working around the shops and warehouses.

The 16th Special Troops, 4th Army, is the AGF Administrative Unit in camp. Its Headquarters is at 4th Avenue and Fort Smith Boulevard.

ARMODIER

"Armodier" is the camp newspaper distributed each Thursday—for free.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Arts and Crafts Shop, Station Complement Area, Building No. 1961 on West Warehouse Street near the stockade where you can get instructions or just putter around with your favorite hobby, is open afternoons and evenings.

ATHLETIC FIELDS

In the East Area, they're near the barracks, but in the West Area they're down beyond the motor storage buildings.

BANK

A branch of 1st National Bank of Fort Smith is in Building 1815 on Chaffee Boulevard in the QM Warehouse Area. It's open from 1230 to 1730 except Sunday

BOWLING ALLEYS

Two buildings, each with four alleys are near Service Clubs 1 and 2. Fifteen cents a line is the ante.

CHAPELS

Schedules of services are distributed to each organization weekly. There are ten chapels, they're easy to find, and it'll do you good to attend regularly.

DAY ROOMS

Each company has one in its company area. We mentioned it here only so you wouldn't forget about it.

DISPENSARIES

For locations we refer you to the map—with the suggestion that you remember it when you come in late at night.

EXCHANGES

You won't need help to find them. They're open during off-duty hours. They have phones at each one. The beer is always cold and they have plenty of ice cream.

FIELD HOUSE

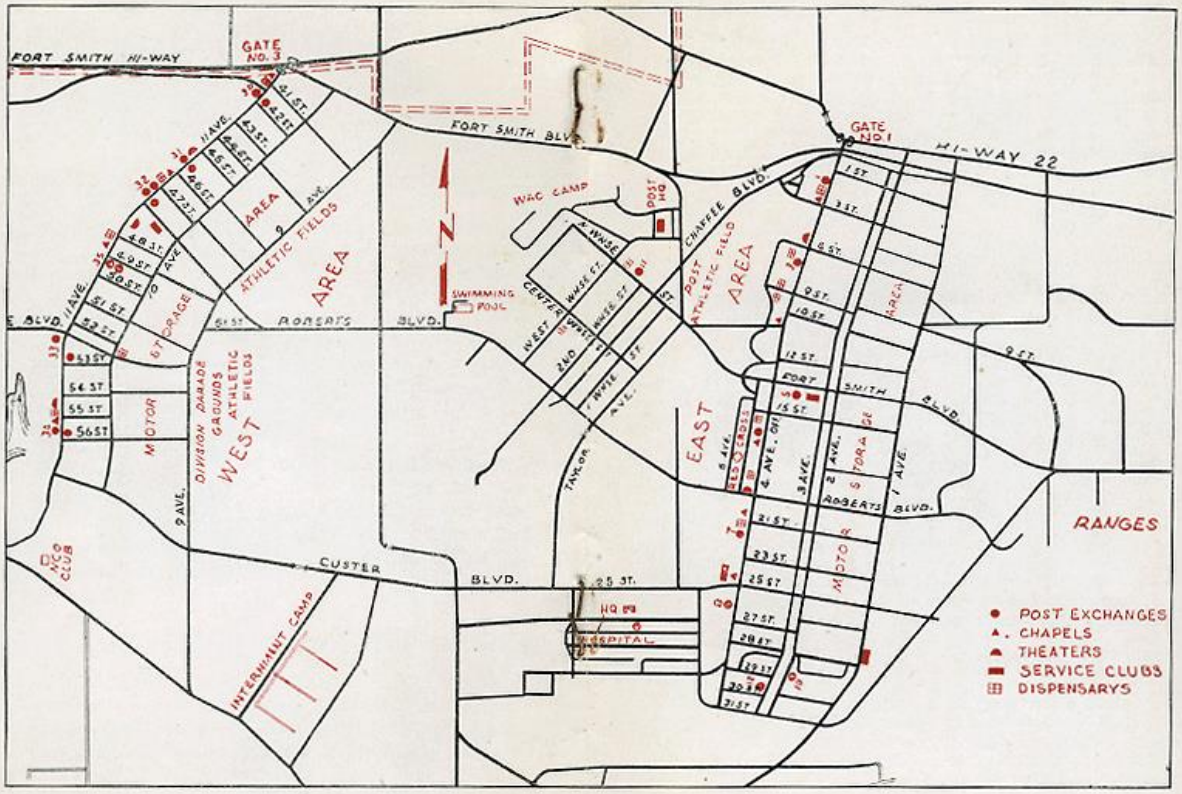
It's in the East area, Fort Smith Boulevard and 3d Avenue, is for main event athletic programs and sometimes dances. But you can work out with the equipment there any time until 2200.

GUEST HOUSES

Near the Service Clubs; will put up your wife, mother, or gal-friend for half a buck a night. Three day limit though.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Building 1930 on North Warehouse Street (Station Complement Area). Puts out the daily war news, handles enrollment in USAFI, and has off-duty classes at night where the serious gents can brush up on their Latin, Trigonometry, Typing and other stuff.



LAKES

There's a little one in the West Area on 11th Avenue off 56th, where you can swim if the medics haven't put it off limits; and there's a fair sized one 10 miles East on Fort Smith Boulevard. But check with Training Division to be sure no artillery is firing at it. There are fish there, too, and a little beach, and a shady knoll where you can take your gal for a picnic.

LAUNDRY

It's located in QM Warehouse Area on Taylor Avenue, Building 1847. Personal laundry costs a buck and a half a month for G. I.'s—and your shirts come back a week later with the buttons on.

LIBRARIES

They're in the Service Clubs, and are stocked with books, magazines and newspapers you'll like. The Librarians are comely lasses who know their business and like to help you.

PERSONAL AFFAIRS

He's the Army version of Mr. Anthony, and gives out with expert advice on legal or personal problems. He's also Army Emergency Relief Officer and has cash dough for certain cases. He's at Personnel Building behind Camp Headquarters.

POST OFFICE

Main office next to Camp Headquarters open 0800 to 1845 except Sunday; East Area—Building 701 on 4th Avenue and 15th Street open 1000 to 1830 except Sunday; West Area—Building 2731 Roberts Boulevard and 10th Avenue.

RED CROSS

Main office at Building 802 on 5th Avenue and 15th Street (East Area). Open day and night if you're in a jam.

Others: Station Hospital—Building C-10.
Personnel Center—Building T-1137 on 22d Street off 4th Avenue.
West Area—Building 2938, 11th Avenue off 52d Street.
Open 0800 to 2000.

SALES COMMISSARY

If your wife's in town, the groceries are cheaper at the Commissary. It's Building 1810, on Chaffee Boulevard in the Warehouse Area, and waits on the trade 0900 to 1430.

SERVICE CLUBS

They're the best places in Camp for fun after retreat. The Fort Smith gals come out there regularly and they just love you-all soljer boys. You can get someone to do your shopping or odd job of sewing there, too. And you can eat between meals—for a price, of course. Weekly schedules of dances and other stuff should be on your Barracks Bulletin Board.

SWIMMING POOL

It's really a good one. Hours for Enlisted Men 1830-2200 each day except Tuesday. Also on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

TELEGRAPH

East Area—Fort Smith Boulevard and 4th Avenue, Building 648—Open 0800 to 2000.

West Area—11th Avenue and 47th Street, Building 2720—Open 1100 to 1900 daily except Sunday.

TELEPHONE

At all the Exchanges and Service Clubs—night and day. The Service Clubs have batteries of them with cute operators to help you place your calls (repeat—Place Your Calls).

THEATERS

Take a look at the map to find the nearest one; and your Barracks Bulletin Board for the name of the picture. Three jits is the cost.

TRANSPORTATION

You may have to wait in line when you want a bus to town or back—but here's the schedule. Cost 20 cents to Fort Smith or 35 cents round trip.

Buses operate through both the East and West Areas every 30 minutes, 24 hours a day. Extras are added during morning and evening peak periods of travel. Buses travel both Highway 71 and 22.

Railways operate out of Fort Smith as follows: Kansas City Southern North to Kansas City, South to New Orleans.

Missouri Pacific Railway—North to Kansas City, North to St. Louis and East to Little Rock and Memphis.

Frisco—North to St. Louis and South to Paris, Texas.

Inter-City buses run to Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Joplin, Kansas City, Little Rock, Texarkana, and Shreveport.

Airline Travel is at Little Rock and Tulsa.

FORT SMITH

The City of Fort Smith is a pleasant town with a population near 40,000, in the Valley of the Arkansas River. The beautiful Ozark mountains are 25 miles north and the scenic Ouachita (pronounced (Wash-i-Taw) mountains 80 miles south of town. Fort Smith is a good army town—the people are friendly, the Civic organizations are helpful, prices are nominal, retail stocks are generally good, and the residential areas are comfortable and homey.

CHURCHES

Almost all demoninations are represented in Fort Smith's 59 Churches. Among those readily accessible are:

Assembly of God—Dodson Avenue and South 15th Street.

Baptist—408 North 13th Street.

Catholic—Garrison Avenue and 13th Street.

Christian—100 North 13th Street.

Christian Science—403 North 15th Street.

Episcopal—219 North 6th Street.

Lutheran—419 North 12th Street.

Methodist—200 North 15th Street.

Nazarene (Central Church of Nazarene)—7th and E Streets.

Presbyterian—116 North 12th Street.

Many others of the same denominations are at other locations in the city.

DEPOTS

The Bus depots are on Garrison Avenue at 10th and 11th Streets.

The Missouri Pacific Railroad Station is at the Northwest end of Garrison Avenue near the river front. The Union Station (Frisco and Kansas City Southern) is on Rogers Avenue at 7th Street.

HOUSING

Homes Registration Office located in Court House, Rogers Avenue and 6th Street, and operated by Camp Billeting Officer, lists the housing vacanicies in the Community. Travelers Aid Society helps, too.

INFORMATION

Chamber of Commerce where you can get city and state maps, as well as detailed information about the locality, is on Garrison Avenue between 6th and 7th Streets.

RECREATION

Commercial entertainment includes movies, roller skating, bowling, golf clubs, baseball park and night clubs. The latter serve no liquor which must be bought by the package for off-sale consumption.

Three USO Clubs run comprehensive programs from 0900 to 2230 each day and on Saturday until midnight.

Locations:

117 North 6th Street (Salvation Army)

South 12th and A Streets
(YMCA-YWCA-NJWB)

South 14th and B Streets (NCCS)

Besides special programs all of 'em offer these services: Art materials, athletic equipment, checking service, crafts equipment, first aid, information, locate persons, library and maps, mailing service, mending service, messages delivered, musical instruments, overseas boxes, package wrapping, personal counseling, pressing equipment, ping pong, radios,

The Great Cyclone at Fort Smith

The following are scans of pages from the introduction to a photographic booklet of images documenting the aftermath of the tornado which struck Fort Smith on Jan. 11, 1898. The title page reads:

"Photographic Views of the Great Cyclone at Fort Smith
Tuesday Night, January 11, 1898
Giving a Graphic and Accurate Resume of Its Deadly and Destructive Work

Price 25 Cents; Photographs are by Gannaway taken exclusively for the publishers
Published and Printed by Thrash-Lick Printing Company, Fort Smith, Ark.
Third Edition"

A CYCLONE, carrying death and destruction in its wake, visited Fort Smith at 11:15 p.m. on Tuesday, January 11, 1898, and even at this writing it is impossible to estimate the loss of life and property to her citizens. It was the most disastrous storm *ever experienced in the southwest, and the destruction it worked was far* more appalling than pen can tell. Block after block of business and residence property was leveled to the ground; houses were demolished to the foundations; others were left with but fragments of wall, or with the fractions of the floor of the first story remaining. Miles of electric and telephone wires and dozens of their poles were dashed to Mother Earth, adding not only to the damage and wreckage but increasing to an alarming extent the danger to life; and to avoid *this impending danger it was necessary to cut off the current* from the electric power house, thereby throwing the business portion of the city into a darkness that seriously interfered with the working of the relief corps, which had immediately gathered to render assistance to the hundreds of injured. Trees of half a century's growth were uprooted and carried a great distance; heavy masonry, at the approach of the terrific strength of the storm king, released its connection, for the time being, with earth, and, in fact, nothing movable was strong enough to resist the pitiless fury of the awful wind, which attained a velocity of sixty miles an hour.

One of the peculiar features of the storm is that the barometer gave no warning of its coming. After looking over the ground, Weather Observer O'Donnell has reached the conclusion that the tornado was distinctively of local origin. The first indications of its approach became apparent shortly after 10 p. m., when the atmosphere, laden with a

depressed and sultry condition, showed that at least a heavy rainstorm was brewing. No one who observed the vivid and continual flashes of lightning in the west thought for a moment that a cyclonic condition would follow the atmospheric depression, but such proved to be the fact, lamentable in its every feature. The lightning's flashes increased, and *by 11 o'clock the wind was blowing a decidedly threatening* gale. *It was* but a few minutes later when the peculiar sound of what proved to be the cyclone was heard in the west, and in the twinkle of an eye it was upon the sleeping city.

A heavy rain followed the horrible cyclonic visitation, and it was probably twenty minutes before the city awoke to the fact that it was wrapped in the folds of a fearful calamity. The fire department was called out and in less than thirty minutes the ruined portions of the city, and *especially that vicinity known as "Texas Corner," was crowded* with willing hands and inquiring friends, ready to render all the aid that was in their power. The scene around "Texas Corner" was something too horrible even to imagine. Hatless and shoeless men, women and children, many clad only in their nightclothes, from the neighboring hotels and boarding houses, were seeking shelter and calling for aid for some of their missing relatives or friends who failed to escape from the wreckage.

Following close in the wake of the cyclone appeared the fire fiend. As was inevitable, there were several fires, some of them serious in character, especially that of the Smith block. Several fires, causing great alarm, were put out by the rain which followed. The rainfall, in this case, was a Godsend, but on the other hand the damage done by it was very great, deluging furniture and household effects which had been blown over streets, alleys and yards, to the extent of which no one can estimate.

The course of the storm seems to have been almost due west to east, and the first place it visited was the National Cemetery, on our western limits. This, the most beautiful spot in our State, was left the most desolate. The five foot brick wall of over a mile in length was lowered to the ground as though it had been made of tin rather than solid masonry; the stately oaks are laid low, the shrubbery rolls before the wind, the lodge so badly damaged that it can scarcely be recognized. All this the work of about sixty seconds. After leaving the cemetery it took a direct eastern course, damaging Belle Point School house to a considerable extent. Next in its path were the cotton yards, three in number; here it seems to have displayed a most wonderful peculiarity by literally blowing the entire contents of bales of cotton from out of the hoops which held them, and leaving the empty shell of the sacking and ties to represent a bale of the fleecy staple. Then came the business portion of Garrison Avenue, between Eighth and Twelfth streets, and two blocks on Towson Avenue. Here the winds seem to have had as little opposition as in the thinner settled parts of the city, and large stone and brick houses were piled one upon another in huge masses of debris. Here also was where death laid claim to more victims than in any other portion. All night and the following days, scores of strong arms were delving in the ruins for dead and injured bodies, and not without success, but their efforts were mostly rewarded by the recovery of those already gone beyond the need of aid from charity and science. When it would appear that all damage possible had been done in this particular locality, the tornado still continued its course east, striking the wagon yards adjacent, and then taking in a more densely populated district.

Although not so many fatalities, this portion was left in utter ruin; pianos, furniture, buggies and everything were strewn as though so much chaff had been thrown to a summer's breeze. The Central Methodist and Baptist Churches are as complete wrecks as was possible to make them, and Brownscombe Methodist badly damaged. The new High School building, costing over $50,000, and only occupied about three months, was so badly damaged that school will probably not be held in it again this year. Now, for some few blocks there was very little to oppose the fury which would brook no opposition, and not until it reached Home Addition did it end its career, as far as the City of Fort Smith was concerned.

The morning of the 12th broke upon the unfortunate Border City with cloudless sky and the lovliest of spring weather, and but for the suffering and desolation within its limits, one would have thought it the brightest and happiest city in the south. The mayor and his assistants, the chiefs of police and fire department did everything in their power to render aid and protect the city from further damage. At 10 o'clock a. m. a mass-meeting of citizens was called to provide means for the relief of the unfortunate. Here was shown the magnanimity of Fort Smith's citizens, by the raising of a large sum without even leaving the building in which the meeting was held.

The following pages of illustrations will give to the reader some faint idea of the awful effect of the cyclone, but the "Art Preservative" will never reach that perfection which will enable it to despict to the brain the horror of one minute's work of such a horrible visitation as this one.

R. C. Goodman Interview

Photos courtesy of R.C. Goodman

CB: Today is April 5, 2006. This is Carole Barger. Joe Wasson and I are at the home of Dr. R.C. Goodman. We'll be interviewing him for the World War II history project of the Fort Smith Historical Society. Dr. Goodman, will you give us your name and birth date, your parents, and your place of birth, please?

RCG: Yes, I was born [in] 1920 in Ogden, Arkansas. Ogden is between Texarkana and Ashdown. I went the first eight years of schools at Ogden and the last four years at Ashdown. Went to Ashdown and graduated from Ashdown High School in 1938.

CB: Did you have brothers and sisters?

RCG: Had one sister four years younger than me.

CB: What did you do after you got out of high school?

RCG: After I got out of service?

CB: No, before you went into the service.

RCG: When I got out of high school in 1938, we had a terrible flood on the Red River. Tore up all the levees and they needed what they call an oiler to grease the levee machine and they needed one right then. It was in our last week of high school and my grades were such that I didn't have to take any final exams and so I applied for the job and I got the job. I missed my picture-taking with my class and everything because I worked at night from 6 in the evening until 6 in the morning, 12 hours for 35 cents an hour.

Anyway I saved my money because I wanted to be in the post office department because I just thought being a rural mail carrier was utopia so I applied for Draughon's Business College in Little Rock and I went up there a 17-year-old kid and they promised me that they'd get me a job for my room and board and I had saved enough money working on that levee machine to pay my tuition for a two-year business school so I could take the civil service exam and go to the post office department. But the job they gave me required about 6 hours a day, 2 hours of a morning early, 2 hours during the noon, and 2 hours in the evening and it was working in the cafeteria and the room they gave me was the very top room on an old hotel on Main Street in Little Rock and all I had up there was a cot and there was 2 other cots and they were used construction workers. And they didn't want me studying at night because they were trying to sleep so I'd go down to the lobby of the hotel and do my studying and I got to thinking you know I was only taking about half the courses I should be taking because of the hours I was working and I decided I needed to do something else so I withdrew from Draughon's Business College in Little Rock and I worked at farm labor until the following February.

It would be February 1939 and I got a job working on a bridge group for the Kansas City Southern Railroad. We were rebuilding some of the work along the riverbanks that had washed out and on the trestles between Ogden and Texarkana and that's the hardest job I ever had in my life. And I worked for them until August and I made 39 cents an hour and I decided that I wanted to do something different than that. So that's when I took my money that I had saved and enrolled in Magnolia A And M College in September of 1939. The College is now Southern State in Magnolia and on the second of October of that year I joined the National Guard which pays $1 a drill and they had four drills a month. That $4 paid, believe it or not, paid for my dorm room. Then I got a job as a night watchman working 3 hours and 15 minutes at night and that ended up paying $15 a month and that paid for my meals. I never saw any money but I got a meal ticket every month.

R.C. Goodman, right, and Lt. West practice using a mortar.

But then on December 24, 1940, they mobilized our unit into the regular army and they sent us to Little Rock for basic training and then in June of 1940, they sent us to Tennessee on the Tennessee maneuvers as sort of our advanced training and we were the enemy against three divisions from up north, three infantry divisions—we were the enemy. And we were down there for a month and while we were there they told us we were going to the Philippines when we got back to Little Rock. Well, being just a bunch of old country boys that just cheered us to no end, just to go to the Philippines.

Thank goodness, that was changed and we were sent to Alaska. We went to Alaska in September of 1940. I had my 21st birthday on board ship going to Alaska. It was the 153rd Infantry from Arkansas. We had three battalions. I was in D Company of 1st battalion and I was the machine gun squad leader at that time, a corporal, and they scattered us all over Alaska. They sent the platoon that I was in to Nome, Alaska with a rifle company made up of mostly men from Hope, Arkansas, Prescott and that area. I stayed up there for a year and a half and I came home. Igot home about April 5th or 6th, 1943, and Dorothy and I decided to get married, which we did on April 10th, 1943, and come Monday it will be 63 years.

Barracks in Nome, Alaska where Goodman was stationed early in the war.

CB: Wonder if you could go back and tell us a little bit about what you did when you were in Alaska.

RCG: We finished our barracks and played in the snow

CB: The Japanese troops were around, but near Dutch Harbor?

RCG: We were in Nome and Nome sits on the Bavarian Sea and it's surrounded by the King , kind of a horseshoe, and in the wintertime the only way you can get into Nome was by snow sled or by airplane. In the summertime, you could get in by boat and by air. We had 200 men, an infantry company and a machine gun platoon. We were responsible for about 10 or 12 miles of beach. Well, the first part that we were there we had to finish our barracks. We were the last boat in the Bering Sea because it started freezing over. The engineers went back on the boat except for 4 of them.

The first time that we were there, the first part of our stay there was finishing our barracks and we'd do some training and we dug some foxholes and machine gun placements on all four corners of the airport and then we did some snow training. We had to ski and walk on snowshoes and they'd make us sleep in a foxhole, dug out in the snow. We had it real good the first winter because we had our barracks nice and warm but then along came Dutch Harbor.

CB: When was that?

RCG: Dutch Harbor was bombed in June of 1942. When the Japanese attacked Dutch Harbor, word came over the radio down at the radio tower that the Japanese had attacked Dutch Harbor and they had a troop ship and its escorts headed north. The only place north would be Nome from down there at that time. So they thought they were coming to us. Why they would want Nome, I don't know what they'd done with it, but anyway they did not show up. But then we had been living on high alert and we did from then forward. We had to move out of our nice barracks which was right on the airport and we had to let the Air Force have it because they started aircraft refueling up there. And we had to move out into the tundra and then we had to build Quonset huts, tin huts, there were 7 or 8 of us to each hut.in that winter of '42.

In December we only had three or four hours of daylight. I have a picture of the sun coming up at 10:40 one morning. There was a little arc over the Bering Sea and setting at 1:40 in the afternoon. The long day in the summertime you could read a newspaper outside 24 hours a day and so being a bunch of old country boys we had to put roofing papers over our windows in the summertime just to sleep because we couldn't sleep in the daylight.

So that second winter up there, we trained. Again, we did snow skiing, we did maneuvers and camped out and all this stuff and dug foxholes in the snow. But this time I had gone from being a squad leader to a section sergeant where I was in charge of two squads and then to platoon sergeant where I was in charge of all four squads and then I had an opportunity to go to OCS which is Officer Candidate School in Fort Benning, Georgia. So I left up there in the middle or latter part of March 1943, I arrived in Texarkana, I think, on April 5th or 6th of 1943, me and another boy out of my platoon. All we had was our winter clothes, Army wools. We didn't have anything else and by the time we got to Fort Benning, Georgia, it was three or four days before we got issued light-weight clothing and we were miserable. But on the way to Fort Benning, Dorothy and I were married on April 10th.

I graduated from Officer Candidate School and they sent me to Macon, Georgia to Camp Wheeler and I trained troops for a year. And then they sent me to Germany, but there's an interesting thing I need to bring out about Tennessee maneuvers. As I said, our 153rd Infantry was the defensive people. And one night we had spent, my platoon and Dr. Camberlin, one of the other squad leaders, we were both corporals, my squad and his squad had charge of a crossroads down in the mountains of Tennessee and we had been fighting mosquitoes all night and we were tired and sweaty and we heard this terrible noise and we looked down the road at a big cloud of dust. We didn't know what in the world it was. None of us had ever seen a tank.

The next thing we knew these tanks come into view and leading these tanks was an open vehicle with a guy standing up in it with two pearl-handled pistols twirling them. You know who I'm talking about, don't ya? Colonel George Patton. Well, as they entered the intersection, we fired our machine guns which were made of blanks. There was an umpire there. He was a major and he stopped the whole column and he said, "Colonel, you're out of action." And I'm not going to use the word that Colonel Patton used because they were pretty naughty. That fellow got a good cussing, and the major finally said, "Now, Colonel, now wait a minute." Patton told him, "You mean to tell me that these two little old, and I won't use the term he said about our machine guns, these two little old machine guns knocked out my tanks." He said, "No, sir, I didn't say that but I'll tell you this, they would have shot your rear end out of that vehicle. It's you that I'm ruling out of action."

So that was the very first in the history of U.S. military of combined infantry and armor. It was the very first. See, they had an armored division with them but that was their first

together. That's what they were experimenting with down there, integrating armor and infantry. This was Patton's 2nd armor division that had come up from Fort Benning, Georgia, I believe. And headlines of the Chattanooga News the next day were, "Colonel Patton Captured." And so we thought, man, would we like to see him. I bet his face was red because he was a very proud man.

I have two claims to fame—one is, I captured Colonel Patton ion 1941on Tennessee maneuvers, and the other one is, I took care of Winston Churchill for a day going to Europe.

CB: Tell us about going to Europe.

RCG: Well, actually we spent the year in training troops in Macon, Georgia. I started out as second lieutenant and later I was promoted to a first lieutenant and I was sent to Europe as a replacement officer. They sent me to Fort Mead, Maryland or somewhere and then we went to Camp Shanks, New York on our way and that's when we boarded the Queen Mary, all 15,000 of us, replacement officers and enlisted men. And they assigned me 200 of them as MPs. I knew nothing about being an MP but anyway we got on at Pier 90. They made us all go below deck. Would not let us look out or anything for security reasons, they said.

Well, we took off from New York and after we got out of the harbor, off the coast of Newfoundland, I believe, we kind of slowed down and this launch came along side of us and our boat never stopped. The launch came alongside and that was Sir Winston Churchill and his whole general staff. They had been to the Ottawa Conference in Canada with Roosevelt and, I think, Stalin.

CB: This was '43, wasn't it?

RCG: This was 1944. It was 1943 after I finished OCS and Fort Benning, I was sent to Camp Wheeler, Georgia to train troops. This was in September of 1944. Well, they occupied one whole deck. There was 15,000 of us and they could only feed two meals a day and they had two men assigned to every bunk on the ship. And we as MPs had a terrible job of managing the food lines 24 hours a day, trying to make sure that people didn't cut into the food line and they got to beating each other over the heads with mess kits and everything. It was a mess. But anyway we made it. We had a destroyer escort for one day out of New York and then we had a cruiser one day and then we had two days with no escort at all. And then the fifth day we had a British aircraft carrier. They ran a zig zag course. The Queen Mary was a fast ship. We went over in five days. It would change course every 8 or 9 minutes, zig zag, and they said the reason it did that it took a submarine about 10 minutes or so to zero in on a ship. A destroyer could only keep up with that speed for one day and a cruiser we had for one day.

And then it was that last day out that I was told to meet the prime minister in the captain's part of the ship. I was and escort him around to different parts of the ship so he could talk to the troops. And then get them all assembled and he'd tell everybody what a horrible time Britain has had and we need to be on our good behavior, and I thought, "You old coot, I'm fixing to go over there and get shot at, too." So anyway, it was real interesting.

We docked in the Firth of Clyde River off of Scotland. At that time the buzz bombs were still being fired from Antwerp into England. The Queen Mary had to dock out in the middle of the River and they unloaded us on barges. I remember we got off of that boat and were on a barge and there was a bow of a ship sitting right beside it that had been sunk by a buzz bomb. But the interesting thing was, I was ready to go after we got there. So Sir Winston and Mrs. Churchill and their staff wheeled down in whatever level the deck was that the barge was going to come on and the barge was waiting. It was raining and he had his overcoat and his top hat and his cigar in his mouth and Mrs. Churchill and I were holding his coat, trying to get him to put on his coat, and he, of course, was politicking and the old barge guy came on board and grabbed him by the arm and said, I'm not going to use the word, but anyway he said, "You get your rear end on this ship out here. I'm leaving." I thought, "My goodness alive, this guy's talking to the prime minister." I found out later that those people didn't like each other. You know, between Scotland and England, they had a bad history. Anyway, he didn't care who he was. He said "I'm leaving." Well, the last time I saw Sir Winston Churchill he still had only one arm in his overcoat because we never got the other one in yet because the old dock captain drug him on board. But it was funny.

CB: Did you talk with him very much?

RCG: I got to talk to him. It all started the night before. The officers were allowed to go to the theatre on the ship and they'd have a show. And this lieutenant and I, he was from Texas, so we kind of buddied up and we went in and we saw this one whole row roped off. At that point in time, we did not know that Sir Winston Churchill was on board that ship. So we saw this whole row lined out and we went in and sat down kind of in the middle on the second row. There was no smoking in there and we waited and the door opened and low and behold who comes out, Sir Winston Churchill and Mrs. Churchill and all the admirals and the general staff people came in. He sat down directly in front of me. She sat down directly in front of the boy from Texas. They turned around, they introduced themselves. So she chatted with us a little while and she said where are ya'll from. The other looked down and he said, "I'm from Texas." And I said, "I'm from Arkansas," and she looked at me and she said, "Where is Arkansas?" Well, we were right next door neighbors to Texas. And then we visited. She was a very gracious lady. How she stuck with him I don't know but he, he could be an ornery old cuss. It was tough to escort him around. You almost had to sort of lead him. But anyway it was fun.

They took us on a train, down short of London, put us in an old artillery place and mud and pup tents and we flirting around with mud there a few days and then they put on another train and took us through London at night and we ended up in South Hampton, England right at daylight. And we had to walk from the rail yard to the shipyards and I never saw so many bicycles in my life. People going to work on their bicycles. So we sat there on the dock all day because they didn't want to cross the channel in daylight. They wanted to cross the channel at night, but at that time, they were still offloading troops on the Omaha Beach which is one of the D-Day beaches.

So they offloaded us, took us across at night. I had to crawl down that rope ladder with all my equipment on and that barge floating around out there and if you missed the barge, you'd get caught between the barge and the ship but I made it. And they took us onto the beach and we had to climb from the beach up a steep hill with all our stuff and I thought at the time how in the world did these guys get up there alive and I thought well, you know what, if there was somebody shooting at me, I'd probably move a lot faster than I'm moving right now.

CB: What day was this?

R.C. and Dorothy Goodman walk through downtown Hot Springs during the war. Courtesy of R.C. Goodman

RCG: Golly, I don't know. I had my 24th , September 23rd, on board the ship going over there so that had to be in late September. We were already across France at that time. Our armies were already through Paris but they took us in what you call a red ball express. It was driven by black drivers and they drove at night with no headlights. And they drove fast. I think I was more scared riding in the truck than I was anywhere else, but anyway they took us somewhere and put us off out in a field and we camped out again for a day or so and then they put us on a train and we went through Paris. We went through Paris at night. It was cold and you heard the World War I guys talk about 40 and 8. Well, that's what we were in. They put about 40 of us in each one of those cars and we didn't have mules but we had all of our equipment and if you moved one inch you lost it. That's how crowded it was. And the cars had holes in them, cracks in the boards. So the train stopped in Paris. An American GI is a very industrious individual. Somebody saw an old beat up coal stove and they put that thing in the door of our car and they rustled a stove pipe and they got some coal and we had a nice fire going. We were just doing great and somehow it changed the direction of the train and it was blowing smoke. Our guys kicked it out the window but it did well for a while.From there, I went over into Holland to Herlen, Holland.

CB: How do you spell that?

RCG: H E R L E N. Herlen, Holland. And there I stayed in an old tobacco warehouse. Our units had just liberated Herlen. They were just over into the edge of Germany and there would be an airplane come over every night and we called him Bedcheck Charlie. He'd come over every night and drop a bomb. We never knew where he was going to drop the bomb and the buzz bombs were still firing so we knew that those of us that were together at that point and time knew we'd be assigned to be the 29th division, the 30th , 84th, and 102nd…they were the four divisions in the 9th Army at that time and we were in the 9th Army sector.

So we heard a lot of bad stories about the 29th and 30th. They were on D-Day and so luckily I got assigned to the 102nd and the officer's place I took was killed in the very first battle. The platoon that he had they'd been all two years together training. He must have been a remarkable officer because those guys were very loyal to him but when I joined my unit we didn't have enough men left to fill a whole platoon. We just had enough men for two squads. The senior leader of the platoon was one of the section sergeants or corporal squad leader. His name was Deck and they had lost their platoon leader and they'd lost their platoon sergeant, they'd lost both section sergeants and Deck then was a corporal and they'd lost two other corporals. They were down, instead of 36 men, they were down to 17 or 18. That was their first battle, and they really took a lot of casualties. The lieutenant in charge was killed the very first day. That sort of made me feel a little funny.

Well, from there my baptism of fire was at Linnoch, Germany. We were trying to push to the Rohr River so we could head on towards the Rhine and on towards Berlin. As we took Linnoch, we were kind of digging in and getting settled and they were mobilizing a whole bunch of troops. I've never seen so many guns and tanks and stuff in my life as was lined up ready to cross the river. This was about the middle of December. And that's when the Battle of the Bulge started.

Goodman sits atop a captured German Panzer tank while serving in the European theater of World War II.

Within 24 hours, all those troops were shifted down to the Battle of the Bulge and they left two divisions up there. They left ours, the 102nd, and the 84th. And the 102nd was responsible for 13 miles of that river. That's a big long area for one division.

CB: Is that the Rhine?

RCG: That's the Rohr. And had the Germans known that, they could have easily gone through us because our line was real thin. And they had a straight shot into

Belgium. So they could have gone really fast but, thank goodness, we were spared that. But we stayed there in that area in a foxhole in the winter of 1944 up until February. It was the coldest winter in history, and snow everywhere. The ground was frozen and we'd have to take a little bit of TNT and blow a hole in the ground. We'd dig our foxholes out of that. We'd go into one of these little villages and get a door and put it on top of that in case of artillery bursts. So they made us dig defensive positions around every one of those little towns in that area because if they attacked it would be just a matter of withdrawal for us. We didn't have enough troops to stop a major attack.

We were all ready to cross the Rohr River and the Germans blew the dam. It went from a little river about as wide as this house to, I think, it was a quarter of mile wide. In February they decided to go ahead. My platoon was attached to K Company, a rifle company. We were not in the assault group that crossed the river. We were in the reserve, but we crossed it right after daylight on a footbridge and that's when we had a pretty rough time for a few days after we crossed that river because the Germans had top-notch strength at that point in time. After we crossed the river, secured our positions, and we prepared for some counterattacks.

CB: Where were you when you crossed the river?

We crossed at Rurdorf, just a few hundred yards from Linnoch. We moved over to a village but anyway that's where we really caught it. We got all kinds of incoming German artillery fire and there was no place to hide. It was just big fields and we were trying to get to another village. So that's where I lost half of my platoon and the rifle company suffered about the same amount of casualties. We were told the 29th Division was supposed to be on our right. We were the right flank of that section. The 29th and 30th were supposed to be to the right of us. The 29th Division was supposed to have crossed the river down from us and was supposed to swing north towards the city Munchen-Gladbach, which was the first big city that we were going to encounter.

Well, the 29th Division didn't get across. They didn't get all their people across and didn't get their tanks across. We didn't get our tanks across initially. We didn't know until later that when we swung north, my platoon was the extreme right flank of the whole 102nd Division and there was nothing between us and the Germans. I had no protection on the flank; I had no protection in the front. I lost half of my platoon that day.

I came home with a guy from the 29th Division. He said when they finally came up later, they knocked out hundreds of artillery pieces that had been shooting at us, not just me but the whole division.. A sketch artist from Yank Magazine was with K Company and my platoon that day. His name was Howard Brodie, and he wrote a book entitled, "Drawing Fire," which included that day and night.

At that time, we had all three regiments committed, I think, but anyway we went from there on to the Rhine River and we were there for a few days and we stayed in a

beautiful city called Krefeld. And then when we got ready to cross, we crossed at Essen. I don't know if it was up the river or down the river, whatever, but we crossed on a pontoon bridge and we were able to drive our vehicles across. After we crossed we saw this German airplane and we all unloaded real quick and hit the ditches and it came right over us. It didn't have an engine, and I thought, wait a minute, what in the world is that? It was a jet.

CB: On the Rhine.

RCG: But we were able to escape that but what he did, he knocked out the pontoon bridge right behind us. That's what he was after. He was after the bridge and he wasn't interested in us I guess because he didn't shoot at us. He came right over us. You could almost see his eyeballs. Anyway, we traveled pretty fast after that and ended up on the Elbe River about 50 miles from Berlin. We were up there a few nights and days. We were in foxholes on one side of the river but had to be careful because the Germans were shooting at us from across the river. We were shooting at them, of course. So one night one of my corporals called me said, "You need to come up here and see this." We weren't talking about a long distance, just a few yard. So I ran up there. I thought one of my men was hurt or something and he said, "Look at this."We'd see this flash of a gun and no incoming shell. The Germans had stopped shooting at us and they were shooting at the Russians. We had a 50-yard line seat. We had I don't know how many hundred thousands of prisoners soon afterwards.

CB: Oh, really? German prisoners.

RCG: German prisoners. There were some Polish prisoners also. Another interesting thing happened. We had orders to cross the Elbe the next day. We had our briefing and attack orders. They had already sent a patrol across the river and I guess it was about 10 or 11 at night they sent word to all the platoon leaders to report back to battalion headquarters, and we couldn't figure out what was going on. We got back and the colonel said, "Well, the war is over for us." The chief said we were 40 miles into Russian territory and the Russians don't want us going any further. So we're going into occupational duty.

And so they started shifting us around in occupation duty headed toward Czechoslovakia and I had a lot of points because you get so many points for each month of service. You got so many points for each medal. You got so many points for overseas and so by that time I had 2 _ years overseas and you get a point and a half for each month that you're overseas plus all the stateside months of service. I had been awarded the Purple Heart. You got 5 points for a Purple Heart, you got 5 points for this, that, and the other, enough to come home later.

In April we arrived up there on the Elbe River and we were withdrawing. On May 8, they called me and said, "You're going to Liege, Belgium with a load of displaced people. At

this time, we had all these displaced people in Holland, Belgium, and France and we managed to get some of the railroads going. Had one bridge across the Rhine River and they assigned one officer and a noncommissioned officer to each train. I chose a corporal of mine who had been speaking a little bit of their language and we headed out for Liege, Belgium. We had 30 minutes to get ready to go. We had no orders, nothing. We were able to carry weapons and we were able to stuff a couple of rations in our bag and that's about it.

During the trip, I rode up in the engine a little while. The engineer was a fireman on the Kansas City Southern Railroad from Sallisaw, Oklahoma. He was mad as a hornet because he had just come in from Belgium. They always had big delays across the Rhine. They had one bridge and he was mad because they only had about 4 hours sleep. I stayed up there in the engine with him for a while and I'd ride back in the caboose a lot. Well, this particular day, May 8th, I was back and they had a cot. In fact, they had a brakeman and a fireman on each engine. They had 4 cots for the engineer and fireman, brakeman, and conductor. When they had a chance to sleep, that's where they'd sleep.

I was just sitting there by a wide open door watching things go by and I stood up for some reason. We had a mirror on the wall. I stood him and combed my hair a little bit because I was in the wind and all of a sudden there was this terrible bang. My head went into the mirror and we had run into the rear of another train. And the other train in front of us was just buckled like this and it was horrible. And it was loaded with French prisoners of war. These guys had survived the war, they survived captivity, and a bunch of them were killed. It happened right across the open field was a little hospital and all I had was a first aid kit and that was it. I think that's one of the things that propelled me into medicine. I felt so helpless. On our train there weren't too many that got hurt. But the only brakes they had on those trains were on the engines and these cars had no brakes.

He rounded this curve and that other train was stopped to get water and he didn't have time to stop. He and the fireman both bailed out of the engine before it hit so they were lucky. I don't know how long it took to get things straightened out because it was a mess for several hours but we finally went on to Liege, Belgium. Well, there we were with no orders, no way to get back to our unit. I ran into a guy with a military vehicle and I told him what the story was. He said, "Well, they have a place downtown. Let me take you down there. Maybe they could put you up and at least give you a meal or something." That was a place where they used for R & R, recreation and stuff. In the war, I never saw a canteen-like thing and they had some barracks in a bunk center. And I went in to a first sergeant in there, identified myself, and I told him what had happened. We have no orders. We don't even know how we are going to get back to our unit. He said, "Tell you what I'll do. You leave your guns here with me and I'll let you have three days and three nights here and we'll feed you in the kitchen." So I got to spend those three days in Liege, Belgium.

But a few days before that, it was really interesting. At this time things were rather quiet for us and some of us were staying in this beautiful little house with an elderly man and woman. And we did not want to occupy their whole house so they had a couple of beds or so down in the basement. They hated Hitler for the kidnapping of their beautiful daughter to populate the super race.

(END OF FIRST SIDE).
In Alaska, there was Joey Brown, we had Bob Hope and Francis Lankford came over.

CB: Oh, really?

RCG: We had Joey Brown, also.

CB: Now, this was a USO troop?

RCG: That was when I was in Alaska, the winter of ’42. That’s when we still had our barracks and we had Jerry Colonna, but by the time Jerry Colonna came up there, we were already out on the tundra. Also an interesting thing was Mickey Rooney. This was before we crossed the Rhur River during the Bulge time and we were still in artillery range in Germany and the Germans would shoot at these crossroads and everything. Periodically. We never knew when they were going to shoot. This jeep pulled up and this guy got out with a guitar and a driver. We were all in the cellars We had been pulled out of line. We were back in this small village for rest and relaxation and there were 15 or 20 of us went out there to see who this was in the Jeep. He played a song or two and he said, “Well, where is everybody?” I said, “Mr. Rooney, let me tell you something. The rest of them have got more sense than those of us here. The Germans shoot at that intersection there all the time. We never know when they’re going to shoot.” He got into the jeep and took off fast. Somehow, I don’t know how he got that far out there but he was in artillery range and didn’t know it.

CB: What kind of uniforms did you have in Alaska?

RCG: Well, the parkas were made out of muskrat, long parkas, very expensive. Funny thing was they told us if you lose one of these, it’s going to cost you $118. And, lord of mercy, at that time I was a $54 corporal a month. Boy, that’s going to take a long time to pay for that thing. In Nome that first winter on Saturday night we’d go to town to a Tom Collins bar. Well, some would get to drinking a little bit and they’d hang their coats on the wall. But I tell you this, when they came back out to the base, everybody had a parka. They spent all day Sunday trying to find their size. We had one guy, 6’6” you know, and some little old guy about my height got his and it was dragging the ground and they’d spend all day Sunday trying to find it because they were going to get the right parkas because they didn’t want that $118 charged to them. We had good equipment up there. We were warm. But it got to 50 below 0 one night and they made us sleep in a hole in the snow like a fox hole and sleep in that thing in 50 below 0

weather but we had a sleeping bag that had three layers that they were experimenting with that was supposed to protect you up to 75 degrees below 0.

CB: Did you stay warm in Alaska?

RCG: Nearly froze the first night I slept in a snow foxhole. I was with Dr. Chamberlain who was my partner here for a while. He was in anesthesia too. You might remember him. He said, "Well, did you take your clothes off?" I said, "How you going to get your clothes off in that sleeping bag?" And he said, "Well, if you took your clothes off and slept naked you would have slept warm because the heat of your body got to all parts of the bag and with your clothes on, every time you moved you had a cold place. So I squirmed around the next night and got my clothes off and slept warm but it was tough trying to get them back on in a sleeping bag when you put your clothes down at the foot. But it was interesting. I had an interesting military career. It covered a lot of different angles. I guess I'm lucky. I had some close calls but I told Dorothy before I left I'm not going to be a hero. I'm coming home. I'm not going to be a coward, but I'm not going to be a hero. I'm not volunteering for anything. I'm not a medal seeker so anyway I wasn't a coward. I was scared. Everybody was scared.

CB: Everyone was scared.

RCG: Everybody in a foxhole. There was a lot of prayer went on in a foxhole, I'll tell you for sure. There wasn't any atheist in a foxhole. I got covered up in one and that's the reason I got these hearing aids. The shell hit the edge of the foxhole and buried one of my sergeants and me up to our waists and we were using German foxholes at that time. We dug straight foxholes. They dug an angled foxhole and it hit over here. I was just out there in that field checking on my men. I guess this guy saw me from across the river saw me going into the hole and a machine gun out in front of it and one shell landed short of us and one shell landed behind us and in artillery that's what you try to do—you try to fire a short round and a long round and you split the difference. I told Ogle, I said, "Ogle, he's got us zeroed in." And this thing went off, we were covered up with dirt. The machine gun is scattered, broke everywhere. I said, "you don't move and I don't move till dark because he's got us zeroed in and if he sees one of us move he's going to shoot us again." We stayed in there covered up to our waists until after dark. We were afraid to move.

CB: I bet.

RCG: My ears have rung ever since. But anyway I had some close calls but I survived.

CB: I'd like to borrow that picture of you in uniform on your honeymoon and scan that.

RCG: This one?

CB: Yeah, that's really cute.

JW: You want to scan for a minute?

CB: Yeah, I can do that or we can just borrow it and bring it back to him then you won't have to bring all that stuff in.

RCG: There I'm standing outside of my momma and daddy's house that they lived in Ogden with daddy's old dog. This was in Hot Springs and this was our honeymoon.

CB: Well, the other side of that page has some in Alaska, doesn't it? Turn this page over.

RCG: That's me and my mother. That's me as a little boy and my daddy. There's me on the football team at Magnolia A & M. Let's see, where I am there. There I am in 1940.

CB: And here you are in Alaska.

RCG: No, in 1940, I was in Magnolia a month after football season was when they mobilized. That's Joey Brown and me and one of my platoon. And this is me and Dr. Chamberlain and two other guys there. That was how those Eskimos fished. That's in the Bering Sea. See that little fish that they use to fish sticks? That's the way they feed their dogs. I asked the lady to let me do that. I don't know how I caught that fish. Don't know where she got this label. I don't know what it is.

CB: Well, why don't you just slip that page out right there and let me borrow it and I'll bring it right back to you.

RCG: That will be fine.

CB: That way we won't have to…

RCG: This page here?

CB: Yeah, so I can get the ones of you in Alaska and the one on your honeymoon. That's good.

RCG: Now, there's another one here. That's me and my daddy and his old dog. When was this? 1945. That's all of it.

CB: This is good. This will do.

RCG: Definitely those two things back, I'd appreciate it.

CB: And there's my card. Did you want to give us a little bit of your opinion about what's happening now.

RCG: What's happening?

JW: Let's fire this thing up. I have one question too after she gets done.

CB: I want to know what you think about the way the war is going.

RCG: Now?

CB: Now. What do you think about the situation?

RCG: I think that we didn't learn a lesson. We learned going across Europe, we didn't leave military behind us. You can't leave an enemy behind where there's weapons and everything and plus the fact we had a military government ready to take over. In fact, while we were in occupation duty for a while, I was called mayor of four towns, four other cities I had to visit every day and sign their passes that they wanted to visit a family here because they were restricted to their towns. But the main thing that I think is wrong. We should have three times as many troops over there as we had so we could have stopped all that looting and stuff. We just didn't send enough people to begin with plus the fact I had two sons in the Gulf War I. One of them, middle guy over here, in a helicopter he had 12 helicopters. He was a Medi-Vac helicopter pilot. He was with the 1st Armored Calvary outfit out of Germany that was the first troops across the border. He has been adamantly against it. He told me when he came home, "Dad," he said, "ten years, we'll be back." Well, he missed it by two, it was 12. And he has been adamantly against it. He said it's a mistake to go over there with just 115-120 thousand troops. He said they just don't understand those people. I think we have to support our troops. I tell you what they'd do is get enough people over there to try to control it. How you going to control these different, these rules out there. They're on your side one day and somebody else comes along with enough money, they're the enemy the next and all that kind of stuff. I think we've misjudged what we're getting into. As far as the military part of it is concerned, they did their job. But what the government didn't do was have a backup bunch of folks in there to keep control of these towns as they went through them. There's an old saying "You cannot run a war with air power. You've got to have troops on the ground." Well, we would bombard towns and you'd wonder how could anybody be alive? The air power is very important, but you've got to have troops on the ground to occupy the territory.

CB: You're dealing with people.

RCG: You can't do it with artillery and air power alone. You've got to have infantry in there. The National Guard that I was in here is there,this artillery unit that's over there, is just 1st battalion was just fixing to go over there now. Up north, our local guys in the unit

I was in, they had already been over there. Here they got guns that can shoot multiple rockets. They made MPs out of them mostly. There was no use for their artillery. I just feel sorry for these kids.

But if you stop to think about it, the casualties we've had in the three years, we had more more in Omaha Beach in one day but just one casualty if it happens to be your son or your daughter is one too many.

CB: It's too much.

JW: My question is I don't know, Carole may have had this happen to her when doing audio interviews but this is the first, you're the first person since I got involved that was in the service when Pearl Harbor occurred.

RCG: Yeah, I was out, we have already been in Nome, Alaska. We got up there first part of September and, of course, Pearl Harbor was December 7. We were, I tell folks, I say, "You know if they'd attacked Nome, Alaska that day, it's been me and two other guys in my barracks who'd have got it. All the rest of them were in town. I was on guard duty and I couldn't go. We heard about it on, we had one of these little shortwave things. We could pick up some ballroom in Los Angeles or San Francisco or somewhere down there. On Saturday night we could pick it up, somebody would pick it up on that. I don't know what time it would have been in Nome when all that happened. I don't remember the time zone up there. Nome was only about 20 miles from Siberia. In the wintertime, you could walk to Siberia from up there across the ice. The Bering Sea was completely frozen over in the wintertime. The last ships that go up there in the late part of September, we were the last one that they were going to let up there in 1944.

CB: Well, did it cause some kind of panic up there when you heard the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor? Did you expect them to hit you in Alaska?

RCG: Well, we were far away. We didn't really couldn't, see, our news was fairly scarce. We didn't have daily news. We would get a little daily teletype message, teletype message of what was going on. So we really didn't know the extent of it for several days the best I recall. Sometimes it would be three weeks before we'd get our mail. I'd get a whole stack of letters from Dorothy all at one time. We never knew when the mail plane was going to get up there in the wintertime, because he'd get stuck down in Alaska, just froze in some other town down there and he couldn't leave. One interesting thing before and after Pearl Harbor and everything after we were trying to help the Russians against the Germans, they ferried an A20 aircraft and a P51. I saw one of those P51s out here at the air show the other day. They ferried them from Fairbanks and they'd stop in Nome and refuel and on over to Siberia. That's how Russia turned the tide in that war was because we sent a lot of airplanes and they stopped in Nome but the Russians had a detachment across the airport and we never saw them. We just heard they had a lady colonel over there running it and there wasn't any other women up there but a few

Eskimos. Anyway, we heard they had a Russian colonel who was a woman running and handling the refueling and all that stuff. They crashed a few of them because it was wintertime and the snow was kind of hard to tell where the runway was even though the snowplows kept it clean. When I left up there, my hut on the snow was so deep we could just see the ridgeline of our huts. You say well, how'd you'd get the door open. Well, we had a storm port at each end and then we'd tunnel us a hole out through these. You just have to make do with what you got but it was not bad up there at all. I kind of enjoyed my service up there.
JW: Well, could you tell us on the camera about the day you got the shrapnel in your cheek?

RCG: Got what?

JW: Did you tell us the day…

RCG: Well, that was the day we were talking about that Howard Brodie was with us.

JW: Yeah, but you didn't tell us on the camera about that day.

RCG: Well, yeah, what I was saying, we jumped off, we had an objective, we had three objectives. The first objective was hold the Germans but not the families and they'd have a big courtyard and their animals, their village was two stories. They'd live upstairs and the animals stayed downstairs and then they would go out from there in kind of pods and do their farming. That was our first objective and we didn't get very far until we started drawing artillery fire. And then we had no place to hide and we'd just been all annihilated if we'd just laid down. We took off as fast as we could and that's when we got into the mine field. We didn't know anything about the mine field. We had not been told about a mine field out there and we got in it. We lost some people in it. I lost some people in it and you think you didn't step lightly. Golly, you're afraid to take another step you were so scared. There was no cover for us from the artillery and that's when we finally got to this enclave and got into this shed with the animals in there. As I said, there was a big old hog. I remember he was in there. The Germans was shooting. Well, we got caught in a bad spot. The Germans were shooting at us from one direction. By this time, some of our tanks had got across the river and they were shooting at the village from the other direction. We were drawing fire from our own people and finally they got a hole in the roof and somebody had a flare and we had different colored flares to send up for friendly or what, you know. Somebody got that flare that we shot through the roof after we got a hole big enough knocked out of it and, of course, that took care of our tanks. They quit shooting at us.

JW: Well, let me clear something up. The hog you got under, was he dead or alive?

RCG: He was alive. He was a big old hog.

JW: There was some cattle in there?

RCG: Yes, we'd get under the hogs and cattle. We figured shrapnel would have to go through a whole lot of meat before it got to us. You'd get underneath anything you could when the roof of your building was falling in.

JW: I'm just surprised the hog cooperated.

RCG: What?

JW: I'm just surprised the hog cooperated.

RCG: Well, he didn't have much choice. There was more than me in there with him. There wasn't much room. There wasn't much room for him to maneuver, but I don't know how he did it but there was cattle. And I'm sure they saved a lot of our lives, too, because they were blasting and the way those roofs were made out of slate type stuff. Itwasn't shingles like these and boy that stuff would rattle down on you just like rocks.The Germans was getting us one way and our own tanks the other. It was a bad situation.

An unidentified soldier, left, and R.C. Goodman, right, visit with actor Joe E. Lewis during their World War II service in the U.S. Army.

CB: And that's when you got the shrapnel in your cheek?

RCG: Just before we got there.

CB: Outside?

RCG: It wasn't bad. It was just a little puncture wound and a piece of metal stuck in my jawbone and a corpsman brought it out and put a little Sulphur in it and then…but when Brodie describes in his article about the lieutenant with the bloody face, that was me and so I got that article. It was in Yank magazine. Dorothy sent me a copy of it but she didn't know her husband was the lieutenant who had the bloody face. I got home and I said that was me. Anyway, they wrote it when they were with K Company and I was with K Company. We were on the extreme right flank. The American soldier is an interesting individual. He talks about a PFC in the article. The battle, you know, two or three weeks, maybe 8 weeks prior to that when we were moving up to the Ruel River or somewhere along in there, the Germans counterattacked with their panzer tanks and

they were sitting off and firing directly into our foxholes and this is prior to the first clash. The German, in order to see, he can only depress his muzzle so far and he has a blind spot. If you can get around him, he can't shoot you and the commander of that tank made the mistake of not latching his hatch and this kid ran out there and it was nighttime, in the dark, climbed upon that thing, opened the hatch, threw a white phosphorus grenade down in there, closed the lid and sat on it until it went off. No telling how many people he saved.

Well, we knew about this and he had gotten the Silver Star. So I thought I saw him and I thought well I think I'm going to stay close to him. The next thing I knew he was pop, pop, pop. I said "What are you shooting at?" He said "There's a German over there." And I said I didn't see anybody and the next thing we know up goes some hands and the Germans surrendered. About that time, the artillery comes in. He was something else and I believe he was a Mexican boy from Texas because…

JW: He had some good eyes.

RCG: He just kind of smelled them out, but he kept them penned down until we got close enough to capture them. Right after that when they saw the Germans, you know, they'd shoot at their own people, they'd start surrendering and I think they were trying to shoot as many as their own as us. But they were, the interesting thing about the German artillery, they went by coordinates on the map. They would fire at a coordinate. They didn't have observe fire like we did. But we had an observer. Some of them had little air planes that direct artillery fire. We had a forward observer and we happened to go through that particular coordinate that that group of 88s was zeroed in on because there was a guy to the left that I came home with, a fellow with a regiment on the left. He said you know you guys could have gone around that artillery barrage because they could see it over there and they were right on us and we didn't have time to go around it. We were already in the middle of it. Well, the German prisoners told us that we don't fear you. All we fear is your artillery. But the infantry, we don't fear you. We fear your artillery. It's vicious and I know because our artillery got on us and the first guy they hit on the first barrage they got our radio operator and our forward observer and they were shooting. They missed the target and we were on the receiving end and I'm telling you I can understand what the Germans felt. That was vicious. We'd like to have never, never got that stopped. Anyway, I don't know how we did it. It's been so long ago. All I know I could sympathize with that German when he said we don't fear you, we fear your artillery. German 88 is the best artillery weapon that's ever been produced and why NATO didn't adopt that weapon, it's beyond me. They could shoot antiaircraft, they could shoot like a howitzer over a hill, they could fire it like a rifle, and it was one vicious weapon. And NATO adopted some other weapon. Why they didn't adopt the German 88 is beyond me. I wouldn't want to be looking down the barrel of an 88.

JW: If you were president you think having been in a war and seen the death and destruction and whole cities knocked down you think that would probably make you try everything before you resorted to war again?

RCG: Yes, but you know the old saying is if our presidents and prime ministers and everything would have to fight the war, we'd never have a war. Have you noticed over there right now we're having 45- and 48-year-old guys fighting that war? Also, 18-, 19-, 20-year-old old kids. This war we've got all these guys that in the Guard and the Reserve and mobilize them and sent over there. It's a different story, but to see that country, Germany, right now and to see it like it was in 1945, you don't even recognize it. We went throughout there in July 2005 and I saw very modern cities. When you get closer over to the eastern side towards Berlin, you can see a lot of buildings still with shell marks around them. But the west that the British and the Americans and the French had, those people are all rebuilding modern buildings and everything and those towns were just flattened. I went through France to a little town of St. Lo in 1988. I went through there two or three months into the war and there was one thing standing...that was a smokestack in that whole city. Back in the 70s or 80s I guess we had two sons that were in the military and they were stationed in Germany for a while and Dorothy and I visited them. We went on a tour down to the beaches and went through St. Lo. I couldn't believe it when I saw a sign on entering a beautiful, modern city. The last time I saw it in 1945 there wasn't anything but a smokestack standing and that was it. It's beautiful country, but it's sure destructive. Why do we want to destroy things like that? I could never understand it.

CB: Well, I think we've just had enough of your time.

Edited by Carole Barger
Fort Smith Historical Society
May 23, 2007

Execution of Bushwhackers

On the 29th wit. A.J. Copeland, James H. Rowden, John Norwood and William Carey suffered the extreme penalty of the law for murder and the violation of the civilized rules of warfare. These men were tried by a military commission and found guilty of the above names crimes.

In April here, in company with twenty or more accomplices, they murdered eight Federal soldiers of the 1st Ark. Cav., who were herding horses near Fayetteville, Ark. They approached our men dressed in the uniform of U.S. soldiers, and pretending to belong to the 14th Kans. Cav., completely throwing them off their guard. That point gained, they suddenly and without a moment's warning fired upon them, and killing eight out of ten.

A Union citizen, named John Brown, was also killed by the miscreants at his own house about the same time.

When the sentence of death was first read to the culprits, they first seemed to be indifferent, one of them remarking with an air of bravado, "Well, all right." As the time of their execution drew near, however, they began somewhat to realize their awful situation, and requested the services of a spiritual adviser, and Rev. Francis Springer assumed that duty.

During the ministrations of several weeks of this reverend gentleman, they showed symptoms of considerable contrition, thought at first they seemed to be aware of scarce any consciousness of the awfulness of their crimes, which they had committed. They began to feel that they had been in their previous career the enemies of God and man, and confessed that they had been "pretty bad boys." So callous and hardened were they at first that what they had done, they considered as first rate, too.

The condemned were all very young men, their average age not exceeding nineteen years.

Carey, the youngest, was a most desperate case, and gave his spiritual adviser a partial history of his wicked career. He is said to have killed twenty-one men. . They had all been once in the confederate army, but at the time of their capture were levying war upon their own hook, that so had become outlaws.

Early in the morning of their last day on earth the prisoners were visited by the chaplain, and impressive religious [illegible] were held. Soon after the close of this interview the irons were taken off the culprits. They were then brought forth from the prison and placed in the custody of the guard detailed for the occasion. In a few moments more they were in the wagons each one seated on his coffin. Chaplain Springer was with two of the condemned in the first wagon, and Chaplains Wilson and McAfee with the other two in the second wagon.

The solemn procession was then formed, the Provost Marshal of the District, Capt. C.O. Judson, 6th Kans. Cav., with his staff, taking the lead. Then came the music and the firing party, consisting of 64 men of the 13th Kans. Inft., the two wagons with the culprits and chaplains, and lastly the guard. A large number of citizens and soldiers lined the streets through which the procession moved.

The unfortunate but guilty man evidently tried to be firm and composed on the march, except Norwood, who repeatedly gave signs of grief by weeping and inaudible prayer. The expression of their countenances, in spite of endeavors to be self-possessed, was that of sadness and despair.

On reaching the place of execution south of town and just outside of the rifle pits, the prisoners were arraigned in a line, each one by the side of his coffin. Three sides of a hollow square of infantry had previous been formed to keep the multitude of the spectators at a proper distance, leaving the side next to the prisoners open.

The Judge Advocate of the District, Lieut. Whicher, then read to them the charges and findings of the military commission, after which the condemned kneeled down with the chaplains, and Rev. Mr. Springer offered a short and appropriate prayer. At the conclusion of it, the officers and others about the condemned shook hands with them and, bidding them a final farewell, retired except the Judge Advocate who remained til their eyes were bandaged and hands tied. By this time all of the unfortunate men showed signs of intense mental distress. Carey and Copeland prayed audibly and with great force. Norwood started a hymn, and was still singing in a low voice when the death volley sent his soul into eternity. Carey, on shaking hands with the Judge Advocate, remarked, "Judge, I hope to meet you in Heaven." At length, as the preparations were completed, and in another moment or two forty-eight muskets were pointed at the culprits. One moment more and at the simultaneous discharge of the forty-eight guns, four lifeless bodies lay stretched on the ground.

The whole terrible scene, from beginning to end, was conducted with the propriety due to a transaction so awful but to the detail entrusted with the fatal shooting a special word is due. The entire detail, consisting of sixty-four men of the 13th Kans. Inf., was commanded by Capt. Frankhouse. Forty-eight were in line about twenty-five feet from the doomed men. One half of the guns were charged with ball and the other half with blank cartridges. The remaining sixteen men were held as a reserve in case of failure in the first discharge, but the volley of forty-eight guns was simultaneous and complete. Death ensued almost instantaneously — no lingering agony remained to torture the doomed and distress the beholders. The most painful reflection awakened by the sad ceremony was that selfish, faithless, and traitorous citizens should have stirred up a strife that precipitates into the vortex of crime, ignominy and ruin so many of the young men of our once peaceful, prosperous and happy country.

This account of the execution of four bushwhackers originally was published in the Aug. 6, 1864 edition of the Fort Smith New Era. Although the name of its author was not given in the New Era, the Rev. Francis Springer wrote the account under the name Thrifton, according to *The Preacher's Tale: The Civil War Journal of Rev. Francis Springer, Chaplain, U.S. Army of the Frontier*, by Francis Springer; ed. William Furry. A copy of the account in Springer's hand signed "Thrifton" was with his journal. Letters from each of the condemned men to their families, three of which also were written in his hand, were found among his papers. Presumably, Springer took dictation from them. For another version of the execution from Springer and text of the letters, prefer to *The Preacher's Tale*.

Coughing Up a Bullet

Clifford Johnson, 27, was shot by E.M. Pigg on Sept. 12, 1913. Pigg thought Johnson was a burglar. Johnson was from Wister, Okla., and after a night of drinking in Fort Smith, he decided to walk to Van Buren. Johnson got lost and at about 2 a.m. went up to Pigg's home to ask for someone to call him a cab to take him to Van Buren so he could catch a train back to Wister.

Pigg said he had listened to noises of Johnson outside his home for about a half hour. When Johnson tried to open his back door, Pigg said he opened fire with his revolver. One bullet lodged in his neck.

For several days, Johnson recovered at Sparks Memorial Hospital, but the bullet was in such a place that the physicians couldn't safely operate on Johnson to remove it. In late September, Johnson took a train from Wister to testify against Pigg at trial. While on the train, Johnson was seized by a violent cough. After he finished coughing, Johnson felt something heavy in his handkerchief. One examining it, he found the bullet.

According to doctors, the bullet worked its way near the lining of Johnson throat from just below his right ear. An abcess formed on the outer lining of his throat which brought the bullet closer to the surface. Discharge from the abcess caused Johnson to cough up the bullet. The bullet had severed several nerves in his neck and cut a tonsil in two.

Pigg originally was charged with assault with intent to kill but the charge was reduced to aggravated assault. He was fined $50 but wasn't jailed.

Source: "Bullet In Neck of Man Is Expelled by Violent Cough," Fort Smith Times Record, Sept. 26, 1913, p. 1; "Oklahoman Is Badly Shot, Two Stories Told of Case," Fort Smith Times Record, Sept. 12, 1913, p. 1.Gallery

Andy Carr

Andy Carr died April 1, 1912, from wounds received in a shooting that occurred during the apprehension of Sanford Lewis on March 23, 1912. His shooting and misunderstandings in the public mind about what had happened resulted in a mob tearing Lewis from his jail cell and lynching him on Garrison Avenue. Carr left behind a wife and five children that lived at a home at 601 S. 17th St.

Carr lived in Fort Smith nearly his entire life and was a 20-year veteran of local law enforcement, city and county. His first law enforcement job was as a city policeman. "His exceptional detective ability" earned him a job as a Frisco detective. Carr resigned from that job to become a deputy sheriff. In 1908, he was elected a constable for the Fort Smith district. Mayor Bourland appointed him to the city detective force at the close of his first term.

At the time of his injury in the Lewis incident, Carr was serving as deputy constable and city special policeman. In 1903, he survived being struck by a street car at Little Rock Avenue (Rogers Avenue) and 18th Street. In another incident, he was saved from being shot when a bullet was stopped by his badge.

Carr was conscious during much of the week preceding his death, but thought he had been in a wreck and was never conscious of how he received his wound. He was buried April 2, 1912, in Oak Cemetery.

Sources: "Andy Carr Was Injured in Fall," *Fort Smith News Record*, Aug. 27, 1903, p. 5; "Andy Carr Died of His Wound," *Fort Smith Times Record*, April 1, 1912, p. 2.

Bachelor Society Passes on Case of Brother Dyke

"Proceedings of the Fort Smith Amalgamated Society of Free and Independent Bachelors:

"Your committee to whom was referred the matter of the sudden and unexplained taking off of one of our most esteemed members, submits the following report:

"Nathaniel Dyke was married on June 16, 1941, in Fort Smith, Arkansas, to a woman. It has been ascertained that a license was procured by some means and that the ceremony was performed by a duly ordained minister of the gospel of the Episcopal church. On its face everything appears to be regular and your committee does not recommend that any legal steps be taken to set the marriage aside, notwithstanding some grave accusations that Mr. Dyke was acting under coercion. Mr. Dyke has not been heard of since the ceremony was performed; his whereabouts cannot be ascertained; his fate is unknown.

"Brother Dyke lived in Fort Smith for many years and was regarded as a safe, conservative man. By his many virtues, he attracted and retained a great many friends; he achieved prominence in the business world, becoming a director in one of your banks. He was prominent in the religious life of the community, having played the organ in one of the city churches. Your committee has heard much testimony regarding Brother Dyke, and is of the opinion that the seeds of the malady which ultimately carried him off were sown during the hours of his musical employment. Whether this is true or not will never be known, there is much evidence tending to prove that such is the case.

"Your committee recommends the adoption of appropriate resolution by this society, to the end that no measures be left untried to preserve its membership and that its usefulness may continue in the future, as in the past, and be the means of preserving many useful citizens to our rapidly growing city.

"Your committee is of the opinion that Brother Dyke could not have been taken by fair methods, and wishes to express disapproval of the extreme measures resorted to by the other sex.

"Upon motion of Brother Carnall, seconded by Brother Pape, the following resolutions were adopted by the society, without a dissenting voice:

"Resolved that in the loss of Brother Dyke, this society has sustained a great blow.

"Resolved, further, that the society erect an appropriate monument to Brother Dyke's memory, at some prominent point in the city, as a warning to all young men against the dangers of organ playing unaccompanied by a sufficient guard.

"Resolved, further, that this society takes this occasion to reiterate its firm adherence to the principles embodied in its constitution and by-laws, and that the sad loss of our brother shall be a cause of further vigilance on the part of each and every member of this body.

"Resolved further, that a copy of this report and resolutions be sent to Mr. Dyke as soon as he comes out of hiding, and that his name be stricken from the membership of this society.

Adjourned.

"We certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the proceedings of the society in the above mentioned matter.

"These resolutions were signed by the majority of the bachelors of Fort Smith."

Source: "Bachelor Society Passes on Case of Brother Dyke," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 2, 1914, p. 7.

The War on Flies

Thirteen was an unlucky number for flying pests in Fort Smith. In May 1913 in a public health campaign, school children slaughtered around 1,500,000 of them.

Pupils at DuVal School won the contest to kill as many flies as possible. They were given incentive by some cash prizes donated by a Fort Smith citizen "who is some 'swatter' himself."

In the DuVal contest, Clarence Laws won first prize, $10, with a total of 220,000 flies. Ray Williams won second prize at $5 with 200,000 killed. Fifty cent prizes were awarded to Lela, Odie and Ollie Cantwell, Mildred Burks, Essie Tankersly, Katherine Moore, Elizabeth Howe, Mary Thomas, Orlene Montague, Rodney Montague, Herschel Ledwidge, Neal Pryor, John Anderson, Percy Howard, Lawrence Music, Ruby Greer, Arthur Lemaster, Lloyd Wiseman, Frank Ingle, Darvin Leekly, John Linthicum, Delmar Page and John T. Evans.

The scores of the 50-cent prize winners ranged from 1,000 to 1,500.

Traps were used to catch the majority, but swatters were working too. One girl caught 15,000 on fly paper. Some traps were store bought and others were homemade, each type working equally as well as the other.

Clarence Laws placed traps in a number of places likely to have high concentrations of flies — store fronts and stables.

Baits included boiled cabbage, fish heads, putrid meat and bread and milk.

Source: "One and a Half Million Flies Slaughter'd By School Pupils, Prize Winners and Results," *Fort Smith Times Record*, May 25, 1913, p. 1.

Fort Smith was Location for Silent Films

In an age before television, there was only one way to show people a city without bringing them to it: Film it. Fort Smith's boosters in 1914 and 1915 did that with two films.

In April 1914, "Romance of a Southern Fort" was filmed. The title was chosen in a contest. Advertising of the city was done in the subtitles, according to the Times Record. The newspaper doesn't explain what that means. Perhaps locations and facts were given in the subtitles as the fictional storyline played out in the action above on the screen.

In any case, scenes of Fort Smith in 1861 were depicted. A mock battle was staged between the wharf and the Gould railroad bridge, using the local military company and high school boys as the soldiers. George Sengel of the Business Men's Club arranged for the shipment of arms and a large quantity of black powder from Little Rock for use in the battle. The river and boats on it were visible in the background.

Among the other sites and buildings shown in the movie were:

- Commissary building
- W.R. Martin's home on Free Ferry
- Warehouse district

Two reels were shot instead of the planned one reel. At 11 a.m. on April 16, 1914, the completed film was shown at the Lyric Theatre to good attendance and "it was pleasing to all who attended."

In the summer of 1915, the city fell under the lens again with the production of "The High Road to Fortune" directed by W.P. Wilson. For a second time, a fictional storyline was used to show off Fort Smith and give the facts of its assets. "Miss Raines," a Chicago actress, played the heroine, Euwine Phortune. Hary P. Lyman was the hero, Oliver Thornton, and George Rye was the villain. At Sixth Street and Rogers and Sixth Street and Garrison, Raines did some trick riding for the camera as she was pursued by the villain.

Filming seems to have lasted longer than it did for "Romance" and took in more of the city. Planned as a two-reel movie, it ran to three.

Among the locations shown in its course were:

- Homes of Scott Robertson, Ben Cravens and James B. McDonough on Free Ferry Road.
- Wolf-Pollock store
- Fort Smith, the fort itself

- Best-Clymer sorghum mill and other industrial plants
- Merchants National Bank
- First National Bank
- Reynolds-Davis buildings
- Van Buren peach shipping industry
- Fort Smith Rim & Bow factory
- Fort Smith Biscuit Company
- Union Station
- Carnegie Library
- Federal Courthouse
- Speer Hardware
- R.C. Bollinger Music Company and all
- Fort Smith churches

The locations were worked into the story line by presenting the hero as an inspector. It included "the legend of the love affair between Betty Taylor and Jefferson Davis" and this was filmed at the fort site. John B. Williams played General Zachary Taylor, Helen Louise Pyle was Bettty and Allen Kennedy appeared as Jefferson Davis.

The film premiered at the Joie Theatre on the morning of Monday, August 16, 1915, to a standing-room only crowd.

The Southwest American said at the time, "Both artistically and as a picture story, the play is far above the average run of movie stories, and as an advertisement of Fort Smith, it was all and more than its promoter had promised."

In the course of the production, the director and George Sengel became locked in a dispute. Sengel became upset, according to Wilson, over some scenes that he thought would be included in the finished product. Wilson said that the scenes were discarded and not even filmed. Sengel appeared to be trying to distance himself and the Business Men's Club from "The High Road to Fortune."

"Romance" was shown at a convention in Toronto, Canada, and in several cities in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Where "High Road" was distributed is unknown.

Sources: "Produce Fine Movie Film of Local Scenes," *Fort Smith Times Record*, April 5, 1914, p. 7; "Local Movies Pleasing All," *Fort Smith Times Record*, April 16, 1914, p. 4; "Spectacular Movie Stunts," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 4, 1915, p. 8; "Hair-Raising Movie Stunts," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 5, 1915, p. 8; "Film the Final Scenes of Play," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 6, 1915, p. 1; "Dispute Arises Over Movie Film," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 8, 1915, p. 7; "Movie Films Nearly Finished," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 8, 1915, p. 7; "Movie Producer, W.R. Wilson, Answers Senator Sengel's Statements (advertisement)," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 8, 1915, p. 2; "Sorghum Plant and Others in the Movie Film," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 8, 1915, section 2, p. 3; "The Last Film Made for Municipal Movie," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 11, 1915, p. 8; "Fort Smith Movie Success in Every Artistic Feature," *Southwest American*, Aug. 17, 1915, p. 8.

Note: If you know where a print of either of these films, please let us know.

Interview with David Matlock, May 6, 2004

Re: Arkansas Coffin Company and Southtown community

Note: Ellipses appear where deletions in the transcript were made. These usually were places where the interviewer interjected and asides took place. Notes have been inserted where longer parts of the conversation were expurgated.

BB: What's your full name?

DM: Garland David Matlock. My mother's dad was a Garland.

BB: Do you know who any of your ancestor's were on your mother's side?

DM: They were from Kentucky. ... My mother was born in Oklahoma City, but her father came from Kentucky. My grandad's dad, no, his brother was Edgar Lee Matlock and he was an attorney in Van Buren.

BB: That would be your great-uncle?

DM: Yes.

DM: (Referring to an aerial photo). They'd already torn down all of the Western Wheelbarrow out here, except for the office building. Rim & Bow was over on the north side and this was Western Wheelbarrow. The Cuttings owned both of them. Tom Cutting owned Western Wheelbarrow and Brian Cutting owned Rim & Bow.

DM: At one time, they didn't use all of the buildings and some of the buildings down here that they had used as warehouses, they had a circus that wintered in there every year. Elephants, lions, tigers.

BB: How long did they winter? Three months?

DM: Probably.

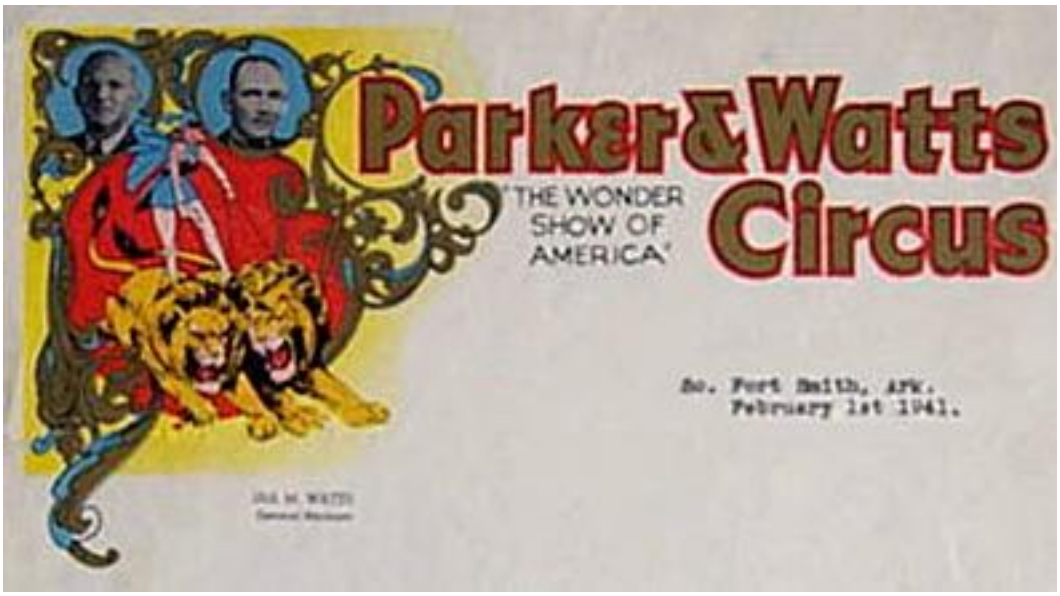
BB: How many years did they winter there?

DM: I don't know.

BB: When did they winter there?

DM: In the '40s.

BB: Do you remember what circus?



The letterhead here gives some evidence that the circus to which David Matlock is referring may have been the Parker & Watts Circus. It's dated "Fort Smith, Ark., February 1st, 1941." Photo courtesy of Joe Wasson

DM: No, I don't. When they would empty a box car here and had to move it, they would go get one of the elephants and move the empty box car. That would give the elephant exercise. I can remember that.

BB: You were born in 1937?

DM: 1933.

BB: (To Carol Matlock). How old are you?

CM: I'm 66. I didn't come here until I was in seventh grade. My daddy was in the military. He was in the Korean War.

BB: When did you go to work at the Coffin Company?

DM: When I was in high school, I'd work there in the summertime. I couldn't work around the machinery because of the labor laws, but I could work in the plant. The first job I had out there was loading lumber.

CM: They had a machine out there that would cut the knot holes out of the wood, then plug them. It would cut them out then make a plug that was the right size and put it in it.

DM: It wasn't an automatic thing. Cypress and pine both have a tendency to have loose knots in lumber. It would just cut a perfect hole around the knot, then they already would have cut a plug to fit that. Then they would hammer it in. Then when they would run it throught the mill, it would be planed off smooth. You didn't lose the wood and you didn't lose the knot.

BB: How long did you load lumber?

DM: That summer. They sorted by lengths.

BB: After that?

DM: The only place I didn't work was the sewing room.

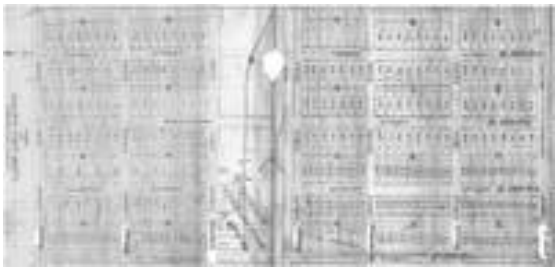
DM: I worked in the cloth room with the caskets to make sure all the linings were tacked in right. Some of the guys could chew tobacco and spit tacks and never get any soil on the material. ... They had a tack hammer and they would keep the tobacco over on this side (points to cheek) and the tacks on this side (points to other cheek). They had them in their mouth, silver tacks so there was no rust. That was before the days of air tackers. You would use a tack hammer and the head was curved right there (gesture) and magnetized. You could pick up a tack with the head. It was unbelievable how fast those guys could get so they could handle a tack hammer and the tacks and keep the tobacco juice separate.

BB: How many employees did the coffin company employ?

DM: This right here (gestures to photo) is about 45. When the plant closed, I think we had about 28, counting the office workers. We had one office girl. I was in and out, Mr. Garner was in and out and Joe **[Gemel Jr.???]** was there. He was secretary/treasurer until the plant closed.

BB: How long was it in operation?

DM: I don't know but it was in business when my grandad went to work for them. He went to work for them as a bookkeeper in 1907. He taught school. He taught in Statler, Evansville and a lot in Crawford County. I've got copies of his old teacher's contracts. They paid him $35 a month for a common school. ... The old Carnall School was a common school. That's where the Carnall 4-H meets now.



Map of Southtown

BB: Where was the school in Southtown?

DM: Right there at the corner of 31st and Tulsa. ... You know why that road curves out there. That's where the street car line came out. You go clear down to where Reed's Drive-in is. That's another curve. It went right straight down what we call Old Jenny Lind Road now. The trolley track came out 21st Street and there used to be a racetrack where Ramsey School is now.

BB: It was the fairgrounds back in the day, too.

DM: When I was in high school, they raced midget racers out there. Then they raced stock cars on it. The trolley tracks went down Old Jenny Lind Road, cross Phoenix. They called it Mill Creek Road, made the turn out there by Reed's then by Southtown School where it made that turn. It dead-ended before the railroad tracks. It never crossed the railroad tracks at the Coffin Co.

BB: That was the end of the line?

DM: That was the end of the line.

BB: How appropriate. (Laughter) Making coffins at the end of the line.

DM: My dad said that when the trolley car would come out there. The trolley man would have to get off and he'd pull what they called 'the stinger.' It made contact with the trolley line. They'd tie it down and they'd go turn it loose at the other end to make contact. Instead of turning around, it'd run backwards going back into town. He said the trolley man would get up there and get ready to move out and the kids would run by and jerk that thing off of the hot line. The trolley man would have to get out and hook it back up. He said the trolley man would pick up rocks and throw them at the kids.

BB: Do you remember the bar or beer garden that used to be where the intersection of Fresno and Towson is today?

DM: Yeah, Rainbow Gardens. I think that's what they called it. It was just a joint. They probably served beer and maybe had sandwiches.

BB: Was it a rough joint?

DM: On Saturday night, most any of them could be rough.

CM: It wasn't your yuppie place of business. There weren't any at that time. They were either one of the few upscale places or they were joints.

BB: Were there any bars or liquor stores in Southtown?

DM: I don't ever remember one being in Southtown. ... At one time, Dad said Cliff Drive was the city limits line. Then they extended into what we now call Phoenix. Then they extended it to Zero Street back in the 1940s. In the '40s, they called it Chaffee Road.

BB: Do you remember any of the old street names?

DM: Oh, yeah. Fishback, Falconer. There used to be a freight depot in Southtown, too.

BB: Do you remember what railroad?

DM: We shipped a lot on the Missouri Pacific, but Frisco and KCS were the main lines in Fort Smith. ... Mr. Bell was the agent. What fascinated me, he had a telegraph key and he had a Prince Albert can that he had squished down and put down on that key. I couldn't understand it. I'd walk in the office and I'd think, 'What in the world is that can on that key for.' Well, if he was back in the warehouse trying to sort freight and move stuff around and he got a call, it would just click. But if he had that can on it, it would echo. He'd hear and come running up out of the warehouse and pick and respond that he was ready to take the message. I thought it was kind of neat and innovative that he had that much ingenuity.

BB: So, your grandfather went to work for the coffin company in 1907?

DM: That's what I remember.

BB: So, when did he buy the business?

DM: I don't know. ... Apparently he had a couple of silent partners who saw that he could make it work. There is some old stationary that's got names on it that I don't recognize. That's got to have been the silent partners.

BB: Did it ever change its name to casket company.

DM: Yeah, they changed it about the time that we married. It sounded more up-to-date to call it the coffin company. Texas Coffin Co. in Texas kept their name until they closed. We were the last company in Arkansas to close our doors. There was one in Texarkana, two in Fordyce, two in Little Rock, one in Pine Bluff and one in Van Buren and one in West Memphis. We were the last one to close the doors.

BB: Why did all those companies close?

DM: Probably the same reason we did. We had a cash flow problem and couldn't overcome it.

...

DM: We were competitive. It just got to the point that it cost so much to operate and our cash flow got (bad).

BB: The big competitors, where were they?

DM: Batesville, I guess is the biggest. They were the largest manufacturer of sealer type caskets. ... Batesville, Indiana, not Batesville, Arkansas.

DM: Did you know there is a steam whistle down at the museum that came from the Arkansas Casket Company?

BB: In the Museum of History?

DM: For years, before we got on a time clock, whoever fired the boiler had a railroad watch and at five minutes to eight in the morning he'd blow the whistle and that meant you had five minutes to get on the job. At eight, he blew it again. That whistle was powered by steam from the boiler. That whistle came off a steam boat that as the story goes, the Indians scuttled it and stole everything off it they could steal. But, I don't know how we ended up with the whistle. They scuttled it there just below Belle Point. I can't document it but that's been the story. They blew it at noon and everyone quit work and went to lunch. At 12:40, they blew it to go back to work at 12:45. That put them off at 4:45 in the evening. That gave them a 15 minute head start on everyone that got off at 5:00.

Referring to some photos:

DM: You see that water tower. I don't know if it was there when the wood building was but that water tower was hooked into a sprinkler system. They may have been hooked up with this (brick) building.

BB: When was the north building built?

DM: I'm guessing about 1915. ... It looked just like this when I was born. (pointing to the fully brick structure pictured in the photos).

BB: The offices?

DM: They were in this building here. (north building)

BB: First floor?

DM: First floor.

BB: Cabinet room?

DM: That's on the second floor.

BB: Cloth covering department?

DM: Second floor.

BB: Sewing room?

DM: Second floor.

BB: What about the third floor?

DM: Third floor was used to store hardware and paint finishing department was on the thrid floor. The whole third floor of the north building was what we called the 'roll room.' We had racks in there and we kept all kinds of casket in stock. Somebody would call and say, 'I need such and such.' It was probably in stock on the third floor.

BB: How much of an overstock did you keep on hand? How many would it hold?

DM: There was a row three-high that would run all the way from the elevator shaft. ... We used to buy sheet steel and we would make all the cuts and bends in it and fold it. We bought from three different companies. They didn't do any finish work. They just did coffin shells. We got so the only assembly work we did was to custom build one, oversize.

What followed was an extended conversation explaining some the terminology of the casket trade and coffin manufacturing.

DM: When I started traveling in Missouri in 1958, the guy who had traveled up there before me went up there by bus and train. Can you imagine. He might call on one or two places a day and that'd be it.

BB: You didn't make the hardware did you.

DM: No, there were a lot of companies that specialized in that.

BB: The people who worked there, did they come and go or were they there for 30 years?

CM: It was families, fathers and sons. The Hastings Brothers.

DM: We had Billy Vaughn. His dad fired the boiler out there for years. He got to where he couldn't do it and retired. Leonard McDonald in the mill room, his dad fired the boiler for years. Leonard worked there and ended up being the mill room foreman.

CM: Was he the preacher?

DM: No, that was Louis. Louis Kramp was the metal room foreman where we did all the metal assembly. He ran a little Bible church over in McCurtain called Shiloh Bible Mission or something like that. The story was Louis worked for the Chicago Coffin Company in Chicago, Ill. When he was a kid, he drove a beer truck for Al Capone. He said he saw the light and the wrongness of his ways and that Al Capone wasn't nothing but a thug. He really got religion. When Frank Nitti was killed in one of those raids up there, Louis said he made Frank Nitti's casket. That was kind of a history, you know. He could do anything. He made all the gutters that are on this house. There's transition pipes out there that come out square, make a turn and go into a round pipe. He did all of that. He was really a good metal man. He knew metal. He really did. All of the machinery in the mill had dust collector pipes. They blew sawdust into a container, like a big closet. Every time they had to move a piece of machinery or replace a piece of machinery, we had to make dust collector pipe. Louis just made it. When we had to make oversize caskets, he'd sit down with a regular sized casket and do some calculations. He'd say you cut this piece this size and that piece that size. He just made it.

CM: (Referring to David Matlock) Most of them, they saw him grow up. When I got married to him, everyone was talking about 'Buddy.' I asked who buddy was. They said, 'Well, that's 'Buddy.' (pointing to David Matlock) Buddy started out in high school loading lumber and to everyone he was just buddy. They were all like family.

BB: Bedell (Hightower) said there was a sandlot baseball field out there behind the Coffin Company. Did you play out there?

DM: Yeah, but I wasn't very good so they put me way out there in the field. (laughter) There used to be little church there back in where Elkins is now. Elkins bought the Casket building.

BB: What do they use it for?

DM: Warehouse.

CM: We would have to go in at night sometimes to get something out for somebody. You could turn on the intercom and you could swear someone was walking around up there. The building moved all the time.

BB: No one was ever killed there were they?

DM: No, it's just kind of eerie. A lot of times, I'd come in at the end of the week. I'd come in the office to do some order writing up when I'd come in off the road. ... I'd sit there in the office and more than once out of curiosity, I'd reach out and turn on the intercom to the third floor. More than once I'd take a flashlight and go back through the plant, go up the back stairs. I'd just know someone was up there walking on that third floor. They couldn't be but it sounded like it. It sounded just like someone walking in that plant at night. It's more than interesting. It's weird! And I knew that plant.

CM: Some of the black funeral homes. They didn't have show rooms, so they'd bring the families up there and go through their show room.

...

BB: Where did you live when you were growing up?

DM: This house was built in 1950.

CM: But you first lived down there where the gas well is now.

DM: When they built Chaffee, they moved a lot of houses that were out there. This came off land over there by the edge of Lavaca.

BB: That house is gone now?

DM: Yeah, it's gone.

BB: Where did you go to school?

DM: Northside and Peabody.

BB: You didn't go to school in Southtown?

DM: No, we lived at 2204 Greenwood until I was 12. You know where Ballman School is? That used to be a dairy. When I lived on South Greenwood, the old man's name was Belzung. Belzung Dairy.

CM: They bought this land here, 72 acres. That 35th Street, I've got a gas bill that says 'Matlock Lane.' That wasn't a road there. The city limits stopped there. This wasn't in the city. The school down there (Raymond Orr Elementary School) purchased five acres from Mr. Matlock. ... They wanted to call this school 'Matlock' and he didn't want them to.

BB: Why?

CM: He was just not a public person and he didn't want them to.

Discussion of Raymond Orr and the Athletic Smelting and Mining Company followed.

DM: The smoke from the smelter would settle on the ground. When dew would form, whatever was in that would settle out and form a poison. You could not raise a horse in this area. You couldn't even use the hay.

BB: They would die.

DM: No, it would affect their joints and stunt their growth. Their joints would swell and get stiff joints just like arthiritis. We lost a horse. We had a pond that was down where the Rehab hospital is, like a nursing home (Covington Court). We lost a horse in there. She got down and couldn't get up, in shallow water. She drowned. It didn't seem to affect the cows and it didn't seem to affect the milk.

BB: You don't know what the emission was?

DM: I don't know what it was called.

BB: What do you remember about the Southtown neighborhood? Would they eat their lunches there in the building?

DM: Most of them did. There was a little cafe that's in Southtown now that does a good noon business. Years ago, there were two little stores in South Fort Smith. Doc Jones had one and right across the street was J.C. Scott. Everyone either worked for Mr. Scott, the Coffin Company or Western Wheelbarrow. You could go in there and they'd make you a sandwich. Doc Jones or Scott's, either one would make sandwiches.

BB: Bedell said Mr. Scott, Mr. Jones and Mr. Bell were sort of the unofficial mayors of Southtown. Is that right?

DM: Yeah, they knew everyone in Southtown, who to trust and who not to trust. Mr. Scott, I remember we had a Model A pickup and Mr. Scott had an old glass gas pump. You'd pump it into the top and you'd watch that. ... When it was full it'd hold 10 gallons.

...

BB: If I read off these names (identifications on photo), you probably wouldn't know anything about them?

DM: Well, Bill Matlock, I think that was one of Sid's boys. Sid was my great-uncle. Jesse David Matlock was my grandfather and my Dad was J.D. Junior. Pence Holmes made

boxes. That's what he did all day long. We shipped 'em in wood boxes. My dad said Pence wore the handle out on a hammer. Instead of being square the head was worn off from just the way he hit the nail. He just wore his thumb into the handle. It was like it was made to fit his hand. My grandad bought him a new hammer and told him to hang that one up. It was a trophy. (Laughter) I guess he did. No one knows what happened to it. Dave Cox, there were a lot of those Cox boys that worked there. Dave worked up in the cabinet room. Ed Norton worked up in the cabinet room.

BB: What was the cabinet room?

DM: That's where they put all the pieces together. We called it an "octagon" because we've got two straight sides, then we've got three pieces on each end. That's just the tub. They put all that together. Here's one guy who's doing nothing but put the tubs together and another who's putting the top rail and caps together. Then, there's another fellow who assembles them as the orders come in. He'll pick this tub and this rail and this cap and put them all together and hinge them and make sure it all fits. Then, when it's all fixed and ready to be covered or lined, then it goes on into cloth room.

BB: But all the caskets start in the cabinet room?

DM: Well, all those pieces are made down in the mill. Mill was on the first floor.

BB: This was before you started getting the pieces from outside?

DM: No, we always made them right there. We made the pieces.

BB: I thought you had said...

DM: We were buying metal caskets.

BB: Oh, so all the wood work was done there up until the last day?

DM: Up until the last day, right.

DM: We had a big planer that could take a 24-inch board. Of course, the boards were not that wide, but it could handle a 24-inch board. When it came into the plant, one side was skinned to smooth it. Then it was cut to length and width. Then it went through a molder. The molder cuts a design in the side of that wood. ... They'd run a whole stack of rails one shape, then another another shape. ... Then they nail all that together so it's ready to sit on the casket, the tube. If that all fits then hinge this half and put the catches on the front of it. Then it's ready be covered with cloth. ... Almost every year we would have school kids come out and go through the plant because it's unique. Not everyone gets to see how a casket or coffin is made. It would be just as interesting to me to go through a furniture factory.

BB: How wide geographically was your customer base?

DM: When I started traveling in 1958, we sold in six states: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas, Missouri and Kansas. I traveled Missouri and Kansas, got as far as Wichita, then Topeka, Leavenworth and Atchison. Then just south of Kansas City. There were two casket factories in Kansas City. South of Kansas City and over to Lebanon and Springfield in the southwest corner of Missouri.

BB: You traveled all six states?

DM: No, just Kansas and Missouri. We had a warehouse in Fort Worth and we had two guys that worked out of that warehouse. One who was the warehouse manager. Mr. Garner, who was my dad's brother-in-law, traveled Arkansas and part of Oklahoma. Then we had another guy who traveled north and west and some of south Oklahoma.

BB: What were the golden years in terms of profits and sales?

DM: I don't know. The plant made it through the Depression so that must have been pretty good.

BB: The downhill slope toward closing, when did that begin?

DM: Probably early to middle 1980s. The plant closed in 1989.

BB: What did you do after that?

DM: I worked for Wal-Mart for a year as a department manager, then I struck out on my own with a snack vending business for 11 years.

BB: Which business do you miss most?

DM: Both of them because you make a lot of friends. I made a lot of friends in the funeral business and a lot in the snack vending business. Both of them, you've got to have good service. Any number of times, I'd get a call at 10 o'clock at night and they'd say, 'I need such and such. Have you got it?' I'd run down to the plant and if it was in stock, I'd call 'em and ask if they wanted me to bring it to them or if they'd come get it. More than once, I'd meet 'em half way and I'd put it in the station wagon. ... We made an oversize casket. Funeral home in Chickasha, they were a good account. They bought wood caskets from us because our wood caskets were cypress. Cypress is called 'the wood eternal.'

BB: Why's that?

DM: Cypress won't rot. Termites don't like it and it won't rot. It has an oil in it. We made an oversize casket for Chickasha. We made the casket and the box it went in. It wouldn't have gone in a concrete or steel vault it was so big. Somewhere there is a picture of three of us standing in the box side by side. This guy was so big that they could not get the casket in the funeral home. They set it up in the garage.

BB: Fat?

DM: Big Indian, he was so big his ear lobes touched his shoulders. He was diabetic. They said his mother was as big as he was. He died. He was about six feet tall. I took that casket over there. ... All oversized big caskets we made we put metal straps under the bottom. The hardware, instead of screws we used bolts and the bolts went through that metal strap for more support. I said, 'How much does this guy weigh?' He said he didn't know. I said, 'Well, just for safety you might have the pallbearers put two-by-fours under it to pick it up.' He said, 'We're not even going to have pallbearers pick it up?' I said, 'You're not?' He said, 'No, we're going to use a backhoe.' They had a sling that come up to a common point and they picked the casket up and put it in the bed of flat-bed truck. They had a backhoe at the cemetery to set it in the grave. He said they had to hire one for the cemetery and one for the funeral home. Most cemeteries now have a rule that you've got to have a concrete box or vault because if the grave caves in they've got to keep filling it. I said, 'Your cemetery have a concrete box or a vault rule?' He said, 'Yeah, we're going to put the box in then put the casket in the box, then pour two yards of concrete in on top of it.' he said the box is going to form the form for a concrete box and that would keep it from sinking in. They were going to put reinforced wire over the box.

BB: Did most of the people who worked at the Coffin Company live in Southtown?

DM: We had about five who would drive in from McCurtain every day. We had some that lived down toward Hackett and Hartford. A couple who lived out on Rye Hill. One fellow lived up at Chester. That's in my period.

BB: Do you know where the sorghum plant was?

DM: You know that big vacant lot that's just across from Wal-Mart with the big water tower. That's where the sorghum mill was.

BB: I read that was the largest sorghum plant in the world, according to the newspaper.

DM: It would stink. It had a musty odor. I remember that.

BB: How did they bring the sorghum in?

DM: Trucks and wagons.

...

DM: When the sorghum mill shut down it became the bonded warehouse. Donnie Green was the manager of that at one time. He runs the warehouse out there for Whirlpool now. He's been into everything.

BB: In terms of amusement, do you know what people did in Southtown? Bedell said they would go into the city or they'd go to each other's houses and play cards.

DM: Yeah.

BB: He said people who would steal stuff in Fort Smith and hide out in Southtown.

DM: I'd heard that but I don't know that for a fact.

BB: He also said he used to witness groups of boys from Southtown fighting with boys from Fort Smith in the vacant lot behind the casket company.

DM: Yeah. I never saw one but I'd heard that. They called the kids the Southtown Scorpions. That's what I remember. It was the same bunch that played ball.

BB: That wasn't the team name was it?

DM: It might have been.

BB: Was there some sort of rivalry?

DM: Probably was. My dad said that in World War I, the Army would bivouac down there north of where the Southtown School was. ... There was a rifle pit. When I was a kid, I'd dig copper-jacketed bullets out of that clay bank where they'd shoot into it. They'd set targets up and that was the back berm. It was right off of 31st about a block and a half north of Phoenix. ... There was a guy named Mapes or Maples out there who had a goat dairy. It was right at the end of 31st where Zero is. He had a goat farm. I used to go down and watch him. He had a lot of goats that he'd milk. We had a couple of jersey cows that I had to milk and I thought that was funny to watch him milk those goats from behind because there's only two teats on a goat. A cow's got four.

BB: Anything else odd that you remember?

DM: Most of the Southtown kids used to sneak off and go fishing, a smelter pond. It was right where the Rheem plant is. The smelter didn't seem to bother the fish. We would catch brim out of there as big as your hand. Biggest old water moccasins you ever saw. Lots of kids spent a lot time over there by that old pond.

BB: Well, thank you.

All the Arkansas Coffin Company photos appear here courtesy of David Matlock.

Marquardt's Ghost Returns Christmas

Negroes Living on Wheeler Avenue Tell Grewsome Stories of a Mysterious Visitor

The colony of negroes living near the old brick store on Wheeler Avenue used by L.M. Alford as a storeroom, did not enjoy their Christmas with as much freedom from care as those living in other parts of town. They are disturbed by a ghost, which they say visits the locality each Christmas night.

Thirteen years ago Richard Marquardt, a prominent grocer who was the owner of the building, committed suicide and it is his ghost that the negroes say roams in their midst when all should be making merry.

Shortly after the suicide of Marquardt, these negroes became disturbed by the ghost which they claim made nightly visits. Their fears were finally allayed when it was only at intervals of several months that they would report seeing the morbid creature moving about; entering doors with a gust of wind; rattling upon window panes; overturning furniture; fanning smouldering fire into flame and otherwise performing uncanny feats which made them pull the cover over their heads and spend a night of torture.

This ghost, according to some who have claimed to have seen it, was deformed, being very short in stature. Instead of legs, it walked upon wooden pegs, which made a loud noise as it passed to and fro over a wooden surface. The ghost always carried a stick, and although it never approached anyone, would constantly whisper: "I am Marquardt. I am Marquardt" which was audible to people several blocks away.

The visits of the illusion became less frequent as the years passed until now the negroes only see it once a year and some of the more hardened and less superstitious ones are growing out of the habit of responding with fear to the annual inspection of the spirit.

Richard Marquardt was a prosperous grocer of Fort Smith before his suicide which took place [Dec. 31, 1890]. He was a German, very popular with both the young and old, always making his sunny disposition felt by everyone and never failing to be the first in making a contribution for charity.

Soon after his arrival in this country, the firm of Marquardt & Zellar was organized at Paris, Ark., a grocery store started at that place. They prospered and in the early '80s opened another store in Fort Smith. Each member of the firm alternating in taking charge of the different store, spending six months at each place. The firm disbanded in 1888 and Mr. Zellar took the property at Paris, and Mr. Marquardt the Fort Smith investments. Mr. Marquardt moved his store from where the Wells Fargo Express Co. is now located to the building in which Hambric conducts his secondhand store. Here he continued to prosper and was persuaded by a man of the name of Miller to erect the

Wheeler Avenue store, Miller agreeing to rent the building when it was completed. This Miller failed to do and Marquardt conducted a branch store there until the time of his suicide.

One morning in [December 1890], Mr. Marquardt was walking about his store discussing daily orders. Ben Meister and I.J. Rains, employees of the store, were standing near the desk and Paul Lorwein, another clerk, was behind the counter. Suddenly, Marquardt became violently insane and grabbing a long cheese knife made for the men. Meister and Rains ran out a side door and the maniac turned his attention to Lorwein, who had not witnessed the assault upon the other, was taken unawares. The long knife made a steep gash in Lorwein's wrist as he threw up his arm to ward the blow. Seeing the blood, Marquardt did not renew the attack but ran out of the store chasing everyone in sight. Charlie Sengel, since deceased, passing in front of the Elevator office, and seeing Marquardt coming at him, stepped inside of a saloon, where the Munder saloon is now. The insane man followed Sengel inside and rushing at him, split his hat brim and scratched his face with wild sweep of the knife. Marquardt then was overpowered and taken to the city jail, where a few hours later he tore a blanket into shreds and fastened the gone end of the improvised rope, made from the remnants of the blanket, around his neck, and the other to a top bunk, climbed into the bunk and rolled off, dying from strangulation.

It has always been the theory of the three who knew Marquardt that he recovered his mind and seeing the blood upon him, a faint recollection of the events was recalled, and thinking that he had killed someone, took his own life rather than face his friends.

This is the theory which caused the negroes to believe that the spirit of Marquardt roams about his losing venture on Wheeler Avenue on the night of the anniversary of the birth of Christ.

This article appeared on page 3 of the Fort Smith News Record, Dec. 27, 1903. Although I have been very true to the text in copying it, I have corrected a couple of errors. The author spells the name "Marquadt" but Oak Cemetery records and earlier article give it as "Marquardt." I chose the latter spelling. The other substanial error is the date of the Marquardt's arrest and death. Although the second paragraph says those events took place 13 years before the writing, in subsequent paragraphs the writer gives the time as January 1901. I've doublechecked this and changed the text accordingly. Also, the original gives Marquardt's partner's name variously as "ellar" and "Zellar." I assume the former is a typographical error omitting the "Z." The original 1891 account of these events differs somewhat from the account given here. Click here to read more. (CHECK ON THIS)

Be Careful What You Say

In early 20th century Fort Smith, two people made remarks that were in light of later events unfortunate and ill-timed. Some might even say they brought bad luck.

During a meeting of the city council in May 1911, Isaac Samuel Lowery, an alderman opposed a city ordinance along with three others on the panel. The ordinance called for the city to purchase of an additional 10 acres near Oak Cemetery for the expansion of the "colored burial spaces." Alderman Lowrey voted "no" along with his three colleagues on the council. The ordinance passed with Mayor Johnston casting a tie-breaking vote. In his vote, Lowrey stated that he had no personal interest in Oak Cemetery other than any good citizen ought to have. Days later, he was dead and buried in Oak Cemetery.

The circumstances of his death from a gunshot wound are somewhat mysterious. At first, his death was believed to be a suicide, but he left no known note and his family contended it was an accident shooting. Lowrey's demeanor on the day of his death was genial. He "mingled in business affairs" downtown, played pool at the Hotel Main with some friends, test drove an automobile and returned to his home at 1100 S. 13th St. at about 6 p.m. He greeted his wife and daughter who were on their way out of the house to visit a neighbor. Lowrey proceeded upstairs and before the women got far, they heard a gunshot and returned to the house. On entering the smelled gunpowder and went to the master bedroom, there the two found Lowrey on the floor dead with "a bullet hole through the head from right to left and just back of the temple and a heavy calibre Colt revolver lying near."

J.F. Lowrey, brother of the dead alderman, theorized that Lowrey was changing clothes and putting a suit of clothes into a dresser drawer in which the revolver was kept. The bullet that passed through Lowrey's head exited an open window that was in the line of fire. The brother said he and the rest of the family thought he had picked up the revolver while putting away his clothes and it had accidentally discharged. They said the track of the bullet shows that he must have been on his knees when it was discharged.

In another case of accidental death, Bessie Johnson, 17, of Fort Smith also uttered some fateful words regarding a cemetery shortly before her own demise. On her way to a camping trip with friends, her mother told her to be careful. She replied, "I've already been out to Forest Park and selected my place." Within hours she was dead and within days she was buried in Forest Park.

Although less mysterious than Lowrey's, the circumstances of Bessie Johnson's demise were no less tragic. Along with her friend, Margaret Brooks, Bessie joined 20 other young men and women and some adult chaperones on June 3, 1914, near a bridge at Cedars, a "small station near Spiro" along the Poteau River. Johnson, Brooks and two male friends, Winn McCann and Clifford Slack of Spiro, decided to wade into the river to look for shells. At some point in the hunt, Johnson slipped and disappeared under the surface of the river. Brooks also slipped but was quickly grabbed by one of the boys. All

the teenagers had trouble with the strong current and although they tried to find Johnson and help her, they ultimately had to be rescued themselves but one of the adults in the party. A search party found Johnson's body shortly after midnight only 30 yards from the place where she went under. She was buried on the following Sunday.

Fort Smith's First Flight

Author's Note: This article first appeared in the *Times Record* newspaper in 2003. I've added a few facts that weren't in it and may add more in the future as I learn more about Bud Mars. *By Ben Boulden*

They didn't have an airfield or a control tower. Until just a few days before, they didn't even have an assembled airplane.

Nevertheless, the citizens of Fort Smith in May 1910 were determined to see a plane fly and pilot James C. "Bud" Mars was planning to show them one.

On May 17, 1910, a Curtiss biplane arrived at the train depot in Fort Smith in three boxes and was transported to Electric Park (present-day Kay Rodgers Park) where crowds gathered to observe the mechanics as they put it all together. Once it was assembled, Mars spun the propellor to jumpstart the motor while four men held the plane down to keep it from breaking away.

According to the Southwest American newspaper, Mars tested the aircraft for the first time and "a few friends, invited guests and newspaper men" were privileged to witness the flight of an airplane in Fort Smith for the first time on May 18, 1910.

It wasn't too dramatic at first as Mars and his biplane "went skimming over the ground but high enough to see daylight between the wheels of the craft and the skyline," according to the American.

Both the American and the Fort Smith Times Record described it as not only a first for the city but a first for Arkansas as well.

The first flight occurred not at Electric Park where the flying machine was assembled but at the nearby Fort Smith Country Club.

Mars' public exhibition of the biplane, sponsored by the Fort Smith Light and Traction Co., was held May 21 at League Park, the baseball field next to Electric Park.

May 21 also was the birthdate of the biplane's creator, Glenn H. Curtiss, and the anniversary of Curtiss? first flight.

Lynn Bauter, formerly Curtiss' mechanic, was on hand to explain the unfamiliar machine to the public.

Mars made two successful flights at an altitude of 75 feet.

The American said, "The spectacle of witnessing a man flying in the air with the ease of a bird was indeed thrilling to the spectators.

"Two circular flights were made in a half-mile circuit which gives Mars a world record for making an accurate flight in a circuit of one-half mile, as all previous flights have been made in not less than one mile circuits."

Before he took off, Mars' wife broke a bottle of wine on the engine of the machine saying, "I christen the Skylark; may she fly long and high."

In the next day's exhibition flights, the Skylark improved on its performance, reaching an altitude of more than 200 feet and a speed of 40 mph. Mars' maneuvers took the plane over the park and surrounding fields as well as the trolley line in a flight lasting more than 10 minutes.

Although the following day's exhibition was canceled, the Times Record estimated that a majority of the city's residents had journeyed to the park to observe the first manned flights in Arkansas on May 21 and May 22. A scheduled exhibition flight on May 23 was canceled.

Only a few weeks later, on June 9, 1910, Mars crashed the Skylark in Topeka, Kan., at another exhibition. He survived the crash and after being reassembled and repaired so did the biplane.

Mars went on to participate in aviation meets and exhibitions throughout the United States and Asia. According to one report, he was the first man to fly an airplane in the

Philippines, taking to the air in that island country during a Mardi Gras or Carnivale celebration in 1911. He went there after being forbidden to fly his plane in Hong Kong.

He was one of the first eight licensed pilots in the United States and was taught to fly by Curtiss.

Mars died on July 25, 1944, in Los Angeles of a heart ailment. He was 68.

Radio Center Images

All photos on this page appear here courtesy of Carl Riggins. Carl worked in the building in the 1960s and 1980s. Years ago, he snagged a booklet from a stack of them that were being thrown out at the Radio Center. It documented the renovation of the building in 1947. The images here were scanned from it. For some reason, they and the text were printed using blue ink. We have color-corrected for that, displaying them here in the B&W in which they probably were taken.

Radio Center exterior as it appeared in 1947.

Farm/News studios on the second floor.

The Control Room at Radio Center.

The auditorium on the second floor.

Carl Riggins in the early 1960s.

The first floor foyer at Radio Center.

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The old Opera House once stood on Garrison Avenue opposite the Radio Center.

Demolition of Radio Center, April 25, 2004.

National Register of Historic Places, Fort Smith listings

Atkinson-Williams Warehouse, 320 Rogers Ave., 1906 commercial structure, 12/12/1979

Belle Grove Historic District, bounded by N. 4th, N. 9th, N. B and N. H Sts., 1865-1920 residential district, 07/16/73.

Bonneville House, 318 N. 7th St., 1880 Italianate house, 09/22/71.

C.R. Breckinridge House, 504 N. 16th St., 1903 home of Arkansas politician and minister to Russia, 08/07/79.

Christ the King Church, Greenwood and S. S St., 1930 Charles L. Thompson Spanish Mission design, 12/22/82.

W.H.H. Clayton House, 514 N. 6th St., ca. 1880 home of frontier prosecutor, 09/04/70.

Commercial Hotel, 123 N. 1st St., 1899 hotel, 05/07/73.

Ferguson-Calderara House, 214 N. 14th St., Classically detailed 1904 home of lumberman, 12/11/79.

Fort Smith National Historic Site, 301 Parker Ave., 1817-24, frontier fort established to keep peace among Indian tribes, site of "hanging judge" Isaac C. Parkers's court. Fort Smith National Historic Site is a National Historic Landmark, NR listed, 03/07/86. NHL listed 12/19/60.

Joseph Knoble Brewery, N. 3rd and E Sts., 1851 brewery building, 03/24/72.

Angus McLeod House, 912 N. 13th St., 1905 Neoclassical residence, 12/08/78.

William J. Murphy House, 923 N. 13th St., ca. 1895, Colonial Revival house, 08/07/79.

Horace Franklin Rogers House, 2900 Rogers Ave., 1904 home of a prominent citizen, 05/02/79.

Tillman Shaw House, 500 S. 19th St., 1909 house with Spanish Colonial, Prairie and Colonial Revival details, 05/16/88.

James Sparks House, 206 N. 14th St., ca. 1887, Romanesque architecture, 09/14/72.

West Garrison Ave. Historic District, bounded roughly by 13th St., N. B St., 1st Street and Parker Avenue, 1870-1950 commercial district, 04/26/79.

Fort Smith Masonic Temple, 200 N. 11th St., 1927 Art Deco structure with Egyptian Revival interior, 11/20/92.

Sebastian County Courthouse/Fort Smith City Hall, 100 S. 6th St., 1937 structure designed in Art Deco variation, 06/08/93.

Birney Safety Streetcar #224, housed at 100 S. 4th St., restored 1926 trolley car, 05/19/94.

Oak Cemetery, SE of intersection of Greenwood and Dodson avenues, city cemetery with burials dating to 1853, 06/02/95.

Fort Smith Confederate Monument, Sixth St. and Rogers Ave., 1903 commemorative sculpture, 04/26/96.

Spirit of the American Doughboy Monument, 4901 Midland Blvd., 1930 World War I commemorative monument, 05/23/97.

Fort Smith National Cemetery, 522 Garland Ave., 1867 military cemetery, 05/22/99.

William Ayers House, 820 N. 12th St., 1888 Queen Anne-Eastlake House, 07/88/99.

New Theatre, 9 N. 10th St., 1911 Beaux-Arts building, 11/18/99.

Fort Smith Post Office and Courthouse, 30 S. 6th St., 1937 Classical Revival-style federal building, 12/13/99.

John “Jack” Wiseman Arnold

John “Jack” Wiseman Arnold, 71, of Fort Smith passed away Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005, in his home. He was born in Kansas City, Mo., and reared in Fort Smith. He served as president of the Fort Smith Historical Society (2003-2004) and president-elect of the Heritage Foundation of Fort Smith in 2002.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Clarence “Tex” Singleton and Eufalia Love Arnold.

Jack graduated from UALR in 1965, and held many offices as a member of the Chamber of Commerce while living in North Little Rock.

Jack served as past department commander of the American Legion Department of Arkansas (2001-2002) and commander of the American Legion Post No. 31 of Fort Smith (1999-2001) of which he was a life member. He served as the Department o Americanism chairman of the American Legion Baseball, Boys State chairman, and volunteered at the Fort Smith Veterans Administration since its opening in September 2000. Jack was appointed by Gov. Mike Huckabee to the Arkansas Athletic Commission in1999 and served as its 2001-2003 chairman. He was a board member of the Fort Smith National Expansion commission, a member of the Arkansas Veterans Coalition, a member of the Sebastian County Veterans Coalition, and a member of the Avenue of Flags committee, Fort Smith National Cemetery. On July 15, 2005, at the 87th State Convention the American Legion Department of Arkansas presented Jack with the Americanism Award and elected him as Arkansas Alternate Executive Committeeman.

Jack received one of Fort Smith’s highest awards, The Spirit of the Frontier, on Dec. 20, 2001, and the Mayor’s Award for Patriotism on July 3, 2001. Fort Smith Mayor Ray Baker proclaimed Aug. 12, 2992, as Jack w. Arnold Day in the city, and named his Father of the Year on July 1, 2004.

He was past president of the Fort Smith Morning exchange Club, a member of the Fort Smith Boys and Girls Club Alumni Association, and a member of the Leadership Fort Smith class of 2003.

Jack was chairman-elect 2005-2006 of Crimestoppers of Fort Smith. Even though his illness left him unable to fulfill this obligation, his fellow bard members presented him with a plaque in recognition of and appreciation for his years as a member.

Jack retired after spending many years in building materials and furniture sales, and was a member of the St. John’s Episcopal Church. He is survived by his wife, Patty, (Patricia Ann Berg), of 46 years; two daughters, Lisa S. Thornton and Lori V. Burrows; a son, Stewart M. Arnold; six grandchildren; and one great-grandson, all of Fort Smith.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Legion Foundation; the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 102454, Atlanta, GA 30368; or Peachtree Hospice, 4300 Rogers Ave., Fort Smith, AR 72901.

To sign an online guest book visit www.edwardsfuneralhome.com.

Interview with Louis Lorenz

This is an interview with Louis Lorenz and his wife Ruth Lorenz at 2805 South Ionia, Fort Smith Arkansas. It was taped on Sunday, Feb. 12, 1978. Lorenz moved to Fort Smith in 1904 at the age of 23. He worked in the wagon factory on Wheeler Avenue for a period of 25 years. He retired in 1974 at the age of 93 from the Lorenz and Vaughn Truck Body Shop. The interviewer, Missy Carroll, represented the Fort Smith Historical Society.

MC: Do you remember the date of your birth and where you were born?

L: I was born March 31, 1881.

MC: Where were you born?

L: In Nebes, Austria, a long way from here. It later became a part of Czechoslovakia.

MC: Who were your parents? What was your mother's name?

L: Josephine. I don't know her other name.

MC: What was your father's name?

L: His name was Joseph Lorenz.

MC: When did you all come to America?

L: I was nine years old when I came here.

MC: Where did you live when you first came here?

L: Burlington, Iowa.

MC: Do you remember anything about your parents?

L: Well, I lived with my mother and father for a few years.

MC: What did your father do?

L: He was a common laborer in a railroad shop.

MC: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

L: I had an older sister, Mary.

MC: Did she come to America with them?

L: No, she remained in Austria. I came over by myself. My father died. My mother and stepfather came over here some time before I came. They came first and then I followed; then my parents went back and I remained here with my Aunt Emma and my Uncle.

MC: What is your wife's maiden name?

L: Ruth Ann Hansberger.

MC: Where did you meet her? In Iowa or here in Fort Smith?

L: Here in Fort Smith. She is a Fort Smith girl. I roomed with her mother. That is how I met her. (Laughter)

MC: (to Mrs. Lorenz) And what was your mother's maiden name?

RHL: Margaret Unold.

MC: What was your father's first name?

RHL: John Hansberger.

MC: Do you know anything about your grandparents, their names? Any information you could give us on that?

RHL: My paternal grandmother was Cordelia Eunice Thurston Hansberger Cheney here in Fort Smith. Her son, Dave Cheney, was my uncle.

MC: (to Mrs. Lorenz) Your mother ran a boarding house? He lived at the boarding house and that is how you met?

RHL: Yes

MC: Where was the boarding house?

RHL: 1122 South Tenth Street, on the corner of 10th and H. The old house is still there.

MC: Tell me a little bit about your courtship.

RHL: We went together about three or four years. I was somewhat younger than he. We didn't marry until I was almost 20.

MC: How old was he?

RHL: He was about 29. We were married Oct. 19, 1910.

MC: (to Mrs. Lorenz) What are your children's names?

RHL: My daughter is Margaret Pachl, and my two sons are Florian Lorenz and Louis Lorenz.

MC: (back to Mr. Lorenz) Did you go to work for the wagon factory when you first moved here?

L: Yes.

MC: Tell me what you did. What was your job there?

L: I was welding wagon tires. Some days I would weld 100 wagon tires. That's a lot of wagon tires. The average wagon tire was an inch and a half wide and about a half inch thick. That heats a lot of iron. I couldn't do that every day. I wasn't man enough for that, but some days I welded 100 tires.

MC: You put the tire on after the spokes and everything was made. In other words, you made the outer rim. What was the process of welding? How was that done?

L: Fire heated with coal. Toward the last few years we welded it with gas. We got the tires hot with gas. The gas made a hotter fire than coal.

MC: Was there a seal or was there an open end where the edges met? Once that rim was put on did you fuse the ends?

L: The tires were finished before they put on the wheels. A wagon tire began with a straight piece of iron, then bent in a circle and the two ends heated to a white heat and fused together by hammering. The tire was then pressed on the wooden rim of the wheel and shrunk to fit the rim tightly by a tire-setter (a hydraulic machine).

MC: Did they teach you how to do the welding when you went to work for them or is this something you already knew how to do?

L: No, I came from the Burg Wagon factory in Iowa. I tried to work at every different kind of work they gave me. As time went on, I just picked it up. When you're around something all the time you eventually learn how.

MC: Where was this in Iowa? Burlington?

L: Burlington, Iowa.

MC: Did they send you to Fort Smith to work with this wagon factory here, or did you just come on your own?

L: I was looking for something to do. I heard there was a new factory in Fort Smith so I came here. I asked for a job and I got one.

RHL: There were a whole lot of men who came, but most of them returned to Burlington. About three stayed.

MC: Were you the only one that did welding on these wheels or were there several other men that worked with the welding?

L: I did it all.

MC: You were the only one that welded.

L: On tires, yes, but there were lots of welding on wagons, but I did tires.

MC: Where was this wagon factory?

L: It was on Wheeler Avenue. You know where Mill Creek is? It was about a couple of blocks south of where Mill Creek crossed Wheeler Avenue. It was a big place.

MC: What were the names of the wagons? Was there a certain brand name?

L: Fort Smith Wagons.

RHL: It was later the John Deere Wagon Company with headquarters in Moline, Ill. John Deere bought the factory after it was started and they made wagons here. First ones were Fort Smith Wagons.

MC: Do you know anything about Ingle Wagon? Did you make Ingle Wagons?

L: They were made on Ninth Street or Tenth. The Ingle didn't last long. The big people always put the little fella out of business. It's worse today. The little fella gets put out of business by the big fella because the big has more to work with. Competition is too big for the little fella compared to the big fella. The Ingle Wagon Company made good wagons but they were just a little place compared to the Fort Smith Wagon Company. Fort Smith Wagon Company was a big place. They worked about a hundred men there, so you know it was a big place. The men were paid in gold. This type of payment changed though because men

complained of not getting the correct amount and also because of too many holdups. During World War I, they had an Army contract for fifty wagons per day.

MC: Was that wagon factory more than one building or were there several buildings? Was it one huge building?

L: It was three buildings. The main building was 100 feet wide and 400 feet long. There was a paint shop. The first building was where they manufactured stuff. That was where they made things out of wood and iron. They went from the main building to the paint shop, and there they got painted. The paint shop was 150 feet by 100 feet. From there they went to the shipping room or storage. They stored what they didn't sell right away. They had some made and they had to store them until they found some place to sell them.

MC: How did they ship a wagon? Did they hire somebody to drive it where it was needed or did they use a railroad?

L: Most of the time they shipped the wagons to different towns. The only way to ship wagons was either people would come right there and hook their horses to it and drive away with a team, or, if it was a big dealer, he would buy a whole carload of them.

MC: These dealers, were they mostly in Arkansas or did they go out into other states?

L: They went to other states after this factory got going good. At first, when anything starts, it is little. It has to grow big by experience. In other words, before you can get big markets, you have to market on a small scale. In slack market times, they would have the paint shop full and then they would get the shipping room and storage rooms full.

MC: Who owned the wagon factory?

L: I couldn't tell you that because several people owned the wagon factory. There were three, four, or five of them that said, "If we want a wagon factory, we'll just have to build one." So they got together and had one built. That wagon factory was a good building.

MC: How did you come to quit work at the wagon factory?

L: The automobiles finally put the wagon out of business. They quit selling wagons.

MC: What did you do after you left the wagon factory? Where did you work?

L: After I quit the wagon factory, in other words, the wagon factory quit me. They quit selling wagons so they had to lay off all the men. They didn't have anything for them to do. Of course, the wagons that were out had to be repaired so I started me a little shop on Towson Avenue.

MC: Do you remember the address?

L: I'm there yet. 509 Towson Avenue.

MC: You started a blacksmith shop there?

L: I built the building, that is, had it built. I'm not a bricklayer. Yes, I've had that all the time.

MC: How long did you stay in the blacksmith business there?

L: Still there.

MC: It is still there but they don't do blacksmithing anymore do they? That's gone into welding now.

L: Sister, there is going to be blacksmith business as long as this world lives. There is always something that has to be fixed that is made out of iron. When anything is made out of iron it is going to need some repair at sometime.

MC: They call it welding now though, don't they, instead of blacksmithing? Gone into welding.

L: No! Welding means when you take two pieces of iron and make one piece out of it. Say that this would be a piece of iron and that would be a piece of iron. Well, you make one piece out of them. (Demonstrated with his hands). You weld one half together with the other half until they are one. You weld them together in other words.

MC: Did you like working at the wagon factory?

L: I never worked at a place any better. That place was my life. I'd rather work there than work for myself. If I work for myself, if I don't make any money, I lose money. But to work for a company, if we don't make any money, the company loses it all.

MC: What is the first thing you remember about Fort Smith when you came here?

L: The first thing I remember was Texas Corner. You have probably heard about that. That was the toughest place in town. Talk about a tough place, that was it. After it got so bad the people finally got tired of it and they made the City Council do away with it. It was just drunks all the time, that's what it was. Fellas that had moved in here, they would drink whiskey and beer. That was a tough place until they closed it up. The buildings are still there. It was a tough place.

MC: When you worked at the wagon factory were there many houses around that area?

L: Not anywhere close, maybe a house here and there, maybe four or five blocks away from the wagon factory?

MC: Was the wagon yard close to the wagon factory? Do you remember anything about the old wagon yard?

L: The old wagon yard was on Towson Avenue. The factory was quite a ways out on Wheeler. Where I work now is close to that old wagon yard, Towson Avenue, the 500 block. They called it Hare's Wagon Yard.

MC: Can you tell me a little about it?

L: Well, there's not too much to tell you, but I'll tell you what I remember. In these days, there weren't any automobiles. I remember people would come to town in a team and wagon and they would go to the wagon yard. They would stay overnight there. There weren't a lot of wagon yards. They would water and feed the horses

and there was a stall for the horses to sleep in. The next morning they would go to town and buy what they wanted and then go back home.

MC: Kind of like a motel.

L: Just about like it. Just like a motel.

MC: Were you ever in the old Opera House?

L: Yes.

MC: Can you tell me about that?

L: Yes. It was on Fifth Street. It was on Garrison Avenue and Fifth Street.

MC: What was it like inside?

L: I don't remember. The last I remember the building hadn't changed any but there weren't any shows there any more. They tore it down.

MC: When you went there, did you go in a horse and buggy?

L: What do you mean a horse and buggy? I'll tell you what it was.

MC: What?

L: Your feet!

MC: You mean you walked everywhere?

L: There wasn't any other way of going. If you wanted to get there, you walked there or you didn't go.

MC: You didn't have a horse?

L: Not until I got more prosperous. I finally got a horse and buggy, but it was a long time before I was able to buy a horse and buggy.

MC: How old were you when you got a horse and buggy? Do you remember?

L: I couldn't tell you that because now I'm an old man and I can't remember. I worked at the wagon company welding tires to make money. You don't do that (buy) when you are a boy. You have to be a man to do that. That's how it works.

MC: Can you tell me something about this old Red Onion Hotel?

L: Well, that was a fancy place in Fort Smith at the time, the Red Onion Hotel.

MC: Where was it? On Towson? Texas Road?

L: Yes! I don't really know anymore, but it was right on Towson.

MC: Is this where they had trouble where a man threw a brick and got fined ten dollars? There was an article in the paper about a little ruckus there. Do you remember anything about that trouble — a man threw the brick and it hit another fellow? He was fined ten dollars. Do you recall that?

L: It is hard for me to remember things. It's been too many years. The old brain doesn't work good any more.

MC: Could you tell us something about the old Garrison Avenue? Was that an old dirt street when you moved here?

L: Garrison Avenue, that was a good street.

MC: It wasn't bricked yet was it?

L: Not at first. Garrison Avenue was later paved with brick. Asphalt was put on years and years later. All the streets in town for years were all paved with brick. That was the only pavement they had. People used whatever they could get and brick was the only thing the had found up to that time for pavement. Before the streets were paved they were just dirt streets. They would get terribly muddy.

MC: Mr. Lorenz, we will finish for today. We sure thank you for your good memory and your help.

L: It didn't hurt a bit what you did to me.

MC: Thank you, Mr. Lorenz, on behalf of the Fort Smith Historical Society.

L: Glad to do it.

END OF INTERVIEW

The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing Comes to Fort Smith

By Ben Boulden

On Jan. 27, 1914, Evelyn Nesbit Thaw appeared for one night at the New Theatre.

Nesbit was that time period's equal in celebrity to O.J. Simpson or Heidi Fleiss. She was the center of a murderous love triangle involving her husband, Harry Thaw, and Stanford White, one of America's most acclaimed architects. Thaw was heir to a $40 million fortune. Nesbit was the showgirl who married him. White was the philanderer who seduced her.

Born in 1884, Nesbit married Thaw when she was 19. Prior to her marriage, she had been associated with White. While involved with White, she was invited to one of the architects many places of assignation in New York City. There, she was asked to pose naked in a red velvet swing. Thaw was insanely jealous and wrung that story of her over the first three years of their marriage as well as a worse one that White had raped her, or at the very least taken advantage of her. When the young couple attended a musical farce at Madison Square Garden on the night of June 25, 1906, they saw White was there as well. During one production number, Thaw got up, walked to get closer to White then fired three shots at him, two of which struck him in the brain.

Thaw did have a genuine reputation for weird and abusive behavior. That combined with the family's resources enabled his legal team to successfully argue that he was insane. The trial was one of the most publicized and sensational in 20th century America. The jury found him "not guilty, on the ground of his insanity at the time of the commission of the act." Committed to an insane asylum, he escaped once to Canada but was captured and returned. Thaw was pronounced sane by a New York court in 1915 and released, after which he promptly divorced Nesbit. His ex-wife already had returned to a life on the stage as a vaudevillian. This is what brought her to Fort Smith.

Interesting, two criminal incidents were associated with her one appearance here. J.H. Watson traveled from his home in Ozark to Fort Smith to see her. According to him, he was not only arrested twice but robbed of $20. Watson was first taken into custody for creating a disturbance in the theater and drinking liquor while in his seat. So he could see the rest of the show, the officers agreed to accept a $10 from his friends and Watson was given permission to return to the theatre. About midnight, officers received a call of a holdup on Ninth Street and upon arriving at the scene discovered Watson was the alleged victim. He was taken into custody again.

At around the same time as these events, a revivalist, Van Deusen of Prairie Grove, was investigated by the police after he tried to pass himself off as Harry Thaw. He claimed that he was waiting in town for his wife and was supposed to join her on the stage at the New. Witnesses said Deusen also had worn a badge and tried to convince

people he was a police detective as well. When brought into local court, the judge told him to return home and quit leading a double life. While leaving, Deusen was heard to

say that if the report of his escapade and arrest got out that he would not get a chance to preach any more. The judge shot back that he should not even try until he was more worthy.

Sources: Nash, Jay Robert, *Bloodletters and Badmen, A Narrative Encyclopedia of American Criminals from the Pilgrims to the Present*. New York: M. Evans and Company Inc., 1995; "Twice Arrested; Held Up; Robbed and then Fined," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Jan. 28, 1914, p. 8; "Evangelist, Who Posed as Harry Thaw, Arrested; Had Booze and Bible in a Grip," Fort Smith Times Record, Jan. 30, 1914, p.5.

Note: *The Thaw-White murder and scandal was dramatized in the 1955 movie "The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing" and in the 1981 film "Ragtime." Joan Collins played Nesbit in the former and Elizabeth McGovern in the latter.*

People of Parker's Court Buried in Oak Cemetery

Personnel of the U.S. District Court of Western Arkansas under Judge Isaac C. Parker

NAME / POSITION / COMMENTS

ADAMS / **Deputy Marshal**
ALLEN, JOHN / **Deputy Marshal**
ALLISON / **Guard**
ARMORER, WILLIAM EDWARD / **Deputy Marshal**
ARMSTRONG, JOHN / **Guard**
ARMSTRONG, JR. HENRY CLAY / **U.S. Marshal**
AYERS, CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS / **Deputy/Jailer/Posse**
AYERS, JACOB T. / **Deputy Marshal**
BAKER, JAMES H. / **Deputy Marshal**
BARLING, FRANK RECTOR / **Deputy Marshal**
BARLING, JERRY KANNADY **Deputy Marshal**
BEAN, WICKLIFF / **Deputy Marshal**
BECK, ADDISON / **Deputy Marshal** *KLOD
BECK, T. E. / **Deputy Marshal**
BELL, WILLIAM / **Posse**
BERRY, JOHN D. / **U.S. Jailer**
BIRNIE, CORNELIUS S. / **Deputy Marshal**
BIRNIE, HENRY C. / **Deputy Marshal**
BIRNIE, WILLIAM STREBECK / **Deputy Marshal**
BLOOMBURG, JOHN P. / **U.S. Bailiff**
BOWLING, FRANK PIERCE / **Deputy Marshal**
BROWN, GEORGE H. / **Deputy Marshal**
BROWN, ELIZA ELLEN / **Deputy Marshal**
BROWN, E.L. / **Deputy Marshal**
BROWN, JAMES D / **Deputy Marshal**
BROWN, THOMAS / **Deputy Marshal**
BUSBY, SHEPPARD / **Deputy Marshal**
CABELL, WILLIAM L. / Son of W.L., Sr. - **Deputy Marshal**
CANNON, LEE W. / **Special Deputy**
CARTER, FRANK / **Deputy Marshal**
CHILDS, DAVE / **Deputy Marshal**
CLARK, WILLIAM H. / **Deputy Marshal**
CLARKE, GREVILLE C. / **Deputy Marshal**
CLARKE, JOSHUA P. / **Crier, U.S. Court**
COLE, JAMES R. / **Deputy Marshal**
COOPER, THOMPSON H. / **Deputy Marshal**
COX, WILLIAM R. / **Special Deputy**
CRAVENS, WILLIE / **Deputy Marshal**

DAVIS, GEORGE W. / **Deputy Marshal**
DAVIS, JOHN / **Deputy Marshal**
DAVIS, JACK D. / **Guard**
DELL, VALENTINE / **U.S. Marshal**
DODSON, JAMES / **Deputy Marshal**
DYER, JOHN R. / **Posse and Guard**
EADS, ALICE STEWART / **Deputy Marshal *first female deputy**
FENTRESS, WILLIAM E. / **Deputy Marshal**
FISHER, SAMUEL N. / **Deputy and Guard**
FRY, REUBEN MACON / **Deputy Marshal**
FURNER, EDWARD F. / **Deputy Marshal**
GILL, JOHN HEDRICK / **Deputy Marshal**
GRAHAM, WILLIAM P. / **Deputy Marshal**
GRAY, JOHN W. / **Deputy Marshal**
HARRISON, JOE C., SR. / **Guard** (black)
HAYNES, WILLIAM F. / **Deputy Marshal**
HICKS, WILLIAM F. / **Deputy Marshal**
HILL, JOHN WINSTON / **Deputy Marshal**
HOGAN, WILLIAM B. / **Deputy Marshal** (black)
HOOD, JOHN A. / **Deputy Marshal**
HOOD, WILLIAM S. / **Deputy Marshal**
HUDSON, WILLIAM / **Deputy Marshal** (black)
HUNTER, WILBUR J. / **Deputy Marshal** (black)
HUNTER, CHARLES H. / **Guard and cyclone victim**
HUTCHINS, JOE R. / **Deputy Marshal** (black)
JACKSON, ROBERT HENRY / **Deputy Marshal**
JOHNSON, JOHN F. / **Deputy Marshal**
JOHNSON, OSCAR H. / **Deputy Marshal**
JOHNSON, WILLIAM H. / **Deputy Marshal**
JOHNSON, JESSE / **Special Deputy**
JOHNSTON, A. SIDNEY / **Deputy Marshal**
JONES, CRAWFORD M. / **Deputy Marshal**
JONES, JESSE H. / **Deputy Marshal**
JONES, NATHAN / **Deputy Marshal**
KING, JOHN H. / **Special Deputy**
LACEY, THOMAS J. / **Deputy Marshal**
LAMB, WILLIAM R. / **Deputy Marshal**
LANE, JOE R. / **Deputy Marshal**
LAWRENCE, SAMUEL / **Deputy Marshal**
LEWIS, WESLEY / **Deputy Marshal**
LUNSFORD, JESSE S. / **Deputy Marshal**
MCCLURE, JOHN / **Deputy Marshal**
MCDONALD, L.D.(DICK) / **Deputy Marshal**
MCGUIRE, HUGH / **Deputy Marshal**
MCLAUGHLIN, STERLING PRICE / **Deputy Marshal**

MERRITT, LEWIS / **Guard *KLOD**
MERSHON, JAMES H. / **Deputy Marshal**
MILLER CHARLES E. / **Deputy Marshal**
MILLER, ISAAC / **Deputy Marshal**
MILLER, EDWARD / **Deputy Marshal**
MOORE, JACKSON "JACK" / **Deputy Marshal**
NEAL, TOM S. / **Deputy Marshal**
OWNSBY, CLARENCE / **Deputy Marshal**
PATRICK, DAVID S. / **Deputy Marshal**
PELLEY, C. MATTERSON / **U. S. Marshal**
PELLEY, JAMES W. / **Deputy Marshal**
PERRY, WILLIAM / **Deputy Marshal**
PIERCE, THOMAS GREENE / **U. S. Jailer**
PRYOR, AUGUSTUS / **U.S. Jailer**
PRYOR, NEIL KANNADY / **Deputy Marshal**
RECTOR, ELIAS / **U. S. Marshal**
REED, J WARREN / Attorney (**Outlaws Lawyer**)
RICHARDSON, JOHN / **Guard**
RICHARDSON, JAMES E. / **Deputy Marshal** *KLOD
ROBERTS, WALTER J. / **Assistant U.S. Jailer**
ROBERTSON,WILLIAM "WILLIE" LEE / **Deputy Marshal**
ROSS, PHILLIP / **Deputy Marshal**
ROWLAND, WILLIAM G. / **Deputy Marshal**
RUTHERFORD, JOHN / **Deputy Marshal**
RUTHERFORD, SAMUEL M. / **Deputy Marshal**
SANDELS, MONTE HINES / **U.S. Attorney**
SCOTT, JOHN / **Deputy Marshal**
SCOTT, SAM CREEK / **Lighthorse**
SEABOLT, MARCUS A. / **Deputy Marshal**
SEATON, WILLIAM / **Deputy Marshal**
SHANNON, THOMAS / **Guard**
SHAW, JOHN / **Deputy Marshal**
SHUEY, THOMAS "TOM" / **Deputy Marshal**
SMITH, WILLIAM / **Posse**
SMITH, ANDREW / **Deputy Marshal**
SMITH, FRANK / **Deputy Marshal**
SMITH, JOHN C. / **Deputy Marshal**
SMITH, JOHN H. / **Deputy Marshal**
SMITH, J.W. / **Deputy Marshal**
SMITH, JAMES A. / **Deputy Marshal**
SMITH, WILL / **Deputy Marshal**
SORRELLS, SAM / **Deputy Marshal**
SPEAKER, JOHN / **Deputy Marshal**

TAYLOR, JR., WILLIAM H. / **Deputy Marshal**
THOMPSON, LEE / **Deputy Marshal**
THOMPSON, J.C. / **Deputy Marshal**
THOMPSON, SYLVESTER M. / **Deputy Marshal**
TRACY, W. L. / **Deputy Marshal**
TUCKER, EDWARD / **Deputy Marshal**
TUCKER, AUSTIN / **Deputy Marshal**
ULLERY, NATHAN / **Guard**
WARD, ROBERT / **Deputy Marshal**
WATSON, FRANCIS T. / **Deputy Marshal**
WELDON, OLIVER D. / **Deputy Marshal**
WHYBACK, ANDREW L. / **Deputy Marshal**
WILKERSON, JOHN A. / **Deputy Marshal**
WILLARD, JOSEPH HENRY / **Deputy Marshal**
WILLIAMS, GEORGE F. / **Deputy Marshal**
WILLIAMS, HARRY W. / **Deputy Marshal**
WILLIAMS, JAMES CICERO / **Deputy Marshal**
WILLIAMS, JACK / **Deputy Marshal**
WILLIAMS, JOHN T. / **Deputy Marshal**
WILLIAMS, SAMUEL ANDREW / **Chief Deputy Marshal**
WILLIAMS, JAMES / **Deputy Marshal**
WINSTON, GEORGE S. / **U. S. Bailiff**

*KLOD = Killed in the Line of Duty

Research and List Compiled By: Charles D Raney

Fort Smith Police Department Officers Killed in the Line of Duty

Detective Sam Booth

Sam Booth was born June 11, 1882, in Fort Smith. He was a Fort Smith police detective when he was shot and killed. Booth was married to Kate Booth at the time of his death. Sam and Kate Booth lived with their three children — Sam Jr., Mildred and Lucile — at 613 S. 13th St. in Fort Smith.

Detective Sam Booth was the first Fort Smith police officer to die in the line of duty. He was shot near the intersection of Towson Avenue and Rogers Avenue around 7 p.m., March 21, 1931, after he and his partner, Detective D.N. Willis, stopped two youths for speeding at Towson and South E Street. Apparently, the young men — one of whom gave his name as Tom Moore from Poteau — knew the officers, as they called the detectives by name. At the time, the officers were unaware that the car the youths were driving had been stolen from the parking lot of St. Edward Hospital about an hour earlier. The officers decided that Willis would pick up the night captain, and Booth would ride to the jail with the young men in their car. According to an eyewitness, the stolen coupe pulled to the curb immediately after turning east on Rogers Avenue. All three occupants scrambled from the vehicle. Booth, who already had been shot once, had his pistol in his hand when he exited the car. More shots were exchanged between the officer and one of the young men. Both youths then ran away and Booth, now mortally wounded after being shot four times, walked south down the alley from Rogers Avenue and entered the back door of Rudisill Motor Company, 111 Towson Avenue. Staggering through the building and holding his pistol stiffly at his side, Booth said to Archie Franklin, salesman for the motor company, "Call me an ambulance, I'm shot all to pieces! Take me to St. Edward Hospital and call Dr. Stevenson." Although Mr. Franklin tried to get a description of the killers, the detective became incoherent. Booth died less than 30 minutes later at St. Edward Hospital. The slain detective was laid to rest in the Catholic Cemetery in Fort Smith on March 25, 1931. Sam Booth was 48 years old.

Captain William A. Bourland

William Andrew Bourland was born Feb. 28, 1880, in Belle Green, Alabama. He was captain on the Fort Smith Police Department when he was shot and killed. William Bourland and his wife, Mabel, lived at 611 N. E St. in Fort Smith and had four children, John D., Clyde, William H. and Katie. Captain Bourland was a member of First Methodist Church.

A gun battle between Fort Smith police officers and three armed robbers on the night of Sept. 2, 1931, resulted in the deaths of both Captain William Bourland and Officer Ralph Howard. Three men robbed a Spiro service station around 8 p.m. that night and were

spotted around 11:30 p.m. by the Fort Smith officers who were looking for them on the Spiro highway. The robbers attempted to elude the officers who pursued them into Fort Smith traveling east on South Y Street to its intersection with Towson Avenue. As the vehicles started north on Towson, the police officers forced the robbers off the street and a gunfight erupted. All three robbers were wounded and one of them died while still in the car. Funeral records from Putman Funeral Home indicate Bourland was shot in the head, and in both the left and right chest. Bourland died that night as he was being carried into St. Edward Hospital. He was laid to rest on Sept. 4, 1931, in the National Cemetery in Fort Smith. William Bourland was 51 years old.

Patrolman Ralph Howard

Ralph Howard was born in Texas on April 26, 1878. He was a patrolman for the Fort Smith Police Department when he was shot and killed. He and his wife, Melville, lived at 811 Birnie Avenue in Fort Smith and had two children, Frank Jr. and Mrs. R.N. McLeod. Patrolman Howard was a member of the Dodson Avenue Assembly of God.

Patrolman Howard was fatally wounded in the same incident in which Captain William Bourland was killed. In the gun battle on Towson Avenue with the robbers from Spiro, Officer Howard was shot in the neck, in the chest and through both hands. Following what the Southwest American called "a gallant fight for life," Howard died at Sparks Hospital on Sept. 4, 1931, two days after being shot. Funeral records from Putman Funeral Home list his cause of death as septic pneumonia, following gunshot wounds to the neck and chest. He was laid to rest on Sept. 5 in Oak Cemetery in Fort Smith. Howard was 53 years old.

Patrolman Randy Basnett

Randy Monroe Basnett was born Sept. 18, 1946. He was a patrolman for the Fort Smith Police Department and was shot and killed Sept. 24, 1976. Randy lived with his wife, Cindy, at 914 P St. in Barling. Living with Randy and Cindy were stepson Bill Howard, stepdaughter Shanon Howard, and Amanda (infant daughter of Randy and Cindy). Amanda Basnett Kinsey now has two daughters, Jessica, 9, and Awbrey, 2. Randy was a member of the First Baptist Church of Barling.

Patrolman Basnett was shot and killed a few minutes after 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 24. He stopped at the service station across from Arkansas State Police headquarters in the 5800 block of Kelley Highway. While Basnett was at the service station, John Edward Swindler pulled into the same location. Swindler was wanted for a double murder and other felonies in both Georgia and South Carolina. Information about Swindler — his crimes, the vehicle he was driving and the fact that he was armed and dangerous — had been given to FSPD officers in their daily briefing that day. After Basnett radioed

dispatchers that Swindler was at the service station, backup officers were dispatched to his location. Meanwhile, before other officers could reach Basnett's location, Swindler reached inside his car, ostensibly to retrieve his driver's license. Instead of a driver's license, Swindler came out of the car with a pistol in his hand and began firing at Basnett, hitting him twice in the chest. Swindler then scrambled back into his stolen vehicle and sped away. Basnett, now mortally wounded, shot six times at Swindler's vehicle as he fled. Two bullets struck Swindler and the remaining four hit the fleeing car. When officers found and arrested Swindler in the wooded area east of the scene of the shooting, he had several weapons and hundreds of rounds of ammunition in his possession. Basnett died in the ambulance on the way to Sparks Regional Medical Center. He was laid to rest in the Roselawn Cemetery in Fort Smith on Monday, Sept. 27. Basnett was 30 years old.

Detective Ray Tate

Ray Tate was born June 14, 1947, in Siloam Springs. He was a detective for the Fort Smith Police Department when he died from gunshot wounds he received Jan. 5, 1981. Ray and his wife, Anita Ruth, lived south of Greenwood with their two children, Charles Anthony and Christina. Tony now has two sons, Cameron and Nicholas. Christina has twins, Kendall and Samantha. Since Ray's death, Ruth has remarried and she and her husband, Lloyd Evans, live in Siloam Springs. Ray was a member of the Harvard Avenue Baptist Church in Siloam Springs.

Detective Tate went to 701 N. 48th St. on a Monday evening to investigate the disappearance of 21-year-old Larry Price. When Jawanna Price, the wife of Larry Price, had left for work that morning, her husband was talking with Thomas Simmons about a car that Larry Price was offering for sale. That day, Larry Price did not report to work, and he did not keep a lunch appointment with his wife. After repeated unsuccessful attempts to contact her husband, Mrs. Price became alarmed. She asked her boss, Holly Gentry, who was a family friend, to accompany her to the police department to report her husband's disappearance. From the police department, Tate followed Holly Gentry and Jawanna Price to the Price residence where he checked out on his police radio. None of the three were heard from again. About 11:30 p.m., Tate's police car was found at a truck stop in Van Buren near the intersection of Interstate 40 and Arkansas 59. Late Tuesday, January 6, the bodies of Tate, Jawanna Price and Holly Gentry were found in a river-bottom field in the Kibler community. All three had been shot execution-style in the back of the head. The body of Larry Price, who also had been shot and killed, was discovered a short distance away. Thomas Simmons was convicted of four counts of capital murder and sentenced to death for the slayings. Ray Tate was laid to rest in the Oak Hill Cemetery in Siloam Springs on Jan. 9. Tate was 33 years old.

Patrolman Bill Simms

Bill Wayne Simms was born March 20, 1947, in Clinton, Okla., and died on April 18, 1986, after being struck by two vehicles. Bill lived with his wife, Donna, his son, Matthew, and his daughter, Melissa, at 1410 Bluff Avenue in Fort Smith. On Aug. 18, 2002, Melissa gave birth to a son who was Bill's first grandchild. Bill served his country in both the Coast Guard and the Navy. He was a charter member of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No. 39 and belonged to the Cliff Terrace Assembly of God.

Patrolman Bill Simms was struck by a car after he had assisted a stranded motorist just inside the city limits of Fort Smith on Rogers Avenue near Barling. The tragedy occurred a few minutes before 9 p.m. on a Friday. While on patrol Simms observed a motorist stalled on Rogers Avenue, activated the emergency lights on his police unit, and assisted the motorist in getting the stalled car off the busy street. As Simms was crossing Rogers Avenue, returning to his police unit, a westbound motorist hit him and knocked him into the path of an eastbound car. He was killed instantly. Bill was laid to rest in the National Cemetery in Fort Smith on April 21, 1986. Simms was 39 years old.

Gallery Author: Chaplain Ben Stephens, Fort Smith Police Department

Sources: *Fort Smith Times Record, Southwest American* and *Southwest Times Record* newspapers, Arkansas Department of Correction documents and records from the families of the officers.

St. Boniface Member Honored by Pope Pius XI for Works of Charity

From Frontier Research Annual 1997 Issue

The far-flung charities carried on by Sir Charles J. JEWETT K.S.G.-G.C.K.H.S., attracted the attention and approval of the late Bishop John B. MORRIS, D.D. to such an extent that he petitioned the Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, to confer upon this outstanding Catholic Layman, certain Papal honors. Thus in 1930, the Holy Father, to show the recognition and appreciation of the Church for Mr. JEWETT'S many works of charity, conferred upon him the Knighthood of St. Gregory, while two years later a second honor was given to him the Grand Cross Knight of the Holy Sepulcher.

To trail the various acts of charity of Sir Charles J. JEWETT, K.S.G.-G.C.K.H.S., would force us to travel throughout the United States and in many foreign lands. In his home city, Fort Smith, he financed the building to a great extent, of St. John the Baptist Church, the school, sisters' home, library building and the parish rectory. In establishing this parish for the colored people of Fort Smith, he donated large sums himself and was instrumental in obtaining financial gifts from others. The most beautiful Rose Window in the church was donated by him.

After the disastrous fire of December 20, 1927, at Subiaco, he voluntarily approached Rt. Rev. Father Abbot Edward BURGERT, O.S.B., and offered financial aid. Through his financial gifts a whole wing, four stories high, was built. The building bears his name. Later he financed the building of a print shop. For this generosity the Benedictine Community at Subiaco will always be grateful to him.

In his own parish he was continuously doing works beneficial to the parish or certain groups of parishioners. For some years he sent a number of boys from St. Boniface School to Camp Subiaco, while later he took the Altar boys for a day's outing to the Abbey and Academy, hoping in this way to cultivate vocations to the religious life and Holy Priesthood. The girls of the school also shared in the kindness of his heart, through an outing for a day, with all expenses paid by him The part he played in building the new church is seen in the beautiful window donated by him in memory of the Jewett Family.

Mr. JEWETT'S charity extends far beyond Fort Smith, Arkansas. September 28, 1940, Mr. JEWETT donated a new Tabernacle for San Miquel Church, Socorro, N.M., in memory of his mother, which is inscribed on it. He was a former parishioner of this church. Mrs. Charles J. JEWETT related an incident about the Medical Mission Sisters Convent, which they visited in Santa Fe. She said Mr. Jewett had a love for Santa Fe. His mother and father were married in the Governor's Palace, now a Museum. The Superior of the Convent drove them to distant places where they had to travel to take care of people, those who could not afford to go to a hospital. She told them that one day a man knocked at their door and when she opened it, he greeted her and said "Sister, I have noticed you driving around in that old jalopy, so I am going to give you

this new car, a Chevrolet." The Superior told them that they wanted to build units right around their Convent, so they wouldn't have to travel in some of the most "God forsaken places." The people could be brought to stay there, even some of their family, while they needed attention. Mr. Jewett donated one of these units (the first one) and on the door appears the words "San Carlos." Sister said, "This is in honor of your Patron Saint."

The Medical Mission Sisters have charge of Holy Family Hospital, in India. He made a sizeable donation to the hospital and in acknowledging it, Sister Roberta EUPER, from Fort Smith, Arkansas, remarked, "I feel just like this is your hospital."

In 1940, Sir Charles J. JEWETT inaugurated a most beautiful and useful work of charity, in St. Boniface Parish, known as the "Mary Jewett Memorial Baby Milk Fund." For about fifteen years, he donated milk to babies of needy families in Fort Smith. The Medical Center cooperated with him in this work and at stated times the babies were brought to the Center for physical check-ups. He asked for volunteers from St. Boniface to help with this work and the following ladies gladly offered their services and formed the first group of workers: Mrs. A.G. BAUER, Miss Cecilia COOK, Mrs. J.J. RAIBLE, Miss Bernadine UPTMOOR, Mrs. Carl FRANTZ, Mrs. C. A. GOEBEL, Mrs. Peter PLEIN, Mrs. James SPARKS, Mrs. Wm. HAAG, Mrs. Albert HASSLER, Mrs. V.A. GRAMLICH SR, Miss Annie STIESBERG, Mrs. Walter PRESLEY, and Mrs. Wm. GISLER.

The milk was furnished by BECKMAN Dairy and was daily delivered to needy families, named as worthy recipients of this charity, by the Medical Center.

Once a year Mr. Jewett gave an Appreciation Banquet at the Ward Hotel to all participants in his work of charity. Besides the ladies from St. Boniface, their husbands, Dr. JOHNSON, head doctor of the Medical Center, as well as Mr. and Mrs. B.F. BECKMAN, were guests at the Banquet and often a civic leader of the city was present to give the principal address.

Miss Maude BRYAN was married to Sir Charles J. JEWETT in August, 1937. Upon their return from a wedding trip she started taking instructions from Father Murray of St. John's Church, and was baptized in December of the same year. Mrs. Jewett received a Papal award "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" from Pope Pius XII on October 17, 1941. On this same day, Mrs. Helen FLETCHER, mother of Bishop Fletcher, received the same honor from the Holy Father. Mrs. Emma Weast Bryan, mother of Mrs. Jewett, who lived with the Jewetts, was baptized February 18, 1953. She also received her First Holy Communion and was confirmed on the same day. Having received Extreme Unction and the Apostolic Blessing, she passed away on February 21, 1953. Father James, O.S.B., took care of Mrs. Bryan in her last illness.

How Weary Willie Spends Christmas

Experiences Related Around the Camp-Fire in the Grove Near the Railroad Crossing

"Hello, pards!"

"Hello, yerself!"

The hobo who has addressed the first remark extricated his clothing from its entanglement with the barbs of wire fence and advanced toward the camp fire in the grove of bushes in Mrs. Bonneville's field just this side of the railroad crossing, around which four of his fellow peripatetic travelers were gathered. A large tin can — a 50-pound lard tin — gave off to the frosty air and the hungry hobobs an appetizing odor, while and old battered coffee pot sent out an invitation to a feast, whether the users of the pot desired it or not.

The can and the pot are a part of the paraphernalia of a hobo camp. Who put them there and by what cabalistic method the other members of this wandering tribe are made aware of their whereabouts, the writer does not pretend to know. He only knows that they are there and that it is a gross violation of hobo ethics to remove them, except it be to establish a new camp somewhere else.

The grove in Mrs. Bonneville's field has long been a hobo camp. The general public is apt to refer to this genus homo as a tramp. That is a mistake. To tramp is to walk. A tramp, therefore, is one who walks. That is a thing the hobo never does except in cases of emergency and they are very rare. The hobo rides. He prefers a freight train to a passenger train, for he is opposed to paying tribute to the railway corporations and there are not so comfortable places for one to secret one's self about a passenger train as in a freight car. A bed in the Waldorf-Astoria is not to be thought of by a genuine hobo in comparison with a burrow in a car of cotton seed. As trains going South and West are compelled to stop at the crossing and the opportunities for hopping on a train is what makes the grove a favorite stopping place with the hoboes. They remain out of sight in the bushes until the signal to start is given and then they rise up like a covey of flushed quail.

"Whatjer got?" enquired a husky big fellow as he lifted the lid from the can, and proceeded to stir the contents.

The newcomer proceeded to empty his pockets. He brought out several packages, wrapped in old newspaper, that contained cold meat and bread; then came four Irish potatoes of different sizes, a large turnip and a medium sized onion.

"You're a brick, you must have been with Coxey," laughed the husky fellow, who seemed to be the ruling spirit of the camp and he laughed at the joke. The onion immediately went into the can.

"Jim, you peel that; Jack, you fix up the potatoes," continued the lord of the camp.

Jim reached down inside his shirt, pull out a little bag that hung at the end of a string and extracted a razor. Then he picked up the turnip and began to peel it. Jack scraped the potatoes with an old piece of iron that looked as if it had once been a piece of cotton tie. After peeling them, he cut them up with the same piece of iron, after which they joined the turnip to again keep companionship with the onion, but this time in the pot, where a few pieces of meat had preceded them.

Before the meal was ready, two other wanderers appeared and both brought contributions to the general larder. They were laid aside for future use. When the meal was cooked a number of old tin cans, the tops melted off to make cups, were produced. Each man had a cup and helped himself to the stew, but there were not enough for each to have one for his coffee, so they had set two cups of coffee in the center of the circle and each man reached for one or the other of the cups as he wanted it. The bread that comes into a hobo camp is usually hard. It is made more palatable after being dipped in a can of stew, and it also affords a means of eating the stew, as there is always a scarcity of spoons.

"Holy Smoke, fellers!" exclaimed one of the party, when the newspaper man joined the crowd and stated his mission. "Here's a guy what wants to know how we spend our Christmas."

"We spends it wherever it finds us, sometimes in jail, sometimes on the road and sometimes in town," spoke up the husky individual, who appeared to labor under the impression that he was a humorist.

There was silence for some minutes after this remark, but on the production of a sack of tobacco and some papers by the visitor, who showed no sign of leaving because he had been given a cool reception, the sentiment of the crowd seemed to undergo a change. After the tobacco had made a circuit of the party, the members became more communicative.

"Jim, remember that Christmas we spent at the cave in the bluff tother side of town?" asked one who had been addressed as Jack.

"Bet I do," replied Jim. "Say, but we had a good warm bunk there. Say, fellers, that was a great joke on Jack. He'd been moseyin' around early in the evenin' and tol' me he knew where there was a lot of chickens and we'd have spring chicken for our Christmas dinner. That night he went off and came back with a chicken, all right, but it was a

rooster about 27 years old. He's got the scar in his hand now where the spur piked him when he nabbed old cock-a-doodle-do. We boiled him and made a stew and ou bet he was good."

The prospect of a "can" and Jim's story having broken the ice, Christmas experiences began to be related by all the party.

"I slipped up a little worse than Jack did one time down in New Orleans," said one who answered to the name of Joe. "I read in the papers about the big dinner they was going to give the prisoners on Christmas. I got dead next in a hurry. You know how they run you in for sitting around the squares? Well, I sits down in the middle of a big copper's beat and pretends to go to sleep. Mr. Copper comes up and tries to wake me up and make me move on. I'm dead to the world, an' nothing short of old Gabe's bugle would wake me. Old Cop gets mad and gives me two or three cracks on the head with his billy and then hauls me off to jail. I was laughing to myself then how I was working them, but so help me the old judge didn't do a thing to me the next morning but give me sixty days and I had to work every one of them on the street."

"If you wants to strike a snap always hit a town where there's a Salvation Army on Christmas. They'll give you a big feed and if you put up the right kind of talk you can carry off a lot" put in the husky individual at the head of the table.

"Yes, but if you go in to work the religious racket, you'll miss the free drinks the barkeep sets up in the morning," remarked Joe.

"It's mighty few barkeeps you can work on Christmas or any other day," retorted husky.

"I was in St. Louis one Christmas and I'll never try to work the back doors there any more within a week after Christmas," said the fellow with a week's growth of red beard. "I got nothing but Turkey every place and I got so I couldn't help gobbling every time I saw anything red. I come down through the Cherokee Nation the next week and I saw a drunk Indian with a red feather in his hat. I had to gobble and durned if he didn't pick up his Winchester and take a shot at me."

"Say, this thing of Kentucky hospitality is all hot air," said the one with a big black mustache. "I worked Louisville one Christmas morning. I got out real early and I couldn't spring any thing that would make any of them chase a bottle out to me."

"Did any of you ever spend Christmas in Chicago?" the writer asked.

"Chicago? What's biting you, man? Do you think we are Esquimaux? Why it's as cold as blue blazes there in the winter."

The newspaper man had separated himself from three sacks of tobacco, a box of matches and all his small change before he got out of the camp, so he could not appreciate the invitation to "Call Again."

Fort Smith News Record, Dec. 13, 1903, p. 11

Celebrating Christmas in the Pioneer Days

A Company of Fort Smith's Oldest Citizens Tell how the Day was Observed in Their Younger Days

Christmas in Fort Smith in the [1840s] was observed much differently than it is now.

"Fort Smith in the latter '40's was a very small place," narrated Charles A. Birnie. "Most of the town then was down on Front street which followed the shore line of the river. There was a very wide street in front of the stores. This all caved into the river in the early '50's.

"All of the residences were scattered along on Second street and close. [When] approached, the signs of festivity were plainly noticeable. Every house made preparations for everyone took a hand in the general frolic, which characterized the holidays.

"A large crowd of young fellows always went out on James Fork near Hackett City the day before Christmas and we would go from farm house to farm house, having a dance at each one and not ending the revelry until after New Year's.

"Election times were more exciting then than they are now. Whisky was so cheap that not so much of it was put to use as it has become since. Good whisky then cost about 16 cents per gallon in Cincinnati and sold here for 50 cents. This was the pure stuff.

One of the election precincts was at the office of the father of Sam Edmondson, 'Old Ginger,' he was called, and from whom the northern corner of Fourth and B streets derived the name of Ginger's corner. When election day rolled around, 'Old Ginger' would purchase a barrel of whisky and knock in the head. He then hung a tin cup on the side and set it out on the sidewalk in front of his office. Every voter who came along took a couple of cups full, drank them, went in and voted, came out, drank a couple more and went on his way. This prevented much repetition in voting as few men could stand the performance more than once."

"There are no more Christmas[es] like there were in the early days of Fort Smith," said Aunt Sophia Kannady. "There are not even as much firecrackers used nor near so much noise made now as there was then.

"Everyone, to begin with, had plenty to eat. There was no one who could not afford turkey, ham, game and things which now only the well-to-do enjoy. I have known large turkeys in those days to go begging for some one to purchase them for twenty-five cents. A big dinner then, as it is today, was the principal Christmas celebration. The dining room was decorated with foliage and evergreens and on the table was a repast suitable for a crown prince. People were great on roast pig and a small one in whose mouth was an apple would adorn the center of the table. Then there would be roast

turkey, garnished with parsley, boiled ham, game of all kinds, besides fruits and pastimes. Everything was put on whole.

"Parties were given everywhere but Christmas day was respected and there were no dances given on that day.

"On Christmas eve everyone hung up their stockings and presents were given as they are now. The toys were about the same, only I believe they were stronger. The first toys I ever saw were brought here by Dr. Meyers, who ran a drug store on Front street. He continued to bring them each year until the war broke out.

"Christmas day customs were followed which have long since been forgotten except by the old settlers. The merchants would contribute to a fund which was used in buying toys, nuts, fruits and candles for all the children in town. Several young men then dressed up in all sorts of toggery to resemble Santa Claus. They would take the toys and things in a big sack on their back and make the rounds. When a house was reached they went in, announced and made the children their presents. The children were always frightened half out of their wits and custom was abandoned on that account. They certainly scared me when I was a child.

"Another custom was for the young men to disguise themselves and ride over town whooping and blowing horns. They called themselves calathumpians. It was a scary sight for a child to look up and see a dozen of these weird figures come charging down the roads, pushing their [steeds] to the utmost.

"During the war, we Southerners were able to get plenty to eat and had our turkey dinner on Christmas, if the Federals would let us alone long enough. The children missed their toys — that is we missed the opportunity of buying factory made ones — but the children were as happy with what they received as they were when we could get the imported ones again after the war. We could take cloth, cut out a doll and stuff it with cotton. What better doll could a child want — they couldn't break it. Then we would make doughnuts and cut them in the shape of all sorts of animals. They pleased the children more than an imported toy would have done.

"After Christmas the round of parties would begin. Such decorations you will not see now, as were seen in the parlor where the party was being held. [There] were no lamps — everyone used candles. In some of the parlors were immense chandeliers which hung from the ceiling. In this there would be about a hundred candles, all colors. The room was as light as day and the candles added ornament to the room.

"Speaking of having no lamps makes me think of the first coal oil I ever saw. It was brought here by the father of Col. B.F. Atkinson, who gave an exhibition of its qualities, by lighting up the town hall. Oil then sold at $1.50 a gallon. People were afraid to use it at first.

"New Year's day was kept the same as Christmas, another big dinner was given, after which everyone kept open house and received callers. This is a lost custom nowadays.

"I had rather live in the old days when Fort Smith was one large family."

Fort Smith News Record, Dec. 13, 1903, p. 13

Thanksgiving 100 Years Ago

AT FEDERAL JAIL
The prisoners at the Federal jail enjoyed an excellent Thanksgiving dinner.

In addition to the regular bill of fare, M.T. Brisco, who has charge of the feeding of the prisoners, had provided a barrel of fine apples and 66 pounds of dressed turkeys.

To a News Record representative Mr. Brisco, Friday morning, said:
"The prisoners all seemd to be very happy yesterday. The apples and turkeys were a great treat for them and everyone seemed to enjoy it greatly."

As Mr. Brisco was passing along one of the corridor Friday morning, one of the prisoners came up to the bars and said:
"Mr. Brisco, we all want to thank you for that dinner yesterday. It was the best meal we have ever had in this place."

Another said:
"There's a whole lot of difference in that dinner yesterday and the way they fed the prisoners thirteen years ago. At that time, I had been sent here by the state for safe keeping and they wouldn't even give us sugar for our coffee."

Thanksgiving services conducted by Rev. Sitton, were held in the jail Thursday evening.

AT COUNTY JAIL
At the county all prisoners were given and old-fashioned Thanksgiving dinner.

"I wanted to give them pumpkin pie to go with the turkey," said Jailer Barry, "but as I was unable to get the pumpkins, we had to be satisfied with sweet potato pie."

IN THE CITY
Dinner at the private residences was, as usual, a bounteous feast and many dinner parties were given. At the Belle Point Hospital, the Children's Home, the County Farm and all charitable institutions, the inmates were provided with turkey dinners with all the accompanying delicacies.

Work was practically suspended all over the city, few stores being open after dinner, and the banks, county and Federal offices, and factories were closed all day. There were some few though that on account of the rush of business were compelled to work their men all day.

Taken as a holiday, the day was an exceedingly quiet one, there being few disturbances to mar the sanctity of the day.

The preceding was excerpted from a news article, "Thanksgiving Day As Kept In Fort Smith," *Fort Smith News Record*, Nov. 27, 1903, p. 1.

The Hell Cat

As told by Belle Starr – Belle Starr was married to Jim Reed at the time of this story. He was a member of the Younger gang. This is reported to be a recollection of her words 14 years after her death. *Happy Halloween!*

It was down in Texas. I had been separated from Jim and was making my way home. I was over 100 miles from home, but distance didn't bother us much in those days. When I rode with Jim, we camped wherever night found us, but when we were separated and I became a woman and not a member of the gang. I always liked to put up at night at a house. I had several reasons for this, one being that it was a good idea to have witnesses to my whereabouts, for it was generally supposed that Jim was never far away from me, and by proving where I was, I could make a good alibi for him. Texas and Indian Territory were sparsely settled then and we could frequently ride a whole day along the military road and not pass but three or four houses.

As I said, I was on my way home. Night was coming on and the dark, lowering clouds told that a storm was coming on. I urged my horse forward, hoping to find a house before dark, for the storm would break soon afterward. Had it not been for that I would have feared little whether I found one before midnight.

Just at sunset I came to a large double log house. A nice wide path led up to the house and a plain path led from the house to a splendid spring. The yard was grown up with weeds and portion of the porch and hall were gone, but otherwise the house was in excellent condition. I rode up and called "Hello!" and no one answered, rode in. I rode right in under the porch, where the floor was torn up and dismounted. The house was vacant, but every room was nicely swept and as clean as if it had been tidied up that afternoon. In one of the big rooms was a ladder leading to the loft. I went up it and peered into the garret. It too was empty, save for a small ball over in a far corner, that I thought was a hickory nut or walnut.

Not knowing how far it was to another house, I decided to remain there all night, for both myself and horse would be protected from the storm. I ate the lunch I carried in my saddle bags, fed my horse, tied him up and made a bed of my saddle blanket and retired. The storm broke early and the room was continually lighted by flashes of electricity while the rain came down in torrents. About midnight I was awakened by my horse snorting as in terror. I had a very strange feeling as if something was about to happen to me, but I couldn't define it any closer. I thought I heard a soft footfall in the room and by one of the flashes of lightning. I thought I saw a cat. I rolled over and was soon asleep again.

About two hours later I was again awakened by the snorting and restlessness of my horse. Usually very quiet, he now was in a frenzy of fear. I raised up and as I did so I heard a noise something like a marble being rolled over the floor. I looked in that

direction and beheld a pair of fiery eyes gleaming at me. The storm had passed and though the rain still came down in torrents, the lighning was less frequent and vivid. By the flashes, I made out something cat-shaped, but much larger than an ordinary house cat — larger than a wild cat, in fact, sitting just a few feet from me rolling a nut or marble across the floor from one paw to the other.

"Kitty! Kitty!" I called, but the strange object never blinked, or moved, except to keep its ball rolling, back and forth across the floor with that grating noise that was becoming very trying to my nerves.

"Scat!" I cried, with more vehemence, but it never made any move except to slap its plaything form one paw to the other.

"Scat! You devil!" I yelled, throwing my tin cup, which made an awful clatter but I might as well have tried to command the rain to stop for all the good it did.

Then drawing my six shooter, I cocked it and took deliberate aim between the blazing eyes. My pistol almost touched the thing's head and the blaze from the muzzle went clear through its head, but still it sat there rolling that back and forth. The other five bullets went through its body just as fast as I could fire my pistol and when the last bullet had chugged into the heavy oaken logs of the wall, the mysterious animal still sat there staring at me and rolling that plaything back and forth.

I hadn't been scared until my six shooter was empty. Then fear seized me all over. I was trembling like a leaf, but I managed to grab my saddle and get out of my room. I was so weak I could hardly walk. My horse was frantic, pitching and rearing so I could not get near him. I had to lead him out into the road before I could get him calmed down sufficiently to saddle him. I rode some distance and came to a big tree, where I took refuge and was partially protected from the rain. As soon as day began to break, I started on my journey and about daylight, I came to a house. I was wet to the skin and had been for two hours or more. I stopped to get breakfast and after I had changed my clothes, the woman asked me where I had spent the night.

"Not much of anywhere," I replied. "Partly under a tree and part of the time riding about in the rain."

"Couldn't you find a house?" the old woman asked, casting a knowing glance at her grown daughter, who was sitting at the table.

"Oh! I saw one back here about six miles, but it was deserted and I didn't much fancy staying there by myself," I replied, carelessly, wanting to make them do the talking, for their actions convinced me there was a story connected to the house.

"Well, you wouldn't have stayed there had you stopped," spoke up the girl. "That's the haunted house."

"Haunted house? What do you mean?" I asked.

"Why it's haunted. No one can live there. There have been a dozen people there in the last year and none of them have stayed there more than three days. It used to belong to Col. So and So. One night some one hid behind his gate post and shot him as he rode up to his home. He rides the old horse he rode in the army nearly every night. The clatter of the horse's hoofs wake up the people and they move out the day after they see the Colonel and his old horse."

"I wish he had come around last night. I'd got on my horse and ridden around with him. He'd been some company, and anyway he'd not been such a terrifying sight as I did see," said I.

"Oh! You saw the cat!" cried both women, in concert, throwing up their hands, and I am sure my face wasn't any whiter when I left the house than theirs were at the mention of the sight I had seen."

The preceding story was published on page 9 of the Sunday, Sept. 27, 1903, edition of the *Fort Smith News Record*. The headline on it in the newspaper was "Only Time Belle Starr Was Overcome By Fear, The Narration of Her Experience in a Haunted House Brought to Light by a Discussion of Cole Younger's Recent Arrest."

The reference Belle makes to how she "became a woman" refers to her practice of wearing men's clothing while riding with her husband on raids or scouting, then changing back into women's clothes after leaving him.

Skeptics will point out its similarity to many other ghost stories and the fact that it is told long after her death. On the other hand, there is no harm done by believing it. Its recollection might even keep you from the folly of bedding down with an infernal feline.

Hallowe'en Parties and Familiar Sports

Some of the Games That Will Be Very Popular at the Gathering Tomorrow Night

Tomorrow night is Halloween and the bad boys will play more pranks than Peck's Bad Boy, while the girls will walk backward to mirrors, look down the well, and jump over candles in an endeavor to find out who their future mate will be and how long it will be until that event takes place.

There are times when the good fairies are said to be about. Halloween is not one of them. All the good ones go to bed at dark on that evening and leave the revelry to the mischievous ones. And it is high revelry they hold.

The evening is that preceding All Hallow's day and from that it takes its name. The playing of pranks on that evening is a custom amos as old as the giving of gifts on Christmas Eve.

The bogie man also stalks abroad on Halloween. The bogie man in this day is the jack o' lantern made out of a good sized pumpkin with eyes, nose and ears hollowed out and is lighted with a candle. No Halloween party is complete without a bogie man, in fact, there should be no light except the subdued light for a Halloween party partakes of the weird and should have half-light in which the fairies revel.

One of the oldest Halloween games is bobbing for apples. The effort to catch an apple in your teeth and remove it from a tub two-thirds full of water, while your hands are tied behind you will furnish plenty of amusement for the spectators, while to you is the additional gratification of knowing that the apple will bear the initial or name of your companion.

The snatching of chestnuts and raisins from a plate of blazing alcohol is another weird pasttime of Halloween and is about the only one that is not supposed to have an effect on the future.

Some of the best known of Halloween games are as follows:

Name two apple seeds after two sweethearts, wet them and stick them to the forehead. The first one that falls off will bear the name of the faint-hearted, unfaithful love. Apples bearing the name or initials of the opposite sex are suspended in the doorway by their stems. The person securing the apple with his teeth learns the name of the bride or groom to be. Sometimes the giving of prizes is substituted for the naming of the apples.

Suspend a wedding ring by a silk thread in a goblet. Repeat the alphabet and stop when the ring touches the side of the glass. Keep this up until the ring spells the name of the future husband or wife.

Fill your mouth with water and walk around the house or around the block without spilling or swallowing a drop. The first person of the opposite sex you meet is your future mate.

Make dough of meal and water. A young man writes names of a half dozen of his favorites among the girls and rolls each into a dough ball. Throw the dough balls into a pot of water and the first dough ball to melt apart will reveal the name of his intended. Young ladies make dough balls containing the names of the young men.
If a maiden stands before a mirror in a dimly lighted room, and eats an apple, her lover, if he is in earnest, will appear and ask for a bite of the apple.

Young men and young women are led blindfolded around a table on which are three dishes. If he sticks his finger first into an empty dish, he will remain single; if the finger goes into the dish of soapy water the spouse will be a widow or widower, but if it goes into the dish of clear water, the spouse will be young and handsome.
Peer into a well at midnight and you will see your lover's face reflected in the water.
The Halloween pranks are generally harmless, though annoying, and seldom go further than the misplacing of gates and other articles.

Halloween will be celebrated in this city by quite a number of Halloween parties.

The preceding article was published in the *Fort Smith News Record*, Oct. 30, 1903, on page 7.

The Harem Skirt Doesn't Scar'em

It has arrived at last, and it has created a commotion.

By"It," the harem skirt is meant.

It appeared on the street this morning, with a good looking girl inside it. Whether it was admired or not it certainly attracted attention and a large crowd was soon in its wake. The crowd followed it to breakfast at an uptown restaurant and waited around the door anxiously for it to reappear. Along appeared the mayor and, as is his wont, he attempted to disperse the unlawful gathering, but on discovering the cause of it, he suddenly felt weak and went inside for a cup of coffee.

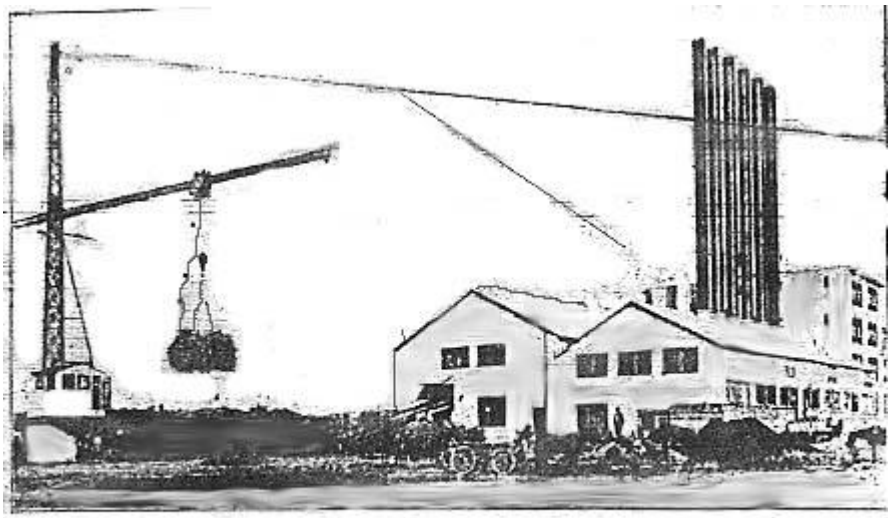
Gray-haired men espied it going down Garrison Avenue and were immediately taken ill and had to step down to the drug store, but it was noticed they always went to a drug store that caused them to get in line with the girl in the harem skirt.

Nothing seen on Garrison Avenue in a long time has caused so much attention. Every one was asking who the woman was and what she's advertising. She is a member of the Hastings Stock Co. appearing at the Auditorium and there are five women in the company who wear the new skirts. Ladies, whose husbands have urgent business or lodge meetings to call them downtown evenings this week will know where to find them should they be needed at home.

Reprint: *Times Record*, May 23, 1911, p.2

The World's Largest Sorghum Mill

In exchange for Fort Smith purchasing $35,000 in company bonds at 7 percent interest, the Best-Clymer sorghum company agreed to build a $75,000 plant in south Fort Smith near just north of where the Wal-Mart Supercenter at Zero and S. 24th streets are today. The date was Nov. 5,1913.



Best-Clymer Mfg. Co. Sorghum Syrup Plant
South Fort Smith, Arkansas

The power plant consists of the battery of six boilers..., a big Corliss engine of 400 horsepower, vacuum pumps to numerous to mention, a small turbine engine operating an attached dynamo by means of which the plant can be electrically lighted.

The Mazzard Land Company agreed to take the entire bond issue if it sold enough house lots later.

Mr. R. Best agreed to buy some of the lots himself, speculating they would be a good investment.

The lot sale in mid-January went well and by the fall of 1914, the sorghum plant was built.

In late January, 30 farmers from the vicinity of Paris, Charleston, Branch, Lavaca and other points on the Arkansas Central line attended a meeting at First National Bank. The meeting was part of an effort to recruit farmers to sorghum cultivation for the new mill. M.B. Parkinson, superintendent of the prospective plant, was there to answer questions as well. Farm demonstration agents were trained at the University of Arkansas to the particulars of sorghum cultivation so as to educate farmers further.

On Feb. 15, 1914, a carload of sorghum seed arrived, enough to plant 3,000 to 4,000 acres.

The Kellerman Construction Co. built Best-Clymer's St. Louis plant and they were the general contractor for the one in South Fort Smith. Construction began in May 1914.

When finished in the fall, it ended up costing $115,000 to build and housed more than 40 railroad car loads of eqiuipment. At the time, it was believed to be largest sorghum mill in the world. The Times Record said:

Operations at the plant finally began at 9:30 a.m. on Oct. 16, 1914. Five hunderd tons of cane were already on hand. It shut for the season one month later. Syrup was shipped to St. Louis for finishing and packaging. The plant continued in operation for many years to come.

Sources*: Fort Smith Times Record*, Nov. 5, 1913, p. 1; Jan. 30, 1914, p. 1; Feb. 16, 1914, p. 8; May 1, 1914, p. 5; Sept. 27, 1914, p. 7; Oct. 16, 1914, p. 1; Nov. 15, 1914, p. 3.

Flag and Field

By Ben Boulden

Two events of note occurred in May 1916. Fort Smith dedicated its flag and a new sports venue, Stadium Park at South Ninth Street and Carnall.

Both events were part of a larger New Era Celebration held for three days in May in Fort Smith that year. The celebration was intended to encourage the spirit of harmony and cooperation, according to the Times Record.

Stadium Park would play host to games of school athletics for the city's youth and for area minor league baseball teams. Today, the site is the home to a wing of the Sebastian County Detention Center.

Governor-to-be Dr. C.H. Brough dedicated Stadium Park on May 11 following an "auto parade" that also included the high school's marching band.

As Mayor Henry C. Read gave his dedication speech on May 12 for the flag, it was run up a temporary pole at centerfield that was removed at the conclusion of ceremonies.

Before the dedication of the flag, nearly 1,000 school pupils performed a flag drill with each child carrying two miniature U.S. flags. Following it, 30 junior high school girls dressed all in red did a Red Bird dance in imitation of the postures and form of the cardinal.

The ceremonies at Stadium Park were preceded by a "long and impressive" parade of children that began in the 1300 block of Garrison Avenue and was led by school Superintendent G.W. Reid, acting as grand marshal. The parade turned south at Fifth Street then proceeded down Rogers Avenue before reaching the stadium. Bleachers were set aside at the park for the exclusive use of the children.

After the dedication, a baseball game between the Denison, Texas, team and the Fort Smith Twins was played. Denison and Fort Smith also competed again on Saturday, the last day of the New Era Celebration.

One final note, several hundred fans showed up on Saturday, May 6, 1916, to celebrate "Board Day," the baseball equivalent of a barnraising. Men and women pitched in to fence the park. Carpenters who had been working to build the stands donated a half day of labor to the cause. Everyone working together completed the fencing.

Source: "Athletic Field Fenced By Fans," Fort Smith Times Record, May 7, 1916, p. 1; "Municipal Flag Has Been Chosen," FSTR, May 9, 1916, p. 5; "Flag Day at the Stadium," FSTR, May 12, 1916, p. 1.

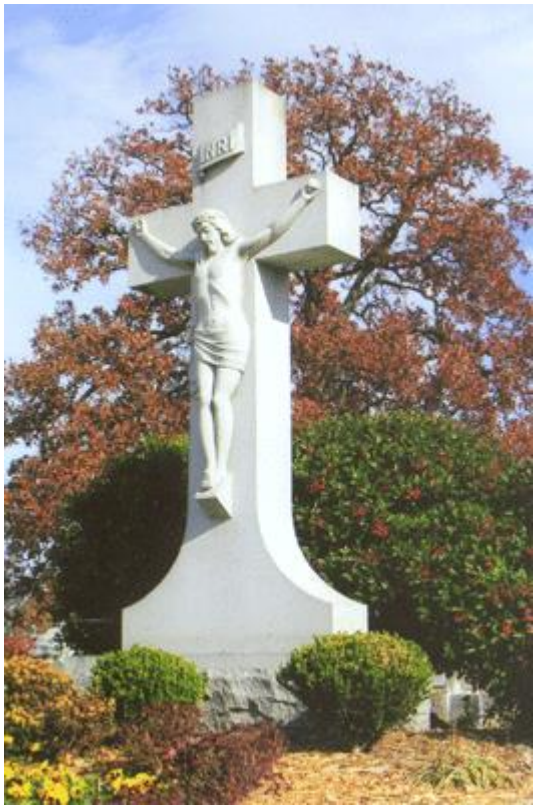
SOS! Photography Submissions

By: Katie Lamar (left)

Boy with Lamb
Artist: Unknown, sculptor
Date: Installed 1988
Medium: Sculpture: marble; base: concrete
Located: St. Edward Medical Center at entrance to Women's Center,
73rd and Rogers Ave.,
Fort Smith, Arkansas

By: Michael Malkin (right)

Confederate Memorial, sculpture
Artist: Monumental Cut Stone Company, fabricator.
Date: Dedicated Sept. 10, 1903
Medium: Sculpture; stone; Base: stone
Located: Sebastian County Court House, South Sixth and Rogers Ave.,
Fort Smith, Arkansas



By: Rhonda Barger (left)

Crucifix, sculpture
Artist: Barre Guild, fabricator
Medium: Sculpture: granite; Base: granite
Located: Entrance of Calvary Cemetery, Lexington Ave., Fort Smith, Arkansas

By: Jordan Brown (right)

Reynolds Memorial, sculpture
Artist: Unknown, sculptor
Date: Dedicated 1920
Medium: Sculpture: marble; Base; granite
Located: Oak Cemetery,
1401 So. Greenwood & Dodson avenues,
Fort Smith, Arkansas

By: Mark Burnett (right)

Reynolds Memorial, sculpture
Artist: Unknown, sculptor
Date: Dedicated 1920
Medium: Sculpture: marble; Base; granite
Located: Oak Cemetery,
1401 So. Greenwood & Dodson Avenue,
Fort Smith, Arkansas

at North 13th Street, Fort Smith, Arkansas

By: Barbara Wilson (left)

Virgin Mary, sculpture
Artist: Unknown, sculptor
Date: ca. 1898
Medium: Painted, gessoed wood
Located: Over entrance door to Immaculate Conception Church, head of Garrison Avenue

By: Gary Felker (right)

Virgin Mary, sculpture
Artist: Unknown, sculptor
Date: ca. 1898
Medium: Painted, gessoed wood
Located: Over entrance door to Immaculate Conception Church, head of Garrison Avenue at North 13th Street, Fort Smith, Arkansas

By: Frank Titsworth

Sphinxes, sculpture
Artist: Mann, George R., architect
Walker, Gordon, contractor
Haralson and Nelson, architectural firm
Date: Dedicated 1929
Medium: Concrete
Located: Fort Smith Masonic Temple,
200 North 11th and Grand Ave.,
Fort Smith, Arkansas

SOS! (Save Outdoor Sculpture) Photography Contest Winners

The Fort Smith Historical Society is pleased to announce the winners of the Save Outdoor Sculpture SOS! Photography Contest, which ended January 31, 2006. This contest, co-sponsored by Bedford Camera and Video, Inc., was designed to promote Fort Smith's outdoor sculpture; display the photographs in various locations; and to recognize the personal efforts of the photographers.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum established the Inventory of American Sculpture, which lists works from Colonial through contemporary times. There are 17 sculptures in Fort Smith which are listed on the Smithsonian American Art Museum website. Nine other sculptures in Fort Smith are listed by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Information below for each image lists the award, photographer's name and city of residence, sculpture title and its location. Click on the image itself to see a larger version of it and read more information about it.

Out of 148 images, judges selected winners. Many entrants who didn't win still produced work that we think is worth seeing so we've given them a page of their own. Thanks to everyone who entered the contest. More SOS images we think you should see are included in the previous post.

Best In Show

Photographer: Donna Morgan

City of Residence: Fort Smith, Arkansas

Sculpture and Fort Smith location:

Reynolds Memorial, Oak Cemetery

Reynolds Memorial, sculpture

Artist: Unknown, sculptor

Date: Dedicated 1920

Medium: Sculpture: marble; Base; granite

Located: Oak Cemetery,

1401 S. Greenwood Ave., Fort Smith, Arkansas

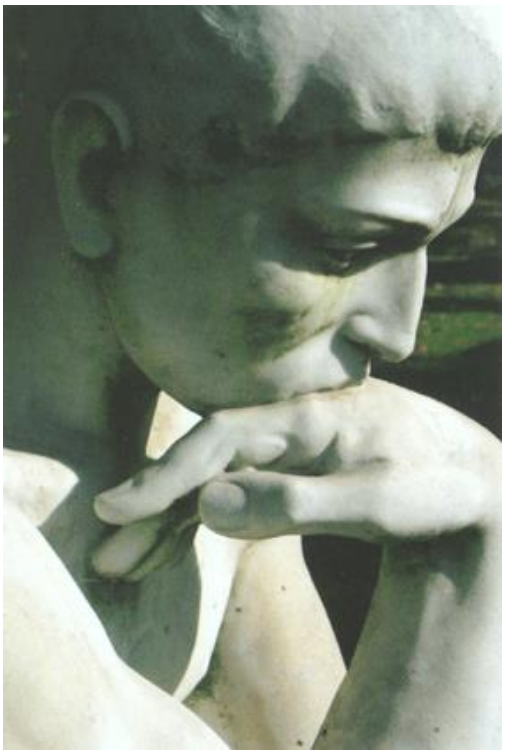
This marble sculpture sits on a granite base, is 67 inches by 40 inches by 18 inches. On the front of the base is incised: Lest We Forget.

The sculpture is mounted on a rectangular gravestone base that marks the burial site of Captain James E. Reynolds, and is placed directly behind two above-ground crypts.

Capt. James E. Reynolds commissioned the sculpture in tribute to the women of the Confederacy. It rests about his grave. Capt. Reynolds was born July 17, 1837 at Granada, Mississippi. He enlisted in the Consecrate Army in 1861, and participated in the Battle of Bull Run under Stonewall Jackson. He enlisted in the Army of Tennessee in 1862, and fought in the battle of Perryville on Sept.14th. He fought in the battle of Murfreesboro, and was promoted to Second Lt. for meritorious conduct on the battle field. He fought in the battle of Lookout Mountain, making Captain for his action in this battle. At the battle of New Hope Church Station, while trying to stop Sherman on his march of destruction through Georgia to Atlanta, he was wounded in the leg, preventing him form further military action.

He and his wife, Felicity Long Turnbull, a member of the Choctaw Tribe, came to the Choctaw nation and settled near Skulleyville in 1867. He acquired large holdings in the Braden Bottoms of the Poteau River. He was called the first capitalist to develop coal mining in Pittsburg County. He established his home at Cameron in 1887, building the palatial residence now called “Old Castle” or “Captains Castle,” in Cameron in 1890. He established a fruit industry in the area with a shipment of peaches to Liverpool, England in 1903. He laid out and established the Arkoma townsite in 1911 with street car service to Fort Smith. He died in July of 1920, and his wife died in October of 1920. They are buried at Oak Cemetery in Fort Smith, where the tomb is marked with statuary carved in Italy, portraying a wounded soldier supported by two young ladies. That had been his personal experience after receiving wounds at New Hope, Georgia in 1864. He had been left on the battle field thought to be fatally injured and was discoverer by the two daughters of his commanding officer.

From “The Proud Heritage of Le Flore County,” by Henry Peck.



1st Runner Up

Linda Bedwell

Van Buren, Arkansas

Stiles Memorial, Forest Park Cemetery

Stiles Memorial, sculpture

Artist: Unknown, sculptor

Rodin, Auguste, 1840-1917, sculptor,

(copy after)

Date: Dedicated 1977

Medium: Sculpture: marble; Foundation: marble

Located: Forest Park Cemetery,

west side, North 50th Street & Midland Blvd.,

Fort Smith, Arkansas

2nd Runner Up

Sandi Teague

Greenwood, Arkansas

Sphinx, Masonic Temple

Sphinx, sculpture

Artist: Mann, George R., architect

Walker, Gordon, contractor

Haralson and Nelson, architectural firm

Date: Dedicated 1929

Medium: Concrete

Located: Fort Smith Masonic Temple,

200 North 11th and Grand Ave.,Fort Smith, Arkansas

A pair of Egyptian sphinxes flank the entrance stairs to Fort Smith Masonic Hall. Each sphinx has a lion's body with a human face topped by an Egyptian headpiece that hangs down on each side. The eyes are closed and there is an aura of serenity to each sphinx. Each sphinx is mounted on a short base decorated with a geometric design.

A Five Mile Journey Under Fort Smith

"A Five Mile Journey Under Fort Smith" first was published on page 3, section 2, of the July 4, 1909 edition of the *Fort Smith Times Record*.

A FIVE MILE JOURNEY UNDER FT. SMITH

Or How I Walked Through the Big Storm Sewers of the City

In the first place, kind reader, if you want to make the trip with me this morning, I would suggest that you get up rather early and eat a good, substantial breakfast, for you have a day's work ahead of you that beats following the plow all day. Then again I will suggest that you put on your old shoes and clothing.

It might be a good idea to take along some rubber boots, a lantern or a bicycle lamp will complete the equipment. Of course you may use your own judgment about the matter, but The Times Record man has been there, and as an experienced guide, wants to bring all the comfort possible about you and he can guarantee that it will not be any too much at that.

Starting the Journey.

If you don't happen to live within reasonable walking distance of the mouth of the big sewer, board a Fifth street car and get off at the suburban railroad crossing. A short walk northwest across a field will bring us to the mouth of the mammoth concrete tube. Here is where the journey commences. We had better light the lanterns before entering, but the light will not be in demand for some little time.

Oh!, there is no place to walk along the sides of the sewer that has the appearance of a big hallway. That don't make much difference, for I told you to bring along your old shoes or rubber boots. This is the place we are going to wade. Splash, splash; we are off. I would like to inform you before going much farther, that this sewer is being used for storm purposes. Of course, the water is dirty, but then it is drained from all parts of the city, and you know good and well there are a few dirty spots here and there.

But, let us be on our way, for if we loaf around it may be night before we get back. In fact, it will be late anyway you take it. As we proceed under the ground it becomes darker and darker. The water rushes by our feet with the speed of a mill race. Tramp, tramp, splash, splash. We are traveling nearly due east, crossing under the bed of the old Buttermilk branch, under the tracks of the suburban railroad, the Fifth street car line, under vacant lots and to North Sixth street, thence to North Seventh and P streets. While under J street and under the alley between North Seventh and Eighth streets we find a branch. One is the continuation of the newly constructed sewer and the other is the old brick sewer.

Under Garrison Avenue.

How would it be to go down and take a look under Garrison Avenue and then cross under that thoroughfare and go out Towson Avenue to Rogers Avenue?. It will be part of the trip to walk under ground all the way. You can step out of the water now if you want to and spread your feet far apart—something after the style of a pretty girl behind the Boston Store ribbon counter stretching her hand from her nose when she measures a yard of ribbon. You will find this way of walking rather uncomfortable and progress will be slow. We are going down under the business section of the city. From North J to North H street alley, over to North Eighth street, thence south to

North Eighth and G streets, east to North Ninth and F, then to F street, east, under the alley between North Ninth and Tenth streets, south under the alley to North C street, east to North Tenth street, south under North Tenth street to a point under North Towson Avenue and then proceeding south to see the light of day. As we draw near there is a great rumbling sound. We are looking upward through the catch basin at North Towson and Garrison Avenue, that don't carry off the water when it rains hard. That rumbling sound you hear is the busy, hustling, progressive business section of the city. We are now crossing under the wide street and will go under Towson Avenue for awhile. Here is Rogers Avenue. Well, this is as far as we can go now. Better rest awhile and then I will tell you what to do.

Through the New Sewer.

I suppose you are pretty well tired now, but we will retrace our steps back to that branch I was telling you about on North Seventh and J streets, where the old sewer connects with the new. From here I will take you through all of the new sewers, where you may walk, without bending your neck even a little bit.

Under Park Avenue.

Well, here we are again at the mouth. We have now arrived at the branching off place and will proceed from North P street east away over on North Eighteenth street, crossing under north Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth streets until we are now at Eighteenth street. We are now traveling south under Eighteenth street and have arrived under O street. Here is another branch, the one proceeding east is nine feet in diameter and this is the route we will take. Going east on O we arrive at a point under North Twenty-second street. We have crossed under North Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth, Twentieth, Twenty-first, and Twenty-second streets. The sewer we are now following is extending diagonally under vacant lots to Lawrence Avenue. The sewer is getting smaller as you will notice and we are traveling parallel to the suburban railroad tracks and will soon pass under Catholic Avenue at the point where it crosses the suburban tracks.

Yes, that light you see ahead is the end. We are near Park Avenue and the laborers are constructing the extension past Sweet street. This work will soon be finished, but let us now walk out of the underground passage and walk overland back to North Eighteenth and O streets where I called your attention to the other branch.

A Stroll Under Little Rock Avenue.

Entering the underground concrete tunnel again at North Eighteenth and O streets, we are now ready to take a stroll through the dark to Little Rock Avenue.

Did you say you were getting hungry? Well, you should be, for don't you know the noon hour has passed and there are no sidewalk lunch stands here, not even a restaurant. Yes, and if you don't hurry it will be past the supper hour and near bedtime. We are now walking under South Eighteenth street. This 3-foot, 6-inch branch is at North Eighteenth and L streets. Unless you would like to crawl awhile, we will keep in this big passage. We are now walking diagonally and this place is North Twentieth and H streets. The sewer is six feet in diameter at this point. The direction we are now going is South and this is North Twentieth street.

Are you getting tired? Now, don't you mind that a bit. The journey is nearly over. We are nearing the end. Yes, here we are at last under Little Rock Avenue. Now if you don't care to walk all the way back we will crawl out of this hole. Lookout, there is a street car. Better get on and ride home. If your friends happen to ask about your personal appearance, just whisper that you have been fishing, but had poor luck.

Have you noted that these underground passageways through which we have traveled, quite closely resemble the main trunk and principal branches of a great tree. Well, having climbed the main trunk and then out each of the several great branches did you observe that, in every block we passed under, there were openings? These openings lead from the main branches to the secondary branches, which were just too small for us to comfortably travel through and they are known as latterals leading out to

the smallest branches which reach all the residence districts of the city, and within reach of each home. All through the north and northeast portion of the city these smaller branches are complete and waiting the order which will permit them to perform their function of carrying the sewage from the homes, down the little branches into the larger and still larger ones, until their contents reach the main trunks and so on out of the city.

Suggestion to the Council.

That journey was nearly five miles long. About ten hours were spent in making the trip. Of course, there are many interesting things to see along the way and they cannot be well described on paper, but if the city fathers would like to know just what the big sewer looks like, it would be well for them to get the permission of Engineer Meyer and take a walk under the city.

Weaver Papers: Antebellum Fort Smith

The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville owns the typescript of the Weaver Papers. Archived in the Special Collections Department of Mullins Library on the UA campus, copies are available on request through the department. What follows are excerpts from the parts of the papers which cover Fort Smith's history before the Civil War.

This year we've tried to add primary source material to the Web site. Technically, the Weaver Papers are a secondary source. J. Frank Weaver did most of his writing on local history in the 1920s, but he also drew on the writings of his father, W.J. Weaver who was an antebellum resident of Fort Smith. Both were Fort Smith newspaper men. All headings and words are Weaver's except those in brackets. We hope that the excerpts here entertain and inform you.

Arrival of First Settlers
In my opinion, those who may be safely referred to as the first permanent settlers of Fort Smith were Major William Bradford, who came in 1817; Captain John Rogers, who arrived in 1822, and William DuVal who arrived in 1825. And I also think it but justice to class Hugh Tygart, Andrew Mathews and Col. John Q. Nicks as among the first permanent settlers, for Nicks resigned from the army in 1821 and two or three years later entered business at Fort Smith with Captain Rogers.

Surgeon First to Die Here
The first death at Fort Smith of which there is any record was that of Dr. Thomas Russell, the post surgeon, which occurred August 24, 1818. Major Bradford was another early victim of the grim reaper, dying at the post here Oct. 20, 1826.

Wants First Schoolmaster Honored
I feel also that somewhere, either in the recitation hall or the auditorium, in our high school building, there should be a marble or bronze tablet bearing the name of C.W. Graham, Fort Smith's first school teacher. But perhaps this is sentimentalism to a degree that finds no place in the affairs of this coldly practical age.

Birth of Twin Cities
Van Buren and Fort Smith were incorporated at the same session of the legislature, and both acts of incorporation were signed by the governor on the same day.

The First House Built In The City There were three brothers named Gibelow here, [later given as Bigelow]. Jonas, the eldest, with Rogers' consent, built a log house on the river bank about one block north of the avenue, where he kept a stock of groceries. He afterwards abandoned the premises and went to Webbers Falls, where he was killed in a street fight.

First Brick Residence Located
The first brick residence erected in Fort Smith was the home of Jesse Reed, father of the late Captain Jas H. Reed of McAlester, Okla. It stood at or near the corner of Fourth and B streets. Mr. Reed was himself a brick mason and a prominent contractor.

[First School for the Deaf]
It is worthy of note that the first school for the instruction of deaf mutes was taught in Fort Smith at the residence of Asa Clark at the corner of Fifth and B streets. Mr. Clark was a native of Maine. He was a stonemason by trade and came to Fort Smith in 1838 to work on the fort. The school was established some time during the [1850s].

[Irving Visit Questioned]
Captain Rogers told W.J. Weaver that Washington Irving spent several days with him at the old log hotel when he returned from his trip on which he gathered material for his famous story "Tour on the Prairies" but the captain must have confused Irving with some other traveler, for Irving says that the day after he reached Fort Gibson at the conclusion of his trip he took a steamboat at the latter place, on which he proceeded to New Orleans.

First Ice Cream Parlor
Another man who built a house in Fort Smith in the territorial days was Mr. Girard. His given name, I believe, was Jules. He was a Frenchman who, on his arrival in America, settled in New Orleans. ... He bought a lot on the river's bank and built the house on it in which for many years he conducted a confectionery store and sold ice cream during the summer months. It is said that his ice cream was the first ever made in the town.

Dispatches: The Civil War in Fort Smith

No. 10: *Report of Brig. Gen. John M. Thayer, U.S. Army, commanding District of the Frontier*

Headquarters District of the Frontier
Fort Smith, Ark., July 30, 1864

Sir: I have to report that on the morning of the 27th instant a force of between 1,500 and 2,000 rebels, under command of General Gano, all mounted, attacked my outpost, seven miles out, composed of about 200 men of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry, under command of Captain Mefford. They moved up in two columns, one driving in the pickets, the other flanking them. Captain Mefford formed his men and fought them bravely, but was very soon overpowered, and he and 82 men were taken prisoners, and the enemy retired before re-enforcements (sic) could be got to the relief of our men. I sent a force in pursuit but could not overtake them. There were 10 of our men killed and 15 wounded; 12 of the enemy killed and 20 wounded, left on the field. I have been obliged to keep a force out that distance so that our stock could graze on the prairie.

Some eight days ago eight of my citizen scouts surprised the pickets of the enemy and took 1 lieutenant and 6 men prisoners, and brought them in. Major Galloway, of the First Arkansas Cavalry, routed Major Pickler and his command, belonging to Stand Watie and Buck Brown's force, killing Major Pickler and a number of his men, and captured 35 horses and mules. Captain Worthington, of the same regiment, subsequently attacked a portion of Brown's force, killing 9 rebels and capturing 15 horses and 3 mules. The enemy, under Cooper and Maxey, are camped on Buck Creek about twenty-five miles southwest of here. I still think their object is to hold this force here, and also to make raids across the river between here and Gibson when the river is fordable, as it soon will be. I have no fears as to this place or Gibson. I may have to withdraw the troops from Clarksville for the reason that I shall have to keep trains running from Fort Gibson to Fort Scott, and shall have to strengthen the escorts on that route, and also guard the fords between here and Gibson. I also have to furnish a large force to guard the parties putting up hay. My cavalry are almost useless as cavalry for the want of serviceable horses. I am anxious to hear about your situation and the movements of the enemy in your front and below you. The force in my front is from 5,000 to 7,000, nearly all mounted. I am only prevented from moving out and fighting them by the want of cavalry and artillery horses. I could not move my batteries twenty miles in this hot weather before half of the horses would give out.

I would call your attention to the fact that the term of service of the Second Indiana Battery, now here, expires on the last of next month. I should be glad to get the Third Kansas Battery up here, now at Little Rock.

Very respectfully,
John M. Thayer,
Brigadier-General, Commanding

Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele,
Commanding Department of Arkansas

ADDENDA

Itinerary of the District of the Frontier, commanded by Brig. Gen. John M. Thayer

July 2 — The Ninth Kansas Cavalry was ordered to Little Rock.
July 9 — The First Arkansas Cavalry transferred to Third Brigade.
July 11 — The Second Indian Home Guards transferrred to Indian Brigade.
July 21 — The Fourth Arkansas Infantry (organizing) was ordered to Little Rock.
July 27 — At daybreak the Sixth Kansas Cavalry, on outpost duty, six miles from Fort Smith, were attacked by General Gano's (Texas) brigade. Loss: 10 killed, 17 wounded; captured, 115 enlisted men and 2 commissioned officers, Captain Mefford and Lieutenant Defriese.
July 31 — Pickets driven in by forces under Cooper, Gano, Stand Watie and Folsom, all mounted. Their advance was met by Colonel Judson, Sixth Kansas Cavalry, commanding Third Brigade, one mile from the fortifications, who succeeded after a brisk engagement, in driving them back. Could not be pursued for want of a sufficient mounted force. Casualties — Colonel Judson wounded, 10 enlisted men killed and wounded. Rebel loss not known.

No. 11: *Report of Lieut. Jacob Morehead, Sixth Kansas Cavalry*

Fort Smith, Ark., *July 29, 1864*

Sir: I have the honor to report to you that I was in command of Company B, Sixth Kansas Cavalry, on the morning of the 27th instant, when the enemy made the attack on our camp, on Massard Prairie; and as soon as the alarm was given that the enemy was in the prairie, which was about 6 a.m., I sent immediately for the herd, which had been out grazing since daylight, and was about three-quarters of a mile southwest of camp. I formed my men on the right of camp to protect my herd as it came in and until it could be secured, but before the horses could be brought up the enemy charged on us, which stampeded the herd and left the men to fight on foot as best they could. We drove the enemy back, and as I had received no orders from the commanding officer, I ordered my men to fall back until they could form on the right of the other companies. When I had fallen back to the left of my company's parade ground I came in speaking distance of Major Mefford, when I received orders to form my company on the right to protect the camp. I immediately took the position assigned me, with Company D on my left. We held our position, repulsing three distinct charges of the enemy. At this time I saw that Major Mefford had, with Companies E and H, been driven from their position on the left of the line and had begun to fall back across the prairie. I knew that I could not hold my ground much longer with what men I had, so, without receiving orders from Major Mefford, commenced falling back toward him. As we fell back I had several men captured by the enemy that was advancing through the timber in the center of our camp. We fought and retreated in good order until we came within a half a mile of the house on the prairie, when the enemy closed in on all sides, taking many more of our men prisoners. Those that were left continued fighting and falling back to the house. There the men that were left were overpowered and captured. Before we reached the house I received a slight wound in the right thigh. Some of my men who were first captured made their escape by hiding in the thick brush, the enemy not staying to hunt for stragglers, but left immediately after the men at the house were captured, taking with them all the men that could travel. All did well under the circumstances, it being a surprise; after driving in the pickets the enemy was in our camp. I lost in the engagement 3 killed, 2 mortally wounded, 5 severely wounded, and 40 men taken prisoners.

Jacob Morehead,
First Lieut., Sixth Kansas Cav. Vols., Comdg. Company B.

Col. W.R. Judson,
Commanding First Brigade

A Southtown Oral History – Part I

The following is a transcript of an oral history interview with Tom L. Scott, Gene Inman (Eugene Benton Inman) and Harold Thames, which took place at Willowbrook retirement community on Feb. 17, 2006, in Fort Smith. Editing and elisions are minimal but were made. For a completely verbatim experience of the interview, please contact Joe Wasson who videotaped it for the Society's archives. **All photos below are courtesy of Tom L. Scott.**

Gene Inman: They put in their winter quarters in the old Western Wheelbarrow works. Most of their entertainers and people who worked for them, when they got into quarters, they'd no longer need them so they'd be released by Parker & Watts. Parker died the season before they came in there. So, Ira Watts became the owner or supervisor. The owner lived in Miami, Oklahoma, and this was more or less his hobby. He owned a smelter in Miami. Scott's store furnished them all their groceries and a lot of their supplies. Once a month we'd send them a bill to Miami, Oklahoma, to the owner and he'd send us a check. A lot of the people that were in it I got acquainted with. The cook, Charlie Oliver and I and Nelson became very good friends.

Tom Scott: Nelson was my dad.

Gene Inman: His dad. In fact, I talked about, he was from up in Illinois. He wanted me to go up to Illinois with him when he left the circus and go into business. He'd be the baker and I could deliver, but I didn't go. I saw Charlie in later years. I was working for Hanna Grate Co. on North Ninth Street, and he was in the circus that came to Fort Smith. He was in a taxi cab and went out to Nelson's store, his dad, and visited with him and found out where I was and come in because I was in the store where I was and visited with me for a while. Then there was a Brownie. He was the cat man. In these elephant pictures he was the one who's taking care of the elephants. We called him the cat man because he was taking care of the lions, and elephants and tigers and leopards and all that. The elephant trainer was Johnny O'Connor. The two horse trainers were Hazel King, the lady. In the early teens, she was the wife of Bill Hoxie, the silent movie star. She also was one time all-around cowgirl in the United States. She was the lady horse trainer. Johnny Bauersox, he was the trainer. It's in this book. It's in the story I wrote that was in the Journal. Hazel King, we were up in Bartlesville and went to the 101 Ranch Museum and found the whole case of silver mounted spurs and bits and stuff that belonged to the movie star she was married with, Bill Hoxie. She had donated to this museum. I was in Greenville, Texas, during the war and one of their featured performers was Hazel King. I went down to see Hazel and didn't know where to look. I went to the cook tent and they pointed to this little tent. It was a little pup tent. It was pouring down rain. I said, "Hazel, This is Gene Inman from Fort Smith," and she come crawling out of that pup tent. That was where she was living. This was in 1943.

The Parker & Watts Circus wintered in Southtown in the late 1930s and 1940s. Sometimes the pachyderms were used to push railcars off the main railroad lines onto sidetracks in Southtown.

Ben Boulden: How many people were in the circus?

GI: Well, when they were on the road, I'd say 100 at least. They went on the road with the only circus street parade in 1937. They had the only circus street parade that a circus offered in that day. They wintered in Southtown.

BB: Do you know what year they started wintering in Southtown?

GI: I would say in '36, and the last of their stuff left there in '41.

BB: And they would stay there for about three months?

GI: They would go on the road and stay from about the first of March through the first of November.

BB: So, their touring period was from March to November?

GI: Something like that. Yeah, about four months.

BB: Before we go any further, your full name is?

GI: Eugene Inman but everybody calls me Gene.

BB: Your middle name?

GI: Benton.

TS: He's named for my great-grandfather. He's his grandfather and Harold's great-grandfather.

BB: Where were you born?

GI: Mountain Grove, Missouri.

BB: Date of birth?

GI: February 27, 1917.

BB: Your parents were?

GI: Ralph Inman and Sarah Inman. She was a Tankersley. Her maiden name was Tankersley.

BB: When did your family move to Southtown?

GI: We came here from Iowa in 1924. We went to Iowa in 1919 and it was was too cold for my father. He had arthritis and we came south. Well, my mother's family lived here.

TS: Your family went from here to Iowa then back?

GI: No, from Mountain Grove, Missouri, to Iowa. Four of us, my sister and I and my Dad and my mother both. All four of us were born in Mountain Grove, Missouri. My dad spent a few years in Iowa before he married my mother.

BB: How long did you live in Southtown?

GI: Well, we only lived there for about six weeks. Then, you know where Carnall School is on the prairie. We moved out there and lived about a half or a quarter from that.

BB: Near where Ben Geren is now?

GI: Well, Ben Geren would be to the east.At Carnall School, there's a little road that goes due south. I lived out there down that road about a half or quarter.

TS: That's Carnall School in 1927. (Shows photo). My mother's there. Gene's there. Harold's mother isn't but the sisters and brothers are.

BB: As for employment?

GI: Well, I worked for his (Tom Scott) grandpa four different times.

BB: At the grocery store?

GI: At the grocery store, I started the first time in September 1944 and the last time was in 1950. There were four different times in that period that I worked for him.

BB: In terms of after Southtown?

GI: Let's see. After I left there, I went to work for Hanna Grate Co. I travelled for them. Then I got sick, and after I got well, I went to work for Firestone until November 1, 1956, then I became a technician at the Air Guard. That's where I retired.

TS: Gene managed credit there at Firestone, and that's a whole different bunch of stories. He spent a lot of time on that.

BB: Mr. Thames, what's your full name?

HT: Just Harold Thames.

BB: No middle name?

HT: That is my middle name. Winford Harold.

BB: Where were you born?

HT: I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1929. We moved to Huntsville in north Arkansas, and we moved down here to South Fort Smith in 1937.

BB: And how long did you live there?

HT: We lived there and around South Fort Smith until 1958. We lived three different places in South Fort Smith, then moved over by Carnall School, where Carnall School is now right across the street. Then we moved into that rock house at (inaudible). We lived there until about 1950 when I went into the Navy. We lived there for about 14 years from when I was seven years old until I was about 21. I worked with them at the grocery store until about 1950.

GI: There's the grocery store in about 1927. (Shows photo). It stayed that way until... When did we tear that out Harold?

HT: It was in the Forties.

GI: It was about '48, I think.

HT: I guess because I know my Dad did it.

GI: That store was taken i 1927 and stayed that way until 1947 or 1948. Just like that. The Karo Syrup in the same place. The Calumet Baking Powder in the same place.

HT: The candy cane's in the same place.

GI: And the peanuts in the jar.

TS: The other two are employees. One of them is Everett Holman?

GI: Yeah, and I didn't know the lady.

BB: That segue ways nicely into your story.

TS: Well, we're all related. Gene mentioned the rock house. So many of the family lived in that rock house.

Thomas Robert Scott, third from the left, stands in his Southtown store in the 1920s. It was located on what is today South 31st Street.

BB: Let's get all your particulars if we can. Is it Thomas?

TS: It's Thomas Lewis [Scott]. That was my grandfather Tankersley. That was his name. I was born in Sparks Hospital on July 9, 1939.

BB: Did you grow up in South Fort Smith?

TS: We lived there until 1941. I don't remember any of that. Then, my father bought a store from my grandfather there at the end of Towson. Near Towson and Zero. In 1941, he bought that store and was in business there until 1976. We lived across the street from there until I was in high school, then he built a new house on South Jackson Street then sold it a couple of years later and built another one down on Cliff Drive and South 34th in 1956.

BB: So you grew up in South Fort Smith and parts nearby?

TS: Yeah, I went to Mill Creek grade school.

BB: Was your grandfather still in business there when you were growing up?

TS: In fact, when I graduated from high school, my grandfather had what you'd call a convenience store today that he owned over on Zero Street that he offered to sell me to go into business. I didn't want any part of it, but today Tackle Box sits on that piece of land.

BB: And you said you made your career in chemical engineering?

TS: Yeah.

BB: And your parents were?

TS: Nelson and Mary Scott, my dad was a JP in Sebastian County for 14 years from 1980 to 1994.

BB: And your grandfather's name?

TS: Was Thomas Carl Scott.

BB: His wife was?

TS: Therese, in fact, her name was Nellie Therese Nelson. Her parents were Swedish immigrants to Moline, Iowa. My great-grandfather was Thomas Robert Scott.

(Identifies people in photo).

Standing in front of the home of the Thomas Carl Scott family house, corner of south 32nd and Utica streets, left to right are Thomas Nelson Scott, his later wife Mary Altha Tankersley, Jane Scott, his sister, and Eugene Benton Inman in the mid-1930s. T.L

BB: And you worked in the grocery store?

GI: I sure did.

HT: Mr. Scott, his grandad hired me when I was nine years old.

BB: Oh, really? You didn't work the full day though did you?

HT: No, I worked after school and all day on Saturday and two hours the other five days. He gave me a dollar.

TS: A dollar a week.

HT: I emptied the trash, sacked potatoes.

TS: Did you ever work in the feedlot Harold?

HT: Oh, yeah.

GI: Chicken feeder, cattle feeder, hog feeder.

HT: I worked for him one Christmas and he gave me a dollar a week raise. Then the war come along and he (inaudible) gave me a lot of responsibilities. He gave me a drawer and I cleaned up the money. He even had me pay bills and write checks. He probably taught me more math than any school teacher. I worked there an awful lot. A lot of the time I worked for his parents, too.

BB: He had a store too?

TS: I need to clarify this. There was Scott's Store No. 1 and Scott's Store No. 2. Then there was the one on Zero that didn't have the name.

GI: You know where the post office is in South Fort Smith?

BB: On 32nd?

GI: Yes. Where that sits used to be our old scaffold that we used to butcher cattle and hogs.

BB: Oh, really? Yeah, I think Mr. Matlock said you had freshly slaughtered meat.

Thomas Carl Scott purchased the Star Cash Store in 1921 with savings from working at the Athletic Smelter in Southtown. He promptly renamed it T. C. (Thomas Carl) Scott's Store, look closely and you can see the trolley rails from Fort Smith that terminated in front of the store located on what is today South 31st Street.

GI: We had beef and hogs. On Saturday, we'd slaughter a whole bunch of chickens.

(Tom Scott points out locations of different stores on a map).

HT: After I got out of high school, I worked at this one (points to photo of Scott's Store No. 2 at Zero and Towson).

BB: Your father was the unofficial mayor of South Fort Smith?

TS: That was my grandfather.

BB: What did his unofficial duties entail when he wasn't running the store?

GI: I'll tell you. When the Democrats were in office, the post office was at Elmer Dooley's store. When the Republicans were in power, it was at Scott's store. It was just a yo-yo for years.

BB: Except for FDR. (Laughter).

HT: When the Republicans were in you'd take the mailboxes and put them in the backroom.

BB: Where was Mr. Dooley's store?

GI: Let's see. What's at that corner now. You passed the casket factory. It would have been right across the street on the southside of the casket factory was the hotel. There was Dooley's store and the hotel sat right behind it.

BB: What was the hotel?

GI: It was the Chandler Hotel. He had a pegleg, Chandler.

BB: What was his first name?

GI: I can't remember.

BB: Did they call him 'Pegleg?'

GI: Not to his face.

BB: But they called him Pegleg Chandler.

GI: Yeah.

BB: How many rooms in the hotel?

GI: I don't know. It was two story and people who worked at the smelter and the wheelbarrow factory lived there.

BB: Oh, I see, so it was more of a residence or apartments almost?

GI nods.

(Brief discussion of hotel's exact location and a handdrawn map and where the drinking establishments were in Southtown).

End of Part I.

Scott's Store No. 2 was at the intersection of Towson (Texas Road then) and U.S. 271. Smith Chevrolet is now just across the road on the left. This photo was taken after an auto crashed into and destroyed the roof around the store which my Thomas L. Scott bought in 1941.

Thomas Nelson Scott, his later wife Mary Altha Tankersley probably enjoying a Sunday outing in the grocery truck.

1Built in 1914, the Best-Clymer Manufacturing Company's sorghum syrup plant operated in Southtown probably until the 1940s. The building was used as a warehouse for several decades afterward. Here it can be seen from the west looking east. According to the Times Record, it was the "world's largest sorghum mill."

A Southtown Oral History – Part II

The following is part two of a transcript of an oral history interview with Tom L. Scott, Gene Inman (Eugene Benton Inman) and Harold Thames, which took place at Willowbrook retirement community on Feb. 17, 2006, in Fort Smith. Editing and elisions are minimal but were made. For a completely verbatim experience of the interview, please contact Joe Wasson who videotaped it for the Society's archives. All photos below are courtesy of Tom L. Scott and Gene Inman.

Ben Boulden: Dooley's was on the corner of what would be Zero and 31st?

Gene Inman: No, it was back this way at 31st and the first street past the railroad tracks.

[Brief review of map].

GI: We had a barber that was on this street that paralleled the railroad tracks there. Let's see that would have been ... [points]. His name was Levi Poteet. I'd get a haircut and a shave for 25 cents. ... When I was going to have a date, well, I'd skip over there and get me a shave for a dime real quick.

BB: The beer halls that you remember?

GI: Were right in here. [Points to the map].

BB: These were the proprietors: George Wilson, Curley McAlester and ...?

GI: Peewee Holman. He was the brother of Everett Holman who worked for T.C. there. There was two buildings there and they alternated. One would be a beer hall for a while then somebody would get the other one, then back and forth. Scott had a building right across here that we used for a warehouse. That building is still there.

Tom Scott: Is that the one that is a cafe now?

GI: No, it's sort of a long, skinny building. If you are going south, there's a vacant lot there then you come to two buildings. It's the first one you come to.

BB: Did they just serve beer or was it liquor?

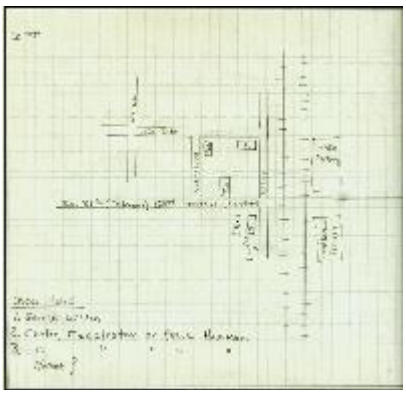
GI: Just beer. Three-two was in fashion in them days.

BB: Were you ever old enough to drink beer there?

GI: I didn't drink beer and didn't care for it. I never was in the joint.

BB: What about you?

Harold Thames: I didn't go into drink but I went in there once or twice.


Map of Southtown Bars.

BB: What did they look like?

GI: They had pool tables and tables where you could sit and drink. I could see through the door.

BB: They were small little places though?

GI: They weren't too big.

HT: And best I can remember they always had domino games going on.

BB: Did they bet on the games?

HT: I don't know.

GI: You know where the Coca-Cola bottling plant is? That was considered part of Southtown. That big area back behind there was a dairy farm that belonged to my great uncle, Uncle Lou Tankersley. He had a dairy there and there was a cemetery back in there where the Coca-Cola plant is that as far as I know is still there. I think it was called Carnall Cemetery. There was a Carnall who was very instrumental in education and the formation of the state from the early days in Fort Smith. Anyway, what I am getting at is Lou Tankersley and this one, Ross Tankersley, had a wild West show previous to World War I.

TS: Ross was one of the originators of the White Dairy and Tankersley Brothers.

[Discussion of photo].

GI: This is John B. Williams. [points to photo] You ever hear of him. He was sheriff for three terms, 1929 to 1934.

BB: Six years?

HT: I wouldn't be surprised if that picture wasn't made about where 540 is today.

Joe Wasson: Was John Williams related to Leon Williams?

GI: Brother. Now here is a picture of John B.'s wagon yard down on Rogers Avenue.

BB: Is this the same John B. Williams who was involved in the incident with Andy Carr?

TS: The beating of the black guy?

BB: Yes.

TS: Yeah, that was him.

BB: Interesting.

GI: Another thing near Carnall here was the smelters in south Fort Smith.

BB: How many people who were employed there?

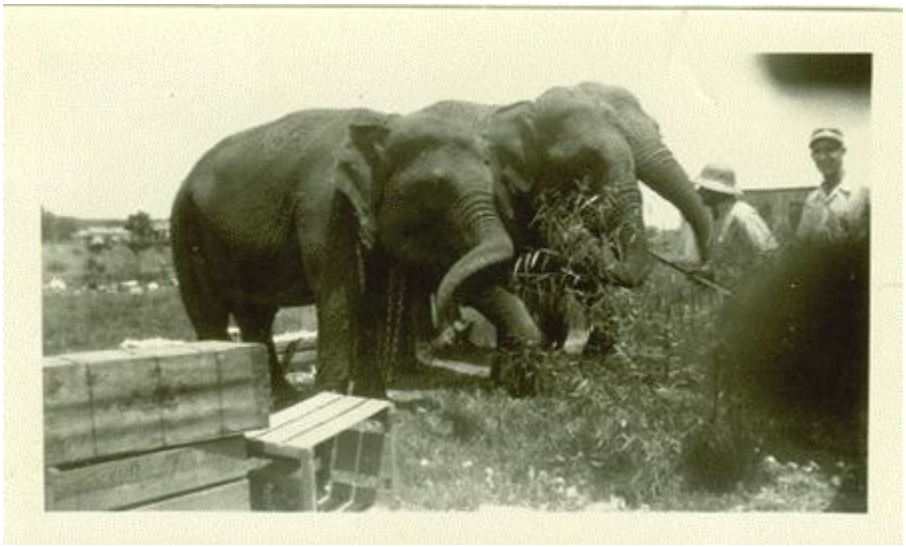
GI: Lots of them. I'd say two or three hundred.

BB: What metals were smelted?

GI: It was zinc. They were some of the best paid people during the Depression when that thing was running. They were some of the best paid people in the country.

TS: I had a little zinc ingot that was imprinted with Acme, which was the name of the smelter. I gave it to the Fort Smith museum among the things I donated.

BB: Was it Acme or Athletic?



Elephants from the Parker & Watts Circus, along with other circus animals, wintered in South Fort Smith in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Sometimes they were allowed outside by their handlers for exercise and feeding. See Part 1 of the oral history for more background on the circus in Southtown. Courtesy of Tom Scott

GI: Athletic. Acme Brick.

TS: I guess it did say Athletic. You're right.

GI: The first smelter was on the corner of Jenny Lind and 71 highway down there.

TS: I didn't know what sequence they came in, but anything that grows there is poison.

GI: You know where the battery factory is. That's were the other one was at. [Northwest Corner of Zero and Old Greenwood Road. Site of Exide battery factory.] Across Zero was a lake where they drew the water from.

BB: For the smelting?

GI: Yep. You couldn't raise a calf or colt. They'd get poisoned.

BB: I heard the horses would die or go lame but cows were unaffected.

GI: The calves were though. You could keep cows, but the calves wouldn't make it.

BB: I heard there would be a fog that enshrouded South Fort Smith when the smelter was going. They said you couldn't put whites out on the line or they would stain yellow. What sort of chemicals were airborne in that process?

TS: I don't know but I'm sure a lot of zinc in the air and that's a heavy metal.

GI: I lost a colt. I had an old mare and she had colt. That smelter started up and I had this old Palomino mare. It absolutely ruined her.

TS: My dad told me that the smelter tried to convince people that it wasn't harmful. To demonstrate it, they planted catalpha trees. That's how all the catalphas got started around South Fort Smith. You know the ones with the long see pods. They can survive in acidic soil. That's why you see so many in that part of town.

BB: And they're still there?

TS: Oh, yeah, you'll see them. Some people call them Indian Cigars. They've got long seed pods about eight inches or so.

GI: The smelter had a farm and they tried growing everything out there.

HT: Their orchard failed.

BB: Is that safe or clean now?

TS: If you really scrutinized it, there would be problems.

HT: If you go out Jenny Lind Road [south], past Yeagers' store, at the top of the first rise, on the left hand side, that's where that smelter set. If you look out there, you'll still see bare places of grass near Mill Creek.

BB: Behind Sutherland's and Town and Country Liquor, that open land? Do you think that land is poisoned?

TS and GI: Sure.

HT: That was the downside of the smelters. There might still be some old concrete there that was part of it. The grass won't grow there.

GI: It is.

TS: When I came back and saw that they were building industrial facilities at Old Greenwood Road and Zero, I was really surprised. In my experience in other states up north, they never would have allowed any development on land that was that contaminated.

GI: Here's another family that was very instrumental in Fort Smith.

BB: The Kelleys?

GI: The Kelleys.

BB: Yeah, I know Gordon Kelley.

GI: I knew her grandad, her dad and her mother.

BB: What was your connection with the family?

GI: My dad leased from them for years and years, starting in 1924. We leased dairy land from them.

TS: Out where the old smelter was at the intersection of Old Greenwood and Zero. Wasn't there a facility on both the east side and the west side?

HT: On the east side, they never did smelt there. They took shale like when you would strip coke. Then they would cinder to go into these lightweight concrete boxes. It was just about as bad with the run off water.

GI: Here's a picture of the ...

BB: The sorghum mill. Best-Clymer, I was trying to think of the name earlier today.

[Brief discussion of photos].

TS: My grandfather bought it from Star Grocery in 1921, and this is how it looked after he put his name on it.

BB: Was there a lot of discharge from the sorghum mill? Water?

GI: Cinders. They used to haul cinders away from it that came out of it.

BB: Coal cinders?

GI: They built railroad siding out there and would load cinders in the cars and haul them off.

BB: Pete Howard said he would play in Mill Creek and get boils.

HT: That was from the water that discharged there. The best I can remember, I lived about three block from it, was there was a lot of pollution that went into the water at Mill Creek.

BB: Do you know what the sources would have been?

HT: Probably runoff from that cane.

BB: From the sorghum?

HT: Yeah, they would squeeze it. They'd run it through rollers then the pulp they would haul it off.

GI: We hauled it from there and fed our cows.

HT: That would be the waste from that thing that got into the creek.

GI: And it would stink.

BB: What did it smell like?

HT: It would be nasty to swim in.

GI: It would just plain old stink. It smelt like an old cow or horse lot.

HT: Have you ever smelled silage?

GI: Here's something just out beyond his dad's store. The old powder mill. It finally blowed up and killed a bunch of people.

BB: Was it gunpowder?

TS: Yes.

GI: Blasting powder for the mines.

TS: It blew up twice didn't it?

GI: Yeah.

BB: Where was it?

TS: Powder Mill Road. [Laughs].

GI: From his store, if you went straight on south, it was about a quarter of a mile.

TS: It was where 271 does that dogleg. It was off to the left there.

BB: Do either of you remember the trolley?

GI: I rode it a thousand miles.

BB: It's last stop?

TS: Was right outside Scott's store.

[Photo talk].

GI: That area where Carnall school is on Tulsa. There was a big field there behind it. That's where the airport was part of the time. Another place was on south. When the river flooded, they would land them over there in that hay field [near today's Tulsa street].

BB: How long were there planes there?

GI: Sometimes they'd be other there for a month.

BB: I mean the years that was an airfield.

GI: I don't know. Probably 20 years. Something like that.

BB: How many hangars did they have?

GI: They didn't have hangars. They'd tie them down. I've seen as many as three planes lined up there. They'd be there on Sunday and give you a ride.

BB: How much?

GI: I think it was three dollars.

BB: How long would you stay up? 10 minutes maybe?

GI: Something like that maybe. You talk about riding that street car. I went to Peabody School and walk down to E Street and catch the E Street car, which stopped at Albert Pike school. It's not there any more. They'd take a block over. They'd come out E, then a little ways on Blackburn, then make a right hand turn on May and lefthand turn on Park to the end of the line. I road five days a week on that for two or three years, then I'd walk the rest of the way home to what's now the corner of 66th and Free Ferry.

BB: Did you ever ride the trolley in South Fort Smith though?

GI: Oh, yeah, I rode it southbound from downtown.

BB: Was there a turn near Fresno too?

TS: That's what you called Society Hill?

GI: Society Curve.

BB: There was a little restaurant or dance hall there?

GI: Yeah, it was a dance hall. Clay's Pool Hall and Dance Hall. A fellow by the name of Clay owned it.

BB: Why did they call it Society Curve?

GI: I don't know. That was before my time. That was a long time ago. That was it right there. [Points to map.]

BB: And there was another bend at Tulsa?

GI: Well, it ended up on Jenny Lind Road and followed it to.

BB: Was Jenny Lind there?

GI: It wasn't Jenny Lind then. It was a streetcar track.

BB: Do you know when it became Jenny Lind?

GI: No, I'd say right after the war. ... If you go out south of Rheem, we used to call that the Old Shale Road. It was the road to Greenwood. It wasn't paved. It had this shale on it.

TS: I presume it went to Jenny Lind before going on to Greenwood?

GI: Yes. There were two Jenny Linds, old Jenny Lind and new Jenny Lind.

HT: Are you talking about the towns or the roads?

GI: The towns.

HT: Yeah, there were two Jenny Linds. There was Old Jenny Lind Road and New Jenny Lind Road in Fort Smith.

GI: Old Jenny Lind Road ends up at Zero at Wal-Mart. It stops. New Jenny Lind goes on over to the factory then makes a jog left then straightens out.

HT: Get out to the junior high on Jenny Lind Road. The next stoplight used to call Old Jenny Lind Road.

BB: In terms of the communities of Jenny Lind?

HT: OK, New Jenny Lind is when you first meet 71 highway. That's Old Jenny Lind right there, where 71 goes in. That's still old Jenny Lind Road. ... Where it says eight nine road, over by Camp Chaffee. You get over there about a mile or half or so. That's New Jenny Lind.

GI: Is there anything there any more?

HT: There's a cafe, a pretty good one. There was two businesses there. They both had post offices. ... Jenny Lind was a going place many years ago.

GI: There were a lot of coal mines in there.

BB: The sorghum mill, the coffin company, the wheelbarrow company, were any of those organized labor?

GI: The casket company was and they went on strike. What year that was. I think it was 1939, and they almost starved to death.

BB: Really?

GI: Yeah, it went on all summer. It was over wages. I think they finally went to work so they could get a pay day again. They didn't get a thing.

BB: Were they affiliated with a larger union?

GI: Oh, yeah, the union was supposed to pay them something, but they never did.

BB: Do you remember ...?

GI: I don't know what union it was.

Nelson Scott owned and ran Scott's Store No. 2 on the northeast corner of Towson Avenue and U.S. 71 where Smith Chevrolet dealership is today (2006). Courtesy of Tom Scott

A Southtown Oral History – Part III

*The following is part three of a transcript of an oral history interview with **Tom L. Scott, Gene Inman** (Eugene Benton Inman) and **Harold Thames**, which took place at Willowbrook retirement community on Feb. 17, 2006, in Fort Smith. Editing and elisions are minimal but were made. For a completely verbatim experience of the interview, please contact **Joe Wasson** who videotaped it for the Society's archives. All photos below are **courtesy of Tom L. Scott** and **Gene Inman.***

Refer above to Parts I and II.

Tom Scott: My dad told me a story about my granddad. Maybe you guys would know about this. Maybe you Gene. My granddad before he started the store was working at the smelter. Dad said he was loaning money to other co-workers. The smelter also was loaning money to workers and they fired him because he was competing with them.

Gene Inman: I don't know about that.

TS: Well, that's the story he told me. You don't know about that?

Harold Thames: No.

Ben Boulden: He worked at the smelter, too?

TS: Yeah, from the time he came down here from Iowa, he worked at the smelter until he got set where he could buy a business. He worked there. Dad told me that story and that finally, they said 'We're not working until you bring him back.' So, they brought him back. They just agreed not to [compete.]

BB: Was there a strike?

TS: I don't think there was a strike but there was a problem. They agreed to take him back. My dad told me the story so I'm going from a memory of when I was a kid. ... I don't know if he was undercutting their interest rates or what.

BB: So he was loaning money from a personal fund he had?

TS: In fact, when I cleaned out my house. I estimate I had three boxes, three cubic feet of loans that my grandfather and father had made that had never been repaid over all those years in business. There were all these little charge tickets and loans.

BB: From the grocery store?

HT: I know that because I was working there when the second world war started and a lot of them moved off. He put that in the ledger and how much each person owed. Some of them sent money back and paid for it. I know a lot of times it was my job if we got a check from California or Texas to go find the ledger and mark it paid, or however much they'd paid on it.

BB: Did he do a lot of that during the Depression?

HT: Oh, yes.

GI: I tell you what they'd do. A fellow named Doc Jones had a grocery store across the street from Mr. Scott. Well, they trade with Doc until he cut them off. Trade on credit. Then, they'd come over to Mr. Scott's and pay ten dollars on their bill and he'd let them buy groceries again. He'd cut them off again, then they'd go back over across the street, pay ten dollars and start trading over there. ... I've got a story to tell. We used to keep one of the drawers in the cash register was for petty cash to pay the bread man and so forth out of. Mr. Scott had cashed a check for a fellow. He had put on there One-Zero-Zero. To me, that meant one dollar, but it was for a hundred dollars. Mr. Scott had cashed that check for him for a hundred dollars, and I gave it to a bread man for dollar. Mr. Scott came in and said, "I had a check her from Bill Ferris for a hundred dollars." I said, "You did not. It was for a dollar." He said, "Oh, no, it was a hundred." I got on the phone trying to catch that bread man. It was Jack, can't remember his last name now.

HT: Jack Nolan?

GI: Jack Nolan! Jack hunted through his stuff and said, "Yeah, I got it." I said, "Well, bring it out and I'll come pick it up at your house." He lived down there on the south side of town and his daddy-in-law, Dudley his name was, had a greyhound. He had that dog down there at his house. Well, I got out of the truck. There was ditch with a plank across it to go into the yard. I didn't make it to the yard. The dog jumped me and I landed flat on my back in that ditch. This dog stood there straddling that ditch and drooling down on me. I was afraid to breathe. I'll never forget that as long as I year. Jack heard the dog and he came out there and got it. He got me out of the ditch and I got my check back.

TS: Sorry, I wasn't paying real close attention. Tell me who Jack Nolan drove a route for.

GI: Oh, for Colonial. Then he became a game warden.

TS: Yeah, I know the story but I didn't know which one it was. They named the lake for him at Greenwood.

GI: Were you aware there was a racetrack where...?

BB: Ramsey?

GI: Yeah.

TS: Gene told me one story which he hasn't recounted today. Tell Ben about the guy who lived in Southtown who said he rode with Jesse James and they had buried treasure down at Ozark.

GI: Bill Eubanks was his name and he had a goiter on the side of his throat that you couldn't fit in bucket. Bill was very ... he told lots of stories. One of the stories he told was that he used to ride with Jesse James. He never participated in any of the robberies. He always held the horses. Well, Jesse James was supposed to make an appearance at the theatre that became Plaza down on Texas Corner. The Mystic theater was down there then.

BB: Jesse James was killed by Bob Ford wasn't he?

TS: Yeah, but...

BB: What period are we talking about?

GI: I'm talking about in the early thirties.

TS: You're saying he was dead at that time?

BB: Yeah.

GI: He appeared up on stage. Bill Eubanks went down to listen to him. After the show was over, he went backstage. He said, "Hello, Bill." He said he still wasn't convinced. I said, this is Bill talking, "I said, 'Jesse, pull your shirt up. If you remember, you had that bad knife cut and I sewed you up. I'll know my sewing.'" He pulled his shirt up and Bill said, "Yeah, it was Jesse. That was my sewing. I'd know it anywhere."

Joe Wasson: There were people who believe Jesse faked his death.

BB: Yeah, I've heard that theory.

TS: But this goes on here.

GI: That's not all the story. Bill told about Jesse and his bunch was leaving Joplin on the way to Hot Springs. They had all their loot on an ox cart pulled by two oxen. They got down to Ozark and we're fixing to cross the river when one of their oxen died. Well, they killed the other one and took all their stuff and tied it up in these ox skins and buried it. They buried it on the north bank of the Arkansas River before you go into Ozark.

INTERRUPTION due to end of tape side.

GI: They went down there armed. Most of them was carrying a rifle or a pistol or two pistols. If they'd found anything, they'd have all killed each other.

TS: My dad was wearing a thirty eight. I inherited that thirty eight. I was down at his brother's house shooting it a summer ago with my grandson. It still fires fine.

BB: You keep it oiled an everything?

TS: Oh, yeah.

GI: It would be worth a lot of money today.

TS: It was made before pistols had serial numbers. It has no serial number.

GI: It has a thirty eight calibre on a forty five frame.

BB: Who's gun was this again?

TS: It was my father's. He traded with a policeman down at Hartford for it. He had a snub nose thirty eight. The policeman said, "I really want that snubnose to carry" and they traded thirty eights. That's where he got it from.

JW: Hold right there. I need to change tapes.

Brief Interruption.

GI: Ira Watts was his name, and he bought a little place up in Crawford County. When I was credit manager at Firestone, I sold him a set of tires on credit. At that time, he and his wife were both alive. I saw in the paper some years after that where they had passed away, both of them.

JW: He was a local man?

GI: I don't know where his home was but he wasn't local. They had an adopted son by the name of Jimmy.

HT: Did he ride horses, too?

GI: Oh, I think he rode some, but Jimmy Briarsox and Hazel King were the ...

HT: Trainers.

GI: There was a guy they brought in who had a Shetland pony liberty act, with eight Shetland ponies. You know what a liberty act is don't you?

BB: No.

GI: That's where you have the horses all lined up and they'll pop a whip and they'll go this way. They'll pop a whip and they'll go the other way and so forth. If you're not a circus fan, you wouldn't know.

BB: Mr. Matlock told me that they'd take the elephants out and use them to push train cars. Is that accurate?

GI: That's right.

BB: Would they use them for anything else in terms of chores or work?

GI: I never did seem them except when they needed them to move wagons or something.

HT: I saw them move a trailer truck. Down there where they had car tools. We were getting ready to leave Scott's store and we saw them pushing the truck over there where they could get gas.

GI: On Sunday, they'd charge you a dime to go in there and see the animals. The cages were all lined up and the elephants were all staked out there. They had one camel who would spit on you.

TS: Harold, did you tell me that someone got too close to one of the ...?

HT: Brownie was feeding the lions and tigers.

GI: Oh, they almost tore his arm off.

BB: Who was Brownie?

GI: He tended to the cats. He got that old medicine that they used to doctor the elephants with. Where you'd hook him you know, they'd get sore spots. They had some special stuff concocted.

HT: Miracle medicine wasn't it?

GI: I know. Brownie put that on his arm and it wasn't no time before he was well. He doctored himself. Shoot, it took about 50 stitches to stitch him up.

BB: Was the Rim and Bow there?

GI: No, it wasn't there at that time.

BB: Were they in the Wheelbarrow space?

GI: They owned the building but they leased them to the circus.

HT: Western Wheelbarrow.

BB: Do either of you remember a goat farm?

HT: Yeah, right at the end of 31st Streeet. Old Man Maples had it.

GI: He and his wife both worked at the casket factory.

BB: How many goats? Do you have any idea?

GI: Oh, two dozen probably.

HT: Sold Watkins in his latter days.

GI: That was after I left.

BB: Sold what?

HT: Watkins products.

BB: What are Watkins products?

GI: Well, they sold vanilla, udder ointment, just name it.

BB: Someone also told me, I think it was Mr. Matlock, that a plane crashed in South Fort Smith? Near Phoenix?

HT: I know where that was at. You know where Crowe Hill Reservoir is at?

BB: Yeah.

HT: About a hundred yards west of the reservoir.

BB: Do you know what kind of plane?

HT: Some kind of dive bomber. There was three of them and it hit and updraft or something. One of them clipped the other one and it went down. I don't know if it hit the propellor or not, but the other two landed alright.

BB: Was it a fiery crash?

HT: No.

BB: Was everyone killed?

HT: Yeah, everyone in the plane was.

TS: Where Gary Street goes through now, that wasn't there.

HT: Moody's dairy was there.

TS: Jim, his younger brother took me back there and we were looking for pieces back there.

BB: How old were you?

TS: I don't know. I was a little, bitty guy.

HT: It crashed before we moved there. Paul Tankersley lived there. I went over there. It would have been before 1943, probably 1942.

TS: That's not the one I remember then because I would have been too small.

GI: Talking about airplanes. When they first put in that strip out there, we had a big ice storm and that thing was just a sheet of ice. Did we have fun. We'd get on the grass, get a run and hit that, cut the wheels and (whistles). Man, we had a good time.

HT: It might have been a little later than that, Tom.

TS: I don't know. There was a Patterson or someone who lived back in there.

GI: Sam Patterson lived on that old farm over where the Coca Cola plant is.

TS: I know. He lived by himself back there.

HT: That was a Moody, Burt Moody. He lived in a little cabin back in there not farm from where the Crow Hill Reservoir is.

TS: Jim was telling me about it. His younger brother is about two years older than me.

HT: It was a pretty good hole.

BB: Do you remember a baseball field behind the casket company?

GI: Yeah, it was to the south there closer to Zero Street.

HT: I played there.

BB: Was it just a sandlot or did it have dugouts?

GI: Nothing official.

BB: Was there any kind of organized team in Southtown?

GI: Just a bunch who would get together on Sunday afternoon to play ball.

BB: Was there a group called the Scorpions?

GI: Oh, yes.

HT: Anybody from Southtown was a Scorpion.

TS: My dad said Mill Creek were the Sand Lizards and Southtown were the Scorpions.

BB: What was that?

TS: It was the grade school nickname. They were the Scorpions or the Sand Lizards.

GI: On Halloween they turned over every toilet in town.

BB: Toilet? Outhouses?

GI: Oh yeah, there weren't but a half dozen indoor toilets in the whole town.

TS: We were still doing that when I started college.

HT: They put a wagon there on top of the cafe one Halloween night.

BB: On top of the cafe?

HT: Took it apart and put it on top.

BB: What cafe was that?

GI: The only one in town.

BB: Well, there's one there right now called Virginia's. Is that the same one?

GI: No.

TS: Virginia's is across the street from where my grandad's store was.

HT: Across the street in the same block though.

GI: There was one that was north of there on the corner. Be the southwest corner of 31st Street and Vicksburg.

HT: Speaking of baseball, Southtown had a team. Jenny Lind had a team. Cavanaugh would have teams. A lot of them was grown men. Cotton Hill, he was a professional baseball player. He played on the team for several years.

TS: He played for the Yankees.

BB: And he was from Southtown?

TS: Yeah.

HT: What they would do was Jenny Lind would play Greenwood, then the next Sunday Greenwood would play Hackett. It was just a team that was for people who just liked playing baseball. They had a pretty good diamond for something that was just dirt.

BB: Were there grown men from Southtown who played as well?

HT: Oh, yeah.

GI: Jones who had the grocery store. He pitched for them. Bill Robinson played.

JW: Did Grady Secrest had anything to do with that?

GI: No, he was over at Andrews Field and that was a different situation.

JW: I just wondered if he was getting his talent from Southtown.

GI: No, most of his was shipped in.

TS: Cotton Hill though, he played for three or four years in the majors. He was a good pitcher. I think he was.

BB: He played in Southtown before or after he went into the majors?

HT: Before and after.

BB: After he retired and played just for fun?

HT: I played a few games after that. Hightower played after he was grown.

GI: Back to the elephants. We had a dump out behind the store. If it got too big, well, we'd burn it. The cans were empty. They ended up out there in the dump. They'd hit them oil cans and they'd knock 'em. They really had a time with those empty oil cans.

BB: Knocking them around?

GI: Yeah, just hitting them. Knocking them around with their trunks.

TS: I don't know if you've heard the story Harold told earlier about the elephant trainer asking him if he wanted a ride? He said ... go on Harold you tell it.

HT: I thought I'd get on just like he did, step up on the elephants trunk and go on up. He said something to that elephant and he just reached up and grabbed me around my waist and set me on top of his back.

GI: The elephant trainer rode the elephant up to the drug store. He wanted some cigarettes or something. I don't remember now. Anyhow, the lady from the drug store took some cigarettes out there and he had the elephant wrap his trunk around her and turn her upside down right in front of him.

LAUGHTER

BB: And I imagine she had a skirt on.

TS: Today he'd be convicted of a sex offense.

BB: Where did they dump the manure?

GI: I don't know. If you went down around that circus, you'd wonder if they dumped it anywhere.

HT: There was a pretty good field west of there toward the sorghum mill. I'd imagine that's where they put it.

GI: The sorghum mill has been torn down but the tower is still up there. The water tower.

BB: Right, I think it's only in the last several years that the last building was torn down.

GI: It burned.

BB: Yeah, right.

GI: After it burned, they tore the rest of it down.

TS: I wonder why they left that standing. It is going to come down. Gravity is still in effect.

GI: It could be dangerous to the airport.

TS: It's not that tall, but its corrosion allowance must be used up now.

GI: Give it time.

BB: I think Mr. Matlock told me about a rumble or fight between two groups. Some boys from Southtown and some boys from Fort Smith in the field, in the baseball field.

HT: I don't remember anything about it. I was 21 when I left for the Navy, then I went to Greenwood when I got out. I never did know anything about anything like that.

BB: I just wondered if there was a rivalry between the two.

GI: The worst rivalry was a little static sometime. Those boys out there, they all had cars. These boys during the Depression didn't have a job and didn't own automobiles. We could go to town any time we wanted and get a girl because we had cars. That caused a little dissension. I started out dating an architect's daughter. I dated the sheriff's daughter. I played the field. My dad was dairyman so I married a dairyman's daughter.

BB: Did you ever ride the trolley in Southtown?

GI: Yes, I did.

BB: Do you remember any of the names of the trolley men?

GI: No, I don't. It was too long ago.

BB: Anything you remember about the trolley itself?

GI: There's more in here (issue of The Journal) then I could ever remember myself.

BB: I know I just wondered if you remembered anything descriptive.

TS: I've got a question for you. My dad always said that trolley route came down part of Phoenix then turned down 24th Street around where Reed's is and turned onto Tulsa. Now, Gene you said it turned onto Savannah.

HT: See that Savannah was there when we moved, then it was just a raised place where the track had been.

BB: Do you remember whenthe old street names like Falconer and Fishback changed?

HT: I lived on Fishback.

GI: I would say that is wasn't long after the war.

TS: One of you told me, and I don't remember which one of you, that when people gave up during the Dust Bowl years, my granddad bought properties from them when they left town.

HT: I don't know about the Dust Bowl.

GI: I know he bought several pieces of property around town.

TS: One of you said the going rate was about two hundred bucks.

HT: I don't know about that, but when people started moving to the west coast to work in the shipyards or factories, when they'd leave they'd ask him whether he wanted to buy their vacant lots and stuff. He'd nearly always buy them. He'd nearly always try to get me to buy some too, and that's where I made my mistake.

TS: When I cleared out my father's house, I found all these deeds for property in South Fort Smith.

HT: He bought a whole bunch of them when the war first started.

TS: Ther must have been a dozen different deeds. Ben, I gave a copy of one of them to Leslie down at the museum. They were of no value to me, but he owned a lot of lots.

Discussion of whether trolley went down Savannah or Tulsa without definite conclusion.

BB: The people who lived in Southtown, did they work in the smelter, the coffin company or the sorghum mill?

GI: They didn't work any place else.

TS: The sorghum mill was seasonal.

GI: My dad worked in the sorghum mill on that drag floor in the summer of '25 or '26.

BB: Were you ever inside the sorghum mill?

GI: I was but it was so long ago, I don't remember it. I was in it when Anheuser Busch owned it.

BB: We've talked about baseball and there were some bars there.

GI: Only one at a time. One beer hall at a time.

BB: Yeah, and your talking about in the 1930s after the drink came back?

GI: Thirties, forties, fifties.

BB: What are the other things folks did when they weren't working in the plants on Sundays. What were the leisure activities?

GI: All of them went to church, nearly.

TS: There's a real good description of life in South Fort Smith here. [Showing typescript document].

HT: Lots of people went to ballgames, baseball games at Andrews Field.

BB: So they'd go into town sometimes. I've never heard that there were any movie theatres in Southtown, but did anybody, maybe on a holiday or something, show a film.

GI: No, no movies ever other there.

HT: Well, it cost hardly anything to come to Fort Smith on a bus so we'd go to movies in Fort Smith.

BB: How late did it run?

HT: I think it ran to about ten o'clock or so. I know when we lived on Gary and Greenwood I was out of school in 1949 and I would ride the bus to 31st and Tulsa and get off and walk to Gary and Greenwood.

BB: Besides Scott's Store and the other establishments you've mentioned, were there any other retail businesses? A barber?

GI: There were usually two or three grocery stores and that little cafe. There usually was someone who worked on automobiles, somewhere along the road.

HT: There was a foundry there for a while, Sargent's.

GI: Sargent's Foundry.

HT: I don't think he hired very many but it was a private business there.

GI: Two or three worked there.

BB: When did 31st street start to wither [economically?

TS: I'd say when my granddad went out of business. He sold his store to Pearson Brothers and shortly after that it was gone. The oil field service companies put equipment there.

GI: Old Man Matlock was dead. He had one son, Dave's dad. Joe Gemael married one of them. David Matlock was plant manager. Clint Garner was head of the sale force. While them three was operating, everything was fine. Joe got killed in a car wreck. He was office manager. Dave retired. Garner, I don't know what happened to him, but the younger generation couldn't operate it like the older ones did. It just went down, down and down. I know when my dad died in 1948, we went to this whole great big upper floor at the casket factory. It was a big showroom and we picked out his casket up there. My mother picked out solid walnut. If you would by a casket like that today, there's no telling what it'd cost. It wasn't expensive then. I asked one of the guys with the funeral home then if they didn't buy anything from the casket factory. He said, "Nothing but the cheapest cloth caskets. That's all we ever buy from them anymore."

BB: I heard that they were undersold by a lot bigger coffin companies.

GI: Oh yeah, well, there were some big operations up around Kansas City, bigger than the one here.

BB: What was the school like?

HT: I went to school in South Fort Smith in the second through the sixth grades.

BB: You continued on in school right?

HT: Yeah, I went one year to Carnall for seventh grade. They had seventh and eighth grades. Then it was in a different school district. Later, it became part of Fort Smith. I went to Fort Smith High School because that school would pay for Fort Smith or Cavanaugh or Lavaca. I went to Fort Smith because it was closest.

Discussion of current Southtown locations.

HT: Cavanaugh and it were just about alike. Mill Creek I mean, not Fort Smith.

TS: There's one left over on Albert Pike that they use for storage now that are of that design.

GI: That one on Albert Pike is just like the rest of them.

...

HT: They all had a central hallway down the middle.

TS: They all were built according to the same drawings.

HT: They had a cafeteria downstairs. I think they might have had one room down there fixed so they had a kindergarten when they started but I'm not sure.

TS: I don't remember them doing that.

GI: I can't remember much about 1924 except that I went to school there for six weeks, the moved out to Prairie and Carnall.

BB: We talked a little about what Mr. Thames did at the store. What did you do for Mr. Scott?

GI: Me? Everything.

HT: We sold shoes. We sold feed.

GI: If we didn't have it, we went to town six days a week. If we didn't have it, we'd buy it for them.

BB: Take on a handling fee or anything?

GI: No, regular charge. We made that trip to town anyhow to deliver groceries. We delivered groceries to all over Fort Smith, especially on the south side. We had to go to town anyhow so we'd go to Griffin grocery to pick up bananas, Cass & Robbins to pick up some drugs, R&B Grocery to pick up produce.

BB: He had his own butcher shop in there, canned goods. You mentioned shoes. Were there any other dry goods?

GI: Overalls, shirts, pants, underwear, baby's underwear. You name it. We had a cabinet full of every kind of colored sewing thread. We had bolt material.

HT: He even sold guns and pistols.

BB: When did he open and when did he close?

GI: We opened at seven mostly and closed at nine. It made for some pretty long days. People stayed late, but sometimes they'd alternate.

TS: My dad would stay seven to seven, but on Saturdays to eight.

GI: But he never closed at eight. He had one customer who never showed up until he was closed.

BB: Your talking about Scott No. 2 now? (nods yes) Was there a place in the store where people gathered to talk?

GI: Yeah, they'd sit on the counter.

BB: The sales counter?

HT: There were groceries behind the counter. If you wanted a can of green beans, they'd get it for you there.

GI: You served them everything you've got.

BB: Were there any crimes you remember occurring in South Fort Smith?

TS: I do. I remember my granddad was sleeping in the store because there were a lot of robberies. Once somebody broke in. They knew it. The police came out and couldn't find 'em so my granddad sat there all night long with his pistol and German shepherd. Finally, someone came crawling out about sunrise. He pulled his pistol on him and held him until they got the police back out there.

BB: I wonder where he hid out.

TS: Somewhere in the warehouse. Dad told me that story.

BB: Were there ever any shootings or murders?

TS: Not that kind of thing.

GI: I stayed there lots of nights just to watch it.

TS: You know times were tough and people would break in to try to steal things. It was the Depression era.

HT: He had a room that he slept in and he had the German shepherd dog. He'd let you know if anybody was there. He'd wake you up if anybody was around.

GI: Rex! That's the first time I've remembered his name in long time.

HT: Nobody was getting into that store as long as he was around.

BB: What was the law enforcement?

GI: For a while we had a, I guess you'd call him a marshal. Bill Neal was his name. I've got a story to tell about that. I was waiting on him one day and he wanted a pound of bologna. So we pulled a big old bologna out and we had an electric slicer. I sliced him of a pound. While I was slicing it off, I sliced that finger off there. (holds up finger and indicates fingertip.) My wife was working there too. I said, "Come finish wrapping this stuff here up for Bill. I've got to wrap my finger up. I've sliced my finger up." He got pale. He said, "I don't believe I want that pound of bologna." My wife had to slice him another pound of it. I knew my finger wasn't in it because things like that dropped into the catch compartment. I knew where it was, but he wouldn't take that bologna.

HT: (laughs) I remember when you did that.

GI: Turn that thing off. I have a story I want to tell off the record.

BB: OK.

Taping ceased for a brief period.

TS: I didn't want to talk about the family there on the record.

...

BB: When you attended South Fort Smith school, how many teachers were there?

HT and TS: Four.

BB: What grades were taught there?

HT: I'm not sure. The year I started there I was in second grade. Miss Schneider was the teacher. I think she taught third grade too. Miss Cox was the fourth grade teacher. (Inaudible) was third grade. I don't know who was first grade. Mr. Williams was the principal and taught both the fifth and sixth grades. They had four teachers for six grades.

BB: Did they live in South Fort Smith, too?

HT: You know I'm not sure if they did.

BB: Basically, reading, writing and arithmetic?

HT: Yeah, and Miss Cox taught some music. I think she only taught fourth grade but I think she talked music to the rest of them. Back then, it was reading, writing and arithmetic, really basic.

BB: Was it an independent school?

HT: No, it was a Fort Smith school.

BB: So the school district was bigger than the city?

HT: Yeah. I'm pretty sure it belonged to Fort Smith because all the kids went on to Fort Smith schools when they got out of grade school; junior high and senior.

BB: Was there a playground or anything?

HT: Oh, yeah, it took a whole block. Our competition, our rival was Mill Creek and we played them in two baseball games every year.

BB: The Sand Lizards and Scorpions?

TS: Yeah.

HT: We never had any problems while I was going to school there.

TS: Oh, yeah, you had more fights on the school ground then you had with Mill Creek. It wasn't like gangs, you know.

HT: We'd have a ballgame over (in Southtown) then we'd have another game and go over there while I was going to school there.

BB: Apparently you had a lot of outhouses because you didn't have a whole lot of sewer service. Did you have city water?

HT: Yeah.

TS: We had outhouses at Mill Creek at one time.

HT: They did all the time while I was in South Fort Smith. The boy's was on the south side of the block in the middle of it. The girl's was on the west side.

BB: Did the community do anything special for the holidays? You mentioned Halloween pranks. Were there other things that went on at Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas?

HT: No, they'd programs and things at the school. They'd have some kind of celebration but I think all the grade schools did.

GI: About the only thing I remember about Mill Creek is they had a pie supper.

BB: Pie supper?

GI: All the ladies would back a pie and put it in a box real fancy. They'd take 'em up there and an auctioneer would auction those pies off.

BB: Was it a church fundraising?

TS: I did this at Carnall School off Zero.

GI: They were always having pie suppers.

TS: They made this pie then you got to sit down with the girl who baked it. It was sort of a matchmaking affair.

HT: 4-H Clubs, they had a 4-H Club in Southtown that would do that.

TS: I experienced that.

HT: 4-H Clubs met right after school, usually at the school. That's the way they raised money.

GI: When I was going to Carnall, we had pie suppers just to raise money for the school.

HT: I was fortunate when I was going there because there was enough revenue that they didn't have to worry about money.

TS: That picture I had there of all the students in 1927 or 1928, you told me that the teacher lived with your family and boarded at the house?

GI: Yeah, and I have a story to tell about that, too. We had this little old house and it had one bedroom and the kitchen where we ate and a dining room and a living room. The living room had a big fireplace and you could light a fire in it and bake your back side then turn around and back your front side. When the school teacher lived with us, we just had an attic room. She and my sister slept together and I had a cot that I slept on. One night, I walked in my sleep and crawled in bed with the school teacher. I tell you, I bet if she was still alive she'd be teasing me about sleeping with her.

(Laughter).

HT: Talking about the pie suppers. During the Second World War, they had them really regularly at Carnall. If you bid ten dollars for a pie, you'd get ten dollars worth of savings stamps and a pie. They did that all through the war, probably every two or three months.

BB: Did your family live there during the war?

HT: Yeah.

BB: Were you in the service?

HT: No, I was too young.

BB: Do you remember if the war really changed things in South Fort Smith? You mentioned people moving off and your grandfather buying lots. Did it depopulate it?

HT: It didn't really depopulate it. It moved the people. He went off to service in the Second World War, but when Camp Chaffee started up you couldn't find a place to live in South Fort Smith.

TS: My daddy let some people set some trailers up in our yard.

HT: Your daddy let people live in part of that house near your store, too. I remember one woman who was from the Northeast who shared a kitchen with your mama and daddy. They were plenty of people. A lot of people (who lived in Southtown before the war) went to California and Texas to work in defense industry. There was a lot who left and a lot who moved in because of the camp.

BB: You mentioned when bars came up and I said, "You can't get a bunch of blue collar guys together and not have a bar eventually," you mentioned some different ethnic groups that lived in South Fort Smith.

TS: This thing about South Fort Smith mentions a guy who used to come in and take a bunch of aspirin before he went to work. They called him the crazy ... Wherever it was

he came from. Down near Jenny Lind and Greenwood, you had a lot of coal mines and a lot of immigrants.

BB: Did any live in South Fort Smith?

GI: Some of them did.

BB: Do you remember what ethnicities though?

GI: Italian, Germans and all kinds.

BB: Was there any part called Germantown or anything like that?

GI: Oh, no, nothing like that. At one time, I knew everybody who lived in every house in Southtown. Now, I don't know a soul that lives in any house in Southtown.

HT: That's not true, Pat Becker.

GI: Oh, that's right, I do know one.

HT: Down in Jenny Lind there were some Polish people. They called it Hunktown.

BB: Why was it called Hunktown?

TS: After Bohunk, huh, which was Yugoslav. I worked for a guy named (inaudible). That's what he said they used to call 'em in Chicago. He was Yugoslavian.

HT: There were a lot of Italians that settled there. They kind of stayed grouped together.

TS: Here it is. A Russian who after every shift would stop at Homer and Genevieve's take a box of aspirin and three bottles of three two in about a minute then catch the bus to Fort Smith.

GI: I was trying to think what their last name is and I can't think of it.

TS: There is a Belgian bachelor, an Osage Indian.

GI: I can't think of their last name.

BB: Did they have a store?

GI: It was a beer hall.

BB: Oh, it was a beer hall called Homer and Genevieve's?

GI: Yeah.

BB: You said that there was only one bar at a time and those were the three different locations they were. (Indicates map).

GI: Yeah.

...

BB: Do you remember any bar fights or anything like that?

GI: There might have been but we never heard of them. Might have been.

BB: Anyone have a backroom with any gambling or anything?

GI: Not unless it was over there at the pool hall.

BB: At the pool hall?

GI: The beer hall.

BB: They had pool tables?

GI: I think they had two of them most of the time.

HT: I know Wilson had more than one at the last place he run. I think he did at the other one.

BB: Do you know what hours they kept?

GI: I don't know.

BB: Were they licensed?

TS: I don't think they were regulated in any way.

GI: There wasn't regulation on anything out there.

TS: It was like South Louisiana. You just started selling beer.

GI: If they had a license, it was a state license.

BB: Do you have any idea what a beer sold for?

HT: I haven't the slightest idea. I'm sure it wasn't very much.

TS: It probably was less than a coke.

BB: Do you have any idea what the capacity of the beer halls was? Ten seats? Twenty? Thirty?

GI: Like I said, I had no business in there.

HT: The only reason I ever went in was to take something from the store. See George had one and I'm sure he lived in the back. George Wilson. The last one he built he built with a room. I been in it several times but I didn't pay any attention.

BB: Did you say it was three two beer?

TS: Yeah.

GI: That's all Roosevelt's bunch would allow.

TS: After prohibition was it?

GI: He was in there when Prohibition ended then we had three-two beer.

JW: Downtown Fort Smith, too?

HT: Yeah, and I remember it was that way for a long time during the Second World War.

BB: I'm about tuckered out. Is there anything you gentlemen want to add that I haven't asked you about?

GI: I've got one more story.

TS: I have something I want to ask you.

GI: This young couple had an apartment down there that they were renting from a lady. She got sick that night so he called out to the hospital. The doctor told him to give her a hot soapy water enema. So he went to the lady who owned the room and he said, "I made her drink that three times and she vomited it up every time."

BB: What was your question?

TS: I meant to look something up and you might know. In J. Fred Patton's book, is there anything in it about a Ku Klux Klan parade in the 1920s?

BB: I doubt it. I can tell you what I know. (Discussion between Boulden and Wasson follows about lynchings and Klan; Klavern on Garrison in 1920s.)

GI: I saw a parade. It was either in the summer of 1925 or 1926. The KKK was four abreast coming down the avenue. There were thousands of hooded members in that parade. Many of them was on horseback and most were on foot. I knew... the reason we came to watch was because we had a lot of relatives who were marching. So did you (gestures toward Tom Scott).

TS: I just wondered. It's a part of history no one wants to talk about.

(Discussion of Klan outside Fort Smith in post World War II era).

BB: So you would have been about seven or eight when that rally was?

GI: Yeah, we came down here from Iowa in 1924, in August of '24. I know it wasn't that year so it probably wsa the next year, 1925. I would have been eight years old.

BB: Was it May Day or President's Day or the Fourth of July?

GI: I don't remember what time of the year it was but I remember I was a kid and I remember all those robes.

BB: Was there any Klan activity in Southtown?

GI: I never heard of any, but there were some members out there I'm sure. Some of them were marching that night.

BB: I never heard of any black families in Southtown.

TS: This talks about some white Tankersleys and the black Tankersleys. They were blondes and brunettes. My mom was a black Tankersleys.

(Laughter)

GI: The circus brought in one roustabout who was colored.

BB: Was that Brownie?

GI: Oh, no. They told him not to leave the compound. He was warned. He stayed in there and as long as he was with the circus he never showed up.

TS: We had some visitors down from Iowa, family. They saw some black people along the road from Pine Bluff, and they had never seen a black person. They paid them a

quarter a piece to let them take their picture because they had never seen a black person.

CONCLUSION

Agnes Oglesby Interview – Part I

Transcribed by: Jenny Boulden

The interviewer is Missy Carrol, representing the Fort Smith Historical Society. Agnes Oglesby was 103 years old when this interview was recorded in 1977. See Part II Below.

MC: Tell me your full name.
AO: I'm blind and deaf.

MC: What is your name?
AO: Agnes Oglesby

MC: Where were you born?
AO: Senatobia, Mississippi

MC: Do you remember when?
AO: Yes. Put it down, darling. I wish I had my paper.

MC: When were you born? 1873?
AO: I wonder where it is.

MC: What was your father's full name?
AO: Well put this down: Senatobia, Mississippi.

MC: It's on the tape recorder. It's on the tape recorder. I don't need to write it. What was your father's full name?
AO: What was my father's name? Ira Dancy Oglesby.

MC: And your mother's?
AO: Louisa Isabelle Nulla

MC: And your brother's?
AO: Ira Dancy Oglesby, the second, the third. He's the third.

MC: Did you have another brother?
AO: No. No brothers, no sisters, just the two.

MC: How old were you when you came to Fort Smith?
AO: I don't know. I'd have to figure it out.

MC: Alright. Where did your father work?
AO: Ira D. Oglesby.

MC: Where did your father work?

AO: Where did your father work? He's a lawyer.

MC: Ok. Tell me about him coming to Fort Smith. Tell me about when he came to Fort Smith.
AO: Why we came here? I wish we never had.

MC: Tell me about it.
AO: My father and Mr. Echols, they were very close friends. And they took a long, long trip out West and they covered the whole of out West. And when they were touring, why I don't remember now why, I don't remember why so they could both visit I really don't know, but I've got that all written down. If you'll come back, I've got it, I'll know why Mr. & Mrs. Echols, Mr. Echols, why. Well Mr. Echols, he went into the banking business and my father was an attorney, and that's all I know of that.

MC: OK. Did you visit the old jail?
AO: Where did you, did I what?

MC: Did you visit the old jail?
AO: Oh! Yes, the jail was always full. Wrong. They did [unintelligible]. They arrested Indians when they had no right in the world. There was no one to protect the Indians when they rode here. They had Indians there. Yes, I visited the jail nearly everyday. And at that time, they would let you behind the bars.

MC: Oh, they would?
AO: That's right. I have gone down there, because I used to go so often. Why I went to the jail just like I'd go see my next-door neighbors.

MC: Every day?
AO: I wish I could give you a name of some of the notorious—what was that boy's name? Now, I have that all written down. I used to go down there and I knew where all them and I took them something to eat and sometimes they'd allow you to give it to them. You're not taking all this down?

MC: Oh, yes, it's interesting Ms. Oglesby.
AO: I would go down there just anytime and visit with those men at that jail. You see they had people in there that ought never to have been there.

MC: The Indians?
AO: The Indians, yes, and other people, too.

MC: Did you help one escape? Did an Indian escape and you help him?
AO: I wonder who…I wish I could remember the name of him. [very soft, sounds like: I was visiting the jail and I didn't think anything at all of going down there.] I wish I could remember, if I'd known you was coming, some of the prisoners that were down there they would be known today. I wish I could remember. And one of the prisoners escaped the jail and came to our home for protection. Now that, that was bad.

MC: Did you help him?
AO: He came to the back door. I recognized him, and I said, "Come in quick and tell me." And he told me that he had come because he wanted to be free. I said, "We can't protect you. We'll be the first ones that they'll come for." But I said, "You go and hide, and I'll tell you where." I said we had a whole section of land and there were numbers of houses on them that were scattered and I said, "Now, don't tell me what house you're in, but you go as quick as you can to that house. Stay there. You come back to me whenever you want to and tell me what you want to tell me and I will help you. But don't you tell me where you are. I cannot disobey the law. My father cannot disobey the law. My father sent you to jail and now he'll get you out if he could. Well we took them out all the time.

MC: Did you help him?
AO: I remember one time we had three prisoners in the home.

MC: Really? What did you do?
AO: You know in those days back then.

MC: Tell me about them.
AO: Well, as I said, my father put them in jail and my mother took them everything [unintelligible]. Well, you see, the jury [judge?—can't tell] had to decide about a case, about the evidence. [Unintelligible]

MC: Yes. Sam Starr?
AO: Her family lived here near Fort Smith [unintelligible].

MC: Did you see her?
AO: Mmhmm.

MC: What was she like?
AO: But there was a lot of interesting things that went on here, but there was nothing unusual for me to have somebody to come in to our home for protection and of course I couldn't do that. No, you couldn't do that.

MC: How did you help them?
AO: I used to go all, when they tried different prisoners you know, I went to the law, to the courthouse and law just like most. I mean, for a girl, I went regularly and never had any…[unintelligible] the cases.

MC: Why did you do that?
AO: I did have a memorandum here of some of the names, Pearl Starr. She [unintelligible]?

MC: She died. Oh, Pearl?
AO: [unintelligible muttering] And who else was it?

MC: Sam Starr?
AO: I try to remember these things unless, you know, I write them down. And [unintelligible] when you're getting something in, especially something to be published, you want to make sure it's right. You don't want my opinion of it, you want the truth about it.

MC: We'd like both.
AO: You don't want to know what I thought about it. I thought that Fort Smith was the most terrible place on earth and I never wanted to live here. That's the truth. I lived in Mississippi, and I just thought that this was the end of the world.

MC: How old were you?
AO: Of course I never would have told the Fort Smith people; it had no effect on them. But merely because Mr. Echols and my father were very close friends and they made a trip out West to find a place to go to because our little town was so very small and all—Senatobia, Mississippi. Mr. Echols wanted to go to Salt Lake and my father was not willing to go to that area because of the religion, you know. He said, no, that would be a great handicap, he wouldn't go. And so they decided on Fort Smith. And I didn't know the reason they decided on Fort Smith, if I could just think of that.

MC: Because of the Arkansas River?
AO: Well, I hate to say it, but I hated it and always have, and do yet.

MC: Was Garrison Avenue just a mud street when you came here?
AO: I can't here you. [Repeats] Oh, yes. Garrison Avenue. There was Garrison Avenue, and there was 4th, a few houses on 4th There were just a few, it was no, er--Sixth St. was just as far as it went.

MC: Where did you live?

AO: We lived at the house belonged to my father and it's still there. It was—honey, if I just could find the number—the house [unintelligible] my [father's building? Father was building?] and it had a big barn, you know, where we had two horses and goose, and a cow and some calves and [unintelligible] had somebody living in it and I can't remember the street. But Mr. Echols was the one who started the banking business and all that kind of thing, you know.

MC: How did you come to Fort Smith? On a train? A wagon train?
AO: Why? How? [mutters unintelligibly for a minute] I just had to think about it. We had passes. My father was an attorney on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. That covered the whole United States at that time.

MC: Right.
AO: What the Missouri Pacific was not interested in, they was connected with[?]. I could travel—and did, did—from the Atlantic to Pacific. I went as far to the North Pole as I could go. And just everywhere in the United States; there was no place I didn't go. Because of having,you know, a pass. And another reason, because I was so terribly interested in it. And I had, I don't know, a pass that covered, if they didn't have it, was related to any place in the United States.

MC: On Garrison Avenue, was there just a lot of saloons?
AO: Garrison Avenue, the prettiest place on Garrison Avenue [trails off]. Honey, I just get raving mad when I see that [unintelligible, sounds German]. The best thing in the town, the old Opera House. That, let me tell you, that was something to be seen by anything. Do you there's a frescoe all around of the operas? Frescoes on the walls. That was something beautiful. I didn't know the man's name that did it. And everyone that came to town that did anything to the town stayed at our home. Even down to Fred Patton; Mr. Patton stayed with him. Well, anyway, the old Opera House was perfectly beautiful. It had a bay window in it that was the most beautiful thing I ever saw. And that, all the frescoes around that wall, and the auditorium and all that, just beautiful. And they tore it down.

MC: That's a pity.
AO: Yeah. The last time I drove down there, there's three houses on one side. You could tell them because of the window and the way they trimmed them. The town has never had a thing for them, but the block before the bridge, that whole block in there, oh, it had the most beautiful houses, the most beautiful houses you ever saw. Not houses, I mean stores, you know, but in those days all the traffic was going by on the river. We had two rivers and that was the reason the folks lived near there, the two rivers. Because Poteau was also near there, Poteau.

MC: Do you remember anything about the old Free Ferry Road?
AO: Oh, Free Ferry. I don't remember anything.

MC: The road from the river? To Van Buren?
AO: The old free road. That's recently. That's nothing new.

MC: Tell me about it when you were a girl.
AO: But the houses down there, you'll find three of them. They're all together. They had the most beautiful windows and the hooping on them. Those houses, the town ought to preserve them. Honey, I used to take an interest in things like that, and if I do say it myself, I stirred up a lot of interest in this town. I didn't mind going into every saloon in this town. I went every week or whenever I wanted to. We lived on Sixth St. Alright, now on the corner of Sixth there were two saloons. One on one side, one on the other. Now then. I had a little dog. And the little old dog always wanted to go in the saloon because they always fed him. I never went uptown, I never went anywhere. There was a hitching post. I had two beautiful horses that I drove. And this dog, alright. And when we were stopped, I always stopped there at the corner and took off. And the dog, jumped out quick and went into the saloon. The saloon had a window about that wide, you know, and you could open it like that. Well, that dog jumped out and into the saloon. At the end of the counter, they had a roast beef always. And they'd slice this beef and give it to people who came in. Well, I stopped in there nearly every time I went uptown for various things and I knew the man, I've got his name down somewhere. Well, I went in there one time and there wasn't anyone in. And I looked around and they fished up something for me to drink—not anything with any whiskey in it, just you know. And in a little while, someone from the Merchant's National Bank came in the side door, and the next one came in, and the next one. And I caught onto it. I knew what they were doing.

MC: What?
AO: They were catching me in a saloon. And I caught onto it. I suspicioned it because of three of them. You see there wasn't anybody in the saloon, oh, two or three, but I don't know who they were, two or three. But these people I knew. And they were from the business around there. And they came in the side and the third one, I got it. I got it. I told the bartender, "Right quick, fix a big bottle of whiskey and put my name on it." He said, "Miss Agnes?" I said, "Fix it quick! And put my name on it!" He got a big bottle there and put my name on it and he starte to ask and I said "Put it over there." Well, he didn't catch on, you know. He was just puzzled, was puzzled to death. "You're leaving the bottle of whiskey here?" I said, "Hush, hush. You'll find out." "Alright." This one came in, another one came in. "Oh, Miss Agnes! Miss Agnes is here! Miss Agnes is here!" Finally I said yes, and he handed out this bottle and they like to have died because they thought [trails off, chuckles]. They just laughed over that thing. I stopped in that saloon nearly every time I rode to town. I used to know his name as well in the family. I used to go to see him. But I had more fun in that saloon than anything on earth. They had the saloon, I even have a list of the saloons that had [trails off]. The town had a, I don't know what it was, but it was some kind of a collection, I don't know what it was. I can't remember—relief—what did they call that?

MC: Salvation Army?
AO: I can't remember what they called it. But anyway, I was a member of it. And they'd say, "Miss Agnes, what territory you take?" And I'd tell them, "All the saloons." I had been in every saloon in Fort Smith just like I knew my home.

MC: After your dog?
AO: And down on the avenue, way down on the avenue, those saloons were torn away. But there were three or four buildings down there, where they were all saloons down there. I did have a list, and I think I have it, of the number of saloons and the names of people on [own?] them. And they had on the floor, and I wish I knew, was a medallion, about this big, and it was put in there of colored material. I wonder if there are any of those buildings left.

MC: Probably some.
AO: I don't think, there may be two or three that are there on Garrison Avenue about a block from the river.

MC: Which one was that medallion in?
AO: Huh?

MC: What hundred block on Garrison was that building on? With the medallion on the floor?
AO: I'm so deaf, please try to talk to me. I can't hear you.

[repeats]
AO: Oh, what block? I think it was Sixth, I think that was right. And the bank, I remember when they opened the bank, too. Mr. Echols opened the bank. But I didn't anymore mind going into the saloon. I tell you, my little dog, would shiver just under the door and make a bound for the counter where the man would slice off, they had at the end of the table all this roast, and he would slice off the roast. Then I would come in, you know, after the dog. But I went into the saloon nearly everytime I went uptown or went back for something and I had a number of times I got money from them. [Unintelligible sentence.] Honey, I went into nearly every saloon in this town with my dog, anywhere here. And at that time, I betcha I got the name to them saloon peoples.

MC: I'd like to have that sometime.
AO: But you know itt's funny to get to be at home in a saloon as you did anywhere here. We didn't have any Boston store.

MC: What did the people think of the Boston store when it was built? Did they have many stores?
AO: The Boston store? Oh, I think that's just bad.

MC: Did they have many shops for women here in Fort Smith?
AO: Oh, yes, they had, oh what was the name of it? What was the name? The Boston store I guess was one of the oldest ones here. At one time, I did, I wrote down the things that I remembered, but I didn't have it and I wish I knew where it was. Because I used to go down…my father was an attorney and he represented, not just local things, he represented well practically all over the United States.

MC: Did he work with Judge Parker?
AO: Oh, I knew Judge Parker. Now Judge Parker and MacDonald—wasn't that what his name was? Now Judge Parker lived a short time. Now Judge Parker was impervious to the law himself, you know. Judge Parker, Judge Parker.

MC: Did you know any of his family?
AO: Oh yes! [Unintelligible]

MC: Did you know any of his children?
AO: Melanie? (Me-LAY-knee) No, Melanie was young…There was a Parker and a Wheeler married.

MC: Nettie. Nettie Wheeler.
AO: Yes, Judge Parker and Wheeler. I don't know how old I was when Judge Parker…I wrote these things down, I mean the fact things, because I wrote some of the things that weren't generally known…

MC: Did you ever see Belle Starr?
AO: Yes, uh-huh. But I don't remember where it was. I don't remember the circumstances that I did. She lived her for a while you know.

Do you remember the old bawdy house down by the river? That her daughter had?
MC: There was down by the river, that was where the houses were, you know. And there was the last time I was down there off of the avenue, off of second, there were some houses down there, but most of them have been destroyed. And down there on Sixth St., some of those houses with curly windows, you know? But that's the way they all were. Oh, that Opera House was something beautiful. They had a great big huge rotunda, a huge tower, you know. And the walls were covered—handpainted you know—that whole thing with scenes from Shakespeare. Destroyed it. Shoe shop, I think now. That part of Garrison Avenue was beautiful. There are about three of them left, you know, with those round windows. Honey, from Garrison Avenue, that first block on Garrison Avenue was the loveliest building you ever saw. From that on up, was houses built just like that, the prettiest thing you ever saw. I was just so proud of Fort Smith and I said, my father being interested in the things you know, that it was all right for me to go. I didn't any more hesitate to go into a saloon than I did anywhere else. And I knew all the saloon people's names and their families. Why we didn't think anything more about selling a bottle of whiskey to me than selling a bottle of cocaine. And the Indians

they come to my home and stay. I never was the slightest bit afraid of the Indians at all. And I have, as I said, one time I knew that this man was trying to escape and I told him you know where to go so I could tell the authorities, and I did, I didn't deceive them. I told them, "Yes, he's been here, but he's gone."

MC: What had he done?
AO: Then I said, "There are houses, my father had at one time houses along in there, and out in the river there's an island and my father had houses out there. And I didn't any more mind going to the jail and seeing them. I didn't think anything about it. They got so maybe they're staying for some of the food, though. [not sure about that sentence].

MC: Oh really?
AO: That's right. But I didn't anymore mind going to the jail than I did anywhere else. Let me tell you. Most of those boys that were put in that jail were under the influence of some leading white person. That's right. The Indians that they were persecuting and doing things and driving out of their homes were people who were being persecuted. That's right. The white people came in. They stole their land from them and didn't pay them. Didn't pay them. They drove the Indians out. And oh my, there I was all for the Indians. I used to go to all their lawsuits, you know with my father. And I was right there at every case. I don't think they ever had a case that I wasn't there.

MC: How long did your father practice law?
AO: How old was I? I don't remember when we came. I have the date down, I don't remember.

MC: Where was your father's law office?
AO: On the corner of Sixth and Garrison, upstairs, what's there now?

MC: There's a jewlery store, there's a hotel, a bank, a savings and loan…
AO: That's right. Where the hotel was, upstairs, upstairs. I can't remember. I don't think it was on the corner, I think it was next door. What's there now?

MC: I can't remember. It's an Abstract Company?
AO: I'm sorry I can't hear a word.

MC: That's alright. Was Merchants' the only bank here? Was Merchants' the first bank here when your father came?
AO: They weren't here.

MC: I mean, when Mr. Echols came. Was Merchants' the first bank?
AO: It was started by Mr. Echols.

MC: Was the other bank already here? First National?
AO: I remember something coming in…what was the name of it? Some kind of a loaning company…I don't remember. Mr. Echols and my father were close old friends in Mississippi and they took this trip West, oh my goodness. Boy, I reckon they covered everything trying to find a place to live. And my father wanted to go to Salt Lake City, and they decided because of religious reasons they wouldn't go there. And then they came back here because they thought that the Indian Territory would be good, you know, and then the other thing was they depended on the river. We had to live where we depended on living along the Mississippi River, the Arkansas River. And they had the Arkansas River and the Poteau. And in those days, there was a lot of traffic on the Poteau. And they thought because of the opening of the river, that it would be a good place to live. There was hardly anything here. There were two houses down on where what was their name…I had some notes I thought would be of interest, but I don't know where…

MC: We'll get that another day.
AO: You know, the ground out there where the old fort was? That's a pretty place. They should never destroy that. Recently they destroyed a gateway that was there. It was a beautiful, beautiful piece of architecture. They tore that down, they had left this gateway there, it was brick and they left it there for years and years. Last time I drove down there I wanted to go across the river and I was suddenly horrified to find that building gone. And there's nothing down there now. Just two or three of the old buildings, that's all that's left down there now. Well Fort Smith had a good opportunity with the Indians right by them. The Indians have no place that's right in America.

MC: Did you ever go out to the Electric Park when you were a girl for fun and recreation? What was it like?
AO: Oh, the park. I haven't been down there in a long time. Is that open yet?

MC: They've changed it over to Kay Rodgers now.
AO: They had some lovely trees there, a lovely place.

MC: Did you go to dances at the electric park?
AO: Terrible not to be able to talk to anybody. Oh dances, no. We did have a little dancing club and we danced upstairs on the second floor of a building on Sixth Street and Garrison Avenue, now what was that? I think that was where it was. There was a club, a man's club, now what was the name of that?

MC: W.O.W.?
AO: Oh, I'll think of it sometime. Well there was a man's club and we had a dance up there every Saturday night. It was near my house, you see, I lived on Sixth Street, and it was on the corner upstairs. A men's club.

MC: Masons? Masonic Lodge?
AO: I don't know. Anyway, it was a man's club. We had a dance every, I don't remember if it was Friday or Saturday night. All week.

MC: Who were some of your friends that went?
AO: I never will forget.

Agnes Oglesby Interview – Part II

Transcribed by: Ben Boulden

Missy Carroll interviewed Miss Agnes Oglesby in 1977 when Oglesby was 103 years old. This is part two of the interview. In the interview, Miss Oglesby uses a racial epithet many may find offensive. Nevertheless, in the interest of accuracy, we have not censored it. (See above for Part I.)

MC: Who were your beaus?
AO: Bill and, who was that boy's name. Down at the post office. Oh, he had a good job down there. I can't think of the name. And the Kennedys. There were three Kennedy boys. Honey, I can't think of them.

MC: Was that the only place they would have dances?
AO: No, they had a place. It was kind of a free-for-all place. I don't remember where that was. It was a place where anybody and everybody could dance.

MC: What other things did you do when you were younger?
AO: I'll tell you what we did. We played tennis. Everybody in my home. We had croquet and tennis. We played croquet and tennis.

MC: The homes were very big with a lot of furniture. Was there a lot of space?
AO: What street would that be on? In the attic, there is an old canopy that was on the bed that they now have at that show place. They have my furniture but they haven't got the canopy. That canopy in the attic, in this house, that I have left. There were five (ornaments?) on that bed. Now that ought to be put back.

MC: Where did all that furniture come from? From Mississippi?
AO: Oh, lord no, I don't know. It came from five generations back. I wish we had never left Mississippi. We lived in a small town in Mississippi. He left on my account. It was a very, very small town. Mr. Echols was a good friend of him. He was always begging him to come to Fort Smith. Mr. Echols was a wonderful man.

MC: What do you mean he left on your account?
AO: (Inaudible response).

AO: What members of the Echols are living here now?
MC: There's Mont Echols.

AO: He was a man who married a woman with three children. He married a woman who had three children. I don't remember what their names are. I'm good at remembering some things but no names. (Reading a piece of paper?) What did you mean when you said 'Your dad left Mississippi on your account?' Oh, (she laughs). Well, it wasn't on my account. It was on Mr. Echols account. They had been close friends all their lives from when they were children. He had an office over most of the state and never could come.

Mr. Echols came soon though. Mr. Echols and father both were from country farms. Mr. Echols had Bill and the girl. He had just three children.

MC: Tell me about your mother.
AO: She had red hair. Her name was Lulu Bell Miller. I think there are some Millers still here. I'm sure there are a good number of the Miller family here.

MC: You said she was an organizer. Did she organize clubs?
AO: Yes, yes, plenty of clubs. The Wednesday Club, the Fortnightly. I wouldn't say. You'd have to go back to the clubs to find out. I know she organized the Wednesday Club, and I think the Fortnightly. You ask them. The Fortnightly will have it. The Wednesday Club she organized that. Their were church organizations. She didn't anymore mind going to the saloon, the jail. Not in the slightest. It was the strangest thing on Earth. She had not the slightest objection to go to any, any place.

MC: She didn't care what people thought.
AO: You have to have their permission now. She had a hand like this, like a Shepherd's Crook. She'd go to the jail. They'd say, 'Mrs. Oglesby, we'll take care of your cane.' Why honey, I had escaped prisoners stay in my home. I don't know if you know it or not. I hate to say it. They were against the Indians. They were. And the ones who were against the Indians were dirty themselves. So we had two ditry (???).

MC: Did your father feel about this the same way as you do?
AO: Father practiced law, and it was a hard thing in those days. There were the Indians to attend to and the white people. Let me tell you something. In history, the white people never treated the Indians right. Honey, they were driven off their homes. I remember that. I know that. They were not treated right. We had in our home, we always had about four or five, I reckoned you'd call servants. They were not treated like servants. They did their duty and we always had four or five. They did what they were given to do. And they were given, I can see it now, a wide porch and servants quarters and a servants' dining room. The servants dining room. There was a passage between the two. The servants were served just what they were in the house. They had the same food, the same things as a child. As a child, I thought it was the finest thing in the world. I had a nurse there.

MC: You had a nurse.
AO: The way the house was built there were four rooms. One, two, three, four rooms. Two rooms here and two rooms above it. They had an open place, then two rooms here and two room above. Then an open place and a servants quarters. That made eight rooms. The servants quarters were right there. And honey, I reckon I had a different feeling. I just that a servant was another member of the family.

MC: Were they Negro or white?
AO: They were Negro and white. We made no difference in Negroes. I had a Negro nurse who nursed me. What was her name? I felt no difference.

MC: That's odd being from Mississippi, Mississippi being a slave state, that you felt that way. I
AO: Mississippi was a place where they were good to their servants. Ohhh, you bet their servants were treated right. We treated them with the greatest respect and affection.

MC: You don't often hear that. You usually hear the opposite.
AO: I never came in contact with any bad niggers. They were treated with as much respect as anybody. I never thought of them as different. They were just servants.

MC: Why were white people used as servants?
AO: It's impossible to talk to me. I can't hear. Now, when the niggers came to America. Half of them stayed in the North. All of them came south because they were employed in the place of servants. Many people looked down on them. In my home, there was no distinction. They were regarded as just as honest and just as good. We had the greatest respect for them. They say that there were niggers in the South, but not the South that I knew. I never knew of a family that treated their servants badly. They were treated with courtesy and respect. I knew many, many families in Mississippi. I never knew of a single case where a nigger was mistreated. They were treated with love and respect. Oh, how I loved my old nurse. She used to punish me. She had a cabin out in the yard, far from the house. (Recording interrupted). She would decide what the punishment would be. I would be sent out to her house. She had a big bed. I would go out and climb up on that top bed and rollover and drop down in there. I was always delighted when I was punished because I would have so much fun. I would pull out the trundle bed and I would rollover and (yelp.) I loved those Negro women. That was a punishment (sarcasm). People have the idea that Negroes were mistreated. They were never mistreated in any family I knew. They were always sweet and obedient. They didn't feel that they were mistreated. I don't think they did.

MC: Are you getting tired?
AO: I wish I had known you were coming. I've written down some things, don't you know.

MC: Let me come back another time.
AO: If I can get that, I can remember some of the names. I resent them saying Southern people were unkind. Of all the families that I knew, they took pride in their Negroes like they did their diamonds and jewel. I never knew a case where a nigger was mistreated. ... Our family, when we came over from Scotland, half of them stayed north. One of them was the governor of Illinois. They wanted to stay north, don't you know. That war was a horrible thing. But there was a feeling between them. The South was closer built,

our family, our servants. Our family was whacked right in two. Some stayed North and some stayed South.

MC: I'll leave you some paper and you go over your notes. I'll come back some other time.
AO: I'll have a grand cleanup and throw away everything I have. I didn't know people were interested in it. The niggers are pushing so hard now you'd be surprised. They're pushing with the wrong idea. The niggers today have their feelings, but I don't know what it is.

MC: I'll come back another time and we'll talk some more.

RECORDED STATEMENT FROM INTERVIEWER MISSY CARROLL:
A week after this visit, I tried two more times to record a visit with Miss Oglesby. We wanted to be factual about names and dates, but she didn't know where her notes were and didn't want to be recorded. We contacted the Trust Department at Merchants National Bank but they did not know anything about the notes. I also contacted Ira and Lucy Oglesby and they did not know where the notes were either. In my conversation with Ira and Lucy Oglesby, they wanted to know what was on the tape. With their help, and also with the help of Carolyn Pollan, the following information is more factual.

Ms. Agnes Oglesby was born Jan. 2, 1874 in Senotobia, Mississippi. Her father, Ira Dancy Oglesby, and Mr. Echols were indeed friends. If you have listened carefully to this recording or read the typescript, you will notice several variations in their story of coming to Fort Smith. The fact is Mr. Echols arrived first and Mr. Oglesby came later. The Oglesbys came to Fort Smith in December 1893 when Agnes was 19 years old. City directories show in 1894 the Oglesbys lived at 723 North Fifth. In 1897, the address is listed as 419 North Sixth. In 1898, the address is 311 North Sixth. In 1900, the address is listed at 321 North Sixth. In 1900, Ms. Agnes went to Europe and spent a year. She returned September 1901. There is an article in the newspaper dated September 21, 1901 that tells of her trip. Ms. Agnes did visit the saloons in town but it was to collect money for the poor. As for the jail, she may have, but it was her mother who went quite often to take food to the women prisoners, one of whom was Belle Starr. Miss Agnes's mother was Louise Isabel Miller. She was born March 6, 1851, in Hernando, Mississippi. She was married Feb. 8, 1852, in Sardis, Mississippi. She died May 23,1943, in Fort Smith, Arkansas. She was on the Board of Lady Managers of Belle Point Hospital in Fort Smith, Arkansas. She was first vice president of the Varina Jefferson Davis Chapter of the UDC. She was one of the founders of the museum, the Old Commissary, and one of the workers of the museum. The fatther of Miss Agnes Oglesby was born August 13, 1851, probably in Georgia. He was the city attorney and died in Fort Smith, Arkansas on Dec. 11, 1919. The city directory of 1919 lists the address as 211 North 17th. Miss Agnes Oglesby lived here until 1945 or 1948 when she

moved to her brother's home at 221 North Sixteenth. We must remember that Miss Agnes is 103 years old and her mind was not as alert as what it once was.

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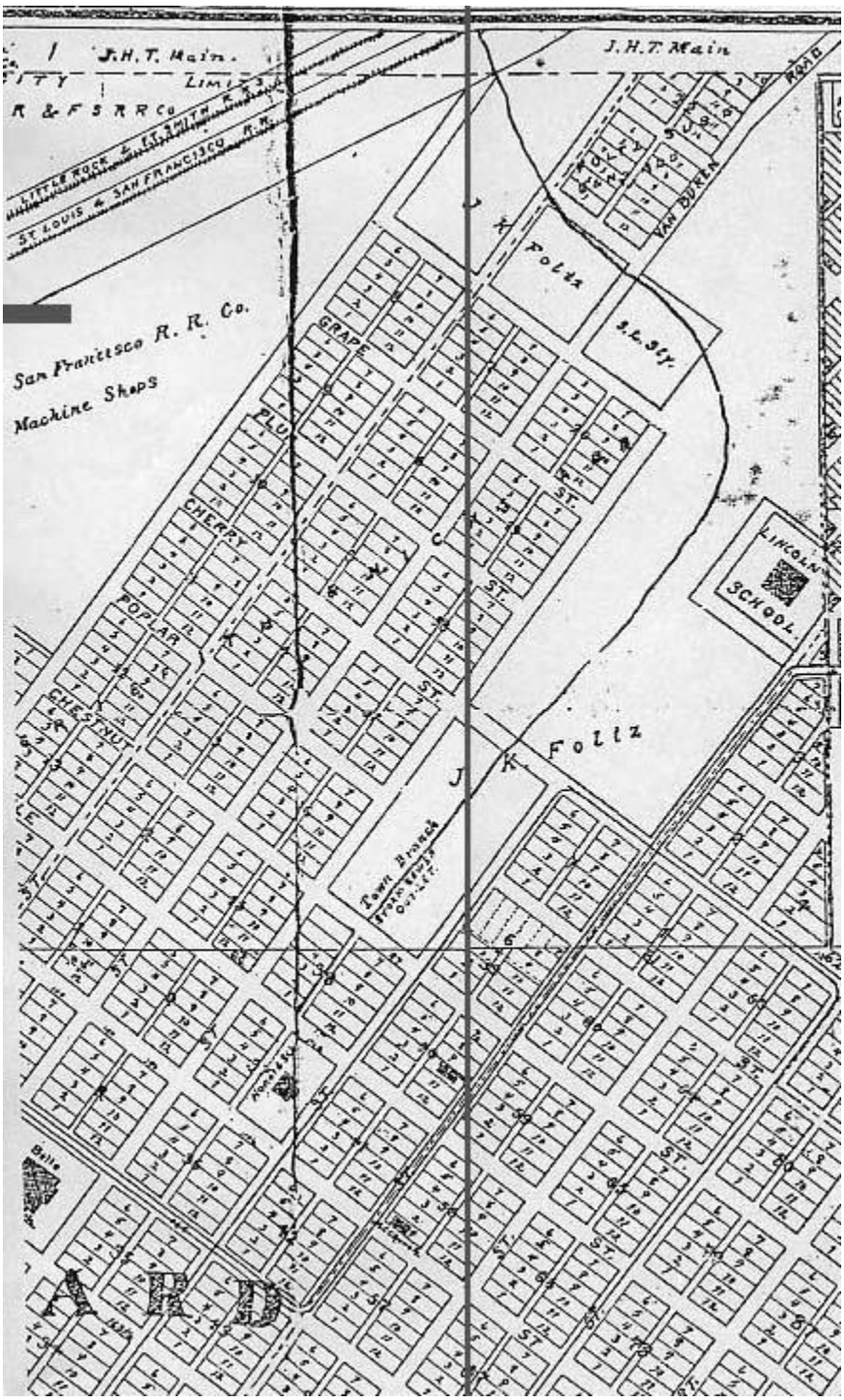
Town Branch

By: Ben Boulden



Town Branch once flowed along Towson Avenue and crossed Garrison Avenue in the 1000 block. It traveled down what is now (2005) a parking area between a motel and Cisterna Park, then continued on today's North 10th Street for several blocks before turning west toward the river.

Near the bend where Town Branch turned into the street's path, the Bull of the Woods mill once stood. It was a grist mill and cotton gin, and its rival, the Red Mill was on the northwest corner of North 10th and Garrison.

The Red Mill was associated with another long since forgotten site, a deep swimming hole that was popular with children. According to the Fort Smith Times Record, the pond had "many uncanny stories attached to it on account of its reported depths."Town Branch's disappearing act began in 1890. A storm sewer was built by W.A. Doyle down Towson Avenue.

Doyle also had the contract to pave Garrison Avenue. Unfortunately much of the brick he had bought for the job was rejected by inspectors. The cost of buying more would have made the contract a money loser for Doyle except that he also had won the contract to build the storm sewer. He used the rejected paving brick, superior to the building brick he otherwise would have used, and made up the loss in savings on the sewer project.

Although it isn't known precisely where Doyle ended the storm sewer, on an 1894 map, Town Branch is shown as having a new point of origin somewhere in the vicinity of North I and North J streets.

With the water flow now contained by the brick and incorporated into the early stages of a storm drainage system, property owners were free to bury the stream under dirt and pavement.

Until then, anyone wanting to cross Town Branch had to use one of several bridges that citizens had constructed along it.

In a heavy rain, the stream swelled with water run off from the streets, often causing the bridges to wash out.

At a nearby dance hall one night before 1890, Town Branch flooded so badly that revelers were trapped until dawn. With the sun coming up, the young women were desperate to get home and the young men were anxious to open up the stores on the avenue where they worked. Finally, it was decided that the men would have to wade across, carrying the women piggyback. The Times Record said "there was a brisk market thereafter for evening clothes."

In a strong rainstorm, the section of North 10th Street near Garrison Avenue is sometimes slow to drain. Some local residents have attributed the problem to the stream continuing to work its mischief.

Nevertheless, Doyle's brick storm sewer would reduce the severity of flooding there after 1890. By 1912, the remainder of Town Branch past North I Street was incorporated into an even more ambitious drainage project. Its waters diverted into the growing underground infrastructure of the city; its banks became nothing more than a dry ditch.

On June 7, 1912, the Times Record reported complaints about stagnant pools of water and ponds left behind, but said residents had begun filling in these "mosquito breeding holes" and the waterless gully with "dry garbage." Soon, nearly every trace of Town Branch was gone.

The Lynching of Sanford Lewis

By: Ben Boulden

On the night of March 23, 1912, an angry mob of men pulled Sanford Lewis, a black man, from the Fort Smith city jail and hanged him by his neck from a trolley pole.

A few hours before the lynching at around 8 p.m., patrolman Andy Carr and his friend, John B. Williams, went to the assistance of two detectives who were on Garrison Avenue struggling with Lewis in an attempt to arrest him for quarreling publicly with a black woman who also was present. When Lewis broke loose and attempted an escape from the policemen and Williams, the men gave chase. After cornering Lewis at the corner of North 10th and A streets in front of the Pony Express, as Lewis was being pistol whipped by his captors, a shot rang out. The bullet from the pistol struck Andy Carr above the eyebrow and exited through his temple. Critically wounded, a cab was called and rushed Carr to St. Edward Infirmary where he died a few days later.

Shortly after the shooting, two more policemen arrived and escorted Lewis to the city jail. Word of the shooting quickly reached a large number of men in the downtown area. Angry at reports that Lewis has shot Carr, by 11 p.m. a hostile crowd of 400 to 500 men surrounded the jail.

As the murderous intent of the crowd became clearer, few police officers actively sought to thwart their plans. Only Capt. Smart and Chief of Police Bryant Barry tried to dissuade the crowd. When Bryant blocked the door to the jail, the mob carried him off and held him to the side. No officer came to the aid of Barry.

After an unsuccessful attempt to batter down the door to the jail with a large piece of lumber, the mob gained entry to the building by tearing the bars off the outside window of the cell that held Lewis.

With several men securing Lewis, they fitted a noose around his neck and carried him to Garrison Avenue. Lewis repeatedly cried out his innocence, but in response to his pleas his captors only beat him into unconsciousness.

Stopping in front of a trolley pole that stood near the sidewalk in front of the Hotel Main and the First National Bank, a member of the mob climbed the pole and secured the rope. Lewis was lifted up as his executioner balanced himself on the pole. The man held him up by his collar and dropped him repeatedly until Lewis' death was certain. The man hoisted the body up even farther and tied the rope off, using his feet to swing Lewis around to show the crowd.

The ramifications of this event were far-reaching. A special grand jury was empaneled to look into the chain of events that led to the March 23 lynching of Sanford Lewis.

Police Chief Barry, Capt. Smart and nine other policemen were all fired by the city council.

Barry's replacement, George W. Moss, began a law-and-order crackdown, which probably drew some inspiration from a large town meeting that was held in the Opera House on March 26. When Mayor Fagan Bourland attempted to speak to the gathering, he was jeered repeatedly by the crowd.

Working under great secrecy and with many reluctant witnesses, the grand jury investigation concluded in May 1912. The first determination they reached was that Sanford Lewis did not shoot Andy Carr, but instead he had been accidentally shot by his friend, Williams, who was attempting to help him apprehend Lewis. The jury indicted Williams for involuntary manslaughter.

In the matter of the lynching, the jury indicted Con Sullivan, also charged with bank robbery in another Arkansas town, and John Stowers, a local building contractor, for first-degree murder. For nonfeasance of office, the jury charged five of the policemen who were on duty the night of lynching.

Within a matter of weeks, the court found the policemen guilty and fined them $100 each. The trials of Stowers and Williams began in August after a change of venue to Waldron in Scott County. According to press accounts, the state called dozens of witnesses and presented very strong cases.

Nevertheless, both defendants were acquitted, although after long jury deliberations. Frustrated by these failures, the prosecutor dropped all remaining criminal charges related to the lynching.

Bourland, blamed by large numbers of citizens for not having done enough to stop the lynching, failed to win re-election in 1913. With his defeat, the turmoil and violence which occurred on the night of March 23, 1912, began to recede in the memory of many of the citizens of Fort Smith. It was not the sort of pleasant, entertaining event that people want to reminisce about.

It was, however, a lesson in the injustice of vigilantes, a lesson that most who witnessed the lynching of Sanford Lewis would probably not soon forget, even if it was remembered only in silence.

Sources: Numerous newspaper accounts from the Southwest American and Fort Smith Times Record as well as court records.

The Burns Murder

On the morning of Monday, Jan. 27, 1958, the mutilated and severed head of Edna Burns was found in the vestibule of Immaculate Conception Church at North 13th Street and Garrison Avenue.

The story that quickly emerged that day and in the days that followed would be burned into the collective memory of the city and into the individual memories of the people of the city who lived through those days.

It is a story of mental illness, delusion and matricide.

Sometime between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. that Monday, Bobby Joe Burns, the son of Jesse and Edna Burns, drugged his mother and decapitated her in the kitchen of the family's home at 2203 South L Street. At least twice before, Bobby Joe Burns, 28, had been committed to a mental institution for paranoid schizophrenia and was given to abusing narcotics, according to Southwest American news stories from the time.

After his capture in the area west of Moffett on Tuesday, he would claim to police that his mother had consented and that he was enacting an Aztec sacrifice ritual.


Burns—Shortly After His Capture

Burns Whisked to Hospital After Murder Charge Filed

According to the American, he explained to police that human anatomy and geographical anatomy are related. The ritual included removal of an eye, part of the nose and part of the tongue. Bobby Joe Burns also referred police to verses in Revelations 20: 9-11. He carried his mother's head to the church wrapped in a sheet, then walked over the Garrison Avenue bridge into eastern Oklahoma, sleeping in a cold farm field that Monday night.

Burns confession to police was done while munching candy bars and drinking sodas. During the questioning, his brother delivered two packages of cigarettes to him and left after saying, "Joe, we don't blame you for what happened?"

This photo of bobby Joe Burns "shortly after his capture" appeared in the Southwest American on Jan. 29, 1958.

Edna Burns had secured the release of her son from a state mental institution about a year prior to the murder. Other members of the family had tried to persuade Edna Burns to return Bobby Joe to the hospital.

Following his capture, Circuit Court Judge Paul Wolfe immediately committed Bobby Joe Burns to the state hospital for 30 days of observation.

Despite later asking that he be charged with murder and executed, he would later rescind that request and ask to be released. Burns would remain in the mental hospital for the rest of his life. Although solid confirmation of his death there many decades later hasn't been obtained, it is believed he died in the state hospital sometime in the 1980s.

The luridness and shocking nature of the murder has ensured that it is still talked about today.

Sources for this summary account of the murder of Edna Burns were news reports in the Jan. 28 and Jan. 29 editions of the Southwest American and a letter written by Burns himself..

A Letter from Bobby Joe Burns

Bobby Joe Burns
Rogers Hall, B-Wing
Arkansas State Hospital
Little Rock, Ark.
July 5, 1958 [sic]*

Judge Paul Wolfe
c/o Prosecuting Attorney Lyman Mikel

Dear Sir:

As you may know, I was in a vacuous mental state at the time I killed my mother in 1958 and that the killing came from God or as might be said right out of the wild blue yonder.

The last time I was in the state hospital before the killing I was released to my mother against medical advice, and was taken home and cared for by her in a room at my home. It was necessary for her to care for me as my mental state was such that I could not care for myself.

I do not recall being in jail after the murder, and did not know the date or day I entered the State Hospital until much later when I happened to observe it on a clothes card here at the hospital. At that time (I mean the time of the killing) I was aware of very little and remember very little.

Later, I went mad and suffered so hard from madness that I wrote the court as you may recall and requested that I be sent to the electric chair. I wanted to use this means to commit suicide.

No charges were filed against me for the killing until I requested them in July of 1964.

Now, I have recovered from my madness and feel much better, and Dr. R.E. Walters is trying hard to rehabilitate me. I work on the Exit Ward as housekeeper and Dr. Walters has told me that execution is a lie and no one wants to try me. He is determined to help me get out.

What I would like to ask you gentlemen is that you drop the charges I requested be filed against me so that I can leave the State Hospital. Mr. Baker and Mr. Laster (The former is Director of Special Education, and the latter is L.P.T. here on the Exit Ward)

(over)

[page 2]

want to send me back to school and earn a degree and first the charges will have to be dropped.

Could you kindly drop them? I doubt if you want to deny that I was hopelessly insane at the time I killed my mother, and it is necessary to drop them at this point. I am not a bad man. We are respectable people. My great-grandfather was a Baptist preacher in Logan County, and my grandfather was County Clerk of Haskell County, Okla. When he moved to Fort Smith in 1918, he paid a number of courtesy calls to your court. When the Cherokee Strip was opened, we were already out there. We have many friends in Ft. Smith and I once received a letter from Gov. Francis Cherry (God bless him) telling me that no one had a right to mistreat me.

So I urge you to drop the charges against me. Please heed Dr. Walters and myself. God bless you. I am,

Very sincerely yours,
Bobby Joe Burns

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*Although dated 1958 at the top of the letter, this is likely a typo based on the reference to a 1964 request and the postmark on the envelope with the letter. The postmark date on the envelope is July 8, 1968.

Labor Is Enjoying Its Holiday with Purely Social Features Eschewing Politics and Such

Labor Day in Fort Smith was celebrated generally today throughout the city. Crowds of people from out of town came in to take part in and to observe the festivities, and everywhere stores closed and work of every kind ceased in honor of the day.

At 11 o'clock, the parade of unionists formed at Tenth and A streets in front of the Labor Temple, and proceeded south to Garrison Avenue, thence west to First Street, east to the Goldman then back to the Labor Temple.

The formation was arranged as follows:

Twin City Band
Street Railway Employees
Laundry workers
Barbers
Bartenders
Bricklayers
Blacksmiths
Broommakers
Carpenters
Cigarmakers
Clerks
Union Label League
Chauffeurs
Electricians
Garment workers
Horseshoers
Machinists
Mine workers
Musicians
Plumbers
Painters
Pressmen
Plasterers
Stonemasons
Stationery firemen
Bakers and confectioners
Boiler makers
Sheet metal workers
Powder workers

Stage and motion picture employees
Icemen

This afternoon everyone will adjourn to Electric Park, where the main features of the program will be carried out. A big barbecue and picnic will occupy the attention of the celebrants until evening when a dance, under the direction of Gene Bly, will be held in the Casino. The dance will continue through the late afternoon and night, music in the afternoon being furnished by Rebsamen's orchestra, and at night by Darby.

During the afternoon, the judges will award a prize of $10 to the organization which made the best appearance in the parade; $5 to the organization which had the greatest percentage of its members in line, and $5 for the best decorated float. There will be no formal speechmaking at any period of the program. Politics and legislation will be sidetracked for pure social delight.

At the park, a card bearing the wording: "Demand the Union Label on Everything" will be placed in some union man's hat. The lady who finds this card will be awarded $2.50.

Reprinted from the *Fort Smith Times Record*, Sept. 6, 1913, p.1. **Note:** The newspaper circulated in the afternoon and so makes reference to events scheduled at press time or later in the day.

Mayor's Speech at the Dedication of the Municipal Flag

Following is the address of Mayor Henry C. Read at the dedication of the flag of the city of Fort Smith, delivered at Stadium Park, May 12, 1916. An historical note, this speech was made after the start of World War I but before U.S. entry into it. It also makes reference to the Spanish-American War of 1898 and, I believe, to the Boxer Rebellion in China.

For my dedicatory address, I have chosen the motto upon our municipal flag, adopted by the city commission on the 5th inst., which is "All for One, One for All" and my theme will be "Patriotism" as expressed in a word we have recently discovered in our vocabulary, a word which unthought of for a generation or more, forcibly brought to our attention that today is the biggest word in the American language and that word is Preparedness.

Having attended the recent meeting of mayors at St. Louis on "National Security." I bring you the message of that meeting.

For generations we have been such a peace loving, peace commanding nation that we have not dreamt that any other country under any possible condition might wish to go to war with us, or if they should, in a fit of anger over some fancied wrong, were we not protected from invasion of our territory by the great oceans separating us from any possible assailant.

From this idle dream we were rudely awakened as if by an electric shock when President Wilson, the pacificist, arguing that "we are too right to fight," after carefully watching day and night the trend of affairs in Europe became so aroused and alarmed that he "right about faced" and leaving his post of duty in Washington took lightning express trains to the great centers of population and urged, begged and prayed that the people might see their great danger and prepare, prepare against the wrath that is to come.

The consensus opinion of the greatest students of political economy is that if we escape war after the European war is over, it will be a miracle.

We love peace therefore we cannot have war, the pacificist says.

Did not the Belgians love peace?

The Armenians were never a warlike people yet consider the condition of those two peoples as a direct result of a war for which they were no more responsible than we ourselves.

Two years ago, Belgium was as peaceful, happy and flourishing as the U.S.; today she is ravaged, ruined and pauperized.

Where are the Armenians?

Five-eighths of their population massacred, the rest scattered like dust to the four winds.

The treatment that these inoffensive people have suffered is without parallel in all history and the reason is because they were not PREPARED to protect themselves. Why has not war-crazed Europe devoured the little countries of Holland and Switzerland? Simply because they are prepared.

Why will not the victors in this death struggle not pick a quarrel with America? Will their armies be depleted? Will their thirst for conquest be satisfied? Such is not history.

No nation has been better equipped for war than when they have just won a great victory.

Will the present war put an end to wars? Will arbitration settle all differences between nations? Will treaties protect? Will the fact that we are by blood kin to all other nations insure us against attack?

Our houses will cease to burn when they are built of fireproof material.

War will cease when the fire of hate ceases to burn in the human breast. Arbitration is operative when there is power to enforce the finding of the court. Treaties are but pieces of paper. Remote blood ties do not bind as long as brother strikes down brother for a real or fancied wrong.

Let us not deceive ourselves — America has no friend in Europe. The more prosperous we become the more we shall be envied and envy is the twin brother of hate. This war is making them poorer and us richer. The greater disparity in this respect the more they will envy us and the more necessity there will be for them to recuperate their lost fortunes from the only nation which can supply them and that country is America.

Now, who will our imaginary foreign foe prove to be? Are we not already in controversies with Germany and England to say nothing of our little neighbor Mexico? To those who are disturbed about Germany, the German armies, etc., let me say that in my humble opinion we need not fear the loyalty of hyphenated Amercians; they are not traitors. They are citizens and citizens by their own volition.

I love my fatherland as devotedly as any son she ever produced but now I am a citizen of Arkansas. She has been good to me, and I will fight for Arkansas until I die.

Note the recent agreement of the entente powers forming an alliance offensive and defensive against all other nations.

What will be occasion for an attack upon America?

Our enforcement of the Monroe doctrine has already caused a brush with our English cousins and could easily become a casus belli.

The Monroe doctrine is considered a farce by all European nations, and even South America does not consider it a protection. South America looks only to England's navy as her safeguard and yet we shall see the day when our very national life itself depends upon a strict enforcement of the Monroe doctrine.

We are rapidly taking the South American trade away from Europe. It naturally belongs to us, but we will have to fight to hold it.

The conclusion is that we must have a Navy equal to the best, adequate coast defense and a large mobile army.

The fear of our statesmen and those who play the war game is that we have slept away our day of grace. We are like the foolish virgins. We are totally unprepared for an early settlement of the war in Europe. We have nothing but money and men.

Money is not munitions, and men are not airships or submarines.

It takes twelve years to make a naval officer. It takes time to make a torpedo. We cannot do in a day what it took Germany, the most efficient nation on Earth, fifty years to do in the way of preparedness.

If war were declared tomorrow, a large percentage of our warships would have to be sent to dry docks for a lack of officers to man them.

Statistics show that our store of munitions would last only thirty minutes the way they are used now in Europe.

We have only one-half torpedo for each submarine.

The youth of our land should be given military training. Every man in Switzerland is a trained soldier.

Preparation is profitable even if it is never called into use.

We should build military roads all over our country and develop our agriculture and mineral resources to the maximum because these would be just as profitable in times of peace as in times of war. Other countries will need our surplus of food product for many years to come.

After all, what is this preparedness for? It is PREPAREDNESS for PEACE.

That this peace loving nation may be in a position to command peace as far as our continent is concerned and become a great factor in a court of arbitration should such be formed to adjust differences between nations.

If anyone fears militarism in this country, I will ask did our treatment of Spain indicate that we wanted our pound of flesh? We demanded no war indemnity, sent her army back to Spain and paid $20,000,000 for certain lands in the Philippines. We refused to join in a claim for war indemnity for China. We are simply not a warlike people. Many of our citizens came to this country to escape militarism, and there is no danger of ours ever becoming a military ridden country.

Our slogan should be "millions for peace, not a cent for war" unless war is forced upon us.

I am happy to call our visiting friends attention to the fact that long before President Wilson discovered that word "preparedness," Fort Smith was busily applying it toward ibuilding a City Beautiful and as a result we have here a little city lying at the foot of the Ozark mountains as complete in all its appointments as many cities of ten times its size. Founded by men of brain and brawn it has steadily grown and developed from within itself like the rose which first puts forth a tiny bud and day by day adds petal to petal in its folding embrace until it can no longer conceal its beauty and bursts forth a full blown fragrant flower to comfort and bless all who will accept of its charms so unlike the mushroom of the plains, which springs up over night with no apparent source of origin or thought of destiny it fades away as suddenly as it came.

Fort Smith was built not by boosters but by the same men along the same lines and every need of modern man is supplied as evidenceed by our commission form of government, our public schools, churches, libraries, musical clubs, transportation companies, telephone lines, theaters, movie shows, paved streets, water works, sewers, natural gas (the greatest boon to housekeepers), scientific food inspection and santitation, unexcelled fire department, Country club, parks and playgrounds, tennis courts all over the city, and last but not least this magnificent stadium for the development of athletics in our youth and entertainment for baseball fans in the city and surrounding country.

Our trees, lawns, gardens and bird sanctuaries make of Fort Smith a veritable Garden of Eden. A city with NO DEBT. NO SALOONS. NO OPEN GAMBLING.

In fact, no place for crooks, criminals and the vicious to whom our police department have made a closed town.

To such a PREPARED CITY, it becomes not only our pleasure but our duty, following the ancient question of the far east to go out into the highways and byways and compel the people to come to the feast we have set before them.

I am proud that the honor has been bestowed upon me of dedicating to Fort Smith her municipal flag.

(Raising of flag).

The national colors — red, white and blue — express our national patriotism. The field of gold typifies solidity for which Fort Smith is famous.

Around the city seal, the white circle denoting continuity signifies that we will ever be loyal to our motto, "All for One, One for All."

May this flag ever wave over as good and brave a people as it does today and speak to the world of their peace, purity and prosperity.

This speech was transcribed from a printing of the speech in the *Fort Smith Times Record*, May 12, 1916. The transcription is verbatim although some small changes were made in punctuation.

The 1907 Ordinance

By: Ben Boulden

At one time, Fort Smith distinguished itself in the way it dealt with a profession regarded by many as undistinguished. It is one of the very few American cities to have had legal and regulated prostitution.

From 1907 to 1924 within a proscribed vice district, prostitution was legal, madams and prostitutes were licensed and the women were subject to regular health inspections.

Only a handful of states left the legal issue of prostitution up to the counties and cities within its borders and Arkansas was one of them. However, Fort Smith, and doubtless other cities in the state continued to prosecute women for engaging in the practice. Even during the period of legalized prostitution in the city, Fort Smith tried and convicted women for prostitution in areas of the city outside the vice district known as The Row.

Before 1907, Fort Smith authorities tried to eliminate it everywhere, or at least keep it under control. In 1890 in the city's police court, 255 prostitution cases were ajudicated. The Digest of City Ordinances that was published in 1891 contains 15 separate sections governing prostitution-related offenses. The ordinance at that time prohibited the presence or keeping "a bawdy house ... for assignation or lewd purpose"; the use of a cemetery as a place of assignation; walking with or associating with a known prostitute; and the movement of any woman on the city streets after 9 p.m.

Nevertheless it seems to have little deterent effect in abating the expansion of commercial sex enterprises in the city. Whereas there were over 250 cases in 1890; in 1990, there were as many as 445 cases in 1900; and 780 cases in 1905.

According to Barbara Meil Hobson's historical study of U.S. prostitution, "Uneasy Virtue," "only one city in the United States, St. Louis ... ever adopted a formal regulation system" and this was in 1870s.

Fort Smith was an exception to this statement. The ordinance read as follows:

All prostitution in the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas, shall be confined to the district embraced between North 'C' Street on the North; the alley in Blocks No.s 2 and 3, City of Fort Smith, on the East; North 'A' Street on the South; and Arkansas River on the West, and there only."

This was the language passed by the Fort Smith City Council in 1907 that legalized prostitution within the Row and defined its boundaries. The ordinance further stipulated that any owner of a house that was used for prostitution in the Row was required to obtain a permit from the city clerk for this privilege.

Similarly, all keepers of houses of prostitution were required to purchase licenses for engaging in prostitution within the district. Both of these groups made monthly payments to the city of the exact same amounts that they had been paying monthly in the way of fines.

Other restrictions required the construction of fences around the houses that would be a minimum of eight feet in height, and prohibited the entry into any of the houses of any male under 21 years of age and any woman under 18.

The most significant innovation was the introduction of the bimonthly health inspections by a city health officer. According to the ordinance he was to inspect both inmates and keepers and to revoke their licenses if they were found to be sick and to withhold their licenses until they were restored to health.

Amidst a wave of law-and-order vigilantism and the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan statewide and locally in the 1920s, the city board of commissioners acted to repeal the 1907 ordinance. With sweeping words, the new city law established a fine of $25 to $100 for use of any place or thing for "illicit sexual intercourse, fornication or adultery, or as a place of assignation."

Prostitution would continue to flourish on the Row and in other locations in the city despite the prohibition. Regular raids, fine and even health inspections would continue to characterize how the city handled the vice into the 1970s.

This essay was taken from an earlier article written for the Times Record's Insight 2000 history of Fort Smith and from a study of Fort Smith prostitution done in 1994 for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

The Lost Hotel

By: Ben Boulden

The building of the Goldman Hotel was done in fits and starts and with many difficulties, but the historic structure that once stood at the east end of Garrison Avenue took even longer to meet its demise.

Twenty years after the last tenants left the hotel, Immaculate Conception Church purchased the property on the corner of North 13th Street and Garrison Avenue in 1994 and demolished it to make room for a parking lot.

In 1908, the Sebastian Hotel Co. began construction of the hotel. The builders had completed some of the floors when the company became insolvent. A new company formed by prominent local businessmen took over the project. Lesser Goldman, a St. Louis cotton broker, agreed to help finance the their Southwestern Hotel Co. in exchange for naming the hotel after him.

From its opening in 1910 until the beginning of World War II, the Goldman Hotel was the social center for the city's notable families and well-heeled businessmen. Six stories of steel-reinforced concrete were arranged into two wings that fronted North 13th Street. The hotel's owners advertised the hotel as "fireproof" and "European." (They added the third wing to the north end in 1929).

The basement and the first and second floors were public spaces, although the second-floor mezzanine contained suites used as offices and showrooms. The third through fifth floors were used for hotel rooms. The sixth floor also housed hotel rooms in addition to a large ballroom.

A high ceiling of flat panels of glass held aloft by 16 pressed-brick columns around the lobby perimeter greeted visitors entering the lobby. A stairway of cast iron and marble led to the mezzanine, and white oak and glass panels separated the lobby from two restaurants and shops on the first floor. All the public spaces on this level were floored in tile mosaic. Decorative plasterwork in floral and geometric patterns graced the ceilings.

Upon its opening, the Goldman Hotel had no lunch counter. Guests ate in the main dining room where tuxedo-clad waiters served meals with silverware, presented finger bowls and delivered the checks on silver trays. Checks were signed, but seldom paid in cash. Most local people who ate there had accounts at the Goldman and, until the Depression could even draw cash on their accounts.

Not only was the Goldman a place for elegant dining, it was a place for meeting and entertainment. In rotation with the Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs and the Marion in Little Rock, the Goldman hosted state conventions of fraternal and professional organizations as well as the weekly meetings of local groups.

Wholesale businesses and factories often set up sample rooms in the hotel for the examination of area buyers. Musical bands such as Eddie Simon's 10-piece orchestra lived in the hotel and played dances every night. In 1930, John England, the manager of the Goldman, started the first radio station, KFPW, which was housed in the hotel and run by Jimmie Barry.

Among the celebrities who stayed in Goldman over the course of its life were: at almost nine feet in height, Robert Waldo, the tallest man in the world; humorist Will Rogers; film stars Rosalind Russell and Susan Hayward; baseball greats Mickey Mantle and Dizzy Dean; Van Buren native and comedian Bob Burns; and female golfer Babe Dedricksen.

In an interesting side note to these celebrity visits, the original Buster Brown and his dog, Tige, were guests of the hotel. During their stay, Tige died and an elaborate funeral was held with burial in the front yard of a Dodson Avenue home.

The Goldman was a classic hotel of bellmen, doormen and other service personnel. The owners maintained a full staff of 125 to 150 people to care for guests in the hotel's 225 rooms. Filling out the complement of maids and others were barbers in a four-chair barber shop where "well-paid" businessmen could get a shave every morning as well as a shoe shine or a manicure.

Cigar stand girls ran a bookmaking operation where their customers rolled dice, "double or nothing," for purchases. These young women also ran baseball game pools and punch boards and were great sources of local information and gossip. World War II ended these practices at the cigar stand and also forever changed the character of the Goldman. Contractors who were helping to build Fort Chaffee flooded the hotel.

After World War II, chain motels and the growing car culture of America sharply cut into the traditional business of the hotel. By the 1960s, the airways had eclipsed the railways as the preferred mode of travel for most Americans, further hurting the Goldman Hotel located downtown near the old train stations.

In that decade, the hotel essentially became an apartment building for tenants who paid for lodging by the week or month. It continued on this basis until a fire marshal ordered

all the upper floors to be vacated in 1974 and the mortgage holder foreclosed. Two local men bought all the furniture and fixtures and sold them off piece by piece.

During an abortive attempt at renovation in 1985, the interior of the Goldman Hotel was stripped of nearly all its interesting decorative features, making it truly a shell of its former self.

Since its demolition, it has been left to those who can remember the hotel and events there to fill in the space that once was occupied by the building. It will be left to those who read and hear those memories to imagine what the Goldman Hotel was to Fort Smith and what it might have been again.

Taken from local newspaper accounts and personal documents.

Fort Smith's Flood History

By: Leon J. Guthrie, Local Forecaster

Rainfall sufficient to produce a flood at Fort Smith may occur any month of the year, although there is no record of floods in September. Heavy rains over Oklahoma and southeastern Kansas are the only flood producing factor, which refutes deep-rooted tradition, "snows in the mountains." An example of this is the fact that changes in the stage of the river at Wichita, Kan., have a practically negligible effect at Fort Smith.

The official river records of the weather bureau station began Jan. 1, 1887. During this period, the highest stage was 25.4 feet, May 7, 1898. From "Hydraulics of the Mississippi,"1876, we learn that fairly reliable data of floods in 1833, 1844, 1866 and 1867 were recorded. This gives a record flood crest of 23.0 feet in 1833. The lowest stage was 1.0 foot below zero October 23 to November 3, 1893.

Since the beginning of the weather bureau records, the flood stage (22 feet) has been reached or exceeded thirty times: once in January, once in February, twice in March, four times in April, ten times in May, five times in June, twice in July, once in August, once in October, once in November and twice in December. There have been no September floods, although the flood stage has closely approached several times in that month. The floods occurred in 1893, 1895, 1898, 1899, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1908, 1909, 1912, 1915 and 1916. A stage of 30 feet was exceeded five times; and 25.0 feet was exceeded seventeen times.

During the 29 years of record, the river has been frozen on the following dates: January 2 to 11, 1887; January 20, 1892; February 7, 9, 1895; January 29, 1897; February 11 to 16, 1899; January 27-29, 1902.

Source: *Fort Smith Times Record*, Feb. 8, 1916, p. 3.

Fort Smith Celebrated 'Dry Spell' 89 Years Ago

By: Ben Boulden

On Sunday, Feb. 13, 1916, the New Theater at North 10th Street and Garrison Avenue was packed with a crowd that just wanted to say 'no.' The drys who gathered in the entertainment space were there to celebrate the prohibition of the sale of liquor in Arkansas and Fort Smith, not enjoy entertainment.

Arkansas had gone dry in 1916 as had the city a few months earlier. The teetotalers urged the state's congressional delegation to make Washington, D.C., just as liquor free and vote for a bill that would extend prohibition to the nation's capital.

Nineteen young ladies dressed all in white occupied center stage at the New Theater, representing the 19 states that already had prohibited the sale of liquor within their borders.

Mayor Read endorsed President Wilson's "preparedness for peace" policy prior to U.S. involvement in World War I and opined that what would do the most for preparedness would be stopping the "manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors." Many speakers noted efforts to prohibit or curtail the sale of drink in the warring European countries and like Read equated prohibition with an alert defense of a nation.

Read refuted the claim prior to citywide prohibition that Fort Smith's municipal government couldn't survive without saloon license revenue with his own claim that the city was running fine without the money. Read even said the deficit of the previous administration was even being paid off. Police had rigorously enforced prohbition in Fort Smith, he said.

Noting that the change in the character of the town had been "phenomenal," Read quoted a salesman from one of the leading distilleries who had called Fort Smith "the best whiskey town in the United States."

Fort Smith didn't give up its whiskey without a long fight though. Lush-like, the city returned to the bottle at least once before taking the pledge for a prolonged dry spell. From August 1914 to January 1915, Fort Smith closed its saloons and prohibited the sale of liquor, hard and soft.

On Jan. 2, 1915, Judge Ezra Hester ruled in county court that a petition valid that requested that liquor licenses be issued. Fort Smith was wet again until Aug. 1, 1915.

Judge Paul Little in March 1915 had ordered that all sales of liquor be prohibited in the city beginning on that date. At 11 p.m., Saturday, July 31, 1915, Fort Smith went dry and officially stayed dry until prohibition was repealed in 1933. In that year, Arkansas returned to a local-option law and placed an excise tax on liquor to raise money for a cash-strapped, Depression-era state government.

Source: "Prohibtion Celebrated," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Feb. 14, 1916, p. 1; "City Closing Hour of 11 p.m. Observed As Saloons Quit Fort Smith For Good," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 1, 1915, p. 1; "Hester Rules For Saloon Licenses," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Jan. 3, 1915, p. 1.

Fort Smith Celebrated 'Dry Spell' 89 Years Ago

By: Ben Boulden

On Sunday, Feb. 13, 1916, the New Theater at North 10th Street and Garrison Avenue was packed with a crowd that just wanted to say 'no.' The drys who gathered in the entertainment space were there to celebrate the prohibition of the sale of liquor in Arkansas and Fort Smith, not enjoy entertainment.

Arkansas had gone dry in 1916 as had the city a few months earlier. The teetotalers urged the state's congressional delegation to make Washington, D.C., just as liquor free and vote for a bill that would extend prohibition to the nation's capital.

Nineteen young ladies dressed all in white occupied center stage at the New Theater, representing the 19 states that already had prohibited the sale of liquor within their borders.

Mayor Read endorsed President Wilson's "preparedness for peace" policy prior to U.S. involvement in World War I and opined that what would do the most for preparedness would be stopping the "manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors." Many speakers noted efforts to prohibit or curtail the sale of drink in the warring European countries and like Read equated prohibition with an alert defense of a nation.

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Researching Land Use

By: Ben Boulden

If you don't have money to hire an abstract and land title company to research the land use history of a particular piece of real property, the Fort Smith Public Library has some free resources that might help you do it yourself.

On microfilm, the library has copies of the fire insurance maps that were created and updated by the D.A. Sanborn Co. beginning in the 1860s. It also has copies of old city directories on microfilm. The library's entire collection of directories has not been filmed, but all of them remain in the holdings of the genealogy room in hard copy.

Sanborn designed the maps to assist fire insurance agents in determining the degree of risk associated with a specific property. As an outgrowth of this purpose, the maps diagram all kinds of information about city buildings and uses to which they and the land they are on were put. The library's copies of the maps document changes to a property over time in use and in physical structure and layout. Sanborn maps are unrivaled as sources of information about the histories of residences and commercial structures.

Another good source is the library's collection of city directories. Most of these contain a street index which gives information about properties and their occupants. The index is in order by street name and within a street listing in order by address number.

A city directory will only list the occupants for a particular year. If someone or some business was at an address between publications of a directory, then it will be difficult to find them. Also, there are some gaps in the library's collection of directories. Still, the directories can be helpful.

For example, I was researching what was at a particular address on Rogers Avenue. Not only did the directory give me a good approximation as to when a business first located at the address, it also gave me an idea of what was around it at different times. When this information was conveyed to the business' owner, it cleared up some confusion as to what she had been told by various people. What she had been told the property was used for in the early 1950s was actually what some nearby property was used for and not the site in question.

Beyond these sources, the Sebastian County Assessor's office has title history information on file and these are documents subject to public use and access. Also, the library has copies of the Sebastian County atlases published in 1887 and 1903, which give some information about land use as well. The 1903 atlas does contain some inaccuracies in its text so it's best to doublecheck anything in it that is of importance to you. I believe the diagrams are reasonably accurate though.

Crime and the Holidays in Old Fort Smith

A Thanksgiving Day brawl and an explosion inspired by Christmas highlighted the holiday season in Fort Smith in 1914.

Headlined "Turkey Day Free-For-All Fight Sends Five Persons Before Mayor For Judication of Trouble Originating Over Clogged Sink At Hotel" in the Nov. 27, 1914, edition of the Fort Smith Times Record, the incident in November injured the following:

- Robert Goodman: "Nick on head; head swathed in bandages; knife stab in left hand; more bandages; scratch says it was caused by knife in left arm."
- M.S. Pilgren: "Discolored eye and scratched face."
- Papa Coogan: "Nick on forehead and bumps on head."

All were charged wtih "D&D" (drunk and disorderly).

Pilgren ran the Central Hotel at the corner of North Tenth and B streets and the Coogans lived there. The free-for-all began when Coogan discovered a sink in the hallway was stopped up and suggested that the Pilgrens had thrown garbage into the drain. Pilgren resented it and apparently insulted Mrs. Coogan. Boards, scantlings and a shovel were the weapons that figured into the subsequent fight.

Accusations flew between the two families in court as to who was the real aggressor, but plenty invective and profanity was traded by both sides in the melee as well.

"Mrs. Pilgren called me enough names to build a road to the depot," Papa Coogan said. Mrs. Pilgren said Coogan was the only one cussing.

Goodman was standing in a doorway watching the fight and was somehow drawn into it. Coogan charged him with coming to Pilgren's aid.

Later in court, Goodman testified that found a straw among the obstructions in the sink drain.

"I guess that was the straw that broke the camel's back," said Mayor Read, who presided over the police court that heard the case. There is no record of how he ruled.

What is known is how Judge Paul Little ruled in the case of three boys less than a month later.

Murray Seal, 17, John Perryman, 15, and Homer McNesbit, 16, pleaded guilty to indictments in circuit court charging them with burglary. They also stated that they had engaged in the crime to secure enough money to hire a horse with the purpose of going into the country to cut mistletoe to then sell in the city to raise money for Christmas.

On the night of Dec. 17, they confessed to breaking into the headquarters of Company D, Arkansas National Guard at 217 N. Tenth St. In their effort to rob a gas meter, which were coin operated at that time, the teens set fire to the building. Only one dollar in change was in the meter. The structure was not badly damaged because of quick action taken by the fire department. Firefighters hosed the wood parts of the structure to keep them wet while securing some sacks that were used to snuff out the gas fire.

The three teenagers had used a match for light while burgling the meter. They were slightly burned by the explosion they had touched off and all were shortly after arrested.

Little sentenced them to serve three years each in the state reformatory. The next day, on recommendation of the prosecuting attorney, the sentences were set aside for a much lighter punishment of 15 days in jail and a $10 fine.

Sources: "Tragedies of Police Court," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Nov. 27, 1914; "Gas Explodes, Starts Fire as Boys try to Rob Meter," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Dec. 18, 1914, p. 8; "Young Burglars Get Three Year Term in Prison," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Dec. 20, 1914, sect. 2, p. 3; "Judge Little Saves Three Youths From Felon's Cell," *Fort Smith Times Record*, Dec. 21, 1914, p. 1.

Rolling Knolls Country Club: A Personal Reminiscence

By: Dusty Helbling

The original two-story mansion that was to become Rolling Knolls Country Club was built by Gen. Benjamin Bonneville in 1865 on his 1,000-acre farm in Fort Smith. (The total acreage making up Rolling Knolls probably was in the 60 to 80 acre range.)

The lumber was brought from Little Rock by wagon and steamboat. I remember the beautiful old, worn black walnut staircase. Many historic figures in past history tread those stairs as this was the social center of the area. The home was built by the 75-year-old general for his new 24-year-old bride.

S.W. Creekmore Sr. was the one that owned and built the Rolling Knolls Country Club golf course, which opened in 1932. I'm not sure how much of the layout of the course was his or if Little Rock pro Herman Hackbarth might have had some input as he laid out several Arkansas golf courses. Mr. Creekmore drove to Little Rock in a Model T Ford for golf lessons in the late teens and early 1920s.

S.W. Creekmore would be a story in himself. He played football from 1908 to 1909 for the Arkansas Razorbacks and was All-Southwest Conference back. He later was the state amateur several times. He played golf with royalty in Europe. His weakness was Coca-Cola. He seemed to always have one in his hand and this led to a kidney stone problem.

Even as a kid, I could tell this was a real gentleman that was respected by all. He took on the Rolling Knolls Country Club project in the middle of the Depression, which took a lot of guts. About every businessman would say it was the worst possible time to start a business.

This was probably one of the reasons he was known to be very tight with his money. My mother, Daisy Helbling, tells about some caddies that were digging around the clubhouse flower beds. When they came across an old rusty shovel blade underground, most likely left there from construction of the home, then one caddy said to the other, "Let's bury this thing before Mr. Creekmore sees it and puts a new handle on it for us to use." The funny thing was that he was serious.

They had a contest to name the golf course with the grand prize of a lifetime membership. Ford Hinkle came up with the name Rolling Knolls and claimed it.

My father, Henry Helbling, was the club pro from 1932 to 1942. He started as caddy in 1917 for Scottish pro John Gatherum who came to the United States to serve as club pro at Fort Smith Country Club. We still have the clubs that were given by John to my father when he was nine-years-old. As he got older, my father worked his way up to caddy master, then assistant pro at the Fort Smith Country Club. He was unique as a

pro because he had a reverse grip, playing crosshanded. As a kid, I did not know there was anything unusual about that as I also played that way.

During the summer months, Dad put in long days and nights. He got up around 5 a.m. to check the greens and mowers had to be sharpened and ready for work crews just after sunrise. The tractor and Model A pickup and the mowers had to all be ready. During the day, he was repairing the clubs, giving lessons and handling fees and sales in the club house.

I mentioned Mr. Creekmore being a little tight. When the last golfers finished in the evening or around sunset, Dad would have to put the sprinklers out to water the greens. The catch was they only had three sprinklers so around 11 p.m. he would have to go out and move them to the next three greens, then again at 2 a.m. back out and move them to the last three greens. I don't recall how much watering went on during the winter months. It was a hard job, but during that time period he was lucky to have a job and a place to live, so we were better off than a lot of people.

As a kid, I was not able to judge how good a golfer my Dad was, but knew that he did have a temper and I didn't want to be around when he was having a bad day on the golf course. The late Bill Mosley told me that when he was on his game he was the best golfer he ever saw, including the likes of Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer.

During the 1930s, Henry Helbling and pro Bob Steel from Texas were supposed to be the longest drivers of a golf ball in the United States. The sports editor of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram wrote that he saw Dad hit a ball 500 yards at Colonial Country Club. My Dad's response was that the editor was crazy and needed a headline to spice up his golf coverage.

He did admit to me how much fun it was in 1934 when Southern Hill Country Club in Tulsa opened up. He was in a group with the great Walter Hagen and was outdriving him 50 yards on average. The fans were trying to figure out who in the heck was this young pro no one had heard of.

He set five course records during the 1920s and 1930s in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Bill Mosley told me about one he set in Oklahoma on a nine-hole par 36 sand green course. He was in a foursome that day. He shot three on every hole for a record 27. The word spread fast and when they went out to play the second nine holes, bets were being made if he could do it again by the spectators. He did the first four holes in threes, but on the fifth hole, a par 5, he only had a birdie.

See above for first posting in this series.

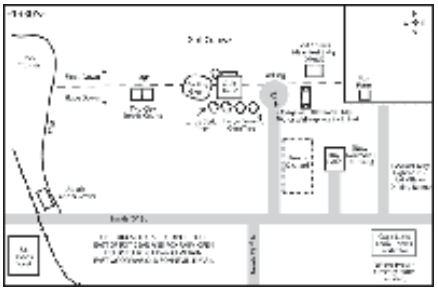
Rolling Knolls – Part II: A Personal Reminiscence

By: Dusty Helbling

Golfers

The thing I remember most was Ladies Day at Rolling Knolls, as mother always played. I remember Lena Robbins, Mattie Price and Ed Dell Wortz.

Then, the old gentleman that was too slow for the men, was my favorite, Uncle "Alf" Williams." Uncle Alf could not hear much and had a little, white mustache and whiskers like the old Coke Santa Claus. He was always the best-dressed man around the club, and to me, was a class act. I found out in my golf research in Arkansas a few years ago that he won the first state amateur championship held at Little Rock Country Club in 1908. So, we know he was a top golfer in his prime. The ladies enjoyed this old gentleman as he certainly was a special person. I remember him sitting on the front porch of the clubhouse watching people teeing off on No. 1 and visiting as best he could. He was a jovial fellow and his laugh was a "Ho, ho, ho," which I remember well.



Some of the fathers brought their sons and started them playing golf: Ben Mosley, sons Bill and Lutie; Mr Basham and son King Basham; Clifford Moore and son; Steve Creekmore and Steve Creekmore Jr. I know there were others, but I can't remember their names.

Then the regulars I can remember would be my dad's good friend Richard Hobbs as they grew up together living in the same area near Fort Smith Country Club. Richard pumped gas at the family's Skelly station on 11th Street, now known as Midland Boulevard. From 10 until he retired around 70, he was well known for his honest auto service, doing a lot for the older people in Fort Smith.

Some others that were regulars were Carl Robbins, Herman Hoff, Terry and Rosemary Hill, Carroll Allison, John Laws, Howard Kelly, Jim Reynolds, Carl Wortz, Louis Wineberger, Ben I. Mayo, Fred Laddage, Lowell Perry and Lawrence Henderson.

Then, along came John D. Yutterman who was in the grocery business. After a few beers, John was ready to take on the best. Walter Moorman and Vincent Allison were the ones he was ready to take with some crazy betting. John D. was a gambler on anything. He won a lot of money and lost a lot. He was the last owner of Rolling Knolls Golf Course when it went out of business in the 1950s. I wish I could recall more whom my father used to talk about that were occasional players.

Some of the top local players were Vincent Allison, Walter Moorman, Curtis Collier, S.W. Creekmore, Leo Byrum, but I do not remember many of them now.

One special promotion was a mechanical driving machine. A golf ball maker set up at the club that was in a trailer with a paddle wheel on the side. This hit their band of balls around 400 yards. That drew a lot of attention.

Guinness Book of World Records
There are two events that took place at Rolling Knolls Country Club that are commemorated on the Walk of Champions at the World Golf Hall of Fame in St. Petersburg, Fla.

PGA Pro Henry Helbling is the only man to eagle the same hole in four consecutive rounds in one day. This was a par 4, 323 yards, which he drove the green the first three rounds and tapped in for two. On the fourth round, he missed the green but chipped in for a two.

The second event involved myself in September 1939. I was playing golf with two caddies late in the day after everyone had finished. Hole No. 3 was a 135-yard par 3 over a creek. I was using a wooden shaft brassie (2 wood) driving the ball on to the green and it rolled into the cup for a hole in one. I didn't realize what that meant at the time because people had holes in one now and then. However, they were not 5 years old. The importance of this did not register with me until in the 1990s a fellow in England's 5-year-old son had a hole in one. He was claiming this was a world record and he was trying to make money from it. I contacted the Guinness World Record people about this. They said they did not keep records of juveniles before 1975. As far as they knew, mine was the first, plus I was younger by three months, so I was 38 years ahead of the second 5-year-old. Then, if I remember correctly, in 2002, a 3-year-old was credited as being the youngest at 30 yards. (This is not a standard hole). They had the kid go 90 feet from a practice green hitting balls until one finally went in. I told the Guinness people that they need to have restrictions on what can be classified as a legal hole-in-one or next they'll be gettting claims from Putt-Putt golf. If they count the 3-year-old, I still held the record for 63 years. If not, I still hold the record, but what real value is that?

Caddies
The caddies were a major part of golf up to the mid-1940s at most golf courses. After World War II, the pull carts had a strong grip on golfers because of the shortage of caddies. Then came the power golf carts and that pretty well finished off caddies except at a few special golf courses.

At Rolling Knolls, we had caddies ranging from around 10 to 40 years. The caddies hung out on the south side of the clubhouse. There were about four or five large cedar trees during the general's time. This was where outdoor socials were held. Lanterns

were hung in the trees and musicians were brought in to entertain. However, the atmosphere was somewhat different with the caddies. This area was used for pitching pennies, dice, horseshoes and cards, etc. Nothing was worthwhile unless you could bet on it.

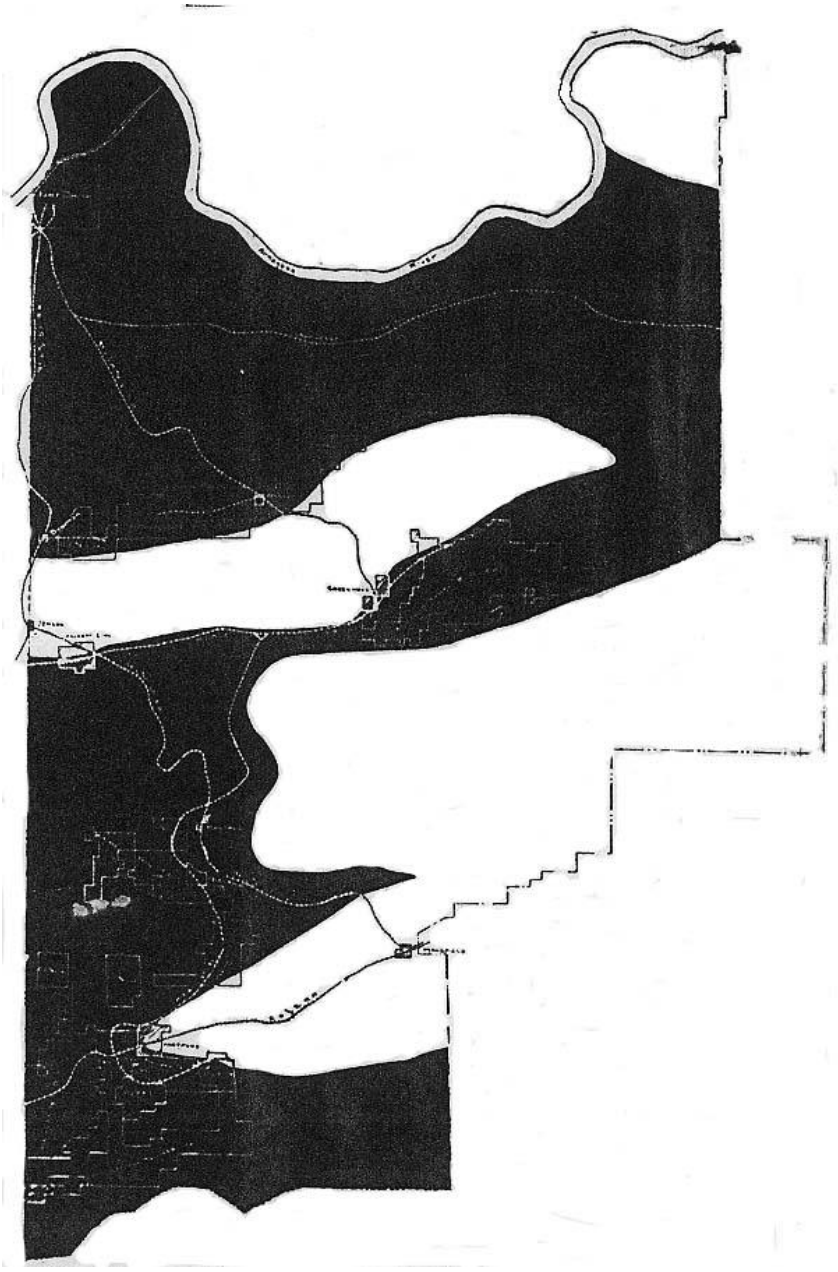
The other form of entertainment was finding ways to get me in trouble at which they became skilled. They found when I was 4 or 5 that they could bet me a nickel as to whether I would not do something and get me going. I had learned from them the value of money as they taught me how many nickels it would take to get a Butterfinger or a Coke. The old favorite of the caddies was was a Coke with a package of Tom's Peanuts poured into it.

When I was 5, they came up with a really bit bet. They bet me a quarter I would not smoke one of my Dad's cigars. He would toss a cigar out the window or door when he was finished with it. I knew this would be worth five candy bars or Cokes. I didn't have to think too long on this. So, the next one that came out the side window, I waited a little bit, then very cautiously went over, picked up the cigar butt, went around to the back of the clubhouse. I leaned up against the building where Mom wouldn't see me from the second floor. However, I had not counted on her opening the upstairs window and leaning out to see me puffing away. Upstairs I went for the spanking. The caddies were all laughing as they seemed to think that was well worth a quarter.

When I came back out, the caddies had a field day teasing me, then one of the caddies had a bright idea.

"Bet you ain't got the guts to do that again for another quarter." Then my bright mind took over, Mom would never think I would try that again, right? So, I tried it one more time, but this time I carried it out behind a big tree where she could not see me. Then, from the upstairs window, Mom started calling for me, so I dropped the cigar out of her sight. I thought I was going to be OK. However, one of the caddies hollered back at her, "He's over there behind the tree smoking a cigar." I guess he wanted me to earn that quarter so back upstairs.

1904 Coal Map of Sebastian County



The map above was taken from a photocopy of a newspaper edition of a special section of the *Fort Smith Times Record*, Feb. 7, 1904. Text with it reads, "Map showing the coal fields of Sebastian County. The unshaded portions constitute the only part of the county not underlaid by coal."

A Message from Judge Jim Spears: A Proposal for a Statue of Gen. Zachary Taylor

The idea for a statue of Zachary Taylor came from Mayor Ray Baker wanting to acknowledge Fort Smith's contact with a former president and war hero.

I came up with the idea for the location while driving by the small triangle of land at the convergence of Garrison and Rogers Ave. I realized that this was the gateway into downtown Fort Smith and just the right size for an equestrian statue. Zach was the natural. I had no idea about the cost or the process of casting a statue.

Mike Richardson at the Fort Smith Art Center introduced me to Don Offenbacker of Springdale and Santa Fe. He does bronzes and his work in on consignment at the art center. I asked Don to come up with a concept and give me a ball park figure on the cost. He did more than that. Over several years he not only drew a concept but cast it in a small bronze that is in my possession. This is the picture.

Fort Smith is almost devoid of public art. This would be a landmark. There is only one other equistrian statue in the state of Arkansas and that is a jockey on horseback at Oaklawn. The concept includes the closing of the short section of 13th street immediately behind the property and the construction of the flags over Fort Smith like the ones at the riverfront. The cost of the statue alone is around $130,000. I think that is reasonable and doable. BancorpSouth has told me they would maintain the plantings in the park consistant with the park that they have nearby. If the city can obtain the property they would be responsible for clearing it and installing the lighting and sprinkling system. The cost of the plantings, statue, and flagpoles would be paid for by a private fund drive entitled "Bring Back Zach".

I envision the school children writing essays and having fund drives to help in part. It would be a great opportunity for them to learn a little about Fort Smith's wonderful history and heritage.

Because of my position I will not be able to be directly involved in the fund raising and others will have to carry the ball on this. If you need anymore please call.

Taylor lived in Fort Smith from 1841-44. He was the commander of the military district that included Fort Smith. His house was behind the present Immaculate Conception church. The chimney still remains. The house was subsequently used for the first St. Anne's Convent and a second story added. The building burned in December 1875. Taylor went on to fame in the Mexican War and was elected president in 1848 on

the Whig ticket. He died in the summer of 1850 after having attended the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington monument. His successor was Millard Fillmore.

Red Pine

A street off Geren Road in Millennium Estates was named for Red Pine, but it would be easy to overlook its story. Its name seems typical of a lot of arboreal street names like Mulberry and Elm. Unlike street names in many new subdivisions with generic designations more about marketing than history or place, Red Pine has a story to tell, the story of the Battle of Massard Prairie.

Red Pine is the English translation of the Choctaw name, Tioak-Homma, the name of a Confederate chaplain. Known also as William Cass, he was the only casualty of that small Civil War battle fought July 27, 1864, who was listed in the historical record by name, according to Tom Wing, park ranger at the Fort Smith National Historic Site and history instructor at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith.

In the spring of 1864, Union forces operating in Arkansas had suffered a major setback when the Red River campaign failed to give them control of the rebel-held south Arkansas.
That, along with promising intelligence from inside Fort Smith, emboldened Confederate generals Douglas Cooper and Richard Gano to probe the strength of the outer defenses of the Union garrison here.

Union troops, numbering about 200 men, had built a small encampment on Massard Prairie in what is today south Fort Smith for the purpose of protecting Army horses that were grazing there.

At dawn on July 27, 600 Confederate cavalry, consisting of Texas, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Creek units, attacked the Union camp.

Although the Union troops made a tactical retreat to a small, nearby hill and attempted a "last stand" defense, the raid was too much of a surprise and the attack too swift. The engagement was concluded in less than an hour.

When it was over, 10 Union men were killed and 15 wounded. Seven Confederates were killed and 26 wounded. Even more significantly for the Confederate side, they captured hundreds of firearms, supplies and clothing. Material was in especially short supply on the western frontier of the war. Among the seven Confederate dead was Red Pine.

In a military dispatch, Cooper credits him with leading the advance and goes on to praise him highly.

"This brave warrior and Christian had on every occasion displayed the highest order of courage," Cooper wrote. Red Pine "was also distinguished as a warrior in every battle in which his regiment was engaged until he received his death wound."

Not much is known of him beyond his name, Cooper's praise and his military service. Nevertheless, his name marks a road lined with homes where families try to live quietly only a few hundred yards from the site of the noisy battle that took Red Pine's life.

Originally written for the *Times Record* by Ben Boulden.

Towson Avenue

Towson Avenue is one of the oldest thoroughfares in the city. Its origin dates back to 1827 when then Lt. Benjamin Bonneville surveyed the path for a road to connect Fort Smith to Fort Towson, Indian Territory. In 1832, a second survey and path was laid for a new trail to Fort Towson starting at a point well south of the city limits then and across the Poteau River in Indian Territory. Also called the Texas Road in early sources, the segment of the road called Towson Avenue today is likely along the same line surveyed by Bonneville.

When soldiers left Fort Smith to fight in the Mexican War, the marched down Towson to Texas then Mexico. It was used by the Overland and Butterfield stage coach lines in the antebellum period and was the road used by federal troops when they evacuated Fort Smith at the start of the Civil War in April 1861. Today, it is a part of U.S. Highway 71.

Source: "Famous Road Of Early Day Gets Marker," *Southwest Times Record*, 1932, undated clip from scrapbook in the Archives of the Fort Smith Historical Society