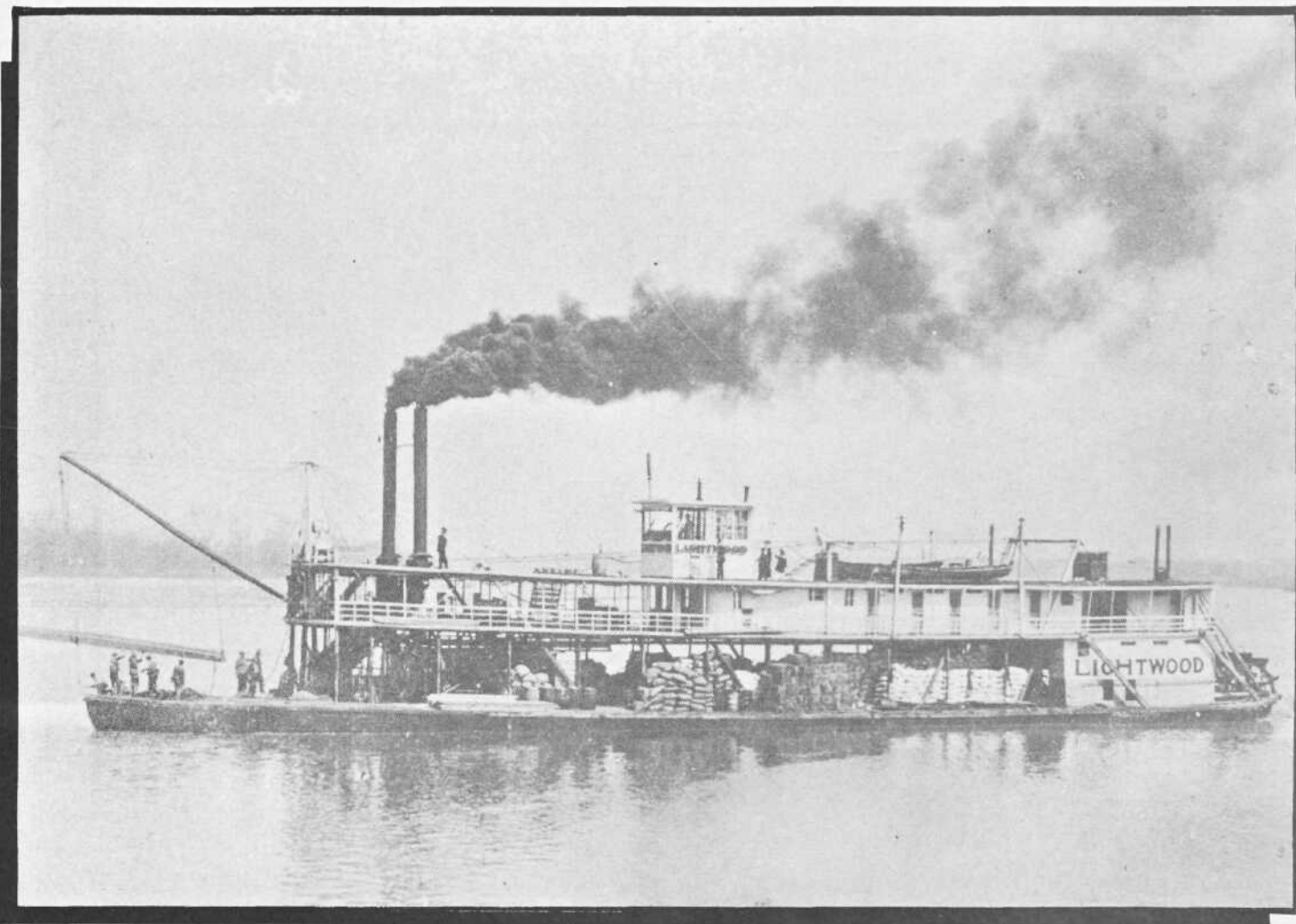
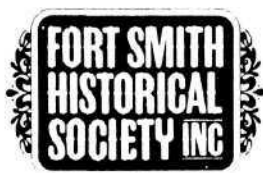


# The JOURNAL



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# The JOURNAL

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**COVER:**

The *Lightwood*, last boat operated on the lower Arkansas River by Capt. B. C. Blakely, 1917. Capt. Blakely is in the pilot house. The crane is hauling in the gangplank. Picture gift to Fort Smith Public Library from Miss Mary Blakely and Mrs. Leo Blakely, daughter and daughter-in-law of Capt. Blakely.

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# STEAMBOATING THE ARKANSAS

by  
Sarah Fitzjarrald<sup>1</sup>

## PROLOGUE

"Steamboating The Arkansas" is not my article alone. It should come as no surprise to Journal readers that there are many friends and neighbors who maintain a lively interest in Fort Smith and its history and who are always willing to help with a story. Unfortunately, they are too numerous to mention individually, but my appreciation is expressed to all.

When I began my research, I learned very quickly that even to find the description of any particular steamboat was an adventure in itself. The *New Orleans*, for instance, was portrayed as having so many different lengths, widths, and tonnage capacities that the best I could do was to let the majority rule and relate the generally accepted version.

Then through the efforts of Amelia Martin, co-editor of the Journal, who was helpful in all the research, I came upon an excellent book, "Merchant Steam Vessels of the United States," published by the Steamship Historical Society of America, Inc. It is a refreshing revelation and I can recommend no better publication to the serious historian. Thanks to Mrs. Thelma Wray, chief librarian of the Fort Smith Public Library, a copy of this book is now available in that library.

During the steamboat era communication was very slow, and there were so many colorful characters and spectacular steamers that it is not difficult to understand how legends sprang up as thickly as wild flowers on an Arkansas prairie. And yet the truth, in at least two very important incidents, contains more gut-wrenching drama than any myth, but has remained somehow strangely obscured.

I refer to the violent earthquake of 1811 when steam navigation on the western rivers had its beginning; and the explosion of the *Sultana* in 1865, the greatest maritime disaster of all the the *Titanic* notwithstanding.

There is so much meat and potatoes in the basic facts relating to steamboats that I have come to resent the whipped-cream frosting of the Edna

Ferber "Showboat" syndrome, in which the southern belle, perfectly coiffed, descends the stairs from the upper deck and sings a love song to the handsome hero at her side.

But I must brush aside my prejudices, those pesky little ants at my table, and take time to express my gratitude to at least a few of the people who were most helpful and cooperative. Thanks to: Mr. Guy Nichols at the Judge Parker Courthouse, who furnished some very valuable research material; Mrs. Sandra Robinson at the Old Fort Museum, for her courtesy; Mrs. Thelma Wray and all the ladies at the Fort Smith Public Library, especially Mrs. Teresa Fox; Mr. David G. McNully, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, for the latest technical information about the Arkansas River; Mr. Yeatman Anderson III, Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections, The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, who cleared up the mystery of why the second deck is called the boiler deck; Mr. Bobby Roberts, UALR Library, Little Rock, Arkansas, pictures from Fado Cravens, Jr. collection; Katie Murdock, librarian, Pope County Library; Ms. Esther Carr, Rights and Permissions Editor, Reader's Digest Magazine; Mr. Louis Intres of Seminole, Oklahoma, who contributed the use of photographs, Captain Blakely's Ledger and Log Books and other data from his collection; members of the Blakely family, photographs; and my son, chief engineer on one of the large towboats on the Mississippi River, who answered many questions.

Last but not least, my special thanks go to Amelia Martin who started it all by saying to me figuratively, but not less realistically, "There is a steamer at the landing. Why don't you go aboard?"

I did, and it was a great ride. I enjoyed every minute of it.

*Sarah Fitzjarrald*

Sarah Fitzjarrald

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Fitzjarrald is the pen name of Mrs. Warren McCullough, a resident of Fort Smith. A free lance writer, she is a member of the National League of American Pen Women, Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas, and the Roundtable Poets of Fort Smith.

## INTRODUCTION

If Nicholas Roosevelt, granduncle of Theodore, had known what lay in store he would have "aborted the mission." To borrow a phrase from the National Aeronautics Space Agency is not unfitting, since Roosevelt's chances of getting the first steamboat on western rivers safely from Pittsburgh to New Orleans were less than those of putting our first astronaut into space.

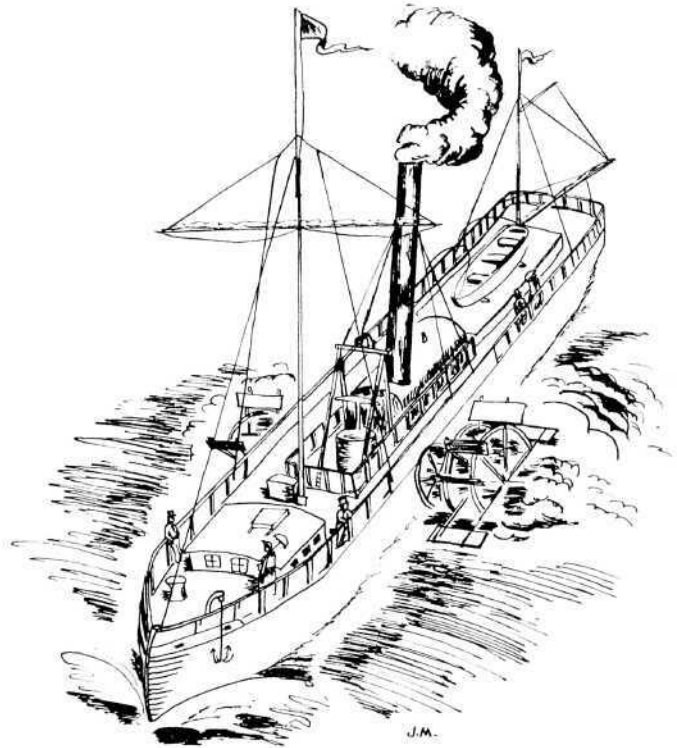
NASA properly aborts a mission if the weather is not exactly right, but nobody could have predicted the worst earthquake ever to strike the United States, and Nicholas Roosevelt was going to plow right through the middle of it.

Roosevelt had been engaged as agent for Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston to build the *New Orleans* which was the first steamboat ever put on a western river, the Mississippi, and to take it from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. As U.S. minister to France, who was instrumental in the Louisiana Purchase, Livingston had invited Fulton to Paris, where Fulton invented a submarine and conducted his first successful experiments with a boat propelled by steam. In 1806 Fulton returned to New York where he continued his work and built his *North River Steamboat*, popularly known as the *Clermont*.

Fulton launched the *Clermont* on the Hudson River in 1807 and received a patent for it. However, his was not the first workable steamboat in America. John Fitch built and operated a steamboat in 1787 which sailed on the Delaware River. It had six vertical paddles on a side, like an Indian canoe, but was driven by steam. He launched another boat in 1790 which operated in regular passenger service from Philadelphia to Burlington, New Jersey. Called simply the *Steam-Boat*, or *Steamboat*, it was the first steamer registered under U.S. merchant steam documentaion. But, there was not enough demand for passage, and Fitch could not gain the financial support to make his boats profitable. He died in 1798.

After Fulton put his *Clermont* into service he and Livingston began to look west for greater possibilities. They sent Roosevelt to explore the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in 1809 and he took his new wife with him, their honeymoon being spent traveling downriver to New Orleans in a flatboat. He studied the river channels and was convinced that the western waters were navigable by steam. By 1810 he was directing the building of the steamboat *New Orleans* at Pittsburgh.

Fulton and Livingston hoped to get a monopoly on the Mississippi River, giving them control of all



**The *Clermont*, built by Robert Fulton in 1807. Original sketch by Janice Martin.**

steamboats and their operation on the river. The territorial governors along the Mississippi were not receptive to the idea, but the territory of Orleans, by legislative enactment, offered a monopoly to whoever could build a boat of 70 tons or more and propel it successfully through still water at four miles per hour.

It took more than a year to build the *New Orleans*, named for its destination point, at a cost of approximately \$40,000. Following Fulton's original design, she was a deep draft vessel with the machinery in the hold, 116 feet long, 20 feet wide, weighed 371 tons, and had two uncovered side paddle wheels.

The boat was ready for its launching in early October, 1811. Roosevelt, along with his wife, and a crew consisting of a captain, pilot, an engineer, six deck hands, cook, waiter, two female servants, and a huge Newfoundland dog named Tiger, departed Pittsburgh on that bright autumn day. The people of Pittsburgh turned out en masse and there was much shouting, waving handkerchiefs, and hats thrown into the air. It was a rousing send-off and Nicholas Roosevelt and his entire entourage, including Tiger, had a nice day.



But trouble was imminently ahead. They spent a lot of time "waiting for the river to rise," a condition which would prove to be the bane of all future steamboat captains. And then there was a fire aboard ship but because of the captain's alertness the damage was relatively slight and confined to one of the cabins. Fire would also constitute an ever-present threat to all future steamboating.

It took Roosevelt almost two and a half months to reach a point 60 miles below Louisville, Kentucky on the Ohio River where he was anchored on the night of December 15th. In the early morning hours of the sixteenth the earthquake struck.

The *New Orleans* shuddered as if it had gone aground, waking everyone on the boat. Roosevelt and all aboard rushed on deck in their night clothes, only to see the tumultuous waters of the Ohio and to hear banks caving in, splashing into the torrent below.

At New Madrid, Missouri, the small settlement built on the bank of the Mississippi River, and site of the epicenter of the quake, there was complete pandemonium. There was a thunderous concussion and the sliver of new moon was blotted out by clouds of sulphurous gas, sand, and pieces of coal spewed from the deep chasms opening in the earth. All was total darkness.

One woman ran until she was completely exhausted, fell to the ground and died. By daylight when more shocks began occurring, the people saw as well as felt the sickening undulating movement of the earth beneath their feet. Noting that the chasms ran parallel to the river and to each other, they felled large trees at right angles to the chasms and clung to them, thereby saving their lives.

The Mighty Mississippi was in an uproar, to put it mildly. It roared and raged and tore at its banks, toppling huge trees, houses and other structures. It was like some antediluvian monster gone mad and at one point, in response to the awesome power of the subterranean movement in the riverbed, a huge wall of water was formed and hurled backward a mile or more. And some accounts say that the river actually ran backward for several days.

With the sinking land masses in the river, huge vortices were formed, literally sucking under large flatboats, their crews and freight, never to be seen again.

In the meantime, Nicholas Roosevelt, his wife, and crew were proceeding slowly and painfully toward New Madrid, unaware that conditions were going to get much worse before they got better. When he reached the Mississippi River and started downstream, he found himself in the middle of the nightmare.

More than once the crew had to cut a way through large rafts of driftwood, and navigation seemed almost an impossibility. Often the pilot did not know

where he was since islands and other landmarks had disappeared. There is little doubt that Roosevelt wondered many times if he would get to New Orleans safely with his boat and with the lives of those aboard intact.

But the small craft, with its steam power and the expertise of its pilot, kept afloat, dodging the hazards; and once through the worst of it in the vicinity of the epicenter, the going was somewhat easier.

They reached New Orleans on January 12, 1812, before the second violent shock struck on January 23rd. The arrival of the *New Orleans* was hailed as a near miracle, as indeed it was.

The third large quake happened on February 7th, and all three of the violent upheavals were interspersed with lesser shocks, and eight of those were of high intensity. It has been estimated that the three violent quakes would have registered from 8.4 to 8.7 on the Richter scale. During the first thirteen weeks there were 1874 shocks recorded.

The quakes were felt over an area of 301,656 square miles, actually rearranging the topography of some 30,000 square miles. It was in this time period that the Tiptonville Dome was formed, a land mass 15 miles long and 5 to 8 miles wide which was raised from 15 to 20 feet. Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee was also formed, eventually becoming ten miles long and three miles wide, a delight for fishermen and boaters alike.

It took ten years for the earth to calm down. And Arkansas has been shaking again. According to the Earthquake Information Center in Memphis, Tennessee more than 14,500 shocks were recorded since they began in January, 1982, and continuing through July 15. Most of the temblors were of low intensity, measuring 2.6 or less on the Richter scale.

The earthquake of 1811 received little publicity, probably due to the fact that the area was thinly populated and communications were slow.

With Roosevelt's arrival in New Orleans he had done two things. He had proved steam-powered navigation under the worst possible conditions and he secured the monopoly sought by Fulton and Livingston, a monopoly which lasted until Henry Shreve (for whom Shreveport, Louisiana was named) built a better boat.

### DESIGN CHANGED

Shreve had visited Pittsburgh when the *New Orleans* was being built and as an able keelboatman and riverman in his own right, he had misgivings about its design. It was all right for the deeper eastern rivers but Shreve felt that the hull was too deep and rounded for the shallow and swift western rivers. And the fact that the *New Orleans* could steam no farther back up the river than Natchez proved his point. The boat was put into service

between New Orleans and Natchez and worked for a couple of years before hitting a snag and sinking in 1814.

Fulton and Livingston again tried the experiment with other boats, among which was the *Vesuvius*, with the same failure.

Henry Shreve was caught up in the latter part of the War of 1812 and it was not until 1815 when he took the steamer *Enterprise* up the Mississippi to Pittsburgh and beyond to Brownsville, when the idea evolved for a superior boat. The *Enterprise* dragged its keel all the way upriver and could not have made it except for high water.

Shreve designed and built the *Washington* in Wheeling, West Virginia, and launched it in June, 1816. Realizing that a boat on the western rivers must travel on the water, rather than through it, he designed his boat with a wider and shallower hull. He rearranged the machinery, placing it on top of the deck which was over the hull, and set the boilers in a horizontal position. What he had come up with was actually a steam-driven keelboat.

Immediately after the launching of the *Washington* it was recognized as a superior boat. However, disaster struck on its maiden voyage down the Mississippi when a boiler exploded, killing thirteen of the ship's crew and passengers. Despite this disaster, every steamboat thereafter would follow Shreve's basic pattern, but with improvements added as needed. Ultimately, the western riverboats would carry incredible amounts of cargo and passengers with a very scant draft of water.

The first deck of the steamboat, or as Mark Twain would call the "first story," was the main deck which carried freight and deck passengers. It also housed the boat's kitchens, engines and boilers.

The second deck was called the boiler deck. It was really misnamed since neither historians nor rivermen themselves could ever explain why it was so called because no boiler was ever placed on the boiler deck.

The third deck was the hurricane deck which housed the Texas cabins and the pilot house.

To Henry Shreve also goes the credit for naming the rooms after different States in the Union, thereby giving us "staterooms" and "Texas" or texas cabins. Modern towboats now pushing barges on the rivers still have their "texas" decks.

When Henry Shreve arrived at New Orleans with his steamer *Washington* he immediately tangled with the Fulton-Livingston monopoly, and it was only after a three-year court battle that he was able to break the monopoly and gain the right of free navigation on the Mississippi River.

In 1807 over 5½ million dollars' worth of goods had been brought to New Orleans by flatboats and keelboats on the Mississippi, but the great

advantage of the steamboats was that they could also steam upriver, carrying freight.

The steamboat had suffered its birthing pangs under the most adverse and cataclysmic conditions that nature could provide, and it had survived a lengthy court battle between strongly willed men. The steamer had earned for itself all the acclaim that would ever be poured out upon it.

### FIRST STEAMER ON THE ARKANSAS

The Arkansas River had the same problems as the Mississippi, except more so. Its waters flowed over a bed of yielding sand but with a slowly moving current. In the dry seasons between the heavy spring and fall rains it was so shallow that only flatboats, keelboats, or steamers which drew very little water could get through.

The average width of the Arkansas was 400 yards with banks which were also yielding, causing large trees to be constantly falling into the river, creating snags. And in those severe winters there was ice to contend with.

Major Rivers Used By Steamboats in Arkansas  
Circa 1820-1920



It was a year after Henry Shreve had built his first boat when Major William A. Bradford and his 64 Crack Riflemen arrived at Belle Point. But Bradford and his men came by keelboat and it had taken them more than two months of hard work to pole their craft upriver, arriving on Christmas Day, 1817.

Bradford was under orders to erect a fort, to keep peace among the warring Indians (mainly the Osage and Cherokee tribes), and to keep the white settlers off Indian lands. He carried out his orders successfully and named the fort "Camp Smith," after Brigadier General Thomas A. Smith, commander of the 9th Military Department at Belle Fontaine, Mississippi.

The new fort was the prime factor in stimulating trade and commerce farther upriver. Flatboats and keelboats brought supplies to the fort during the first five years of its existence, and Major Bradford said that for every thousand tons of freight shipped overland by wagon, there were five thousand tons brought in by way of the river.

Three years after Bradford's arrival in Fort Smith, in March of 1820, the first steamboat ventured up the Arkansas River to Arkansas Post, a distance of 60 miles. She was the *Comet*, a side-wheeler of 154 tons, and commanded by Captain Byrne. Not very surprisingly, she ran aground. But that was perhaps because the pilot might not have known about the White River cut-off.

The cut-off was an easier access to the Arkansas River. Pilots on the Mississippi who wished to ascend the Arkansas would enter the White instead, go upriver a few miles where there was a channel about six miles long, cutting back to the Arkansas. Boats would take the channel and emerge on the Arkansas about 10 or 12 miles below Arkansas Post. The distance was shorter and the water in the White River and the channel might have been deeper and with fewer snags. For whatever reason, it was the usually accepted entry to the Arkansas River from the Mississippi.

A couple of months later the *Maid of Orleans*, a side-wheeler at 193 tons, made a successful run to Arkansas Post. The *Maid* was noteworthy in that she was built to sail the high seas but equipped with steam power to navigate the inland rivers.

But it was not until two years later in the spring of 1822, when the *Eagle*, another side-wheeler, and called little more than a packet at 118 tons, went as far upriver as Little Rock. The townspeople met the boat with great jubilation and gave her a hearty welcome. She was bound for Dwight Mission, in what is now Pope County, with a load of supplies for the mission school but could not reach her destination because of low water.

However, the rains came, and on April 9th there was a 5½ foot rise on the Arkansas River in 48 hours. Consequently, the *Robert Thompson*, commanded by Captain Philip Pennywit, was able to steam upriver to Fort Smith.

The *Robert Thompson*, also known as the *Mercury* and the *Donally*, was a side-wheeler, 65 feet long and 11 feet wide. Carrying 300 tons of supplies for the fort, the steamer had two 20-foot keelboats in tow. She had collided with another steamer, the *Tennessee*, 100 miles below Louisville with minor damage. Aboard the *Robert Thompson* was a welcome passenger. Major Asher Phillips of the Army Paymaster Corps, with the payroll for the soldiers based at Fort Smith.

It is ironic that Major Bradford, who had built the fort which was responsible for much of the increase

in river trade, was not there to greet the first steamboat. He was relieved of his command in February by Colonel Mathew Arbuckle and departed Fort Smith on March 24, 1822. It was less than a month later, on April 20th, when the *Robert Thompson* made her first arrival at Fort Smith. The steamer also made three more trips that first season, taking military supplies to the fort from Pittsburgh.

The *Robert Thompson*, like many of the steamboats, had a short life. She collided with yet another steamboat, the *Republic*, in 1823 and was taken out of commission.

In the fall of 1822, less than a year after Colonel Arbuckle came to Fort Smith, he proposed to the Adjutant General's office that the fort be moved farther upriver. Because of the Indian hostilities, he believed that by removing the fort it would take pressure off the citizens of Fort Smith and the surrounding area.

He was turned down at that time but three years later, in 1825, he received orders to move the fort. Called "Cantonment Gibson," it later became "Fort Gibson," and was situated on the Grand River about three miles from its mouth. The new fort also stimulated trade farther upriver.

The steamers had their work cut out for them. The following is a list of provisions necessary to supply Fort Smith for one year, from July 1, 1823, to the following year. This amount of provisions was needed by the soldiers alone, and did not include any area citizens. It was advertised in the *National Intelligencer* in Washington: 300 barrels of pork, 625 barrels of "fine flour," 3500 gallons of good proof whiskey, 275 bushels of good sound beans, 4400 pounds of good hard soap, 2150 pounds of good hard bottom candles with cotton wicks, 70 bushels of good clean salt, and 1125 gallons of good cider vinegar.

## POPULATION GROWTH

During this time the population of Arkansas began to grow rapidly. It went from 14,276 in 1820 to 30,380 in 1830, and 97,574 in 1840.

In the 1820's the U.S. Government began signing treaties with the Indians living east of the Mississippi River -- the Cherokees in North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama; the Chickasaws in Northern Mississippi and Tennessee; the Seminoles in Florida; and the Creeks in Alabama and Georgia. And in September, 1830 the government signed the treaty with the Choctaws, known as the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit, whereby they would cede their lands in Georgia, Alabama, and Southern Mississippi in exchange for land west of Arkansas.

Also during this time the government began offering better land grants to white settlers by reducing the price from two dollars per acre to one



dollar and twenty-five cents, and reduced the minimum acreage limit from 160 acres to 80 acres. Later it was reduced to 40 acres.

The demand for steamboats increased. Indians and white settlers had previously come by keelboats and flatboats but with the steamers emigration was speeded up, and if the passengers were no more comfortable on the crowded steamers, at least their travel time was shortened.

In the spring of 1827 several boats arrived at Little Rock, bound upriver with supplies for Dwight Mission and Forts Smith and Gibson. Among them were the *Catawba*, a side-wheeler at 112 tons, Captain Havenden; the *Scioto*, also a side-wheeler, 120 tons, Captain Ray; and the *Highland Laddie*, side-wheeler, 81 tons, Captain McCallum.

In February, 1828 Captain Pennywit, who had brought the first steamer to Fort Smith, returned in command of the *Facility*, side-wheeler, 60 tons. Called the "father of steamboating on the Arkansas," Pennywit was one of the most popular men on the river. He went back to Little Rock about a month later with the steamer loaded with cargo obtained in Crawford County, consisting of hides, furs, cotton, and 500 barrels of pecans. He announced that if he could get enough business and the condition of the river warranted, he would continue making regular runs the rest of the season.

In December of that year, on one of his trips, Captain Pennywit was again at Little Rock with the *Facility* and a fleet of keelboats in tow, carrying about 200 Cherokee Indians.

Late in 1829 he acquired the *Waverly*, a side-wheeler, 117 tons, but of lighter draft, and continued making regular trips in 1830. In December 1830 he took the *Waverly* up the White River to Batesville, opening the White to steamboat navigation.

During Captain Pennywit's career on the Arkansas he was in command of many boats, among which were the *Neosho*, 88 tons; the *Little Rock*, 84 tons; the *Arkansas*, 115 tons; and the *Arkansas No. 5*, 162 tons - all side-wheelers.

Born in Virginia in 1793, Pennywit enjoyed a long and successful life as a riverman. He was first engaged in the keelboat trade before joining in steam navigation. He earned his popularity. He was an accommodating person, often going to the rescue of boats which were grounded by taking on passengers and cargo and taking them to their destination. One of the significant remarks in his biography was that, "While he was not obligated to do so he brought the latest newspapers from the cities."

We can only guess at how much he contributed, either knowingly or unknowingly, to the culture and economic well-being of the people in Arkansas and the Indian Territory.

Legend has it that Captain Pennywit built the first steamboat ever built in Cincinnati in 1818. This is not borne out by documentation, however. The steamer *Vesta* was built in Cincinnati in 1817.

He retired from the river in 1841 and later moved to Little Rock where he lived with a friend until his death in 1868. He was buried in Fairview Cemetery at Van Buren.

In looking back at the 1830's, the first decade of steamboating on the Arkansas River, those times seem rather grim. Moving a steam-powered boat was vastly different from guiding a keelboat or raft downriver, and while there was always much rivalry between captains and crews there was also the need for helping each other. There was more than one "helping hand" on the river.

During the second week in January, 1832, there was a rise on the river due to heavy rains, and the *Reindeer*, side-wheeler, 81 tons, employed to transport the Choctaws, was able to reach Little Rock with a keelboat in tow, carrying more than 1100 Indians. They disembarked at Camp Pope and hoped to start overland for Red River.

The *Reindeer* went downstream to Arkansas Post and took on about 500 Choctaws and brought them back to Little Rock on January 22nd. They started upriver, bound for Fort Smith, but because of low water at Dardanelle they were transferred to keelboats and reached Fort Smith in February.

In 1832 Congress appropriated \$15,000 and authorized the Corps of Engineers to maintain a channel in the Arkansas riverbed deep enough for free passage of heavy boats, and to be kept open from the mouth of the Arkansas to the mouth of the Grand River, 465 miles. The money was hardly enough for the snagging, the revetments, and the "contraction works," and when it ran out the work stopped.

What was done, however, was of much benefit in transporting the emigrating Indians and white settlers, and the migration was almost in full swing at that time.

In November 1832, the *Little Rock*, side-wheeler, 84 tons, was put into commission. Built expressly for the Arkansas River trade, she was owned by the citizens of Little Rock. And it was this steamer, arriving from Fort Gibson, which carried as a passenger the famous Washington Irving. He had been west of Arkansas, touring the Indian country and stopped at Fort Smith, Van Buren, and Mulberry on his way to Little Rock. Captain Pennywit was commander. Also aboard was another famous passenger, John Audubon.

Also in November 1832, the cholera came to Little Rock. There were about 2000 Choctaw Indians camped near the edge of town and the disease was raging. There was one doctor among them who



received thirty dollars per day. From 20 to 30 people died daily and the Indians suffered terribly. But there is no record of its spreading to the citizens of Little Rock.

There was another outbreak of cholera in the spring of 1833. It was reported to have been five times as bad as the previous epidemic and affected the whole Mississippi valley. In New Orleans people were dying daily and steamboats left in the night to keep passengers from coming aboard.

At this time Captain James Miller died aboard his steamer, *Reindeer*, at the mouth of White River, and six other people on the boat died on the trip from there to Little Rock.

Cholera, infectious disease that it is, terrified everyone, and every steamboat that traveled the Arkansas carried it. Gone was the excitement and the rush to the landing to greet incoming steamers. Some planters turned their slaves out into the woods to fend for themselves as best they could, and many of them died daily.

To compound the misery of the spring of 1833 were the floods, and every large river in the Mississippi valley was 20 to 30 feet above flood stage. Farms were severely damaged or ruined completely.

But the flood waters receded quickly. Henry Streve, who had had success in breaking up the Great Raft in Red River, was hired by the government for snag removal work on the Arkansas. He began the work in August, 1833, but had removed only 20 snags when he ran into the difficulty of low water.

He returned in January, 1834, and renewed his work. By February 22nd he had cleared 250 miles of the river up to Little Rock, removing a total of 4907 snags, one for every 88 yards. He had at his command three machine boats which were worked by hand - the *Helepolis*, the *Archimedes*, and the steamboat *Java*. However, he reported that larger machine boats were needed since some of the snags weighed as much as a hundred tons, or 200,000 pounds each.

As with other projects on the river, when the money stopped so did the work. But with this beginning, excitement and interest grew, giving yet another boost to the young steamboat industry.

By 1838 steamboat interests began to combine but the organizations were not stock companies as we know them today. They were loosely connected and simply gave each boat an equal chance with all others in carrying cargo. The owners pooled their earnings and portioned out the profits according to boat size, the large boats taking a greater slice of the pie.

These crude business organizations might well be viewed as the unintentional wonder of the steamboating era, because it is inconceivable to the

modern business intellect how just one of these crudely formed companies could have survived even one season's operation without calling a meeting of the board of directors to settle the dispute.

But steamboating was profitable. Freight rates averaged 25 cents per hundred weight for a short haul (thirty miles or less) and as low as 5 cents per hundred weight for a long haul. And the big advantage of the companies was that they could guarantee a more regular schedule of shipping, at least as regular as the rises and falls on the river would allow. In the event of low water the keelboats and flatboats took on as much freight as they could handle.

In 1838 plans were also made to rebuild the fort at Fort Smith and make it permanent. The work was assigned to Captain Charles W. Thomas who had spent several years at Fort Gibson and was thoroughly familiar with the Fort Smith area.

Captain Thomas went to Bangor, Maine where he recruited 39 skilled mechanics and 16 laborers. The mechanics were to receive \$1.50 per day and the laborers \$15 a month. Thomas and his men boarded the *Dayton* at Pittsburgh, and stopped at Cincinnati where he purchased tools, materials, and provisions. The *Dayton*, a side-wheeler at 111 tons, was chartered to bring the men and supplies to Fort Smith but could get no farther upriver than Lewisburg (Morrliton) because of low water. The men were forced to walk the remaining hundred miles, arriving at Fort Smith the last week in July.

This is an intriguing incident, leading one to wonder what happened to the supplies and why the men did not wait with the boat until the next rise in the river, or if the supplies were transferred to keelboats, why they did not board the keelboats and ride along instead of walking that great distance.

Some of the side-wheelers operating on the Arkansas during the 1830's and their captains are as follows: *Reindeer*, Captain Miller; *Laurel*, Captain Smith; *Arkansas*, Captain Thompson; *Little Rock*, Captain Rudd; *Volant*, Captain Kelley; *Eagle*, Captain Bigelow; *Neosho*, Captain Pennywit; *William Parsons*, Captain Tunstall; *Ottawa*, Captain Page, *Tom Bowline*, Captain Smith; *Veteran*, Captain Van Houten; *Navarino*, Captain Buckner; *Gallipolis*, Captain Hereford; *Arkansas*, Captain Halderman; *Tchula*, Captain Smith; *Spy*, Captain Clarkson; *Laurel*, Captain Guess; *Little Rock*, Captain Pennywit; *Revenue*, Captain Moore; *Florida*, Captain Hicks, *DeKalb*, Captain Lemon; *Ozark*, Captain Hosea; *Tecumseh*, Captain McCullough; *John Jay*, Captain Mason; *Siam*, Captain McKenzie.

Stern-wheelers during this time were: *Itasca*, Captain Boyd; *Liverpool*, Captain Houston; and the *Trident*, Captain Irwin. It is not known whether the

*Express* was a stern or side-wheeler. Her captain was Captain Speaks.

#### 1840's

The decade beginning with 1840 brought a new element of danger to steamboating, the nature of man himself. Collectively, the rivermen had challenged the Arkansas, a river which knew only one master, the whims of nature. It could be a raging flood one week, carrying and depositing thousands of tons of new sediment, wiping out previous sand bars only to form new ones in different places. And the next week it could drop to a maddening trickle of water.

The rivermen learned early of its vagaries and their race against it was born of economic necessity. With the growth in population merchants clamored for goods to sell as the settlers and Indians demanded more and better merchandise. A fast-running boat was a profitable one.

If familiarity with the river did not actually breed contempt, it at least gave boat owners, captains, and pilots more leeway in taking chances. It was a sign of the times and the river seemed less grim.

Horse racing became a popular sport and many settlements had race tracks. One of the earliest ones in the Fort Smith area was at Massard Prairie, and the Indian Territory boasted its own racing facilities. There was no trouble in moving horses around to the different race tracks since a steamboat could carry race horses as easily as it carried ribbons.

One of the racing fans was Joe Vann, a wealthy Cherokee living at Webbers Falls. He owned a large cotton plantation, some 300 slaves, and the fastest quarter horse in the world, named Lucy Walker. He built a fine side-wheeler of 182 tons for the New Orleans trade and named her after his horse, the *Lucy Walker*.

On her first trip she was commanded by the noted Captain Halderman of Louisville. She came up the Arkansas and carried out Vann's cotton crop along with that of Lewis Ross. The steamer was manned by some of Vann's own Negroes and he went along as a passenger.

Delighted with his fast boat, Vann began imbibing freely and continued drinking until they got to Louisville, where Captain Halderman resigned. Vann took over the boat himself.

A fast boat had just left for New Orleans and Vann determined to beat it to their destination. The steamer touched at Portland, below Falls Canal, to take on passengers. During this time Vann was on the main deck, cursing his firemen and threatening them with the whip if they did not make the chimneys red hot. Finally, the boat backed out to the middle of the river and rounded for downstream. It made two or three revolutions of the wheels and blew up with a frightful explosion, killing or injuring

all of the Negroes and some of the passengers. Eighteen lives were lost and not even a fragment of Vann's remains were ever found.

One of the early steamers which had already made a name for herself before 1840 was the aforementioned stern-wheeler *Trident*. She was of solid build with powerful engines, and it was said of her that she could get to Fort Gibson on less water than any boat on the river. The *Trident* ran from Pittsburgh to Fort Gibson under the command of Captain Houston.

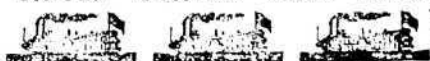
When there was a sand bar too near the surface of the water for easy passage Captain Houston would back up, get full steam ahead, and "jump her over" the sand bar, much to the discomfiture of the lady passengers who screamed loudly, and to the stewards who hung on to the rope clamps to keep them from smashing.

The maneuver sometimes failed, however. William H. Allen wrote in his journal on June 5, 1840, "Beat *Trident* who grounded on Caba, his dido to the contrary, notwithstanding."

He also wrote that the *Corvette* and the *Lady Morgan* were aground above Little Rock. The *Cinderella* and the *Little Rock* were aground below Little Rock on Fourche Bar. But a few days later the *Trident* was free and had a full load of passengers, supposedly after taking on passengers from the boats which were grounded.

#### Memphis and Arkansas River

#### UNITED STATES MAIL LINE.



THIS line is composed of entire New Boats this season, to-wit:

IZETTA, Wm. WINDSON, *Captain*.  
CHESTER ASHLER, REESE PRITCHARD, *Capt.*  
LITTLE ROCK, JENKS BROWN, *Captain*.  
FREDERICK NOTREBE, R. L. HAISES, *Capt.*

The above Boats have now entered the Memphis and Little Rock U. S. Mail trade permanently. They are new and first class Passenger Boats, built expressly for the trade, and are equipped and furnished in a superb manner.

Their days for leaving Little Rock are *Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays* out 10 P. M., and leave PINE BLUFF for Memphis, on

*Mondays, Thursdays and Sundays 3 P. M.* Connecting at Napoleon with Regular Packets for New Orleans, and at Memphis with Regular U. S. Mail Packets for St. Louis, Cairo, Louisville and Cincinnati and with Rail Road for all points north, west and east.

Small Boats will connect with this line at Little Rock, and from Fort Smith, Van Buren, Ozark, Dardanelle and all points intermediate.

For further information apply on board the Boats or to

JNO. D. ADAMS, *Proprietor*,  
or G. S. MORRISON, *Agent*, Little Rock.

March 21, 1861.—11

Daily Times & Herald  
March, 1861

William Allen was clerk on the side-wheeler *Keystone*, and wrote that the Captain was considering going home with the *Trident* but "he would do better by remaining as no boat but the *Keystone* can run now with any ease." Obviously, there was a difference of opinion as to which boat could get farther on less water, and there must have been a keen rivalry between the captains. The boats were well matched, one weighing only one ton more than the other, the chief difference being that the *Trident* was a stern-wheeler.

On May 1, 1841, Colonel Zachary Taylor arrived at Fort Smith. He was ordered to take command of the large Second Military Department - an area embracing all territory south of the 37th parallel from the Mississippi River to the Mexican and Texas border. He intended to make his headquarters at Fort Gibson, but after inspecting the quarters there Colonel Taylor, future hero of the Mexican War and future President of the United States, decided to transfer his headquarters to Cantonment Belknap in Fort Smith. Cantonment Belknap had been erected in the fall of 1839 by William C. Belknap's troops one-half mile southeast of the new Fort at Fort Smith when all other available quarters were filled.

Colonel Taylor opposed the completion of Fort Smith on the grounds that it was a useless expenditure of money and labor. He said that the fort, if finished, would "serve as a lasting monument to the folly of those who planned, as well as him who executed."

Colonel Taylor's main concern was the Indians. He regarded Fort Gibson as one of the most important posts on the entire Indian frontier and was able to push through Washington's plan for a fort high up the Red River, near the mouth of the Washita. However, despite Taylor's opinion, Fort Smith remained an active and important post, and the steamboats kept coming.

One of the early men on the Arkansas was Captain Ed Norton, who commanded a fast boat named the *Cotton Plant*, a side-wheeler. Norton was the brother-in-law of Colonel Francis Nortrebe, a well known settler in the State. His boat was manned by deck hands and firemen who were slaves from his own plantation. They were good boatmen and also good singers.

Another pioneer boatman was Billy Irwin who came from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1841. Accompanying him was Reuben Haynes, whose home was in Steubenville, Ohio. Haynes began working as cabin boy but for a number of years previously he was a jockey, riding many races on the Old Fort Smith race track. In time he became a pilot and then commander of a boat.

Stage coaches made their appearance in 1838 and arrangements were made between them and the steamers which allowed for more frequent and

rapid transit between certain points, a particular advantage in carrying the U. S. mail.

It was not unusual for a light draft boat to earn a net profit of 50,000 dollars in one season, provided of course, it did not run into a snag or suffer an accident. The average life of a boat was 3½ years and boats that escaped accidents were often used as long as seven or eight years with only minor repairs.

Boats had their advantage in that they could carry tons of freight along with the passengers. And they carried everything imaginable - from livestock to farm equipment to household goods.

The *Fort Smith Herald* was by this time publishing regular schedules of arrivals and departures, and merchants' advertisements of their wares. One such advertisement listed "kits" of salmon, cans of fresh clams, cans of Baltimore oysters, and cans of fresh lobsters.

Another advertisement which appeared in the *Fort Smith Herald* in 1848 said, "Sand bars, snags and low water obviated. Great Eastern U. S. Mail, by stage coach from Fort Smith and Van Buren to Little Rock and thence to the Mississippi."

Along with the boat schedules were the usual notices such as, "The River in Good Stage for Boats, but is falling slowly," or "River Falling but still navigable," and later, "River falling but still navigable for small boats."

News of a riverboat explosion never lost its impact, creating a feeling of horror and dismay among the reading populace, as witness the heading of a news item in the *Fort Smith Herald*, taken from the *Cincinnati Dollar Times* - "Another Awful Steamboat Explosion!!! Great Loss of Life!!"

While most of the explosions happened on the Mississippi River the Arkansas had its share, such as the one which happened to the *New Hampshire*. She was a stern-wheeler at 125 tons. The young clerk on the *Keystone*, William Allen, whose journal was referred to earlier, was by then commander of the *New Hampshire*. His younger brother George was in the office, along with Robert Meadows. The Allens, brothers of the late Mrs. Jesse Turner of Van Buren, were highly liked as rivermen, and their boat was popular among the trade.

Coming upriver on her last trip, the boat's boilers exploded about 50 miles above Little Rock. Both young clerks were killed, along with ten others. The boat was near shore when its boilers let go, throwing the iron safe from the office far inland. It was found half-buried in the sand with the body of young Allen lying near it. A piece of the boiler went like a cannon ball through the whole length of the boat, killing the others. It smashed the upper berth of the last stateroom but missed the lower berth in which lay a boy passenger, George Birnie, brother of W. S. and H. C. Birnie, residents of Fort Smith.

Captain Allen escaped, but the shock and the



terrific concussion, as well as grief for the fate of his brother, affected his mind and it was a long time before he recovered.

There was several causes for explosions - too much heat in the firebox; defective boilers, either in the metal itself or from too long usage; too much strain from an overload of cargo and/or passengers; or defective steam valves.

While explosions took their toll and grasped the attention of all citizens, the number one enemy of steamboating was snags, as was the case of the *J. H. Harris*. The owner wanted to sell out and four of the local firms - Joseph Bennett, Sutton & Griffith, Birnie & Meyer, and Johnson & Grimes paid \$2,000 each and bought her. They were able to control their own freight and did a good business in the New Orleans trade. On the first trip the commander was Captain Sol Miller, who was succeeded by Captain Reuben Haynes.

On its last trip, much of the cargo of the *Harris* was shipped by J. C. Atkinson, and Melvyn & Lynde, who were in the tinning business. Their fruit canning enterprise was the first one in the southwest and they put up wild strawberries, blackberries, peaches and grapes. The cans were handsomely labeled and put into neat cases. The rest of the cargo consisted mostly of dried peaches in gunny sacks. There were many passengers aboard and about half-way between Van Buren and Little Rock, in Hog Thief Bend, the *Harris* struck a snag, headed to a sand bar and sank to the guards. The passengers found themselves thirty miles from the stage road in an unsettled country and not a house for miles. They lay there for a week watching for a boat, during which time the process of wrecking went on.

The machinery and part of the freight were placed on the bar and the sacks of peaches were cut open in order to save the sacks. There was a large pile of peaches stacked on both sides of the boat.

In 1848 one of the *Swallow's* flues burst near Ozark, fatally scalding Jeremiah Harrington, 13 years old, who was on his way from Ireland to Fort Smith where his father was living. He was a relative of Dan and John Harrington, also residents of Fort Smith.

The *Santa Fe* was snagged at Spadra Bluff but was afterwards raised. On a subsequent trip up the river one of her flues collapsed at Fort Coffey, killing one of the deck hands and scalding two others.

In 1848 the cost of shipping freight from Little Rock to Van Buren increased to 40 cents per pound. The custom was to load the boat to capacity with freight and to take on deck passengers (usually emigrants) with little regard for their comfort or convenience. They paid the same passage as stateroom passengers and most of them brought their own food, blankets to sleep on, and drinking water.

During this period, the quality of life among the settlers and townspeople along the Arkansas River was being continually upgraded. A typical cargo brought to Little Rock in October, 1848, on the steamers *Swallow* and *Pontiac* was as follows:

825 barrels best Missouri flour, 15 barrels crackers, 2 half-barrels of dried fruit, 250 pounds feathers, 1000 pounds cotton yarn, 20 kegs white lead, 10,000 half-Spanish cigars, 2 dozen grindstones, 6 dozen hemp bed cords, 25 dozen papers chewing tobacco, 20 boxes star candles (Procter and Gamble candles), 4000 pounds side bacon, 1000 pounds shoulder, 2000 pounds hams, 50 barrels "Hamilton" whiskey, and 4 barrels Old Bourbon whiskey.

We cannot leave the 1840's without taking at least a passing glance at the California Gold Rush. Colonel Zachary Taylor had proven to be a master craftsman in the art of Indian affairs, attending councils to promote good will between the different tribes. He wrote Adjutant General Jones, "The results can be no other than beneficial, as well to the red man as us . . .," and he was right. From the middle of June, 1843 when he attended a Grand Council at Tahlequah, real Indian trouble became almost a thing of the past in the eastern and central portions of the Indian Territory.

Colonel Taylor was unassuming in conversation and dress. He liked jeans and casual clothes without insignia, and wore a broad palmetto hat. He talked more in terms of crops, field hands, and the stage of the Arkansas River than military activities.

Taylor was transferred to the command of the First Military Department with headquarters at Fort Jesup in the spring of 1844. He was on his way to fame and glory. Upon Taylor's departure, Colonel Arbuckle was made commander of the Second Military Department and returned to Cantonment Belknap at Fort Smith.

News of the death of John Quincy Adams reached Fort Smith on March 14, 1848. The Seventh Military Department was formed and Captain Arthur B. Lansing was appointed quartermaster. Post commanders in the district were to forward their requests to him for supplies.

Thus Fort Smith, the normal head of navigation on the Arkansas River, was taking new status as the chief depot for the department. Fort Smith was then supplying Forts Gibson, Washita, and Towson in the Indian Territory. These forts had been erected to protect the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians from the Plains Indians.

The Mexican War was ended with the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe de Hidalgo, and gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California. Citizens all over America began looking west to the opportunities afforded by the golden nuggets. In Fort Smith, a mass meeting was held and Fort



Smithians drafted a memorial in which to request that the valleys of the Arkansas and Canadian Rivers be opened to Santa Fe.

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During the years of steamboating, the editor's column in the newspapers usually noted newsworthy items of steamers. The following items are from the *Fort Smith Herald: A Weekly Newspaper*.

January 12, 1848:

The River is very low. We understand that the steamers *Santa Fe* and *Alert*, arrived at Van Buren on Monday last, but could not get up to this place in consequence of the bar at the mouth of Lee's Creek.

Since the above was put in type, last evening, the *Alert* came up.

1848:

#### Steamboat Accidents

The steamboat *Amulet*, on her downward trip, struck a snag on Sunday the 23d ult near the mouth of Frog Bayou and sunk. The machinery and furniture were saved. The hull is a total loss.

The steamer *Santa Fe*, in descending the river on Friday last, struck a snag near Spadra Bluffs, and sunk. It is feared she cannot be raised. We hope, however, that the enterprising Captain may be enabled to get her afloat again, and resume his place in the line.

\* \* \* \*

Advertisement, *Fort Smith Herald*, February 16, 1948:

#### More Arrivals

The undersigned have just received per Steamer P. H. White, direct from Cincinnati and New Orleans.

15 sacks best quality Rio Coffee,  
½ Bll. Cranberries,  
25 lbs Currants  
6 boxes Star Candles Nos. 4, 5, and 6  
2 do Tallow do,  
6 do No. 1 Soap  
4 do Assorted Candy,  
12 do Cheese,  
4 Blls boiled cider,  
2 do cider vinegar,  
1 do American Brandy,  
1 do do gin.  
12 doz New Brooms all of which we will  
sell low for cash or country Produce.

John & Henry Beckel

Eventually, with the cooperation of the Arkansas State Assembly and the Federal Government, the request was not only granted but also a military escort of thirty men accompanied the emigrants to Santa Fe. Shortly after, through the efforts of Senator Solan Borland of Arkansas, the Federal Government also issued orders for a military escort to accompany emigrants all the way to the Pacific coast.

By the end of February, 1849 Forty-Niners were pouring into Fort Smith. Emigrant companies were being formed at Little Rock, Batesville, Clarksville, and Fayetteville. And Fort Smith civic leaders began to vie with those of Independence, Missouri, for the distinction of being the "jumping off" place for western emigration.

Every steamer arriving at Fort Smith was filled with Forty-Niners, and people were arriving from places as far away as Memphis, Philadelphia, and New York. It was an exciting, as well as a dangerous time. A cholera epidemic was again raging on the Gulf Coast and spreading northward and several deaths were reported on boats below Little Rock, bound for Fort Smith.

The *Robert Morris* arrived at Fort Smith on April 15th with the news of the death from the disease of two pilots and several of the crew on the way up the river. Passengers on the steamer *Oella No. 2* had also died en route upriver, and in an emigrant camp four miles from Fort Smith cholera was also reported but fortunately it did not spread into town.

At that time the Arkansas was in a stage of high water, enabling steamers to make the run from Little Rock to Fort Smith in record time. The *Alert No. 2* made the fastest time ever recorded for a vessel of her class, *stern-wheeler*, 94-tons, in 37 hours between the two points, including stops.

The emigration of the Forty-Niners had only begun, and Fort Smith, as supply depot for the other forts and the gold seekers heading west, benefitted greatly. We would have to say that the decade of the 1840's went out with a boom.

#### 1850's

One of the popular and somewhat eccentric commanders who owned and operated his own boat, the *General Shields*, on the upper Arkansas River in the 1850's was Captain Hugh L. Rogers. Born in Ireland, he arrived in America when he was quite young. He had learned the engineer's trade, had navigated the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, built railroads in North and South Carolina, sailed on a canal in Virginia, and ran fast horses on the race track.

Captain Rogers had a scheme all his own in administering to the needs of customers living along the river who were inclined to the drinking habit. And he was successful in not attracting the

attention of the authorities. He concealed the liquor in tin receptacles stashed between the ribs of the hull of the boat and would dispose of them whenever they were called for. For those customers wishing more than a quart or a gallon he would, by previous arrangement, roll a barrel overboard and signal by blasts from the boat's whistle where the precious stuff might be found on the river. The customers for whom the barrels or smaller containers were intended would then start out in a skiff and search for the liquor until they came across it.

It is not exactly clear why Captain Rogers had to be concerned about the authorities since the records show that many of the steamboats carried at least one or two barrels of good whiskey with every load of cargo. But he had a good thing going, and it might be one of the reasons he fired his clerk.

Since the clerk was a very important member of the crew, Rogers was asked why he had let him go. He replied that he couldn't make any money until he fired the "d . . . d" clerk. His own method was simpler. He would count his money before he left on a trip, pay cash for everything and keep the bills of lading. When the run was over Captain Rogers would put all his money on a table, count out what he began with and lay it aside. What he had left was his profit.

He never lost his love of fast horses and for many years was a familiar figure at the annual meets on the Fort Smith race track.

The steamer *Philip Pennywit*, also called *Pennywit*, was a side-wheeler, 246 tons, built in Cincinnati. In 1851 she struck a snag and sank in Cherokee Bend, as the big bend in the river was named by boatmen. John Melvin, her pilot, wept over the accident.

Mr. Asa Clark lived for several years on the corner of what are now Fourth and B Streets in a house built with lumber rescued from the wreck of the *Pennywit*.

The *Young America* was a small stern-wheeler that entered the Arkansas River trade in 1857. She was built by Johnson & Grimes for Captain W. B. Nowland, who was to pay for her by carrying freight for the firm. At that time, Ed Nowland, second clerk, had begun to attract attention as one of the most successful young boatmen on the river. Because the boat was small enough to run at almost any stage of the river it made money for Captain Nowland.

But one day in 1859 she ran hard aground on the bank about 100 yards above the Fort Smith wharf. Before she could be removed the river fell and she went to pieces under the fierce summer sun of that year's long drouth.

One of the mishaps on the upper river which did not cost any lives but scared the wits out of the passengers, some of whom were excursionists, was

the collision of the *Belle Gates* against Wilson's Rock about 12 or 15 miles above Fort Smith. The *Belle Gates* was a Red River side-wheeler, 278 tons. The river was very high at the time and the collision smashed one of her wheels and tore away some of her upper works. Commanded by Captain Bryant, it was brought safely back to Fort Smith. Captain Bryant owned a large plantation on Red River and all the deck hands on the steamer were his slaves. The *Belle Gates*, built in 1851, had a long and successful life. She was taken over by Confederate control in 1861.

Another boat which attracted much attention because of her size was the *Thirty-Fifth Parallel*, also known as *Parallel*. A side-wheeler built in 1859, she weighed 419 tons and could carry 3,000 bales of cotton. During the War Between the States the Confederate authorities burned and sank her in the Yazoo River above Vicksburg to obstruct the advance of the Federal gunboats up that stream.

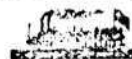
Another boat which was well remembered by Fort Smithians was the *Lady Walton*. Built in 1858 in Cincinnati by W. B. Nowland for a man named Pennington, she weighed 150 tons and was a stern-wheeler. She was named for Mrs. Lizzie Walton of Fort Smith. Pennington was a sawmill man, and with S. D. McDonald, operated a mill near Fort Smith. It was this sawmill where the lumber was bought to build the Greenwood court house at Greenwood in 1853-56.

The *Umpire No. 2*, was snagged and sank in the bend below Cherokee Bend in 1854. It was later raised and put back into service. In 1859 the *Resolute*, also sank in the same bend. The bend was then named by boatmen, "Resolute Bend." The *Resolute* went to pieces and was not recovered for further use.

Among the well known early stamboat captains were Megaffick, Kendall, Irvin, Gregg, Pennywit, Brown, Chapman, Reasoner, Simpson, Betty, Thomas Crooks, Warden, Applegate, Abraham, Box, James Pritchard, McKee, Elliott, W. E. Timms, James Timms, Ed Nowland, W. B. Nowland, George Nowland, Hugh Rogers, Reuben Haynes, Eugene Smith, and Jim Bowlin.

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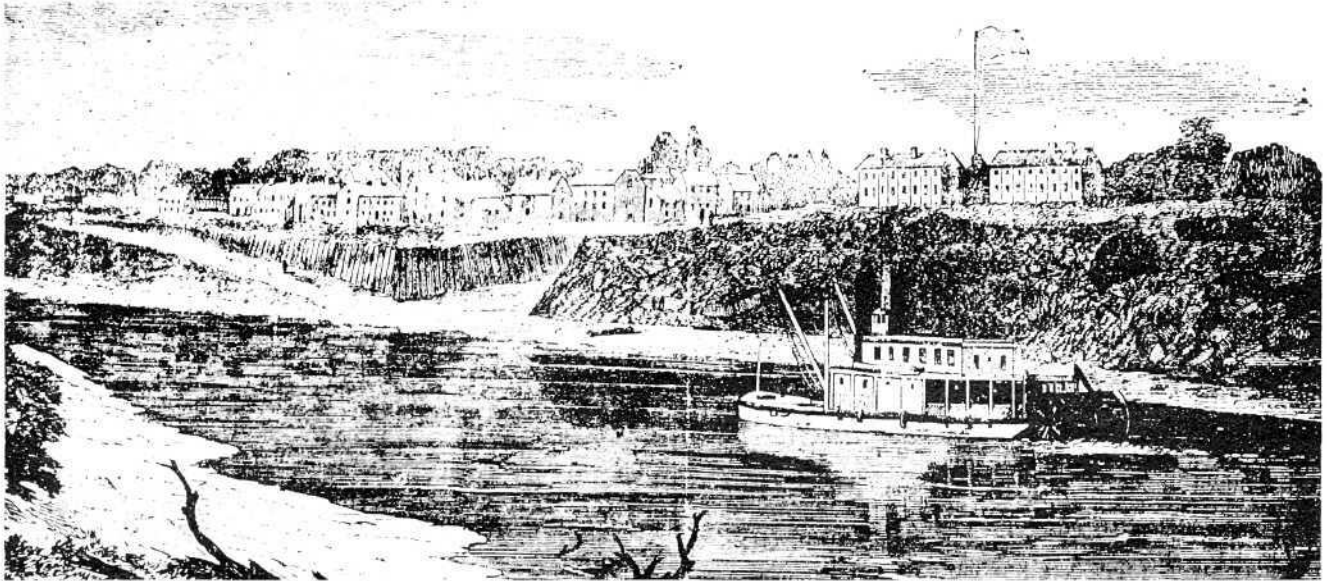
Regular Arkansas River Packet.  
FOR PINE BLUFF, LITTLE ROCK, VAN  
BUREN and FORT SMITH.  
The Splendid Passenger Steamer



CONEWAGO,  
D. S. JAMES, - - - - - Captain.  
THE above steamer will run as a regular packet  
from the above places, touching at all land-  
ings. She is a light draught boat with excellent  
accommodations.  
march 28, 1861.

Daily Times & Herald  
March, 1861

## CIVIL WAR PERIOD



Fort Smith waterfront in Civil War times. (London Illustrated News Print reprinted in Arkansas Gazette, date unknown).  
Contributed by Jean Montague

Steamboating had just about come into full swing on the Arkansas River in the latter 1850's but with the beginning of the Civil War it almost came to a halt as far as private shipping was concerned. Many of the Arkansas River steamers were either destroyed or confiscated by the Federal government or by their own Confederate government to keep the opposing faction from taking them and using them.

The *Frederic Nortrebe*, the *Key West*; and the *Rose Douglass*, all stern-wheelers, were burned at Van Buren by order of General Blunt when he made his raid in 1862. The *Era No. 6*, stern-wheeler, and another boat named *Arkansas* were lying in the mouth of the Poteau River at the same time and were burned by the Confederate military authorities, who expected the Federal troops to cross the river and take possession of them. The *Arkansas* was owned by Asa Bennett, a Fort Smith citizen, and was in the Fort Smith and New Orleans trade.

In June, 1863 Captain Pennington, owner of the aforementioned *Lady Walton*, was directed by General Holmes to take the steamer from Little Rock to Jacksonport, on the White River, to bring back supplies that belonged to the Confederate government and which were in danger of capture by the Union soldiers who were advancing into that section. Pennington proceeded to carry out orders by going down the Arkansas to the White River cut-off and entering it, reaching the White. Both streams were very high.

When the steamer got through the cut-off it should have been turned left to go to Jacksonport. But Pennington suddenly appeared from the Texas cabin with a shotgun and commanded William

Forbes, the pilot, to turn toward the Mississippi River. The pilot was astounded since Pennington was thought to be a Confederate sympathizer. He asked if he was in earnest. Pennington replied, "Yes, I am in earnest; I intend to take this boat to the Mississippi and turn her over to the Federal government."

The Federal authorities forthwith confiscated the *Lady Walton* and appropriated her for their own use without ever paying Pennington for his boat or the use of her. The steamer was renamed and re-documented in March, 1864 and later that year collided with another steamer.

These are only a few of the typical boat losses during the turmoil which ravished the country in the early 1860's.

Some of the pilots working on the Arkansas in this era were Henry and Robert McKnett; and Will, John, Alexander, and Jim Melvin. Will Melvin was said to have been one of the most skillful pilots who ever turned a wheel on the Arkansas.

Rufus G. Caldwell, another Fort Smith boy, learned the river under his brother-in-law, Reuben Haynes and followed the river for many years. Jim Bowlin graduated from the engine room to the pilot house and then became a commander. Jeff Baldwin was another well known pilot. Eugene Smith, a brother of Fort Smithian John P. Smith, was another early pilot who became a commander. He followed the river until a short time before his death. Leslie Bennett, Fort Smith native, was a pilot and followed the river until his death at Pine Bluff in 1874.

Two of the most noted men contributed by Fort Smith to the river traffic were William B. and Edward Nowland, both of whom took to the river at an early



age. William Nowland began his career in 1854 as second clerk on the *J. H. Harris* which was under the command of Captain Reuben Haynes. He rapidly mastered all the details of the steamboat business and in 1857 was placed in command of the *Young America*. From 1861 until the occupation of Little River by the Union forces in 1863, he was in charge of boats running on the Arkansas River in the service of the Confederate government, and after that event he served in the Confederate Army until the surrender.

### EXPLOSION OF SULTANA

The greatest maritime disaster of all time happened on the Mississippi River just after the end of the Civil War on April 27, 1865. It was the explosion of the *Sultana*. She was a side-wheeler at 660 tons, with Captain Cass Mason commanding.

She had passed inspection on April 12th, but before she started her downriver run the news arrived about the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln on the 14th. Mason brought the sad news downriver.

The *Sultana* made the run safely to New Orleans and was bound back upriver when it was discovered that a trickle of water was oozing between two warped plates on one of the boilers. Some engine repairs can be made on the run but this was not one of them. Mason stopped at Vicksburg where a patch was riveted into place. Significantly or not, the patch was one-sixteenth of an inch thinner than the metal in the original plates.

Encamped near Vicksburg were about 4500 Union soldiers awaiting passage north to home. The *Henry Ames* had taken the first 1300 and the *Olive Branch* had cleared port with another seven hundred. Legal limits on passenger loads had long been established, but the regulations were relaxed during the war and even in the face of a highly dangerous overloading of passengers, there was little that civil authorities could do about it.

On the *Sultana* the legal limit, including passengers and crew, was 376. However, the steamer took on more than 2400 soldiers. Along with a passenger list of 100 private citizens and a crew of 80, it was the largest passenger load ever to board a steamboat. There was literally standing room only and even the hurricane deck was crowded with happy soldiers going home.

The Mississippi was swollen with flood waters, but even under the strain of the tremendous weight, the *Sultana* was maintaining almost normal speed. In the early morning hours of the 27th, at a point just beyond Tangleman's Landing seven miles north of Memphis, the inevitable happened.

The first steamer to come upon the scene from the north was the *Bostonia* 2, Captain John T. Watson

commanding. In the darkness it was difficult for him to realize what had happened but when he could discern that there were hundreds of people swimming, or trying to stay afloat in the water, he was appalled. It was said that his reaction was "cold horror."

When the news of the disaster reached Memphis other boats responded, among which were the *General Boynton*, the *Marble City*, the *Jenny Lind*, and the *Rosadella*. Before it was over 1547 lives were lost, more than the 1517 lost in the sinking of the *Titanic* in the Atlantic Ocean in 1912. While books have been written, and movies made, about the *Titanic*, the loss of the *Sultana* has been remarkably obscured.



Picture of John T. Watson made about 1901. Mr. Watson, Captain of *Bostonia* No. 2, who participated in the rescue of passengers from the ill-fated *Sultana*, later was a Baptist preacher and school teacher in Franklin and Sebastian Counties, Arkansas.

Excerpt from *The Sultana Disaster*  
*Memphis Bulletin*  
April 28, 1865, page 2

"The explosion was not heard on board the *Bostonia*, and when that steamer rounded the point, the first intimation of the disaster was the discovery of the *Sultana* on fire. Capt. Jno. T. Watson at once appreciated the terrible state of affairs, and reaching the wretches who were struggling in the water, he and all aboard the *Bostonia* used the utmost efforts to rescue the unfortunates. They threw overboard the wooden staging, bales of hay, and everything that might save lives. The *Bostonia* was placed in some peril by the efforts of her gallant officers to reach those who were drowning . . . The *Bostonia* saved over two hundred lives and throughout the whole affair Captain Watson, the clerks Fisher and Lorenz, the pilot, Mr. C. Keating, the mate, Mr. Alvord, the engineer, Mr. McGwin, and indeed all on board of her, deserved the warmest commendation."



There were two factors which were probably responsible for the dimming of this great tragedy. First, there was an understandable national euphoria, a feeling of great joy and relief at the ending of the war. And second, there was Lincoln's assassination and his subsequent funeral which captured the headlines, and the minds and hearts, of all Americans. But for whatever reasons, it seems in retrospect that there was almost a complete blackout of the tragedy.

It is noted in passing that Captain John T. Watson, commander of the *Bostonia 2*, was the great-grandfather of Dr. Art Martin, well known physician of Fort Smith.

### RECONSTRUCTION:

While the war had been hell, the reconstruction days in Arkansas didn't exactly constitute a Garden of Eden. There were bushwhackers and riff-raff running riot over the countryside, and in 1868 it was deemed necessary to organize the State militia. James J. Hodges was appointed agent to go north and purchase arms, and bought 4000 muskets which were shipped to Memphis. On the 12th of October Governor Clayton chartered the steamer *Hesper*, in command of Captain Sam Houston, to go to Memphis and transport the arms to Little Rock. When she got to Memphis the boxes of arms were loaded aboard and the steamer started on her return to Little Rock. When she had reached a point about 20 miles below Memphis, she was overtaken by the steam-tug *Nettie Jones*. A party of men came aboard the *Hesper* and speedily broke open the boxes and pitched the guns into the Mississippi River, and the *Nettie Jones* returned to Memphis.

The men who accomplished this feat were sworn to secrecy and were so thoroughly disguised that their identity was not known for a generation afterward. When there was no longer need for concealment they openly acknowledged commission of the deed.

The scheme was arranged by a man named Berry. Captain Ed Nowland was requested to go to Memphis and take command of the tug that followed the *Hesper*, but declined. Jules DuBose, a young lawyer who later became prominent in Memphis politics, was leader of the masked party, all of whom belonged to the Ku Klux Klan.

And then there was the Brooks-Baxter War in 1874. It was a contest between two men, Brooks and Baxter, for the governorship of the State of Arkansas. And it was during this conflict, on May 8th of that year, when the steamer *Hallie* met her death wound.

Brooks was expecting a flatboat to arrive from Fayetteville on May 8th with guns from the armory of the State University. The Baxter men decided to capture the guns and not allow them to reach

Brooks and his men. About 3:00 a.m., the *Hallie*, manned by about forty men, started up the river to meet and capture the flatboat. Commanding the *Hallie* was Captain Sam Houston, who also commanded the *Hesper* six years earlier, in the incident just related.

Brooks discovered the plan of the Baxter men and sent a detachment of six companies, about a hundred men in all, to head off the *Hallie* and prevent the capture of the flatboat and its cargo. The Brooks men reached Palarm, a station sixteen miles up the river from Little Rock. There they concealed themselves in the woods along the bank.

The *Hallie* was two or three miles downriver, taking on wood, and after loading the wood it came alongside the place where the Brooks men were stationed.

An officer from the Brooks forces stepped out and ordered the boat to turn around and return to Little Rock. Houston refused and the firing began on both sides. The firing continued for about fifteen minutes, during which time the boat was bearing to the other side of the river. When it reached the bank all of the men except the injured, and two men left to care for them, got off and went into the woods. A flag of truce was raised and the Brooks officer sent a man to confer with the mate of the *Hallie*.

Those who went on the boat found a scene of wreckage and death. Pools of blood covered the deck; Frank Timms had been shot through the temple. In the cabin was Captain Sam Houston, who had been shot through the breast, and was breathing his last. John Meyers, the pilot, was severely wounded. The barricades which were made of two-inch planks had been shot through and through, and bales of cotton, also used for protection, were splattered with blood. Windows had been shot out and the pilot house was completely wrecked, another man L. B. Leigh, had been shot through the knee.

The *Hallie* made it back to Little Rock but her hull was so completely riddled with bullets that she later sank.

Thus ended the career of a courageous riverman, Captain Sam Houston. He had tackled the Arkansas head-on by jumping the *Trident* over sand bars. He had commanded the *Hesper* because of personal conviction. He survived the Civil War; and it seems improper, almost indecent, that his life was sacrificed in a local contest between two politicians.

Although steamboat traffic on the upper Arkansas began to decline about 1872 when the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad was built through the Indian Territory, it was not until the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad had been completed to Fort Smith in 1876 that for a time the river traffic was practically suspended.

Coincident with this date, however, there began an era of carrying trade on that portion of the river not touched by railroads which lasted for many years. Fort Smith was the center of this trade. As a rule the boats engaged in this traffic went no lower down the river than Dardanelle nor higher up than Fort Gibson. On several occasions connections by river was made with Arkansas City, Kansas, but these occasions were very rare, and finally attempts to establish permanent trade by water route with the prairie regions of southern Kansas were abandoned.

The pioneer in the local boating trade of which Fort Smith was the center was Captain B. C. Blakely, a native of Covington, Kentucky. Captain Blakely came to Arkansas in 1858 and served in the Confederate Army during the War Between the States. From 1869 until 1874 he was in business at Jacksonport, receiving and forwarding freight, and shipping walnut lumber to New Orleans. In 1875 he began working on the river on a boat commanded by Captain Pete McCarty and continued in the boating business on the White and Black Rivers until he came to Fort Smith in 1878.

The first boat built by Captain Blakely for the Fort Smith trade was the *Jennie May*, the keel of which was laid at W. W. Wheeler's sawmill on the Arkansas River three miles above Fort Smith in July, 1878. The boat was built principally for the transporting of the mill's products.

Mr. Wheeler was a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. J. C. Huff was a partner in the milling enterprise but his name did not appear in the transaction of the firm's business because he was a white man and a resident of Arkansas. The *Jennie May* did good service and was used until worn out.

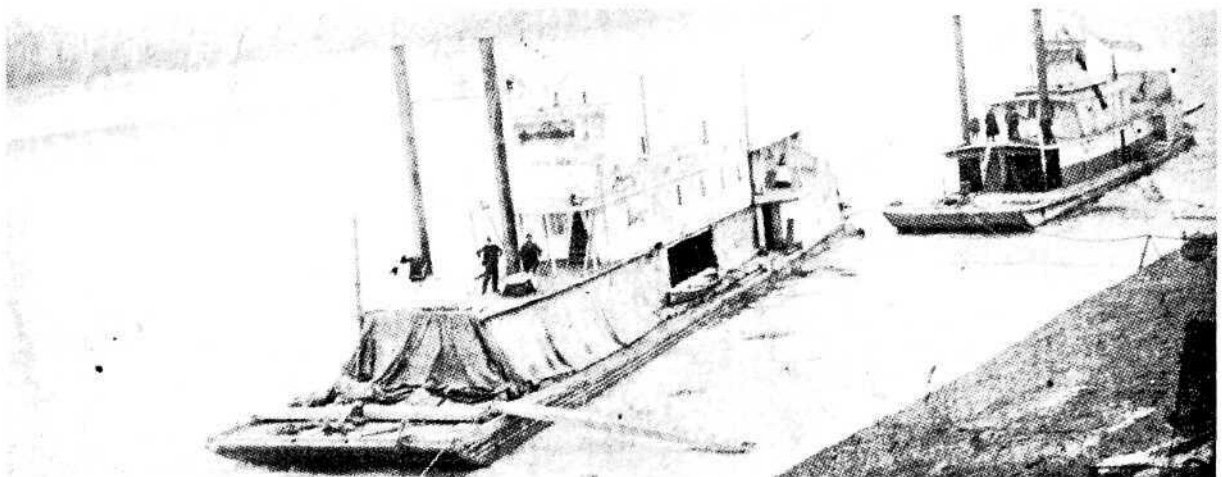
In 1879-80 the *Fort Smith* was built on the Poteau River at the mouth of Sugar Loaf Creek, Captain Blakely superintending the work of construction. J. C. Huff was a partner in the enterprise. The *Fort*

*Smith* had a carrying capacity of 150 tons and a stowing capacity for 250 bales of cotton. It was the intention of the owners to use her in carrying lumber to southern Kansas but one trip convinced them of the impracticability of the project as they got no higher than the mouth of the Verdigris River. The *Fort Smith* remained in the local trade until the winter of 1883 when she was crushed by ice as she lay at the wharf at the foot of Garrison Avenue.

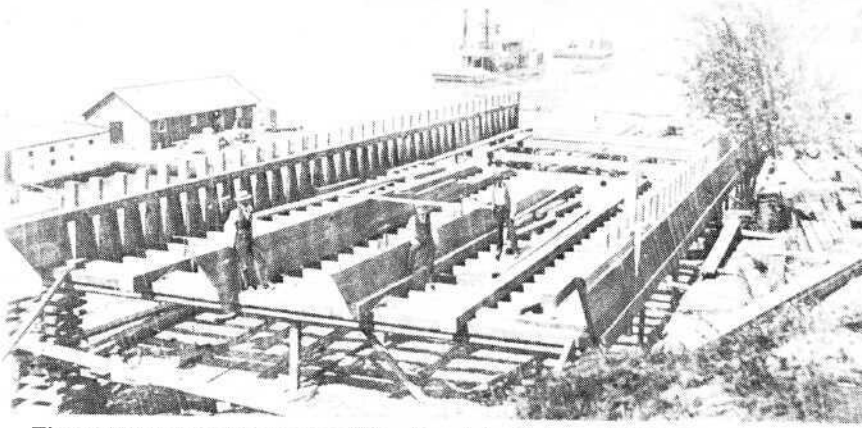
About the year 1880 the combined flour interests of Wichita and Arkansas City, Kansas, organized to secure relief from the excessive freight rates. They formed a river transportation company with a steel-hulled towboat, *Kansas Miller*, and two barges at St. Louis. After making a few successful trips, bringing cargoes of flour to Fort Smith from Arkansas City, the boat and barges were purchased by Henderson & Collier, wholesale flour dealers of Fort Smith. They were then run in the Fort Smith trade until sold to the United States Engineering Department at Little Rock and added to the fleet of boats engaged in river improvement work. The *Kansas Miller* was renamed *Cleveland*.

Captain Blakely and J. C. Huff built the *Webb City* in the fall of 1883. Blakely superintended the construction of her hull at Covington, Kentucky, and fitted her with machinery at Jeffersonville, Indiana. The carrying capacity of the *Webb City* was 200 tons, storage capacity for 600 bales of cotton. In a short time Huff disposed of his share in the boat to his partner, who in turn sold her to the Woodson Transportation Company, an auxiliary of the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad.

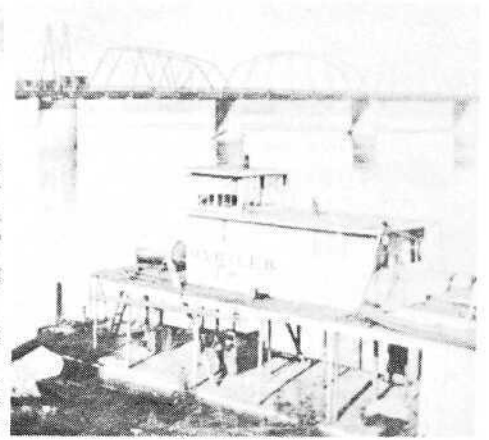
In 1884 Captain Blakely made another venture in the river trade, building the *Border City*, which had a capacity for 175 tons of freight and storage room for 250 bales of cotton. The boat was operated as an individual enterprise until 1889 when she became the property of the Merchants' Transportation Company of Fort Smith. This organization was



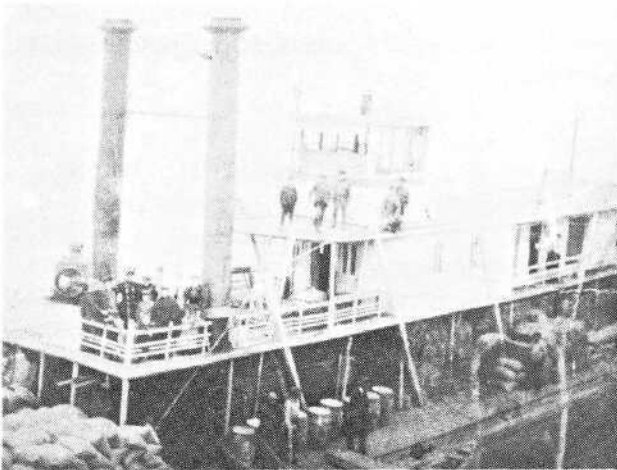
Steamboats at the foot of Garrison Avenue in 1890. The one in front is the *Jennie May*.



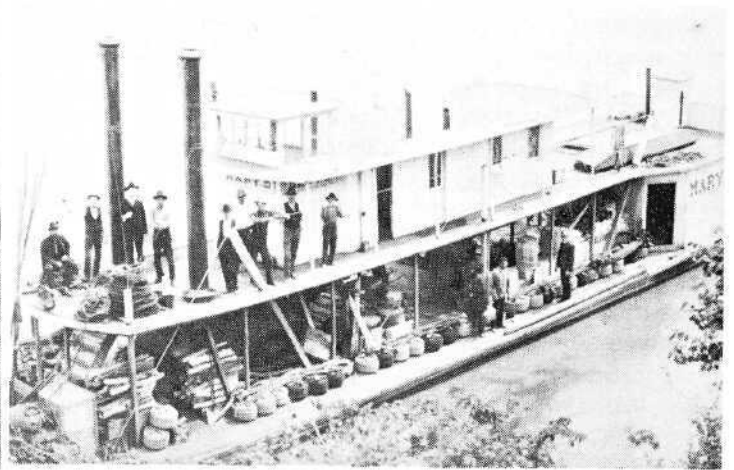
The government dredge boat *Van Frank*, built circa 1896 in Fort Smith. In February 1940 was still in use on lower Arkansas. The picture shows framework of the hull as the boat was being built near the present location of the Garrison Avenue Bridge. Courtesy Mrs. Elbert R. Griffin.



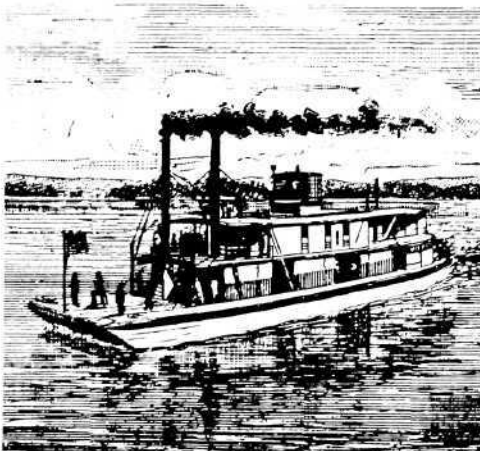
*Myrtle B.* gasoline powered boat built in 1907 by B. C. Blakely. Courtesy Louis Intres.



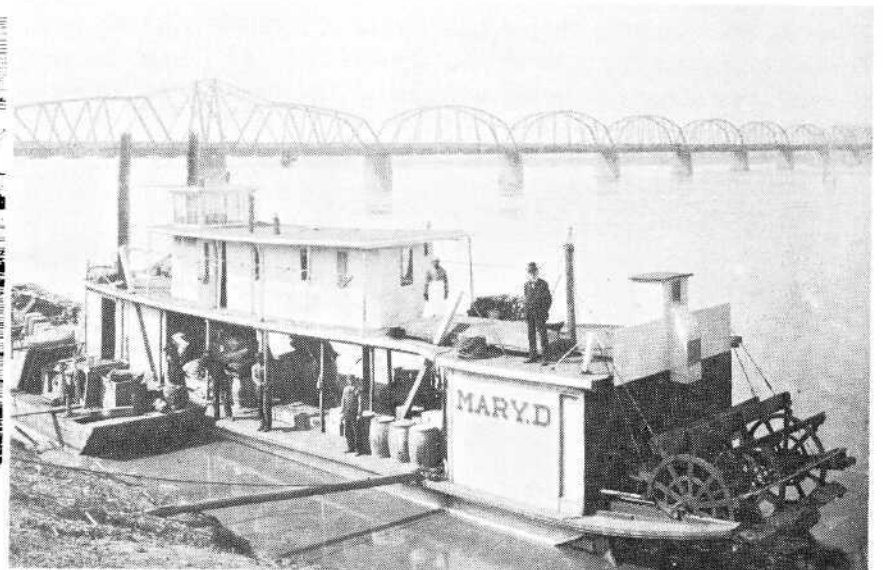
*William Drew No. 2*, built in Fort Smith by Capt. Whybark and launched 1890. Also known as *William Druhe*. Courtesy Louis Intres and Mrs. Elbert R. Griffin.



The *Mary D.* built by Capt. Blakely and named for his youngest daughter. Note firewood stacked at bow of boat. Courtesy Mrs. Elbert R. Griffin.

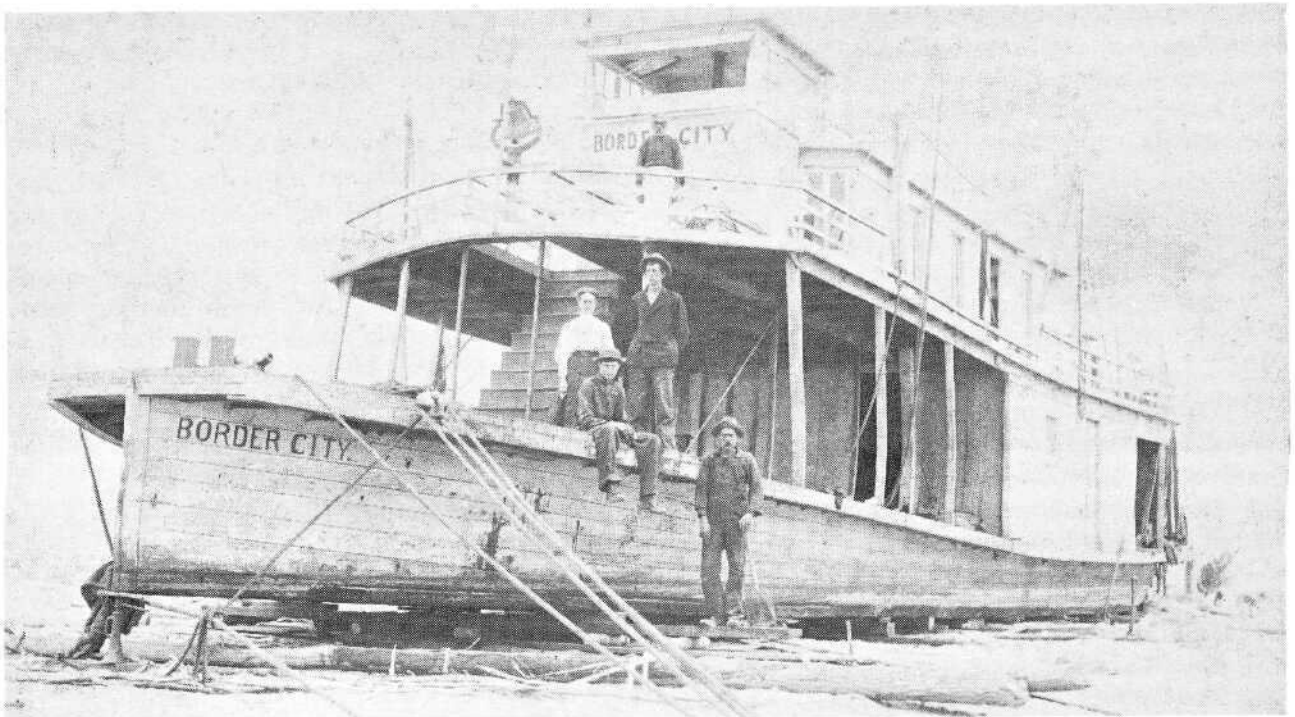


*Border City*, built by Captain B. C. Blakely in 1884. Woodcut print used by permission of Hiram Burrow.



The *Mary D.* remodeled. Courtesy Mrs. Elbert R. Griffin.





Gasoline powered *Border City* under construction, 1908. B. C. Blakely standing on the crown. Leo Blakely sitting and Mary Blakely standing. Courtesy Louis Intres.

promoted by Captain Blakely for the purpose of furnishing facilities to meet the demands of the local river traffic which had grown to such proportions that one boat could no longer handle it. John Ayers, W. J. Murphy, David Speer, John Mathews and B. C. Blakely were incorporators of the company, although a number of other business men of the city became stockholders after the organization. The officers of the corporation were David Speer, president; John Ayers, secretary and treasurer; and B. C. Blakely, superintendent and manager.

Another boat was built and named the *John Mathews*. The work of construction was done at Madison, Indiana. The capacity of the *John Mathews* was 200 tons, storage capacity for 700 bales of cotton.

The *Border City* was put into trade between Fort Smith and Fort Gibson, and the *John Mathews* between Fort Smith and Dardanelle.

In 1884 the *Jennie May No. 2*, 300 tons and storage for 500 bales of cotton, was built at Fort Smith for J. C. Huff. This boat met disaster by striking a snag in the Fort Smith Bend in 1886.

The *William Druhe*, a raft boat, was built at Fort Smith for Captain L. C. Whybark's lumber mill. The *Druhe No. 2*, 200 tons of freight, and storage for 300 bales of cotton, was also built at Fort Smith by Captain Whybark and was launched in 1890. At a later date she was sold to the Merchants' Transportation Company.

In 1892 the *G. W. Mayo* was built by Captain Blakely. She had capacity for 150 tons of freight and storage for 250 bales of cotton. A portion of the framework of the *Druhe No. 2* was used in its construction. Captain Blakely listed in one of his ledgers a total of \$998.07 for labour (sic) in the building of the *Mayo*. After being used in the local trade the *G. W. Mayo* was sold and put into service on the Ouachita River where she burned with a cargo of 600 bales of cotton.

#### FORT SMITH



## STEAM FERRY

THE UNDERSIGNED HAVING LEASED  
for the space of twenty years, all the  
rights and privileges of the

### BELLE POINT BRIDGE

AND

### Ferry Company,

Has, now plying between Fort Smith and  
the Cherokee side of the Arkansas River,  
the fine new Steam Ferry Boat

## REGULATOR,

of 32-horse power, capable of crossing the  
Arkansas river at any stage of water.

Fort Smith New Era, March 1870



The *Mary D.* 85 tons and storage for 100 bales of cotton was built at Fort Smith in 1903 and was named for Captain Blakely's youngest daughter. After two years' service she was sold to the Muskogee Transportation Company.

The *Mary C. Lucas*, built at St. Louis, was bought by Captain Blakely in 1906 and put into the Fort Smith trade.

The gasoline boat, *Myrtle B.*, 35 tons of freight and storage for 90 bales of cotton, was built at Fort Smith in 1907. This boat was operated until she became useless.

The gasoline boat, *Border City*, was the third boat of that name. She was built at Fort Smith in 1908 and was destroyed by fire while lying in Trustee Bend in November, 1912.

Of the boats used in the Fort Smith trade during the period above referred to, no less than twelve were either built or commanded by Captain Blakely - *Jennie May No. 1*, *Fort Smith*, *Webb City*, *John Mathews*, *Jennie May No. 2*, *G. W. Mayo*, *Myrtle B.*, *Mary D.*, *Mary C. Lucas*, and three boats named *Border City*. The last boat operated on the lower Arkansas River by Captain B. C. Blakely was the *Lightwood*. 1917.

In a conversation with Frank Weaver shortly before his death, Captain Blakely expressed his belief that the Arkansas River was in a safer and better condition than it had ever been in the history of steamboating.

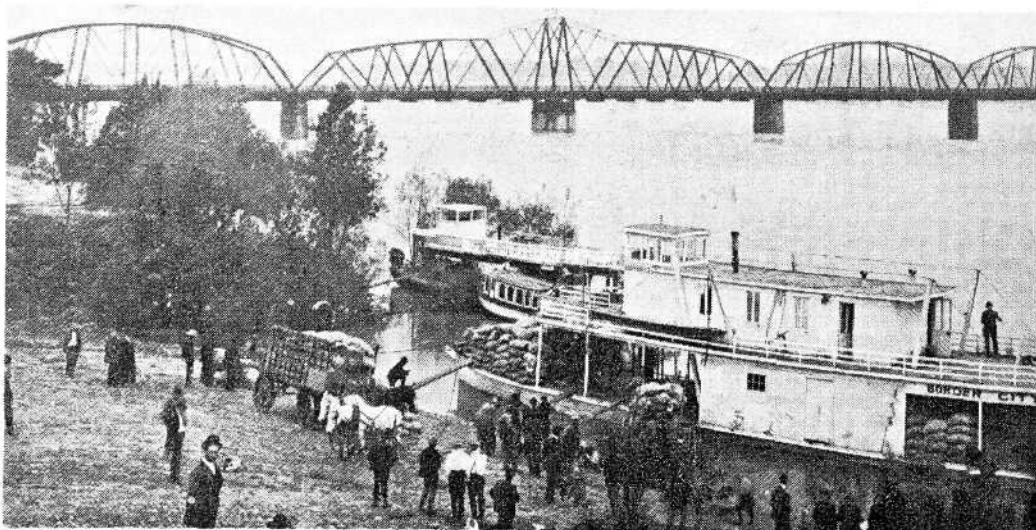
The river had widened and the area of high sand bars was greater, the accretion on one side keeping pace with the giving way on the other side, maintaining a channel width between bounds.

According to his idea the river was freer of snags. In early days the Arkansas was a veritable graveyard for boats, but the bottom lands had become almost denuded of timber and the arable lands were in cultivation, so there were few trees left to fall in and make snags. Without the protection afforded by fallen timber the river had followed the more rapid caving, leaving the old snaggy bed for another course made through cultivated lands, and in some instances the wrecks of sunken boats of thirty or forty years previous to the time, were a mile or more from the existing bed of the stream, their resting places overgrown with forests of cottonwood.

## WHARVES AND LANDINGS:

For a number of years Fort Smith was without a wharf, and steamboats were compelled to discharge cargo on the river bank just below the foot of Garrison Avenue. The "landing," as it was called, was approached by a road that had been cut through the river bank at the foot of Walnut Street and which had its exit at Garrison Avenue. The lack of a wharf occasioned great inconvenience because in rainy weather the landing would become a mire through which teams could make their way only with much difficulty. Often the freight that had been unloaded would become damaged by the inclemencies of the weather.

This was the condition until 1850 when the town council contracted with Asa Clark to build a wharf 900 feet in length, extending from the south side of Garrison Avenue to the north side of Mulberry Street, or a little below Johnson & Grimes' storehouse. The wharf was to be a huge log crib filled with rock, with a top layer of earth.



Boat-landing at Fort Smith, circa 1909. Gasoline powered *Border City* and other boats at landing, shipping potatoes. The Frisco Bridge in the background was the only bridge across the Arkansas River and was a toll bridge for wagons and people.

Courtesy Louis Intres.

This appears to have been the most important step in public improvements that the city fathers had ever undertaken in the small town, and the following item was found in the local newspaper:

"The town council have at last concluded to build a wharf. We hope as they have resolved to do this work that they will not let the matter rest, but drive it ahead while the water is low and an opportunity is afforded for its completion. No step taken by the council has met with such approbation as the building of a wharf, and no public work is so much needed in this place. It will have a happy influence upon all classes of our citizens, and will give encouragement to those who have been rather halting between two opinions, whether to build good houses or not. We have already been assured by one man, who is wealthy and a large property owner, that he will now go on and build several houses and improve his property. All that is now necessary to accomplish this work is constant and untiring perseverance. We do hope the council will not let the matter sleep."

But the wharf was never completed. Mr. Clark entered upon the work of construction with the degree of energy for which he was noted but abandoned it within a couple of months, owing, it would appear from the meager records of that day now obtainable, from inability of the town to make good with the financial end of the bargain. But later, other parties came forward and completed the structure from the foot of Walnut Street half-way to Garrison Avenue. Mr. Clark afterward built a wharf of his own by permission of the town council, at the foot of Mulberry Street, which bore his name as long as it lasted.

Clark conveyed freight up the river bank by means of a heavy cart, attached to which was a cable connector with a capstan, and oxen furnishing the motive power.

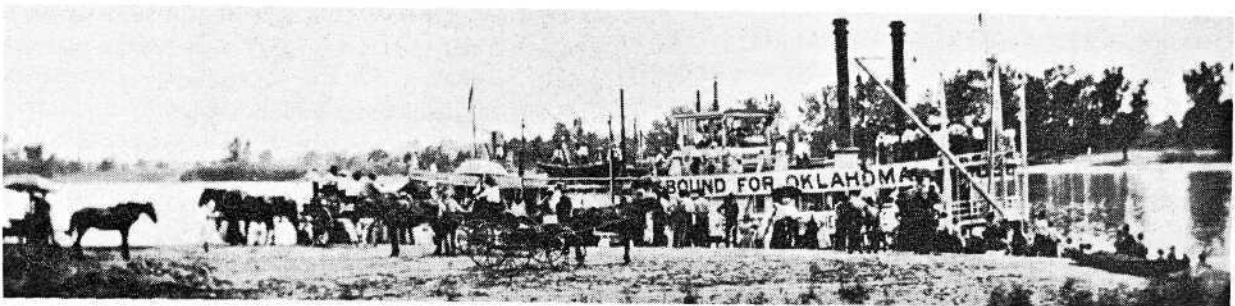
In the latter part of the 1850's an attempt was made to improve the landing at the foot of Garrison Avenue with macadam but without relieving the situation to a great extent. The fine rock wharf at the

foot of Garrison Avenue, so long in use and directly under the approach to the Garrison Avenue bridge, was built by the city in 1867 under the supervision of General W. L. Cabell, William Geiger being the contractor for the stonework. In addition to the wharves already mentioned there were landings farther down the river where boats stopped when they were prevented by low water from going farther up. One of these was where the Compress stood and was known as "DuVal's Landing." There was another much lower down that was known as "Shoofly Landing."

Asa Clark was a native of Maine. He came to Fort Smith in 1840 from Bangor and for several years after his arrival was in the employment of the government. He was one of the most useful of all the men who arrived here at that time. He opened a stone quarry and demonstrated the value of native stone for building purposes. He established a brick yard and made and sold brick. He built the St. Charles Hotel, on the corner of what are now First and "A" Streets. In 1858 or 1859, at the corner of what are now Fifth and "B" Streets, he and his wife established the first deaf-mute school ever taught in Arkansas. He died in 1890 and among his survivors were his wife, Sarah Hiatt Clark; son, John Clark; and three daughters, Emma Frances Hetherington; Mart A. Wren; Katie A. Lawrence. One daughter, Melvina E. Bruce, preceded him in death.

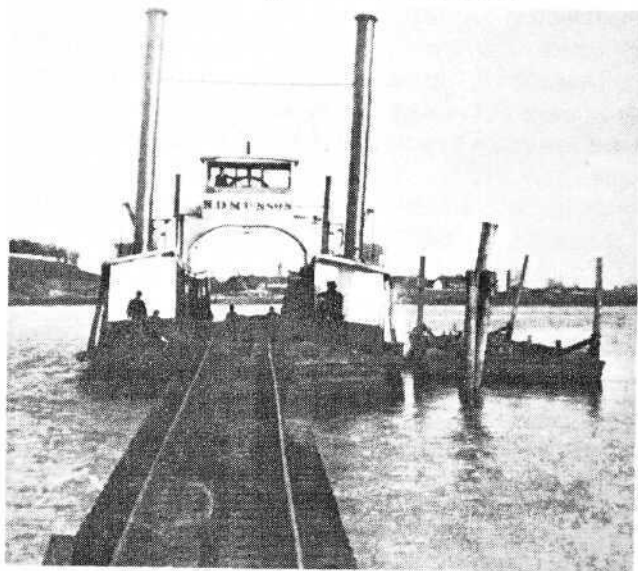
There was a prevailing idea that shipping on the Arkansas River by steamboats ceased when the railroads were built in the 1870's but this was not the case. In a deposition given by Mr. Leo Blakely in 1967 to members of a panel representing the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, he relates the story of steamboating as late as 1908 in which he, his father and brother participated.

Actually, there was a remarkable recovery in steamboating on the Arkansas River by 1867-68 after the Civil War. With the completion of railroads, steamboats still operated because the railways could not accommodate all customers lying along the river. Transfer, or ferry, boats were operated

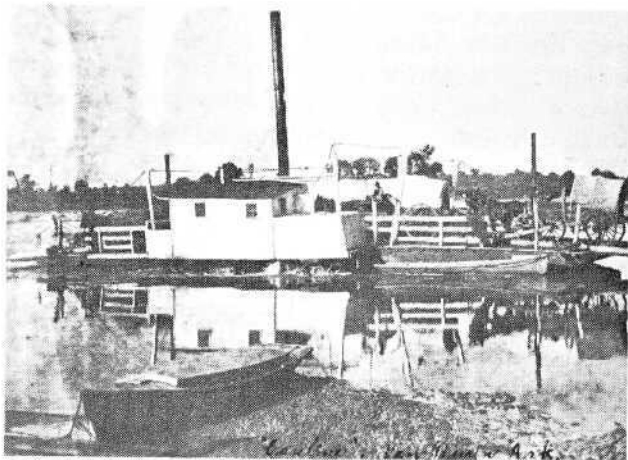


Steamboat landing, Van Buren, Arkansas, circa 1913.

until bridges could be built on the river to carry railway cars across, connecting them with tracks on the other side. Such a transfer boat operated at Fort Smith until the bridge was constructed.



*N. D. Munson, Transfer boat, Van Buren 1880's. Fadjo Cravens, Jr. Collection, UALR Archives.*



*Ferry boat Caroline, Van Buren, circa 1900. Fadjo Cravens, Jr. collection, UALR Archives.*

One of the worst boat disasters which happened in the immediate vicinity of Fort Smith and Van Buren was the sinking of the *John Mathews*, also known as *John Mathis*. In Blakely's deposition his version of the accident differs somewhat from other reports. He says the date was the latter part of 1894, right after Christmas. Since Leo Blakely was born in 1890 it is possible that his memory was in error. In Clara B. Eno's "History of Crawford County," the date is given as June 2, 1892.

However, the Eno version agrees with Blakely in that the cargo was a big load of shelled corn taken on at Webbers Falls, Oklahoma. Captain Hattaway of Van Buren, Blakely's partner, was commanding. Blakely also says the boat was carrying shelled corn - and cotton.

Blakely's Christmas date is more reasonable since corn and cotton are harvested in the fall and latter part of the year. Both versions are in general agreement as to how the accident happened.

There was a huge rise on the river and the swift current was carrying tons of driftwood. There were 27 persons aboard - Captain Hattaway and his three children, 15 deck hands, day and night engineers, day and night firemen, two pilots, the cooks, and the clerk. The Eno version says that the kiddies were out for school vacation. Blakely does not mention the passengers, but the children would probably be out for Christmas vacation.

Captain Blakely had asked Captain Hattaway not to take the boat out, at least until after Christmas, but Hattaway replied, "I can handle it as good as you can."

Hattaway got to the bend of the river above the Van Buren Frisco Bridge and whistled, signaling the men to open the draw on the bridge. Eno says that three men were needed to open the draw but only one man appeared on the bridge. Blakely said that a log got caught in the rudders and Hattaway broke the tiller rope. He thought he could break the log loose with his pilot wheel which was about fourteen feet in diameter. The pilot wheel was made larger deliberately so that the men could get up it with their feet and hands to pull it over and latch it so it wouldn't roll back. When the tiller rope broke Hattaway lost control of the boat and it hit broadside against the end of the bridge and broke in two.

All were saved on the *John Mathews*, including the children, except the day engineer, the night watchman, and three of the deck hands.

Leo Blakely began at the early age of six or seven working on the boats with his father. At that age, he related, he could receive freight because he could read, and "anybody who could read, could read a box of kraut, or a box of tomatoes, or a box of corn, or a keg of nails, or a spool of barbed wire, or a cultivator, what not."

Blakely also said in his deposition that his father, Captain B. C. Blakely, lived with Mr. William Druhe (Drew) who operated the Fort Smith Cotton Oil Mill. Mr. Druhe lived at the south end of the oil mill.

Captain Blakely purchased the *William Druhe* from Mr. Druhe. The cotton oil mill and compress was on the river on First and Second Streets where the Border City Ice Company and the Frisco Railroad tracks were later located.

Some of the landings mentioned by Blakely were: Paw Paw, Oklahoma; Redland, Oklahoma; Fishermen's Rock; Long's Landing; Black Rock; Short Mountain; Flat Rock; Blaine, Oklahoma; Willow Shoals; Tamaha, Oklahoma; Hisaw, Oklahoma; Webbers Falls, Oklahoma; Muskogee, Oklahoma; and Fort Gibson, Oklahoma.



Hisaw, Oklahoma, was on the Canadian River between the mouth of the Canadian River and Whitefield, Oklahoma. Whitefield was just across the Canadian from Briartown, where Belle and Henry Starr lived at one time.

Jack Elliot was a bootlegger who had a general mercantile store at Hisaw. Jack used to come to Fort Smith and buy a casket, and the caskets were nested in different sizes from the large to the baby size, and they were heavy. Elliot would load a large size with enough liquor to make it just about as heavy as the nested coffins. He bought the coffins from the coffin factory on 10th Street, about the four hundred block. Bernie Brothers had a morgue and they used to keep the hearse in front of the casket company.

When Elliot took the coffins to his store at Hisaw, he would remove the liquor and stack the coffins in a shed behind the store, and if anyone wanted a coffin all he had to do was go pick it up because Elliot was glad to get rid of it. Elliot also had another business at Tamaha, Oklahoma, a pool hall where he sold all kinds of drinks and liquor.

Leo Blakely was pilot for Jerry Boyd on a little pleasure boat that they ran across the river at Fort Gibson as a ferry. There were concessions there in Hyde Park. They got two dollars per couple and they could carry ten couples at a time, and go back and get more couples. Blakely said it was pretty good money.

Blakely once went as a pilot with Jerry Boyd on the small boat to Tulsa to get some silver fox for Governor C. N. Haskell, first governor of Oklahoma.

Jack Geren, of the Fort Smith Geren family, had a store and a gin at Peno, Oklahoma. The only way they could get anything out of there was to haul it in a wagon, and it was closer to haul it to the bank of the river and put a flag out. When Blakely's boat came downriver they would stop and pick up cargo - cottonseed, cotton, potatoes, hay, or other crops.

Fishermen's Rock was at Spiro right under the hill. Fishermen would stretch their tents there and weave their nets. The steamboat would take fish to Fort Smith for them and also deliver a barrel of coal tar about once a month. It was used to put on the trotlines and nets to keep them from rotting. The lower river (Poteau) was full of mud. Blakely said one could dip a bucket of water up and have two-thirds mud and one-third water.

But they could still run a boat up and down the river without too much difficulty. The crew would have to stop the boat and "blow her out and pump up again." When they got a chance to go into the mouth of Sallisaw or Vian or Illinois or Sansbois, any stream like that, they could fill up with good water. The water for the boilers was pumped directly from the river into the condensers.

The stacks were seventy-five feet high and about four and a half feet in diameter. Blakely said that he

had seen a stick of wood, cord wood, thrown into the fire box, go right on through and right out the stack and hit the water. A dangerous job, firing the boiler.

The previously mentioned *Mary C. Lucas* was a hundred and twenty-five feet long, and 30 inches in the hold. She could carry about five train car loads of freight. When asked how many tons the boat could carry Blakely replied that they didn't go by tons.

Captain Blakely bought the *Lucas* in St. Louis. It was unusual to ride a steamboat from there down the Mississippi River and around to Fort Smith, so Leo and his older brother Sid accompanied their father, Sid getting a leave of absence from his job working for the Missouri Pacific Railroad to make the trip.

Leo, fifteen years old at the time, did the firing and was night watchman all the way down the Mississippi. The night watchman's job was to keep the steam up in the boiler. Steam was kept at ten or fifteen pounds. The next morning it was easy to pull down the dampers, turn the slash bar over, throw some coal in the fire box and soon get two hundred and twenty-five pounds of steam.

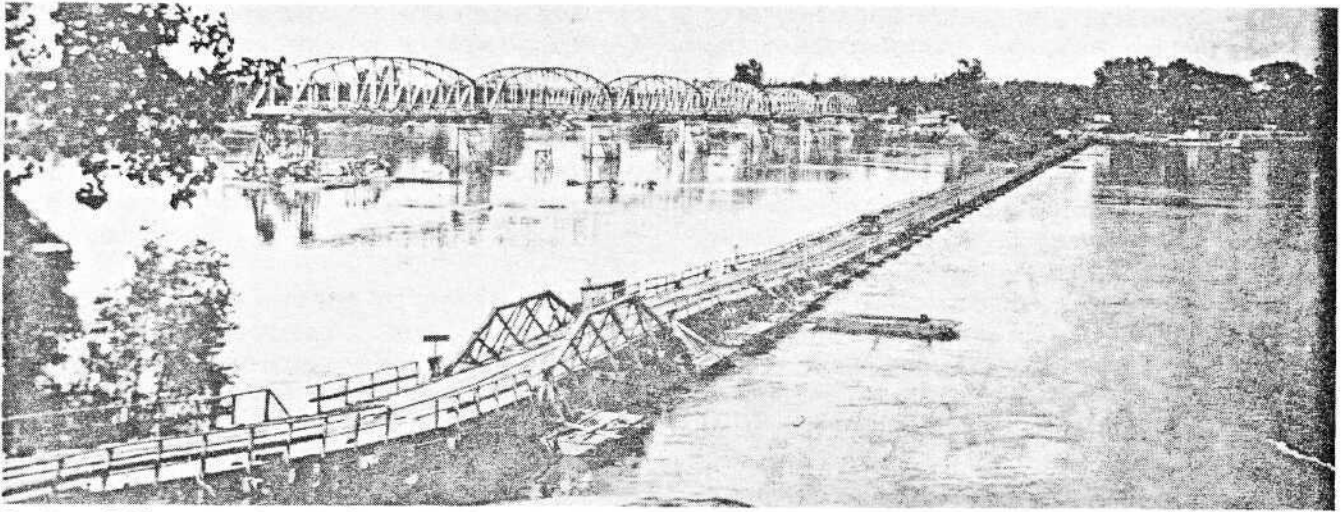
Captain Blakely had a good friend, Captain Joe Evans, who had a pontoon bridge at Dardanelle which he had to break to let a boat through. When the Blakelys arrived with the *Mary C. Lucas* about 5:30 one evening they tied up in Evans' back yard. He lived on the river bank and went down immediately to see the boat. He wanted to buy it to handle his pontoon when high water came or whenever he had to break the bridge, but Captain Blakely refused to sell him the boat at that time.

The Blakelys went on to the mouth of Piney Creek the next day and tied up because of the ice. Ice running in the river was very dangerous.

Captain Blakely operated the *Mary C. Lucas* from the time he bought her in January, 1906, until the fall of the same year when he sold her to Captain Joe Evans. Evans offered Blakely a deal that he could not turn down - 800 dollars more than he paid for the boat.

Some of the cargo that was carried on the *Lucas* included 25 to 50 wagons built at the Fort Smith Wagon Company, 25 or 30 barrels of salt, 50 barrels of sugar, four or five barrels of coal oil, and perhaps a half-carload, or whole carload, of barbed wire and hog wire, and cultivators. A carload of cultivators would come in by rail to Fort Smith and the transfer company would unload them and take them down to the boat.

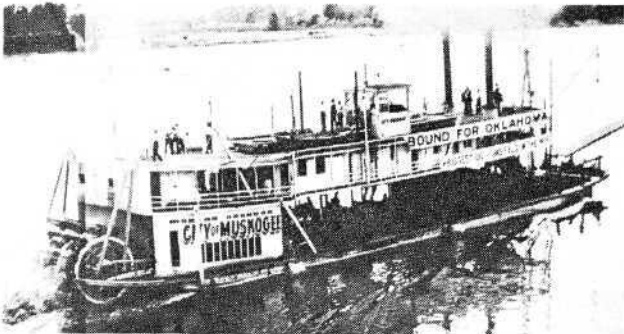
A barrel of coal oil then weighed about six or seven hundred pounds and two men would carry it up the river bank. Leo Blakely was asked if they weren't pretty good sized men. He answered that when he was "a kid sixteen years old" he could carry the hind gear of a wagon on his shoulder.



**Pontoon Bridge at Dardanelle. Owned by Capt. Joe Evans of Dardanelle. He purchased the *Mary Lucas* from B. C. Blakely. Fajjo Cravens, Jr. collection. UALR Archives.**

Blakely recorded that his father, Captain Blakely, had a master's license for the Mississippi River and tributaries, and a pilot's license for the Arkansas and tributaries. The Poteau River used to be navigable as far as the old iron bridge, which was where the soldiers used to go during the Civil War, to Fort Coffey and on up the river.

Once when the *Border City* was tied up at the Fort Smith Cotton Oil Company wharf, the *City of Muskogee* came in and tied up beside it. The *City of Muskogee* had four or five carloads of nails and barbed wire, etc. in the hold of the boat and Captain Blakely advised them they would have to "cut the stack" in order to go under the Gould Bridge. The stacks were hinged so they could be laid back, but it was called "cutting the stacks." The Frisco Bridge at Muskogee did not have any draw, despite government regulations that all bridges must have draws to let boats through.

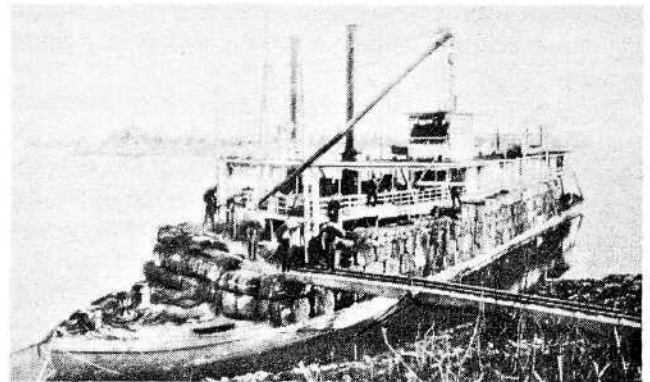


*City of Muskogee, 1913.*

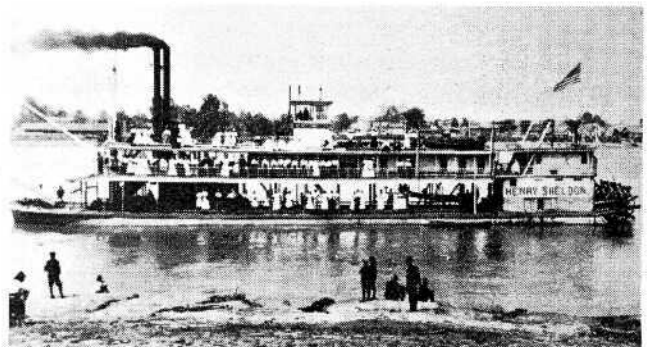
When the *Mary D.* was operating, there was an Arkansas pilot from White River who would take the boat to the Frisco Bridge and whistle for the draw, even though he knew that the Frisco Bridge at Muskogee did not have any draw.

The *City of Muskogee* got up the river but could not come down because of the Frisco Bridge. The

captain of the steamer would take the boat to the Frisco Bridge and file a claim against the Frisco Railroad and the company would send an agent and pay him because he could not get the boat through. The captain collected enough money in claims to build a boat that he could take downriver.



*Steamboat Lightwood with load of cotton. Courtesy Mrs. Elbert R. Griffin. (See cover for later photograph of the Lightwood)*



**Spring outing April 1906, Maddox Seminary for Young Ladies, Little Rock. *Henry Sheldon* made trips between Little Rock and Russellville. Courtesy Fajjo Cravens, Jr. collections, UALR Archives.**

Blakely submitted a letter written by his father to Lieutenant Sibert with the Corps of Engineers in which he urged the government to build dikes, dredge, and do other improvement work to keep up the Arkansas River.

Leo Blakely worked on the river until he was 19 years old and then went to work for the Frisco Railroad in 1909. He retired from that job in 1960 after working for the company for 51½ years.

The western steamboat was born in the violence of an earthquake and through almost a century it took its licks and its many losses in snaggings and explosions. In 1872 the U. S. Corps of Engineers compiled a list of 117 boats sunk on the Arkansas River alone and the list was by no means complete. The steamer also survived the tragic war which split our nation in two.

But with the inception of railway transportation the steamboat began to fade from the scene and by 1910 for all practical purposes it was gone. And so quietly did it die that it seems almost like the morning mist vaporizing in the warm summer sun.

The western rivers, however, are now alive and well. Through the untiring efforts of such men as the late Senators John L. McClellan of Arkansas and Robert S. Kerr of Oklahoma, assisted by many

private citizens such as Fort Smith's own C. F. Byrns (also deceased), the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation Project was finished in 1970.

With its flood control through locks and dams and huge storage lakes, the river has finally been tamed. Because the channel width is 250 feet and has a depth of 9 feet, guaranteed to be kept open by the Corps of Engineers, the modern towboats have no difficulty in pushing freight barges on the river. The channel depth is the same as that guaranteed on the Mississippi River system.

The projected amount of freight to be hauled on the Arkansas River by 1985 is 19,195,328 tons.



Imagine, if you will, strolling across the beautifully kept slope of Belle Point. And looking eastward, picture in your mind one of the early steamers chugging toward you with the smoke flying from its stacks and its paddle wheels churning rhythmically. If you try very hard you might perhaps get a glimpse of Captain Pennywit, or Captain Blakely, standing on the hurricane deck with a look on his face of sheer pleasure at the "condition of the river."

A delightful bit of fancy, that.

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## STEAMBOATS ON THE ARKANSAS RIVER - 1790-1868

A complete list of steamers operating on the Arkansas River is not available at this time, but this compilation includes boats known to have been used on the Arkansas, plus a few other boats that are mentioned in *Steamboating The Arkansas*. Most of the information on this list is taken from *Merchant Steam Vessels of the United States 1790 - 1868*, *The Lytle-Holdcamper List*, and used by permission of The Steamship Historical Society of America, Inc., Staten Island, N. Y.

Explanation: Disp. Disposition; A, Abandoned or not documented; Bu, Burned; Col, Collided; Exp, Exploded; Sn, Snagged; Str, Stranded; p, Side-Wheeler; w, Stern-wheeler; aka, also known as; f, ferryboat

Rig	Name of Vessel	Tons	Year	Place Built	Disp. & Year	Lives Lost
w	A. H. Sevier	193	1860	Cincinnati, O	1860 Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	0
p	Alabama	213	1852	Elizabeth, PA	1856 Exp, Minden, LA	9
w	Alert	92	1846	Belle Vernon, PA	1847 Sn, AR River	0
w	Alert No. 2	94	1848	Brownsville, PA	1849 Col, Smithland, KY	0
p	Allegheny	45	1820	Pittsburgh, PA	1825 Sn, Columbus, MS	0
w	America (f)	277	1854	St. Louis, MO	1870 Sn, AR River	0
p	America	460	1850	Philadelphia, PA	1851 Sn, St. Francis R., AR	0
p	Amazon	138	1847	Jeffersonville, IN	1857 Sn, Woodriver, IL	0
w	Amulet	62	1844	W. Wheeling, VA	1848 Sn, (Frog Bayou)	0
w	Arabian	305	1866	Pittsburgh, PA	1868 Col, Grafton, IL	34
w	Argonaut	228	1855	Brownsville, PA	1863 A	
p	Arkansas	115	1832	Cincinnati, O	1846 A	
p	Arkansas	229	1841	Cincinnati, O	1844 Sn, Lewisburg (Morrliton)AR	0
w	Arkansas	246	1852	California, PA	1856 Sn, Mobile River, AL	0
w	Arkansas	223	1860	Pittsburgh, PA	1863 Bu, Little Rock, AR	0
w	Arkansas	549	1868	Pittsburgh, PA	1888 Ice, Place Unknown	Un
p	Arkansas No. 4	281	1844	Cincinnati, O	1849 Col, Rigolets, LA	0
p	Arkansas No. 5	162	1845	Louisville, KY	1856 Sn, Mobile, AL	0
p	Arkansas Mail	107	1843	Louisville, KY	1848 Bu, Louisville, KY	0
w	Arkansas Traveler	170	1856	New Albany, IN	1860 Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	1
w	Arkansaw	131	1857	Louisville, KY	1861 C, Passed to Conf. Control	
p	Arkansaw	51	1820	Clarksville, TN	1827 Sn, Mobile, AL	0
p	Artizan	144	1839	Wheeling, VA	1841 Sn, Van Buren, AR	0
p	Baltic	399	1856	New Albany, IN	1860 Exp, Mobile, AL	20
w	Bee	105	1835	Pittsburgh, PA	1839 Sunk, Below Ft. Gibson	Un
p	Belle Gates	278	1851	New Albany, IN	1861 Confederate Control	
p	Belle of Arkansas	224	1842	Louisville, KY	1850 Unknown, New Orleans, L	Un
w	Ben Coursin	161	1851	McKeesport, PA	1857 Col, La Crosse, WI	7
p	Ben Johnson	525	1866	Metropolis, IL	1869 St. Louis, MO	0
p	Bracelet	169	1857	Louisville, KY	1861 Bu as Conf. "Cottonclad" Transport, L.R., AR	
p	Breakwater	142	1840	Pittsburgh, PA	1841 Bu, Known	Un
w	Caroline	103	1853	Pittsburgh, PA	1854 Bu, 20 mi. above mouth of White River, AR	45
p	Carrie Jacobs	156	1863	Brownsville, PA	1870 A	
w	Cashier	126	1847	Industry, PA	1853 A	
p	Catawba	112	1827	Silver Creek, IN	1831 Sn, Jacksonport, AR	0
w	Cedar Rapids	131	1858	Freedom, PA	1861 Sn, Douglass Landing, AR	0
w	Celeste	79	1863	Cannelton, IN	1865 Sn, Duvalls Bluff, AR	0
w	Centralia	239	1864	Wheeling, W VA	1868 Sn, Auburn Landing, AR	0
p	Charm	33	1859	Louisville, KY	1861 A	
w	Cherokee	261	1864	Monongahela, PA	1864 Bu, St. Louis, MO	0
w	Chester Ashley	192	1860	Cincinnati, O	1863 Bu, Little Rock, AR	0
p	Choctaw	133	1851	Louisville, KY	1854 Unknown	Un
p	Cincinnati	157	1818	Cincinnati, O	1823 Sn, Ste. Genevieve, MO	0
p	Cinderella	125	1837	Cincinnati, O	1841 Sn, Bayou Plaquemine, LA	0
p	Citizen	170	1849	Brownsville, PA	1850 Sn, Arkansas River, AR	0
p	Colonel Drennen	125	1852	Cincinnati, O	1859 A	
p	Comet	154	1819	Cincinnati, O	1823 Sn, New Orleans, LA	0
p	Compromise	132	1832	Louisville, KY	1837 Sn, Little Rock, AR	0
p	Cora	150	1830	Pittsburgh, PA	1837 A	
p	Corvette	195	1838	Cincinnati, O	1842 A	
p	Cotton Plant	295	1846	Cincinnati, O	1852 Bu, Napoleon, AR	0

p	D. H. Morton	173	1856 Cincinnati, O	1859	Bu, Dardanelle, AR	0
p	Dardanelle	170	1856 Cincinnati, O	1859	Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	0
p	DeKalb	125	1836 E. Liverpool, O	1840	A	
w	Des Moines City	122	1859 Pittsburgh, PA	1865	Sn, Arkansas River, AR	0
p	Diligence	124	1845 Wheeling, VA	1849	Sn, Fort Coffee, AR	0
w	Dispatch	45	1846 Freedom, PA	1854	A	
p	Domain	131	1844 Wellsville, O	1853	A	
p	Dove	176	1856 Louisville, KY	1866	Sn, Pearl River, MS	0
p	Duroc	220	1847 Louisville, KY	1853	A	
p	Eagle	118	1818 Cincinnati, O	1825	Sn, New Orleans, LA	0
p	Effort	80	1836 New Albany, IN	1838	Sn, Franklin, LA	0
w	Elizabeth	53	1839 Pittsburgh, PA	1845	Exp, Mississippi River	6
w	Ella	173	1854 Elizabeth, PA	1865	Sn, Little Rock, AR	0
w	Ella Hughes	212	1867 Paducah, KY	1880	"Sunk" New Orleans, LA	0
p	Ellen T	96	1848 Cincinnati, O	1850	A	
w	Empire	152	1854 California, PA	1856	Sn, Mississippi River	0
U	Enterprise	45	1814 Brownsville, PA	U	Unknown	
w	Era No. 6	83	1860 Pittsburgh, PA	1862	Bu, Van Buren, AR	0
w	Eveline	108	1842 Pittsburgh, PA	1846	A	
p	Exchange	127	1852 Brownsville, PA	1858	Sn, White River, AR	0
p	Express Mail	244	1841 Cincinnati, O	1846	Sn, Campti, LA	0
p	Facility	112	1827 Cincinnati, O	1832	A	
w	Fannie Scott	253	1866 Belle Vernon, PA	1869	Bu, St. Louis, MO	0
p	Florence	399	1857 Elizabeth, PA	1864	Sn, Atchinson, KS	0
w	Florence Traber	241	1866 Cincinnati, O	1868	Sn, Arkansas River	0
p	Florida	109	1836 Pittsburgh, PA	1841	A	
p	Fort Gibson	96	1842 Louisville, KY	1842	Sn, Alexandria, LA	0
w	Fort Smith	244	1866 Pittsburgh, PA	1871	Sn, White River, AR	0
p	Fox	91	1834 Ripley, O	1840	Sn, Mobile, AL	0
w	Franklin	181	1851 Brownsville, PA	1854	Bu, Apalachicola R., FL	1
w	Frederic Nortrebe	190	1860 Cincinnati, O	1862	Bu, Van Buren, AR	0
w	Frontier City	144	1860 Pittsburgh, PA	1861	Sn, Napoleon, AR	0
p	G. A. Thompson	366	1865 Eureka, WI	1869	Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	4
p	Gem	478	1850 Cincinnati, O	1856	A	
p	General Bem	116	1849 Paducah, KY	1854	Sn, Walnut Bend, AR River	10
w	General Shields	76	1849 Nashville, TN	1851	Sn, Arkansas River	0
p	Governor Breathitt	125	1844 Louisville, KY	1849	Sn, New Richmond, O	0
p	Governor Morehead	98	1840 Madison, IN	1846	A	
p	Grape Shot	153	1855 California, PA	1859	Sn, Van Buren, AR	0
w	Guidon	240	1864 McKeesport, PA	1870	Sn, Arkansas River	0
p	Hamburg	216	1838 Savannah, GA	1846	Bu, Savannah, GA	0
w	Hamilton	123	1867 Cincinnati, O	1876	A	
p	Harp	132	1837 New Albany, IN	1838	Sn, Frog Bayou, LA	0
w	Henry Fitzhugh	217	1857 Cincinnati, O	1864	Sn, Licking River, KY	0
w	Hero	60	1854 Brownsville, PA	1861	A	
w	Hesper	184	1866 Cincinnati, O	1872	Sn, Red River	0
w	Hickman	227	1855 Cincinnati, O	1860	Bu, Below Little Rock, AR	2
p	Highland Laddie	81	1825 Cincinnati, O	1828	A	
w	I Go	104	1861 Antiquity, O	1864	Bu, Arkansas Post, AR	0
w	Irene	211	1864 Louisville, KY	1868	Sn, Below Shreveport, LA	0
p	Isaac Shelby	100	1856 Murrysburg, VA	1860	Sn, Swan Lake, AR	0
w	Itasca	80	1837 Marietta, O	1839	A	
w	J. W. Done	211	1854 Shousetown, PA	1864	A	
w	J. H. Miller	68	1863 Hazelton, IN	1864	Bu, Pine Bluff, AR	0
w	J.M. Harris	123	1851 Shousetown, PA	1855	A	
U	J.M. White	498	1844 Elizabeth, PA	1848	A	
p	J.T. Doswell	190	1848 Louisville, KY	1856	A	
p	James O'Hara	161	1829 Elizabethtown, PA	1833	A	
p	James Pitcher	116	1843 Louisville, KY	1846	Sn, Blue River, IN	1
p	James Raymond	274	1853 Cincinnati, O	1866	Exp, Mississippi River	1
p	Jefferson	232	1851 Newport, KY	1852	Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	0
w	Jennie Whipple	138	1857 Brownsville, PA	1866	A	
p	John B. Gordon	57	1848 Brownsville, PA	1851	Sn, Arkansas River	0
p	John D. Perry	382	1858 Jeffersonville, IN	1869	Bu, Duvall's Bluff, AR	0
p	John Jay	140	1836 Marietta, O	1840	A	
w	John S. Hall	110	1864 Pittsburgh, PA	1866	Str, Little Rock, AR	0
p	Judge Torrence	419	1857 Cincinnati, O	1868	Sn, Napoleon, AR	0
w	Julia Roane	181	1859 California, PA	1863	Bu, Little Rock, AR	0
w	Juliet	157	1862 Brownsville, PA	1865	Str, White River Cut-Off	0

w	Kate May	207	1859 Cincinnati, O	1860	Bu, Cannelton, IN	0
p	Kentuckian	285	1829 Pittsburgh, PA	1834	A	
p	Keystone	69	1839 Pittsburgh, PA	1861	Bu, Arkansas City, AR	0
w	Key West	169	1857 Elizabeth, PA	1862	Bu, Van Buren, AR	0
w	Lady Jackson	207	1860 Cincinnati, O	1863	Sn, White River, AR	0
p	Lady Marshall	99	1834 Cincinnati, O	1838	A	
w	Lady Morgan	59	1838 Pittsburgh, PA	1840	A	
w	Lady Walton	150	1858 Cincinnati, O	1864	Col, w/str. Norman, Warsaw, IN	0
w	Last Chance	222	1865 St. Louis, MO	1873	A	
w	Lark	142	1865 California, PA	1881	A	
p	Laurel	113	1844 Cincinnati, O	1848	A	
p	Legal Tender	539	1867 New Albany, IN	1876	Sn, below Pine Bluff, AR	0
w	Leni Leoti	174	1863 Freedom, PA	1869	Sn, Arkansas River	0
w	Leon	87	1859 Brownsville, PA	1864	Sn, Barnum, AR	0
w	Linton	286	1867 Pittsburgh, PA	1869	Sn, Cut-Off, Arkansas R.	0
p	Little Ben Franklin	85	1842 Cincinnati, O	1845	Sn, Liberty, IL	0
p	Little Rock, (f)	125	1865 New Albany, IN	1872	Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	0
w	Little Rock	183	1858 Cincinnati, O	1863	Bu, Little Rock, AR	0
w	Liverpool	51	1837 Liverpool, O	1853	A	
p	Logansport	127	1837 Cincinnati, O	1841	A	
w	Lucy Long	82	1844 Nashville, TN	1845	Str, Louisville, KY	0
p	Lucy Walker	182	1843 Cincinnati, O	1844	Exp, New Orleans, LA	18
p	Magnolia	160	1850 W. Elizabeth, PA	1856	Str, Vicksburg, MS	3
p	Maid of Arkansas	213	1840 Cincinnati, O	1842	Bu, Carrollton, LA	0
p	Maid of Orleans	193	1818 Philadelphia, PA	1825	A	
p	Marietta	81	1841 Pittsburgh, PA	1845	A	
w	Mary Erwin	308	1866 Cincinnati, O	1869	Bu, Cincinnati, O	0
w	Mattie	149	1863 Paducah, KY	1867	Sn, Cut-Off, AR	2
w	May Queen	68	1850 Mononghela, PA	1852	Sn, below Little Rock, AR	0
w	Medium	74	1844 Freedom, PA	1850	A	
w	Mercury	184	1862 Brownsville, PA	1867	Str, Cut-Off, AR	2
w	Miami	175	1863 Cincinnati, O	1866	Exp, Napoleon, AR	40
p	Milton Brown, aka B. P. Cheney	247	1859 Pomeroy, O	1863	Bu, as Confederate Str	U
w	Monedo	55	1846 Louisville, KY	1847	Col, Cumberland River	0
p	Moses Greenwood	267	1852 Cincinnati, O	1855	A	
p	Mount Pleasant	90	1835 Portland, O	1837	A	
p	Neosho	88	1834 Cincinnati, O	1837	Sn, Arkansas River	1
p	Nettie Jones	43	1865 Cairo, IL	1870	Foundered, Memphis, TN	2
w	New Ark	71	1845 Zanesville, O	1847	Exp, Pittsburgh, PA	0
w	New Hampshire	125	1845 Pittsburgh, PA	1847	Exp, Pine Bluff, AR	12
w	Nightingale	228	1863 McKeesport, PA	1872	A	
p	North Bend	120	1841 Pittsburgh, PA	1846	Str, Perthshire, MS	0
w	Northwest	88	1863 Cincinnati, O	1868	A	
w	Odessa	61	1839 Pittsburgh, PA	1843	A	
w	Oella	51	1842 Brownsville, PA	1848	A	
p	Oella	77	1848 Cincinnati, O	1850	Sn, Lower Mississippi R	0
w	Orleans	78	1839 Pittsburgh, PA	1842	A	
p	Ottawa	25	1833 Ottawa, IL	1834	Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	0
w	P. H. White	51	1847 Cincinnati, O	1849	A	
p	Paragon	495	1863 Elizabeth, PA	1868	Sn, Cairo, IL	0
p	Peerless	227	1864 Cincinnati, O	1865	Bu, Mound City, IL	0
p	Pelican	362	1856 New Albany, IN	1858	Bu, Francis MS	0
p	Philip Pennywit	246	1849 Cincinnati, O	1851	Sn, Van Buren, AR	0
w	Pilot	72	1845 Freedom, PA	1848	A	
w	Pine Bluff	153	1859 Elizabeth, PA	1870	Bu, Evansville, IN	0
p	Pontiac	184	1846 Cincinnati, O	1851	A	
p	Pontiac No. 2	269	1850 Cincinnati, O	1851	Col, Owensboro, KY	20
p	President	288	1824 Pittsburgh, PA	1829	Str, Plum Point, TN	0
w	Princess	185	1863 Freedom, PA	1868	Str, Napoleon, MO	0
p	Progress	59	1862 Zanesville, O	1865	Sunk, Arkansas River	20
w	Quapaw	245	1857 California, PA	1857	Sn, Little Rock, AR	0
w	R. C. Gray	427	1866 Shousetown, PA	1874	A	
w	Red Wing	150	1856 Mononghela, PA	1860	Sn, Smith Cut-Off, AR	0
p	Reindeer	98	1831 Brownsville, PA	1833	Bu, New Albany, IN	0
p	Renown	163	1837 Rising Sun, IN	1841	Sn, Unknown	0
p	Republic	147	1842 Cincinnati, O	1846	Sn, Lewisburg (Morrliton)AR	0
w	Resolute	62	1856 W. Brownsville, PA	1867	U, Alton, IL	0



p	Revenue	145	1844 Pittsburgh, PA	1847	Bu, Peoria, IL	0
p	Rialto	76	1840 Pittsburgh, PA	1842	Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	0
p	Ringgold	212	1846 Louisville, KY	1848	Sn, Arkansas River	0
p	Robert Morris	232	1845 ElizabethTown, PA	1851	A	
U	Robert Thompson	U	1821 Steubenville, O	1823	Col, w/Republic	0
w	Rodolph	249	1864 Cincinnati, O	1865	Sn, 15 mi. below L. R.	0
p	Rolla	67	1843 Cincinnati, O	1845	Sn, Pine Bluff, AR	0
w	Rose Douglass	123	1860 Belle Vernon, PA	1862	Bu, Van Buren, AR	0
w	Rover	55	1835 Pittsburgh, PA	1842	A	
w	Rough and Ready	126	1856 Paducah, KY	1858	Col, Napoleon, AR	0
w	S. H. Tucker	128	1856 Cincinnati, O	1861	passed to Conf. Control	0
w	Saint Francis	69	1849 St. Helena, AR	1855	A	
p	Saint Joseph	217	1846 St. Louis, MO	1850	Exp, Napoleon, AR	U
w	Salem	106	1835 Pittsburgh, PA	1843	A	
w	Sallie	399	1868 Pittsburgh, PA	1872	Sunk	U
p	Sallie Anderson	62	1846 Louisville, KY	1849	Bu, Little Rock, AR	0
w	Sam Kirkman	271	1857 Paducah, KY	1862	Bu, Fort Henry, TN	0
p	Samson	198	1832 Cincinnati, O	1836	Bu, New Madrid, MO	0
w	Sante Fe	116	1846 W. Wheeling, O	1861	A	
p	Saracen	241	1856 New Albany, IN	1859	A	
p	Scioto	170	1823 Gallipolis, O	1827	A	
p	Sea Gull	21	1833 Warren, O	1834	Sn, Little Rock, AR	0
p	Siam	127	1835 Pittsburgh, PA	1841	A	
p	Silas Wright	247	1847 Wheeling, VA	1854	A	
p	Skylark	371	1858 Brownsville, PA	1862	Bu, Duck River, TN	0
p	Southerner	298	1836 Cincinnati, O	1851	Sn, New Orleans, LA	0
w	Southern Flora	63	1859 Wellsville, O	1861	A	
p	Spartan	44	1823 Chilo, O	1828	A	
p	Spy	42	1832 Frederick Town, PA	1841	A	
w	Starlight	214	1862 Belle Vernon, PA	1868	Bu, Gretna, LA	0
p	Steubenville	45	1836 Steubenville, O	1840	A	
w	Success	280	1867 Brownsville, PA	1868	Sn, Arkansas River	U
p	Sunny South	270	1860 Wheeling, VA	1867	Bu, Portland, AL	1
p	Superior	74	U Steubenville, O	1832	Exp, Brandenburg, KY	3
p	Swallow	252	1838 Cincinnati, O	1843	A	
w	Tahlequah	38	1866 Pittsburgh, PA	1874	A	
U	Tecumseh	96	1836 Jeffersonville, IN	1841	Sn, U	U
p	35th Parallel	419	1859 Cincinnati, O	1861	Bu as Conf. "Cottonclad" to avoid capture, aka Parallel	U
p	Thomas Yeatman	113	1830 Cincinnati, O	1833	Exp, Memphis, TN	7
p	Tom Bowline	94	1834 Louisville, KY	1836	A	
p	Tributary	148	1845 Pittsburgh, PA	1848	Bu, Louisville, KY	0
w	Trident	70	1838 Pittsburgh, PA	1845	A	
p	Trustee	146	1849 Cincinnati, O	1852	Sn, Van Buren, AR	0
w	Umpire	124	1854 Nashville, TN	1860	Bu, Osage River, MO	0
w	Umpire No. 2	101	1850 Shousetown, PA	1854	Sn, Above Little Rock, AR	0
p	Undine	158	1859 Brownsville, PA	1864	Bu, Johnsonville, TN	0
p	Van Buren	94	1833 Pittsburgh, PA	1834	Bu, Columbus, GA	0
w	Van Buren	229	1866 Pittsburgh, PA	1869	Sn, Above Pine Bluff, AR	0
p	Velocipede	123	1835 Cincinnati, O	1842	A	
p	Veteran	86	1833 Ripley, O	1838	A	
p	Victoria	179	1839 Marietta, O	1855	A	
w	Violet	89	1856 Brownsville, PA	1862	Bu, Van Buren, AR	0
p	Virginia	123	1826 Cincinnati, O	1831	A	
w	W. A. Caldwell	297	1866 Pittsburgh, PA	1870	U, Arkansas River	0
p	Wabash Valley	99	1844 Pittsburgh, PA	1848	A	
p	Waverley	117	1827 Cincinnati, O	1834	A	
w	William Armstrong	89	1846 Wheeling, VA	1849	Sn, Little Rock, AR	0
w	William Henry	95	1857 Paducah, KY	1861	Sn, Fort Smith, AR	0
p	William Parsons	116	1831 Ripley, O	1835	Sn, Little Rock, AR	0
p	Wing and Wing	227	1843 Pittsburgh, PA	1840	A	
p	Wheeling	93	1835 Pittsburgh, PA	1842	A	
w	Young America	127	1853 Monongahela, PA	1855	Sn, Bath, IL	0
w	Young America	55	1856 Christy Landing, O	1859	Ran aground, Ft. Smith., AR	0
p	Yuba	348	1852 Murrysburg, VA	1856	Str, Wood River, IL	0

Rig	Name of Vessel	Tons	Year	Place Built	Remarks
U	Know Nothing		1855	Little Rock, AR	..... Drew three inches with an empty hull, only six inches when outfitted with machinery, and a bare two feet when fully loaded
U	Neosho			Van Buren, AR	..... Constructed by Capt. Truesdell, drew only thirteen inches of water
U	Rock City	250	1857	Little Rock, AR	..... 127 feet long, 28-foot beam, 16 staterooms * other civilized accoutrements
p	New Orleans	371	1811	Pittsburgh, PA	..... First steamer on Western Rivers. Sn. Baton Rouge, LA, lives lost U, 1814 - 116 feet long, 20 feet wide
U	Judge Wheeler	.....	.....	.....	Exp, Bell's Landing, 45 miles above Vicksburg, TN, 1871
U	J. S. Dunham	.....	.....	.....	Sn, and sunk 2 months after loss of Judge Wheeler, 1871
p	Sultana	660	1863	Cincinnati, O	..... Exp, 1865, seven miles above Memphis, TN. Greatest maritime disaster of all time. 1547 lives lost as compared with the loss of the Titanic in 1912, in which 1517 lives were lost.
p	Washington	403	1816	Wheeling, VA	..... First practical steamer on Western rivers, built by Henry M. Shreve. Disposition of boat not known.
w	Mill Boy	86	1857	Brownsville, PA	..... Built as 86-ton barge. Converted to steam, as a floating grist mill, 1860. Snagged and lost at Jacksonport, AR, 1864, No lives lost.

## CAPTAIN B. C. BLAKELY

1844 - 1919

By Amelia Martin<sup>1</sup>



Benjamin Croy and Elizabeth Hornor Blakely with grandson.

Captain Benjamin Croy Blakely, resident of Ft Smith for 41 years, was a steamboat captain, pilot, owner and builder, known as one of the most famous of the Arkansas River steamboat captains.

B. C., or Ben, as he was most often referred to, was born Dec. 2, 1844, but his birthplace is somewhat in question. The family Bible, which is now in the possession of Robert H. Blakely, a grandson, says he was born in Wilkesville, Vinton County, Ohio. The 1860 and 1880 U. S. Census also show his birthplace as Ohio, but his death record, obituary, family information written by his daughter, Mary Blakely, and the birth certificate of his son, Leo Woodard Blakely, all show him to have been born in Covington, KY.

Mary's story tells that when Benjamin was 12 years old, his father, who is believed to be James Wells Blakely, learned of the boom in Oregon where new houses were needed. An architect and builder, he built houseboats which he and six or eight of his friends and their families used to set out on the

<sup>1</sup> The following very special people have assisted in collecting Blakely family information: Louis Intres, Col. L. W. Blakely, Dr. S. H. Blakely, Robert Blakely, Cieta Terrell, Sibyl Griffin, Tom Blake, Wilma Jameson and Sally Roden. Their help has made the story.

Mississippi River, bound for Oregon via Ft Smith, a trip which fate ended at Independence County, AR.

When the travelers reached the mouth of the Arkansas River, they became confused and went up the White River instead of the Arkansas. Landing at Batesville, AR, for supplies, they found an opportunity for building there and decided to stay in Batesville.

Mary's story says that with the coming of the War Between the States, the father of B. C. Blakely joined the Southern forces, and the Union Army took his houseboats and made gunboats out of them. Also that he was killed in service, but her information may have been in error. There is no proof of his death and some indication that he was alive after the war.

Benjamin, at age 19, joined the Confederate Army. United Daughters of the Confederacy membership papers for his daughter, Bessie<sup>2</sup> Blakely Griffin, show he was a member of Co. A., Crabtree Regiment, McCray Brigade, AR Cavalry. The family story says that after several battles, his Captain was killed and the men who were left in his outfit voted to make Ben their Captain, a rank he held until the completion of the war. Bessie's UDC papers contain a notation to the effect that records do not show he was ever officially made an officer. In later years, he was commander of the A. E. Steen Camp of Confederate Veterans. He was also a charter member of the First Methodist Church, south, formerly known as the Central Methodist Church, and a member of the A.O.U.W.

Capt. Blakely, a federally licensed steamboat captain for the Mississippi River and all of its tributaries, and a federally licensed pilot for the Arkansas and its tributaries, obtained his first river pilot's license after the Civil War.<sup>3</sup> Oddly enough, the purpose of obtaining that license was not to pilot steamboats, but to raft logs to New Orleans.

After the war, Ben Blakely went into the timber business with a Mr. Warner, who would buy the timber, cut it and put it into the river. Then Ben would raft the timber down the White River to the Arkansas and the Mississippi to New Orleans, a trip which took about two weeks. Since the person in charge of the rafting had to be a licensed pilot, Ben applied for and received his first Master Pilot license.

By this time, steamboats had become so numerous on the river, it was hard to handle a raft that had no power except oars to keep out of their

way. As a solution to this problem, Capt. Blakely and Mr. Warner built a small tow boat that could handle from 2500 to 3500 logs in a block with the boat in the center.

Approximately five years later, after they were forced out of the timber business, Capt. Blakely went to work as a Master Pilot on the Arkansas River, running from Ft Gibson, Oklahoma, to New Orleans, Louisiana. After some five years of working for other companies, he decided to go into business for himself and went to Louisville, KY, where he built the *Ft Smith*, which he operated from Ft Gibson, then the Indian Territory, to New Orleans. This was the first of a number of boats he owned and operated. He sold the *Ft Smith*, which was later cut down in ice, and built the *Border City* that he also sold. It is said that part of the hull of steamer *Ft Smith* now lies buried beneath the riverbank close to the spot where the old wharf used to be.

Sale of the *Border City* made way for the building of the *Border City No. 2*, a much larger boat which could carry a great deal more freight. He operated it for several years, then sold it to another packet company and built a tow boat for Cummings Lumber Co. which had a sawmill just north of the wharf (which would be just north of the Garrison Ave. Bridge between the railroad track and the river).

When the tow boat was completed, he went into partnership with Capt. Hattaway and they bought the *John Mathis*, (also known as the John Matthews), which later wrecked at the Frisco Bridge at Van Buren.

At this point, the rest of Mary Blakely's story has been lost, but we know Capt. Blakely also owned the *Jennie May*, *William Drew (Druhe)*, *Myrtle B.*, *Mary D.*, *Mary C. Lucas* and others, including the gasoline powered *Border City* which was the third boat by that name. Capt. Blakely was burned seriously in 1912 when this boat was destroyed by fire a short distance east of Van Buren.<sup>4</sup> Capt. Blakely cleared the burning boat safely, but was burned when he returned to the boat to rescue a man he mistakenly thought had not escaped.<sup>5</sup>

As late as 1917 he was operating a steamboat, the *Lightwood*, on the lower Arkansas and to Vicksburg on the Mississippi. According to his son, Leo Blakely, it was in 1913 that Capt. Blakely operated the last big steamboat in this area. This was the *City of Muskogee* which had been sold by the Ft Gibson Gravel Co. to a packet line operating between

<sup>2</sup> Bessie was called Bess and there is question as to spelling of her name. Her UDC papers are signed "Bessie."

<sup>3</sup> Southwest Times Record, Fort Smith, AR, February 4, 1940. *Veteran Recalls the Good Old Days When Steamboats Plied the Arkansas* by Eddie Hicks.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Family story, Robert Blakely



Vicksburg and Memphis. Capt. Blakely brought the boat down from Muskogee to the mouth of the Poteau and tied it up there while he overhauled it and made repairs before taking it on down to the Mississippi.<sup>6</sup>

Capt. Blakely was always enthusiastic for government improvement of navigable rivers and much regretted the passing of river transportation.<sup>7</sup>

Capt. Blakely was married in 1873 to Elizabeth Hornor, born in Helena, AR, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Hornor. So says the obituary of Mrs. Blakely which appeared in the Southwest American, Ft Smith, July 4, 1930. It also stated they were married in Jacksonport, AR, but a search of copied Jackson County marriage records fail to show the marriage there. Press time has not permitted a search of marriage records in surrounding counties where we believe it will be found, but until proof is found, this cannot be accepted as accurate. The obituary information obviously was given by someone who knew the Blakelys had lived in Jacksonport and assumed their marriage had taken place there. The Blakely's came to Ft Smith in 1878.<sup>8</sup>

Children born to this marriage were:

William Hornor, b. 1874  
Annie E., b. 1876 d. 1889  
Hela, c. 1879 d. 1943  
Hattie, b. 1880 d. 1881 infant  
Bessie, b. 1883 d. 1941  
Sidney, b. 1880 d. 1939  
Leo W., b. 1890 d. 1972  
Mary D., b. 1893 d. 1981<sup>9</sup>

William, the oldest child, was an architect who built several notable buildings in Ft Smith and Tulsa. He was married to Mary Alice Weaver from Olatha, KS, and they had three children: William Dunlop, no children; Mary Elizabeth married George W. Walden from Moberly, MO, had two adopted children; and Robert, resident of Ft Smith, married Harriette M. Garrod and has two daughters, Barbara (Mrs. Harry L.) Mathis, Jakarta, Indonesia, and Janet (Mrs. Joe) Watkins, Harrison, AR.

Hela Blakely married Walter Eakin and had four children: Mary Catherine, Joe, Margaret and William "Bill".

Bess Blakely was married to Frank R. Griffin. They lived in Ft Smith and had one son, Elbert R. Griffin.

Sidney married Irma Davis. Their two children are Sara Jane Rogers of Mount Ida, AR, and Dr. S. H. Blakely, retired college professor of Ft Smith.

Leo Woodard Blakely lived in Ft Smith all of his life and worked for the Frisco Railroad. He married Lillian Pendell, and their only child, Col. L. W. Blakely, is a resident of Battle Creek, Michigan.

Miss Mary Downing Blakely, the last living child of B. C. and Elizabeth Blakely, died in Ft Smith, her lifelong home, on July 15, 1981, at the age of 88.

B. C. Blakely's marriage to Elizabeth Hornor was a second marriage for him, but nothing is known of the first marriage except he had a daughter named Fannie R. Blakely, who was born circa 1868 and died in Ft Smith at the St. Johns Hospital on Aug. 17, 1898 at the age of 30. Ft Smith death records show B. C. Blakely as her father and that she died of eplipsey, but do not show her birthplace or her mother's name.

*On board U. S. Snag Boat Sheldon*

*Dec 6, 1893*

*My Darling Wife,*

*This morning finds me about 30 miles above Little Rock. The Str "Little Rock" came up last night and brought up another carpenter, so the one we had is going back this morning and will take the boats mail.*

*This boat is under orders to clean the river as far up as Roseville, but this is very uncertain. Should the river rise, the crew will be laid off until it falls to a suitable stage for work. Of course we will be expected to remain on board if we hold our position. I don't like the prospect much at this season of the year, but until something more certain offers, will have to stick to it. I may be employed long enough to relieve our present necessities. I have but a few moments to write. The man is ready to go, will write next opportunity. If you write it will reach me through the office at Little Rock. Kiss the Children for papa.*

*Your loving husband,*

*B C Blakely*

*B. C. Blakely*

Letter used by courtesy of Mrs. Elbert R. Griffin

<sup>6</sup> Southwest Times Record, February 4, 1940. See footnote 2.

<sup>7</sup> Southwest Times Record, November 18, 1919. Obituary of Capt. B. C. Blakely.

<sup>8</sup> Southwest American, July 4, 1930. Obituary of Mrs. Elizabeth Blakely.

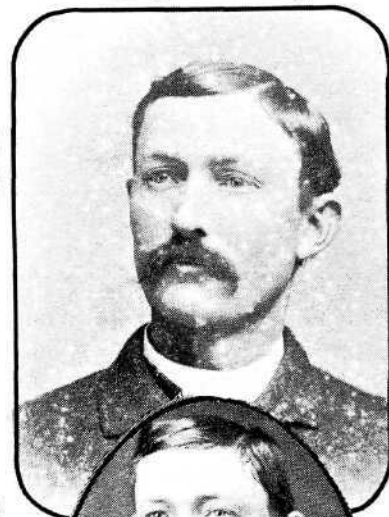
<sup>9</sup> Names & dates as given in the Blakely Family Bible owned by Robert H. Blakely, grandson of B. C. Blakely.



**Molly Blakely (Mrs.  
George E. Downing)**



**R. D. Blakely,  
18 years of age**



**Benjamin Blakely**



**Adaline Blakely  
(Mrs. W. E. Murray)**



**Zenora Blakely  
(Thought to be variation  
of spelling of Zerah)**



**James Wells Blakely**



**Charlie Blakely**

*Courtesy Clea Terral, great granddaughter of Hulda Blakely Van Cleave.*

Little is known of James Wells and Harriet Blakely who are assumed to be the parents of B. C. Blakely. A family photograph album indicates this. Some members of the family accept it as fact - others doubt. This is the 1860 U. S. Census record of the family in Independence County, AR:

J. Blakely, 65 M, Carpenter b. Conn.  
Harriet Blakely, 48 F, b Ohio  
Lucinda Gray, 22 F, b. Ohio  
Mary Gray, 20 F, b. Ohio  
Adeline Blakely, 17 F, b. Ohio  
Benjamin C. Blakely, 15 M, b. Ohio  
Huldy Blakely, 12 F, b. Ohio  
Charlie Blakely, 9 M, b. Ohio  
Daniel Blakely, 7 M, b. KY

The full given name of Hulda, who was listed on census as "Huldy" is Hulda Roslie and she was married on Dec. 12, 1869, to Nathaniel Van Cleave. Her Civil War Pension papers state she was married in Independence County, AR - again the marriage records have not been located in Independence County. Hulda and Nathaniel had five children: Lula Bessie, b. 1871, m. William Booker; Robert Adrian, b. 1872, m. Alice Coleman, both drowned in flood in Corpus Christi, TX, no children; Herbert Rowland,

b. 1876, m. Elsie Chase, moved to California; Beulah Beatrice, b. 1878, m. Andrew Jackson Geren and had seven children; Roy Daniel, b. 1881, m. Nellie Lee Vanderburg and had ten children.

Daniel, son of J. and Harriet, was Rufus Daniel and was called "Rufe." He was a lighthouse keeper in Alaska circa 1910-1920.

Benjamin C. is the subject of this story.

Lucinda, Mary "Molly," Adeline and Charlie we can tell you nothing of except Molly married George E. Downing and Adaline married W. E. Murray. Two of the girls are said to have lived in the Mena, AR area.

If J. Blakely is the father of B. C. and the age given in the census is correct, he would have been 68 years old in 1863, the year he was said to have died in Civil War battle.

Much research has been done on this family, but many trails led to dead ends or confusing data, and much work remains to be done. There are many questions to be answered.

Readers with additional knowledge of this family are requested to write to the Fort Smith Historical Society and help tie the Blakely family story together.

# CAPTAIN JAMES BOWLIN

By Amelia Martin

Capt. James Bowlin, well known river man, appropriately came to Van Buren, Arkansas, by river boat from Knoxville, Tennessee, where he was born circa 1837, the son of Noble and Catherine (Clift) Bowlin. After the death of his father in Tennessee in 1835, his mother married John Barnes, who also died in Tennessee.

In the fall of 1843, Mrs. Barnes with her seven children, in company with her brother-in-law, Robert McCurry, floated down the Tennessee and Mississippi River to the mouth of the Arkansas River in a flat boat, then traveled to Van Buren by steamboat, landing March 10, 1844. After spending the rest of her life in Van Buren, Mrs. Barnes died at the age of 62.

Four of her seven children were still living in 1889. In addition to James, they were: Catherine, wife of William Johnson, of California; Sarah, wife of James Culvert, residing near Troy, Kansas; and William, a printer, business man and farmer of Van Buren, who in 1852 married Samantha Neal, a native of Missouri, then in 1866 married Miss Julia Barnes of Van Buren.<sup>1</sup>

James Bowlin began steamboating early in life and as master and pilot ran on the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers for about fifty years.

Before the War Between the States, he ran from New Orleans to Fort Smith on the steamer Fort Gibson, while in the employ of the New Orleans and Arkansas Packet Company. When steamboating was at its height on the Arkansas River, from 1868 to 1872, Capt. Bowlin was pilot and master of several boats of the John D. Adams line.

In 1891 Capt. Bowlin ran, as pilot, on the Reese Pritchard, one of the largest boats ever on the Arkansas River. After that he was connected with the government service and the Nowland packet line from Memphis to Vicksburg.

Just as Capt. Bowlin lived most of his life on the river, he also died on the river. On December 5, 1905,

he suffered a fatal heart attack while seated at a table in the cabin of the United States snagboat Arkansas, which was tied up about four miles below Pine Bluff during snagging operations.

His funeral was held at his residence, 1119 Cumberland Street, Little Rock, Arkansas, with interment in Mount Holly Cemetery. Pallbearers were steamboatmen in Little Rock, and members of the Odd Fellows Lodge of which Capt. Bowlin was a member.

Mrs. Bowlin had died about 1902, but he was survived by one son, Walter, who was a conductor on the Rock Island Railroad.

The following quote from his obituary<sup>2</sup> points out the faith Captain Bowlin had in the Arkansas River:

"By order of President George W. Rogers, the Board of Trade flags will be at half-mast Thursday out of respect to the memory of Capt. James Bowlin," said Secretary Brown last evening in speaking of the dead riverman.

"Capt. Bowlin was one of the best and most useful members of the Board of Trade and a leading worker on the River Committee. No man in the state was prouder of Arkansas than 'Capt. Jim,' and none more interested in the rehabilitation of the river commerce. He was greatly interested in the movement to barge coal from Muskogee to New Orleans and expected to handle the first boat and fleet of barges. It was his belief that in a few years a great traffic in coal would be built up. He was also an enthusiast in the proposition of making an all-the-year-round channel in the Arkansas between Little Rock and Memphis, and stated repeatedly that the greatest obstruction was near Little Rock. It was his idea that when once the government really gave the subject systematic attention and regular appropriations to maintain the channel it would never be abandoned. Twenty years from now he believed the Arkansas would be one of the greatest commercial waterways in the world."

<sup>1</sup> The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwestern Arkansas, pages 1124-25. Published 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Arkansas Gazette, September 7, 1905, page 5, columns 4-5 obituary from family records of James Ray and Susan Clark of Van Buren, Arkansas.



# NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

September 1982 — May 1983

By Mary Lou Jacobsen

"The Blue and the Gray" television movie filmed mostly in the Fort Smith - Van Buren and Northwest Arkansas area, using hundreds of local actors, is scheduled to be shown on three nights:

Sunday, November 14, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. CT

Tuesday, November 16, 8 to 10 p.m. CT

Wednesday, November 17, 7 to 10 p.m. CT

CBS calls this epic eight-hour drama about the American Civil War the most ambitious undertaking ever by the network, and expects the movie to be the highlight of the television season.

## ATTENTION TEACHERS!!!!

Arkansas Workshop

Teaching with Community Heritage Resources

Thursday and Friday - November 18-19, 1982

Arkansas College, Batesville, Arkansas

Open to Teachers of History and English, Curriculum Coordinators, Supervisors, Administrators, Historical Society Representatives, Museum Education Coordinators, Librarians, and others who work with teachers and students. Limited to 40 participants. Those attending will receive reimbursement, not to exceed \$50, for mileage, meals and lodging. No fee for attending. Three hours graduate credit (optional) will be offered for workshop and related activities. Whenever possible, re-certification or in-service credit will be offered for the workshop.

For workshop application form and additional information, send name and address to:

Mid-South Humanities Project

P. O. Box 23

Middle Tennessee State University

Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132

or

Tom Stanley

Assistant Professor of Art and Historic Preservation

Arkansas College

Batesville, AR 72501

## ANNUAL MEETING

### ARKANSAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Fort Smith, April 21-23, 1983

Tradewinds Motel

Hosted by Fort Smith Historical Society

See April issue of *The Journal* for program information. Visitors are welcome.

## ANNUAL MEETING

### FORT SMITH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thursday, April 28, 1983, 7:00 p.m.

Community Room, Ft. Smith Public Library

61 South 8th Street

All members and guests welcome and urged to attend.

Membership renewals for 1983 are now due. A membership in the Historical Society makes a lasting gift.

## BELLE FORT SMITH TOUR

April 30 — May 1, 1983

2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

The Christmas Tour in 1981 was well attended and there are tentative plans to have another holiday tour this year. Full information regarding both tours will be in the local newspaper.

## RED STOCKING REVUE

March 3 - 4 - 5

Civic Auditorium

Fort Smith, Arkansas

Sponsored by the Junior Civic League. Proceeds donated to local charitable organizations.

Have a fun filled evening seeing a fabulous display of local talent.

## 1983 OLD FORT RIVER FESTIVAL

May 13-14-15

Fort Smith City Park

This three day gala event sponsored by the Fort Smith Junior League has something to please everyone.

## FRONTIER RESEARCHERS

Every 4th Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.

Community Room, Fort Smith Public Library

1982-83 Officers:

Nolan Finney, President

Jan Eddleman, First Vice President

Jennie Little, Second Vice President

Joey Nock, Recording Secretary

John Neihouse, Treasurer

Maxine Bell, Historian

## FRONTIER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Plaques denoting outstanding historical preservation achievement were presented at the first Frontier Achievement Award Dinner sponsored by the Social Studies Educators of the Fort Smith School District, on April 23, 1982. Recipients of the awards were:

Victor Cary	Dr. Robert Walling
Dr. Art Martin	Mrs. Julia Yadon
J. Fred Patton	

This will be an annual event and nominations will be accepted from the community for the 1983 awards which will be made in April, 1983.



*Fort Smith Streetcar  
Restoration Association Incorporated*

Over 600 hours have gone into restoration of the Fort Smith Birney Safety Car #205; the body restoration is well on its way to completion; and the association is bidding for operating parts.

When completed, Car #205 will operate on an approximately 1½ mile proposed round-trip route in the downtown Fort Smith Historical District.

The streetcar restoration "205 Club" has been formed to recognize donors of a minimum donation of \$205.00, or more. Membership is limited to 205 members and each member will receive an engraved numbered membership plaque and a lifetime pass to ride the "trolley."

For contributions of \$25.00 or more, receive a paperweight with the streetcar engraved on it; for \$5.00 plus \$1.00 mailing, the history of Fort Smith Streetcars written by Charles Winters and published by the Fort Smith Historical Society is available.

Estimated cost for completion of car restoration, Car Shop and Sub Station building, 6000 Volt DC Power Source, track repair and construction, and 600 Volt overhead wire is approximately \$66,000, plus lots of volunteer labor and in-kind donations. You will recognize that this is a small price for a project of this magnitude which has the potential of revitalizing the entire downtown Fort Smith historical area.

You can join this effort to preserve an exciting part of Fort Smith history by sending a contribution, together with your name and address to the Fort Smith Streetcar Restoration Association, 2121 Wolfe Lane, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

## ACTIVITIES AT FORT SMITH PUBLIC LIBRARY

LIBRARY - Regularly scheduled/activities:

Every Wednesday, 12:15 - 1:00 p.m., Free movie -

everyone brings sack lunch. Cokes and coffee are available.

2nd Wednesday each month: Book Review 10:30 a.m.

Every Thursday: Children's Story Hour 9:30 a.m.

### Club meetings in Community Room:

1st Monday 7:30 p.m., Fort Smith Computer Club

2nd & 4th Monday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Fort Smith Embroiderers' Guild

2nd Monday 6:30 p.m., Professional Photographers

4th Monday 7:00 p.m., Camera Club

1st Tuesday 7:00 p.m., Old Fort Gun Club

4th Tuesday 7:00 p.m., Frontier Genealogy Society

1st Thursday 7:30 p.m., National Organization for Women

2nd Thursday 7:30, League of Women Voters

3rd Friday 1:30 p.m., Poets Roundtable of Fort Smith

1st & 3rd Saturdays 9:30 a.m., in Conference Room on first floor, Ft. Smith Chess Club

2nd Tuesday 6:30 p.m., Fort Smith Beekeepers Association

3rd Monday 7:00 p.m., Child Nurture Club (Sept. thru May)

1st Thursday 6:30, Westark Relics

1st Thursday 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., 60-plus Writers

## CLAYTON HOUSE

514 North 6th - Fort Smith, Arkansas  
(Built in 1882)

Restoration of the kitchen, breezeway and other rooms is nearing completion. The house is open for tours from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. There will be special programs beginning in September, watch the paper for dates and plan to attend. Above all, come by during the holidays and enjoy the tree with Victorian decorations (if one catches your fancy they are available to add to your own tree.) Tour Admission \$1.00 for adults, 50¢ for children. Special rates for groups. No charge to members of Heritage Foundation.

## OLD FORT MUSEUM

Location: 320 Rogers Avenue, Fort Smith, AR 72901

Hours of Operation: 10:00 - 5:00 Tues. through Sun.,  
Sept. through May

Nominal admissions charge: Members and school groups free.

Special exhibits monthly:

September ..... Old Fort Smith Advertising

October ..... Fort Smith Bottles

November ..... "A Place Called Rohwer"  
(Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities)

December . "Visions of Sugar Plums" (nightwear and toys from the Old Fort Museum's collection)

January ..... Treasures of the Old Fort Museum  
Recent Acquisitions  
February ..... Firearms Exhibit  
March ..... Old Bank Checks  
April ..... Vacant  
May ..... Office Equipment - Typewriters - To  
Celebrate National Secretaries Week

### FORT SMITH SYMPHONY

Adult Season Tickets ..... \$25.00  
Student Season Ticket ..... \$10.00  
Family Plan ..... \$60.00  
(Two adult tickets & tickets for each child)  
Fort Smith Symphony Orchestra, Walter Minniear,  
Conductor and Featuring -  
Ida Levin, Violinist ..... Oct. 10, 1982  
Messiah ..... Dec. 5, 1982  
Louise Deal - Pluymen, Soprano ... Dec. 12, 1982  
James & Julie Rivers, duo pianists Feb. 20, 1983  
String Choir from Ft. Smith Public Mar. 30, 1983  
Leigh Stevens, Mirimba Soloist (Pops Concert)  
May 1, 1983

### FORT SMITH ART CENTER FORT SMITH LITTLE THEATER

A development program to raise \$1,400,000 to build a new Art Center and Little Theater in Fort Smith is now under way.

John M. Yantis, chief executive officer for Mid-America Industries, is serving as Development Council Chairman, and Samuel M. Sicard, chairman and president of First National Bank, is fund chairman.

The new complex will be located in the 400 block of North Sixth Street.

To volunteer time or money to this effort, call (501) 785-4477, and ask for Mary Jean Black, or write to The Center, Inc., P. O. Box 1626, Fort Smith, AR 72902.

### FORT SMITH ART CENTER

#### MAIN GALLERY -

September 1982 ..... Shelia Parsons  
October, 1982 ..... Steven Payne  
November, 1982 ..... 6th Annual  
Photography Competition  
December, 1982 ..... Annual Christmas Card  
Competition  
January, 1983 ..... Julietta Thornton  
February, 1983 ..... British Print Makers  
March, 1983 ..... TBA  
April, 1983 ..... TBA  
May, 1983 ..... Jack Gilliland

#### BAY WINDOW GALLERY -

September, 1982 ..... Alice Boatright  
October, 1982 ..... Ada Waelder  
November, 1982 ..... Patricia Wofford

December, 1982 ..... Larry Jenkins  
January, 1983 ..... Mary Ellen Anderson  
February, 1983 ..... Dennis Smith  
March, 1983 ..... Sister Ann Graffy  
April, 1983 ..... Leo Costes  
May, 1983 ..... Ruth Gardenhire

### PHOTO ALLIANCE GALLERY -

September, 1982 ..... Billy Roberts  
October, 1982 ..... Al Carpenter  
November, 1982 ..... Photo. Competition Judges  
December, 1982 ..... Linda Lyle  
January, 1983 ..... Bradley & Janice Martin  
February, 1983 ..... Terry James  
March, 1983 ..... Dr. James Brown  
April, 1983 ..... Woody Gibbens  
May, 1983 ..... TBA

### GALLERY ONE -

September, 1982 ..... Edith O'Kelly  
October, 1982 ..... Elva Johnson  
Violet Blair, Mildred O'Bannon, Gwyn LaCrone  
November, 1982 ..... Duane Sanders  
December, 1982 ..... John Bell  
January, 1983 ..... Lela Wilson  
February, 1983 ..... Danny Hanshaw  
March, 1983 ..... Sarah Johnson  
April, 1983 ..... Jimmie Elizabeth Martin  
May, 1983 ..... Barbara Fent

### FORT SMITH LITTLE THEATER

3600 North O - Fort Smith, Arkansas

#### Season Tickets -

Matinee - \$10.00 (2:30 p.m. Sunday)

Regular - \$12.50 (8:15 p.m.)

Champagne - \$25.00 (7:30 p.m. Thursday)

5 Shows are included on the season ticket.

#### SAME TIME NEXT YEAR -

Champagne Opening September 16

Matinee November 7

Other Performances Sept. 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25

#### BEDROOM FARCE -

Champagne Opening November 4

Matinee November 7

Other Performances November 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13

The Little Theatre's 1983 Season will open in February. A full schedule of their performances will be in the next Journal.

### WESTARK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

October 13 ..... WCC Jazz Band - Noon Show  
October 17 ..... WCC Choir Concert  
November 5, 6, 7 ..... WCC Drama Department  
Production December 7 ..... WCC Band Concert  
March 25 ..... Miss Westark Pageant  
April 22, 23, 24 ..... WCC Drama Department  
Productions April 26 ..... WCC Band Concert



# BOOK NOTES

By Amelia Martin

## **SEBASTIAN COUNTY ARKANSAS CEMETERY RECORDS,**

**VOLUME 1.** Compiled by Chris Elmore Allen, C.G.R.S., surname indexed by Mary Nigh, Assistant Librarian, Fort Smith Public Library. 100 pages, Price \$7.00, postpaid. Order from Chris Elmore Allen, 2700 South Dallas, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

In addition to name, location and records of nine cemeteries, this surname indexed book includes a list of 24 Sebastian County Cemeteries with dates of their May Decoration services and a list of names and descriptions of twenty cemeteries located in Fort Chaffee Military compound, Sebastian County AR. Cemetery records included are: Mt. Harmony, Union Ridge, Elmore (Mt. Zion), Dawson, Washburn, Cross (Gilliam), Clark Chapel, Vinita, and an unnamed cemetery in a field a few miles from Bonanza.

\* \* \* \*

## **CUMULATIVE INDEX TO THE ARKANSAS HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, VOLUMES 1 - XXXV.**

Two volume set, compiled by Walter L. Brown and Denyse S. Killgore, Arkansas Historical Association. 487 pages. \$25.00 postpaid. Send check or money order to Arkansas Historical Association, History Department 12 Ozark Hall, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701.

\* \* \* \*

## **OBITUARY INDEX FROM ARKANSAS HEALTH SCIENCES PUBLICATIONS.**

105 pages. Order from History of Medicine/Archives, UAMS Library, Slot 586, 4301 West Markham Street, Little Rock, AR 72205. Price \$4.00 plus \$1.00 mailing costs.

This index lists obituaries from Arkansas journals of the health sciences, specifically medicine, pharmacy and dentistry through the 1980 volumes. The medical obituaries date from the early 1870's.

\* \* \* \*

**ARKANSAS AIRWAVES,** by Ray Poindexter. 421 pages, hardbound. Price \$10.50. Order from Ray Poindexter, 204 West I Street, North Little Rock, AR 72116.

Intensively researched, this history of radio in Arkansas is unique, and as far as we can determine, is the only book written on this subject. Because of the intangible nature of radio, it has not left its own recorded history, and its past, for the most part, had disappeared into thin air, destined to oblivion until

Ray Poindexter undertook the task to put it on paper for posterity. Included in this book is an individual history of each station in Arkansas, with names of people involved in the development and operation; also early programs. It is recommended to all readers interested in radio and public broadcasting.

— — —

**AUTHOR:** Ray Poindexter, News Director of Radio Station KAUL, North Little Rock, Arkansas, was born in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, October 23, 1922. He is a graduate of Southwest Missouri State Teachers College (now Southwest Missouri State University) at Springfield, and received his master's degree from Arkansas State Teachers College (now State College of Arkansas) at Conway in 1965. During World War II he was skipper of a Naval LCT in the pacific, and began his radio career at KBTM, Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 1946. Later he worked at stations in El Dorado, Paragould, Newport, Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Jacksonville. He taught English and speech at North Little Rock Senior High School and Broadcasting at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

In addition to his broadcasting and teaching activities, Poindexter has performed as an actor, appearing with such established names as Marie Wilson, Margaret Truman, Marjorie Lord, and Harriet McGibbon (Mrs. Drysdale of "The Beverly Hillbillies" television series).

\* \* \* \*

## **JOHN GABRIEL FORT, FOUNDATION OF FRONTIER FAITH,**

By Lynn C. Mauldin. Paperback. Order from Lynn C. Mauldin, 1018 West Gore, Lovington, N.M. 88260. Price \$10.00 postpaid.

Written to bring to light the life of one of Arkansas' true pioneers, this book is a simple and short history of John Gabriel Fort, a man whose deep faith in God was graphically portrayed through numerous experiences and upon multiple occasions. Though not an attempt to list all of the descendents of John G. Fort, this book is a well developed story of the family of this man, complete with pictures, family documents, and many, many names, dates, etc. Six years of research went into the preparation of this book which is interesting reading for all but of particular interest to descendents of John Gabriel Fort, sixth child born to Spear and Margaret Susan (Titsworth) Fort, and Dorinda Jane Bell.

— — —

AUTHOR: The Author, Lynn C. Mauldin, a great, great grandson of John Gabriel Fort, is pastor of Northside Southern Baptist Church in Lovington, NM. He was born August 14, 1948 in Brown County, Texas, and graduated from Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Texas, in 1970. He and his wife, the former Linda L. Parker, have two children, Benjamin, age 5 and Nathaniel, age 3.

\* \* \* \*

**THE HODGE/HODGES BOOK (Two volumes)**, by Thomas Bruce, M. D. Published 1982. Volumes priced separately, \$9.50 each, softbound; \$13.50 each, hardbound. Send order with payment to Dr. Thomas Bruce, 4 Hillandale, Little Rock, AR 72207.

**Volume I:** *Descendants of William Riley Hodge, M. G.* 148 pages plus full name index and 33 pages of family portraits. 8-1/2 x 11.

This is a well researched, written and printed history of William Riley Hodge (1817-1882) who was born in Virginia, but lived in Tennessee, Missouri and northern Arkansas, where he was a farmer and itinerant Church of Christ preacher. Dr. Bruce challenges readers to prove parentage of William Riley Hodge and to add to the list of thousands of descendants who are documented in the book. The major related family surnames are JAMES, DOWELL, KEELING, LAWHON, COPELIN and SMITH.

**Volume II.** *Reference Source Book for Hodge/Hodges Research in Virginia, Tennessee and Arkansas.* 115 pages, 8-1/2 x 11.

A wealth of Hodge/Hodges Research Material Induces Pre-Civil War Immigration Lists of Hodge/Hodges, DAR Patriot Index, Virginia Census records 1782-1830, Tennessee Census Records 1820-1850, Arkansas Census Records 1850-1900, Early Marriage and Tax Records, Arkansas Civil War Index and much more on families with Hodge/Hodges surnames.

— — — — —

AUTHOR: Thomas Allen Bruce, M. D., since 1974 has been Dean of the College of Medicine, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Barton Institute of Medical Research at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock. A native of Mountain Home, Arkansas, he is a graduate of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and the U of A Medical School in Little Rock. He also had post graduate training at Duke University, Cornell University, the University of Texas, the University of London (England) and the Harvard Business School. For his research in the fields of heart disease, medical education and rural medical care, he is the recipient of several awards, including the Arkansas Governor's Certificate of Merit for

Outstanding Citizenship in 1974. He is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the World, American Men and Women of Science, and Men of Achievement. He is married to the former Dolores Fay Montgomery, a native of Merryville, Louisiana.

\* \* \* \*

## INQUIRIES

FORT - HICKSON. Ms. Charlotte Cole, 2100 Wolfe Lane, Ft. Smith, AR 72901 is in search for information on the Fort and Hixson families. David Fort b 1800 KY, (brother of John Gabriel Fort), sons John b 1825 and Spear b 1827 in Cooper Co., MO. Moved to Franklin Co., AR by 1830. The 1830 census shows David Fort with 3 sons. William C. Hixson came to Johnson Co., AR in 1857 from Hamilton Co., TN.

\* \* \* \*

PATRICK. Mr. Gene H. Patrick, 1639 Park Towne Court, N.E., Apt. 56 Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402. Needs information on Peter Patrick, a blacksmith in Fort Smith, around 1875.

\* \* \* \*

SHELLEY - PRITCHARD. Mrs. Merle Mayhugh, 33 Longwood Drive, Canton, Illinois 61520, would like to correspond with descendants of Charles Shelley and his wife Susannah Pritchard who are buried at Mt. Olive Cemetery, Midland, Arkansas.

**ATTENTION ALL READERS  
IF YOU SEE AN ERROR IN THE JOURNAL  
WRITE TO YOUR EDITORS  
WE WANT TO KNOW  
PLEASE HELP US WATCH FOR ERRORS**

State in your letter the error and correction plus your source of correcting information. Include also your name, address and telephone number so we may contact you personally should the need arise.

Your editors make every effort possible to print only historically accurate information. Manuscripts of all writers are checked to the best of our ability for accuracy, but despite our best efforts, errors do occur, especially in materials from secondary sources.

Regardless of cause of error, the Society is anxious to print a correction of any error for which proof of correction is furnished in writing to our editors. If you see an error, let us know.

Limited quantities of past issues of *The Journal* are available at \$5.00 per copy at the Fort Smith Public Library. Copies may be ordered by mail from: **The Fort Smith Historical Society**

**61 South 8th Street • Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901**

For mail orders: Order by Volume and Issue Number, include your complete mailing address and \$5.00 plus 75¢ mailing charges per copy.

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# 1882 NEWS

1882 NEWS

Articles Taken From The  
FORT SMITH WEEKLY NEW ERA  
Wilma Jameson

*July through December 1882 are exciting days for the people of Fort Smith, according to the editor of the NEW ERA, Valentine Dell. Boles has replaced him as U.S. Marshal but we see him still fighting the battle with his pen even though he has lost the war.*

*The downtown area of Fort Smith is badly damaged by fire, the citizens of the city being called upon to fight the blaze without the aid of a fire engine. Our editor, who has been campaigning for a fire department for some time, lets fall from his pen in the days to follow many a caustic word about their lack of a proper fire department.*

*Dog licensing is voted on and passed. As a result, dogs without the proper identification, are shot and killed where they stand while their owners watch in horror.*

*Many of the citizens are witnesses to the Aurora Borealis or "Northern Lights" and they also experienced a small earthquake that is very upsetting to their nerves.*

*Belle Starr is arrested in the Indian Territory!*

*These are just a few of the exciting events that happened in the fall of 1882.*

## July 6, 1882

A daily stage line to Muscogee, IT., on the Missouri Pacific Ry. went into operation last Saturday, Col. Wisdom, of the Herald, being the contractor. This is a needed improvement.

The colored people of this city are going to have a railroad excursion and picnic to Mulberry a week from today in which they will be joined by the colored people of the counties of Crawford and Franklin on the line of the L.R. & F.S. Ry. The Fort Smith colored brass band will be on hand to liven the occasion. At night there will be a party at Hunt's Hall. Admission 25 cents.

## THE FOURTH

The 106th anniversary of our national holiday was observed as usual in this city. A national salute in the morning with a general suspension of business later in the day was the order. Thousands were at the Schuetzen park and in the afternoon the town was as quiet as a Sabbath morning. The weather was delightful, cool and pleasant. An accident deprived the sightseers of the pleasure of seeing the

fireworks come off at night. They did come off but altogether too sudden. A spark set fire to a box of combustibles and there was an explosion and grand flare up all in a moment. Fortunately no one was hurt. The Fort Smith Cornet Band furnished excellent music.

## FOR TOWNSHIP CONSTABLE

From an advertisement in another column it will be seen that Mr. C.C. Ayers is a candidate for the office of township constable. That he will, if elected, make a good officer, his record is sufficient proof. For over twelve years he was a Deputy U.S. Marshal and was also U.S. Jailor during the Marshalship of V. Dell, in which position he established his reputation for efficiency and business capacity.

## THE BRIDGE ACROSS THE ARKANSAS AT VAN BUREN

The bill before Congress granting the privilege of building a railroad bridge across the Arkansas river at Van Buren, five miles below here, was taken up and it passed the House last week, on the motion of Col. Thos. Gunter. It is very likely a law by this time, having already passed the Senate, where Messrs. Garland and Walker put it through in good style. This ensures a speedy completion of the San Francisco road to this place. For the present, we learn that a track will be laid from the crossing at the river parallel with the track of the L.R. & F.S. Ry. and on their land, to this town.

## July 13, 1882

General Catlin has taken possession of his new house on Knox' street.

Col. Fishback has been appointed state superintendent at the next state fair, of county exhibits.

Gid Morgan, not to be outdone, is going to put a steam ferry from the Choctaw to the Cherokee side of the river, which will make two steam ferries across the Arkansas at this place.

Capt. F. M. McDaniel and thirty men, the surveying party of the Frisco line from here to Paris, Texas, returned last Thursday, after surveying a road through the Choctaw Nation. Congress has not yet given the right of way, however.

Dr. A. Dunlap, one of our leading physicians, on returning from a meeting of the Board of Health last Thursday night, missed his way and fell into a deep gully, breaking a bone in his left leg below the knee. His horse had slipped the bridle while tied to a rack and the Dr. had to foot it home quite a distance, he living in the eastern suburb and the night being dark, too. We are glad to learn that the Dr. is cheerful and expects to be out again ere long.

### A FAMILY RE-UNION

On the occasion of her fifty-sixth birthday last Friday Mrs. John Sengel Sr. had quite a family reunion at her residence on Washington<sup>2</sup> street. Among the invited were her sons and their families, her niece Mrs. General Bonnevillie, and other relatives and a number of her neighbors and members of her church, the German Lutheran. It was a happy occasion and one well worthy of the venerable old lady so well known to everyone in this town for more than a quarter of a century past.

In prime health, with her husband eighteen years her senior also hale and hearty by her side, surrounded by her children and troops of grandchildren in her own home, the very model of a home - whether it be her elegant parlors, dainty bedrooms, spotless kitchen or sweet dairy - Mother Sengel might well feel a justifiable pride on looking back to years of patient labor and duty faithfully performed.

Well may Mother Sengel feel proud of her sons, Charles, John, George and Ed, all well settled and prosperous business men, save Ed, the youngest, not yet of age. This city has no more substantial and true citizens, than Charles, John and George Sengel, and we feel like taking some credit for it to ourselves as their teacher score or so of years ago, and the boys used to feel it sometimes too.

Now, while we take great pleasure in stating what we did, there is a practical moral to this, which is worth attending to.

Here is a poor man and his wife, owning a single lot 50x140. By their industry, frugality and fair dealing they become comparatively wealthy, rear a large family and settle all of them comfortably. What they did, everyone can do, provided he has the same grit, energy and perseverance. We can do without politicians, who make all the fuss in the world, but we can't do without such as Mother Sengel. If it were

not for such as her, and our framers and mechanics, who never have anything to say in public life, there would not be any state worth talking about.

July 20, 1882

The little steamer "Fort Smith" arrived on Monday from the Indian Territory loaded with wheat and lumber.

The Fort Smith Hospital Association has detailed Drs. Eberle, Kelleam and L. Bennett to attend at the infirmary every day between twelve and one o'clock. Medical advice and medicine will be furnished gratis to deserving poor. This is a most worthy undertaking.

D. S. McKibben sold his Mazzard prairie farm to a Kansas man for \$6,000.00

The daily mail coach between Fort Smith and Muskogee is making good time, arriving in 24 hours at each end of the route from the starting point.

July 27, 1882

Mr. John Gardiner is building a fine livery stable in the rear of his old one on Garrison avenue.

Deputy U.S. Marshal J. G. Farr, came in on Monday of last week with five prisoners, the names and offenses as follows: Wm Prince, John Wilson, Ben Butler and Andrew Guess, charged with larceny, and Jno. Brown for assault with intent to kill, who gave bond at Rocky Comfort.

### MARRIED

**QUARLS--PETTIT** - At the residence of the bride's father, in this city, by Elder Hamilton, of Little Rock, on Thursday, July 29. Tom Quarls, of Fayetteville to Emma Pettit, of this city.

The happy young couple took the stage for Fayetteville in the afternoon where they intend to make their home in the future.

August 3, 1882

Berry, the Democratic standard bearer and candidate for Governor, opened his speech on Tuesday at this place with the words of the martyred Lincoln: "with charity for all and malice toward none," the motto, that has floated at the NEW ERA'S masthead for more than a dozen years.

We are glad to see an ex-Confederate follow Lincoln's and the NEW ERA's footsteps and adopt

as guiding star the lofty sentiment spoken by the man, who, beloved of all the earth, fell, a victim of the concentrated rage and malice of the CAUSE, that our prospective governor fought and buried a leg for. The world moves, praised be God.

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### THE CONTEST DECIDED

The lively contest that has been waging for the Congressional seat of this district among the democratic brethren was brought to a close last Saturday, when Pulaski, Logan, and Conway counties instructed for Judge Rogers. This gives him a clear majority without consulting any of the counties that have not yet instructed. Of course, nomination means election, just as 10 or 14 years ago a republican nomination was equivalent to an election.

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### THE 'FRISCO BILL PASSED

On last Thursday the House passed Senate bill granting the 'Frisco line the right of way through the Choctaw and Chickasaw country. This will bring the road to Fort Smith at once, and from there be extended down into Texas.

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### THE BORDER RIFLES

This is a military organization under the name of "Border Cadets" last winter. The company consists of a number of young men of the best standing in this city. On Tuesday night the company was mustered into service at their armory, corner Wayne and Garrison avenue by Captain P.T. Devany, mustering officer.

The company numbers only about twenty members, but is rapidly filling up. The officers of the company are as follows, so far: Captain, J.F. Eberle; First Lieutenant, Ed Haglin; Second Lieutenant, Oscar Pettit; First Sergeant, Willie Sample.

The rest of the non-commissioned officers have not been appointed yet. Our citizens ought to encourage this organization. The time may come when the strong arm of the law must be upheld by our citizen soldiers. At any rate, encourage the boys. It will do them good. A purse should be made up to furnish them with neat uniforms. We will go an X on that ourselves. Start the ball.

— — —

August 10, 1882

### THE TENTH OF AUGUST

Twenty-one years ago to-day was fought the battle of Wilson's Creek, or Oak Hill as named by the Confederates. It was the first great battle fought in the West and caused many a vacancy in Western

Arkansas in families, that mourn their loss this day. Those were stirring days and to look back to them now one wonders, how a few demagogues could succeed in leading the country to ruin, for Western Arkansas was overwhelmingly loyal even in 1861 and the people had actually to be dragooned into the secession movement.

But these days of dire calamity are now past, the country is knit together firmer than ever and those who once stood arrayed in deadly conflict against each other are now proud of a common country, restored, purified and happy.

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We learn that Col. Boles, U.S. Marshal, is very ill at his home at Dardanelle.

— — —

The St. Charles hotel, an old landmark near the R.R. Depot, has been re-opened by Captain Rouse.

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The Town is full of strangers, principally from the Indian Territory - Whites, Indians and Negroes, in attendance on the U.S. Court.

— — —

Drs. J.E. Bennett and G.W. Smith have been appointed by the Board of Health in conjunction with the Mayor to select a site for a city hospital building.

— — —

Col. Wisdom of the *Herald* had moved into his new building on Howard<sup>3</sup> street, in the most beautiful part of town, overlooking the grand Arkansas Valley for many miles.

— — —

A number of witnesses in the U.S. Court from the smallpox infected district of the Creek Nation in the Indian Territory were stopped some distance from town and turned back..

— — —

From and after to-day dogs without the regulation collar perambulating the streets lay themselves liable to have their mundane existence cut off short. But how are you going to do it, Mr. Mayor? Don't commence the shooting folly, else somebody else will get shot besides the dog. Don't throw poison about the streets. A little hungry child may pick up a piece of poisoned food and die. The whole dog-killing business is an outrage, unless performed in the manner prevailing in large cities, viz: to catch unlawful canines in stout scoop nets, putting them into a cart and disposing of them out of sight in some decent manner. But we always have been and are still of the opinion, that all the dog ordinances are dogoned nuisances. Nobody ever saw a less number of dogs on account of them.

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### **COL. E.C. BOUDINOT**

So well known not only in Arkansas and the Indian Territory, but through out the whole country, is here in attendance on the U.S. Court. We had a very pleasant meeting with our old time friend and are glad to say that Col. B. thinks the future of Fort Smith the brightest of any city in the Southwest.

### **EMANCIPATION DAY**

Last Friday, the 4th inst., the colored people of this town and surrounding country had a grand jubilee meeting and barbecue in Schuetzen Park in honor of the first emancipation of their race from slavery by Great Britain, the forerunner of the great work of Abraham Lincoln. The turn out was very creditable. Music was furnished by the Belle Point brass band. The weather was showery, but it did not seem to dampen the zeal of the participants much. There was an ample barbecue dinner and everybody seemed to enjoy it.

In the afternoon several addresses were delivered by Major Thomas H. Barnes, the editor of this paper and Mr. W.D. Donald, a graduate of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee.

Everything passed off very pleasantly and the managing committee deserves much credit for their arrangements.

### **August 17, 1882**

Our flourishing neighbor across the river, Van Buren, is going to build a ten thousand dollar school house. But in doing this she will be compelled to suspend public schools for a year in order to get the necessary funds. Fort Smith had to do the same thing some years ago to obtain means to pay for the Belle Grove school property. This is a sad blow to the best interests of the people, but as long as the present Bourbon constitution exists, the people have no remedy. Never was Bourbon stupidity more plainly exhibited than in that constitutional proviso, tying the people's lands to educate their children. Let's have a change by all means.

### **A. I. UNIVERSITY FAYETTEVILLE, ARK.**

**The next session of this institution will begin  
SEPTEMBER 4th, 1882**

**and end June 7, 1883.** Tuition is free to all who are qualified to enter the college classes and to all Normal and Beneficiaries in the Preparatory Department. Normal appointments are restricted to young ladies over 14 years of age, and to young gentlemen over 16 years. The recent election gave a full faculty of sixteen members, with General D.H. Hill as President.

Mrs. M. Wolf, wife of the well known merchant, died on Monday from a malady brought on by confinement. She leaves eight children.

### **NEW NATIONAL BANK**

Before the fall opening of the business season this city will have another National Bank, which will supply a long felt want. The incorporators are staunch business men of this place, viz: W.J. Echols, E. Park, Boequin & Reutzel, Sengel & Schulte, Zeno Ross, Wm M. Cravens, Wm Breen and M. S. Cohn. The Name of the Bank has not been fully decided upon, but will be known in a few days.

### **DEMOCRATIC TOWNSHIP CONVENTION**

Last Saturday the Democrats of this - Upper - township met at the courthouse in this city and selected candidates for the officers of Justice of the Peace and Constable. Judge B.A. Neale presided and C.M. Cooke was appointed Secretary. The following nominations were made:

For Justices of the Peace: Samuel Edmundson, Mathew Grey, M.J. Casey and Bolivar Barnes, the first two being incumbents at the time.

For Constable: Henry Williams, W.M. Boone, R.T. Kerr, and M.J. Casey.

### **August 31, 1882**

The prohibition movement having developed itself into an element of considerable proportions in the present election, we have devoted considerable of our space in to-day's issue to advertisements discussing the question pro and con.

The friends of temperance, in this section, are working manfully to secure the abolition of the sale of intoxicating liquors in this county, and they believe that success will crown their efforts on the day of election. The questions, does prohibition prohibit, and its effect on the community in a commercial view, are being discussed in all our throughfares, with good arguments on both sides.

### **THE LATE U.S. MARSHAL OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS**

The press of the State has taken notice of our indictment last week by the U.S. Grand Jury at this place for alleged false claims made while U.S. Marshal. We do not wish to prejudge the matter, but can't help giving some of the views of our brethern as expressed in their papers.

The Hot Springs *Horse Shoe*, republican, of the 29th says:

*Valentine Dell, the most honest and yet worse persecuted and maligned*

*gentleman that ever held a government position in the state of Arkansas, has been indicted at Fort Smith "for making and presenting false accounts." After working all sorts of imaginary and trumped up schemes to oust him when U.S. Marshal, and making him spend his salary to hold the position one short year, they now attempt to persecute and harass him further and take from the mouths of his large family of children the hard earned bread of to-day by making him defend himself against as damnable schemes as were ever hatched up by political shysters. Personally, the editor of the Horse Shoe and Mr. Dell are not the most closely allied friends in the world, but with all this we cannot close our eyes to such an heartless persecution of an honest man - the noblest work of God - without a protest.*

*Valentine Dell, one of the United States Marshals appointed by Hayes, has just been indicted for embezzlement at Fort Smith, Arkansas. The appointments of that goody goody president did not, as a rule, possess even his negative virtues. - (St. Louis Chronicle).*

*Col. Valentine Dell is a republican, not in sympathy or harmony with republican principles, policies and appliances in Arkansas. As to the charge of embezzlement, we do not believe a word of it. If there ever was an honest federal official in Arkansas that man is Valentine Dell. Those who know him best will not believe this report. - (Little Rock, Democrat)*

We are not now and never have been in sympathy or harmony with such republican "principles, policies, and appliances" as have disgraced the republican party in Arkansas and other southern states, drove decent people away from it and made even Bourbon democracy respectable by contrast. Our record for nearly twenty years past in conducting a radical republican journal speaks for itself. As to the scheme now on foot to ruin us politically, socially and morally, just wait and "see the salvation of the Lord". When we get through with them our enemies will wish they hadn't tackled V. Dell.

We feel very grateful to Dr. Dunlap for the manner of his going on our bond last week. Though as yet crippled and on crutches from his recent painful

accident, he promptly volunteered when he learned of our case, saying that it was the duty of a good citizen to stand by another if needed. We could readily have given bond to any amount but the generous action of Dr. Dunlap in subjecting himself to so much inconvenience to aid us, was a compliment we shall never forget.

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**September 7, 1882**

### **MARRIED**

At 8 o'clock last evening at the residence of the bride's father, by the Rev. F.A. Feffett, Capt. J.E. RICHARDS, of Dardanelle, to Miss FLORENCE G., daughter of J.H. McClure Esq. of this city.

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Our neighbors of the "Herald" have moved their editorial and printing office to the Halliwell building, on Knox street.<sup>4</sup>

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We are informed by Deputy U.S. Marshal Wilkerson that Chief Bushyhead of the Cherokee nation is lying at the point of death from the bite of a centipede.

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Mr. and Mrs. Park, of Chicago are in the city, and intend making it their home. Mr. Park will be cashier of the new bank, to be put in operation here, and is a brother of Dr. E.E. Park, of this city.

### **TRANSFERS OF PROPERTY**

M. McEachen to Col. Archibald, 8 acres in the Catholic addition on the Little Rock road, at \$200 per acre, and one half interest in a lot in block 40 for \$700.

G.W. Moore to I.M. Ullery, 7½ acres adjoining Fort Smith, for \$1800.

Mrs. M.A. Allen bought of Mr. Prescott, two miles out, ten acres, very well improved, at \$100 per acre, also of Thos. H. Barnes twenty acres at \$50 per acre.

As an evidence of the rapid growth of our city, and the confidence felt by parties coming here with a view to permanent location, of the prospect of Fort Smith becoming, indeed, a great and populous city, we learn that Mrs. Eberle refused an offer of \$5000 for the lot on the corner of Knox<sup>5</sup> street and Garrison avenue, fronting twenty-five foot on the avenue, and now occupied by Mr. Ed. Brogan.

Sam'l McCloud, of this city, and C.F. Ewing & Company of Kansas, yesterday purchased forty-five feet of the property adjoining the stable of McCloud and Johnson, at \$75 per foot front. Mr. McCloud bought twenty-feet, and the remaining twenty-five

(4) North 6th Street

(5) North 6th Street

*gentleman that ever held a government position in the state of Arkansas, has been indicted at Fort Smith "for making and presenting false accounts." After working all sorts of imaginary and trumped up schemes to oust him when U.S. Marshal, and making him spend his salary to hold the position one short year, they now attempt to persecute and harass him further and take from the mouths of his large family of children the hard earned bread of to-day by making him defend himself against as damnable schemes as were ever hatched up by political shysters. Personally, the editor of the Horse Shoe and Mr. Dell are not the most closely allied friends in the world, but with all this we cannot close our eyes to such an heartless persecution of an honest man - the noblest work of God - without a protest.*

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(4) North 6th Street

(5) North 6th Street



by the gentlemen from Kansas, who intended erecting thereon a handsome building for banking purpose.

### **THE MERCHANTS BANK**

At a meeting of the stockholders held last Tuesday evening the organization of the new bank was affected, and the following officers elected:

President - W. J. Echols

Vice-President - Zeno Ross

Cashier - John Park

Directors - W.J. Echols, Zeno Ross, Jno Park,  
Wm Breen, George Sengel, Henry Reutzel,  
and Wm M. Cravens.

Paid up capital stock \$55,000.

**September 21, 1882**

### **A DEAD HERO**

Isaac Murphy, the best Governor Arkansas ever had - The only man that voted NO in the Secession Convention.

Last Friday there died at his mountain home in Madison county, at the ripe age of four score years, Isaac Murphy late Governor of this State. The deceased, since his retirement from office in 1868, lived in complete obscurity and seclusion, though he at all times took a lively interest in public matters.

Since his retirement in 1868, the old Governor lived at his humble home at Huntsville, Madison county. His financial condition was far from affluent; in fact he was in very straightened circumstances toward the close of his life. Some day, when the history of Arkansas will be written by an impartial pen, the picture of the heroic, pure and patriotic Isaac Murphy will throw in the shade that of almost any other man that figured prominently before its people.

### **FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!**

**Fifteen Buildings in the Business Portion of the City  
Laid in Ashes**

### **LOSS SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLARS**

On Friday night last, at 25 minutes to 11 o'clock, the alarm of fire was sounded, and in a few minutes Garrison avenue was alive with citizens hurrying to do battle with the dreaded fiery monster, whose flaming tongues were reaching out in all directions for combustibles with which to cram its greedy maw.

### **THE ORIGIN**

The fire was first discovered in a small frame stable, filled with hay, belonging to Mr. B.Z. Gannaway, and located just back of the warehouse of L. Goodman, and was the work of an incendiary. From the stable to the warehouse, thence to the frame building of M.S. Buckley, and occupied by L.

Goodman, was the work of but few moments, so rapidly did these tinder boxes burn; thence to the frame building of B.Z. Gannaway, adjoining on the west, and occupied by Morton & Kimmons.

Here it was hoped that the fiery element would receive a check, but the flames were not to be cheated of their prey, for reaching around to the back of the stone building, occupied by J.S. Goss, the doors and windows were soon on fire, and communicating with the interior, the whole building was quickly wrapped by flames. The adjoining building, occupied by George Tilles, was the next to succumb.

Right manfully did our citizens seek to stay the further progress, and contested the ground foot by foot with the lurid monster, but with no avail, for ruin and destruction had marshalled their hosts to the fray. The Bonneville block, three frame structures two stories high, were the next to yield.

Here the flames were checked on the west, after having thrice driven from the roof of the adjoining brick building, belonging to R.G. Campbell, the men who, were laboring to stay the progress of the fiery foe ---- Twice the building was given up as lost, but by superhuman efforts, working amidst the fire and smoke that scorched and blinded them, our citizens beat back the monster in his wrath, and, when assured that victory was theirs, a shout of triumph rent the midnight air.

On the east, the fire had communicated to the frame warehouses of W. Breen and Dr. W.W. Bailey, thence to the brick building occupied by Dr. Bailey, which was soon destroyed. Thence to a row of one-story frame buildings, adjoining all of which were reduced to ashes, and only ceased after the most strenuous efforts had been made to save the building in which the bank is located.

The avenue was piled with goods removed from the burning buildings, rendering it almost impassable, and had it been a windy, instead of a calm night, nothing short of a miracle could have saved the city from the devouring flames.

When will our citizens awake to the necessities of a thoroughly organized fire department? A fire engine in good working order, properly managed, could easily have saved all of the buildings, with, perhaps, the exception of those of M.S. Buckley and B.A. Gannaway. The following is a list of the buildings burned, by whom occupied, etc.:

Mrs. Gen. Bonneville, three frame buildings, insured for \$3,000. One occupied by Devlin & Sparks, \$4,000.00 insurance; one by M. Silberberg \$3,000.00, and the third empty. There were several offices, occupied by lawyers and justices of the peace, on the second floor.

Phillip Baum, two stone buildings, \$4,500 -- occupied by George Tilles, \$3,500, and J.S. Goss, no insurance.

B.Z. Gannaway, no insurance; store occupied by Morton & Kimmons, insured for \$1,000.

M.S. Buckley, frame, \$2,000, occupied by L. Goodman, \$2,000.

Wm Breen, stone, \$3,000; on stock, \$17,000.

Mrs. Dickens, brick, \$2,000; occupied by Dr. W.W. Bailey, \$3,000.

M. Brogan, saloon: W. Henderson, barber; John Hendricks, barber; P. Baum, butcher, building owned by G.T. Sparks. John Walsh, \$1,000; owned by Dr. J.H.T. Main.

### THE WEDDING

The Episcopal church was beautifully decorated last Tuesday evening, it being the occasion of the marriage of Lieut. Joseph Dickman, of the U.S.A., to Miss Minnie, youngest daughter of the late Elias Rector, of this city. At 8 o'clock the choir sang the wedding march, while the bridal party advanced to the Altar. The bride was escorted by her brother, James Rector, they were preceded by eight fairy-like little maidens strewing flowers along the aisle; and followed Lieut. Dickman and Mrs. Rector. The beautiful and impressive ceremony was performed by Rev. J.L. Birnie, after which the newly married couple and invited guests, repaired to the spacious residence of Dr. DuVal, where a magnificent reception was held.

At a special meeting of the City Council, held last Monday evening, the Mayor was authorized to condemn or purchase the property on the south side of Garrison avenue, opposite Knox street,<sup>5</sup> for the extension of said street to the government reservation. The move is a good one, as the street can now be extended at a much less cost than heretofore, when the buildings were standing, or in the future, should the owners erect buildings thereon.

Our old friend J. O'Daniel on last Monday morning, sold out his entire establishment, lock, stock and barrel, yes, and menagerie, too, to Mr. J.S. Goss, the famous hat man.

### October 12, 1882

Deputy Marshals L.W. Marks, Jno. Williams and W.F. Jones have arrived in the last few days with full quotas of prisoners.

Deputy Marshal L.W. Marks, who returned from a trip in the Osage country last Thursday, brought with him as prisoner a Mrs. Belle Starr and her husband -- Starr, charged with horse stealing. Mr. Marks informs us that Mrs. Starr alias Mabel Shirley, and two or three of her aliases, was a member of the

Younger gang, and was present at the time that Shepherd shot and claimed to have killed Jesse James. Mrs. Starr was captured in that northwest corner of the Cherokee Nation, on Bird Creek. At the trial before U.S. Commissioner Wheeler, she was deemed guilty, and required to give bond in the sum of \$1000 for her appearance at the next term of Court. She had no difficulty in giving the requisite amount.

Out of the ashes. The old reliable drug store of Dr. W.W. Bailey, having lost nearly the entire stock on hand, at the late fire, he has now opened out in the Doiser building formerly occupied by D.B. Johnson & Son, with a fresh stock of drugs and Medicines, Paints, Oils, etc., and his many friends and the public generally are cordially invited to call and examine his stock before purchasing elsewhere. His goods are fresh from market and of the very best quality, and he is knocking the bottom out of high prices. Don't forget the place. No. 159 east side of Garrison avenue.

D.B. Johnson & Son have removed to their new store, No. 189 Garrison avenue, where they are prepared to furnish the public with Dry Goods, Notions, etc. at very low figures. Call and examine their stock before making your purchases.

The appointment of Dr. W.W. Bailey of our city, as one of the commissioners for this State of the Garfield Monument Exhibition, is an excellent one. The exhibition is to be held in Washington on the 25th of November.

Mr. Silberberg has reopened at W.P. Barbee's music store, No. 122 Garrison avenue, and will sell goods saved from the fire at half price - 50 cents on the dollar.

"The Famous" is the name of the new house of Mr. J. Karatofsky, who has opened a fine stock of Fall and Winter Dry Goods, Clothing, Boots, Shoes, Hats, and Gents Furnishing Goods in the Grier building Garrison avenue, where bargains are to be had in the above named Goods. Mr. Karatofsky is determined not to be undersold. Give him a call and be convinced.

### DOYLES' OPENING

R.E. Doyles' magnificent new stores were thrown open to the public at 10 o'clock Monday morning, and the curious one invited to examine their stock. The sight fully repaid everyone who went there. The Stationery department, under the charge of Mr. J.A.

Skipwith, is complete in every department, and filled with choice, fancy articles, besides the wealth of literature and stationery. The clothing department, presided over by the genial Mr. J.M. Sloan, is the place for gentlemen of the most fastidious tastes, and all can be satisfied.

Mr. Rushing, the bookkeeper, had his desk tastefully decorated with flowers, making a pretty frame for his smiling face. Mr. Fielder and Mr. Johnny Sloan gracefully did the honors among the brilliant display of dress goods and trimmings. The velvets, ottomans, brocades, silks and plushes are fit for a queen, and anyone can be suited in that line. The laces deserve especial mention, they are rare and unique, fleecy and a pleasure to look at. The glove and hosiery departments are full and complete. The shoe department, under the charge of Mr. Clendenning, is stocked with shoes for all. The hand made kid shoes will please anyone wishing something tasty in that line.

On the second floor the beautiful bric-a-brac calls forth enthusiastic expressions of delight. The millinery department is conducted by Mrs. Leisles, with several assistants. The display of fine hats, flowers, feathers, and ribbons is glittering, and defies description.

There is everything from a neat dolls' hat to the close bonnet and elegant Gainsborough hats with drooping Ostrich feathers. The orange blossoms are beautiful. We mention this fact for the benefit of several.

The lace curtains and lambrequins of different qualities are of the latest styles. The carpets of every variety are in abundance, and are in colors to suit everyone. The rugs are of varied pattern, styles and quality, some of the velvet ones being elegant. The china and tinware departments arouse the housekeepers highest appreciation. There are toys also, too numerous to mention, which will delight the childish heart. The big dolls, making the little girls wish Christmas would hurry and come. Taken altogether the display cannot be fully described, and an accurate idea of its elegance and beauty, cannot be obtained without a personal investigation. All are invited to call and examine the novelties. On Monday there was a constant rush from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and the gentleman clerks were indefatigable in their attention. Mr. Doyle has arrived and has everything under his supervision. He may be justly styled the John Wanamaker of Fort Smith.

#### OUT OF THE FIRE

J.S. Goss, the Cheap Hat Man, having bought out Jim O'Daniel, is now prepared to sell Groceries and Provisions at the extreme low prices heretofore offered at the Menagerie: however, J. O'Daniel's friends will find him with J.S. Goss, in charge of the

Grocery Department. Mr. Goss has also on hand a large stock of Dry Goods, Clothing, Hats, etc. that he is offering exceedingly low -- Hats at cost, they having been damaged by the fire in this city.

#### FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!

A thousand thanks to the citizens of Fort Smith who assisted in the removal of my goods at the time of the late conflagration. This calamity and the loss of my store house makes it necessary that I should at once close out my present stock of merchandise, as I wish to carry nothing now on hand back to my old stand when rebuilt. On the 9th I will be open for business at the two story stone house on the south side of Garrison avenue, two squares from the bridge.

WM BREEN

Col. A.H. Reynolds, the popular furniture dealer of Fort Smith, has on hand the largest and finest assortment of furniture ever seen in this city, consisting of Parlor and Bed Room sets. Experienced workman at his factory are kept busy all the time to supply the demand of home manufactured furniture, and their work will compare favorable with anything bought from the eastern market, in quality and price. Col. Reynolds has made a fine display of furniture at the Fair, and the public are requested to call on him, at Nos. 81 and 83 Garrison avenue, where he will take pleasure in showing through his establishment all who may be pleased to call.

October 19, 1882

What about that fire-engine? Have our citizens already forgotten the recent conflagration on the avenue? or are they waiting until the fire-fiend has destroyed our goodly and growing city before they awake to the necessity of a well organized fire department? Shut the door *after* the horse if gone.

#### THE WEDDING

The Presbyterian Church was beautifully decorated Tuesday evening, it being the occasion of the marriage of one of Fort Smith's most beautiful young ladies, Miss Mamie Bright, to Mr. M. B. Baird, of this city. A beautiful arch of roses and evergreens was erected in front of the altar, in which was suspended a wedding bell of white roses. At eight o'clock the wedding march, played by Miss Clark announced the arrival of the bridal party. The bride, looking very lovely, leaning on the arm of the groom, proceeded to the altar where they were united by Rev. Mr. Weaver, Rev. W.A. Sample, the pastor, being absent from the city, unavoidably detained. After the ceremony the happy couple and invited guests repaired to the Baird House, where the reception was held.



**October 26, 1882**  
**THE EARTHQUAKE**  
**FORT SMITH NOT FORGOTTEN**  
**BY DAME NATURE**

Everything seems to conspire together to keep Fort Smith prominently before the world, and the nerves of its inhabitants strung to their highest tension. We had hardly got over the September elections before Crul's big comet blazed in the sky, as if it intended to run us down and swamp us; then the great fire that recently burned a goodly portion of our city; next the Third Annual Fair, in which we tried to excel ourselves, and now the big earthquake comes along, almost shaking us out of our boots, to aid in giving us notoriety. That was all we lacked to make us famous. Visitors need not, henceforth, go to Mexico in order to experience the delightful sensation. Fort Smith presents her claims to a generous public and asks that they be considered. We have the prettiest girls, the best climate, smallest death rate, biggest potatoes, and to cap all we have just had a real, genuine, substantial earthquake. It occurred on Sunday last at 4:15 p.m, and lasted nearly a minute. The oscillations were from the south-west. A number of our citizens were frightened by the unusual occurrence, windows rattled, houses rocked to and fro, and chickens flew about in the wildest disorder.

— — — —  
**MARRIED**

**SAMPLE-SAUNDERS.** On last evening at 9 o'clock, Mr. J.C. SAUNDERS, of the *Herald*, was married to Miss ALICE E. SAMPLE, at the Presbyterian church.

The church was beautifully decorated; there were three arches, the largest one, through which the bridal party entered, having the cupids suspended from it, holding a double heart pierced with a golden arrow a beautiful gate of flowers and evergreens spanned the arch. The second one was just in front of the altar, around which were massed lovely flowers in profusion. The third arch at the right, being the one through which the happy couple passed out. At precisely 9 o'clock the grand wedding march announced the arrival of the bridal party. The ushers were Messrs. W.M. Mellette, and J.F. Read, followed by Messrs Kimmons and Griffing. These were followed by the attendants, Miss Adella Dicksens and Mr. Will Sample, then two cupids, personated by little Minnie Miller and Alice Balgin; then the bride and groom. The lovely bride was attired in a beautiful costume of white satin, made en train, with veil and orange blossoms. The bridesmaid was attired in white cashmere and satin, while the proud bridegroom looked ecstatic in the conventional black. The ceremony was

impressively performed by Rev. T.R. Welch of Little Rock; after which the happy couple and host of friends repaired to the residence of the bride's father, Rev. W.A. Sample, where an elegant reception was held, and warm congratulations offered.

— — — —

**RECTOR-LUCE** - On Wednesday evening, Oct. 25, 1882 at the Episcopal church in this city, by Rev. Mr. Birnie; Mr. ELIAS RECTOR to Miss MAGGIE LUCE.

— — — —  
**November 2, 1882**

**MARRIED**

At the Lutheran church in this city, by Rev. P. F. Germann, Mr. FRANK SELIG to Miss ANNA SCHOEPEPE, both of this city.

— — — —  
**November 9, 1882**

The steamers *Jennie May* and *Mill Boy* were at the wharf on Monday.

— — — —

Mrs. E. Wolf died on Monday night at the resident of her daughter, Mrs. A. Mayer of this city, in her eighty-second year. The funeral took place on Tuesday.

— — — —

The Post Office is now open on Sunday from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Deputy Marshal W.F. Jones arrived Monday bringing with him eleven prisoners, charged with various offences committed in the B.I.T.<sup>6</sup>

Deputy Marshal Addison Beck came in on Tuesday with five more prisoners.

— — — —

The "Side Closet" is the name of a newspaper edited and published by some of the young men of Miss Myrtle Parke's school. F. Parke, Jr. editor; Daniel Baker, Jr., and Fred Dillon, assistants. That's right, boys, prepare yourselves for the life struggle before you and harness for the fray.

— — — —  
**FIRE**

On Saturday morning last at 12:30 o'clock our citizens were aroused by the ringing of bells, firing of pistols and the harsh cry of "fire". Garrison avenue was again the scene of conflagration, as the fire was found to be in the house of Mrs. M. Krone, occupied by a Mr. Jacobs and family. It was a frame, one story building of four rooms, and was entirely consumed. Insured for \$700.00. As the city has no fire department or apparatus, other than a Hook and Ladder, perhaps our citizens had better get a few squirt guns, such as boys are in the habit of playing with, and when a fire breaks out, attend the scene. It

The Gazette has this to say of the event:

*"The engagement of Miss Ella Wormser, the beautiful and accomplished niece of Max Hilb, of the firm of Probst & Hilb, to Mr. George Tilles, of Fort Smith, a popular merchant of that place, was yesterday announced. The announcement created much surprise, and a party called last night at the residence of Mr. Max Hilb to offer them congratulations."*

#### DIED

At the residence of Dr. Jas. S. Scovel, on the 2nd inst, of Pneumonia, Mr. James Largin, in the seventy fourth year of his age.

For the past thirty years Mr. Largin has resided in this county, and in his death another land-mark was removed from our midst. For the past few years he has made his home with his daughter, Mrs. Rutherford, and was on a visit to his children in the city, when stricken down. He asked for rest, and the great master called him from his labors.

#### REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

At the sale of the property of the late Jerry R. Kannady, on Monday last, Mr. J.K. Barnes was the purchaser of lots 1 and 2, corner of Hickory<sup>10</sup> and Lafayette<sup>11</sup> streets, at \$1,306. Mr. Wm. Johnson buying the two adjoining lots, 3 and 4, at \$1,090. The lot on Howard<sup>12</sup> street, near the avenue, was knocked down to Mr. Henry Reutzel at \$2,226.

Vogel & Wallace to Mr. J.K. Barnes lot on corner Garrison avenue and Green<sup>13</sup> street, with the building thereon. Consideration \$5,000.00.

Henry Reutzel to Thos. H. Barnes, lot on Howard street near avenue - consideration \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

#### DECEMBER 14, 1882

The daily St. Louis mail now arrives in this city at 5 p.m. via the 'Frisco.

#### FIRE

About 5 o'clock yesterday morning our citizens were awakened by the cry of fire, which was found to be the house of Mr. J.M. Huffington, situated in the upper end of town. No one seems to know how the fire originated, as the kitchen and dining rooms were in flames when Mr. Huffington was aroused, but it is supposed to have been caused by a defective flue. The flames spread rapidly and in a few minutes the entire house was a sheet of fire.

A small party of friends had gathered at the house the night before in honor of the tenth anniversary of the wedding of Mr. & Mrs. Huffington, some of whom remained till nearly 12 o'clock, so agreeably did the moments pass, and all left wishing their host

and hostess inestimable blessing and continued good fortune.

The house we are informed was insured for \$1,500 and the furniture \$900. The furniture that was saved from the flames is badly damaged.

#### REMOVAL!

**C.H. Boyd & Company, Proprietors  
of the**

#### HORSE SHOE DRUG STORE

have removed their large stock of Drugs, Medicines, Toilet and Fancy Articles, to the Miller Block No. 179 Garrison avenue, next door to Williams Bros. where they will be pleased to see everybody and his neighbor. Returning thanks for past favors they ask a continuance of the same. By strict attention to business this firm has won an enviable notoriety, their motto being "Once a customer always a customer," they labor to secure that result. Don't forget the place sign of the big

#### HORSE SHOE

December 21, 1882

#### DIED

On Sunday last at 2 p.m. Mrs. Zindorf, after a long and painful illness.

The funeral services were held Tuesday morning at the Catholic church, the deceased having been a consistent member of that church all her life. *Requiescat in pace.*

On Tuesday morning at 2 o'clock, George Thomas, infant son of Mr. & Mrs. T. Jeff Cunningham, aged 6 months.

The sympathy of the entire community goes out to the grief stricken parents in this heavy bereavement.

Not dead but gone before.

The Home Dramatic Company was only partly organized last Monday evening, as business prevented all members from attending. Mr. John S. Park was elected President and stage manager, and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution and by laws, consisting of Mr. J.F. Eberle, Mr. J.L.S. Travis, and Mr. J.S. Park. The next meeting will be at the residence of Mr. J.S. Park, corner Jefferson<sup>14</sup> street and Garrison avenue, on Dec. 29, 1882.

#### MARRIED

On Tuesday evening, Dec. 19, 1882, at the Presbyterian church, by Rev. W.A. Sample. Mr. J.D. WILSON, to Miss LULU MORMAN, all of this city.

The church was beautifully decorated for this occasion with flowers. The attendants were Mr. Otie Clark and Miss Macha Wilson, and Mr. Erdie Bomford and Miss Susie Gatlin.

(10) North D Street

(11) North 7th Street

(12) North 5th Street

(13) North 4th Street

(14) North 16th Street

# 1982 MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

MEMBERSHIP, AUGUST 1, 1982

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 Baker, Monica, % Virginia Bronson,  
 1518 Weeks Lane, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
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 Burton, Mrs. Carl, P.O. Box 3035, Ft. Smith, AR 72913  
 Caruthers, Elmo Jr., 285 Booth Ave., Englewood, NJ, 07631  
 Carv, BGen Victor L., Box 1059, Ft. Smith, AR 72902  
 City National Bk, 1222 Rogers, Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Condren, Stewart M., 2809 Heather Oaks Way, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Crane, William Y., 1805 No. A, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Cravens, Elizabeth E., 4200 Sunnyside Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Cravens, Fadjo Jr., 2100 S. W., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
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 P.O. Box 1391, Ft. Smith, AR 72902  
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 Hauert, Rt. 2, Van Buren, AR 72956  
 Hawkins, Mr. & Mrs. Franklin, 4701 Free Ferry Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Hill, Robert B., 45 S. 4, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Johnston, Mr. & Mrs. Ben B., 3000 Blackburn, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Joyce, Mr. & Mrs. Taylor, 1713 Savannah Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Kelley, Miss Gordon, P.O. Box 1551, Ft. Smith, AR 72902  
 Kelly, James B., 3400 Bissonnet, Suite 200, Houston, TX 77005  
 Kistler, Betty L., 322 S. 14, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Koenig, Dr. A. Samuel, MD, 4000 Free Ferry Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
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 O G & E Co., c/o J. T. Gilliam, 311 Lexington Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
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Bell, Fletcher, Rt. 1, Box 49D, New Blaine, AR 72851  
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77550  
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Burns, Norma M., Rt. 3, Box 707, Spiro, OK 74959  
Burrow, Mrs. S. H., Box 134, Ozark, AR 72949  
Bushkill, Dick, 1227 58 Terr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Bushong, Mr. & Mrs. Chuck, 3708 Marshall Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Buzbee, Mrs. Reedy, 1305 N. 58 Terr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
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Byrum, Virginia L., P. O. Box 465, Salida, CA 95368  
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Calvert, Betty, 1118 N. 36, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Calvert, Carla M., 10 Riverlyn Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
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Chancey, Dr. J. P., 6600 Rogers, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Chaney, Susan, 2318 N. 55 Ln, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Chausteur, Jules V., 4422 S. 31, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Childress, Joann, 211 W.B. St., Tehachapi, CA 93561  
Chiolino, Mrs. Frank J., 519 Melrose, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,  
Genealogical Dept., 50 E. No. Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84150  
Clark, Mrs. Rex, 1812 Taylor, Ave., Springdale, AR 72764  
Cole, Mrs. R. M., 2202 S. S., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Coleman, Billy G., P. O. Box 479, Spiro, OK 74959  
Coleman, Nancy, 805 S. 23, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Collier, Bess L., 1424 N. 38, #2, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Collins, Mr. & Mrs. J. R. Jr., 501 Jenny Wren, Van Buren, AR 72956  
Condren, Ann W., 1428 SW 72nd, Oklahoma City, OK 73159  
Conger, Del., 4324 N. O, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Coogan, Robert C. CPA, P. O. Box 1788, Fayetteville, AR 72701  
Cook Elementary School, 3517 Brooken Hill Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Copeland, Mrs. Mary C., 5516 Country Club, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Cornelius, Lena, 3605 Grand, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Corrotto, Mrs. Leo, 3229 S. 39, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Couch, Virginia, Rt. 1, Box 587, Arkoma, OK 74901  
Council, Dansby A., 11 Berry Hill, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Cowne, Mr. & Mrs. Chas. E., 817 Garrison Ave. Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Craighead County Library, 315 W. Oak, Jonesboro, AR 72401  
Crampton, Dale, 2708 Alabama Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Cretnik, Leo, 323 S. 17 St., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Crews, Polly, 501 May, #3 Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Crump, Mrs. Robert G., P. O. Box 367, Greenwood, AR 72936  
Danner, Mrs. John M. 1615 S. 22, #1, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Davidson, James B., P. O. Box 622, Ft. Smith, AR 72902  
Dawson, Mr. C. C., Rt. 1, Box 410, Arkoma, OK 74901  
Dawson, John K, 2825 Dodson Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Dean B. Ellis Library, AR State Univ., Box 2040, State Univ, AR 72467  
Delaney, James J., 301 N. 20, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Delt, Mary, 2121 Wolfe Ln., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
DeVito, Mrs. Inez S., 1114 S. Greenwood, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Dew, James A., 2714 Kelley Hwy, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Dingman, Marion M., 421 S. First Ave., Barstow, CA 92311  
Dixon, Gilmer K., 1015 S. Greenwood, Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Dixon, Mr. & Mrs. N. E., 3300 Fresno Ct., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Dobbs, Mrs. Byron, 4902 S. U., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Donoho, Tommy, 8 Riverlyn Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Doss, Capt. C. T., 1201 S. 74, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Draper, Mrs. J. Kelley, 431 May Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
DuBois, Bill & Susan, 9 Quincy Cir., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Duerr, Joseph H., 4714 S. T Cir., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Dryhood, Juanita, 7416 Euper Ln., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Eads, Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Sr., 2519 S. 47 Ct., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Echols, Mr. & Mrs. Olen J., 3208 So. 92, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Ellis, June B. PhD, 512 So. 16, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
England, Ann & Bill, 1134 N. Waldron Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
England, Raymond, Mrs., 1408 S. 40 Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Ernst, Robert R., Rt. 3, Box 99D, Winona, MN 55987  
Euper, Mary Nell, 1415 N. Waldron, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Evans, Calvin, 9714 Moody Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Falivene, Carl J., Rt. 5, Box 307G, Athens, OH 45701  
Falk, Mrs. Geo R., 1218 Elizabeth Ln, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Farrar, Jackie M., 701 N. 6, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Farris, Mrs. Clayton, 1000 Lowery St., Delray Beach, FL 33444  
Farris, Elizabeth Putman, 1415 Frontier Ln, Edmond, OK 73034  
Faulkner, Mrs. J. P., 603 Lecta, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Fayetteville Public Library, 217 E. Dickson, Fayetteville, AR 72701  
Fears, May, 108 Vista Hills Blvd., Van Buren, AR 72956  
Felker, Dr. Gary V., 3000 Rogers Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Fent, H. Don, 2304 S. 65, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Ferguson, David A., P. O. Box 190, Muldrow, OK 74948  
Ferguson, Jackson, P. O. Box 613, Blacksburg, VA 24060  
Fishback, Bernice, 2014 S. M., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Fisher, Robert D., 1214 E. Jackson Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Flynn, Lila Jean, 2614E N. Tustin Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705  
Ft Smith Chamber of Commerce, 613 Garrison Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Foster, Virginia L., 120 N. 17, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Fowler, Charles A., 524 N. 38, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Frazier, Mrs. Raymond, 3650 Barry, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Fulgham, Mr. & Mrs. David, 6704 Harness Way, Mobile, AL 36609  
Furr, Mrs. Jackie, 2008 E. 12 Place, Tulsa, OK 74104

Gaines, Mrs. Joe, 1305 Charleston, Garland, TX 75041  
Galloway, Wayne D., 3208 S. 34, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Gardner, Mrs. Carnall, 5315 S. Cliff Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Gardner, Virginia, 5515 Country Club Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Garner, C. E., 4523 Free Ferry Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Garrison, C. B., 3418 S. Cliff Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Gately, Glenn, 3326 Crow Hill Cir, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Gentry, Eneard W., 2624 Surrey Ave., Modesto, CA 95355  
Geren, Mr. & Mrs. Dick, 4601 Grand Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Gilker, James A., 1 Free Ferry Hgts, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Godt, Mrs. Henry C., 709 S. 23, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Godt, Henry C. Jr., 12410 Ballas Meadows Dr., Des Peres MO 63131  
Gordon, Bill, Sr., P. O. Box 1236, Ft. Smith, AR 72902  
Gordon, Bill W. Jr., 8100 Mark Ln, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Goslin, Mr. & Mrs. John Alan, 2666 Enid St., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Grace, Mrs. James B., 1923 Hendricks Blvd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Grant, Mrs. H. L., 603 Little John Ln, Houston, TX 77024  
Gray, Dr. C. K., 400 S. 16, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Gray, Del, 1420 N. 35, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Gray, Mrs. Thomas V., 1315 55 Terr. Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Green, Theodore S., 2537 Clear View Ave., Ventura, CA 93003  
Gregg, Dr. & Mrs. J. Burton, 2712 S. Greenwood, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Hannah, Curtis A., 4058 N. Oketo, Norridge, IL 60634  
Hamilton, Gary C., 8239 Cypress, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Harlan, Parks E., Box 158, Spiro, OK 74959  
Harper, W. R. "Bud", 2107 Wedgewood, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Harris, Ruth, 5505 Cross Ln, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Harrison, Mrs. Pearl, 1018 N. 49, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Harrison, Mrs. Robert L., 4800 Skywood Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Hawkins, Mrs. Frank, 31 Crepe Myrtle Pl., Little Rock, AR 72209  
Hawkins, Dr. Wright, 9 Berry Hill, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Heathcock, Mrs. Leota, Rt. 1, Box 141A, Barling, AR 72923  
Heflin, Mr. & Mrs. George, 12674 West 116th, Overland Park, KS 66210  
Henson, Mr. & Mrs. Perry, 1514 Hendricks Blvd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Hill, Mrs. Naomi, 3801 S. Gary, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Hill, Mrs. Robert B., 1528 Hendricks Blvd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Hissom, Mrs. Lillian M., 4301 Skywood Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Hobbs, Lloyd G., P. O. Box 126, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Hodges, Mrs. Luther, Jr., 3301 London Derry Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Hodges, Mary Frances, 2719 Elkhart, Little Rock, AR 72204  
Hoge, Dr. & Mrs. Marlin, 5501 S. Cliff Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Holder, Roberta, 2501 Dallas Cir., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Homolka, Charles, P. O. Box 394, Ft. Smith, AR 72902  
Huckaby, Mary E., 1205 N. 41, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Hosford, Dorothy E., 2510 S. 67, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Hughes, Dr. Charles I., 308 Greenwood, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Hughes, Dr. & Mrs. R. P. Jr., 6717 Free Ferry Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Huskison, William, 7715 Horan Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Inman, Mr. & Mrs. Donald E., 2822 Wesleyan, Irving, TX 75062  
Inman, Eugene B., 3421 S. Cliff, Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Irvin, Jessie R., 609 Superior Rd., White Oak, TX 75963  
Jacobsen, Mrs. Mary L., 1023 N. 13, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Jedlicka, Frank, 4200 N. 55, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Jenkins, Doris J., Rt. 1, Box 75, Hackett, AR 72937  
Jenkins, Jimmy L., 146 N. 41, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Jensen, Benoyd, 4900 S. W., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Jetton, Faye, 1221 N. Waldron Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Johnson, Bill, P. O. Box 428, Mansfield, AR 72944  
Johnson, Katherine, 1123 N. 14, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Johnston, Burley, 9610 Painter Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Johnston, Dr. Mont S., 10 Link NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120  
Jones, Ira F. Jr., 5526 Grand Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Jones, Jay W., 3500 S. 62, #39, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Joyce, Mrs. Joe D., 1101 S. 22, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Karr, Mr. & Mrs. Charles, 7415 Westminster, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Keck, Kathleene, 501 N. 17, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Keller, Fred L. Sr., 608 8th St. Dr., Yukon, OK 73099  
Kelly, Mrs. Howard, 2310 S. R., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Kelsey, Dr. & Mrs. Fred C., 6419 Boston, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Kelsey, Dr. & Mrs. J. F. 3220 S. Cliff Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Kimble, Mrs. R. V., 936 Cedar St., Greenville, MS 38701  
Kimmions Jr. High School, 2201 Waldron Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
King, Mrs. Ruth M., 700 Belle Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Kirkpatrick, Mrs. Fred Jr., 530 Melrose, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Kizzlar, Mrs. Guy, 6118 Gila Rd., El Paso, TX 79905  
Krock, Mrs. F. H., 4008 S. S., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Krone, Mrs. Tim M. Sr., 1420 55 Terr, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Kuykendall, Gene, 1821 Phoenix, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Lackey, Edythe T., 217 S. Holly St., Sallisaw, OK 74955  
LaFontaine, Edna & Larry, 9504 Springwater, Dallas, TX 75228  
LaFontaine, Mr. & Mrs. David, 1825 Ridgewood Rd., Ft. Collins, CO 80526  
Lairamore, Harvey & Marilea, 3215 Old Greenwood Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Landers, Arba, Rt. 1, Box 355, Arkoma, OK 74901  
Latture, Paul, 613 Garrison Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Lee, Mrs. C. C., 1302 N. 56 Terr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Leggett, Paul R., 4515 Park Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Lind, D. C., P. O. Box 4070, Ft. Smith, AR 72914  
Link, Jerry, 723 N. 45, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Linnemann, Mr. & Mrs. Lowell, 811 N. 13, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Little, Mrs. W. J., 1318 S. Reno, El Reno, OK 73036  
Lockwood, Dr. & Mrs. F. M., 70 Haven Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Looper, Floy, 1140 N. 57 Terr. Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Lothery, Mrs. E. Frank, 802 Strozler Ln, Barling, AR 72923  
Loudermilk, Charles, 2530 Greenlawn, Union Lake, MI 48085  
Loum, Alice, 1520 S. P, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Loum, Michael R., 5824 Carlye Dr., Little Rock, AR 72209  
McCain, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth, 4506 N. 46 Cir., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
McCann, R. E. Jr., 4620 Free Ferry Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
McCarty, Mrs. G. L., 4110 S. P, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
McCauley, Mrs. H. E., 2206 S. 64, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
McCuen, Judge W. J., P. O. Box 269, Hot Springs, AR 71901  
McCullough, Mrs. Warren, 7816 Texas Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
McDonough, J. Martin, Carroll Rd., Sparks, MD 21152  
McEwen, Dr. & Mrs. Stan, 130 N. 30, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
McFarland, Mrs. Roy, 4619 N. M, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
McGee, Richard A., Rt. 1, Box 231, Arkoma, OK 74901  
McGuire, Clair A., 640 Balboa Ave., Coronado, CA 92118  
McLaughlin, Glen, 20264 Ljepava Dr., Saratoga, CA 95070  
McNeil, Jack, P. O. Box 707, Parkin, AR 72373  
Mankin, Charles, 48 Ferndale, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Marberry, Virginia, 283 E. 33 St., New York, NY 10016  
Marks, Morton & Isabel, 1018 S. 23, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Marquette, Mr. & Mrs. Donald G., 2601 S. Houston, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Marquis, Mr. & Mrs. Birney, 1121-A Laurel, McAllen, TX 78501  
Martin, Mr. & Mrs. Art B. Jr., 2212 S. T, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Martin, Cy, 2519 Daisy Ln., Ft. Worth, TX 76111  
Martin, Tommy, 738 S. Jupiter, Garland, TX 75042  
Matthews, Mrs. Ruth I., 9412 S. Enid, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Mecham, E. L., P. O. Box 97, Albuquerque, NM 87130  
Meek, Mrs. Robert S., 3009 Park Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Mellies, Inc., 311 N. 16 Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Meltzer, Mrs. W. D., 4803 S. U, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Meriwether, Rosalie, 4914 S. U, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Metheny, Arlie, 3601 Marshall Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Michael, Norma, P. O. Box 69, Hartford, AR 72938  
Mikel, William, 1012 N. 38, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Mitchael, Mrs. A. W., Rt. 2, Box 430, Ft. Smith, AR 72916  
Mitchell, Alonzo F., 6804 S. 6, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Montague, Jean, 7815 Euper Ln, J-85, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Montgomery, Fred, 2000 S. Q, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Montgomery, John Robert, Box 787, Sallisaw, OK 74955  
Moody, Mr. & Mrs. C. R., 2138 Sorrel Ln SW, Roanoke, VA 24018  
Moore, Lee Anne, 307 Shady Ln, Van Buren, AR 72956  
Moore, Mr. & Mrs. W. P., 1739 Sherwood Forest Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70815  
Moore, Mr. & Mrs. Walter T., 2315 S. 65, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Moore, William H., 5005 Leeshire Trl, Tucker, GA 30084  
Morley, Rhoda J., 1765 N. 441, Okeechobee, FL 33472  
Morphew, Enos, 1198 Brookside Ln, Lincoln, CA 95648  
Morris, Mrs. Betty, 3201 S. 18, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Mott, Gordon B., 1022 S. Carolina Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003  
Mott, Mrs. Ralph, 1104 S. 26, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Moulton, Dr. & Mrs. E. C., Jr., 4700 S. Cliff Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Mullen, Miss Kathaleen, 1615 S. 22, Apt. 8, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Mulloy, Richard L., 4701 Mussett Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Myers, Mrs. F. G., 3388 E. 25, Apt. A, Tulsa, OK 74114  
Nelson, Dell, 5333 S. Y Cir., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Nelson, Eric W., Jr., 1112 Horizon Trail, Richardson, TX 75081  
Newman, Mr. & Mrs. Keith M., 3409 Royal Scots Way, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Northside High School, N 23 & B Sts. Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Old Fort Museum Ass'n, 320 Rogers, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
O'Brien, Fountaine, 3610 Morris Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Overstreet, Mrs. Russell, 1618 N. I, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Owens, Lois F., Rt. 2, Box 436, Muldrow, OK 74948  
Pachi, Mrs. Joe B., 2717 Ionia, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Pachi, Merle, 2224 S. U St., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Paine, Mr. & Mrs. Robert L., 5215 Elm, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Pape, Mr. & Mrs. Bob, 3117 Orlando Rd., Oklahoma City, OK 73120  
Parker, James B., 130 E. 18 St., Apt. 9-V, New York NY, 10003  
Patton, Mr. & Mrs. J. Fred, 1217 S. 37, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Paxson, Dillwyn W., Rt. 2, Box 172, Winslow, AR 72959  
Payne, Howard A., RR 4, Pocohantas Trail, Basett, VA 24055  
Payne, Sarah Elbertine, 7811 Euper Ln, #K-92, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Peer, Mr. & Mrs. Donald C., 4600 S. S St., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
Pegues, Mrs. Hazel M., P. O. Box 4247, Ft. Smith, AR 72914  
Perry, Richard V., 1125 N. S. St., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Pevehouse, Mr. & Mrs. Bob Ed, 1224 56 Terr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
Phillips, James O., 7 Haven Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Pierce, Harlan, 1410 S. 12, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
Pilgrim, Annabelle, Rt. 1, Box 104, Arkoma, OK 74901  
Pinkston, Mrs. Marvin, 814 S. 11, Ft. Smith, AR 72901

Pittman, M/Sgt. & Mrs. Tom Sr., P. O. Box 43, Hackett, AR 72937  
 Platt, Mrs. Rosalie E., 4602, 4602 S. V. Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Pine Bluff & Jefferson Co. Public Library, 200 E. 8, Pine Bluff, AR 71601  
 Porter, Col. & Mrs. C.B. Jr., 7500 Westminster Pl., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Pratt, Bryan, 7415 Faust Ave., Canoga Pk., CA 91307  
 Presson, Hazel G., 3410 S. M. Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Prewitt, Dr. Taylor, 8311 Mile Tree Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Price, Miss Ethel, 221 Lecta Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Pullen, Mr. & Mrs. Floyd, 2606 Enid Pl., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Putman, Mrs. Jesse, 4907 S. U. Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Ragon, John C., 6300 Park, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Rains, Frances, 1801 Utica Pl., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Rambo, James B., 2101 Autry Ln., Bryan, TX 77801  
 Ramsey Junior High School, 3201 Jenny Lind, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Rebsamen, Dr. R. D., P. O. Box 3066, Ft. Smith, AR 72913  
 Reding, Lawrence, 4116 S. 83, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Redwine, Mr. W. D., Box 604, Greenwood, AR 72936  
 Reed, J. Ralph, 1211 S. 57 Pl., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Reutzel, Charles A., 1700 Burnham Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Richards, William S., 420 N. 36 Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Richardson, Betty, 5617 Wessex, Ft. Worth, TX 76133  
 Riddle, Mr. & Mrs. Joe, 820 S. 25, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Riggs, Mrs. Ralph J., 4117 Bradley Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Roberts Paint & Crafts, 623 Towson, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Robinson, Joseph, 6445 Crystalline Dr., San Diego, CA 92120  
 Robinson, Sandra, 8600 S. 30 Terr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Roebuck, Dr. Fred., 144 Lecta, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Roebuck, Betty Thompson, 220 Lecta, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Rogers, Mrs. Hugh, 2315 S. O, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Roop, B. O., Rt. 1, Box 53, Fayetteville, AR 72701  
 Rose, Mr. & Mrs. Charley B., 621 Tompkins Dr., Okla. City, OK 73127  
 Ross, Ezra L., 1328 Ransom Ave., Brookings, OR 97415  
 Ruge, Johanna, 1520 S. Eye St., #4, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Russell, Clayton, 7812 Texas Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Rutledge, Emily, 321 May, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Sanders, Anna Lee, 220 N. Tyler, Little Rock, AR 72205  
 Sanders, Mary B., 5672 Kern Dr., Huntington Beach CA, 92649  
 Sanders, Sarah C., 5801 Kinkead Ave., Apt. 75, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Schaap, Mary Elizabeth, 145 Lecta Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Schaap, Mr. & Mrs. Ray, Jr., 9809 Labette, Little Rock, AR 72205  
 Scherry, Claudia, 3904 S. P., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Schirmer, Mrs. Roy E., 54 Haven Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Schmidt, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth, 2017 Warwick Pl. Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Schullis, Lorna, 8223 Holly, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Scurock, Mrs. R.O., 601 Lecta Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Sebastian Co. Library, Box 400, Greenwood, AR 72936  
 Seelbinder, Hugo, 2020 S. L., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Sessions, Dr. & Mrs. Will A., Jr., 4612 S. V, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Sharum, Mr. & Mrs. Clarence M., 39 Haven Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Sharum, Mr. & Mrs. Robert A., 2205 S. 26, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Shaw, James, 4367 Potter St., Philadelphia, PA 19124  
 Shoulders, Mr. & Mrs. Warren, 1510 Hendricks, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Simpson, Fr. James B., Hillspeak, Eureka Sprs., AR 72932  
 Sisk, Mrs. Clarice C., 1710 N. 45 Terr., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Skaggs, Mrs. Walter L., 3800 Free Ferry Ln., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Smith, Mrs. Douglas O., 1323 N. 33, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Smith, L.F., 1705 Brazil Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Smith, Maggie Aldridge, 101 N. Madison, Siloam Springs, AR 72761  
 Smith, William J., Rt. 1, Box 377, Arkoma, OK 74901  
 Son, Mr. & Mrs. Clarence F., Son Optical Sr., 3000 Rogers Ave.,  
 Fort Smith, AR 72901  
 Sorell, James, Box 5031, Tucson, AZ 85705  
 Southard, Mrs. J.S., 312 Belle Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Southerland, Cleatus, P. O. Box 25, Muldrow, OK 74948  
 Speaker, Mr. & Mrs. Tris E., 725 N. 44, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Speakman, Lucille R., 613 N. 13, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Spradling Elementary School, 4949 Spradling, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Standrod, Mrs. Garland, 2723 N. 23, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Stanphill, Mrs. H. N., 5710 Country Club Blvd. So., Little Rock, AR 72207  
 Starks, Rosalie Harrison, 1629 Sheffield Rd., Okla. City, OK 73120  
 Staton, Eugene L., 2510 S. 67, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Stearns, George, 2608 Heather Oaks Way, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Steward, Judy Hestand, Old Alma Rd., Van Buren, AR 72956  
 Stubblefield, J. R., 6511 S. Q, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Sugg, Richard, 613 Garrison Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Sunnymead Elementary School, 4201 N. O, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Sutton Elementary School, 5001 Kelley, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Sutton, Fae, 867 N. Lincoln St., Orange, CA 92667  
 Swafford, Mrs. Hugh, 6205 Grand Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Sy, Dorothy, 3212 S. 94 Cir., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Tatum, Evangel, 1924 S.M., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Terbieten, Mrs. Mary E., 905 N. 35, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Terrell, Clela, Rt. 1, Box 382, Hackett, AR 72937  
 Thompson, Mrs. Clover, 5221 Johnson, Apt. 21, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Thompson, Felix, 3801 Free Ferry Ln, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Thompson, Jesse D., P.O. Box 248, Clarksville, AR 72830  
 Tollett, Charlene, Rt. 1, Box 178, Hugo, OK 74743  
 Turner, Mr. & Mrs. Robert F., 1314 Hendricks, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Tustison, Edna, 7815 Euper Ln., #J-83, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 University of Arkansas-Little Rock, 33rd & Univ., Little Rock, AR 72204  
 University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701  
 University of Arkansas at Monticello, Monticello, AR 71655  
 University of Central Arkansas, Torreyson Library, Conway, AR 72032  
 Van Nordsall, Mrs. Alma, 7815 Euper Ln., J-80, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Vandermillion, Mrs. Zeda, Rt. 5, Box 584, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Van Zandt, Mr. T. J., 2110 E. Main St., Van Buren, AR 72956  
 Vaughn, James E., Rt. 1, Box 774, Lavaca, AR 72941  
 Vertrees, Mrs. Tom, Sr., 4218 Free Ferry Ln., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Vick, Mr. & Mrs. Robert H., 1457 N. 41, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Van Derau, Inez M., 5523 Castle Way, San Antonio, TX 78218  
 Vorster, Sister Pierre, P.O. Box 3489, Ft. Smith, AR 72913  
 Wakefield, Sam E., 419 S. 18, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Walker, Cecelia M., 2508 S. "O" St., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Walrod, Albert B., 1011 Louisville, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Watkins, Ben O., 1918 S. M, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Watkins, Raymond, W., 6119 Beachway Dr., Falls Church, VA 22041  
 Watson, Mrs. Allen E., Rt. 2, Box 83-A, Charleston, AR 72933  
 Weatherford, Daisy, Star Route, Arlington, OR 97812  
 Weeks, Mr. & Mrs. W. H., 4900 E. Valley Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Weidman, Bill & Peggy, 801 S 24, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Wentz, Mrs. Merritt R., #2 Steward, Van Buren, AR 72956  
 Westark Community College, Sociology Dept., P.O. Box 3649, Ft. Smith,  
 AR 72913  
 Westphal, Mr. & Mrs. Bennie, 5700 Euper Ln., Ft. Smith,  
 AR 72903  
 Westphal, Mr. & Mrs. Danny, 531 N. 35, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Wheeler, Dr. Homer C., 2015 S. 13, McAlester, OK 74501  
 Whitaker, Mrs. Rue, 920 W. Nicholson, Harrison, AR 72601  
 White, Dr. & Mrs. J. Earle, 7 Riverlynn Terr., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 White, Phil, 523 Garrison, #3E, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 White River Regional Library, 368 E. Main St., Batesville, AR 72501  
 Whitehead, Mrs. C. P., 10625 Aztex Dr., Sun City, AR 85373  
 Whitely, Mrs. S. G., 221 N. 17, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Wiggins, Alpha P., 7000 Free Ferry Rd. Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Wiggins, Corene F., 1537 S. 36, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Wiley, Irene N., 13032 Duffield, LaMirada, CA 90638  
 Williams, Dr. John C., 415 S. 16, Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Willis, Milton, P. O. Box 652, Van Buren, AR 72956  
 Wilson, Dr. & Mrs. Carl L., 4601 Free Ferry Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Wilson, Mrs. Harry B., 1411 Meadow Ln., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Wilson, Dr. Morton C., c/o Holt Krock Clinic, 1500 Dodson, Ft. Smith, AR  
 72901  
 Wilson, Steve, 5 Free Ferry Cir., Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Winans, Mr. & Mrs. Lewis, 21 College Park Ave., Oneonta, NY 13820  
 Wisconsin State Historical Society, 816 State St., Madison, WI 53706  
 Wofford, Mrs. Ben, Jr., 1710 N. 46 Circle, Ft. Smith, AR 72904  
 Wolferman, Elizabeth M., 1109 Adelaide Ave., Ft. Smith, AR 72901  
 Woodhull, John, 10941 Galax, El Monte, CA 91733  
 Wooten, Mr. & Mrs. Paul, 2801 S. 36, Ft. Smith, AR 72903  
 Wynn, Abbie, 8320 Byrd Ave., Inglewood, CA 90305  
 Yary, Mrs. Clearcie E., 13026E Hart Place, Cerritos, CA 90701  
 Yearty, Gordon & Gennievie, P.O. Box 892, Ft. Smith, AR 72902  
 Zarwell, Lillian, 2033 S. 69, Ft. Smith, AR 72903



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- il - some sort of graphic is used, other than a portrait.
- por - a portrait of the person(s) named is on page indicated.
- (---) - for such as spouse, title, marital status, degree, etc.
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