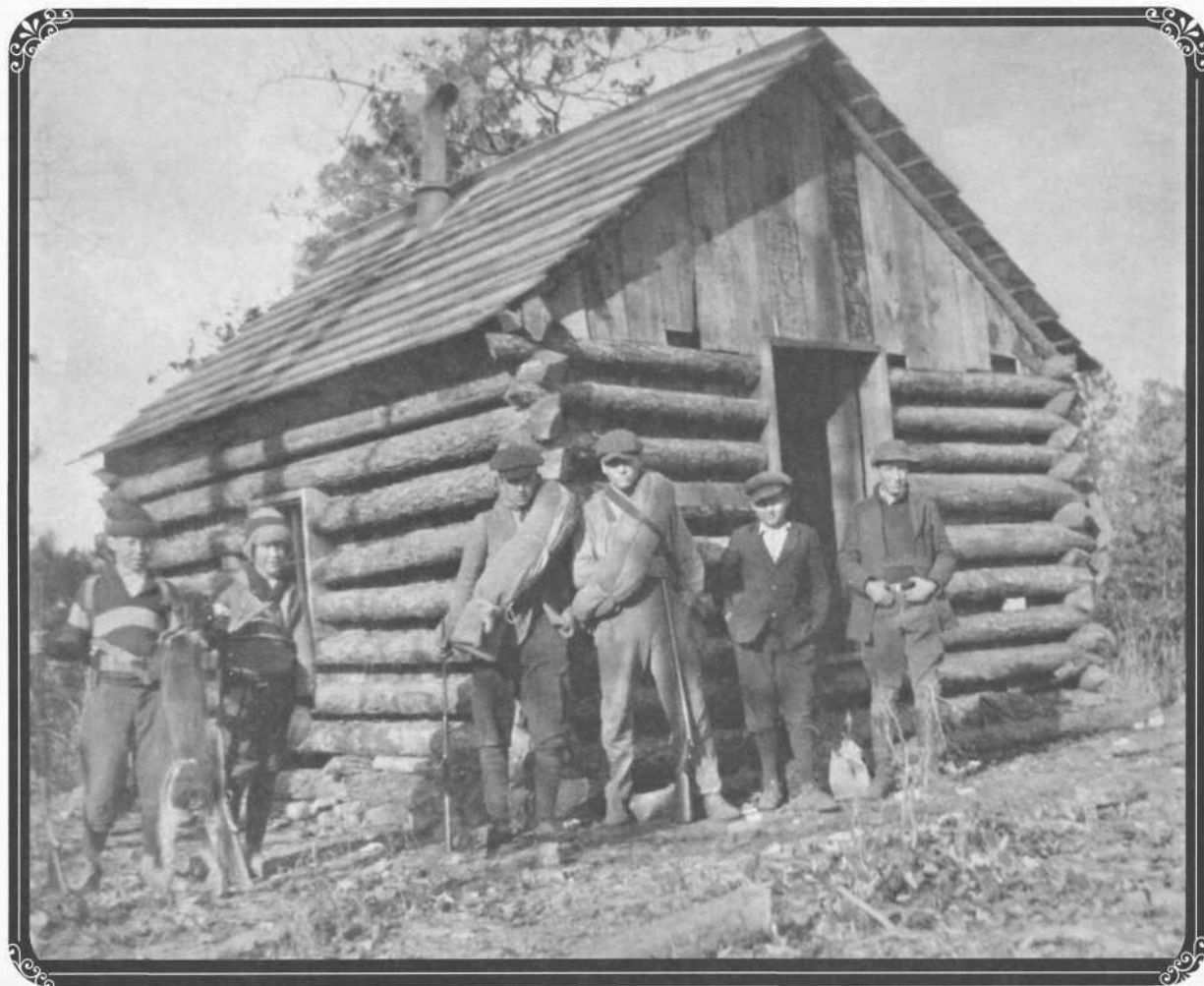


The JOURNAL



C.F. Wilmans and the Boy Rangers



*The New Theatre
from 1911 to the future*



*'Hangin' Times in
Fort Smith, Part X*



*Drennen House
Teaches Historians*

Vol. 29, No. 2, September 2005



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Our website is updated regularly, and contains information on the Organization, Membership, Back issues: How to order, Tables of Contents of Back Issues, Contacts & Links, Archives, and a Gallery of Historic Images: Views of old Fort Smith.

See the Query page on our website for a bulletin board of current research questions. Readers may post their own research questions or topics in hopes of furthering their own research.

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The JOURNAL

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COVER: "No uniform... no Scout," said the bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America. C.F. Wilmans responded by creating the Boy Rangers in Fort Smith in 1917. His organization allowed hundreds of local boys to enjoy the outdoors. A group of boys are pictured at their summer camp cabin, Jan. 1, 1923. Left to right: Jack Riley, Pat Duncan, Richard Maple, Donald Dalby, Oliver LeFever and James Berry. Photo from the Wilmans Collection.

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News & Opportunities

2005 Frontier Achievement Awards

Each year, the Secondary Social Studies Educators of Fort Smith recognize individuals, businesses, or industries who have made an outstanding contribution to the historical development of our city and/or helped to preserve the heritage of Fort Smith.

An awards ceremony and social were held April 22 to announce the winners of the 2005 Frontier Awards:

- Maxine Eggensperger, a retired educator of the Fort Smith Public School System.

- N.W. 15th Arkansas Volunteer Infantry Civil War Reenactment Group.

- The Darby Community Center for the preservation of the 1886 First Christian Church at North 7th and C Streets in Fort Smith.

After the social an official meeting of the Fort Smith Historical Society convened in order to thank outgoing board president, Jack Arnold, for his service. Incoming president, Billy Higgins, was installed.

Society Business Meetings Announced

On Sept. 19 at 6 p.m. in the Board Room of the Fort Smith Library a meeting will be held to discuss a revision of the bylaws and constitution of the Fort Smith Historical Society.

A called meeting of the Fort Smith Historical Society will be held Nov. 14 at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Fort Smith Public Library. The purpose of the meeting is to vote on the new Constitution and By-Laws. All members are encouraged to attend.

The regular quarterly meeting of the Fort Smith Historical Society is set for Oct. 19 at 2 p.m. at the Fort Smith Public Library Board room.

Informal History Discussion, Sept. 24

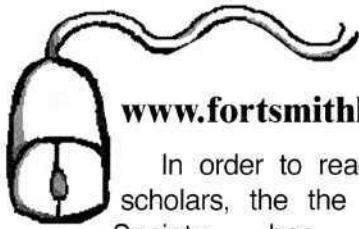
Ben Boulden will host a general discussion of local history at 1 p.m. at the Fort Smith Public Library. These informal meetings are open for anyone to share stories, research and knowledge.

No duty is required for membership other than the payment of dues. Interested members are sought to produce the Journal and archive materials held by the Historical Society. Meetings and programs of the Fort Smith Historical Society are open to the public.



2005 Frontier Award honorees. Left to right, seated: Steve Christian, David Johnston and Jim Starbird, members of the N.W. Arkansas 15th; Maxine Eggensperger, educator; Mike Thompson and Clint Morris, also members of the re-enactor group. Left to right, standing: David Alexander, N.W. Arkansas 15th; Brenda Andrews of the City of Fort Smith Planning Department; Mike Alsup, director of Fort Smith Parks & Recreation Department (Darby Center).

Historical research on the Internet enhanced by society's website and a searchable index of all Journals, from the Boreham Library



www.fortsmithhistory.com

In order to reach more readers and scholars, the the Fort Smith Historical Society has a website at www.fortsmithhistory.com.

Ben Boulden manages the site, which includes scores of images from the archives of the society and from collectors who have offered their holdings for display.

Following the lead of the National Archives or the Smithsonian web sites, the Fort Smith Historical Society is endeavoring to make information available to remote readers who may never have the opportunity to travel here. Sharing this valuable information, rather than archiving or collecting all of the original documents, exemplifies the philosophy of the Fort Smith Historical Society that these

important materials should be preserved, catalogued and the information they contain made accessible to as many interested users as possible.

The Society also hopes that the web site will attract or reveal even more material and information to be added to the historical record of Fort Smith and the surrounding area.

The site's image galleries online grow regularly and currently include photographs, newspaper clippings, maps, historic publications and postcard images.

It also includes a cooperative chronology of significant dates in Fort Smith history, a page of biographies, and current information about joining the Historical Society.

The Society is currently seeking donations or a single sponsor to support the cost of maintaining the web site.

Contact benboulden@sbcglobal.net to contribute materials or donations to the web site project.



www.uaafortsmith.edu/Library/FortSmithHistoricalSocietyJournalIndex

The Boreham Library at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith has contributed immeasurably to the accessibility of historical research by publishing an electronic index of the Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society on the library website.

All the volumes from 1977 through April 2005 are searchable. The electronic index is a direct transcription of the index pages from the individual Journal issues, according to Martha Coleman, librarian, at the Boreham Library.

A researcher using the index might search for a subject or name, for example, to learn specifically in which issue it was included.

To obtain that specific article, Coleman recommends using the Interlibrary Loan Services from any local library to request a photocopy of an article. (The complete volumes of the Journal are not available in electronic format at this time.)

Coleman notes on the library website that the electronic index is a work in progress. A group of

students accomplished the original work of transcribing data from the Journal indices into a database. Fort Smith Historical Society volunteers proof-read the database entries and the university's information technology service assisted in publishing the searchable database online, according to Coleman.

Users are invited to submit corrections to the searchable index. Coleman's e-mail address is provided on the website. Contributing writers and other researchers are encouraged to review their subjects of interest to help with the on-going editing and revision process.

The society also encourages those interested in obtaining back issues to review the inside front cover of each Journal for information on ordering issues. All Journal back issues are available. Only Volume 1 is reproduced as a copy, as the original issues are no longer available.

The society commends and thanks Coleman and the Boreham Library for making this information available globally.

Fort Smith Historical Society

"Save Outdoor Sculpture!" Photography Contest

Sponsored by Bedford Camera & Video and the Fort Smith Historical Society

Purpose: This contest is designed to promote Fort Smith's outdoor sculptures which are listed on the Smithsonian American Art Museum Art Inventories, display the photographs, and recognize the personal efforts of the photographers.

Content: Photographs will be judged on artistic and technical merit as well as content. They should depict the beauty, aesthetics, and historical value of outdoor sculpture in Fort Smith. The photographs should be easily identifiable and highlight various sculptures in different locations in Fort Smith.

Contest Period: Photos must be turned in no later than Jan. 31, 2006 to any Bedford Camera & Video location. Judging will be complete and winners announced by Feb. 15, 2006. Photographs not selected may be picked up beginning Feb. 28 at Bedford Camera & Video, Inc. in Fort Smith.

Prizes:

Best of Show: \$75 gift certificate from Bedford Camera & Video, 10"x15" print of winning photo, one roll of film and developing, three year membership in the Fort Smith Historical Society, photograph to be used in the April 2006 issue of the Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society.

1st Runner Up: \$50 gift certificate from Bedford Camera & Video, 10"x15" print of winning photo, one roll of film and developing, two year membership in the Fort Smith Historical Society, photograph to be used in the April 2006 issue of the Journal.

2nd Runner Up: \$25 gift certificate from Bedford Camera & Video, 10"x15" print of winning photo, one roll of film and developing, one year membership in the Fort Smith Historical Society, photograph to be used in the April 2006 issue of the Journal.

Honorable Mention: One roll of film and developing from Bedford's Camera & Video, and photograph to be used in April 2006 issue of the Journal.

A **Youth Division** with similar prizes is also a part of the contest.

Adult contestants and students under 25 may find complete entry and prize information, and a complete list of the sculptures at Bedford's Camera and Video, Inc., 2801 Rogers Ave., Fort Smith, Ark.

Smithsonian American Art Museum Art Inventories

What are the Art Inventories?

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has two comprehensive listings, the Inventory of American Paintings Executed before 1924 and The Inventory of American Sculpture. These inventories provide information on over 335,000 artworks in public and private collections worldwide.

The Inventory of American Sculpture records works from Colonial up through contemporary times. In-depth information on nearly 32,000 outdoor sculptures collected from a nationwide survey known as Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!) is a key component of the sculpture database.

Outdoor Sculpture in Fort Smith

The initial survey of sculpture in Fort Smith was conducted in 1993 by a Pine Bluff sculptor who coordinated the statewide SOS! Survey for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, and Mark Christ, of the AHPP. AHPP staff members surveyed again in 2003, documenting sculptures that were missed originally or were installed since then.

The list of sculptures sent to Washington did not include everything included in the state inventory. Funerary sculptures in cemeteries were not sent unless they were signed by the artist or depicted an interred individual. SOS! In Washington specifically excluded funerary art, but the AHPP staff managed to get those that were included brought into their inventory.

A complete list of eligible sculpture is included in the contest entry form available at Bedford's or online at www.fortsmithhistory.com.

Addendum

“Winslow Park: A Rustic Retreat”

by Melanie Speer Wiggins

In the Sept. 2005 *Journal*, (Vol. 29, No.1) footnotes and sources for the article “Winslow Park: A Rustic Retreat” were accidentally omitted. In order to make the historical record correct they are published, below.

“It was Fort Smith’s Palm Beach,” ¹

1. Phone interview with Kay Cravens, Fort Smith, Ark., Sept. 9, 2004.

...Ida McFaddin (Mrs. W. P. H.) of Beaumont wrote to her husband on 4 July 1917: “You just have to see it here to appreciate the beauty and the coolness.” ²

2. Letters from Ida McFaddin, July 1917, courtesy of The McFaddin Ward House, Beaumont, Texas.

She went on to say that the view on both sides of the mountain down to the valley below was “beautiful.” ³

3. McFaddin letters.

“This new enterprise is of great value to Winslow as a summer resort...” ⁴

4. **The Winslow American**, Sept. 10, 1909. University of Arkansas Special Collections, Washington County Historical Society MC 1368, Box 32, Folder 35.

A letterhead for the club... listed the directors... ⁵

5. Ralph Speer, Jr. collection.

Speer listed the families he remembered in the 1920s... ⁶

6. Ralph Speer, Jr. “Winslow Lodge, Winslow Park Club, Winslow, Ark.”

Winslow bore the name of Frisco’s president. ⁷

7. Robert G. Winn and Lyda Winn Pace, Winslow: **Top of the Ozarks**. Washington County Historical Society, 1983. University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Washington County Historical Society, MC 1368, Box 32.

...around 1908, more businesses appeared in Winslow. ⁸

7. Ibid.

“You didn’t see very many walkways of that nature.” ⁹

9. Phone interview with Betty Speer Morgan, Conway, Ark., Sept. 12, 2004.

...hack drivers, gathered the guests, loaded them up and clip-clopped down the various dirt roads. ¹⁰

10. Winn and Pace, Winslow: **Top of the Ozarks**.

For a while, they could hear the train pulling the long grade on the south side... ¹¹

11. Douglas C. Jones, **Weedy Rough**, 75.

...all did a rushing business immediately after the train left

the station,” noted historians. ¹²

12. Winn and Pace, Winslow: **Top of the Ozarks**.

“These were called ‘Thank-you ma’ams...” ¹³

13. Cravens interview.

“There was a story about Mrs. Mastin, who made her chauffeur honk at every hairpin curve...” ¹⁴

14. Phone interview with Randall Viguet, Fort Smith, Ark., Sept. 12, 2004.

“She brought a cook, too...” ¹⁵

15. Morgan interview.

Mrs. Mastin was also Tommy Mastin’s grandmother. ¹⁶

16. Phone interview with Rudd (“Ruddy”) Ross, Jr., Fort Smith, Ark., Sept. 25, 2004.

“My first memories were that we went on the train.” ¹⁷

17. Morgan interview.

...extra train in the summer months that was called the Dinky ¹⁸

18. Winn and Pace, Winslow, **Top of the Ozarks**.

She made sweet grass baskets, which were very popular. ¹⁹

19. Ibid.

She was a rather large woman who wore a pince-nez and an imposing array of jewelry. ²⁰

20. McFaddin letters; Ralph Speer, Jr., “Winslow Lodge.”

“ ‘twas a wonder it did not kill me.” ²¹

21. McFaddin letters.

“a gasoline pump in the valley...” ²²

Interview of Ralph Speer, Jr. by Margaret Speer Carter, undated.

“this hill has sewerage, which means lots to those, especially, with children.” ²³

23. McFaddin letters.

“the roads were almost nonexistent—almost pig trails.” ²⁴

24. Carter interview with Ralph Speer, Jr.

Blocks weighing several hundred pounds came in on straw-lined Frisco cars... ²⁴

25 Winn and Pace, Winslow: **Top of the Ozarks**.

“She would wear a hat to church...” ²⁶

26. Ross interview.

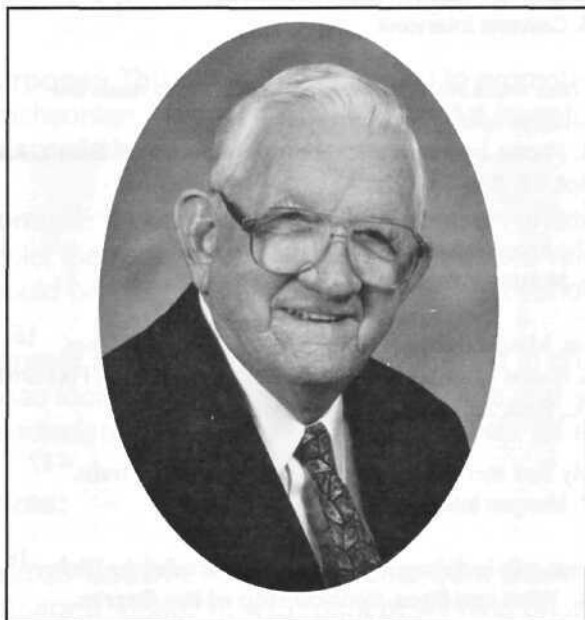
Edward Merriman served as best man. ²⁷

27. **Galveston Daily News**, Aug. 20 and Aug. 24, 1933.

“Winslow as a summer resort is now only a memory to a few elderly survivors.” ²⁸

28. Ralph Speer, Jr., “Mountain Lodge.”

In Memoriam:
Hugh Swafford, 1924-2005



Elmer Hugh Swafford was born September 22, 1924 in Fort Smith to Elmer Lee and Faye Hines Swafford. He worked at Fort Chaffee before entering the Army during World War II. He trained in the infantry, and then was sent to Oran, Africa. He served as a sergeant in the 14th Air Force Flying Tigers, in the China Burma Operation. The Flying Tigers dropped food and ammunition to the Chinese and American Forces.

Hugh worked as a salesman for the Automotive, Inc. for seventeen years. He joined his father-in-law as office manager for Jeffrey Construction Company, and then served as Vice President of Jeffrey Sand Company until his retirement in 1994. He then had time for his first love other than his family—golf. He was a member of the Fianna Hills Men's Golf Association, playing golf year-round. Hugh had been known to play with a colored ball in the snow. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church and long-time member of the University of Arkansas Razorback Club.

Hugh was gentle and loving man who always had a smile for everyone. He never said a cuss word or a bad word about anyone. He had a laugh that made you want to join him.

Hugh passed away May 24, 2005 in his home. He was buried in Roselawn cemetery after services in Roebuck Chapel of First Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Joanne; a daughter, Sarah, and her husband Jim Garrett of Dallas; two sons,

Jeffrey Lee and his wife Alana of Jupiter, Fla.; David Hugh and his wife Denise of Burleson, Texas; one sister, Dorothy Howard of Fort Smith; a brother, Preston, of Fort Smith; five grandchildren, three step grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

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Drennon/Scott Home is focus of Historic Interpretation Program

By Tom Wing

Teaching for the future while learning from the past: The Historical Interpretation Program at UA-Fort Smith

The Historical Interpretation Program at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith came into existence in the Fall of 2004. A direct request by the National Park Service and Arkansas State Parks led university officials to examine the prospects of a program to train future park rangers, tour guides, and historians for careers at historic sites, museums, battlefields, and parks. The program is unique, the only bachelor level program in the United States. Historic Interpretation facilitates an emotional or intellectual connection between visitors and historic sites.

Emotional connections span the wide range of human emotions and can come in the form of pride, honor, loyalty, sadness, and exultation as well as others.

Emotional connections occur when the interpreter has provided an opportunity for a visitor to relate a personal feeling or experience to the historic site.

Intellectual connections refer to understanding, and comprehension of processes and events, as well as people's places in them. Both types of connections can foster stewardship and preservation of significant historic resources.

The curriculum is a result of a partnership between UA Fort Smith, the National Park Service, Arkansas State Parks and the National Association for Interpretation. While the National Park Service and Arkansas State Parks are potential beneficiaries of the program, the National Association for Interpretation, a global organization with members in 30 countries, helps to define and maintain professional standards in the field of interpretation.

The program consists of a Bachelor of Arts in History with 32 hours of core curriculum in interpretation. Courses include Basic Skills, Public History, Conservation of Heritage Resources, Travel Seminars and internships.

The internship allows for the preparation for real life, in a real life place by helping students gain valuable experience while providing an opportunity for potential employers to establish a working relationship with entry level workers.

The partnership with the National Park Service will allow for Historical Interpretation classes to be taught in the Frisco Depot, a historic Fort Smith landmark on the National Register of Historic Places. Recently acquired by the National Park Service, the Frisco Depot is adjacent to Judge Parker's Courthouse and the other historic sites downtown.

Students in the program will also have a unique opportunity to participate in the transformation of Crawford County's oldest residence into a historic and cultural resource.



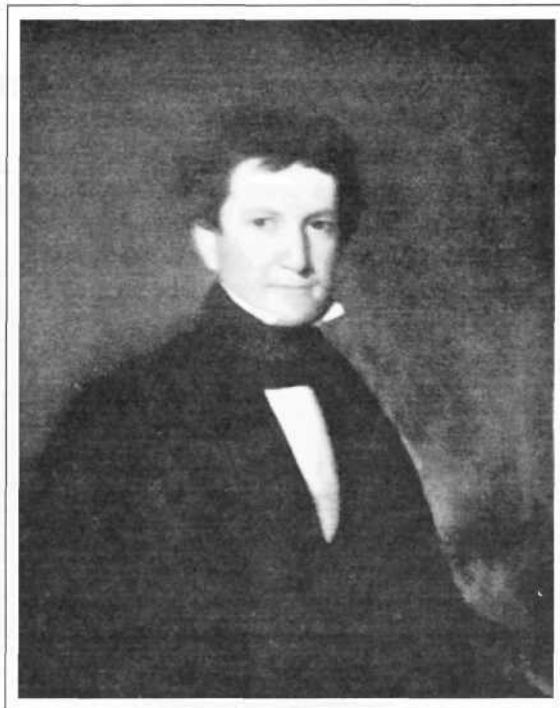
The Drennon/Scott house in a 1940 photo.

Historical Interpretation students will share in the establishment and operation of the Drennon/Scott Home, newly acquired by UA – Fort Smith through a grant from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resource Council. Built in 1836, the Drennon/Scott Home in Van Buren has been continuously occupied by the family until UA Fort Smith acquired the property in 2005.

Furnishings and family property document the history of the “founding father” of Van Buren. In the late 1820's John Drennon and David Thompson started a woodlot business on the north bank of the Arkansas River (near the present 540 bridge in Crawford County.) They supplied firewood to the new and lucrative steamboat traffic. The community of Columbus rose up near the business site.

The location was prone to flooding and after rebuilding twice, Drennon and Thompson sought higher ground up river. They purchased the property that became Van Buren for \$11,000 in 1836. Statehood for Arkansas in 1836 brought an influx of settlers to Van Buren from Tennessee, Kentucky and Mississippi.

Thompson died in 1838 leaving his partner to become one of the most wealthy and prominent members of the community. John Drennon's life was nationally significant. He served as Superintendent of the Western Superintendency making him the Federal Government's representative to the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw Seminole, Creek, Osage, Caddo, and Quapaw Nations.



As Indian Agent, he conducted the allotment of Cherokee immigrants of 1839. He was the Co-Chair of the Arkansas Constitutional Convention. A personal friend of Albert Pike, he served as Pike's second in his famous duel with future Arkansas Governor John Selden Roane.

Drennen was a trustee of the Real Estate Bank and business partner with Sam Houston. He owned slaves and significant amounts of land.

Home passed to daughter in mid-19th century

John Drennen died in 1855 and passed most of his estate to his daughter Caroline and his son-in-law Charles G. Scott. Scott was well known as a businessman and Confederate supporter during the Civil War. James Stuart, Drennen's stepson, was a Captain in the Confederate army and rode with Brigadier General Stand Watie.



John Drennen (top) was instrumental in the establishment of Van Buren.

Charles G. Scott married Caroline Drennen, daughter of John.

Drennen's stepson, James Stuart (below) in Confederate uniform.



The Scott family continued prominence in Crawford County and Arkansas through Caroline and Charles' children Phillip and Fanny. Fanny served as the Arkansas Hostess at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and Philip (P.D.) served on the advisory committee for the 1904 St. Louis Exposition. Dunham Scott served his country as a Captain in the Infantry during World War I.

Except for its occupation by federal troops during the Civil War, the home has been continuously occupied by Drennen/Scott descendants.

The furnishings and effects of the family were acquired by the Department of Arkansas Heritage and the Historic Arkansas Museum and include portraits attributed to George Catlin as well as works by Arkansas artist Edward Payson Washbourne.



The Drennen/Scott home in a contemporary photo. The property has been continuously occupied by Drennen and Scott descendants since the early 19th century. Many of its important furnishings and contents will be preserved and studied, adding to historical record and providing a valuable opportunity for study by students in the UA-Fort Smith interpretive history program, archeologists and other researchers.

The parlor contains a frieze that was displayed at the Arkansas House in the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. A wealth of antebellum furniture including a grandfather clock dating to the 1740's and a Steinway piano manufactured in 1860 will be preserved.

A loan agreement will allow UA-Fort Smith to display significant items once the house is stabilized and brought to museum standards. Historic Interpretation students will have a unique opportunity to develop exhibits for the public and educational programs for Van Buren schoolchildren. The Van Buren Advertising and Promotion Commission is aware of the project's potential interest to scholars, visitors and tourists.

Paths of tribal and slave history related to site

Plans for the Drennen/Scott Home also include certification for the National Historic Trail of Tears and the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, both under the National Park Service.

The twofold mission of the Drennen/Scott Home will be to provide real world opportunities for UA-Fort Smith students, while preserving and displaying the significant aspects of the property for visitors. The opportunities for research will be multi-disciplinary. The original 1836 structure was expanded in the 1840s, an addition was constructed in the 1890s, and another in 1971. The 26-acre site serves to protect the home's natural landscape. Only the house and another outlying building still stand on the property, but archeological research may lead to the discovery of other structures known to have been in use there, including slave quarters, a barn, and a detached kitchen.

The Drennen/Scott Home is scheduled to open to the public in early 2007, but expert talks and programs will start in the Fall of 2005.

For information on the Drennen/Scott Home or the Historical Interpretation Program at UA-Fort Smith, contact Tom Wing, Assistant Professor of History, twing@uafortsmith.edu, 479-788-7805.



C.F. Wilmans' Boy Rangers

Part I: The Early Years

By Carole Barger

When the Boy Scout movement began in 1916 throughout the country, C.F. Wilmans organized a troop at Fort Smith. Later the Boy Scout national organization made a connection with a clothing manufacturer, and all Boy Scouts were required to have uniforms. Wilmans' troop had boys who could not afford to buy uniforms. At about the same time he decided that the Boy Scout program concentrated too much on book learning, which he felt would not reach the type of boy who needed it. The Boy Scout minimum age was 12, and lots of kids wanted to join who were not yet 12. So Wilmans decided to turn the Boy Scout troop over to his co-leader.

On Nov. 25, 1917, at age 52 years, he organized the Boy Rangers, an organization which emphasized outdoor activities. He set the starting age at 10 for the Boy Rangers. Cost to join was 20 cents annually. No uniform was required.

Mr. Wilmans kept careful records of his Boy Rangers. In several thick ledgers he has recorded

each boy's name, address, birth date, age, as well as date and amount paid for membership dues. George Furlow and David Farris were the first two charter members. The first boy to qualify as a Mountaineer (expert) Boy Ranger was Don Foster. Following him in this group were Arval Linimon, Billy Blair, Watson Paxson, and Dillwyn Paxson.

Dillwyn would go on to become the Assistant Chief Ranger, Wilmans' right-hand man. He would be the one to see that the artifacts, records, photographs and Mr. Wilmans' large nature library were cared for after Wilmans' death in 1951. Mr. Paxson's niece, Shirley Paxson, of Mulberry, has since donated the records to the Fort Smith Historical Society.

Mr. Wilmans' many scrapbooks of photographs, news clippings and stories written by Boy Rangers provide the basis for this article. The Boy Ranger archive provides an excellent record of the organization's history but also presents an

At their Crawford County summer camp, Boy Rangers (above) swimming in a creek.

opportunity to glimpse the daily life and culture of Fort Smith through the activities of the youngsters who joined the Boy Rangers.

The Boy Rangers was not an educational institution, but a group started to build a boy up both mentally and physically. The object of the organization was to teach the boy the outdoors and get him in the fresh air to learn nature in the wild state, and not from books.

The Rangers went to the woods, hills and streams and learned nature. They learned the names and habits of animals, birds, fish, insects, and learned about trees, flowers, and other plants. They learned to camp, cook, swim, and take care of themselves in the woods. While doing these things the boys gained in health and strength by climbing mountains, swimming, hiking and rowing.

Requirements were strenuous and useful. The boys learned how to draw a water course for three miles and describe the shoals and deep places and forests and fields on either side of the stream. They learned to draw a road on paper, showing the turns and all principal land marks for a distance of five miles.

BOY RANGERS TRAINING

The first thing the Boy Ranger learned was the Ranger sign, which meant obedience. The oath was, "I agree to honor my country's flag and my parents; and not to bring disgrace to the Boy Rangers of America; to be clean in mind and body." The motto was, "Take care of thyself; know what to do at the right time and how to do it; know how to help others should occasion require; always be ready to do a kind act." There were rigorous tests for the boys as they progressed from Junior Rangers to Mountaineer Rangers.

ENROLLMENT OF BOY RANGERS

Below are a few of the names from original ledgers.

Name	Street & No.	Date Joined
George Furlong	608 N. 21	Nov. 25, 1917
David Farris		Nov. 25, 1917
Levy Brooksher	Box 65	Nov. 25, 1917
George C. Packard	914 S. 2	Nov. 25, 1917
Brady Pryor	715 S. 2	Nov. 25, 1917
Jesse Putman	N. 11	Dec. 19, 1917
Lee Ben Putnam		Dec. 22, 1917
James A. Barry		Mar. 11, 1918
Ralph Coomer		Feb. 23, 1918
Bill Pitcock	602 Elgin St., Little Rock	Feb. 26, 1918
Chas. Grammer	616 N. 5	Jan. 29, 1918
Troy Brannon		Feb. 22, 1919
Dale Crampton	Box 156	May 7, 1919
Alva B. Cantwell	N. R. St.	Apr. 20, 1920
Preston Meek	3009 Park	May 11, 1920
Tommy Foltz	1116 N. 13	Dec. 3, 1920
Arthur Vervack	Box 84	Dec. 28, 1920
Ross Atkinson	406 N. 3	Aug. 5, 1924
Charles Winters	2440 N. 12	Oct. 5, 1924
Leon Grigsby		Jun. 3, 1926
Billy Raley	1007 N. 7	Mar. 7, 1926
Billy Ward	2401 S. Greenwood	Oct. 7, 1926
Don Foster		Apr. 11, 1927
W.M. Edmonds	914 S. 18th	Jan 5, 1931
Dillwyn Paxson	721 Wheeler Ave	Jan. 12, 1931
James McKeever	518 N. M	Jan 15, 1931
Billy Mack Ayers	1512 S. 21	Jan 23, 1931
Billy Blair	813 S. 12	Feb. 7, 1931
Joe Garland Constantino	814 S. 20	Feb. 7, 1931
Frank Constantino	415 N. 21	Feb. 27, 1931
Billy Avlos	711 N. 6	Mar. 7, 1931
Sam E. Gearhart	Albert Pike Road	Jan. 3, 1932
Virgil Bracken	515 S. 16	Feb. 26, 1933
Jack Moore Donaldson	214 N. 9	Apr. 28, 1934
Raymond Forsgren	701 N. 18	May 4, 1934
John T. Laws	718 N. 18	May 4, 1934
Buck Barnett	1218 Grand	Apr. 4, 1936
Homer Crain, Jr.	36 Vista Hillcrest	Sept. 24, 1940
Charlie Norris Jones		Sept. 24, 1940
Joseph St. Cloud Irwin	608 Clifton Ct.	Sept. 24, 1940
Kenneth Lilly	906 N. 36	Sept. 24, 1940
John Sam Wood II	600 N. 17	Sept. 24, 1940
Mose Smith, Jr.	904 S. Albert Pike	Sept. 24, 1940
Joe Dorsey	301 Belle Ave.	Sept 25, 1940
Hugh Carter Dorsey	301 Belle Ave.	Sept 25, 1940
Oran Moody	3949 Rome Ave.	Oct 24, 1940
Raymond Paxson Evans	Rt. 3, Bx. 103	Aug 1, 1944
Jim Bill Wells	901 S. 14	Nov. 10, 1946
Andy Hendricks	1104 Elizabeth Lane	

An interesting enrollment card, among the hundreds of youngsters, reads: Fort Smith, Arkansas, May 15, 1924, J.C. Irwin, Sr., 82 years of age, Honor Member, 418 N. 6th Street. Mr. Irwin was the grandfather of Joe S. Irwin of Fort Smith, who has some good tales of this great old man, a Confederate Scout, wagon master, rancher, and all-round story-teller. His story will appear in the April 2006 Journal.

Boy Rangers of America

C. F. WILMANS, GRAND CHIEF RANGER
FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

No.

Name _____

Address _____

Has been enrolled as a member of the Boy Rangers of America
for the year ending December 31, 193

GRAND CHIEF RANGER

A Boy Rangers membership card. C.F. Wilmans was a printer by trade. His archives include a variety of custom-printed documents, pamphlets and books related to the Rangers.

JUNIOR RANGER TEST

1. Hike 1 mile in 12 minutes.
2. Learn and recite the Boy Ranger Oath.
3. Learn and recite the Boy Ranger Motto.
4. Know and demonstrate the Ranger sign.
5. Know and demonstrate the Ranger salute.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of Ranger knots.

MOUNTAINEER BOY RANGERS TEST

A boy must be 12 years old or older to become a Mountaineer Boy Ranger and pass all the following tests:

1. Hike 12 miles in 5 hours and carry a pack consisting of 2 blankets, enough provisions for 6 meals, knife, fork, spoon, plate, tin cup, and frying pan.
2. Cook a meal consisting of fish or meat without cooking utensils.
3. Put up a tent and ditch it properly (not a pup tent).
4. Build a lean-to without using nails, string or wire.
5. Row a boat one mile in 20 minutes in still water using 2 oars.
6. Swim one mile in still water.
7. Blaze and follow a trail, using three methods.
8. Tie all 10 knots in the Boy Ranger Tests.
9. Give first aid, including bandaging, putting on splints and demonstrate how to bring a drowning person to life by artificial respiration.
10. Build a raft so it will safely carry two or more persons.
11. Point the compass direction night or day without compass, North Star, sun or Great Dipper.

Any boy who can do all the requirements is worthy the name, Mountaineer Boy Ranger.

C.F. Wilmans,
Grand Chief Ranger
Fort Smith, Arkansas



A Mountaineer-rank Boy Ranger with his lean-to shelter.



BOY RANGERS OF AMERICA
BOY SCOUTS TROOP No. 1
Fort Smith, Ark.
Camp Monday, July 8 to 13th, 1918

If you wish to go on a camping trip, starting Monday, July 8th and return Saturday the 13th, send in your name with \$7.00 on or before Friday, July 5. This does not include railroad fare, it will be extra.

Steward's Spur where the camp will be located is 4 miles from Rudy and 2 miles from Lancaster on the Frisco railroad, between the two, and 18 miles from Fort Smith. The camp will be about _ mile north from Steward's Spur on the bank of Frog Bayou, a clear, swift running mountain stream and fine swimming hole opposite Big Piney mountain in a grove of Pine and Hickory.

Every boy will be expected to carry his own equipment consisting of 1 spoon, 1 tin cup, 1 knife, 1 fork, 1 tin plate, blankets, bath towel, 1 extra shirt, handkerchiefs, dishtowel and bathing suit and should bring an extra pair of breeches and stockings.

If you wish you may bring fishing lines, ball, bat and gloves.

All boys will be expected to help cook if necessary, keep the camp clean, get wood and do other work in his turn. Any boy who will not obey the camp rules is not desired and will be sent home.

Come with us and have a good time and spend six days in the mountains.

If you are not a member of the Boy Rangers or Boy Scouts Troop No. 1 you had better join the Boy Rangers and go with us. We want you.

Send in your name as soon as possible so arrangements can be made.

C.F. Wilmans
815 Garrison
Fort Smith, Ark.

C.F. Wilmans, 1865-1951

Founder spread his lifelong enthusiasm for nature

C.F. Wilmans, Grand Chief Ranger, was born October 13, 1865 in Shawneetown, Illinois to Charles Ivan "C.I." and Sarah (Wyant) Wilmans. His father, a newspaper editor, moved the family to Olney, Illinois when C.F. was only three. Later the family migrated to Mount Carmel, Grayville, Fairfield, Salem, Centralia, and then back to Fairfield.

Young C.F. became ill at the age of 10, while at Salem, and was given about two years to live. His doctor suggested that it would aid in his recovery if he could spend time in the out-of-doors. "Give the boy a fish-line, a can of worms and send him to the woods," was the doctor's prescription. C. F. got his first taste of nature then, which would become his consuming passion for the rest of his life.

When C. F. was 16 the family made the move to Dallas where he got his first job, running a foot-press on the Morning Herald. His salary was \$3 a week for six 10-hour days, 5 cents an hour for overtime. His pay was docked for lost time.

On Sundays, his day off, he made trips to the woods and fields. It was while there that he became acquainted with a Texas Ranger who gave him an Indian bow, quiver and arrows taken in an Indian fight. This artifact would become one of the main attractions in his Boy Rangers museum.

C.F. took a job as pressman in 1884 for \$12 a week with the Milligan Brothers, who printed the Texas Farm and Ranch, published by Holland and Knox, Frank F. Holland, editor. Then in 1885 Wilmans opened his own printing office.

While in Dallas he became proficient at riding his bicycle and won medals for the greatest distance traveled in one day. He was one of the organizers and first secretary of the Dallas Humane Society.

On July 14, 1889 Wilmans received an appointment as pressman in the Government Printing Office at Washington, D.C. He worked in Washington for a while and took the opportunity to travel extensively in the East. C.F. next went to Tishomingo, Indian Territory (Okla.) in 1899 where he opened a printing office and published a newspaper.

While in Tishomingo he learned about Indian habits and customs, and took an interest in working with boys, teaching them about wildlife.

In 1903 he made a trip to Fort Smith, three days each way, in a one-horse buggy, almost having to make his own road in spots. In 1906 he returned to Fort Smith and opened a printing office at 815 _ Garrison. Little is known of those early days in Fort

Smith, but he continued hiking and teaching boys about nature, before organizing the Boy Rangers of America in 1918.

In addition to his work with the boys, Wilmans authored and published several short books: *Insects*, 1934; *Legend of Mystery Mountain Massacre*, 1945; *The Out-Door Boy, He Learned Nature In The Open*, 1945; and pamphlet, *Nature..Nothing More Cruel*, 1945. The books were soft cover, available from Mr. Wilmans for 25 cents each.

In 1922 one of the boys, Harold Taylor, published the Boy Ranger Annual, which had news of Ranger activities, stories by the boys, and a fiction story, "True Ownership," in eight chapters by

Expert Ranger James Barry.

In December 1948, the Fort Smith Exchange Club awarded C. F. Wilmans the Golden Deeds award in recognition of his long record in boys' work in the Fort Smith area and throughout the Southwest over the last 50 years. Not only did Wilmans organize the Boy Rangers, with a membership of over 2000 boys, he actively served the Boy Scouts in summer camps in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, as nature counselor.

Charles F. Wilmans died at age 85, March 27, 1951. His funeral was held at the St. Johns Episcopal Church in Fort Smith and he was buried at Forest Park Cemetery.

This man, who played such an important part in the lives of so many boys, lives on in the memories of the Boy Rangers still alive today. He is remembered as a great humanitarian, one of the first environmentalists, a lover of all nature. What he taught and lived for should not be forgotten.



Wilmans remembered by many

Joe Durham, of Fort Smith, remembers the golden years of his childhood in an article published by Mack and Bess Stanley, in "Fort Smith Well Remembered." Joe remembers the Boy Rangers in the late twenties, headquartered above a print shop located between Third and Fourth Streets on Garrison Ave.

"Our leader was a grand old man named Wilmans. Lifetime dues were fifty cents, and any youngster who was unable to come up with the fee, somehow became a member anyway. One of the many outdoor activities of the Boy Rangers was a 14 mile hike to our winter camp located beneath a huge overhanging cliff some four miles west of Rudy. Equipped with full pack and blankets, we would catch the street car on Friday nights and ride to the terminal in Van Buren. We would then hike the railroad track to Rudy, then up a mountain trail to our destination. Mr. Wilmans, although in his seventies at that time, always led the way, offering gentle encouragement to our numerous gripes and complaints. During our two-day stay in the mountains, we often helped Mr. Wilmans in his lifelong search for arrowheads and other Indian artifacts. His magnificent collection of these treasures has since been donated to the City of Fort Smith. I like to believe that some of my finds may be found in this collection. I have to agree with George Bernard Shaw's statement that, 'The only truly worthwhile thing in life is youth.'"

Others tell similar tales about Mr. Wilmans. Joe Irwin of Fort Smith joined the Boy Rangers in 1940. He remembers the hikes the boys took, and the wonders of the Museum. He praises Mr. Wilmans as "one of the true great humanitarians, and Fort Smith was so fortunate to have had him."

Shirley Paxson, of Mulberry, was a small girl when her uncle, Dillwyn Paxson, and brother, Raymond Evans, were involved in the Boy Rangers. But she was allowed to go along on an occasional Rangers outing, trotting along behind Raymond, trying to keep up. She echoes others in her praise of Mr. Wilmans. "He was kind and gentle, but strict with the boys, demanding respect. He was a great man."

WAR WORK, WORLD WAR I

During the summer of 1918 a system was devised by which the Boy Rangers received merit marks by Grand Chief Ranger C.F. Wilmans for an act in aid of the war, Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A., Red Cross,

Liberty Loan sales or anything in connection with the war work for which they received no pay.

According to an article published in the Boy Rangers Annual, dated 1922:

These awards closed December 31, and have been carefully checked up. Different colors of ribbon were used to denote the various merit marks. The boys wore these on their sleeves. After checking up the names it was found that 70 boys had a total of 795 merit marks to their credit.

During the summer of 1918 the Boy Rangers in Fort Smith, Arkansas were called to distribute circulars for Liberty loans, to sell War Y.M.C.A. Memberships, Red Cross Memberships; to sell and assist the ladies during various sales for war relief work; to stand guard at the stands where war benefit sales were being held. They also worked through the crowds selling candy, popcorn, and peanuts.

In addition to these they were called upon by the Food Administration to put up posters in all grocery stores in the city. Rangers were chosen as officers or captains to look after the cleanup work, to notify people to keep their places clean. The Boy Rangers did all they were asked to do and are ready for another call."

A special badge was given to the five having the highest scores as follows:

First, Brayton Fletcher, 136; second, James Barry, 95; third, Harold Taylor, 60; fourth, Frank Dansby, 49; fifth, Joe Haines, 42.

These boys have refused money as pay for their services in this work, time and again, but this year they are going to try and beat last year's score."

"There is never a week passes but what there are several calls sent in for the Boy Rangers to help the various committees distribute literature and otherwise help in War Work, and they responded nobly. Below are a few items from the daily papers commenting on them:

The Boy Rangers performed neat service in distributing literature detailing information about bonds. Booths will be established at all churches today for subscriptions."

— Daily Times Record

"The most powerful appeal for super-subscriptions for the Fourth Liberty Loan came on Saturday. It was the eight-page war newspaper Stars and Stripes, printed by the American Expeditionary Force in France. General Pershing sent copies to the Fourth Liberty Loan forces in this country. The eighth district headquarters at St. Louis printed thousands of copies of the paper. Two thousand copies were sent to Fort Smith and the American Boy Rangers distributed them in this city."

— Southwest American



(Top) C.F. Wilmans in the Boy Rangers headquarters and natural history museum which was filled with artifacts and taxidermy.
(Center) Great horned owl prepared by C.F. Wilmans, who did his own taxidermy work.



(Above) A gang of Boy Rangers in everyday clothes (undated).
(Left) Live alligators kept in a tank at the Boy Rangers museum.

"BOY RANGERS TO HAVE FINE SUMMER QUARTERS"

In the Southwest American, February 6, 1919, there was a description of the plans for a Boy Rangers summer cabin:

The Boy Rangers are preparing to build a permanent home for their summer encampment. Through a deal just consummated by C.F. Wilmans this building is made possible. A plot of land has been secured and the contract signed to build a two-room cabin in the Big Piney Mountains on Frog Bayou near Steward's Spur. The site is ideal at the foot of a high cliff and situated near the water's edge, where swimming and boating can be enjoyed by the youngsters during summer camp. One side of the pond is a sandy beach, an ideal place for bathing, as there the depth is gradual, with no abrupt variations. A boat will be kept on hand for the pleasure of the Rangers as well as to be handy in case of need in rescuing any of the young fellows should an accident happen. The plans and specifications were drawn by Wilmans, especially for this company and will be constructed of pine logs felled in the mountains near by. It will require 40 trees to form the ends and sides of the cabin, and 40 more for the floor, ceiling and roof. There will be two rooms, a dining room and kitchen combined, which will also be used as a sitting room. The other will be the sleeping quarters of the rangers, and will be provided with bunks capable of accommodating 30 boys. A porch the full length of the building and 12 feet wide will afford a comfortable sleeping place during the warmest nights.

MANY CAMPS ARE HELD

Many of the old-timers in the Lancaster and Rudy areas of Crawford County remember the Boy Rangers and Mr. Wilmans. The Rangers camped around Shay Holler, at Blue Hole, where there was a good, deep swimming hole. They often rode the Frisco train from Fort Smith to the depot, in Lancaster, then walked to their camp grounds. The Lancaster Depot is no longer there, but the railroad still crosses Frog Bayou where the boys spent so much time.

Farmers in the area were glad to share fruit and produce with the boys, as they knew Wilmans had trained the Boy Rangers to leave the fields as they found them, and not bother anything.

In the summer the local farmers would drive up the road, fording the creek to reach the depot, with wagon loads of fresh fruit and produce to be

shipped to northern cities, Chicago and New York. Old timers remember that the wagons would be lined up half a mile waiting to unload produce onto the train.

Wallace Steward, Jr. and his cousin, Harlan Brammer remember Mr. Wilmans as a tiny little man who always carried a large walking stick. He was a kind man, always patient with the boys. Wallace's father, Wallace Steward, Sr. was a friend of Mr. Wilmans' and worked with him to help the boys out at camp, sometimes cooking for them.

Wallace's grandfather, Brush Steward, assisted Mr. Wilmans in the early days of the Boy Rangers. He helped with the Fox Hunt, and was able to shoot a fox one time. Unfortunately, Brush was bushwhacked in 1923. He had the habit of carrying his money in a money belt around his waist, and the money belt was the motive for his murder.



Brush Steward holding a fox he killed.

CABIN DESTROYED BY FIRE

The Southwest American, Feb. 10, 1929, describes the camp on Frog Bayou, and includes the sad detail of the destruction of the summer cabin by fire:

Wilmans bought some ground on Frog Bayou three miles north of Rudy between the creek and the mountains and called it the Boy Ranger Big Piney Mountain Camp because of the many large pine trees there. Swimming, diving, boating, and rowing contests were held at this camp each summer. The winter camp is on a 40-acre tract in the Big Piney Mountains. A log cabin was built on top of this mountain in 1923, but was destroyed by fire a month after it was finished.

Wilmans concluded that bootleggers burned the cabin because Rangers had reported to authorities a hidden whiskey still they had discovered near the camp several months earlier.

FOX AND HOUNDS RACE

Lancaster, Crawford County, Ark. depot was the area in which most of the hiking trips were made. For the use of the Rangers, Mr. Wilmans homesteaded 40 acres north of Rudy, Ark. One recreational project which drew much enthusiasm and participation was his "Fox and Hounds" race.

Wilmans was always the "fox," leading the boys on a chase to trail the fox to his lair. He would start at midnight, from the Boy Rangers' camp two miles north of Rudy, and "blaze a trail" though the wild, rugged mountainous areas of Crawford County, over high rocky bluffs, through dense forests, and over streams to Rudy, the finishing point, a distance of 15 miles. He would leave instructions tacked to a tree at each "station" on how to proceed to the next one (using flashlights), sometimes in freezing weather.

The fox was never caught up with. The boys would leave out in groups of from 2 to 5 or so, and all kept track of the time it took to complete the "run." A few of the older boys would go together to make good time. The younger boys had a leader with their group, who was too old to be in the contest. Many of these races were held, and no one knew ahead of time where the trail would lead.

One fox and hound race is described in the following undated story, in the Hill-Billy News, published in Fort Smith by Gene Barnes, located at 405 1/2 Garrison Avenue, which was the location of Mr. Wilmans' print shop:

"Approximately 75 boys are expected to participate in a Fox and Hounds race which will be held Nov. 29th over the Boy Rangers race course near Rudy, Olen T. Anderson, scout master of Boy Scout Troop 6, who is arranging the race announced Tuesday. The race open to boys 12 to 17 years old, as well as to boys living outside Fort Smith, will begin at the Scout camp grounds near Rudy at midnight, pass by the Rangers' winter camp site, end at Rudy. The course is 15 miles long.

Eddie Cole, of the Shreveport, Louisiana Scouts has notified Anderson he expects to enter a group of Scouts from there.

C.F. Wilmans, Grand Chief of the Boy Rangers, is to be the "fox" and Arthur Cooper will be his assistant. Anderson will be the timer and starter. Prizes will be awarded. Younger boys will start at midnight and others at five-minute intervals until all have started. Anderson said boys participating should take one or more flashlights and several batteries and bulbs, a lunch and canteen."

Another article, from the *Fort Smith Times Record*, Aug. 18, 1939, covers one of the Fox and Hound races in which groups from Springdale and Shreveport, LA participated:

TWO LOCAL RANGERS WIN FOX AND HOUNDS RACE

15-Mile Run Covered in Three Hours, One minute

Jack Thompson and Eugene Kuykendall, Boy Rangers of Fort Smith, won the annual Fox and Hounds Race promoted by C.F. Wilmans, Grand Chief of the Boy Rangers, Saturday night in Crawford County. Wilmans was the fox. He was assisted by Jere Ivy, Shreveport scoutmaster, who came to Fort Smith on Saturday with a group of Shreveport Scouts and their executives. The Shreveport Boy Scouts did not compete with the Springdale Boy Scouts and Boy Rangers who competed with each other.

Heinie Dierich of Springdale came with seven Boy Scouts from Springdale to enter the race. The groups started from the old Boy Scout cabin near Rudy for the 15-mile run which ended in Rudy. Mr. Wilmans and Mr. Ivy went ahead to place signs.

Kuykendall and Thompson, Boy Rangers, who won, tied. Their time was one minute over three hours. Each will get a medal. Holley Holmes, Fort Smith Boy Ranger, covered the course in three hours and 23 minutes coming in second place. He will receive a silver medal. Eleven Shreveport boys entered the race. Bill Whisnet won first place for Shreveport. He will receive a silver medal. His time for the 15 miles was three hours and 55 minutes.

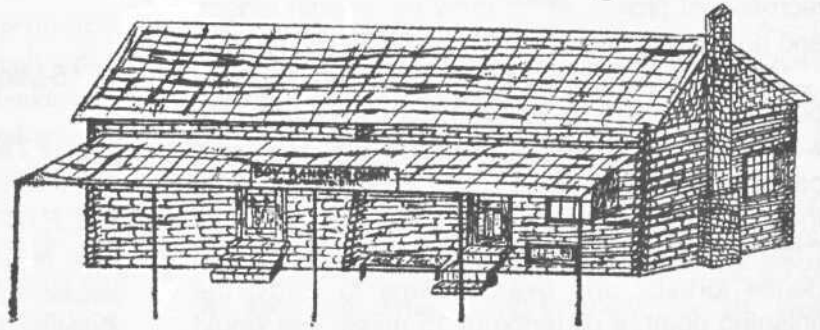
Wallace Steward, Jr. remembers that one night a boy got separated from the group during a fox and hound hunt and spent the night wandering around in the dense woods. He managed to find a creek and follow it down to the Stewards' home.

Mrs. Steward took him in, cleaned him up, gave him a clean set of clothing to wear and took his tattered clothing and patched it for him. He was clean and fed by the time Mr. Wilmans got to their home to report him missing. There was not another case reported of a boy becoming lost during the hunt.

One of Mr. Wilmans' Boy Rangers, Harold Taylor, published the Boy Rangers Annual, dated 1922, which contained news of Boy Rangers activities, stories by some of the Rangers about trips they have made together, reports on the Rangers sports teams, contests, as well as the story of C.F. Wilmans, Grand Chief Ranger.

The Boy Rangers kept an extraordinary record of their activities through scrapbooks, the writings of the members in a "Boy Ranger Annual," and in meticulous record-keeping by Wilmans. More photographs than can be published here are part of that collection, which is now held by the Fort Smith Historical Society. The Boy Ranger materials were preserved for many years by the family of Dillwyn Paxson.. Mr. Paxson's niece, Shirley Paxson, of Mulberry, has since donated them to the Fort Smith Historical Society.

Boy Rangers To Have Fine Summer Quarters



(Above) An illustration of the first Boy Rangers' lodge from a Fort Smith newspaper clipping. This larger cabin was destroyed by fire, perhaps set by vengeful bootleggers.

(Left) Rangers at the Lancaster station in Crawford County near their summer camp.

(Below, left) A Boy Ranger in a loincloth stands in a canoe.

(Below, right) A group of Boy Rangers pictured at camp.



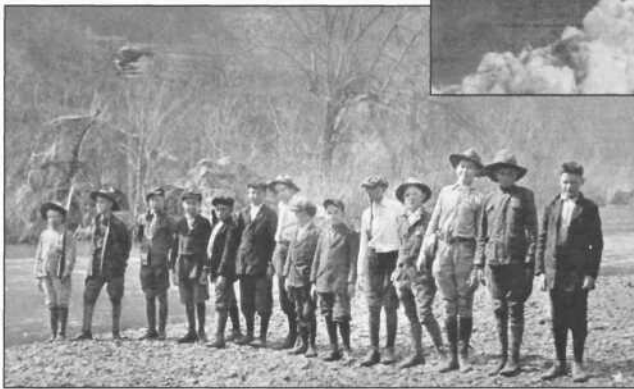


(Above) A portion of a large photo of Boy Rangers at summer camp.

(Right) Unidentified Boy Ranger with his tent, holding a gun. The sign on the tree behind him reads "Property of C.F. Wilmans."



(Below, left) A group of Boy Rangers in winter garb.



(Bottom, right) The back of this photo gives the names Harold Hurley, Arval Linimon, George Wooten, Charles Howell and Dillwyn Paxson. The boys are carrying bedrolls over their shoulders.

Jimmie Barry on C.F. Wilmans

A Boy Ranger's recollections

Jimmy Barry was a local radio personality, former Boy Ranger, and historian. His many letters to Tom Blake, Southwest Times Record Regional Editor, contained much of the history of Fort Smith during his lifetime.

Over and over again in the last two years I have heard, "Why don't you write about C.F. Wilmans?" The reason has been because it would fill a book.

C.F. as his adult friends called him, was one of the greatest humanitarians in the history of Fort Smith. His work influenced over 1,500 boys; many still living are better because they knew him.

He was a naturalist and a page out of the old west. A pioneer, soon after Oklahoma statehood, Wilmans sold his newspaper and print shop in Tishomingo, OK and came to Fort Smith. While he ran the business it was in Indian Territory.

Apparently he was in good financial condition because he soon owned a print shop and got the First National Bank's business. He printed the individual and firm names on their checks and cut their bank notes. The bank issued their own paper money. It was printed in Washington and came to Fort Smith in big sheets of 24 bills, as I recall. He had a big paper cutter and I watched him cut the money many times.

His brother, Robert, owned and operated the Texas Show Print Company. This firm specialized in theater and circus posters and billboard paper. The Robert Wilmans had a boy my age. I visited him one weekend and he took me on a tour of their big plant in downtown Dallas. They had wood type about two feet high.

W. B. Wilmans, another brother, owned and operated the Fort Smith Printing Company, with Arch Monroe and F.R. Griffin. Arch Monroe was Mayor of Fort Smith for two terms, as I recall.

Lloyd Wilmans, another brother or cousin, came to Fort Smith and opened a stick candy factory. Using pull with C.F. I got a job as a roller when it opened but quit after two weeks because the work was too monotonous for me. After a few years, Lloyd closed the plant and moved back to Texas.

In the next note I will tell about C.F. Wilmans' Boy Scout Troop, one of the first in the United States.

...He was always intensely interested in boys. Absolutely thrilled to teach a boy how to do something and then watch him do it right.

When he read about the Boy Scouts coming to the

United States he contacted them and organized a troop. A Fort Smith cotton broker, Curtis C. Wright, was also interested in the new Boy Scout movement and helped Mr. Wilmans.

After a couple of years, they got a letter from the national headquarters. Boy Scouts of America had made a connection with a clothing manufacturer and all Boy Scouts must have uniforms. Wilmans appealed to them and said he had boys who could not afford to buy uniforms. Their answer: "No uniform...no Boy Scout."

After lots of thinking and talking and planning, Curtis Wright took the boys who wanted to buy uniforms and had Fort Smith's first uniformed Boy Scout troop. Mr. Wilmans formed the Boy Rangers of America. The Boy Scout minimum age was 12. Lots of kids wanted to join that were not 12, so he put the starting age at 10 for Boy Rangers.

Only the Boy Rangers got to go on Mr. Wilmans' hikes and enjoy his knowledge of animals, birds, snakes, insects and how and where to find Indian arrowheads, spearheads, bird points and tomahawks. On camping trips, I learned that two or three of the boys were not Boy Rangers. Mr. Wilmans was willing for them to come along but they did not want anything said about it. It might hurt Mr. Wright's feelings.

On the other hand, World War One was going full blast and all of the boys in Fort Smith were proud to see Curtis Wright's Scouts in uniform as they took part in big events.

I sold Times Records on the streets and nearly all of the newsboys were Boy Rangers. We had the money to buy the finest uniforms if we wanted them.

Mr. Wilmans' print shop in downtown Fort Smith was the headquarters of the Boy Rangers. It was open almost around the clock. Mr. Wilmans was not married and lived in a back room.

Times records were published every weekday afternoon at four o'clock. When the war department issued a casualty list they would bring out an extra. Newsboys knew the telegraph operators and where they worked. Casualty lists often contained thousands of names and would take hours to send and receive.

Word would spread among the newsboys: "They are getting a casualty list and the paper will be out about 2 am." Some of us would go to Mr. Wilmans' shop and stay until he ran us off around midnight. Then, we would go back to the paper and sleep on newspaper rolls until the extra was printed. We would go up and down Fort Smith streets yelling, "Casualty list," and house lights would go on regardless of the time of day. We sold all the papers we could carry.

Life without C.F. Wilmans would not have been so good.

—Jimmie Barry, 1986

Following is a contribution by one of the boys, describing a Rangers hunting trip.

A Trip to Big Piney Mountains

By Paul Northum, Expert Ranger

About three weeks ago Mr. C. F. Wilmans, G.C.R., planned a trip to the Boy Ranger's camp at Big Piney Mountains. Well, it didn't take long to get up the bunch. As it was going to be a hunting trip we all took guns.

The party consisted of Mr. C. F. Wilmans, G.C.R., Joe Haines, Expert Ranger, Foster Henley, Kenney Muse, Earl Call and myself. Foster and myself stayed all night at Mr. Wilmans'. The next morning Earl came and we went down to Hayes Café for breakfast. We had a pretty good load to carry to the train and were going to catch the local freight which stands down in the yards. Just as the train was about to go Kenney and Joe came. It took us about two hours to get there. After we got the tents up some of the boys went out for a little hunt and Joe and I stayed in camp.

Just after Mr. Wilmans came back Wallace Steward came by and while he was crossing the creek the water came up to the horse's saddle. Wallace said that wasn't anything, the other day the water came over the saddle and got him wet. Joe asked him to take us 'possum hunting but he didn't want to go 'possum hunting but the following day he would take us squirrel hunting. When the boys came back we told them about it. After dinner Foster and I went out for a little hunt and didn't kill anything but a sapsucker. After we came back we ate dinner (second time) and had a good time all afternoon. That night we went to bed early to keep from freezing. The next morning we went by after Wallace and he had just finished breakfast.

After we had walked a little piece the dogs started to barking and Wallace said they had treed. Well we all went down there and when I tried to shoot I found that I had not loaded my gun so Foster killed the squirrel the first shot. After a while the dogs treed again and we fired 14 times at this one. The next time we fired about 10 times. When we got back to camp Kenney and Earl did us dirty and took the squirrels.

Well we had a good night. The next day was Sunday and we could not shoot our guns much. Mr. Wilmans went over to Steward's Sunday morning as everything was ready to take home. After Mr. Wilmans came back we all went over to the railroad loaded our equipment on and went back to Fort Smith.

– from *The Boy Ranger Annual*, 1922

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The New Theatre

Evolution of a Playhouse to a Movie Theater

By Stephen Husarik

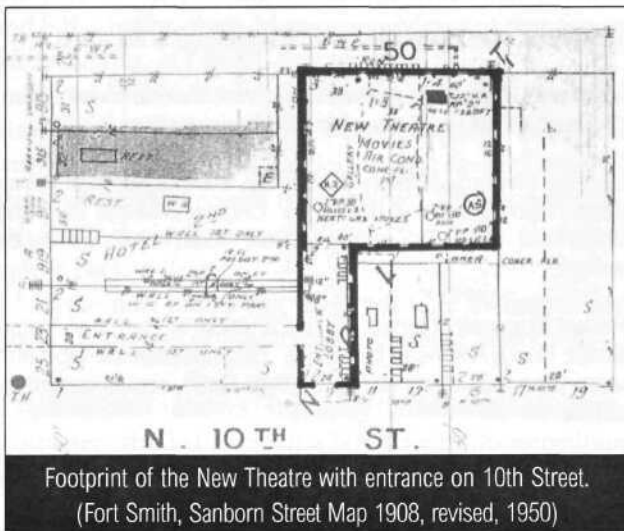
Impressed by a 1903 performance at the New Amsterdam Theatre in New York, banker and well-traveled businessman George Taylor Sparks decided to bring a similar experience to Fort Smith.¹ The New Amsterdam Theatre sported a grand entrance in the Beaux Arts style, possessed the latest theatrical technology and offered some of the best stage productions in New York.² To reproduce this experience in Fort Smith, an entirely new theatre was needed—one with a suitable location and a backstage area that could support major stage shows.

Legend has it that Sparks consulted one of the architects of the New Amsterdam about the design of his New Theatre in Fort Smith. What is certain is that the firm of Boller and Boller of Kansas City designed the New Theatre, and they were clearly influenced by the style of the New Amsterdam.

Carl and Robert Boller developed their reputation by producing over one hundred movie palaces in the United States.³ Built early in the career of their firm (1911), the New Theatre was conceived as a theatrical playhouse. It had—among other things—a stage with a 70 foot fly space that could hold many back drops and even a catwalk. The large stage, its double door access from the alley, and proximity across the street from the Fort Smith and Western Railroad Depot (no longer at 10th street and Garrison),⁴ made it an ideal venue for stage productions traveling the route from New York City to Dallas. Performers arrived in rail coaches with props and backdrops ready for production.⁵

Located at 921-925 Garrison, the New Theatre stands about a hundred feet beyond what was once a lawn used for outdoor events.⁶ The architects placed the main entrance at 9 North 10th street at a right angle to the theatre auditorium as a reminiscence of the architectural footprint of the New Amsterdam.

Rendered in cream-colored and glazed terracotta tiles, the Beaux Arts entrance is dated 1911 and labeled with the Sparks family name. A rain drip edge contains a gargoye head placed between two Greco-Roman scrolls that are framed by classical brackets. Two chains once held up a lighted marquee over the doorway. This impressive portal emphasized the social aspect of arrival—just as 19th century Europeans arrived in high style at their opera houses. New Theatre advertisements and programs posted carriage pick up and delivery times for each production. Doorman Charles H. Wiseman greeted visitors at their transports and they walked through an elegant barrel-vaulted lobby under four large electrical chandeliers to the auditorium.⁷



Footprint of the New Theatre with entrance on 10th Street.
(Fort Smith, Sanborn Street Map 1908, revised, 1950)



9 North 10th Street entrance in 2005.



The only known photo (c. 1920) of the interior of the New Theatre shows the proscenium and ceiling ornamentation, the two balconies and box seats. The balconies were supported by cantilevered ironwork, maintaining clear sight lines with no obstructing pillars. The piano at far lower left is in the orchestra pit. Decorations were done by the Chicago theatrical decorator firm of Mitchell and Halbach. Elaborate plaster relief carvings adorned the edges of the balconies, the stage arch and ceiling fixtures, painted in ivory with gold gilding. Box seats were framed by Greco-Roman pilasters and arches painted in green, lavender, pink and gold to match the main drop curtain. The ceiling was in panels of rose red. Electric lighting was controlled from backstage, where a technician changed the aisle footlights to suggest comfortable temperatures. Green imitation leather seats with iron frames seated 1,200 patrons.

Photo courtesy of Fort Smith Historical Press Fort Smith, Arkansas

In 1922, a second vaulted entrance on Garrison Avenue (called Peacock Alley) was installed at a cost of about \$50,000. It was lined with eight lamps suspended over fashionable stores with display windows.⁸

The New Theatre incorporated the latest safety features and technology, including electrical fixtures, plumbing and even a special "firewall" stage curtain.⁹ Aisles were made extra wide so that patrons could evacuate quickly in an emergency, and dressing rooms were made of concrete. Six water mains were provided for fire hoses, and there was sufficient plumbing to allow for drainage and toilets on the first two floors and backstage.¹⁰ Although six large fans were suspended over the audience on the first floor and balcony, air purification was clearly a problem in the early years. After the flu epidemics of 1917 and 1920, two giant wind tunnels were installed to circulate and refresh the air.¹¹ {See illustration at right.}

The auditorium seated 1,200 people on an inclined main floor, in two balconies and in two sets of box seats. Housed in a building constructed of brick and concrete, internal steel reinforcements enabled the balconies of the auditorium to be cantilevered over the main floor.¹³ This eliminated vertical posts that could interfere with sight lines. Box seats were also cantilevered to provide a better view. An upper gallery was reserved for African-American patrons who, at that time, were not permitted on the lower floors.

Decorations were done by the Chicago theatrical decorator firm of Mitchell and Halbach.¹⁵ Early advertisements and programs from the New Theatre show elaborate art nouveau motifs (i.e., floral, vine, leaf and textile patterns), but the trim of the theatre itself was a little more restrained. Elaborate plaster relief carvings were reserved for the edges of the balconies, the stage arch and ceiling fixtures; they were painted in ivory with gold gilding. Box seats were framed by Greco-Roman pilasters and arches and painted in green, lavender, pink and gold to match the main drop curtain. Seats

*African-Americans were not allowed on the two lower floors of the New Theatre until the early 1960s. They entered by means of a staircase outside the theater. When the theatre was remodeled by the Malco Group in the late 1930s, a separate lobby staircase next to the ticket booth gave them interior access to gallery seating.*¹⁴

were done in green imitation leather with iron frames and the ceiling was done in interwoven panels of rose red.¹⁶

A large proscenium stage opening permitted easy distribution of sound during live performances. The stage below was constructed like a wooden box placed over the dressing rooms. Staging equipment in early American theaters was like that of a sailing ship, a rigging system of mast blocks, pulleys and long hemp lines held up the drops. Lines were counterbalanced with bags of sand¹⁷ that changed weight unpredictably with the humidity. The rigging was dangerous because, if the ropes snapped, a thousand-pound bag could fall on those below.

The New Theatre could simulate New York style productions because of its large fly space, but there was not much wing space on either side of the stage so that storage was an issue. Productions consisted largely of stage furniture, with flats and drops. Dressing rooms, located below the stage, were crowded with low ceilings even though they had modern amenities such as lavatories and dressing tables.¹⁸

Made of asbestos, the main drop curtain had a faux painting of a drawn drape that looked like a large valance and swag. A scene from "Midsummer Night's Dream" was painted in the center of this drop—yet another reference to the New Amsterdam which produced that play at its grand opening.¹⁹ Touring companies brought in their own backdrops with painted scenes that were lifted up and down as needed during a production. Later in the history of the theatre, there were three main drops: a velvet curtain, a canvas drop for advertisements and a movie screen.²⁰

More than a thousand lights in the theater were controlled by a backstage panel. In addition to the house lighting and aisle footlights, the stage had red, white and blue footlights.²² Vaudeville skits were performed on the edge of the stage while more elaborate productions requiring scene changes were performed further back in front of drops. Productions that required spotlights used carbon arc lamps sometimes covered with bottles of colored water or gel.

The theatre was not air conditioned for nearly the first quarter-century of its existence. In order to help patrons imagine that temperatures in the building were more comfortable, a technician changed all the aisle footlights from red (in the winter) to green (in the summer) to suggest that the temperature was either warmer or cooler than it actually was.²³



New Theatre Ventilation and Sanitation

The above illustration shows clearly the perfect ventilation system in use at the New Theatre.

This illustration, however, does not show the giant Typhoon Twin Fans located on the roof of the theatre. These fans are capable of moving 200,000 cubic feet of air per minute, which means that every foot of air in the New Theatre is changed each minute.

Foul air is often confused with warm air. Oftimes air becomes overheated and creates the sensation of foul air. Not only is the New Theatre kept full of fresh, live air, but our heating system insures the correct temperature. 70 degrees is said to be the proper temperature for a closed room. Rare-

ly ever do the thermometers at the New Theatre vary from this standard.

Every day the New Theatre is thoroughly cleaned, but during the recent shut down the theatre has been completely renovated and disinfected. Wood work and walls with which patrons come in contact have been repainted.

From the direction of the World of Mirth all danger of epidemic has passed and the ban will be lifted at midnight. Every precaution has been taken to make the New Theatre absolutely proof against contagion. The amusement center of Fort Smith is again offering its patrons Entertainment, Music, Courtesy.



Southwest American Advertisement showing improved air circulation patterns after the flu epidemic in the New Theatre, (1920).

Fire Safety: A Southwest American article from 1911 touted the fire safety of the New Theatre:

"In the first place there is an absolute firewall between stage and auditorium with the stage opening covered with an asbestos curtain tested to fire underwriters' specifications."²¹ Many theaters of the time proudly displayed firewall curtains with the word "Asbestos" printed on them. Medical research would later show that asbestos was a dangerous material.

Flu causes ventilation work: From July to September, 1917 the New Theatre was closed due to a (global) flu epidemic. The spread of disease was presumed to have arisen from poor circulation in the building. Everything had to be disinfected, repainted and cleaned. A new ventilation system was installed to help prevent future outbreaks of the disease and the building re-opened in 1918. Still another flu outbreak in the early 1920s closed the theatre a second time.¹²

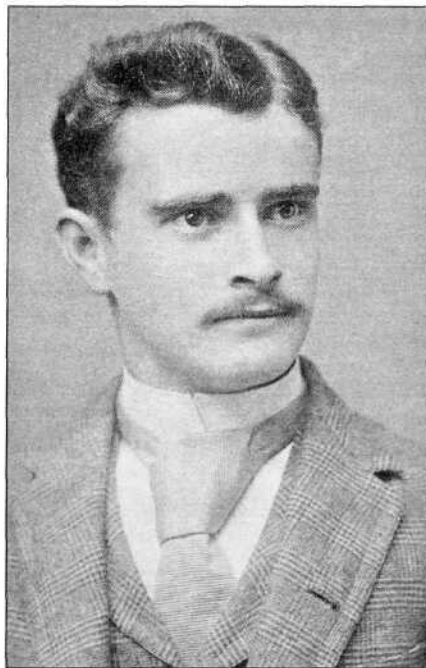
George Sparks, who had invested in plans for the New Theatre, was never to see it.²⁴ In 1907, he died in a shipwreck off the coast of California. The Sparks family built the theater as George had envisioned it and leased it to Chauncey A. Lick (of the printing firm Weldon, Williams and Lick, Inc.) who became the first manager of the New Theatre.

Lick was the ideal person for the job because he leased and managed the Fort Smith Opera House and his company printed tickets for theatrical productions across the United States (including the Ringling Brothers Circus).²⁵ With national business connections, Lick became both impresario and promoter of vaudeville acts at the New Theatre.

Two housewarming events preceded the New Theatre grand opening celebration on Sept. 29, 1911. Crowds assembled at Caldwell's three days ahead of time to get tickets.²⁶ Tickets cost an incredible \$10 — about \$150 dollars in today's currency. The first official program included a production of "The Third Degree" by Charles Klein. Written for the New York stage, it was later scripted for a film of the same title in 1919. The story revolves around a wealthy college boy who falls in love and marries a waitress. This indiscretion angers his father who disinherits him. The son stumbles into a situation where his father's second wife is involved in an affair with a man who commits suicide. The son is given the third degree by the police in the hope that he might confess to it as a murder.²⁷ As the critic of the Southwest American wrote:

The opening bill was The Third Degree... recognized as one of the strongest ever shown on the American stage. It is cast in New York and affords a keen insight into the sorrows of the world of society and the penalties excited of those who follow fashion in its mad whirl.

*The company is well balanced and the scenic effects commanded the admiration of the enthusiastic audience.... Manager Lick has every reason for congratulating himself upon the most successful opening of his New Theatre. To see it is to admire it, and no one could find reasonable excuse for criticizing either the house or the play. [Clemens] Hammer's orchestra furnished the music and the program was one of the most enjoyable features of the opening night."*²⁸



Chauncey A. Lick
(1868-1953)

the nation. With rail connections across the street and adequate stage and fly space, the New Theatre was an ideal venue for staging traveling theatrical productions in Fort Smith.

The variety of performances over the years can be seen by surveying the New Theatre advertisements in the Southwest American from 1911-43.²⁹ Hundreds of productions took place, including plays, pantomimes, operettas, dances, melodramas, vaudeville skits and comedy acts. Klaw and Erlanger,³⁰ a firm that specialized in sending out road show versions of New York productions, acted as a clearinghouse to managers across

In addition, solo performers as diverse as Shirley Temple, Geraldine Ferrar, Will Rogers, Mary Astor and W.C. Massey appeared at the New Theatre. As the years passed, however, vaudeville and other productions increasingly became entr'acte affairs while reels of movie film were being changed. The same week that the New Theatre opened, for example, the nearby Joie Theater was presenting a four-reel silent film entitled "Jerusalem Delivered."³¹

In 1915, D. W. Griffith's silent film "The Birth of a Nation" was shown with the musical accompaniment of a 30-piece orchestra at the New Theatre.³²

NEW THEATER

Three Nights Starting Thursday

DECEMBER 16

Matinees Friday and Saturday

WORLD'S MIGHTIEST SPECTACLE

D. W. GRIFFITH'S

5,000 Scenes

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Cost \$500,000

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8 MONTHS IN MAKING Founded on "The Clansman"

Operatic Score Interpreted by Symphony Orchestra of 30

SEE

Battle of Petersburg Sherman's March to the Sea Assassination of Lincoln Lee and Grant at Appomattox Wild Hides of the Ku Klux Klan

PRICES:
NIGHTS—Lower Floor \$1, \$1.50, \$2; Balcony, 50c, 75c, \$1.00; Gallery, 25c, 50c.
MATINEES—Lower Floor, 50c, \$1; Balcony 25c; Gallery 12c.

Seat Sale Opens Monday at Caldwell's.
Fort Smith and Duncanson, Van Buren. Only 50c Tickets to Any one Person in Line, Children in Arms Not Admitted. Carriage at 5 and 11.



Front, back (above) and center (below) of an elaborate, color theatrical program from the performance of "Rain" at the New Theatre in 1925. On the following page, a theater program of the play "Meet the Wife," starring Mabel Brownell, also presented at the New Theatre.



Menuett in G No 2
(String Quartette with other parts ad lib.)

1st Violin I. VAN BEETHOVEN
Allegretto Arr. by Chas. R. Stickney

One part of a nine-part musical score. From the collection of Lucien Sabin. Courtesy of Marilyn Simpson

The New Theatre orchestra was a rotating group of members from various bands—anywhere from ten to thirty players—sometimes sitting on stage. “These orchestras were usually directed by Percy Darby, Maurice Derdeyn, or Dr. E. Dudley Spurrier.”³³ One of the original Fort Smith orchestral arranger-performers, Lucien Sabin, put on demonstrations of the original performance of *Phantom of the Opera* (1926) during the 1970s, to give people an idea of just how these silent films sounded to theater-goers. Given only parts or cue cards for each silent film received at the New Theatre, he was expected to make suitable arrangements.³⁴ Even when he received printed scores for films, the length of musical selections had to be adjusted. Obviously, the music that people heard across America for any given silent film was not the same from theater to theater.

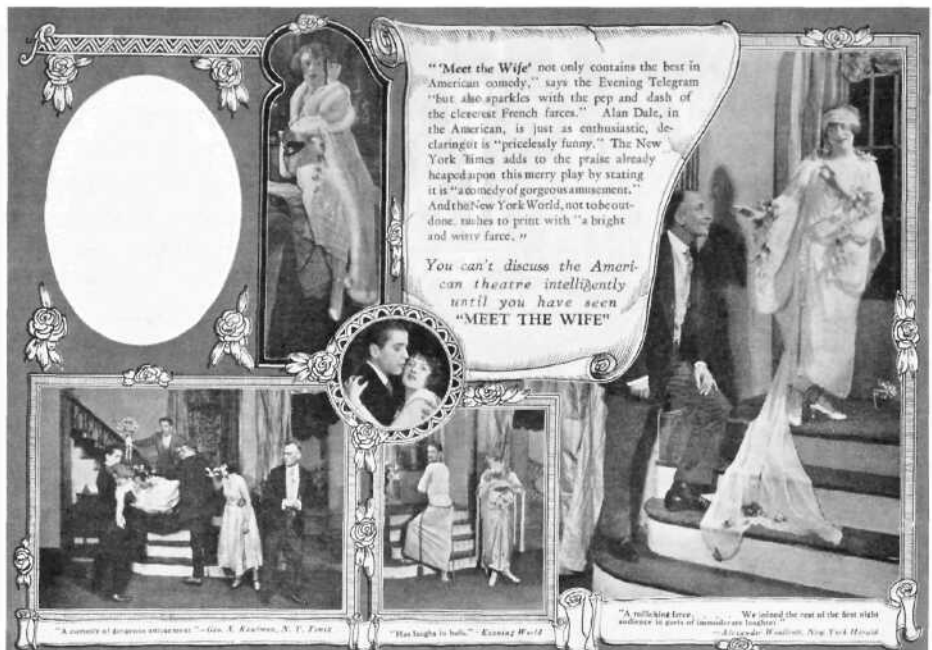
Pianists often accompanied silent films, but in a large theater such as the New Theatre, organs became increasingly popular. In April, 1927, a Wurlitzer Hope-Jones organ was installed and Herbert MacAhan (an organist from the Capitol Theater in Little Rock) was called in to accompany the Koko cartoon with organ and slide show, a production from the Rialto Theatre, New York.³⁵ Organ improvisations in large theaters impress audiences both with the volume of the instrument and the reverberation of sound across the auditorium space. But what really impressed Fort Smith theater-goers at the time were the sounds of

bells, drums, whistles and sirens placed up high in the auditorium.³⁶

Silent films gradually disappeared after the New Theatre spent \$20,000 in 1929 to equip the place with talking sound.³⁷

This was a substantial investment at the time—something on the order of about a quarter million dollars in today’s currency—but it indicates that public taste had shifted from stage plays, musical productions and vaudeville to Hollywood film extravaganzas and marked a turning point in theater history. Even though the Great Depression was close at hand, the “talkies” as they were then called, would completely take over as the principal form of American entertainment. Thereafter, the stage productions that took place in movie theaters were a novelty.

42-43



A whole series of inventions led up to the "talkies." The first film with sound in the New Theatre was called the Thomas Edison Talking Picture (January 9, 1914).³⁸ The picture lasted only six minutes, but it stimulated much interest and curiosity. An Edison Phonograph was linked to a Kinetoscope on the first floor of the auditorium. Synchronization between the sound and the picture was poor. A reviewer from *Variety* who saw and heard one of the Edison Kinetophones in 1914 wrote: "The talking, instead of enhancing the picture, simply annoys."³⁹ By 1915, the Kinetophone⁴⁰ was replaced by more complicated and exacting machines.

Leased jointly by the Publix firm, the Joie and New Theatres were the first to show "talkies" in Fort Smith. The first talkie shown at the New Theatre was entitled "The Trail of 98" (1929).⁴¹ It was a romantic tale of two adventurers during the Yukon Gold Rush. Three stunt players were killed during the making of this highly-rated film.

The Great Depression gripped the country only a couple of months after the showing of "The Trail of 98." Although stage productions from the outside were curtailed, local shows flourished in Fort Smith. Talent show contestants got the chance to perform on stage in exchange for free viewing of films and film previews.⁴⁴

In 1935 the New Theatre proudly announced in the newspaper that "air conditioning" (actually, just a water cooler) was installed.⁴⁵ In the late 1930s, the Malco Group (which, by that time, owned or leased almost all of the theaters in Fort Smith) leased the New Theatre and completely remodeled it in a trendy art moderne style. This radical transformation

involved not only the installation of new heating and air-conditioning, but the total re-design of interiors and exteriors, and the lowering of the upper balconies by ten inches.⁴⁶

Like the Temple Theater located nearby (a theater belonging to the Masonic Temple but leased by the Malco as a commercial movie house), there was an understanding that the New Theatre would be returned to its original state at the end of the lease—but that never occurred.⁴⁷

The war years brought in a steady stream of soldiers from Fort Chaffee, but with the post-war craze of drive-in movies and construction of the Central Mall Theatres in the 1960s, the New Theatre fell into disuse. At the end of its 75-year run, like many American theater palaces at the time, the New Theatre was used mainly for showing X-rated movies.

Don Connor purchased it from the Sparks family, and later sold it to John Yantis. In 1992, the Yantis family sold the New Theatre to a non-profit organization, Music Fort Smith, led by John and Suzanne Horne. Through the efforts of Music Fort Smith, the theater was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on Nov. 29, 1999.⁴⁸ With volunteer labor, the non-profit group cleaned the building of standing water and debris. Funds from grants were used to repair the roof and tuck-point the exterior brick, preserving its structural integrity.

In 2004, the New Theatre was purchased by Richard Griffin, who announced plans to restore it as a performing arts theater.

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Special thanks are due to the numerous humanities students at University of Arkansas - Fort Smith (then Westark College) in 1999 who cataloged newspaper articles on the New Theatre found in the Southwest American from 1911-1943. Thanks are also due to Honors Program students who wrote interpretative essays on this subject the same year. Further thanks are due to the people who provided valuable information and sources for this article including John and Suzanne Horne, Don Connor, Chloe and Stacy Lamon, Marilyn Simpson, Mary Jean Gattis (Shoop), Jim Walcott and the reference librarians at the Fort Smith Public Library and the Boreham Library, UA Fort Smith.

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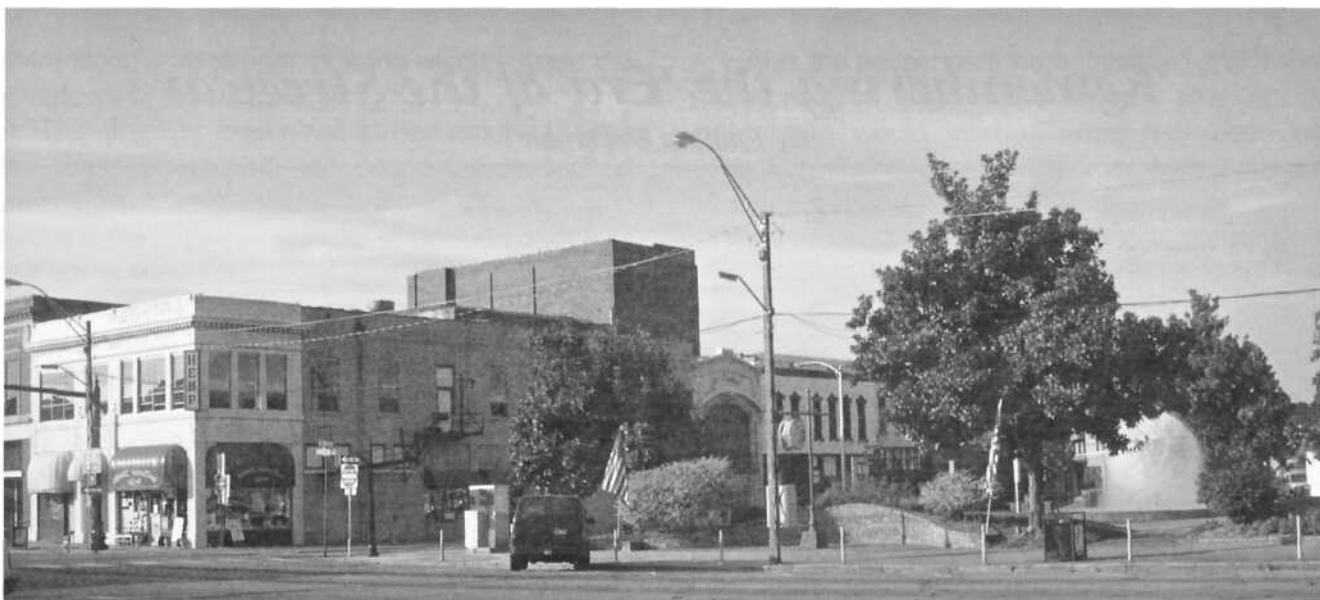
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The New Theatre in 2005, taken from the U.S. Post Office. The original entrance on N. 10th Street is the arch visible in the center of the block. The 1922 "Peacock Alley" entrance is the farthest door visible (at left of the photo) on Garrison Avenue. The "fly" is the tallest structure at center of the block. The words "New Theatre" are still faintly visible at the top of the building.

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Remembering the Era of the Streetcar

By Pauline Beckman



We lived out from downtown Van Buren quite a way, though it was not what you would call "out in the country." Down the hill from our house was a field to walk through as we headed off to town. A path had been worn diagonally across the field by neighbors of the area in their daily walk to their job in town or on their way to the streetcar stop downtown.

Folks whose jobs were in Fort Smith had to ride the streetcar to work and back home again. The same was true with reference to shopping. In either case you had to ride the streetcar from downtown and it ran on a schedule. Though shops in Van Buren were quite adequate, a lot of shopping was done across the river.

As the "car" (as it was referred to) left Van Buren, it crossed the bridge spanning the Arkansas River. After crossing over the bridge, there were tracks laid

for the cars with siding tracks laid parallel to the main tracks. The siding was an extra pair of tracks for the car headed for Fort Smith to switch onto while the car heading for Van Buren from Fort Smith could go straight on through to the bridge. After it had passed by, the road ahead was cleared. Schedules were strictly adhered to.

I remember times when going to Fort Smith the streetcar in which we were riding would pull off onto the siding and wait for perhaps a few minutes for the streetcar headed for Van Buren to come into view, then pass us on its way. Our way then was clear to proceed.

All the streetcars had a kind of bar mounted at the top of the car. At the opposite end of this moveable bar was the part that straddled the electric wire overhead providing the power to the streetcar. At Midland Boulevard and Kelley Highway,

Near the Frank Beckman home at North E and 18th Streets, a Fort Smith Light & Traction passenger streetcar appears alongside maintenance vehicles constructing new track in the center of North E Street, 1911. (Photo courtesy Dr. Art Martin, Fort Smith Trolley Museum.)

there stood a huge open building which housed the streetcars when not in service.

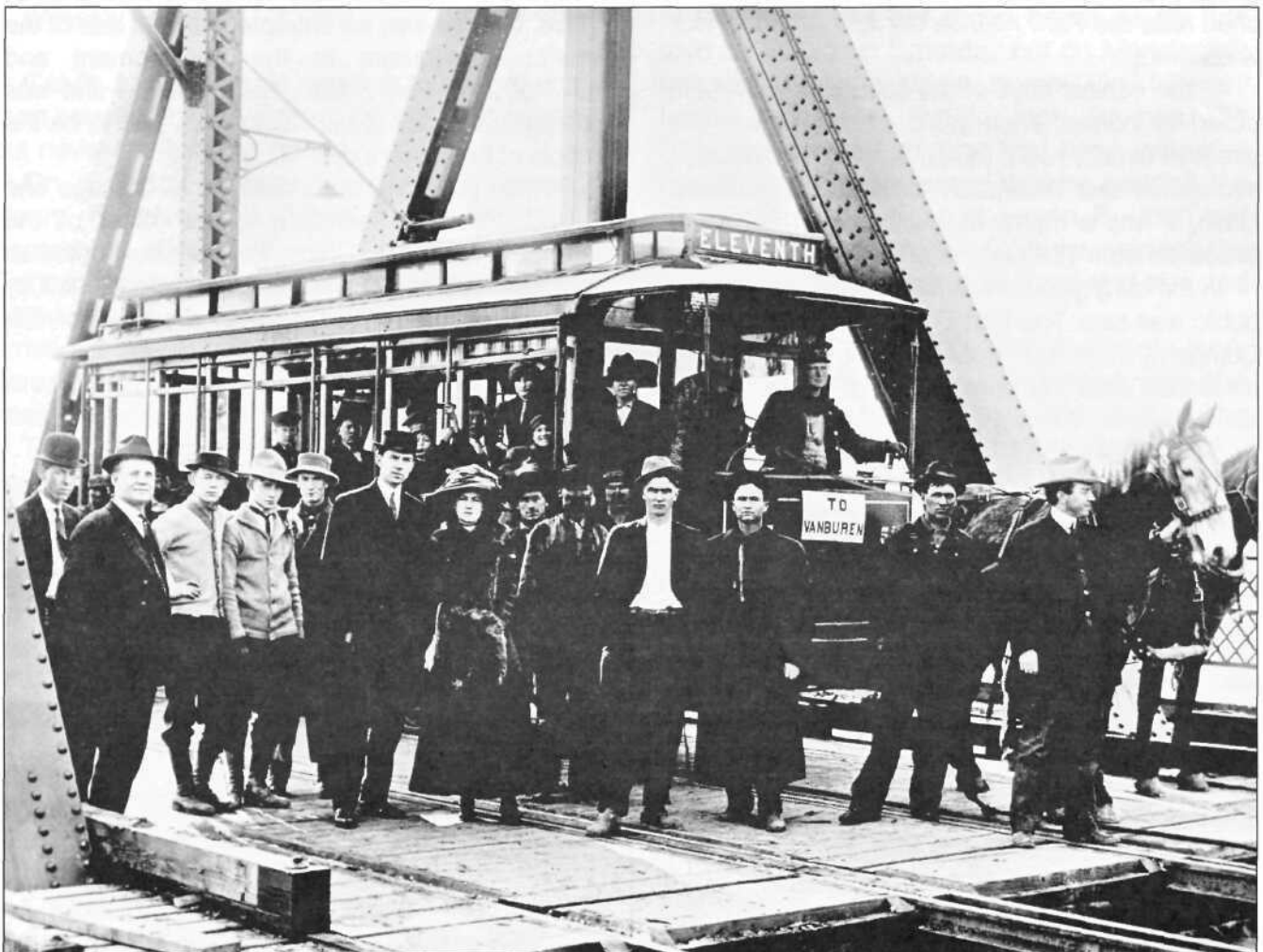
The streetcar itself never turned around but the bar could be moved and connected in such a manner that each of the ends of the car could become the "front" or engine, when the position of the bar is connected to the electric wire above the car in the correct position.

Inside each end of the car was driving gear such as air brakes, etc. Seats were built so as to change facing directions. On the floor by the motorman's foot there extended upward from the floor a metal stem, the top of which was widened and rounded. The motorman would signal by stomping on the top of this with his foot whenever it became necessary to warn those in the path of the streetcar. Some kind of metal lever under the floor would be activated and it made a loud clanging noise.

After the passengers were unloaded and the car was prepared to go in the opposite direction, the motorman would start at what had been one direction. Going down the center aisle he would clutch the raised metal handle situated on the aisle corner of the back of the bench seat, pulling it into the opposite direction. Each seat was reversed. Then he would pick up those working parts that were interchangeable and carry them to the other end of the car and install them into their proper place.

Streetcars never needed a round house such as railroad steam engines did, though in large cities a round house or sidings were common.

Various routes serviced Van Buren and Fort Smith and some other nearby areas such as Arkoma, South Fort Smith, and a line extended out of Van Buren to a certain point. On regular routes around town the same passengers would board the



Engineers, supervisors and invited guests mark at the first streetcar run across the new bridge between Fort Smith and Van Buren. Overhead trolley wires were not yet in place so car No. 51 was pulled by mules driven by William Pink Spradley, Sr. (Photo courtesy Dr. Art Martin, Fort Smith Trolley Museum.)

streetcar at their different points each day, and they would engage in conversations about the weather, politics, and news of the day as they traveled to their jobs.

If a passenger was running to catch the car the motorman would wait for him, and if a passenger was disabled or very old, the motorman would get off the car and assist him. Also, the motorman or conductor would carry messages for those folks who wanted to send messages to another passenger along the way. They were so accommodating in those days.

When riding the streetcars, riders had a way of developing friendships, encouraging people to develop hobbies, and children to gain educational skills by their travels and use of the cars. How else could school groups ride to their activities outside of town? The Boy Rangers rode to a certain point out of the city, then hiked to their camp in Rudy. Girls often rode the Park Avenue car to the end to pick wildflowers.

In the earliest days of the streetcars they were pulled by horses. Then came electric power. The streetcar usually had a motorman, and a conductor, sometimes two motormen to handle the duties. Often, it was a man's lifetime career. There were streetcars from 1883 to 1933.

In the early years, entertainment for the general public was rare. The Fort Smith Light and Traction Company, owners and operators of the streetcars, developed what was called Electric Park. It was like an early day Disneyland, located where Kay Rodgers Park is today.

The circus, one or the other of the big circuses, would come to Fort Smith almost every year, and would set up their big tent on the huge circus ground just off Dodson Avenue. The circus grounds had space for wagons, buggies, and cars. On special occasions, such as the circus, extra cars of the Park Hill line were put into service to handle the crowds.

What a joyful experience, riding the streetcar to see the circus! I can still hear that loud clanging noise; like music to my ears. Truly lives changed when streetcars stopped running. It will never be the same again.

Pauline Beckman contributed the history of Beckman Dairy to the April 2004 Journal. Born in Dora, Ark. in 1914, Beckman is a life-long resident of the Fort Smith area and is currently writing her memoirs.

Falk Doll Collection Being Restored at Museum

Members of the Fort Smith Doll Club are working with the Fort Smith Museum of History to organize, restore and preserve the doll collection of Ella Tilles Falk.

Ella Tilles Falk was born March 12, 1902, a third generation Fort Smith resident. She was the daughter of George and Lillian Tilles. George was an entrepreneur and one of the major contributors to the development and promotion of Fort Smith. Baby Ella, as she was called to the day of her death, was said to be the apple of her father's eye.

While attending the University of Chicago she worked as the secretary to the head of the Republican Party in Chicago. She also worked as an assistant to Julian Lamar, a New York City portrait artist. The museum has a portrait of Ella done by Lamar.

Ella married George Falk and made her home in Fort Smith where she was a volunteer and philanthropist to many charities.

After her death on April 21, 1999, her extensive doll collection was donated to the Fort Smith Museum of History. Ella obviously loved dolls as her collection is quite diverse and totals over 1,000 dolls. There are dolls from Victorian times, through the early 20s and 30s, to some of recent origin. The collection includes dolls of every description: French Jumeau, German Simon and Halbig, Oriental, By-Lo babies, American early 20th century composition such as Shirley Temple and Deanna Durbin, cloth and rag dolls, lovely Madame Alexanders, Chatty Kathy, Barbie, and many more.

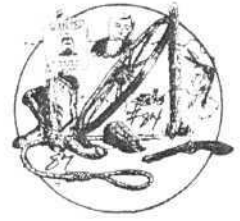
The museum's goal is to breathe new life into her collection through preservation and restoration so Ella's dolls will continue to provide enjoyment to the visitors to the Fort Smith Museum of History.

Contact the Fort Smith Doll Club for more information at (479) 452-8964 or e-mail fortsmithdollclub@cherryredlipstickandlace.com.





Hangin' Times in Fort Smith



By Jerry Akins
(Part X)

They Meet Death Without a Murmur and Have Nothing to Say **The executions of Calvin James and Lincoln Sprole, 1886**

SPROLE AND JAMES HUNG

"They Meet Death Without a Murmur
and Have Nothing to Say"
(Weekly Elevator 7-30-86)

Calvin James's crime appears to be one of a man coveting his neighbor's goods. Illicit goods but never-the-less his goods.

On a Friday in late July of 1885 James, Henry Reuben and Albert Kemp left their homes in Chickasaw Nation I. T. near Tishomingo to go to Texas. Tony Love left his home later that same day and all four men arrived at Joe Minow's Grocery at Thompson's Ferry on the Red River within a few hours of each other.

Then according to statements of witnesses and arresting officers and of the accused they crossed back over the Red River on Friday and camped in a field. On Saturday Henry Reuben and Albert Kemp were riding ahead and James and Tony Love were riding side by side in the rear, Love carrying four gallons of whiskey in two containers. Albert Kemp, according to the deposition of Zeddick Jackson, an arresting officer, said that the men in the lead heard a pistol shot and turned to see Love slumping over his saddle horn, blood running out of his face.

Calvin James then ordered Reuben and Kemp back to help him. Kemp refused saying that he didn't think that James was going to do such a thing. James replied, "God damn it to hell what you standing talking so long for? Come back here and let us get away with this thing."

Kemp stayed where he was and Henry Reuben went back and he and James led the horse and dead rider off the road and came back with the booty of whiskey.

Tony Love did not arrive home as he had said he would on Saturday but on Monday his unsaddled horse came home. On Tuesday Love's father set out to look for him. On Saturday, a week after he had been expected home, Wash Taylor heard that he had left the Red River a little ahead of James, Reuben and Kemp. Taylor and Andrew Colburn overtook the three suspects at Cherokee Town and arrested Albert "Abb" Kemp first.

Abb at first denied any knowledge of Love's whereabouts but when confronted with the information that they had been seen leaving the store together told Taylor that as soon as they arrested James and Reuben he would tell all. Shortly after Henry Reuben rode up and Taylor "threw down on him" and told him he was under arrest. Reuben drew his pistol and Taylor told him to put it away or he would kill him. Andrew Colburn then threw down on him too and as he turned to look, Taylor hit him over the head and grabbed his pistol. About that time James came up and they arrested him too.

James too denied any knowledge about Love and said that they had come home by a different route. The lawmen and suspects then started for home and it was during that ride that Abb Kemp related the details of the killing and robbery. Kemp told his story to Zeddick Jackson as well as Taylor and both versions are consistent.

After Calvin James had shot Tony Love and ordered the other two to help him Abb stayed in

Logo design used by permission of Fort Smith Social Studies Educators.

the road while Reuben went back and he and James led the horse and dead rider off the road, unsaddled the horse and turned it loose.

After the lawmen had left James and Reuben in the custody of "old man Peters" they went, with Abb Kemp directing, to the site of the killing. From there they followed a trail to where the body was left. It had apparently been put between two logs. It was eleven days after the killing and hogs or wild animals had torn the body to pieces so they gathered up the remains including the head with the bullet hole in it. They took the remains back to old man Peters and showed them to James and asked him if that looked anything like Love. James still denied any knowledge or involvement.

From Peters place the party continued to Caddo where they turned over custody to Deputy Mershon. Apparently all of the arresting party continued on with Mershon as guards, for in the night a guard came to Taylor with a message from Reuben. Reuben, who was shackled to James, wanted to be taken a distance from the others where he said that he would tell all about the event. Taylor refused his request for obvious reasons. Taylor, while at Caddo, had asked all three, when they were together, who had done the killing. James and Reuben replied that he would find out when they got to Fort Smith. Later they both said that Kemp shot Love because he owed him and would not pay him. However, when the critical time came both Reuben and Kemp testified against James and both went free.

Lincoln Sprole

Lincoln Sprole was described by at least three witnesses as a peaceable and quiet man and by his jail mates as one with limited mental abilities. But in his argument with Benjamin and Alexander "Ellick" Clark, father and son, fear or anger pushed him past his peaceable limit.

Sprole and the Clarks were among a number of people who farmed neighboring lands around Paul's Valley, Chickasaw Nation, I. T. Benjamin Clark was known to have a terrible temper as verified by J. W. Solomon who had known him in Texas and stated that he had always been in difficulties there. Ellick was said to have been even more volatile than his father.

In May of 1885 Sprole and a man named Perry, with whom he lived and farmed, got into an argument with Ben Clark, originally precipitated by a disagreement over a plow bolt. The hostilities progressed to the point that late one evening Ellick Clark came to the house of J. W. Solomon and demanded a pistol. When Solomon refused Ellick jumped off his horse and said, "John, by God I am going to have it."

Being familiar with his neighbor's house he went inside and got the gun. Solomon later followed Clark to his place and got the gun from Ben Clark who said that he didn't know why Ellick took it since they had plenty of guns of their own. It was then that Solomon learned of the seriousness of the dispute and described Clark as the maddest man he had ever seen.

Solomon found that Clark was in a rage because he was told that he could not water his horses at Perry's place. Clark swore that he would water his horses there next day or shoot someone. Solomon tried to quiet Clark and get him to go up to Perry's and "quash the fuss" but he would not listen. He told Clark that Perry and Sprole were afraid of him and might kill him but nothing would calm him.

So Solomon went to Perry's house where he found Sprole armed with a rifle and Perry with a shotgun and the doors locked. They would not let him in but raised the window and both expressed a desire to end the argument. While Solomon was talking, Ellick Clark came and watered his horse. Solomon talked to the boy and tried to get him to promise not to come back any more "until the fuss was stopped."

While he was talking Ben Clark stepped out from behind a gatepost holding a shotgun and told his son to come along. Clark said later that the reason he had come was to show them that he could water his horse and if anyone had stuck his head out he would have "blowed it off."

Solomon argued with Clark for a long time and finally Clark agreed to go up the next day with his coat off in his shirtsleeves to show that he wasn't armed and "fix it up with Mr. Perry".

Early next morning Solomon saw Ben and Ellick Clark passing in their wagon and asked where they were going. Ben said they were going to White Bead Hill to get his son a suit of clothes. Shortly afterward Sprole rode to the McCracken home and obtained a saddle then rode past Solomon's house in a run. When he

got to Solomon's house he hit his horse with a quirt and went by at full speed. He had a rifle across his saddle.

About three hours later John Unland came driving Clark's wagon and calling for Solomon and McCracken to come quickly. They found Ben Clark in the wagon mortally wounded and learned that his son had been shot too. They found young Clark at the scene of the attack shot in the knee and the upper right chest. Both Clarks said that Sprole had shot them. When Ben Clark was shot the horses ran and Ellick jumped out to stop them. It was then that Sprole shot him in the knee then advanced and shot him again on the ground.

Both Clarks were taken to their beds, Ben dying later that day. In the meantime Sprole came to the McCracken place and acted as if nothing had happened. When asked if he regretted what he had done he replied that he was not sorry for anything. Alexander Clark lived on for seventeen days, sometimes rallying and forgiving Sprole and other times pledging to kill him.

Sprole left the territory for Kansas where he had relatives. In Kansas he was arrested and taken to Fort Smith.

"Prisoners Sentenced"

"On Friday last Judge Parker passed sentence of death on Lincoln Sprole, Blue Duck, Kitt Ross and Calvin James, execution to take place July 23d. Sprole was sentenced twice, having been convicted of two murders. None of them had anything to say why the sentence of death should not be passed and took the matter with great indifference. All are young men." (Elevator 5-7-86)

Duck, Ross and James petitioned for new trials, with Duck and Ross being granted but James denied. Sprole expected a commutation from the president but none was granted so by July 23, 1886 only James and Sprole remained. The Fort Smith Elevator reported, "On Friday last, in accordance with the sentence of the court, Lincoln Sprole and Calvin James paid the dreadful penalty prescribed by the laws of God and man for the crime of murder."

Sprole was taken to the Catholic Church on Thursday evening, preceding his Friday

execution, where he was baptized by Reverend Lawrence Smythe. On the way to the church he was taken to a barbershop and was shaved. The paper reported that he seemed to enjoy the outing, it being the first time he had been out for more than a year.

James was baptized in the jail on Friday morning by Rev. A. J. Phillips of the African Methodist Church. Sprole slept soundly on his last night on earth and "partook of a hearty breakfast on Friday morning."

Early Friday morning people began to gather around the front of the jail trying to see the condemned men and before the time of execution arrived a large crowd had gathered. At one o'clock jailor Pryor and two deputies entered the jail with a complete change of clothing for each condemned man. "They soon arrayed themselves, assisted by their fellow prisoners, and announced themselves ready."

Sprole made a touching farewell that caused him to weep "while tears forced themselves to the eyes of many of his companions." James appeared little affected. They then removed to the anteroom where the death warrants were read by Deputy Marshal Carroll.

The procession then started for the gallows with a guard on either side of each prisoner and Rev. Smythe in front of Sprole and his guards.

On the scaffold Rev. Smythe conducted religious services with Sprole while Rev. Phillips attended James. On the trap, when asked if they had any last words Sprole shook his head and James too declined. The arms and legs of the men were pinioned, the caps put in place and the trap sprung. Both necks were broken and they died without a struggle.

The whole affair, from the time they left the jail occupied less than twenty minutes. Sprole was buried in the Catholic Cemetery and James was taken to the potter's field. James had a wife and children in the territory but neither his nor Sprole's people visited them.

Sources:
Fort Smith Elevator
National Archives

1905 Newspapers

FORT SMITH ELEVATOR

July 7, 1905 – Dec. 29, 1905

*(Abstracted from microfilm in the
Fort Smith Public Library
by Dorothy Doville)*

*(Editor: Spelling, punctuation and grammar appear
as printed in Fort Smith Elevator)*

JULY 7, 1905

The property at the head of Garrison Avenue once occupied as a residence by the late John Dodson was bought last week by James Frizzell

One night last week somebody with taste for choice poultry went to the coops of E.B. Miller on South Thirteenth street and stole thirty Plymouth Rock chickens.

There are 68 passenger trains a day leaving Fort Smith. Time Tables are posted for each of the following:

The Frisco System
Arkansas Western Railway
Missouri Pacific Route
Fort Smith & Western
MO., OKLA. & Gulf Railway Co.
Fort Smith & Western R.R.
The Santa Fe
Kansas City Southern
Midland Valley Railroad
Arkansas Central Railroad

JULY 14, 1905

Ground for the new convent of the Church of the Immaculate Conception was broken last Friday morning, the first spade of dirt being turned by Rev James Brady, who had previously blessed the ground. The new building will be a brick structure costing about \$40,000.

JULY 21, 1905

Capt John F. Williams returned last week from the east, where he went early in June to watch over the potato market and sell spuds raised in this section. He says the condition of the market the whole time he was there made him tired.

JULY 28, 1905

Last week B.F. Beckman, a recent addition to Fort Smith from Iowa, bought the property formerly occupied by T.W.M. Boone as a residence on North Fifteenth street. Mr Beckman paid \$5000 for the property, one of the choicest on the street.

Articles of incorporation for the Fort Smith & Van Buren Bridge & Transit Co were filed. The new company will build a bridge between Van Buren and Fort Smith. The bridge is to be for steam and electric cars as well as a wagon and foot bridge.

AUG. 4, 1905

Last Saturday Ben Atkinson received mail from Ed Thomas who is in California, a horned frog neatly sandwiched between two slices of bread. The bread was somewhat dried from its trip but the frog showed no signs of distress, disappearing shortly after it was released.

Monday morning a horse belonging to Charley Hatfield, the butcher, stepped on a live wire in front of Central Methodist church and was instantly killed.

Hillard Bryan, the assessor, was laid up for illness for several days last week, but this week is at the court house wrestling with gentlemen who believe, or seem to believe, that property should be assessed at about one-half or one-fourth of what it is really worth.

AUG. 11, 1905

The old B.T. DuVal residence on Lexington Avenue was sold last week to Milton Boyd for \$600. It is a fine piece of property.

The hose and chemical fire wagon purchased by the city some time ago arrived in the city last week and has been installed at the department headquarters.

SEP. 1, 1905

The Grand Opera House will have for its attraction for one week starting next Monday, September 4,

the Gertrude Ewing Company in repertoire at popular prices, with ladies free night Monday.

SEP. 15, 1905

An old man named Kress was buried with his fortune of \$17,000 in his coffin. His relatives heard of it and exhumed the body and divided the money.

SEP. 22, 1905

There is little doubt that society will turn out to see their favorite actress, Adelaide Thurston, in her new play, "The Triumph of Betty," which will be an early attraction at Grand Opera House.

SEP. 29, 1905

Col B. F. Atkinson died in Denver, Colo. He was President of the Atkinson-Williams Hardware Company. Buried in Oak Cemetery.

The people of Fort Smith were shocked Tuesday night upon learning of the sudden death of Mrs W.W. Bailey, wife of Dr. W.W. Bailey and daughter of the late Dr. J.H.T. Main.

OCT. 6, 1905

The Fort Smith Biscuit Company, the Oklahoma Vinegar Company and the Fort Smith Coffee Company have combined upon a plan by which visitors to the street fair may have a free lunch. The lunch will consist of a cup of coffee, a cracker and a pickle.

OCT. 20, 1905

Sunday afternoon Ward Murta, while patrolling around one of the bear cages on the circus grounds, had the end of one of his fingers snapped off.

Robert A. Adair, Secretary of the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce for several years, died last week at Independence, Kan.

NOV. 3, 1905

Al Belt, whose license was revoked by Judge Falconer for having violated the agreement not to sell liquors on Sunday, has closed his doors.

NOV. 17, 1905

While stepping from the Ferris wheel last Saturday Miss Minnie Hightower, of twelfth street, was struck by the box succeeding the one on which she had just emerged and severely injured.

Prof. Booker Washington, president of the Tuskegee (Ala) Institute will speak at the Grand Opera House in Fort Smith, November 21.

NOV. 24, 1905

Monday night the council passed an ordinance extending the franchises of the street car company fifty years.

Mr Herschel Hunt and Miss Ethel Sengel were married in this city Wednesday evening, November 15th. Brides parents are Senator and Mrs George Sengel.

DEC. 1, 1905

The cornerstone of the new convent was laid Monday, with Fathers Brady, Thomas, Enright, Bandini and Boyle conducting the ceremonies.

The Boston Store celebrated its twenty-sixth anniversary last Saturday. The Boston Store was a very small institution when it began operations in Fort Smith.

St Edwards Infirmary was opened to public inspection Saturday and Monday morning the infirmary was dedicated and blessed. This magnificent hospital was named in honor of Bishop Edward Fitzgerald.

DEC. 15, 1905

Ben Cravens announces to the public his candidacy for the position of Congressman from this district.

Last Sunday the new pipe organ at St John's Episcopal church was used for the first time. Cost was \$3000.

DEC. 29, 1905

Daniel Roach, a one-armed peddler, died Monday in Belle Point Hospital from injuries said to have been sustained by being thrown out of one of the saloons on the lower part of the avenue.

“Fallen Heroes” of Fort Smith Law Enforcement

By Charles Raney

Nine police officers have died in the line of duty of the Fort Smith Police Department. As research of the Fort Smith Police Department continues, the possibility exists that other officers may also be identified as having paid the ultimate sacrifice performing their duties in support of the citizens of this community.

Remembering these law enforcement heroes is the purpose of this article and for the erection of the marker outside the entrance to the Police Department facility. The duties which a police officer owes to the State are of a most exacting nature. No one is compelled to choose the profession of a police officer but, having chosen it, everyone is obligated to perform its duties and live up to the high standard of its requirements. To join in that enterprise means the surrender of much individual freedom. The police officer has chosen a profession that he/she must hold to at all peril. He/she is the outpost of civilization. He/she cannot depart from it until he is relieved.

It is a great and honorable duty, to be greatly and honorably fulfilled. Wherever the law goes there civilization goes and stays. When the law fails, barbarism flourishes. Whoever scouts the law, whoever brings it into disrespect, whoever connives at its evasion is an enemy of civilization. Change it as you will, but observe it always.

Most the above words were stated by the late President of the United States Calvin Coolidge in 1919. His utterances are as meaningful today as then. Let us remember and not forget these fallen heroes.

Officer Ernest Augustus (Gus) Anthony
End of Watch: May 13, 1904

Officer Anthony was born in Missouri on March of 1845. He was killed when a Kansas City Southern coal train, which was being switched in the Missouri Pacific yards, backed over him. Officer Anthony was bringing medicine and candy to a lady on a passenger train for her young daughter who was ill and fussy. Three trains were being switched at the time and, amidst all of the noise, Gus was unable to hear either the train or the warning cries from nearby witnesses until it was too late. The fatal accident occurred on May 13, 1904.

The *Arkansas Gazette* said that Officer Anthony

was, for fifteen years, “one of the best policemen Fort Smith ever had.” The *Daily News Record*, Fort Smith reported that all the businesses on Officer Anthony’s beat were closed during the time of his funeral and described the floral tributes as “magnificent”. Gus was 58 years old and was laid to rest in Oak Cemetery. Officer Anthony was survived by his wife, one son, and three daughters.

Detective Patrick Andrew Carr
End of Watch: April 1, 1912

Detective Carr was shot and killed when he assisted other officers in the capture of an escaped prisoner. A Fort Smith police detective had observed a 24-year old male engaged in a loud verbal confrontation with a female on Garrison Avenue. He arrested the male and while he escorted him to jail, the prisoner pulled away from the detective and fled. Detective Carr observed the escape and joined with others in the pursuit of the escapee. During the pursuit and recapture of the prisoner, shots were fired and Detective Carr was struck above the right eye by a bullet. Detective Carr died nine days later in St. Edward Hospital without regaining consciousness. He was laid to rest in Oak Cemetery. Detective Carr was survived by his wife, two sons, and three daughters.

Detective Sam Booth
End of Watch: March 21, 1931

Detective Booth was shot and killed while transporting two men to jail. Detective Booth and another detective had stopped a car at Towson Avenue and South E Street. The car contained two men that were known to the detectives. The other detective left the scene to pick up their captain and Detective Booth began to ride to the jail in the suspect’s vehicle. Unbeknownst to the detectives, the men had just stolen the vehicle. Immediately after turning onto Rogers Avenue a shootout ensued inside the vehicle and Detective Booth was shot once. Detective Booth exited the passenger side of the car on Rogers Avenue and ran around to the driver side. The men also exited the passenger side and one of them fired across the hood of the car, striking Detective Booth three more times.

Although mortally wounded, Detective Booth attempted to follow the men but collapsed in a nearby car dealership. He was transported to St. Edward Hospital where he died 30 minutes later. The suspects were apprehended and sentenced to life in prison. Detective Booth had been with the police department for 20 years. He was 48.

Captain William A. Bourland
End of Watch: Sept. 2, 1931

Captain Bourland and Patrolman Ralph Howard were shot and killed during a shootout of several armed robbery suspects. They had begun to chase the car down Spiro Highway and chased them onto Towson Avenue where they ran it off the road near South Y Street. A shootout ensued and Captain Bourland, Patrolman Howard, and all three suspects were shot. One of the suspects died at the scene. Captain Bourland was shot in the head and twice in the chest. He was pronounced dead at St Edwards Hospital. Patrolman Howard was struck in the neck, chest and both hands. He succumbed to his wounds two days later. The two surviving suspects were taken into custody. Both were sentenced to life in prison but the sentence of one of the suspects was commuted and he was paroled.

Captain Bourland was survived by his wife, son and three daughters. He was 51.

Patrolman Howard had been in the police department for 20 years and was survived by his wife, son and daughter. He was 53.

Officer Thomas Hairston
End of Watch: September 27, 1936

Officer Hairston was on patrol with Officer Verne Bentley on the north side of Fort Smith. As the two officers cruised along Midland Boulevard around 1:30 a.m., they heard shots coming from the vicinity of Ninth and Suburban Streets. Officer Bentley turned off Midland Avenue and started down Suburban alongside the railroad tracks. The officers observed Rupert Kursh approaching them brandishing a rifle. Officer Hairston called out from the vehicle two or three times ordering Kursh to stop and drop the rifle. Officer Hairston then shot twice, striking the suspect in the chest with both shots. One of the shots went through the suspect's heart. After the shooting, Officer Hairston exited the police

car and ran back to Midland Avenue to the ice plant where he summoned an ambulance. Officer Hairston then ran back to the scene of the shooting where he collapsed with a heart attack. When the ambulance arrived, he was put in the ambulance and transported to the hospital. While en-route, Hairston died from the heart attack precipitated by the stress of the shooting and running to call an ambulance. He was 62 and had served part and full time on the police force for over 25 years.

Patrolman Randy Monroe Basnett
End of Watch: Sept. 24, 1976

Patrolman Basnett was shot and killed when he confronted a double-murder suspect, John Edward Swindler. Patrolman Basnett was in the parking lot of a service station when the suspect pulled into the parking lot as well. He had recognized the suspect's car from a bulletin provided to the police department earlier in the day. When Patrolman Basnett asked for identification the suspect reached inside the vehicle, produced a .25 caliber handgun, and shot Patrolman Basnett in the chest. Patrolman Basnett returned fire at the fleeing suspect. Two shots struck the suspect and four shots struck the suspect's car. The shooting occurred across the street from an Arkansas State Police barracks. Several troopers who heard the shots pursued the suspect and assisted other Fort Smith officers in arresting the suspect a short distance away. Swindler was sentenced to death and executed on June 18, 1990. Patrolman Basnett had been with the police department for over four years and was survived by his wife, stepdaughter, stepson, parents, sister and brother. He was 30.

Detective William Ray Tate
End of Watch: Jan. 5, 1981

Detective Tate was shot and killed after being abducted along with three crime victims. A woman and a co-worker had gone to the police station to report that the woman's husband was missing. After taking the report, Detective Tate followed the two back to her residence. He advised dispatch of his arrival and then made no further contact. The bodies of Detective Tate, the woman, and the co-worker were found the following day. Detective Tate had been restrained in his own handcuff and had been shot in the back of the head. The body of the

missing husband was found in a nearby recreation area. A suspect was apprehended and charged with four counts of kidnaping and murder. The suspect was convicted of all counts and sentenced to death but died in prison. Detective Tate had been with the department for four years and was survived by his wife, son, daughter and sister. He was 33.

Patrolman Billy Wayne Simms
End of Watch: April 18, 1986

Patrolman Simms was struck and killed by a vehicle while crossing Rogers Avenue near Barling at 10:55 p.m. He was on patrol when he stopped to assist a disabled motorist. He had activated his emergency lights and walked across the street to the car. When he finished with the motorist he was walking back to his patrol car when a car struck him. He was knocked into the path of another car and was killed instantly. Patrolman Simms had been with the police department for over two years and was survived by his wife, daughter, son, mother and sister. He was 39.

The Fort Smith Police Department is one of the finest in the country. Those who have gone before and are currently serving have earned our respect and deserve our support. Each May, the Fort Smith Police Department honors the 'fallen heroes' in a solemn ceremony in front of the police department. Try to attend one of these and pay your respects to those that gave their life protecting you and I.

"When you leave at last this worldly din
and seek, like mortals, Paradise to win
St. Peter, I trust, will o'erlook ev'ry sin
and say: Well done, my boy, come right in
You're a Policeman."

— Author unknown.

Charles Raney and Police Chaplain Ben Stephens, with the assistance of volunteers, are researching the history of the Fort Smith police department. Information, documents, clippings, artifacts, etc., are being sought from everyone. Contact the Fort Smith Police Chaplain if you have items to loan.

Inquiries

The following inquiries for historical information have been received:

BURGESS YATES

Looking for information on Burgess Yates. Born 1830 and was tried in Fort Smith before U.S. District in 1876. Was probably acquitted but need verification.

Reply to:
Linda Miller
319 Kansas St.
Camdenton, MO 65020.

1916 COVERLET

Looking for information about a coverlet that was shown at the 1916 Fort Smith County Fair, where it apparently won first prize. It was made by Jane or Lydia John(s). Knowing more about the coverlet could help us track down some family history.

Reply to:
Constance Bearnes
Jefferson City, MO 65109

JOHN PURKHISER

I've uncovered a news article from the Webb City, Mo., *Daily Register* dated March 1904. The article claims Thomas Purkhiser left for Magazine, Ark. to assist his father, Joel Matthew Purkhiser, who was operating a sawmill. Joel's brother, John Preston Purkhiser, also worked in the Ouachita national forest and for many years in the sawmill industry. John Purkhiser may have died there. I am looking for the death date of John Purkhiser. I am also interested in establishing if the names of sawmills are known on Western Arkansas/Eastern Oklahoma during the time frame of 1900-1910. John Purkhiser probably died around 1904 and could have been in Logan County but his widow remarried in Booneville in 1905.

Reply to:
Jerry Forman
1508 West View Drive
Berkeley, CA 94705

Inquiries are recorded by: Chuck Raney,
Corresponding Secretary. Mail inquiries to:

Fort Smith Historical Society
P.O. Box 3676
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3676

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NOTES: # - some sort of graphic is used, other than a portrait.

* - a portrait of the person(s) named is on page indicated.

(- - -) - for such as title, marital status, degree, etc.

"- - -" - for nickname or special emphasis.

(-) - dash between page numbers indicates the name of the person, place, etc. is carried throughout the story.

(gp) - group picture

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