

The JOURNAL



The Gearharts & Constantinos

Families from Midwest and Italy unite in Fort Smith in early 1900s



A '30s Boy:
Part II



*Hangin' Times
in Fort Smith*



Man on the Street:
*Images from Garrison Avenue's
mystery photographer*



MISSION: The mission of the Fort Smith Historical Society, Inc., founded in 1977, is to publish *The Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society* and through *The Journal* and other activities to locate, identify and collect historical data; to publish source materials and historical articles, all pertaining to the City of Fort Smith and the immediate surrounding area. Preservation of Fort Smith history is our primary mission and to this end, we always welcome the loan of Fort Smith historical material and will return it promptly.

MEMBERSHIP & ORDERS: *Journal* back issues are available. Cost for the current issue is \$7.50 plus a \$2 mailing charge per copy. Cost for past issues is \$4 plus the \$2 mailing charge. A composite index for Volumes I through IX is available for \$10 plus a \$4 mailing charge. Cost for the complete set of Journals, Volumes I through 31, is \$225. Volumes I and II will be reproduced copies, as these copies are no longer available in original form.

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Attention: Nancy Ciulla, Treasurer
P.O. Box 3676
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3676

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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 Google group, Fort Smith History Forum, for a bulletin board of current research questions. Readers may post their own research questions or topics in hopes of furthering their own research.

Webmaster: Al Whitson, al.whitson@cox.net

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COVER: Photos of Jennie Constantino and Sam Gearhart
Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III.

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News & Opportunities



Photo courtesy of the Fort Smith Historical Society

ORVILLE BITTLE RECEIVES an award for his article, "A World War II Veteran's Story," from Tom DeBlack.

The Journal Wins Four State Awards

The county and local journals awards committee of the Arkansas Historical Association chose *The Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society* to receive the Walter L. Brown Award for Best County or Local Journal and the Best Graphics award. In addition, *The Journal's* article entitled "Escape to America" by Melanie Speer Wiggins was cited for Best Article award, and Orville Bittle's article, "A World War II Veteran's Story," received the Best Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir award. Awards were presented at the Arkansas Historical Association's 67th annual awards banquet on March 28th in Eureka Springs.

Fort Smith Museum of History to Develop Docent Program

The Fort Smith Museum of History offers many opportunities for volunteers: archives and collections care, carpenter's shop, tour leadership, and more. The museum board has appointed Donna Wintory to lead the development of a volunteer program for docents. Museum docents, community members who serve

on a volunteer basis, provide tours of the museum's collections and special exhibits to visiting groups of all ages. Docents will receive training that will provide them an opportunity to learn about teaching techniques, to become familiar with the full workings of the museum, and to meet the director, curator and other museum staff.

For information call Donna Wintory at (479) 650-6649.



Photo courtesy of the Fort Smith Historical Society

RECIPIENTS OF THE 2008 Frontier Achievement Awards include, back row from left, Joe Wasson, Barbara Coleman, Luanne Weir and Judge Jim Spears, and, front row from left, Mayor Ray Baker and Cindy McNally.

2008 Frontier Achievement Awards Presented by Secondary Social Studies Educators of Fort Smith

The Secondary Social Studies Educators of Fort Smith recognized the individuals and organizations that have made an outstanding contribution to the historical development of our

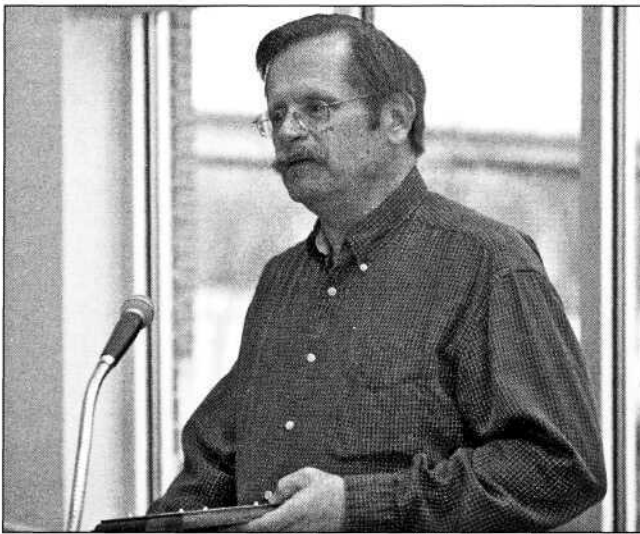


Photo courtesy of Kaia Larsen / Times Record

JOE WASSON RECEIVES an award for his work on the Fort Smith Historical Society's World War II Oral History Project.

city and/or helped to preserve the heritage of Fort Smith, at an awards program on April 17, 2008, at the River Front Park Events Building.

Fort Smith Mayor Ray Baker was presented with the first "Ray Baker Lifetime Achievement Award," which will be given in the future in his honor. Baker, who retired in May 2007 from Southside High School, had taught history for more than 40 years and was the last remaining member of the original faculty who began teaching at the school when it opened for the 1963-64 school year.

Fort Smith Historical Society board member and *Journal* co-editor Joe Wasson received an award for his work with *The Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society* and his work on the World War II Veterans Oral History Project. Wasson has recorded the oral histories of more than 110 World War II veterans and is recording the oral history of other Fort Smith citizens, including the Benedictine Sisters at St. Scholastica Monastery.

Others recognized as 2008 awards recipients were Barbara Coleman, nominated for her work in historical re-enactment and her volunteer service with the Fort Smith Public Library; Circuit Judge Jim Spears, for his work with the Deputy Marshal Bass Reeves Statue Committee and the U.S. Marshals Museum Board; Immaculate Conception Church, reported to be the first Catholic church in Fort Smith; and the Fort Smith Public Library, which has many materials for history buffs, including a genealogy department, with records

of births, deaths from 1881 to 1964, many funeral home and cemetery records, and other materials, with some records accessible on the library website.

WW II Oral History Project to Work with Southside's EAST Students

For the last two years, Joe Wasson, videographer/interviewer for the World War II Oral History project, has been involved in interviewing more than 110 veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm. Wasson has also conducted interviews with Fort Smith citizens who have contributed greatly to life in Fort Smith, people with the experiences and memories that merit preservation. All interviews are saved to magnetic tape, DVDs and in printed transcripts. As Wasson continues to do interviews, the amount of work editing and preparing the DVDs has become more time-consuming, and we have been in the process of developing a source for skilled technical assistance.

The EAST partnership is the first piece of the answer to the staffing problem. With this assistance, more interviews can be edited, captions and photographs added, and professional-quality DVDs produced to be shared with the interviewees and their families.

The EAST Project, which stands for Environmental and Spatial Technology, is partnered to 220 schools in seven states. Southside High School in Fort Smith has been a participant school since 2000, with a fully equipped classroom. Southside facilitator Debbie Marley is available to assist students as they work to develop and complete their own projects.

According to the EAST website, "The EAST project is a nonprofit organization that provides new ways of learning for modern students. EAST focuses on student-driven service projects through the use of the latest technology. EAST schools are equipped with classrooms containing state-of-the-art workstations, servers, software, and accessories, including GPS/GIS mapping tools, architectural and CAD design software, 3D animation suites, and more. Students find problems in their local communities and use these tools to solve them. EAST's focus is on the learning environment of the

Memorial and Commemorative Gifts Important to the Historical Society

When making a gift to honor or remember someone important to you, please think of the Fort Smith Historical Society. Gifts may be made in memory of a loved one, or in honor of a birthday, graduation, anniversary or other event.

Memorial gifts are a beautiful and lasting way to honor those who are dear to us. All memorials and commemorative gifts are acknowledged with a letter to both the donor and the family of the person honored.

Here's another idea: If you particularly enjoyed a feature in *The Journal*, show your appreciation for a subject you found interesting by making a contribution in honor of the writer.

A contribution to the Fort Smith Historical Society supports the publication of *The Journal*, which is placed in libraries and schools, and becomes an important part of the historical record of our region. *The Journal* is indexed by the Boreham Library at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, with the index carried on its website. UAFS is also developing a site with complete, downloadable copies of *The Journal*, accessed on the UAFS website.

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Please send only checks or money orders, and indicate whether you will need a written receipt. The Fort Smith Historical Society cannot accept credit card payments. Send your contributions to:

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EAST classroom, where students are responsible for creating lesson plans. There are no lectures, no tests; instead, students are guided by an EAST facilitator (a teacher trained in the EAST process). This approach to learning offers tremendous results, with students becoming better prepared for college and the business world, and they care more about learning.”

New programming requires additional funding, so the World War II Oral History Project has several grants pending to staff both this amazing partnership and the entire oral history program on an ongoing basis. There is much more urgent work to do than can be accomplished on a timely basis by our current number of volunteers. We also would welcome any support, personal and financial, from individuals or groups, to help the oral history project capture the stories of World War II veterans before it's too late.



Photo courtesy of Ginny Lang

CLARA JANE RUBARTH shakes hands with State Rep. Jim Medley.

WW II Oral History Project Receives WAPDD Grant

Through the efforts of State Rep. Jim Medley, the World War II Oral History Program was awarded a grant of \$672 from the Western Arkansas Planning and Development District Inc. Medley presented the check at a meeting of the Fort Smith Historical Society at the main library on July 9, 2008. This funding will make it possible for us to purchase large external hard drives to safely store the video interviews of World War II

veterans. We are very appreciative of Medley's efforts to assist this program.



Photo courtesy of the University of Arkansas

TOM W. DILLARD, head of the *Special Collections Department for University of Arkansas Libraries*, works with the *Index Arkansas* staff: (seated) Elizabeth McKee and Andrea Cantrell; and (standing) Joan Watkins and Rachel Skoney.

***Index Arkansas* Makes Arkansas Newspaper Research Easy**

Index Sponsored by the Special Collections Department of UA Libraries

Researchers seeking newspaper articles about historic Arkansas events and people can find Arkansas newspaper indexing on *Index Arkansas*, an online database for publications dealing with Arkansas topics. The index contains nearly 30,000 citations from Arkansas' statewide and regional newspapers, joining more than 60,000 citations from other historical and biographical sources.

Index Arkansas is an important resource for students and scholars, containing a total of 90,913 citations from Arkansas newspapers, periodicals and books. Tom W. Dillard, head of the Special Collections Department for University of Arkansas Libraries, said, "The development of *Index Arkansas* is a transforming event in the study of our state. For so long, researchers have labored without a good index to state literature, but now we have one. And, we fully expect to expand it substantially in the years to come."

The newly available newspaper citations began as records kept in an old-fashioned card file of 40 drawers.

In Memoriam



Photo courtesy of Joe Wasson

Wanda Sue Alkire Wasson

**By David Dunagin
and Rena Westbrook**

Wanda will be remembered for her preservation of the historic Breckinridge House, her years as an antique dealer providing assistance in helping furnish many Fort Smith area homes with antique furniture and gracious accessories and artwork, and her great encouragement to those undertaking not just preservation of older homes, but projects of all kinds.

Oral History Project Donation

Harley Strang

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The records were carefully computerized and are now easily searchable by author, title, keyword, and subject. Coverage is mostly from the early 1930s through 1985, with scattered entries from the 1830s through the 1920s.

In development for many years, *Index Arkansas* was initiated by the late Georgia Clark and expanded by Elizabeth McKee

and Andrea Cantrell of the University of Arkansas Libraries. Joan Watkins, current manager and senior editor of *Index Arkansas*, said, "I am profoundly grateful for what they have accomplished. It is rare to find such a level of dedication as shown by these individuals and the University Libraries."

Index Arkansas is unique. While other states and universities have undertaken similar projects, *Index Arkansas* stands apart from them because of the large number of publications covered and its availability online. In addition to newspapers, 43 Arkansas periodicals, 30 county history journals and 80 books with historical and biographical content are indexed. Researchers might find citations to newspaper articles ranging from an 1838 article about a Washington County dinner honoring Judge Archibald Yell, to articles from the 1930s about drought in Arkansas during the Dust Bowl era, to articles concerning the Cuban refugee crisis at Fort Chaffee in the early 1980s.

Dillard said, "*Index Arkansas* is a new bridge to our heritage. It will help Arkansans discover that, yes, we do have a heritage, and it is worth studying. I hope researchers will make great use of it." After finding citations to newspaper articles on their topics, researchers can obtain copies of the articles through their local library or its interlibrary loan service. *Index Arkansas* is available online at <http://arkindex.uark.edu/>. Use of the index is free of charge and available to everyone.

*"Index
Arkansas is a
new bridge to our
heritage. It will
help Arkansans
discover that,
yes, we do have a
heritage, and it is
worth studying."*

Tom W. Dillard,
head of the UA Libraries
Special Collections Department

*News release by University of Arkansas at Fayetteville,
Arkansas.*

The Gearharts & Constantinos



Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III
GEORGE GEARHART, circa 1900.



CATHERINE HUMBLE GEARHART

Families from Midwest and Italy unite in Fort Smith

By Arthur Yell Berry III

PART I – The Gearharts

Chapter 1: Sam E. Gearhart

My name is Samuel E. Gearhart. I was born in Circleville, Ohio, on Sunday, May 15, 1887. Circleville is located on the Scioto River, about 25 miles south of Columbus. In the summer of 1896, just after my ninth birthday, I got my first job. It was delivering newspapers for the *Circleville Union Herald*.¹ Every job I've had since was working for a newspaper. I loved the newspaper business. When I was growing up there, Circleville had about 7,000 citizens, and I knew I wanted every one of them to buy a newspaper.

There were four in my immediate family: Mom and Dad, known to everyone else as Catherine



MABEL AND SAM GEARHART, 1889.



Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

THE CADET BAND in Circleville, Ohio, circa 1899. Sam Gearhart is third from left in the second row.

and George, my older sister, Mabel, and me. We attended grade school at the High Street School, and I graduated from Mrs. Wells' sixth-grade class in 1899.²

In those years, Circleville had a Cadet Band, and I was a member. I had the distinction of playing with Ted Friedman. Of course, I didn't know it was a distinction at the time. Ted was just a friend. But a few years later he would become the popular clarinetist and band leader Ted Lewis.

When I was fourteen, Ted and I rode our bicycles to Columbus. We'd had enough of school and wanted to go to work. Ted got a job with a music company, and I went to work as an office boy for the *Columbus Citizen*, selling papers on the side. The first extra I sold was when President



SAM GEARHART on a bicycle.

marshal and saddler in Circleville.⁹ He served during the Mexican War in 1846 and 1847, in Company I, 2nd Regiment, Ohio Volunteers-Infantry, and saw action at Marin, Mexico, in February 1847.¹⁰ Susan, my grandmother, died just three weeks after Mom's birth.¹¹ Mom was raised by her dad until he remarried in the 1880s. Kate, as she was known growing up, and her family, lived in the 600 block of Franklin Street, about two blocks from my dad's family.¹² William died in 1889, and both of my Humble grandparents are buried in Circleville's Forest Cemetery.¹³

Chapter 3: Jerome and Mary Ann Morrow Gearhart

I'm not sure why my grandparents, Jerome and Mary Ann Gearhart, moved to Missouri. My aunt Florence, Dad's oldest sister, was born in Columbus in 1855, while the next two children, John and Catherine, were born in Alexandria in 1858 and 1860. Dad came along in 1861.

The family moved to Missouri between 1855 and 1858. Sometime between September 1861 and August 1862, the family moved to Oneida, Illinois, where my grandfather was a farmer. In August 1862, a year after my dad was born, my grandfather joined the Union Army.¹⁴ With my grandfather, Jerome, fighting in the Civil War, my grandmother, Mary Ann, and four children returned to Circleville, where her fifth child, my aunt Mary, was born in 1864.¹⁵

How did my grandparents travel from Ohio to Missouri, a distance of well over 500 miles across half of Ohio and all of Indiana and Illinois? By wagon? In the late 1850s, it would have been a very long and difficult trip. By rail? An easier passage but more expensive. Or, maybe they journeyed by boat down the Scioto River, a part of the Ohio and Erie Canal, to Portsmouth and traveled the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to Alexandria. They arrived in Missouri before the Civil War and remained there and in Illinois only half a dozen years. A generation before, Jerome, as a three-year-old, and his parents had traveled more than 300 miles from Pennsylvania to settle in Ohio, an even more difficult trip in the 1830s. After the war, the Jerome Gearhart family was again living in Circleville, and I ended up with four more aunts and uncles — Robert, Emma, Nannie and Fred.¹⁶ My dad, George, was the fourth of nine children.

My grandmother, Mary Ann Morrow Gearhart,

was born in Ireland on March 15, 1837.¹⁷ [Victoria became Queen of England.] She emigrated from Ireland as a child with her father and mother, Andrew and Elizabeth Morrow, my great-grandparents, between 1841 and 1850.¹⁸ My grandfather, Jerome, was born in Greencastle, Pennsylvania, on November 15, 1832. [The year Charles Darwin made his discovery and began his research that resulted in his "Origin of the Species."] He came from Pennsylvania to Ohio as a three-year-old with his father and mother, George and Mary Albright Gearhart, and one younger brother, Samuel. He grew up in Circleville and worked for a druggist in town before marrying my grandmother, Mary Ann. The wedding was in Circleville on July 3, 1854.¹⁹ He was twenty-one and she was sixteen. After returning from Missouri and Illinois, and service during the Civil War, he worked as a carpenter and house painter.²⁰ Jerome enlisted in the 102nd Illinois Volunteers (Infantry) on August 9, 1862, and received a bonus of \$27. His regiment was formed in Knox County, Illinois, near his home in Oneida. The 102nd spent the rest of 1862 and 1863 in Kentucky and Tennessee.

In February 1864, they marched to Alabama, and in May 1864, joined Gen. William T. Sherman's Army of Georgia. The 102nd fought in the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain and the siege of Atlanta. Jerome served as a corporal, detailed as a clerk to General Sherman's headquarters.²¹ His unit then followed Sherman on his march to the sea and the siege of Savannah, Georgia. In January 1865, Jerome marched north and participated in the campaign of the Carolinas. His younger brother, John, a member of the 43rd Ohio Infantry, was killed on Feb 3, 1865, at the Battle of Rivers Bridge in South Carolina. Jerome's 102nd marched by way of Richmond, Virginia, to Washington, D.C., where he was discharged on June 6, 1865. He later received a pension of \$10 a month. I wish he could tell us what his training involved ... what the march to Alabama was like ... what he did during the siege of Atlanta. Did he ever say, "Yes, sir," to General Sherman? I have no pictures of my grandparents but my grandfather, Jerome, was described on his military enlistment papers at age thirty as being five feet four inches tall, with brown hair, dark eyes and dark complexion.²²

My grandmother, Mary Ann, died March 24, 1898, at the age of 61 and is buried in Circleville's Forest Cemetery.²³ After grandmother's death, my granddad,

Jerome, moved to Columbus. In 1904, he moved to the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Sandusky.²⁴ When he died on March 21, 1917, at the age of 84, he was living with his youngest daughter, my aunt Nannie, in Columbus.²⁵ He died of arteriosclerosis

after a seven-week stay at the National Military Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. He is buried next to my grandmother in Circleville's Forest Cemetery.

Chapter 4: George and Mary Albright Gearhart

My great-grandparents, George and Mary Albright Gearhart, came from Pennsylvania. George was born in Franklin County, near Greencastle, Pennsylvania, on February 5, 1805. [Lewis and Clark were on the Missouri River.] The youngest of nine children, he lived at home on a farm until the age of seventeen, when he was apprenticed to learn the trade of saddlery. Three years later, at age twenty, "moved," as he said, "by the excitement of western emigration," he and a companion walked west for fifteen days, probably following the National Road, which today is U.S. Route 40. Arriving in the village of Circleville — then with a population of 750 people — he said, "A long tramp; this town is good enough for me."^{26,27} He worked for, "James Bell, then engaged in the manufacture of leather, saddles and harnesses."²⁸ George returned to Pennsylvania in 1827, and married my great-grandmother, Mary Albright, on December 13, 1831. In 1835, with his wife and two children (my grandfather, Jerome, and my great uncle, Samuel) he returned to Ohio, where he purchased a farm near Stoutsville, about five miles from Circleville. After a couple of years he decided he "preferred life in the city instead of clearing timberland on a farm," and moved in 1837 to Circleville, "a town," he was quoted as saying, "with a few hundred people and an abundance of mud."²⁹ He and Mary lived the rest of their lives in Circleville.



THE GRAVE MARKERS of George Gearhart (left) and Mary Albright Gearhart (right).



Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

My great-grandmother, Mary, was born on December 28, 1809, the daughter of my great-great-grandparents, Peter and Christiana Albright.³⁰ [Thomas Jefferson was president of the United States.] She was the mother of ten

children, my grandfather, Jerome, being the first of five brothers and five sisters. Her husband, George, supported his family as a saddler.³¹ He was also a superintendent on the Ohio and Erie Canal and a weigh master for Ruggles Packing House. He was also active in politics, serving as Township Trustee for twenty-five years. He served as deputy sheriff and ran for sheriff as a Democrat in 1850, only to be defeated by thirty-nine votes by his neighbor, the Whig candidate. He served one year as city marshal in 1858, was a member of the Board of Education for eight years between 1849 and 1867, and was instrumental in the establishment of Everts School.³² Mary died September 23, 1860, at the age of fifty-one. She is buried in Forest Cemetery in Circleville.³³ George lived another thirty years, although, according to his obituary, he "grew feeble from infirmities and old age" and "failing eyesight left him totally blind."³⁴ He died May 29, 1891, at the home of his daughter, Catherine Bock. He is buried in Forest Cemetery next to my great-grandmother. His obituary states, "He was a man of positive character and inflexible honesty, quick-tempered and impulsive, but there was no deception in him."³⁵

Chapter 5: John and Margaret Loughrey Gearhart

George was the last of the eleven children of my great-great-grandparents, John and Margaret Loughrey Gearhart. John was born in 1744 [the year Benjamin Franklin invented his stove] and he emigrated from Switzerland in 1758. He traveled to southwestern Pennsylvania, near the source of the Monongahela River, as the French and Indian War

was being waged. He discovered iron ore on his land and built a forge, which he operated for a number of years. He then sold his farm and forge and moved back to Franklin County in southeast Pennsylvania, “a more desirable location.”³⁶ From there he enlisted as a soldier in the Revolutionary War³⁷ and served in the 1st Battalion, Company 6, Cumberland County Militia.³⁸

In 1783, after the Revolutionary War, John married Margaret Loughrey, my great-great-grandmother, who was from Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. She was born in 1765. [Mozart composed his Symphony No 1.] Her parents, my great-great-grandparents, were from Holland.³⁹ On October 20, 1791, John and Margaret bought 520 acres in Antrim Township near Shady Grove. They paid Samuel McCulloch 2,000 pounds for the land.⁴⁰

John left a will dated September 14, 1816, in which he provides for his wife and eleven children.⁴¹ He died October 12, 1817, at the age of 73 and is buried in Byer Cemetery, just east of the Greencastle Reservoir. Margaret lived another thirty-eight years. She died August 8, 1855, at the age of 90 and is buried next to a daughter-in-law and three grandchildren in Grace UCC Cemetery in Greencastle, Pennsylvania.^{42,43}



Photo Courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

THE GRAVE MARKER of John Gearhart at Byer Cemetery.

So, my parents were George and Catherine Humble Gearhart. My grandparents were Jerome and Mary Ann Morrow Gearhart, and William and Susan Hartman Humble. My great-grandparents were George and Mary Albright Gearhart, and Andrew and Elizabeth Morrow. And, my great-great-grandparents were John and Margaret Loughrey Gearhart, and Peter and Christiana Albright.

PART II – The Constantinos

Chapter 6: Move to Arkansas

But this is only half of my story. Back in Ohio, while working for the *Columbus Citizen*, I met a man known as Colonel Decker, a man who took me under his wing. After about five years in Columbus, Colonel Decker asked me if I would like to move to Arkansas to help start a newspaper.⁴⁴ At nineteen, I, along with two friends, came to Fort Smith to work on a newspaper called the *Southwest American*.

This was in February 1907. Indian Territory had not yet become the state of Oklahoma, and downtown Fort Smith still boasted of more than fifty saloons. I remember the clink of silver dollars and the rattle of poker chips on Garrison Avenue.⁴⁵ Even though Fort Smith still had some of its “wild west” customs, subscribers to the newspaper complained because we were running comics in the Sunday edition. People thought Sunday comics and banner headlines were pretty bad.⁴⁶ My job at the paper included selling subscriptions and advertising and

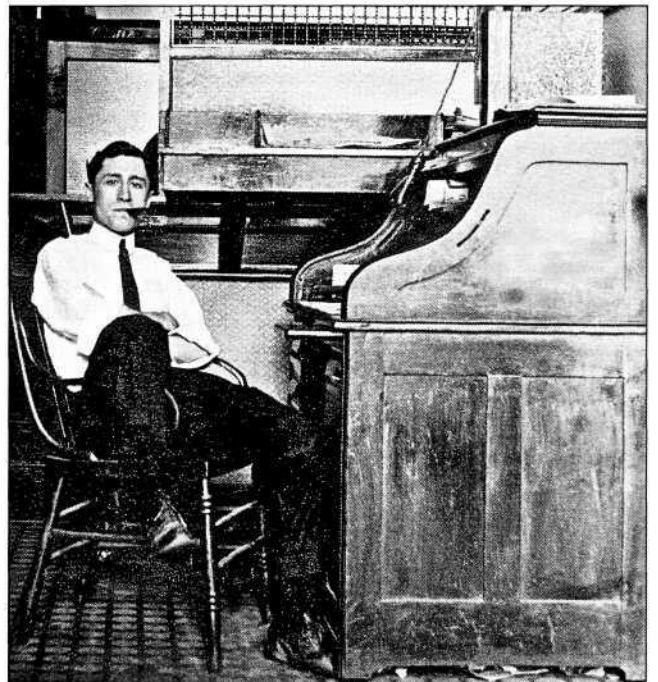


Photo courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

SAM GEARHART at the *Southwest American*, circa 1908.



Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

JENNIE CONSTANTINO



FRANCESCA BERTINO CONSTANTINO

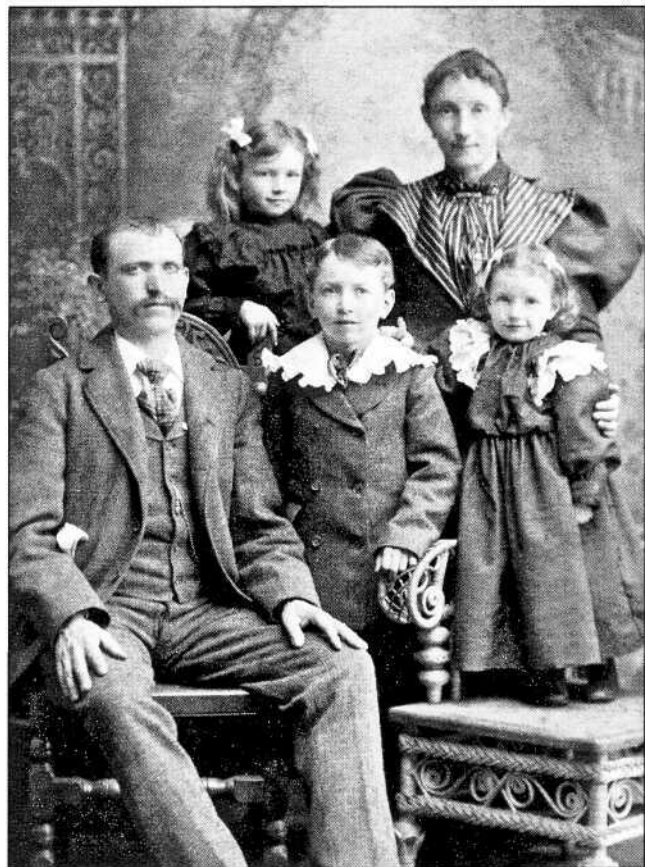
keeping the books.

As the paper grew, we needed to hire a bookkeeper. Jennie Constantino answered our ad, and she was hired. The first time I saw her, I said to myself, "This is the girl I'm going to marry, if I can." And I did. Isn't she something! We were married February 13, 1917.

Chapter 7: The Bertinos

My wife, Jennie, was the first of three children born to Antonio and Francesca Bertino Constantino. She had two younger brothers, Joe and Alex. Francesca Bertino, my mother-in-law, known as Dadee, was born October 2, 1872, in Rivarolo, Italy. Rivarolo is located in the northwest corner of Italy, about twenty miles north of Turin.

Francesca (Dadee) immigrated to the U.S. as a twenty-year-old in 1893. She arrived in New York on the Kaiser Wilhelm II on a cold February day. The temperature had fallen to 22 degrees, but there was no precipitation. She had traveled from her hometown of Rivarolo, about 125 miles south by way of Genoa, Italy.⁴⁷ As did some 12 million other immigrants, she walked through the Great Hall at Ellis Island before taking a train to Indian Territory.



JOE AND PAULINE BERTINO AND CHILDREN

Dadee's older brother, Giuseppe (Joe), had arrived with his wife, Pauline, and one son, Joe Jr., five years earlier and had gone to work in the coal mines around Krebs, Oklahoma. Workers were needed and the railroad advertised in Europe hoping to encourage



Rivarolo Canavese
Via Ivrea

Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

(TOP) Rivarolo, Italy, in 1933.

(LEFT) Bertino family childhood home in Rivarolo, Italy, in 1933.

(BELOW) Ellis Island in New York.

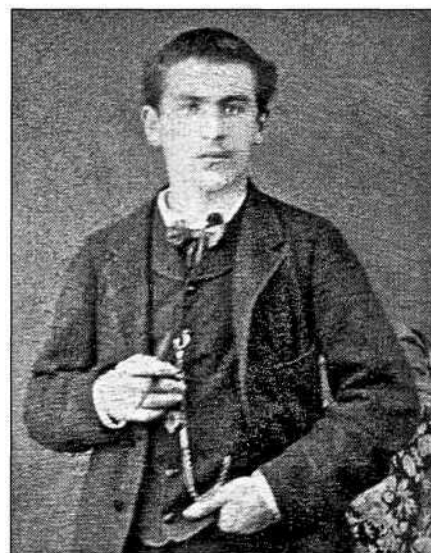




ANTONIO CONSTANTINO SR.



MRS. ANTONIO CONSTANTINO SR.



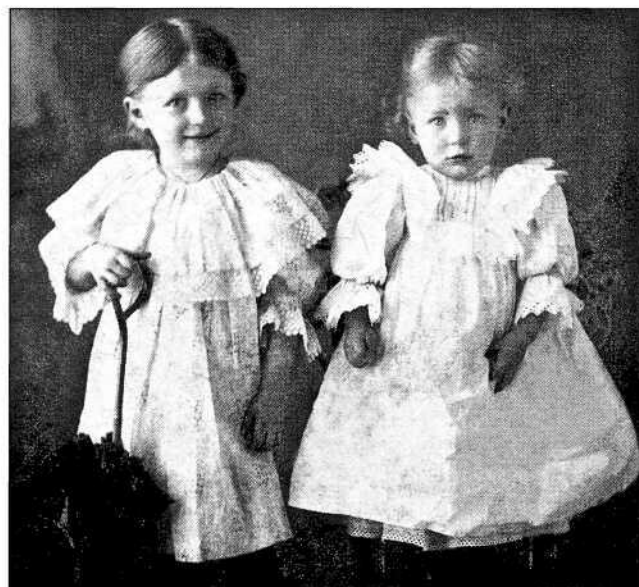
Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III
ANTONIO CONSTANTINO JR.

immigrants to come work the mines. Joe responded and arrived in the U.S. in 1888. After a few years, he believed he had found a husband for his sister, Francesca, so sent her money for her passage from Italy. But when she arrived, she had a friend with her. In fact, she had brought her boyfriend, Antonio Constantino. This didn't go over too well with her brother, who made her work to repay her fare. [Judge Isaac Parker was holding court in Fort Smith at this time.]

Francesca was the fifth of eight children of Giuseppe Bertino and Maria Giovannini, who were both born in 1839. [Giuseppe Verdi had just written his first opera.] Giuseppe was the second child of Battista Bertino, born in 1800, and Antonia Ferrero, born in 1810. [John Adams was president.] Battista's parents were Antonio Bertino, born in 1770, and Theresa Bonomo, born in 1775. [The year the American Revolution began.]

Chapter 8: The Constantinos

Antonio Constantino, my father-in-law, was born August 4, 1870, in Turin, Italy, about twenty miles south of his future in-laws. He immigrated to this country at the same time as Francesca but took a different ship. He was due to serve in the military and could not get permission to emigrate. However, he could get a pass to France.⁴⁸ He traveled some 600 miles across France, through Lyon and Paris, and boarded the *La Gascogne* at Le Havre, France. He arrived at Ellis Island on the same day as his future



JENNIE AND JOE CONSTANTINO, circa 1900.

wife, February 27, 1893.⁴⁹ His father was Antonio Constantino Sr. Although I have pictures of both Antonio Sr. and his wife (Jennie's grandparents), I regret I do not know her name or any more about them.

Francesca and Antonio were married September 26, 1893, in Krebs, Indian Territory, and had three children: Marie Teresa (Jennie, my future wife), born January 14, 1895; Joseph Anthony Constantino Sr., born in 1897; and Alexander Francis Constantino, born in 1903. Jennie was born near Mine No. 10 in Krebs, and she later said that the house that she was born in was so rickety and so cold that there was



Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

(TOP) Joe, Alex, and Jennie Constantino, circa 1903.



(TOP RIGHT) Constantino's General Store on First Street in Fort Smith.

(LOWER RIGHT) Constantino's Restaurant in 1975.

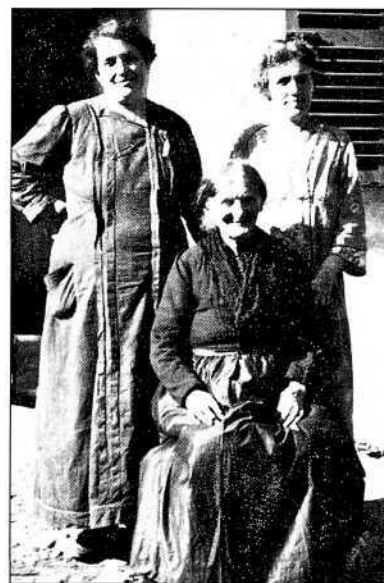


snow blowing through the cracks in the winter.

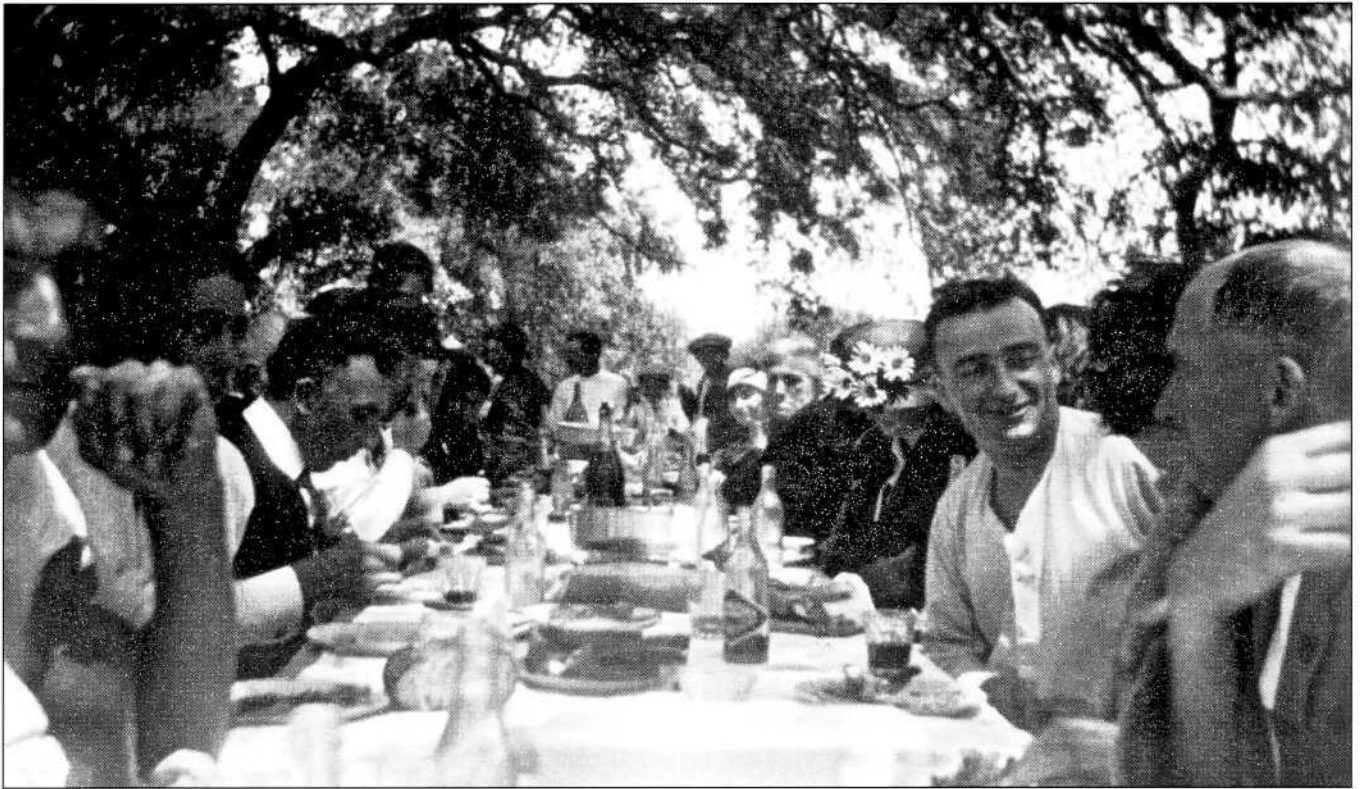
After Jennie was born, the Constantinos moved to Fort Smith in 1896 and opened a general store on First Street called Constantino's. Francesca and Antonio became naturalized citizens in 1906.⁵⁰ Jennie and her two brothers grew up in Fort Smith and went to Peabody School on 21st Street. The family built a house at 814 South 20th Street in 1910. Eventually they closed the general store and opened a confectionery, also called Constantino's, at 407 Garrison Avenue. Francesca worked right alongside her husband, Antonio. When not working at Constantino's, Francesca would wear a big purple hat, which added to her proper look and strong presence.⁵¹ The confectionery had a soda fountain with ice cream and a long counter with glass over it where they kept the chocolate and other candy. Antonio was known for his "Orange-Aide," fresh squeezed orange juice over shaved ice.⁵² After the

confectionery came Constantino's Restaurant. They had spaghetti and meatballs and barbecued ribs and beer.

Francesca and daughter Jennie traveled to Italy in 1914. Because of the way he left Italy, Antonio was unable to return to his homeland with his wife and daughter. Mother and daughter sailed on the *Duke of Genoa*



JENNIE'S MOTHER, Francesca, from right, her grandmother, Maria Giovannini, and Francesca's sister, Domenica.



Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

THE BERTINO FAMILY in Rivarolo, Italy, in 1930.

and visited their family in Rivarolo. They also visited Venice and St. Mark's Square.

In 1930, Francesca again sailed to Europe, this time on *The Augustus*. Traveling with her were two of her brothers and their wives, Alex and Angelina Bertino and Tony and Maddelena Bertino. They visited at their family home in Rivarolo, explored the streets where they grew up and went to school, and enjoyed the company of family and friends at a picnic.

Chapter 9: My Family

As I said, Jennie and I met while working at the newspaper and we dated several years. In 1914, I took Jennie back to Columbus to meet my family.

Jennie and I were married at Immaculate Conception Church on February 13, 1917. We had nine children. The first was Frances Katherine, known as Chee. Next was Mary Jane, known as Buddy because her older sister was expecting a brother. Joan Teresa was third. Samuel Edgington was fourth. George Anthony was fifth. William and Robert, twins, were sixth and seventh. John Alexander was eighth. And Jennie Sue, known as



JENNIE CONSTANTINO in Columbus, Ohio, in 1914.

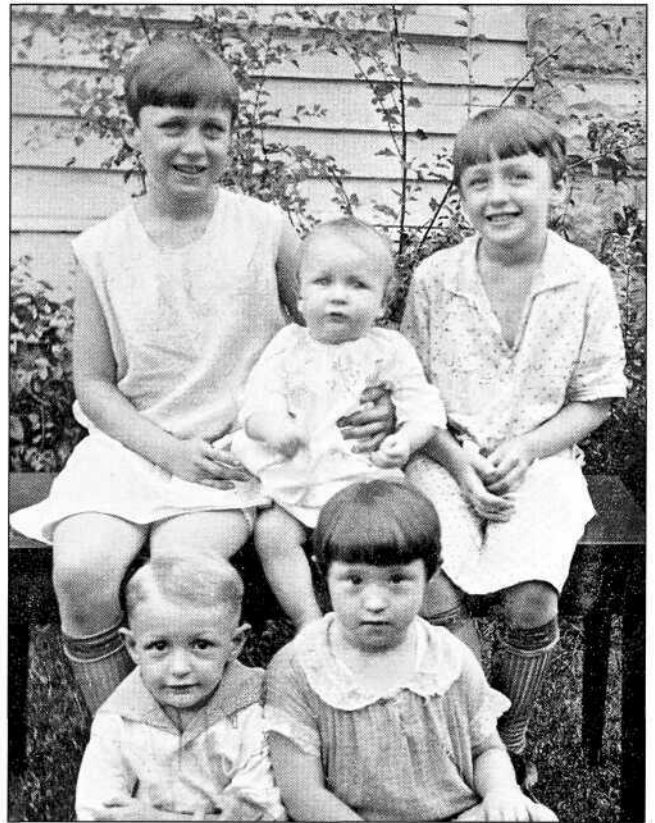
Suzannah, was ninth. Throughout the 1920s and '30s, I worked for the *Southwest American*, selling advertising and promoting the newspaper and Fort Smith.

If I was going to promote Fort Smith, I had to start with my own family, so I convinced my mom and dad, George and Catherine, and my sister, Mabel, and her husband, Emory Edgington, to move from Ohio to Fort Smith. Emory worked with me selling

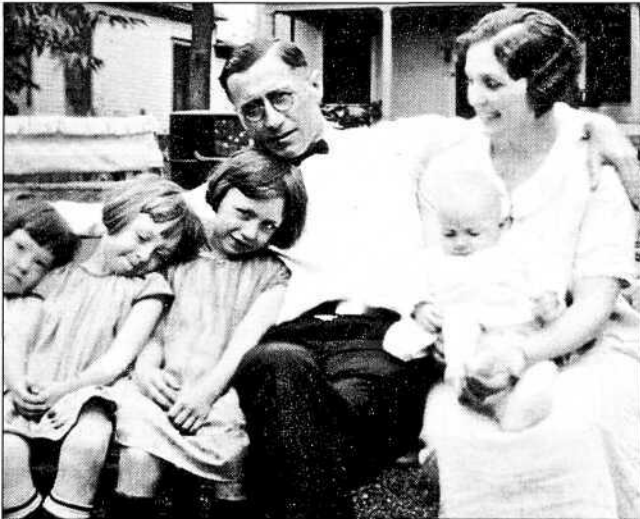


Photos courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

SAM AND JENNIE GEARHART.



SAM AND JENNIE GEARHART'S CHILDREN, circa 1926.



SAM AND JENNIE GEARHART AND FAMILY



SAM AND JENNIE GEARHART'S HOME at 1310 Albert Pike in Fort Smith.

advertising at the newspaper. Mabel was also at the newspaper, working as a proofreader. My dad, George, worked at Constantino's Confectionary.⁵³ By 1921, Jennie and I had three daughters and we were living at 721 South 22nd Street.⁵⁴ That same year, my in-laws, Antonio, Francesca and their son, Alex, lived three blocks away at 814 South 20th Street.⁵⁵

Regrettably, on July 13, 1922, my father-in-law, Antonio Constantino, died. He is buried in Calvary Cemetery. Then a year later on August 27, 1923, my mother, Catherine, died. She, too, is buried in Calvary Cemetery.

In 1930, which was a busy year for us, Jennie and I built the house that I called "The Electric Paradise" at 1310 Albert Pike, across from St. Scholastica Convent. It was one of the first homes in town that had an electric dishwasher and an electric icebox, and when you opened the closet doors, the lights came on.

In 1930, Jennie and I and six children lived on Albert Pike.⁵⁶ My mother-in-law, Francesca, and Jennie's cousin, Katherine Bertino, moved in with us as Jennie's brother, Joe, and his wife, Eloita, were living in the 814 South 20th Street house.

Children of Sam and Jennie Gearhart

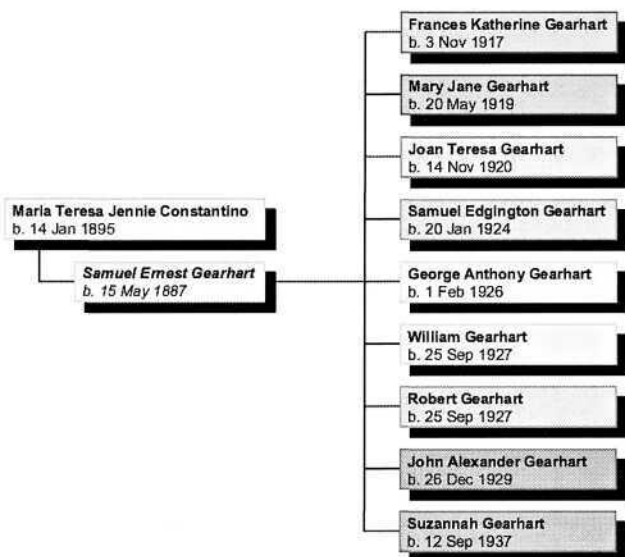


Image courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III



Photo courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

SAM AND JENNIE GEARHART with their grandson Artie Y. Berry III.

The Edgingtons and my dad, George, were living at 2612 South Greenwood.⁵⁷

In 1940, I took a job managing the *Northwest Arkansas Times* in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Jennie and I, five of our children, my dad, George, and my sister, Mabel, moved to 1134 Skyline Drive on Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville. In 1942, we moved to 326 North Washington Avenue. Later we moved to 221 North College Avenue and finally to 219 North Block Avenue, which was just one block from the newspaper office.

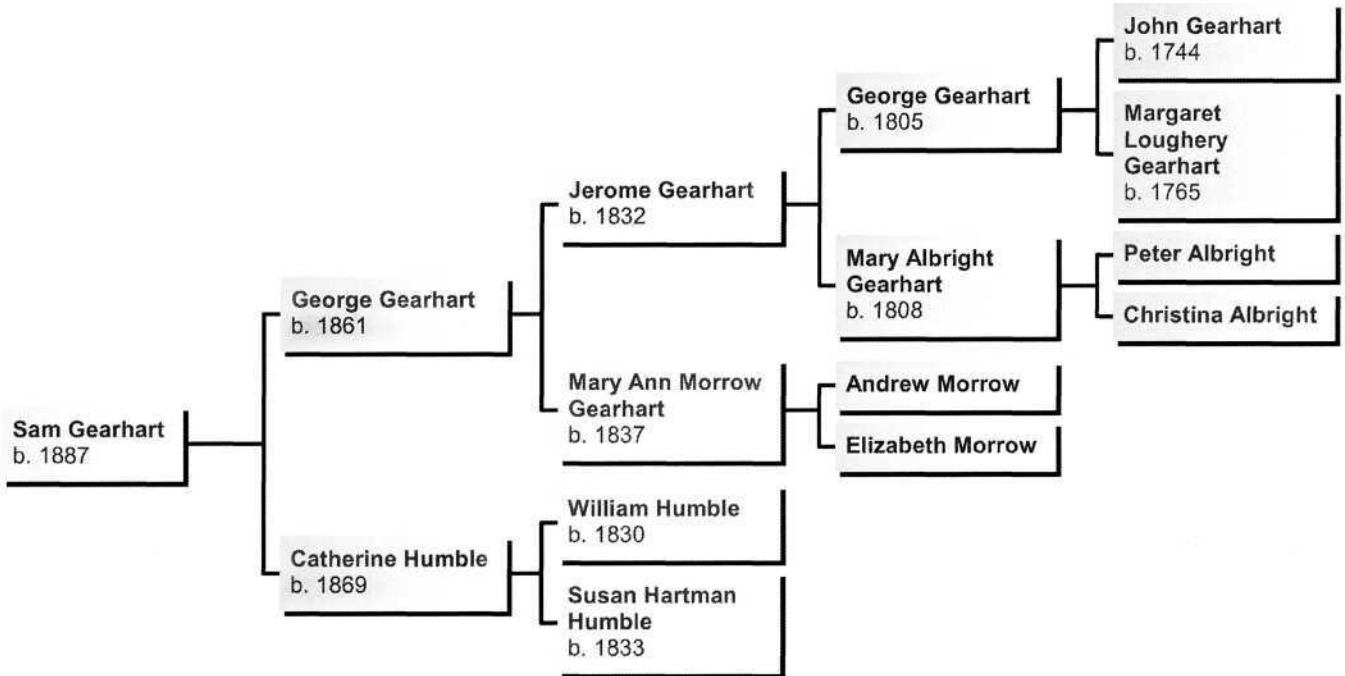
My dad, George, was 81 years old and new in town, and making new friends under those circumstances can be challenging. My youngest daughter described him as a “gentle” man who wore a white hat, literally, a white hat, which he called his “Sunday-go-to-meeting” hat. But, he wanted to return to familiar surroundings, so in 1943 he decided to move back to Circleville. Just six months later, on January 25, 1944, he died.⁵⁸ We brought him back and buried him next to my mother in Fort Smith’s Calvary Cemetery. In 1955,

my mother-in-law, Francesca, died, and she is buried next to her husband, Antonio, in Calvary Cemetery.

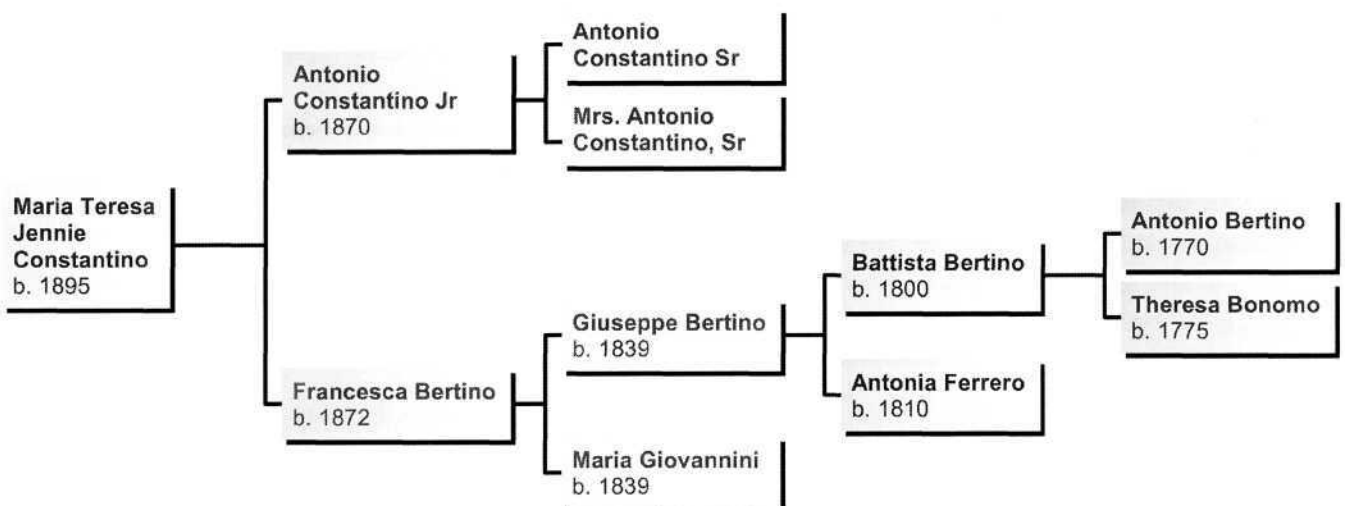
Over the years I had a number of civic interests. If you don’t mind me mentioning a few, I was president of the Ozark Playgrounds Association and the Midwest Advertising Managers Association. I was a director of the Salvation Army and of the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association. I was chairman of the one-fund drive in Fayetteville, later called the United Way, and vice president of the Chamber of Commerce. The Boy Scouts gave me their Silver Beaver award.

But I also had time to help Jennie raise our family. Frances Katherine, known as Chee, was born on November 3, 1917, and was named after her grandmothers, Francesca and Catherine. She grew up in Fort Smith, attending St. Scholastica Academy. She studied a year at Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas. She married A. Y. Berry Jr. on August 4, 1940, and they had

Ancestors of Sam Gearhart



Ancestors of Jennie Constantino



Images courtesy of Arthur Yell Berry III

six children. As of the fall of 2007, there were eighteen grandchildren, four step-grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren (plus one due) and five step-great-grandchildren.

Mary Jane, known as Buddy, was born on May 20, 1919, and grew up in Fort Smith, attending St. Scholastica and the University of Arkansas. She married Stan Ramey, a career army officer, on July 10, 1942, and they had six children. Currently there are fifteen grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Joan Teresa was born on November 14, 1920. She was undoubtedly the center of our family. Joan had Down's syndrome and died at the early age of thirty-five.

As her sister said, "There wasn't anything that could have meant more to all of us in our lifetime than this child because she was so loving. And she was so sincere; one of those people that you knew really and truly loved you just because it was you. Joan was my favorite."⁵⁹

Samuel Edgington was born on January 20, 1924, and was named after me and my brother-in-law. He grew up in Fort Smith, attending St. Scholastica and the University of Arkansas. Sam was in the Army Air Corps during World War II and was lost in the Pacific. But just before he left, he married Ree Barry on March 25, 1944, and they had one son. Currently there is one grandchild, six step-grandchildren, and seven step-great-grandchildren.

George Anthony was born on February 1, 1926, and was named after my father. He grew up in Fort Smith and Fayetteville, attending school at St. Scholastica in Fort Smith, Fayetteville High School, and the University of Arkansas. George was also a newspaperman, joining me at the *Northwest Arkansas Times* after graduation. He married Joan Inman Van Hoose on April 17, 1949, and they had four children. Currently there are six grandchildren.

William and Robert were twins born premature on September 25, 1927. Medical science was not able to provide much help 80 years ago. Robert lived for seven days, and William lived for fourteen days.

John Alexander was born on December 26, 1929. He grew up in Fort Smith and Fayetteville. He went through the fourth grade in Fort Smith and

finished elementary and high school at Fayetteville. He attended the University of Arkansas and, after service in the Air Force, worked for General Electric and Singer in New York City. He married Gretchen Baerg on September 8, 1951, and they had five children. Currently there are ten grandchildren.

Jennie Sue, known as Suzannah, was born on September 12, 1937. She grew up in Fayetteville, attending elementary and high schools there. She studied at Webster College and graduated from the University of Arkansas. She married Lee Kleese, a career army officer, on December 27, 1958. They had three children. Currently there are three grandchildren.

Conclusion

So, that's my story, and, to tell the truth, I'm mighty proud of it. You and I are what our ancestors passed on to us ... and I think they did quite well.

They passed on not only their genes, but also their experiences, their values, their beliefs, and their faith. And I thank the Lord for His handiwork. I ask Him to keep all of my ancestors and all of my descendants in His care.

Editor's Note: This story of the lives of Sam and Jennie Gearhart and their ancestors was written in the fall of 2007 by Arthur Yell Berry III, their grandson.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Arkansas Gazette*, January 13, 1957, Floyd Carl Jr.
- ² Class Reunion, October 23, 1954, Circleville High School, Circleville, Ohio.
- ³ *Arkansas Gazette*, January 13 1957, Floyd Carl Jr.
- ⁴ Fentress Funeral Home Report of Death, January 25, 1944.
- ⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Ohio, Pickaway County.
- ⁶ Fentress Funeral Home Report of Death, October 8, 1868.
- ⁷ 1860 and 1870 U.S. Census and Marriage Certificate.
- ⁸ Forest Cemetery Burial Records, P 103, December 31, 1994, Pickaway County Historical Society.

- 9 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Eighth and Tenth Censuses of the United States, 1860 and 1880, Ohio, Pickaway County, Circleville twp.
- 10 History of Pickaway County and Representative Citizens, Aaron R. Van Cleaf, Chapter 23, P 220.
- 11 Forest Cemetery Burial Records, P 147, December 31, 1994, Pickaway County Historical Society.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Forest Cemetery Burial Records, P 103, December 31, 1994, Pickaway County Historical Society.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Eighth and Ninth Censuses of the United States, 1860 and 1870, Ohio, Pickaway County, Circleville twp.
- 16 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Ohio, Pickaway County, Circleville, twp.
- 17 *Circleville Union Herald*, Obituary, Mary Ann Gearhart, March 31, 1898, P 5.
- 18 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Ohio, Pickaway County, Circleville twp.
- 19 *Circleville Union Herald*, Obituary, Mary Ann Gearhart, March 31, 1898, P 5.
- 20 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Ohio, Pickaway County, Circleville twp.
- 21 Discharge Papers and Illinois State Archives, Civil War Detail Report, RS 301.020.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 *Circleville Union Herald*, Obituary, Mary Ann Gearhart, March 31, 1898, P 5.
- 24 Application for Admission, Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, dated December 9, 1903.
- 25 Death Certificate, Ohio Bureau of Vital Statistics, District 904, File 20846.
- 26 *Pickaway County, Ohio, History*, Chapter 11, P 33.
- 27 *Circleville Union Herald*, February 23, 1889, Birthday celebration article, George Gearhart Sr.
- 28 *Circleville Democrat and Watchman*, Obituary, George Gearhart Sr., June 5, 1891.
- 29 *Circleville Union Herald*, February 23, 1889, Birthday celebration article, George Gearhart, Sr.
- 30 Kittochtinny Historical Society Library, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.
- 31 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850.
- 32 *Circleville Democrat and Watchman*, Obituary, George Gearhart Sr., June 5, 1891.
- 33 Forest Cemetery Burial Records, P 104, December 31, 1994, Pickaway County Historical Society.
- 34 *Circleville Democrat and Watchman*, Obituary, George Gearhart Sr., June 5, 1891.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 *Circleville Union Herald*, February 23, 1889, Birthday celebration article, George Gearhart Sr.
- 37 Pennsylvania Archives, Series 2, Volume 13, P 80.
- 38 Headstone, Byer Cemetery, Greencastle, Pennsylvania.
- 39 *Circleville Union Herald*, February 23, 1889, Birthday celebration article, George Gearhart Sr.
- 40 Deed recorded in Franklin County, October 31, 1791, Book 2, P 344.
- 41 Will, John Gearhart, Attested October 24, 1817.
- 42 *A History of Grace United Church of Christ*, Greencastle, Pennsylvania, 1748-1998, P 10.
- 43 Photographs of Grace UCC Cemetery, Greencastle, Pennsylvania.
- 44 *A Family History: Stories and Recollections*, K. Lynn Berry, August 1991, P 8.
- 45 *Arkansas Gazette*, January 13, 1957, Floyd Carl Jr.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ellis Island Passenger Arrival Records, February 27, 1893.
- 48 Sandra Columbatto, cousin in Rivarolo, Italy, as told to K. Lynn Berry, September 30, 2003.
- 49 Ellis Island Passenger Arrival Records, February 27, 1893.
- 50 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Arkansas, Sebastian County, Fort Smith twp.
- 51 Ree Meehen, as told to K. Lynn Berry, September, 30, 2003.
- 52 *A Family History: Stories and Recollections*, 1991, K. Lynn Berry, P 7.
- 53 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Fourteenth Census of the United State, 1920, Arkansas, Sebastian County, Fort Smith twp.
- 54 1921 Fort Smith City Directory.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Arkansas, Sebastian County, Fort Smith twp.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ohio Death Certificate, George William Gearhart, January 25, 1944.
- 59 *A Family History: Stories and Recollections*, 1991, K. Lynn Berry, P 9.

A '30s Boy

Part II

By Robert A. Martin

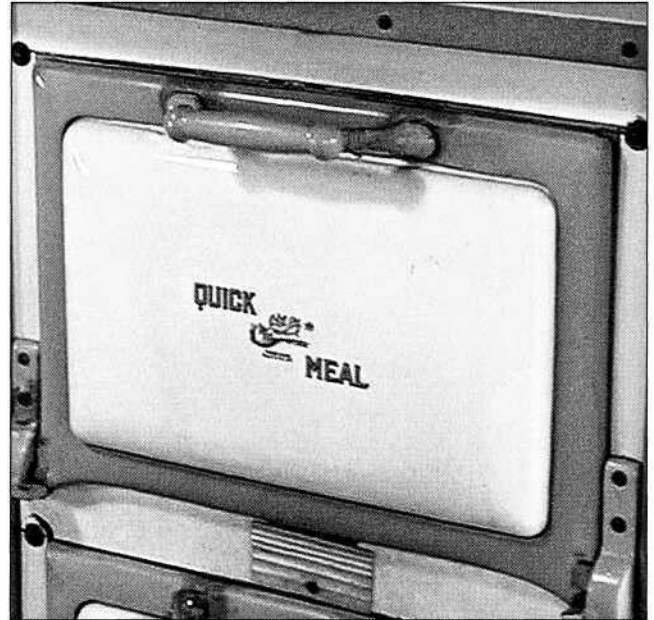
Note: Bob Martin's "A '30s Boy" Part I appeared in the Vol. 32, No. 1, April 2008 issue of *The Journal*.

Mom was a wise woman; she never saw all that happened. I went all the way through the twelfth grade in Fort Smith Public Schools, and not one time did I ever play hooky, and it was all her fault. The proposition was like this: Anytime I wanted to do something special, I did not have to go to school. Something special would be happening such as the circus being unloaded or the New York Giants and Cleveland Indians playing an exhibition game at Andrews Field, in other words, anything that would be more interesting and educational than a day in school. It worked; I was proud of the trust and upheld my end to prove it.

"Good stuff" was what we called it, our favorite food. It was made out of hamburger meat, noodles, tomatoes, and I don't know what else. Mom was the master craftsman of the dish, and we never tired of it. She could cook fancy like on Thanksgiving and Christmas or plain such as her beans and corn bread on Thursday, which was wash day. Those beans going "blub, blub" on her old Quick Meal Stove was a good situation.

I have eaten many meals while pondering the trademark on the oven door of that stove, a chick, just bursting forth from the egg, its beak open and a flying insect depicted just before being devoured by the chick, hence "Quick Meal." One of the pan supports over the flame was burned out and was replaced by the front sprocket off a bicycle, which was just right.

All of my shirts, or most of them, were made by Mom. Uncle Herbert, or maybe it was my sister, Scooter — they both worked at Sears — brought home some red flannel. It was used for some decorative purpose during Christmas and discarded



Courtesy image

A QUICK MEAL STOVE

by Sears, but utilized by Mom. I loved that red shirt and wore it all of the time. Someone started calling me "Rosie;" many people still do. When I hear myself called or referred to by that nickname, I know it is someone who has known me a long time.

I referred to Mildred awhile ago as "Scooter." It was before I was born, but I have heard it from all members of the family; Mildred wanted a scooter. This resulted in her pestering Dad to get her one. On one occasion, Dad was in the bathroom and "Scoot" called to him by way of the crack under the door, "Dad, please get me a tooter." He did, and she became "Scooter," "Tooter," or "Scoot."

Christmas time with us, as with all kids, was really great. Two Christmases stand out in my mind. On one, Dad had gotten us a puppy and tied him to the tree, and the other was the most memorable of all. No words could describe that Christmas morning when I came down to the tree and found my Iver Johnson bicycle there. It was red, trimmed in white, with chrome fenders, a truss fork shaped like a

Merry Xmas
Dick -
Here's your Iver Johnson
Mother & Dad

Now's the time
to put in *your* bid for an Iver Johnson Bicycle. You know how parents loosen up the good old pocket-book at Christmas time. Get busy.

The Iver Johnson Juvenile Models (drop bar) embody exactly the same features of superior construction as the famous Iver Johnson Bicycles for adults.

High carbon seamless steel tubing; drop-forged parts, two-piece crank set; two-point ball bearings, reducing friction; five coats of enamel, hand rubbed, and all nickel plating over copper.

Colors: Iver Johnson Blue, Maroon and Black; best guaranteed equipment.

Interesting Bicycle Booklet "B"—FREE
Full of information. Get a copy and show it to dad. It'll help you "sell" him. The booklet illustrates and describes the various Iver Johnson models for boys and girls, as well as for men and women—also Velocipedes for little children. Mail the coupon or a postcard.

IVER JOHNSON BICYCLES

IVER JOHNSON'S
ARMS & CYCLE WORKS
21 River Street, Fitchburg, Mass.
New York: 151 Chambers St.
Chicago: 108 W. Lake St.
San Francisco: 717 Market St.

Iver Johnson's Arms & Cycle Works
21 River St., Fitchburg, Mass.
Gentlemen: Please send me free and at once a copy of your Bicycle catalog "B."

Name
Street
City State



Courtesy image

AN ADVERTISEMENT for an Iver Johnson bicycle.

bean flip stalk, and narrow, flat, rubber fenders. The hanger was two-piece construction, and the front sprocket in the center was shaped like a star. These were the identifying marks of Iver Johnson, and they spelled "class." How my sister Toot had "raised the down" and the payments were made on that bike is a mystery for me even today. It cost about fifty dollars at Oliver Boas Cycle Shop, which was an absolute fortune in those money-tight days of the '30s. I rode it many years; in fact, I peddled my wife around on it after we were married.

I also rode it a zillion miles for Western Union. Dit got a job there, and he got me on. I was No. 4, but the only number having real distinction was No. 1. The Western Union emblem on his cap was gold instead of blue. I was in the tenth grade when I worked there. I was about fourteen or fifteen years old and made 40 cents per hour. In the winter during school I worked at nights. When the following summer came, we both had enough seniority to get our pick of the hours, so we took 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. This let us deliver all of the night letters that had accumulated and be gone from the office most of the morning. It also let us off practically at noon, giving

us lots of time to do what ever struck our fancy. Dit had come by a Cushman Motor Scooter about this time. Working on it was one of the things that kept us busy.

We had some gang at Western Union. This was in the early '40s when Camp Chaffee had been constructed and the town was full of newborn soldiers. We delivered lots of one- and two-red star telegrams. A one-star was a message telling the family a boy was missing in action. A two-star went like this:

Dear Mr. & Mrs. So & So,

We regret to inform you that your son, private So & So, has been killed in action. Details will follow.

Signed: Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Commander in Chief, U.S. Army.

These were the bad messages delivered by us.

Once I went to a house with a message. The young wife of the soldier it was addressed to read it. It was the positive answer to a request he had made through the Red Cross regarding a hardship discharge. She said he had left a few minutes earlier to join his unit at the Missouri Pacific depot, leaving for an embarkation point. As fast as I could pedal, I headed for the depot. When I got there, the train had not left. It had a big, black steam engine with a long string of cattle car Pullmans behind. Jumping on the last one, I ran through the train yelling his name. Several cars later, he responded to my loud page. When he read the wire, he handed me a greenback, grabbed his gear and took off looking for his lieutenant. All this was done in one motion. The whole affair gave me a good feeling, especially the buck.

Jack Gammill lived at 722 South 22nd Street with his mother, dad, one sister, Grace, and Ralph Edward, his brother. Ralph was the youngest, and we never called him anything but "Little Ed." The house where they lived is now torn down, replaced by an apartment. Mr. Gammill, whose given name was William, was called "Will" by his wife. He operated a radio repair shop in the back room of their house for a living. One of Jack's duties was to help his dad string up aials for people's radios, and on some jobs, I would help. When it came to shinnying up tall trees, we had no peers



(ABOVE) A Q.S.L. card.

(RIGHT) An Atwater-Kent radio.



or fears. If you didn't have a good aerial, one with height, length, proper insulation, and lead in wires, your "Amos and Andy," "Lum and Abner," or "The Shadow" spoke from your Atwater-Kent, Zenith or Philco like dogs growling. This made the owners unhappy, as radio was the No. 1 home entertainment for the family then.

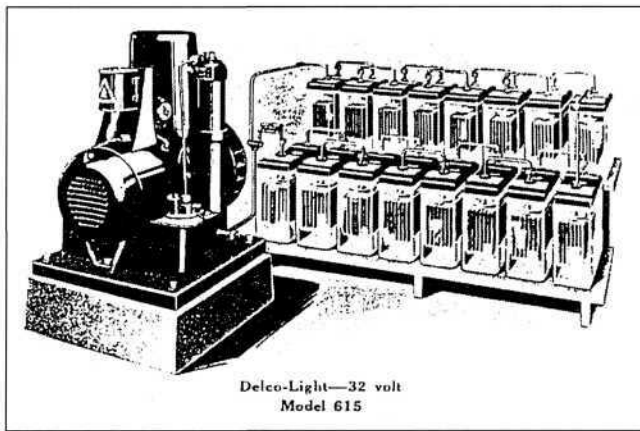
Jack was and is a real genuine genius in the field of electrical technology. We were at all times on the lookout for discarded laminations, the rustier the better, for him to wrap the windings of his transmitter transformers around. He was an amateur radio operator, builder, and owner when he was thirteen years old. The call letters of his location were W5HNU: W, as in Wisconsin; 5; H, as in Halifax; N, as in Nebraska; and U, as in Utah. This is the way he would identify himself to others around the world. Slapping out the words on his "double-whacking bug," almost as fast as you could say it. Q.S.L. cards were the proof you had communicated with some fellow in a far-off place. They were mailed to each other after the transmission to adorn the walls of your "shack." Jack had them from everywhere.

If I were to pick up the phone right now, call Jack and ask, "What is the coldest you have ever been in your life," without hesitation he would answer, "That sleeting, windy day we chose to swipe that cable off that guy over by the high school." It was winter, but also the proper time. It was proper because no one was playing miniature golf. Ice covered the building where the money was taken and the clubs were dispensed. Drifts of snow made

triangles out of the boards that bordered the lanes between holes. Few people were out, and the farthest thing from their minds was miniature golf. The aforementioned cable was needed by us to build the longest, thus the highest-swinging, bag swing in history.

The cable was kept in place by cable clamps; these secured it to the posts on the ends. Between these, a distance of about 50 feet, were short lengths of telephone posts set in the ground. Holes were drilled through these to accommodate our needed material. The purpose of this short fence was to keep cars from driving into the golf course. Little Ed, Jack and I took it loose and dragged it all the way up to the woods. Once we got it past McDaniel's Drug Store and across Rogers Avenue, we were home free. Stopping in the alley between 23rd and 24th streets, we built ourselves a fire. After twisting ourselves a Durham and thawing out, we proceeded on our way.

Did we build the swing? You bet! Our launching place was a platform high on one of Bell's poles. It was ready-made with steps that led up the pole, with handrails placed around the perimeter of the platform. It was painted green and had a mystical box attached to the pole. While waiting your turn to swing or jump



Courtesy image

AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR A DELCO GENERATOR

on, you could open the box and look in. Inside all these boxes was the same thing, an assortment of wire and the inevitable dirt doobers' nest.

If Jack, Dit, Ed and I had owned a cutting torch, welding machine, engine lathe, and drill press, the U.S. would have had a man on the moon much sooner. We did all our work with a file, hacksaw and chisel. For instance, we had a Delco power plant we purchased from Herschel Biltl, the son of John Biltl, who owned the store mentioned earlier. It was a single-cylinder gasoline engine with a generator attached. The frame of the generator was cast integral with the block of the engine, and we wanted them separated. Since the casting was about one foot in diameter and two inches thick at the point we wanted it parted, it seemed impossible. Taking turns and recruiting all who happened by the barn to help, we set to it with a hacksaw. Several hacksaw frames, dozens of blades and about two weeks later, it parted, and we got the engine started. Since Herschel had said, "You'll never get it running," we put it in Old Betsy, and with it chug-chugging along, we pulled it off to show him he was wrong!

We did everything in season. In winter, you grabbed onto the rear bumpers of cars. Your shoes acted as runners as you were dragged along the frozen snowy streets. Kites were made and flown in March. Baseball started in spring and ran until late summer. Speaking of baseball, I must inject the observation. Contrary to the way most people think about our present "Little League," they make me sick. Little toddlers with their uniforms and professional equipment, supervised by adults seeking to share vicariously in their children's

success, miss the whole point of baseball. It should be played by boys in tennis shoes with holes in them. They should be dressed in overalls or jeans with the sliding side well worn. Everyone on the team should have a different colored cap. The ball should be made by wrapping string around a golf ball and covering it with tape. The umpire should be some old retired geezer who could not care less who wins. He should also be protected from the boys by his weak and elderly condition. The field need be only a vacant lot or pasture, or even a street. All questions created by dubious play should be settled by the boys themselves. And the only observers, other than the aforementioned old man, should be the guys waiting their turn to play. This is the type of sport God intended baseball to be. It was both fun and educational, as it taught you how to get along. I can see the smiling face of Abner Doubleday as I pen these words.

Can you imagine what would happen in one of these Little League games if suddenly the whole team decided it was too hot for baseball and got on their bikes to go for a dip in Lake View? Lake View was our swimming hole. It was created by the County Highway Department, much to the delight of us boys. They blasted it out of solid rock to obtain rock for crushing. After blowing out a sort of circular hole about 75 feet in diameter and 25 feet deep, they abandoned it for a better site 100 yards to the west. It filled with water, and the County Highway Department inadvertently had become the Parks Department, which was no accident in the '30s. All sorts of doings were in that area — swimming, blasting, fishing or watching the big hard-rubber-tired, chain-driven, Mack trucks haul the stone up the fill to the crusher. It was located just across Highway 22, now Rogers Avenue, from the present Central Mall. Later on, to build Chaffee, another hole of water was created. Its location was on the spot now occupied by the mall. This was not the original Lake View. The city limits at that time was just up McAnally Hill where Valley Road intersected Highway 22. The sign said, "Welcome to Fort Smith, Population 32,000."

Marbles were played in early spring. We called them doogies. We always played keepers. The other game was funnies. In funnies, you never won or lost marbles; conversely, in keepers, you either won or lost. The marbles were produced in

four materials, from which they were classed. On the low end of the pole were potsies. They were speckled and made of clay, usually brown. Next were glassies, clear solid colors or marbled various colors. Steelies were obtained by finding a discarded ball bearing and removing the bright, hard spheres. Then way, way beyond these in value were agates. They were classed also, a tiger eye being the top, followed by the bull eye, plain and usually brown. Then the smoke, which was sort of clear gray. A taw was the doogie you used for shooting. I think this word, taw or tau, is short for talisman, a token for luck.

I traded 350 glassies for my taw. The transaction took place on the southwest corner of Peabody School ground. It was a tiger eye that was five-eighths of an inch in diameter and a beauty. If when hitting another marble, it “moonied” — that was when a small, moon-shaped imperfection appeared on impact — I just placed it in a jar of oil or grease overnight and the moons would disappear. I still have it today. The reason, perhaps, that I can recall in such detail the way I obtained it was the value I place upon this treasure.

Tops were spun in early September as school was starting; then again a small revival in early spring. A boy’s prowess as a top spinner was judged by the number of “spools” he carried on his string. A circle about eight feet in diameter was drawn on a smooth spot of ground. Each player, usually about four or five, anted up. That is, he placed a thread spool into the center of the ring. The order in which we got to spike at the spools was determined by trying to hit a line scratched into the ground. Closest was first and so on. If you failed to “spin” when you spiked at the line, you were last. If the string was not wound properly around the top, it usually resulted in the top hanging onto the string and becoming a string-held projectile. If this struck one of the other players, he would yell, “Shin breaker, top taker.” This meant the owner of the errant top had to fork it over to the strikee. This rule applied only if the strikee was bigger and meaner than the striker. I failed to state that the object of the game was to knock the spool out of the ring and then spin after hitting it. I can smell the paint and wood burning now. I am grade-school age and decorating my top with a red hot ice pick, heated on Mom’s Quick Meal.

“Touch In and Touch Out” was played at night, home base being the pole supporting the street light at



Courtesy image

A POSTER FOR DUNCAN YO-YO

South 22nd and F Streets usually. If six were playing, three would be on one side and three on another. If you and your guys were “it,” you were after the other three. It didn’t matter which side you were on, as they were both fun. The “its” would give the escapees to one hundred, counted by fives, to get gone. Then “let’s go get them.” The object was to find him, knock him down or tackle him, pat him three times on the back, and then take him to the pole. The grass around the pole was the area where he had to stay. At this point, someone had to guard the captive, for if he yelled, “Gimme a hand,” any one of his fellow outlaws could get to him and give him a hand — that is, touch him, and he was free. This could go on and on, getting rougher as it went, as there were no holds barred in the procedure.

The harbingers of spring in the adult world are perhaps robins, crocuses, etc.; but for us, there were also many. One of these was the arrival of a group of foreigners, I think they were Filipinos. They were sponsored by the Duncan Yo-Yo Co. and were experts in yo-yo trickery. They performed at the five-and-dime stores on Garrison Avenue, the wooden aisles being their stage. Some of the yo-yos were metal with holes drilled in them. These made a whistling noise as they spun. They cost as much as two bits apiece, which we didn’t have. But we never failed to have a good time playing with our ordinary ones on our way home.

You remember the indescribable feeling of going barefoot, in particular, on that first day of spring, how the grass felt to your shoe-softened feet? The smell



Photo courtesy of the Fort Smith Historical Society

THE BOY RANGERS MUSEUM in the 400 block of Garrison Avenue.

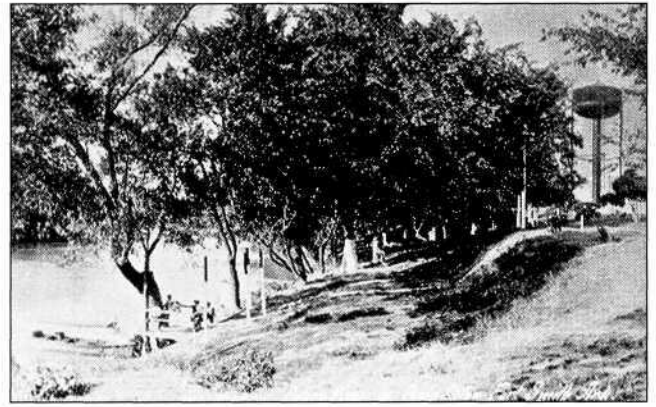
of spring, the knowledge that school would soon be out, the feeling you could run as fast as lightning and jump as high as a tree. I think perhaps that may well be the very pinnacle of feeling good.

The Boy Rangers, that was the name of the organization. If you were a boy over eight years old and had ten cents, you could get a card with your name on it, which proved to one and all that you were a member. The headquarters was on the north side of Garrison Avenue in the 400 block. A narrow, creaky flight of stairs led from the street up to this interesting and entertaining place. Mr. C. F. Wilmans was the organizer and Chief Ranger. He was a printer by trade and had a print shop in the front rooms of the building. This was off-limits to smaller Rangers, but you could see the handfed presses operating through the glass inset in doors. They looked like animals opening and shutting their mouths, with guys

feeding them blank paper, which they returned as handbills.

Toward the center was the museum. Thousands of arrowheads and other stone instruments were placed in decorative patterns on the wall. Animals stuffed by Mr. Wilmans or one of the Mountaineer Rangers, were displayed in glass cases in the room. All the items had a card attached that said, "Donated by so and so." Joe got it out of the tree, but I donated it. It was a hummingbird nest with pea-sized eggs and said, "Donated by Bob Martin." I always headed there first to see my contribution.

Along with the stuffed animals, there was a cage of alligators that seemed to sleep most of the time. In this room also were the "scratch" tables. This was our answer to pool. The tables were about three-feet-square, and in each corner was a pocket. The object was to flip a checker as one would strike a cue ball in



Photos courtesy of the Fort Smith Historical Society

(LEFT) The pump station at Mill Creek. (RIGHT) The Poteau River in Fort Smith in the 1920s.

pool, this in turn hitting another of the checkers and driving it into the pocket.

In the very back was the gymnasium. Mr. Wilmans had made the equipment, which consisted of trapeze, chinning bar and barbells made from concrete-filled cans. The walls of the gym room were decorated with names and dates. There were no '30s boys who would have carved obscene words into those plaster walls. Use them? Yes, but carve them into the gym walls? No!

The building was brick, but the ceiling joists were 2-inch-by-12-inch eaves. I can hear them as plain as I can hear the clock ticking in our den as I write this. It was a rhythmic squeak, high-pitched and low, as you swung back and forth and higher and higher on the trapeze. My descent was always a "little drop." My knife and other stuff invariably fell out of the bib of my Payday overalls as I hung by my knees in preparation for the daring feat. Some of the names carved into the walls were these: Bill Blair, Mountaineer; Don Foster, Mountaineer; Orvil Linnaman, Mountaineer; Dillwyn Paxon, Mountaineer; LM, my brother's trademark; June Riggs, Ralph Riggs, Jack Blair, Joe Blair, Gene Blair, Bill Avlos, George Avlos, Ted Winrich, and Bob Martin, 1936. I was ten years old.

Often hikes were taken to Rudy for fox and hound chases or field days spent looking for arrowheads. These were found in plowed ground along the Frisco Railroad, which was the route taken by foot to the camp on Clear Creek. There were no set meeting times, and Mr. Wilmans sponsored most of the club himself. He was a short, slightly built man, who even in his old age was as tough as whit leather.

In those days, Wheeler Avenue, when you were going south, made a quick descent down to the creek. To alleviate this, a cut was made through the hill. In doing so, several graves were opened up. These were Civil War soldiers, killed in a skirmish that took place on or near that spot. I believe this to be true, as I have found several minie balls around there.

The pump station was about six blocks west of Wheeler Avenue and right on the Poteau River. This was before Lake Fort Smith was built and was the source of water for the city. Holding reservoirs with iron fences dotted the area. The pump station itself was filled with all sorts of interesting engines and other steam-powered devices. Pecan trees were numerous there, and the Fort Smith and Western Railroad Bridge was only about two blocks down the river. These things together made the pump station a good place to go.

Starting somewhere out by Potters Field on Highway 71 South and ending at the Poteau River near the pump station was Mill Creek. Most of the time, it was barely flowing, and in summer only pools remained. One of these was known as Flat Rock. This was at a spot about a block and a half south of Spring Street and the same distance east of Wheeler Avenue. My dad and his brothers played there when they were kids, as did we. The water was still and became very muddy after we were there awhile, but all of our thrashing and jumping around didn't seem to affect the thousands of black water spiders that darted effortlessly over the surface of the pool. This spot could be reached by the secret tunnel, entered at Towson Avenue and Spring Street. It was a storm drain pipe about four feet in diameter and ran to Mill

Creek about three blocks away. One time, we went to Flat Rock for a swim, and some church group was baptizing new converts. Mill Creek is not likely to be voted a "national stream" by Congress, but with our imaginations, it could have been the Amazon River.

Little Ed and I were going up the alley behind my house. When we got up behind McDaniel's, Reggie McDaniel was out in his backyard. Reginald and James, his brother, were called "Reggie" and "Mouse" by one and all. They were older guys who ran around with my brother, Joe, and his gang of friends. Being older, they would tolerate "squirts," as we were called, if we happened to be needed for something. We placed a high priority on being in their presence and would do anything they asked. Reggie had found a pair of old hand-operated hair clippers. At their best, these things were diabolical, and in the condition these were in, they were really bad news. He was just dying to try them out, so when he spotted us, he called, "You two squirts come here."

I should have run in the opposite direction. After all, had I not been the object of one of Reg's whims a short time earlier? Ex-Lax had just been introduced on the market. It was sold in flat, tin container, about 3-inches-by-3-inches. The product was scored like a Hershey Bar and tasted sort of like one. He had come by some of this stuff over at his uncle's drugstore. Placing it in a candy dish, he offered me all I wanted. This should have been the tip off, but my love of candy overruled my good judgment as I ate my fill. It was a long time later that I found out the cause of my "bush fever."

"I'll give you guys half a bushel of cantaloupes if you'll let me cut your hair," he said. Hitting Ed with my couple of years' seniority, I said, "You first." Reg squirted a few more drops of 3-in-One Oil on the clippers and started whacking. In a few minutes, Ed looked like he had stuck his head in a meat grinder. At this point, I prudently took off. Ed had some of the cantaloupes cradled in his arms as I saw him heading down the alley toward his house. In a few minutes, up the alley came Mr. Gammill. He was a big man, whose ears protruded



Courtesy image



Courtesy image

AN ADVERTISEMENT for a 1938 Pontiac automobile.

farther from his head at the bottom than they did at the top. Taking long strides with abandon, he completely disregarded the usual alley obstacles of brick bats and rain-formed ridges. He was heading for Mack's with a full head of mad up. I cut across Buster Kohler's chicken lot and beat him to Reggie's, where I hid and waited. Had he knocked on the back door in a normal way, Reg might have answered without looking, but no one would have responded to the pounding he was giving the door without checking first. Reg must have done this, as not a stir was made inside the house. Mr. Gammill beat on the house for a while and then went back down the alley. I stayed concealed in my hiding place, snickering and enjoying the whole show. Sure enough, after awhile, Reg stuck his head out to see if he was gone. I yelled, "You're in trouble now, Reggie," and ran. I didn't see it, but I understand Mr. Gammill returned later and chewed Mr. Mack out for siring such a son as Reggie. This was not an uncommon practice in our neighborhood.

As I said, Reggie and Joe were quite a bit older. In fact, a year or so later, they, with Dad's help, got jobs driving cabs. This was done after school and at night. The Checkered Cab Co. had just taken delivery on a new fleet of vehicles. They were about 1938 model Pontiacs, specially equipped for taxis.

The special equipment included leather seats and governor-restrained engines, among other things. Believe it or not, Joe actually learned to drive on this job. This is not a completely true statement. He had driven T-Models, but on a T, there were no gears to shift by hand. You operated the T-Model by pushing one of three pedals protruding from the floorboards.

One was the brake, one was reverse, and the other forward. The position of the forward pedal, in or out, gave you high or low. So I guess I should have said that Joe learned to drive a *modern* car on the cab line. Joe's cab was No. 120, and he learned to drive quickly. In fact, I would say he was an expert.

In the '30s and '40s, cabs and buses were a very important part of the transportation system in Fort Smith. They were both operated by the same company, Mr. K. Rodgers being the owner. If not in full, he was the principal stockholder. Sterling Kellogg was the general manager, and Dad was the night foreman at the bus garage. Joe was seventeen or eighteen then. I loved it when he would take me for a ride, even though he would scare the daylights out of me, speeding through traffic or acting like he was going to turn a corner when we were going far too fast to make this turn possible. Cab phones were located in strategic spots around town. These were for the drivers to phone the main office, checking to see if a person wanted a cab in that area. When business was slack, it was not uncommon to see three or four cabs parked near a phone. The drivers sitting outside, telling jokes or relating anecdotes of fares they had hauled that night. Listening to these stories was educational to us "squirts." When the phone would ring, the driver who had been waiting longest would answer and head out to pick up the fare. There was one of these phones located on a then-vacant lot between McDaniel's Drug Store and the building that formerly had been Dad's shop. A cleaning business is located in a building there now.

We hung out a lot at night over around the drugstore. Long snipes could often be found. Gold-tip gum boxes were discarded and quickly grabbed up by us. Cigar boxes were thrown out in the trash. And best of all, there were motorcycles there. These belonged to the delivery boys. Carroll Cox, Red Banes, and Gene Brooks were some of the riders. If you wiped off their motorcycle or gave them a nickel, you might get a ride. Carroll Cox was the best. He would take you down North B Street and really give you a scare, leaning the bike over until the footboards would drag the asphalt. This produced a string of sparks, which added to the excitement.

The drugstore was also the hangout of older "young guys." They sat on the rails used as car restrainers and joked or went inside and sat in the booths, joking and carrying on with the carhops.

"Flat foot floozy," "big apple," "trucking," "shag," these were some of the words often heard around drugstores in 1938. They were not the straight-forward drug-dispensing businesses they are today. They had a soda fountain, which, if the soda jerk wanted, could dispense you a glass of iced water or concoctions that would make a king's mouth water ... banana splits, Mandys, etc. A Mandy was a glass with ice in it covered by cherry or some other flavored syrup. As I recall the soda fountain, there seemed to be a predominant lime smell. They used lots of limes.

Ward's Ice Cream was delivered in wooden kegs. These kegs surrounded a five-gallon, tin-coated container. Between the two was dry ice. On the outside of the green-colored, wooden keg was a blanket-like cloth shroud. We watched for Red Ross, the soda jerk, to put them out back to await replacement. We'd check them out, as he often left a scoop full or two for us. Cooley Drug Store was in the 2000 block of Rogers Avenue. McDaniel's was in the 2300 block. In the '40s, sometime about 1941, Cooley bought out Mack and made Cooley No. 1 and No. 2. This they did in ownership and with signs telling the public such a transaction had taken place. But the building in the 2300 block on Rogers is still Mack's to me, even though the business faded into the past many years ago.

We had collectibles in the '30s, too. They were fun. I think perhaps that then, as now, the hunting for and trading of the item was the better part of collecting. Whiskey became legal in the early '30s. The fancy bottles with deeply embossed labels were fascinating and pretty. We would lug them in from our various trips to different sections of town. If a large chunk of metal was spotted, we went after it on foot and pushing Ol' Betsy. Mary asked me if Betsy was named after Betsy Orr, my original sweetheart. No, it was named after a beautiful Diamond T Cab-Over Truck, owned by a local mover. The name "Betsy" was painted in cursive writing on the door. I can't tell in words the admiration I had in my heart for that vehicle.

But back to collecting. Very seldom did the metal make a full load, so we loaded up with things we found along the way. Whiskey bottles were included among those fill-ins. The really pretty and ornate ones were placed in a cranny up in my attic. Bottles would never last long down in the barn. Nothing fragile would. The common bottles, plain, clear glass

with flat labels, were broken up and placed in a steel 55-gallon, open-top drum. These were waiting to be taken to the glass company. This establishment made chimneys for coal oil lamps. It was about four blocks north of the free bridge and right on the east bank of the river. It was called Witherspoon-Simpson Glass Co. The lamp chimneys were blown completely freehand by puffed-cheeked men with three-foot-long pieces of pipe in their mouths. A trip to the Witherspoon-Simpson not only netted a little cash, but it was also fun to watch the blowers at work.

Cigar bands were traded and collected as one would postage stamps. As with the whiskey bottle labels, many of these were colorful, deeply embossed works of art. A good part of these cigars had their origin in Cuba or South American countries. As a result, their names were prefixed El: El Verso, El Roi Tan, El Producto, and so on. If you were walking along and spotted a rare band in good condition, it resulted in that good feeling that accompanies finding something of value. This good feeling was also present when you traded for a band you had long sought. This made it all worthwhile.

When the brick building on the north side of Rogers Avenue in the 2100 block was built, it housed the John D. Yutterman Grocery Co. Out back you could find orange crates and apple boxes. These were wooden crates, which were made out of straight-grained pine. The apple boxes had large paper labels denoting their brand. One I recall had a grinning Indian's face on it. These crates were put to lots of uses. Two prominent uses were skate mobiles and bicycle boxes. Nail a box, end down on a two-by-four, then nail handles of wood about 45 degrees apart to the top end. Find a skate, remove the rubber wheel restrainers and secure them with sixteen penny nails to each end of the under side of the three-foot-long two-by-four. The result is a skate mobile. This was ridden as you would a scooter. The open side of the apple box faced you as you rode. The end of another box, halfway closing this opening, formed a compartment for your coat or other junk.

The luggage carriers we used were behind the seat of our bicycles. They were made of two U-shaped springs that interlocked. Raising the springs, you placed what you wanted to carry in the area where they overlapped. The springs held whatever it was in place. When the springs were both raised to a vertical position, the distance between them was exactly the

width of an apple box. You took a coping saw and cut out two pieces of wood that matched the inside of the springs. Then you nailed these centrally disposed to the outside of the apple box. The result was a firmly held container for hauling stuff that was larger or that you did not want squashed, such as six loaves of day-old bread.

Orange crates had all sorts of uses. All hens laid eggs in orange crates in the '30s. My sisters, Faye and Mildred, made vanities for their rooms out of these crates. They used three crates for this. Two were vertical with one nailed horizontal to the tops of these; a space between them formed the knee hole in the vanity. They painted the crates white and draped material over the exposed openings. Inside they placed their prettying up paraphernalia.

Up in the wood where we built the bag swing was our clubhouse. It was known as "The Cave." We dug down in the ground about three feet then raised the walls about the same. It was constructed sort of like a storm cellar. The entrance was an opening under the wood top, tunneled in. Naturally it had a place to build a fire. How else could you bake your "spuds?" In order for Ed Robinson to become a member, he had to get us some wood. This he did, he took the slats from under the beds at his home. We nailed them up, and he was in.

From the clubhouse, we ventured out to see what all we could bring in. It could be anything, wooden boxes, cardboard, discarded furniture, or other household items. We'd haul it in. In fact one time, not their only trip, but one time Foster Parker and Verne Bentley came out. Foss and Verne were city policemen. They said we would have to clean up the place, as some of the neighbors were complaining. Before they left, they took a look in the clubhouse. Crawling on hands and knees with flashlight in hand, Verne went in. When he backed out, he said to Foss, "Looks like Alla Babba to me. Where did you guys swipe all the Jell-O mix?" It was a lucky strike, as a man down on E Street who was a salesman had given it to us. The Jell-O had gotten hard in the boxes, but other than that, there was nothing wrong with it. You could tear the box down about halfway and lick on it for hours. We told them where the fellow lived, and they went to see him. He corroborated our story, and we were home free.

The '30s put lots of families into migration. Among these were the Mike and Francis Blair family.

Francis was Mom's sister and one of my friends. They, with their five sons and one daughter, moved to Oklahoma City. Mike had found a job in the oil fields. As a result of his work, he was able to get gasoline free. It was not the type you would get at a regular filling station; it was referred to as "Casin head gas." This he would put in a 55-gallon drum, which was carried in a two-wheeled trailer behind the A-Model. With a setup like this, they came to visit Grannie Kaufman and other relatives frequently.

It was on one of these visits that they brought a little black and white puppy with them. I became so attached to him that I refused to let them take him back. It was 1936, so I was about 10 years old. From that day until I was grown, I was never without a friend. I named him Nick. He stood about one foot tall and had medium-length fur. One of his ancestors must have been a retriever, as he had long "feathers" on the back of his front legs. He loved to ride on anything. I taught him to ride on the bike with me. No, he didn't ride in a box on the back. He rode with his front feet on the handlebars and his back feet on the two horizontal bars that run from the seat to the gooseneck. I would take my right hand off of the handlebar, and he would run and jump up on my right leg. At this point, I would take my right hand and put it under his stomach, boosting him into position. After that, he was on his own. I could ride as fast as I wanted, and nevermind the bumps or steepness of the hill, he stayed on.

There is absolutely no place in Fort Smith or the surrounding area that we didn't go. Nick's one fault was that he thought he was a big dog. This got him and me both in trouble. One day, up on 21st Street, a big collie and Nick went at it. The collie had him in a grip behind his neck, and at times, his feet were off the ground. I couldn't stand this, so I entered the fray. Grabbing the big dog by both hind legs, I started swinging him around in a circle. He let go of Nick, and the next orbit around, I popped his head against a big sycamore tree. By the time he recovered, we were on the bike and gone.

Nick's place in the house was under the kitchen stove. Mom wouldn't allow him in the bedroom. As I said earlier on, Mom didn't see everything. He spent many nights curled up in bed at my feet. We shared everything, trouble or candy bars, it made no difference. Nick loved to swim. Round Hole in May Branch, Lake View, Slate Bluff, Wildcat Lake and the river were all

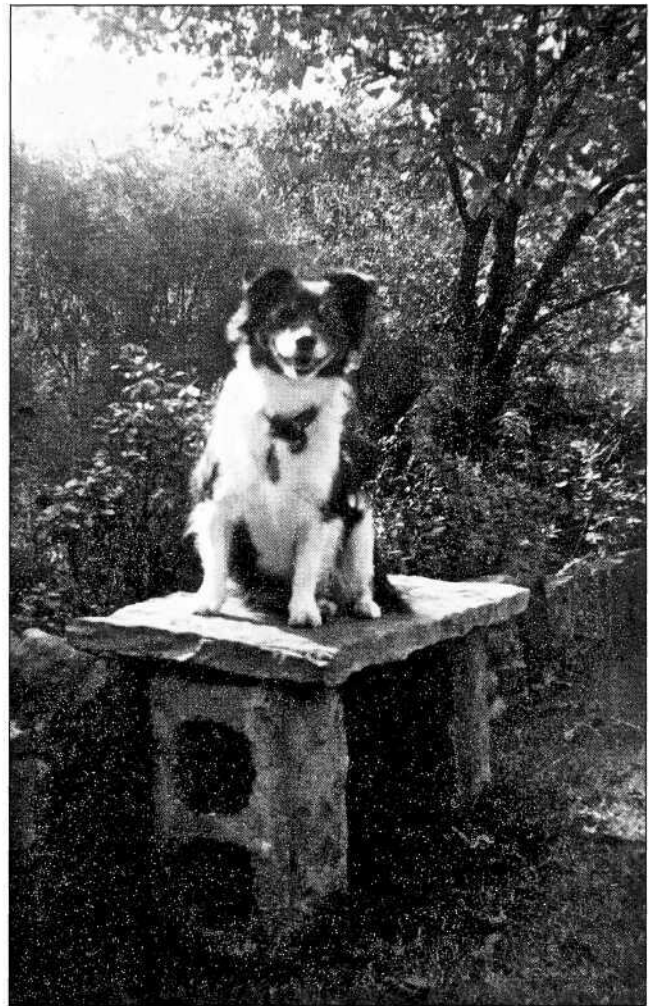


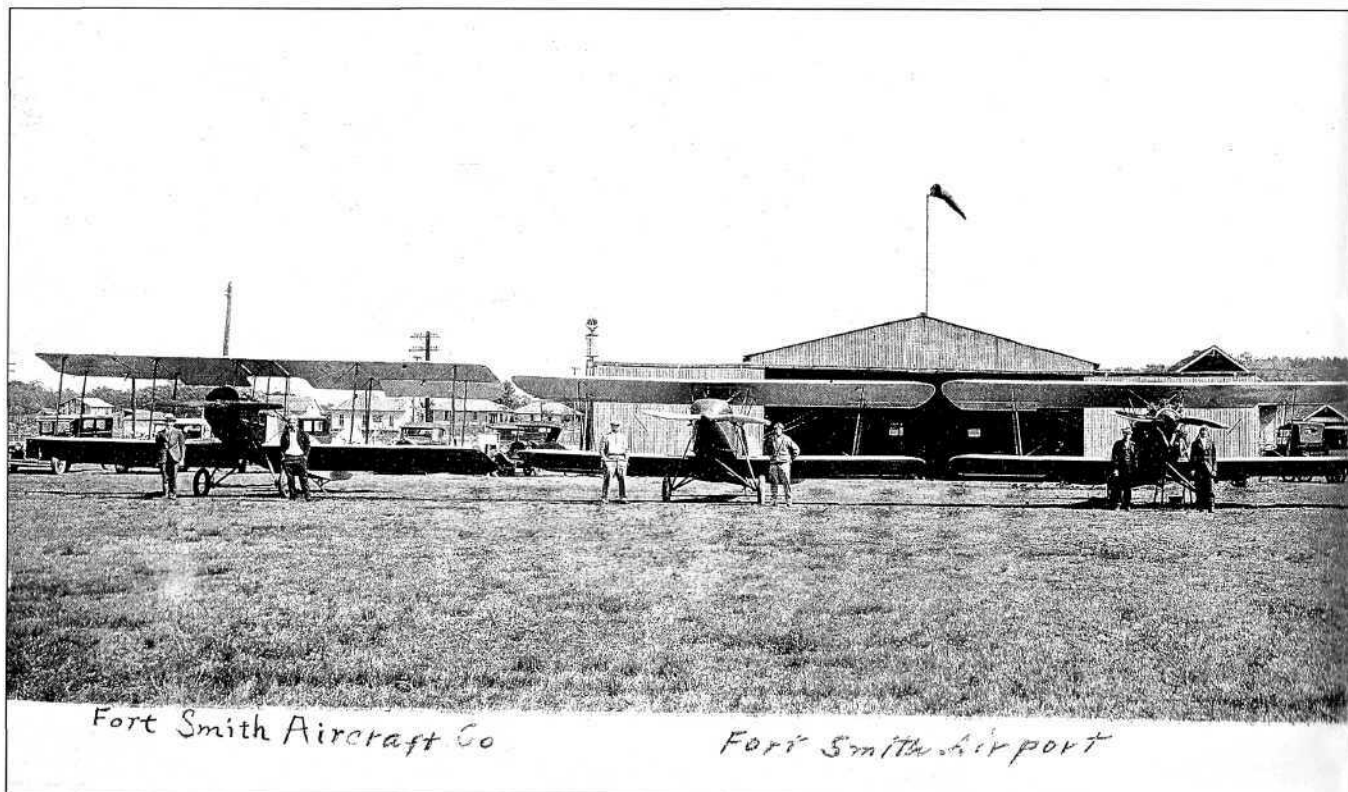
Photo courtesy of Robert A. Martin

NICK, ROBERT A. MARTIN'S DOG

familiar to him.

Juney's uncle ran a filling station over at Moffett. The road in the '30s, Highway 64, left the Free Bridge in a long sweeping curve toward Moffett Central. His station was on the right, just as you left the bridge. There was always something going on over there. Once they buried a man alive. For a dime you could look down a tube and see him. He was underground for a week. The object of the stunt was to draw people to the area. There was a beer garden, an outdoor affair where people came to drink. Prohibition was not long gone, and they had lots of business. They not only served beer, but also had a dance. A beer-guzzling bear on a chain was also present to amuse the folks. The whole area was a sort of entertainment center. On the left of the road inside the curve, someone established a walkathon. Prizes were awarded to couples who could dance and walk the longest.

Naturally people drove their cars over from Fort



Fort Smith Aircraft Co

Fort Smith Airport

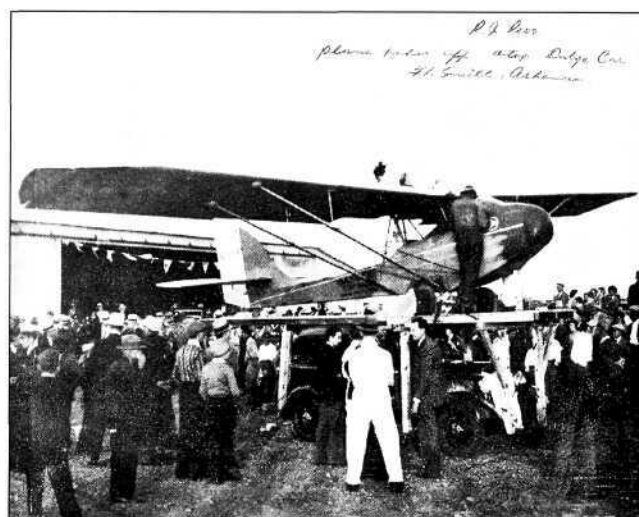
Photos courtesy of Wayne Haver, Fort Smith Air Museum

OLLIE BLAN AND COMPANY at the Fort Smith Airport.

Smith to see this. As a result they bought beer and gas and played the slot machines. Yes, they openly had gambling over there. I don't know if it was legal in Oklahoma then or not. One thing for sure, the one-armed bandits, as they were called, were present, because I lost a dime in one, a dime lost just to see if the wheels with cherries and lemons would line up properly. One time and never again. Cigarettes were cheaper in Moffett, as Oklahoma's state tax was less than Arkansas'. This was the drawing card to lots of people. One cigarette, named 20 Grand, was as long as four cigarettes.

The stockyards were located in the same section of Moffett as they are today. Of course they were not as big then. Watching the auctions, unloading, and riding were educational and fun. Actually, the education was administered by the cowboys. This was done inadvertently as they squatted around and told stories. We loved these sessions.

The airport was one of our favorite places in Moffett. On Sunday, there was always activity there. Sunday was busier than other days, because there were no airlines here then and not much commercial flying. This was especially true in the earlier '30s. For the record, I will



*P.H. Ross
plane taken off atop Dodge Car
H. Smith, Arkansas*

THIS PHOTO SHOWS A CURTISS JR. PUSHER PLANE on top of a Ross Motor Co. Dodge automobile being readied for take-off as the Dodge speed down the runway. This is a borrowed Curtiss Jr. because the previous day Rudd Ross Sr.'s Curtiss Jr., "Plymouth Floating Power," fell off the car before it reached flying speed. This flight was successful. The man in the suit talking to the man in white is Rudd Ross Sr.

list some of the men and planes I remember from there: Floyd Munsey, Roy Shine, Jimmie Ward, Rudd Ross Sr., Buell Phillips, Cy Martin, Ollie Blan and Beeler Blevins.



Photo courtesy of Wayne Haver, Fort Smith Air Museum

LOUISE MCPHETRIDGE THADEN stands next to a young Ira Jones, who is sitting on the wing of an airplane after Thaden flew into Alexander Field in Moffett, Oklahoma, on January 30, 1930.

The planes hangared there were: a Stinson high-wing monoplane, a de Havilland Gipsy Moth, 0x-5 powered Curtiss Jenny from World War I, several Piper Cubs and Taylorcrafts by the late '30s, and a Curtiss Pusher owned by Rudd Ross. One time at a show, a little three-cylinder plane took off from the top of a car. A plywood platform was fitted over the top and to both bumpers. The plane's wheels were chocked and bound by a quick release mechanism, operated by the pilot. When the car had achieved air speed, the pilot gunned the engine, which was already running, released the holding device, hoisted back on the stick and was airborne. A neat trick, especially considering the rough surface of the grass strip. There was also Ward's Waco biplane, called a Cavalier. It was a five-cylinder, high-wing monoplane, made at Bartlesville, Oklahoma. It was a cabin plane and very small but plush.

Once in awhile, a group of barnstormers would fly in and put on a show. These were usually World War I pilots, flying biplanes of various makes, but usually Jennys. I will never forget a guy flying a Jenny into

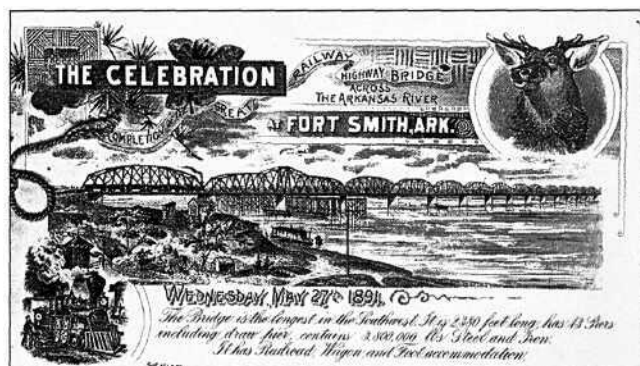


Image courtesy of Dr. Bill Pollard

A NOTICE OF THE 1891 OPENING of Gould/iron Mountain Bridge across the Arkansas River.

a barn over at Moffett. It was not a barn used by a farmer, but rather a structure built for the crash. I just knew that at the last minute he was going to pull up and over it, but he didn't. He flew right into it, wings sheared off and all. It was a real crash, and he crawled out unhurt.

There were guys doing all the usual aerobatic stunts, plus other tricks such as picking up a handkerchief with the snare on the wingtip, flying upside down at very low altitude, mock dog fights and always a parachute jump. I don't remember this, but Charles Lindbergh flew the *Spirit of St. Louis* over Fort Smith and landed here. This was after his famous flight. I suppose he was on a tour of the United States for people to see him and his plane.

Sometimes our trip over to Moffett was on foot by way of the old Gould Railroad Bridge. It was operated by the Missouri Pacific railroad, but financed by the famous financier Jay Gould. It was located about 200 or 300 yards upstream from the present structure. It was constructed of steel trusses and had one section that would swing parallel to the river. This feature was to permit boats to go by. This never happened that I remember. In fact before the McClellan-Kerr waterway was constructed, the river would nearly dry up in the summer.

This gave us another route to Moffett. I have waded all but about ten or fifteen feet of it. This portion was on the west side and usually about six feet deep. If we wanted to be dry when we got on the Moffett side, we would cut a willow stick and secure our clothing to it. Holding it out of the water, we would dog paddle the narrow channel, then dress and go our way.

My mother's parents lived at 813 South 12th



Photo courtesy of Robert A. Martin / Photographer B.F. Lynch

THIS PHOTO TAKEN in late 1939 at 813 South 12th Street in Fort Smith shows members of Bob Martin's family. From left are Hattie May Kaufman Huber, Frances Dora Kaufman Blair, Minnie Melissa Kaufman Martin (Bob's mother), Sarah Florence Kaufman, George Adam Kaufman, Charles Alonzo Kaufman, Benjamin Franklin Kaufman and John (Boose) Kaufman. Denham's Hamburger Stand can be seen in the background.

Street. Granpaw migrated to Arkansas from near Mattoon, Illinois, by way of Texas, sort of out of the way, but he was a trail driver as a young man. I don't know the details but Granpaw (George) Kaufman's mother was shot to death by outlaws. He was sitting on her lap when it happened.

Granpaw was one of the very early rural mail carriers. His route was out Rogers to what is now South 31st Street, and then south. Back then, South 31st was Old Greenwood Road. It was all dirt and followed roughly what is now Highway 45 to Rye Hill. The mail hack was a narrow box-like affair, drawn by a single horse. Mom said she rode with him many times. On one trip, he was held up by robbers. When the sheriff arrived, he put bloodhounds on the

trail of the holdup men. The hounds caught up with the men, which was a mistake, as they shot the dogs and hung them up using mail straps. After he quit the post office, Granpaw ran a store on the west side of Towson Avenue in about the 700 block. In the time span of my memory, he didn't work any. As a result of this, he was always at home and ready to talk

Grannie and Granpaw had a family who lived in the north half of their house, a widow lady and her two daughters. She was referred to as Mrs. Woodward and her daughters were Mary Katherine, my age, and Rita, about six years older. The house was not built as a duplex. As a result, it had only one bathroom. This presented a problem, as you had to pass through the corner of their bedroom



Photo courtesy of H. E. Huber

GEORGE KAUFMAN, Robert A. Martin's maternal grandfather, poses next to the mail wagon he drove the U.S. postal service in Fort Smith.

to get to the toilet. Mary Kay told me later that it was not uncommon for one of my uncles to visit Grannie late at night. This in turn called for a trip to the bathroom. She said whoever it might be would stop to talk to them while they were in bed. Now the strange part of this was that neither party thought anything of it. That's how it was in the '30s.

An often-asked question was, "Where were you when you first heard the news about Pearl Harbor?" I had been fifteen years old nearly two months on that Sunday morning. I was on the corner of South 22nd and F streets when Jack Gammill came running out of the house yelling, "The Japs just bombed Pearl Harbor." Gene McGuire was with me, and we all agreed the United States would make quick work of disposing of them. Little did we realize our reaction was as foolish as one we had earlier. This was when the

Italians, under Mussolini, invaded Ethiopia.

A serial of "Tarzan" was showing at the New Theater. As a result of this, we were all giving the Tarzan yell and looking for vines to swing on. News of the invasion reached us, and Juney said, "Why them Italians ain't got a chance. They'll turn the lions loose on them." We all agreed with that, too.

Fort Smith industries made an attempt at war production. When I said "attempt," it might have sounded like they failed, which is not true altogether. The big flop that prompted this comment was Ward Furniture Co.'s attempt to build gliders. The gliders were to carry assault troops. It was a cost-plus job, and a big building was built out on the north side between Sixth Street and 11th Street near Trusty School. I recall that an attempt was made by some daredevil flyer to get one in the air. It was done at the new airport, located where it is now. In fairness to the builders,



Photo courtesy of Robert A. Martin

ROBERT A. MARTIN in his sailor suit beside his dog, Nick.

the workmanship was okay but the design was poor.

Forty mm and 37 mm shells were produced at Warmack Stove Co. The plant was on Wheeler Avenue, just south of the Mill Creek crossing. Old man Warmack had a plant that was powered by batteries of Ford flathead sixty-horsepower gasoline engines. These were coupled to generators, which ran the machinery. The miracle of the job was that it was done at all. He had some automatic screw machines for producing burners, ferrules and other fittings for his stoves. They were old as the hills, but somehow they were able to tool them up for the shells.

Of course the contribution to our awareness of military things was Camp Chaffee. Soldiers with

triangle patches on their arms were everywhere. The triangle patch designated an armored division, and the 6th was the first to call Chaffee home. Later the 5th and 14th Armored Divisions were there. Fort Smith became one huge housing point for the married soldiers and their families. Every available nook and cranny was taken. This era was the harbinger of better economic times. In fact, the whole thing was economic in my opinion. The brave men who died during the Battle of the Bulge and at Iwo Jima saved us not only from the Hun and the Jap, but also from the Depression that gripped the world in the '30s. Penny arcades, beer joints, dance halls and cheap clothing stores all sprung up alongside the legitimate businesses. People were making money.

I was in the tenth grade at Fort Smith Senior High on December 7, 1941. My brother, Joe, was drafted in 1942 and was put in the Army Air Corps. After his basic at Kessler, he went to radio and gunnery school. His assignment was on a B-17 Bomber. It was the "Pistol Packing Mama" and flew thirty missions with the 8th Air Force, based in England. I was proud of him, and a star hung in our front window, telling all that a boy from this home was in the service. It was red, and we were grateful, as a gold star proclaimed that a boy had been killed.

Mom added another star when I joined the Navy in October 1944 at seventeen years of age. I was assigned to the USS PC-1179 after I joined the Navy. We were near Aniwetok in the Pacific when I got a letter from Mom. She said Nick had been hit by a car up on 21st Street and he was dead. I went back on the fantail and crawled up on the depth charge racks. We were underway, and the water was curling over the stern. It was calm, the moon and stars plus the phosphorous igniting along the hull made for pleasant surroundings. I had just turned nineteen. Memories of my childhood with Nick as the focal point flooded my mind, flooding me with sorrow. I realized I would never be a "boy" anymore, and I cried.

Editor's note: When we interviewed Bob Martin in 2007 as part of our World War II Oral History Project, we were so impressed with his "A '30s Boy" story that we decided to print it, rather than the transcript of his interview. We hope you will agree with us, that this is a story that had to be told in our *Journal*.

Man On The Street



Photo courtesy of Audrey D. Henry

WILLIAM MIKEL in uniform in 1945 on Garrison Avenue.



Photo courtesy of Betty Thompson

BETTY STEWART THOMPSON, left, and Allene Means Meadors in front of Tilles Inc.

1930s and 1940s on Garrison Avenue

We thought it would be fun to feature a collection of photographs of Fort Smithians, snapped on Garrison Avenue by an unknown photographer sometime during the late 1930s and the 1940s. As you walked along Garrison Avenue, somewhere near Hunts Department Store, the Boston Store or Tilles, you might become the subject of a “man on the street” photograph. The photographer snapped the photo, handed you a ticket, you paid and received the photo when it was ready. Does anyone remember the name of the photographer?

You may recognize friends and relatives here. You may have a photo to submit for the next “man on the street” column. If so, send it to: Editor, *The Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society, Inc.*, P.O. Box 3676, Fort Smith, AR 72913-3676.

Man On The Street

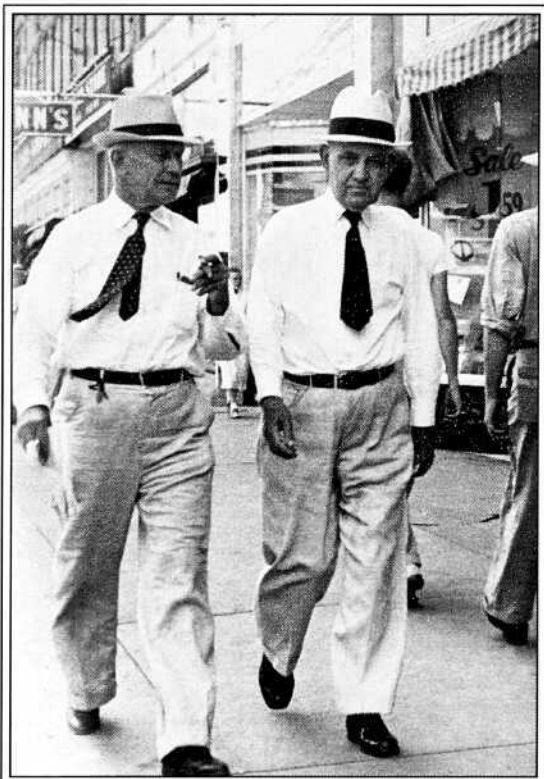


Photo courtesy of Pauline Beckman
A.L. PEACHER and B.F. Beckman, c. 1939.



Photo courtesy of Pauline Beckman
PAULINE TRIPLETT BECKMAN, c. 1939.



Photo courtesy of Rita Webb
JEANETTE LOVETT, 5 years old, 1937.



Photo courtesy of Bob Martin
MILDRED MARTIN LIVELY, left, and Mary Densmore Martin.

Man On The Street

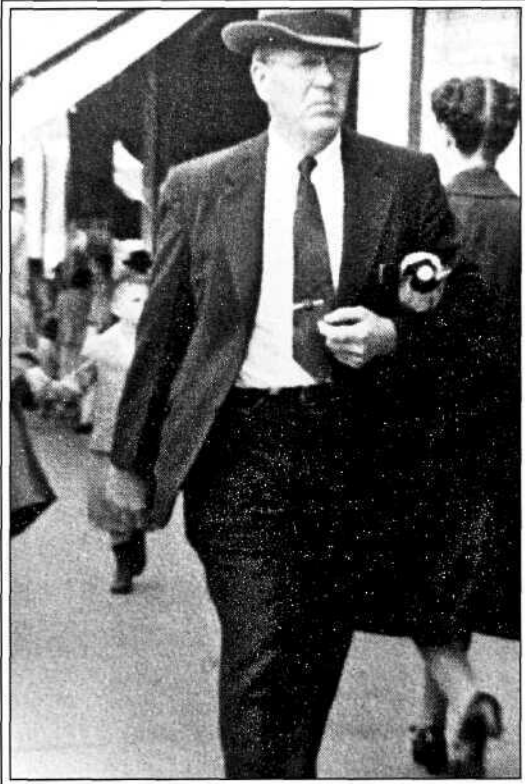


Photo courtesy of Midge Stouffer

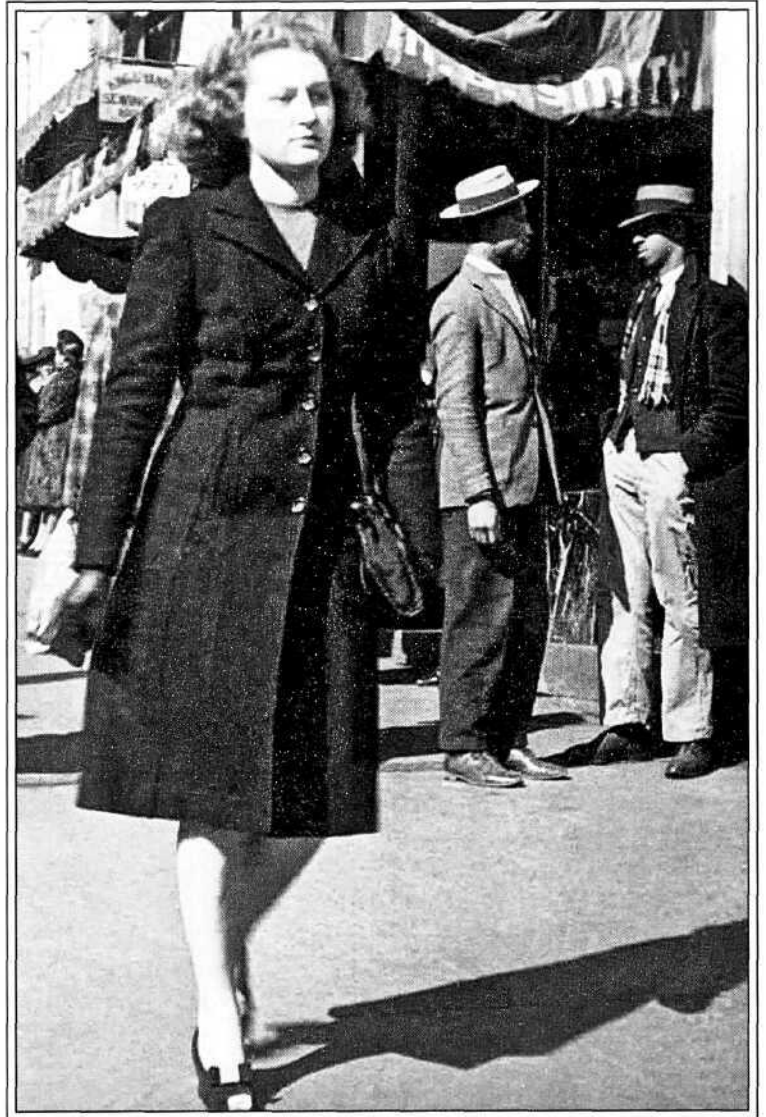


Photo courtesy of Tom Pryor

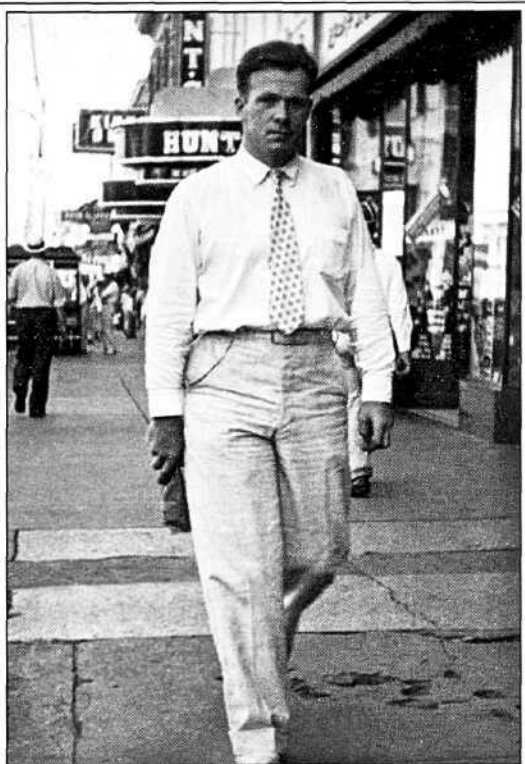


Photo courtesy of Midge Stouffer

(ABOVE) *Eva Pryor.*

(TOP LEFT) *Don Sloat Sr.*

(LOWER LEFT) *Don Sloat Jr.*

Man On The Street

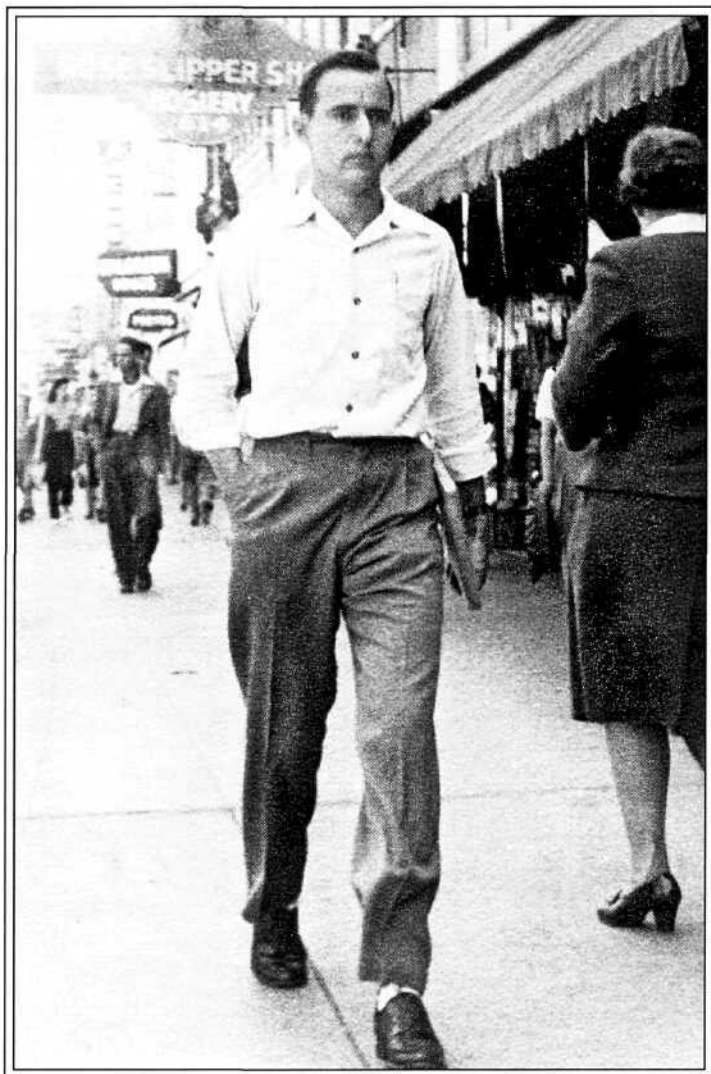


Photo courtesy of Fort Smith Historical Society

(ABOVE) *Hugh Bullington in downtown Fort Smith in October 1945.*

(TOP RIGHT) *Lucille Hiller and Gaylon Brown on Garrison Avenue.*

(LOWER RIGHT) *Amanda Hiller on Garrison Avenue about 1946.*



Photo courtesy of Amanda Hiller Goldsborough



Photo courtesy of Amanda Hiller Goldsborough

Man On The Street



Photo courtesy of Larry Cantwell

PEARL LENINGTON CANTWELL and Larry Cantwell, holding a Captain Marvel Space Gun, 1945.

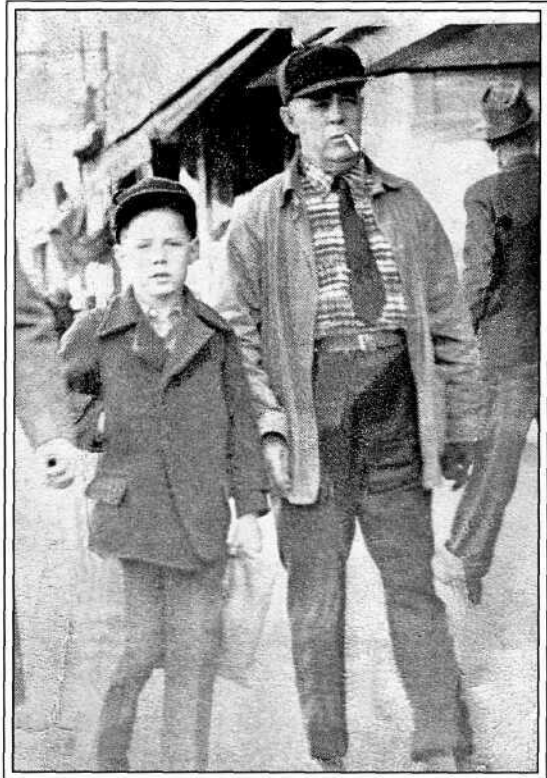


Photo courtesy of Joe Edwards

JOE EDWARDS and his father, James I. Edwards, on Garrison Avenue in front of Hunt's, 1945.



Photo courtesy of Rita Webb

RITA WEBB AND JOE CAMPBELL, 1943.



Photo courtesy of Floyd Barger

DR. M.I. AND NETTIE BARGER, 1945.



Hangin' Times in Fort Smith



By Jerry Akins

His Boots Were His Downfall

Richard Smith

January 25, 1889

Richard Smith made all of the usual protestations and lies and even tried to induce his boots to lie, but they did not cooperate, nor did his in-laws.

On Wednesday, March 28, 1888, Thomas Pringle went to the woods about four hundred yards from his home in Towson County, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory, to cut boards. Hattie Seals, who lived at the Pringle home, near Shawnee Town, had gone along to assist in chipping the bark from the boards and was standing only a few feet from Pringle when a single rifle shot was fired from behind some trees. Pringle was hit in the right shoulder, the bullet ranging downward. He fell mortally wounded, and his first words to Hattie when she went to his aid were that he was going to die. Pringle told Hattie to tell his brother to kill a man named Murphy with whom he had "had a fuss" at a dance about a week before. But Murphy had not threatened to kill Pringle. After she had tended him awhile, Pringle instructed Hattie to go for some Indian men who "lived tolerable close." Hattie and the men carried Pringle to his house, but Thomas Pringle died before they could get him there.

Charles Pringle, brother of the deceased, was informed about noon on the day of the murder and went

to the site and looked for tracks. He found where a man had stood behind a tree and indications that he had crawled up to the tree. The tracks were distinctive in that there were the imprints of large tacks in the soles of the boots, twenty in the right and fourteen in the left, with three in the shape of a "V." Also one boot was broken, allowing the big toe to protrude and the sock to make a fabric imprint in the soil. The wearer appeared to have walked a few steps and then run toward a pond or lake where the trail ended. The next day, Charles Pringle and three others found the same boot tracks on the other side of the water going in the direction of Richard Smith's house and at Smith's house.

The search party determined that they would arrest Smith the next day but then learned that he and his brother-in-law, Charles Mitchell, had gone to Wheelock, Indian Territory, to a funeral. On the following day, Smith was arrested, still wearing the boots but with the tacks removed from the left and the heels removed from both boots. He claimed that he had removed the heels three weeks earlier, but all of the witnesses testified that they could tell that the boots had not been worn long since the tacks and heels had been removed. Also, William Henry testified that Smith had gone to his house wet up to the waist on the day of the killing.

Henry and Smith went to the field where Henry was burning brush, and there Smith asked Henry to help him remove the heels from his boots. They were later found where Henry said that they had thrown them. Smith removed the nails from the sole of the left boot but kept the nails. In the words of Henry, "He wanted them nails."

All of the foregoing information is from the depositions at the proceedings before the commissioner, and judging from the list of affiants, it appears that all of Smith's in-laws, his neighbors and all of the evidence were against him. Still he maintained his innocence. But in a confession to Deputy Marshal J.N. Ennes, which he later denied, Smith implicated his brother-in-law, Charles Mitchell, as an accomplice. Mitchell supposedly told Smith that he should kill Pringle. The assumed motive for the killing was a result of a quarrel that Smith and Pringle had on the previous Sunday. Smith had traded Pringle a cow for a gun but Pringle learned that the cow belonged to Smith's employer, not Smith. They were to meet and go to the employer's house to clear up the matter later, but in the meantime, Pringle was murdered.

Charles Mitchell didn't even get as far as a grand jury indictment. He was discharged as a suspect at the commissioner's hearing. Charles, along with his brother, Samuel Mitchell, also a brother-in-law of Smith, and a host of others were all witnesses against Richard Smith, and the testimony of each corroborated that of the others. In August 1888, it did not take the jury long to bring a verdict of guilty of murder.

The August 18, 1888, issue of the *Fort Smith Weekly Elevator* carried this article:

At noon on Tuesday last, while most of the guards were at dinner, Turnkey Casey, who was in charge of the lower tier of cells, where all those charged with murder are confined, unlocked the door leading into the guard room to pass a bucket of dinner in for one of the prisoners. About the only prisoners in the corider [sic] at the time were Carroll Collier, a white man, and Dick Smith, a negro murderer. Collier was standing at the door, and when Casey unlocked it he attempted to pull it open so he could pass out. While he and Casey were struggling in the door, Dick Smith came up and grabbed Casey's pistol from the scabbard. At this

juncture Mike O'Connell, one of the guards, arrived on the scene and fired a pistol shot into the cell, which was followed by another shot from Dick McStravick, who was on the steps leading to the second story, which caused Smith to drop Casey's pistol, though neither of the guards shot to hit any one. At this time Collier was standing right over Casey's pistol and was ordered to shove it out under the bars with his foot, which he did, and thus ended the excitement. During the shooting the other prisoners in the jail were hugging the corners of their cells closely.

On Saturday, November 3, 1888, Judge Parker pronounced the sentence of death on Richard Smith and set the date of execution for Friday, January 25, 1889.

The headline of the *Elevator*, January 25, 1889, read simply "NO. 60." However, it was mistaken; Richard Smith was number fifty-nine. The paper had been mistaken more than once before, sometimes getting the number executed off by as many as four. Presumably they, as others did later, mistook the name George Young Wolf Six-Killer, executed October 10, 1873, to be two people. Nevertheless, fifty-nine or sixty, Richard Smith was just as dead by 1:30 p.m. on January 25.

Smith had accepted the Catholic faith, and on the morning of his last day, after arising early and partaking of a "hearty breakfast," spent the rest of the morning in prayer. He appeared to be resigned to his fate. At 12:30 p.m., Jailor Pettigrew entered the jail, announced that the time had come, and he put the handcuffs on Smith. Smith was then taken into the corridor where the death warrant was read. He was accompanied to the gallows by Rev. Lawrence Smythe where the ceremonies were brief. On the death trap, he was asked by Pettigrew if he had any last words. Smythe handed him a small crucifix and while holding it, he once more declared his ignorance of the killing of Pringle and stated that an innocent man was being hanged. His arms and legs were pinioned, the black mask was placed over his face, the trap was sprung and a drop of eight and a half feet broke his neck. He was pronounced dead in fifteen minutes.

Sources: National Archives; depositions, petitions & telegrams.

Fort Smith Weekly Elevator, August 18, 1888; January 25, 1889.

Alice B. Eads:

First Female Deputy?

By Jerry Akins

“LOCAL WOMAN RELATES TALE OF EARLY DAY” is the headline of the article in the June 13, 1934, edition of *The Southwest American*. Below that reads, “Mrs. Alice Eads, Probably Only Female Field Deputy Under Parker’s Regime, Is Still Hale and Hearty, By Edwin P. Hicks”.

This is a reproduction of that article with comments.

She Rode For Judge Parker

Mrs. Alice B. Eads, a Fort Smith woman now living at 617 South Seventeenth Street, has the unique distinction of having been a bona fide deputy United States Marshal under United States Marshal Dale [Valentine Dell, District Marshal, 1880, 1881, 1882] She has a commission as a deputy marshal bearing the signature of Judge Parker.

Comment: No one living today has seen that commission. Her name, neither Alice Eads nor Alice Stewart, appears on no list of Marshal’s Office employees. No record of her employment is known to exist.

She wasn’t an office deputy. It wasn’t her duty to serve papers. Her job was to locate fugitives, “bad” men, the worse the better, and go with officers and bring them in.

She could shoot a gun, rifle, shotgun or revolver as good as a man, and she had the nerve to stand under fire and send back as good as she got. She carries a couple of buckshot in one of her legs today as a result of one of the skirmishes in which she participated.

One can talk about your Bonnie Park-

ers and your gun “molls” of today. Here is a woman who heard bullets singing about her ears on many an occasion and she was a representative of the federal government at the time, not a fugitive.

The Indian Territory was her working ground. She knew many of the Indians by their first name. She worked for two full years as a deputy marshal and with numerous deputies throughout the section, assisting in the locating and taking of scores of bad men.

She was present at 15 murder cases when Judge Parker, her personal friend by the way, pronounced the sentence, “and may you hang by the neck until you are dead.” She heard Cherokee Bill sentenced, but she did not attend the hanging.

She saw Jack Spaniard, a full blood Cherokee, go to the gallows, but turned away before he dropped. [*Fort Smith Elevator*, March 30, 1888; Jack Spaniard is about one-fourth Cherokee and was born and raised in the Cherokee Nation.] She saw the Buck gang, six of them, [there were five] standing on the gallows, ropes around their neck, but turned away. It wasn’t quite right, she believed, for a person to watch another human being die that way, no matter how much he deserved it.

Husband Is Killed

Her husband, John Stewart, was shot and killed before her eyes by two men, Ed Fulsome, Choctaw Indian, and Jim Hobbs. Fulsome later was captured and hanged, but Hobbs never was located.

She talks of the “skirmish on the ridge” in which a group of bad men came in to shoot up a town. She joined the marshals and

battled them off. There was a brush across the Arkansas river at the Moffett site, in which 10 men attacked the house where she and a group were staying. Bullets flew in a general battle. There it was that she got the two buckshot in her leg.

It was the murder of her husband which brought her into contact with the federal court in Fort Smith and the led to her commission as a deputy.

Her husband operated a store and saloon 50 miles south of Fort Smith, just inside the Arkansas state line. Indians swarmed over the border to Stewart's place. She learned to talk their language. Good and bad men she met there and learned their faces and names, learning their hiding places, for many of them were "on the dodge" from the Parker riders.

Her husband was shot and killed and she was the only eye witness to the slaying.

The Fort Smith Elevator of June 30, 1882, reported, "Stewart's saloon was conveniently located, just on the line between Scott County and the Nation, partly in the Nation and partly in the State."

The New Era, March 16, 1882, reported, "Night had fallen and finding the grocery closed they [Hobbs and Fulsome] began calling for Stewart. Mrs. Stewart, a young woman in delicate health, answered their call, demanding to know their business."

The 1934 Eads interview continues, "The father of Ed Fulsome placed a reward on my head. He sent word among the Choctaws and other Indians that if I were slain it would be worth their while since I was depended on to send his son to the gallows."

The only evidence giving credence to her claim of a reward on her head is a statement in the March 16, 1882, issue of *The New Era*: "From a partial confession of Fulsome it appears that someone in or about Waldron, county seat of Scott County, near which place the murders had been committed, offered him \$750 to slay Stewart who was keeping a grocery store near the line, but the defendant claims he did not accept the offer."

Eads continues: "Consequently my brother and I, Rufus MacRay, had to leave. We were in hiding a lot of the time and had nothing to do but practice shooting. We fired all day long at targets, and we had

a purpose."

Shooting "all day long" seems like an odd way to hide out. Besides the fact that it would attract attention unless they were many miles from civilization, it would require lots of ammunition, which would have to be supplied somehow.

Eads who was described in 1882 as "a young woman in delicate health" goes on:

Anyone who had the nerve to go after bad men could get a commission in those days, for it took nerve. I was just mean enough, I reckon, and the crowd I ran with was mean enough so that I wasn't afraid to take chances.

My work was mainly to scout them out. I worked under Marshal Dale [Valentine Dell] and with Cal Whitson, Bill Ellis, Bert Brown and plenty of other deputies.

Then, two paragraphs down she adds:

I had something of a knack of finding their hiding places, anyhow. Usually my brother rode with me, and frequently I rode alone. I located a good many by tracking their whiskey. They had to have their whiskey.

"Scouting them out" seems like odd work for a woman who would have been very obvious riding alone in the territory. The male deputies sometimes tried to be as inconspicuous as possible, even taking jobs alongside their quarry until an opportune time to arrest them.

The paragraph previous to the "scouting out" paragraph is an outright fabrication. It reads:

I located Bill Busby, who had killed five deputies, led the officers to his hiding place, and was there with my gun out, when he surrendered. He was hanged in Fort Smith. Busby had two girls keeping house for him at his home in the Cherokee Nation. It was through the girls that I found his hiding place.

Fact: William Busby was the son of Shepard Busby, who killed Deputy Barney Connelly when Connelly came to arrest the elder Busby at his home. William Busby, it appears, never left the

Busby home after the killing except to go to the neighbors to tell them of the incident and to find someone to identify Connelly. He and the two women mentioned were there when the marshals came to the scene later that day. Shepard Busby hid out for thirteen days, knowing that he had killed a deputy marshal and believing that other deputies would kill him if they caught him. He sent word that he would surrender to Deputy Marshal Asbell. Connelly's shooting occurred on August 19, 1891, and Busby surrendered thirteen days later to Deputy Marshal Asbell and his posseman Joe Boyd by prearrangement at the home of a friend. William Busby was convicted of manslaughter for his alleged part in the killing and was sentenced to prison for ten years. Only one deputy, Barney Connelly, was killed, not five. All of the foregoing is from official documents: Proceedings before the Commissioner (depositions), court trial transcripts and reports of the *Fort Smith Elevator*. The only truth to Eads' story is that there were two women living with Busby: 22-year-old Tennessee Burns, mother of two of Shepard Busby's children, and Florence Jones, his 14-year-old "fiancé."

Eads also claimed to have located Jackson Crow, who was executed at Fort Smith for murder, and it may have been that she was in the posse that captured him. According to *The Fort Smith Elevator*, Deputy Charles Barnhill and his posse trailed Crow to the Poteau Mountains where his family lived in December 1886. December 1886 was two years later than she claimed to have worked as a deputy.

Alice B. Eads claimed to have "worked for two full years as a deputy marshal" but her stories cover fifteen years, from the death of her husband in August 1881 to the hanging of the Buck gang on July 1, 1896.

Reporters and writers seem to have been anxious to portray women as active field deputies. On January 30, 1898, *The Chicago Sunday Chronicle* ran an article about two young women from Oklahoma Territory in which they stated:

The young women are Miss S. M. Burch and Miss Mamie Fossett. They are of that adventurous class of females who invaded the newly opened territory in search of homesteads. They are young, fairly good

looking, well-educated, fearless and independent. Their duties are by no means confined to keeping Marshal Thompson's books. When they took their oath of office and assumed their duties it was with the distinct understanding that they would serve the Government just as would any other deputy marshal. They were to take the field, serve writs and warrants just as any rude man might be called on to do. And they have been doing this with exceptional success.

The article goes on in the same vein for several columns.

The author of that article apparently was not aware of numerous articles in *The Guthrie Leader* over the years that always referred to Miss S. M. Burch as either a clerk or stenographer in the marshal's office. She once was referred to as "our efficient lady deputy United States marshal." But, apparently, all of the clerks and stenographers were deputized. Miss Burch's sister-in-law, Florence L. Hitchcock Burch, was also a deputy. Florence later wrote her memoirs in which she specifically stated that, although they were deputized, they were not field deputies.

As for Mamie Fossett, the writer must have been privy to information that no one else had. She was the daughter of Chief Deputy William D. Fossett and was made stenographer to Marshal Thompson. She was never listed as an office deputy in the Attorney General's annual reports. (Quarterly of the National Association for Outlaws and Lawmen History Inc.)

So, it appears that Alice B. Eads was a legend in her own mind and the result of a newsman who didn't let facts get in the way of a good story. The "Oklahoma's Female Marshals" appears to be a product of a reporter's overactive imagination.

Sources

National Archives documents; depositions & trial transcripts

The Fort Smith Elevator

The Fort Smith New Era

Oklahombres

Quarterly of the National Association for Outlaws and Lawmen History Inc.

1908 Newspapers

THE SOUTHWEST AMERICAN

July-December 1908

by Wincie Hendricks

Abstracted from microfilm
in the Fort Smith Public Library.

Editor's note: Most spelling, punctuation and grammar
appear as printed in *The Southwest American*.

July 4, 1908

CHIEF HENRY SURRATT ARRESTED FOR ASSAULT

Chief of Police Suratt and Street Commissioner Jerry Kelley mixed things up yesterday morning over the location of some street wagons. An information was made before Justice Edmonson by Kelley charging the chief of police with assault and battery.

The trouble occurred in the presence of Guard Barling who it is claimed placed the chief under arrest, although the warrant was served by a constable. Surratt claims the case comes within the jurisdiction of the police court. Judge Freer refused to take up the case yesterday morning, but will make some disposition of it today.

Kelley claims that the chief of police struck him with an umbrella while the chief declares that Kelley threatened him with the butt of a whip.

The trouble arose over some instructions given Kelley by the chief. The street commissioner resented the orders given him claiming he was not subject to the instructions of the head of the police department.

July 18, 1908

PAY LAST TRIBUTE AT FRIEND'S

Yesterday morning friends to the number of

several hundred gathered at the late residence of Mrs. Sophia Kannady, to pay the last tributes of love and honor to her memory. Not alone from the immediate neighborhood did they come, these friends who had known and loved her for these many years, but from other parts of the state and even points outside the state, kind hearts and loving friends sent testimonials of their affection.

The Right Rev. Dean McPherson of St. John's Episcopal church assisted by the Rev. W.N. Waldrup conducted the services at the house and Rev. McPherson at the cemetery. The pall bearers were J.F. Head, Judge John H. Rogers, John P. Smith, W.J. Johnston, Dr. W.W. Bailey, Dr. J.G. Eberle, H.C. Myers, of Van Buren and W.W. Wheeler of Sallisaw.

July 24, 1908

BIBLE PRINTED OVER 300 YEARS Book in possession of Fort Smith man which is a valuable historic relic

J. Sinclair of Nineteenth street has a Bible in his possession which in all probability has no equal for age in this country. The book has just been received from Belfast, Ireland, and is 309 years old.

On the title page appears the inscription of the printer, "imprinted in London by the deputies of Christopher Barker, printer to the queen's most excellent majesty, 1599."

The book has been well thumbed and throughout copious notes have been made on the margins indicating a careful study research of the various books. Some of the notes can be deciphered. One is to the effect that the Bible in 1737 was the property of Sir John Parr. Although yellow with age the printing is yet quite legible indicating that a high grade of paper and ink had been used. The old Queen Elizabethan style of spelling is used, although it is impossible to

determine the version of the book which precedes that of the St. James.

The Bible has been in the Sinclair family for the past three generations, which covers a period of nearly 200 years. It was sent here by Mr. Sinclair's father, who now resides at Belfast.

August 4, 1908

FROM AULD IRELAND

P.E. McShane brought home from Ireland a fine blackthorne walking stick each for Will McAnley and William Prendergast. They are the real genuine thing and their new possessors pronounce them peaches.

Miss Mary Coulter of the Arcade store and her aunt, Mrs. B. McFarland, will leave today for a three week visit at Host Springs.

August 10, 1908

CHAUNCEY LICK GETS INJUNCTION

Chancellor Bourland has returned to the city and is now holding court in chambers. Yesterday the case of the city against Chauncey Lick charged with maintaining a billboard at the corner of Seventh and A within the fire limits was heard yesterday. Lick, through his attorneys, applied for an order restraining the city from removing the board and in consequence, the court ruled that the ordinance in question did not effect billboards and accordingly enjoined the mayor and chief of police from removing it.

September 22, 1908

**BY OCTOBER 1 WILL BE READY
FOR BIG BUSINESS**

The Fort Smith Vinegar and Cider company, which succeeded to the business of the Oklahoma Vinegar company, will by October 1st, be ready to take care of much new business.

The vinegar and cider department has been kept

in operation and the shipping department has taken care of all orders.

As soon as the new company arranges all details, they will return to work about forty employes who have been idle for several weeks, and ten traveling men will go on the road.

A car load of vinegar stock has been received and shipments of other supplies are on the road.

Receiver Quent Ware is rapidly clearing up the affairs of the old company. His statement for the first twenty days shows a profitable period. He is enthusiastic over the prospects for the fall and winter trade, and when the traveling men start out the plant will be prepared to receive all orders and fill them promptly.

October 21, 1908

HANDSOME NEW CAR

It was built by the Fort Smith Car Works

Car No. 18 is a new, double-truck car which the Fort Smith Light and Traction company will begin operating on its lines today. It is the first electric car ever run in this city in which a large portion of the woodwork was taken from trees grown in Fort Smith, sawed in Fort Smith and finished and put into a car in this city.

November 5, 1908

FUNERAL OF R.J. ABBOTT AT 8 O'CLOCK

Robert J. Abbott, one of Fort Smith's oldest pioneers and prominently identified with the growth of the city, died yesterday morning at the home of his son-in-law, Harry Salls. Death came after an illness of nearly three years.

The deceased was born in Coldwater, Mich., 86 years ago, and in early life removed to Texas. He settled at Hockley, where he conducted a general store and was postmaster. At the close of the Civil war, he took a load of cotton to New York, meeting with difficult and dangerous obstacles in his travels across the country to a seaport. He arrived in New York with his cargo and commanded a big price for the staple which at that time was very much in

demand. Returning to Texas, Mr. Abbott resided in Houston and in 1882 removed to Kansas. Seven years later he removed to Fort Smith. Harry Salls, his son-in-law, coming to this city at the same time.

The decedent was one of the promoters with Mr. Salls of the Fort Smith roller mills, and upon the organization of the company, Mr. Abbott was elected secretary and treasurer. In his business life, Mr. Abbott commanded the respect of his associates by the probity of his life, integrity and loyalty to his city.

Decedent is survived by a brother and sister, they being the last of a family of twenty-two children. The funeral will be held Thursday morning at 8 o'clock from the residence of Harry Salls, and Rev. McKay will officiate. Interment will take place in Houston, Tex., where the wife and daughter of the deceased are buried.

November 6, 1908

STREET 'CAFES' WILL NOT BE REMOVED

The ordinance providing for the removal of lunch stands from Garrison avenue is peacefully sleeping in Alderman Johnston's grip. What is more the probabilities are that the measure will sleep for some time, if Alderman Johnston is expected to report it out.

According to Mr. Johnston, the lunch stands have a place in the city that cannot be filled by restaurants.

He cites instances where poor people who would be unable to satisfy their hunger in cafés, are able to purchase sandwiches at lunch stands at reasonable cost and for that reason will not support the abolishment of the stands.

November 14, 1908

FORT SMITH PRODUCTS Raspberries and Roses Growing in Gardens in November

Yesterday P.A. Ball of the American National bank picked ripe raspberries and an armful of

rosebuds, which were growing in his open garden. While raspberries are a rarity at this season of the year, there are hundreds of gardens where roses have been in full bloom up to the present time, but Thursday's frost nipped thousands of buds.

Mr. Ball's roses and raspberries were shipped by A.S. Huey of the Fort Smith Light and Traction company to his wife at Chicago to show her what a delightful winter climate is to be enjoyed in Fort Smith.

November 19, 1908

BUILDING PERMITS SHOW GREAT BUILDING ACTIVITY

A Gratifying number of building permits have been issued by City Clerk Sparks in the past two weeks, the most important being a permit to J.L. Ludeau to build a sanitarium on North Eleventh street to cost \$7000.

Other permits issued were:

Herman Cook, one story, four-room house, on lot 6 block 11, North C street, \$800.

W.E. Lucey, 1615 Catholic avenue, five room frame dwelling, \$1,450.

T.F. Grober, North I and Twenty first street, brick storehouse, 23x60, \$1,200.

James T. Hoeny, two story twelve-room dwelling, frame, Oakland Place \$4,000.

W.H. Cole, two story, eight-room dwelling, Lot 16 and 17, block 8, B. and S. addition, \$3,500.

J.H. Limberg, stone storeroom, 25x40, North Seventh street, \$1,100.

H.N. Hall, one story, six room frame dwelling, Oakland Place, \$1,900.

F.N. Masters, two story, eight-room dwelling, North Fourteenth street, \$2,000.

J.F. Henley, two, one story frame dwellings. Of four rooms each, on lots 9 and 10, Hunters addition, to cost, each, \$600.

Greer Brothers, one story brick, 35x85 store room, lots 1 and 2, block 463, Reserve, \$1,500.

S.E. Donahue, one story frame dwelling, five room, North Sixth street, \$2,000.

Eva M. Mellette, two story brick storeroom, 50x90 on Rogers Avenue between Fifth and Sixth streets, \$6,000.

December 11, 1908

**WHAT LITTLE CHILDREN WANT
FROM OLD SANTA CLAUS**

Dear Santa Claus:--I am a little girl 6 years old. I want a nice large doll And a doll swing. I want an automobile that will not scare horses or run over folks. Two white rocking chairs and one straight chair for my dollie. I want a picture book, a shopping bag for auntie, an umbrella for mamma, a pair of gloves for papa, some oranges and some chocolate candy. I hope you will take all the poor little children something nice. Please bring a Chinese umbrella for dollie.

KATHRYN McGEE,
614 North 14th St.

Dear Santa Claus:--Please bring me a pair of pretty bunnies, a guinea pig, and a bantam rooster, and some books and nuts. I live in Midland Heights.

Your friend,
HOWARD

Dear Santa Claus:--Every Christmas I have been hoping that you would bring me a Shetland pony, and I'm going to look for it again this year. I am 11 years old, and my papa told me that if I was a good boy I would get a pony sometime. I want to tell you that I am good, and my dear mamma will tell you so.

Your friend,
BOBBIE

December 20, 1908

MCLEOD-KNOBLE WEDDING

On Wednesday afternoon, December 16th at 5 o'clock at the Knoble home on North Eighth street, a very quiet wedding occurred when Miss Hazel Knoble was united in marriage to Mr. Angus A. McLeod. Only the immediate families were present. The ceremony was performed by the brother of Mrs. Knoble, the Rev. Mr. Thomas Hyatt Tatlow of Edina, Mo., assisted by Dr. M. Mcn. McKay.

The bride was handsomely gowned in an olive green traveling suit. Immediately after the ceremony Mr. and Mrs. McLeod left on the Cannon Ball for a trip to St. Louis and Chicago.

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 * - a portrait of the person(s) named is on page indicated.
 (- - -) - for such as title, marital status, degree, etc.
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