



# The JOURNAL



## The Butterfield Overland Mail Company

*The Road From Fort Smith*



**Sarah Ridge  
Paschal Pix**

*Between Two  
Worlds*



**Victory Loan  
Flying Circus**

*Spectacle 'The  
Greatest'*



**Nicol Wintory**

*From Berlin To  
Fort Smith, Part II*



**Richard  
Kerens**

*A Giant In  
Transportation*



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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.

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Journal Editor & Co-Founder 1977-2004

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# The JOURNAL

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**COVER:** Main photo: William H. Buckley's design for a centennial commemorative stamp. Courtesy of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

**Lower photos, from left:**

- ❖ Sarah Ridge Paschal at about age forty. Courtesy of Paul Ridenour and McNeir Family Collection.
- ❖ Lt. Charles Potter (right) confers with his lead mechanic regarding the status of the 50th Photo Section Jenny in Fort Smith on May 5, 1919. Franklin O. Carroll via Alan L. Roesler.
- ❖ Nicol Wintory in a Ross Motor Company shirt c. 1941. Courtesy of Nic Wintory.
- ❖ A dignified success radiates from this photograph of the white bearded Richard C. Kerens archived in the collections of the Missouri History Museum.

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# In Memoriam

## Art Bradley Martin, M.D.

December 11, 1917 - January 27, 2013



**DR. ART MARTIN RECEIVING AN ARKANSAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION AWARD** from Dr. Jeannie Whayne, professor of history at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville.

**A**rt Bradley Martin, M. D., founder of the Fort Smith Trolley Museum and initiator of, with wife Amelia Martin, *The Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society* died in Fort Smith on January 27, 2013. Dr. Martin was ninety-five years old at the time of his death, being born in Greenwood, Arkansas, on December 11, 1917. Dr. Martin was a World War II veteran serving as a battalion surgeon with General George Patton's Third Army in Europe. Returning to Fort Smith after the war, he became a medical fixture in this city, receiving numerous awards recognizing his service to the community, to the area hospitals, and above all, to his patients.

The city and its people have been and are enriched through the dedication, vision, and hard work of Dr.

Martin and Amelia, who died in 2004. The Trolley Museum has expanded to its present operation and organization and is today an essential part of the tourism and student learning industries in Fort Smith. *The Journal* is an award-winning publication with contributing writers from all parts of the country, local editors, dozens of volunteers, and hundreds of members.

For these profound contributions to the cultural and physical health of this city, we recognize and salute Dr. Art B. Martin and wish the very best for his surviving family, son Bradley, daughter Nancy, son Tommy, and daughter Marilyn, and the grandchildren and great-grandchildren who will miss him but will be, perhaps, consoled by the continuing legacies of Dr. Martin and his wife, Amelia.



# News & Opportunities

## Mark Your Calendars!

Fort Smith Historical Society's  
Spring quarterly meeting will be  
Wednesday, April 10, 2013

5:30-7:30 p.m.

At the Fort Smith Public Library, Main Branch,  
Community Room.

This is the board member and officer selection meeting and all members of the Society and the general public are welcomed to attend.

\*\*\*

## Experience Arkansas History At One Of The State's Premier Events!

Arkansas Historical Association

73rd Annual Conference

in Helena-West Helena, Arkansas

April 11-13, 2013

Join us every spring for the Arkansas Historical Association annual conference. Hosted by a different community each year, conference events include scholarly presentations, receptions, and special tours. Make plans to attend this conference to learn more about the state's rich heritage. This year's theme, "Claiming Freedom," continues the AHA's look at the Civil War in Arkansas. For information contact Donna Ludlow via email at [dludlow@uark.edu](mailto:dludlow@uark.edu).

\*\*\*

## Fort Smith Chosen *True West* Magazine's Top True Western Town Of The Year 2013

For the eighth year, the sixty-year-old monthly publication has named its top ten True Western Towns. "True West is one of the best sources for travel and tourism for fans of the Old West," says David Turk, historian for the U.S. Marshals Service. "It's been considered



one of the very best western history magazines for many years."

There are thousands of great towns in the American West that exemplify the spirit and dedication of the pioneers who built and developed them. However, ten of them stand out, and they are the True Western Towns of 2013, according to the February 2013 issue of *True West* magazine.

The designation is based upon an extensive application, which was completed by a committee of individuals most familiar with how Fort Smith has preserved its history and heritage. The credit for Fort Smith's selection goes to many individuals and organizations according to Claude Legris, executive director of the Fort Smith Advertising and Promotion Commission. "Our community has always placed a high priority on preserving our colorful past and making sure the appreciation is passed on to future generations. We have 'branded' Fort Smith with our frontier heritage, it's a natural brand for Fort Smith," says Legris.

"Thanks are largely due to the largely unpaid and often anonymous army of preservationists and historical society members who identify, maintain, and restore the buildings and artifacts of those days. We...as well as our children and grandchildren...have the chance to marvel at these irreplaceable relics where so much of our fabled history took place."

"The accolades for this accomplishment belong to the hundreds who have made our heritage a priority for many years," said Legris. "Miss Polly Crews, who was a member of the Arkansas Parks Recreation and Travel Commission, told us for years that, 'Our future was in our past,' and as usual, Miss Polly was right." Crews, who passed away six years ago was a passionate advocate for tourism, particularly in Western Arkansas.

\*\*\*

## Fort Smith's Trail Of Historical Downtown Plaques

Fort Smith has twelve historical plaques within walking distance in our downtown area. All plaques are equipped with QR Codes, which allow smart phone users to scan the code that will open their browsers to online slide shows with audio narration. The plaques hold an amazing wealth of Fort Smith history that dates

back almost 200 years.  
Begin your quest to find  
out more about Fort Smith!

See the map on the  
inside back cover of this  
Journal. For copies of the  
color brochure containing  
the map, visit the Fort  
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Visitors Bureau, 2 North  
B Street, Fort Smith,  
Arkansas, or call 1-800-  
637-1477.



**PLAQUE FOR NORTH  
SECOND STREET IN 1860**

\*\*\*

## Fort Smith's Historic Oak Cemetery Presents Tales Of The Crypt

**Sunday, April 28**

**Guided Tours begin at 2 and 3 p.m.**

**1401 South Greenwood Avenue,  
at corner of Dodson Avenue**

See re-enactments by  
actors in costume, telling the  
life stories of some of our  
famous and infamous Fort  
Smith characters.

This is a walking event,  
rain or shine. Be sure to  
wear comfortable walking  
shoes. Parking is available at  
Ballman School, Creekmore Park, and along Thirty-  
second Street. Shuttle buses will be running.

For more information call 479-784-1006.  
[www.fortsmithparks.com](http://www.fortsmithparks.com).



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## Notice

If anyone has and would share a photo of Governor  
Bill Clinton dancing with his wife Hillary on Garrison  
Avenue following his election in 1990, please contact  
the Pebley Center, UAFS, (479) 788-7213 or email  
Mary Jeanne Black at [MBlack3086@aol.com](mailto:MBlack3086@aol.com).

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# History Conference Held At UAFS

Topic For Fifth Annual Event Was  
*Women Of The Southwest Frontier: From Settlement To Suffrage*

By Martha Siler

**T**he fifth annual Fort Smith History Conference was held in the Reynolds Room of the Smith Pendergraft Campus Center at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith on Jan. 26, 2013. More than sixty attendees from across the region gathered to take part in the workshop, which was sponsored by HStorytellers Interpretive Services, the Fort Smith Historical Society, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Department of History and Social Sciences of the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith.

Participants were treated to a keynote address by Peggy Lloyd of the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives. Mrs. Lloyd spoke of women who settled the Arkansas frontier and the challenges they faced. She gave examples of these challenges through her discussion of a free woman of color and of a female landowner in antebellum Arkansas.

Scholars from throughout the region presented on a variety of topics such as life on the frontier, soiled doves, women in the armed services and period dance.

The following is a list of presentations:

- ❖ Dr. Russell Lawson, "Senora Berlandier: Life on the Northern Mexican Frontier."
- ❖ Daniel Maher, "Myra Maybelle Shirley's Transition to Belle Starr."
- ❖ Randy Smith, "Women's Funerary Statues from Historic Fairview Cemetery in Van Buren, Arkansas."
- ❖ Sara Griffiths, "Arkansas Soiled Doves: Socioeconomics and Prostitution in the Early 1800s."
- ❖ Written by Kimberly Robinson and read by Dr. Cammie Sublette, "Mrs. Hiram W. Jones, Quaker woman."
- ❖ Kisa Clark, "Kate Richards O'Hare: Socialist, Activist, and Educator."
- ❖ Dr. Susan Simkowski, "Women of the Military Frontier."
- ❖ Josh Williams, Curator of Historic Washington State Park, 19th Century Re-enactment Dance instruction.

Six hours of professional development were approved for area educators, under the direction of Dr. Curtis Varnell through Arch Ford Educational Co-operative of Western Arkansas. For the fifth year, through the generous support of sponsors, the conference committee was able to offer the workshop free to all students and to include three meals for attendees, while keeping



**SARA GRIFFITHS PRESENTS HER PAPER** on "Arkansas Soiled Doves: Socioeconomics and Prostitution in the Early 1800s" at the fifth annual Fort Smith History Conference on January 26, 2013.



**PEGGY LLOYD AND OTHER ATTENDEES** enjoy a nineteenth-century style dance at the conference.

conference fees low.

According to conference co-chairs and HStorytellers founders Leita Spears and Martha Siler, plans for the sixth annual Fort Smith History Conference—to be held on January 25, 2014, at UAFS—are under way and topics for a theme are being discussed. For more information on past conferences and on the 2014 conference, please visit [www.fortsmithhistoryconference.webs.com](http://www.fortsmithhistoryconference.webs.com).



# Nicol L. Wintory

*“From Berlin to Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1938-39”*

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## PART II

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Interviews conducted for the Pebley Center Oral History Program, University of Arkansas Fort Smith

Interviewee: Nicol L. Wintory

Interviewers: Billy Higgins and William Hargis

Interviews conducted at the Museum of Fort Smith History

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*Part II consists of two interviews conducted in 2010. Part I appeared in The Journal, 36, 2 (September 2012): 5-21.*

### Interview No. 3

**Billy Higgins:** Well we were back in Berlin, you were talking about the end of 1938 and there were motorcades. You had actually talked about the Zionist youth organization that you were in, and so we know in 1938 was the “Night of the Broken Glass” [*Kristallnacht*].

**Nicol Wintory:** Yea, we left a month ahead of that.

**BH:** OK, let’s start right there then. Nineteen thirty-eight was quite a year in Berlin, Germany, was it not?

**NW:** Right. In fact, in October of that year, a notice appeared in the Berlin newspapers that all Jews, regardless of nationality, had to turn in their passports, which obviously would have made us prisoners of the state because without a passport, you couldn’t go anywhere. So, my father had already been in Denmark since June. We went ahead and joined him there. We bought round-trip tickets and ended up going to Copenhagen. To make a long story short, we stayed there for seven months awaiting permission from the United States to enter on an immigrant visa. While we were living in this boarding house, we met this lovely American couple. He was a native Dane, his wife was an American who lived in Pasadena, California. They came there every other year because the Dane’s mother happened to live across the street from this particular inn where we were staying.

We became very friendly with them because my little siblings and their little boys were about the same age, and they played together, usually under my supervision. We were really sweating it out because everyone in Europe was fully aware of the fact that a war was going to happen. The United States just didn’t seem to get the point. Maybe the government did, but the man on the street didn’t seem to realize it.

**BH:** Do you remember the name of this American couple?

**NW:** Yes. Mr. and Mrs. Sven, S-V-E-N, Gantzel, G-A-N-T-Z-E-L. I forget her given name, but they were just wonderful people, and since I was fluent in English, I



**THE MOORE-MCCORMICK FREIGHTER**, Scanyork, carrying ninety passengers in September 1939. Nicol and family sailed on the same ship from Denmark earlier in 1939.

*(Photo used with permission from Corbis Images.)*

was sort of the intermediary between my family and them because my mother spoke some English but she wasn’t fluent enough that she could carry on a casual conversation, and my father spoke not a word. Anyway, finally the word came from the U.S. embassy to the city that our permission has been granted to emigrate, so we were just enthusiastic because we knew this was the high point we had been waiting on. So my dad immediately looked around for the cheapest passage he could find, and he found one on a Moore-McCormick liner called *Scanyork*, which was going to leave within not too many days. So we wired our family in New York to send us passage, and they wired back and said, “Well that kind of money, we just haven’t got.” Keep in mind, we had a family of six with us.

**BH:** And when you left Berlin to go to Copenhagen, were you able to take any saving or any of your valuables?

**NW:** Each was one of us was permitted to take two dollars and fifty cents, equivalent to ten Marks.

**BH:** And that was it?

**NW:** That was it.

**BH:** You didn’t figure a way around that?

**NW:** When you are trying to escape—

**BH:** You don't want to antagonize.

**NW:** You don't want to do anything to possibly get you in trouble and get you detained. So all you were allowed to take with you was ten German Marks.

**BH:** How did you survive Copenhagen?

**NW:** Family in New York. It was very inexpensive living. So anyway, the big day comes, and we are authorized to leave. There were some other complications even at that point which I don't think I need to go in to because I—well, I might mention it. Well, my family was cleared by the American doctor that examined all of us, because if you had certain diseases, you could not enter this country. So he immediately checked us all out, and he checked me and found out that I had some kind of an eye condition that barred me from entering the United States. Luckily, through some friends of my father, some Danes he knew from his business days, we contacted a university professor who examined me, a medical professor, and found that I had a mild case of conjunctivitis, which was kind of like a cold in the eye. He gave me some eye drops, and I was scheduled to see the American doctor a week later. [By then] I was already cured. So the communicable disease that he claimed I had was just nothing. We were permitted to get out.

Unfortunately, the family just did not have enough money to pay for our passage. Mrs. Gantzel came to me the next morning after we had gotten permission and said, "Yesterday your father was just on top of the world, full of enthusiasm and ready to leave, and today he looks like he has lost his last friend. What happened?"

I said, "Well, we got permission to sail, but we don't have the money to get there."

"Oh," she says, "That explains it. Well I am so sorry for you all. Maybe something will work out for you." That was all. That was at breakfast.

At lunchtime, she calls me over to where they were sitting. She says, "I have talked to my husband, and we have decided to pay for your passage." Now keep in mind, these are total strangers. They were Americans visiting, and we just happened to live at the same boarding house.

**BH:** Were they New Yorkers?

**NW:** No, they were from California. Pasadena. So I said, "Well that is just amazing." I told my father, and he could not believe it.

**BH:** A great act of generosity!

**NW:** Yes, these people didn't know us from Adam, and they paid for our passage. My father kept thinking these people came all the way from Pasadena to Denmark. That's a long, long ways to travel. We didn't have those super-duper airplanes in those days. You had to get to New York and then get to Denmark. I don't know how they came or any of that. Well, we had become so friendly with them. In fact, they owned a little house on the north of the island that Copenhagen sits on, and I spent a couple of nights with them there on the beach.

So anyway, we get to the United States, and we ask

around, wondering about these Gantzels, and we found out that her maiden name was Kellogg and her family made Rice Krispies. They could have bought the boat.

**BH:** And Battle Creek!

**NW:** To her, it was absolutely nothing. Her husband managed her estate.

**BH:** Was she about the same age as your mother?

**NW:** I think she was somewhat younger. Mother was 39 at that time. She had her babies somewhat normally. I was twelve years older or almost thirteen years older than my siblings. So I think they were probably in their late twenties, early thirties.

**BH:** You talked about what a remarkable woman—that came through about your mother—and I was thinking perhaps that is where the friendship was.

**NW:** No. The friendship was with me particularly because of the fact that we could communicate so well. And I was supervising my little siblings, and they all played together, so I became the babysitter for all of them. Once we got here and learned about the Kellogg family, we could readily see why they were able to pay for our passage without any problem.

**BH:** So, you went to your father and told him the good news.

**NW:** Not to worry.

**BH:** And your father had what sort of reaction?

**NW:** First of all, he couldn't believe that—

**BH:** Did he grab you and hug you?

**NW:** Well, we weren't that kind of family. Mother might have hugged me, but Dad would maybe shake hands. [laughing] We were never great huggers, and I am still not to this day, and I am having to get used to it because it seems that in the South, everyone wants to hug everybody. [laughing] And I have never been much of a hugger.

**BH:** But he showed his delight.

**NW:** So anyway, we embarked on this ship. It took thirteen days to get from Copenhagen, by way of Boston, to New York. We were not permitted to leave the ship while it was docked in Boston. However, I had gotten friendly with the radio operator, who happened to be Jewish, and he decided that I needed to see Boston. So he and I smartly walked off the crew gangplank and spent the day in Boston. He was off [that day], and he showed me Boston.

**BH:** Nic, do you happen to remember his name?

**NW:** No.

**BH:** Do you remember what you saw the first time you set foot in America?

**NW:** Yes, well they were all decorating for some kind of Easter event. This was in April of '39. That is when we left Denmark.

**BH:** OK. Seven months, you said. In the meantime, when you got to Copenhagen and before you set sail, things really got bad in Berlin for Jews.

**NW:** After Kristallnacht, everything really went to hell.

**BH:** And so that actually occurred a month or so after

you left.

**NW:** That's right. That's the reason whenever they talk about when they want someone to talk about the Holocaust, I always feel somewhat awkward, because, compared to the people who served in the concentration camps and were exposed to some of the worst conditions, I really left before that happened. So while I lost an aunt and a cousin and a great-aunt to the Holocaust and saw the onslaught of it, the beginning of it, I was really not in it to the extent that, for example, Elie Wiesel or some of the other people who were actually in concentration camps.

**BH:** Rafael Lemkin, whose family went there. Are you familiar with that name?

**NW:** Yes, I have heard that name. I always caution everyone in that regard that I can tell the beginnings of it, but it really started after I left.

**BH:** Before October 1938, when you were on the streets in Berlin, and you talked about that, or going to school, did you have to wear any distinctive clothing?

**NW:** No, that wasn't put in to effect until later. You know the yellow patch and all of that business. That started after we left. See, that's what I mean.

**BH:** Well, you had mentioned the dentist across the street had to write—

**NW:** Well, that was different, because they put a swastika on his nameplate, but he wouldn't have worn anything. He was a good Lutheran, as I told you. So he never even lived to see those days.

**BH:** But nevertheless, if you stayed, you would have had to give up your passport, and when you left, you had to leave your wealth behind you.

**NW:** Everything was left behind. In fact, we walked out of the house, each one of us with a suitcase, and mother didn't lock the door. And I said, "Mother, you forgot to lock the door," and she says, "Why? We're not coming back." It is just like you walk out of your house tonight, and you're gone. You don't lock the door. Why? Because everything that is in there was just left.

**BH:** The trigger [for your sudden departure] was that your father and mother heard that you were going to have to surrender your passports.

**NW:** Well, that was why we left.

**BH:** And you figured then that you would be prisoners of the state.

**NW:** Right.

**BH:** And some of that had to do with his experience in the 1920s trying to get citizenship [inaudible]

**NW:** You know, we were leaving, you remember me telling you, on Austrian passports, which the Nazis didn't even know we had.

**BH:** So in that respect, you had experience in these matters, and you knew it was going to get worse.

**NW:** We fully expected it to. Right, right. I am not trying to imply I could forecast Krystallnacht. I had no idea that was going to happen, but I knew things weren't going to get

any easier.

**BH:** When you were in Copenhagen and news of that came, can you remember the discussion that you had?

**NW:** No, I really don't.

**BH:** It must have been sickening or terrifying.

**NW:** We were safe at that point, and I was concentrating more on where I was living and getting to the United States and all of that. To me, I had kind of left Germany behind.

**BH:** And you weren't experiencing in Denmark, in that seven months, any anti-Semitism or—

**NW:** None. Danes, they are great people. I understand that there is now some kind of Nazi movement, but I understand they have sequestered it. The Danes themselves are the most generous people in the world. The nicest, warmest, most helpful, kindest. I just loved it in Denmark.

**BH:** And their language is essentially German, right?

**NW:** It is a Germanic language, but it is not like that if you speak German you can understand it.

**BH:** Oh really? That is what I am driving at. So you had to learn that language, too?

**NW:** Yes. I did it by submerging in it and reading words and buying a newspaper. There are still things that are interesting and still confusing in learning the language. If you pick up a newspaper, and it says in Danish, "Krigs Tilstand," when you read that as a German, it means, "Cessation of War." But the "Til" is not "Stil," it's "Til," and that translates to "Zustand," which means "Condition of War." So you could get readily confused if you don't know where to divide a word.

**BH:** It's a very good example. Those little nuances can make all of the difference.

**NW:** Exactly. And there are some words, for example, the word "child," which in German is "kind," K-I-N-D, and in Danish, it's "barn," B-A-R-N, so it's not like they are all the same. Unless you really learn it, there are many, many similarities.

**BH:** OK, so you and the radio operator stepped ashore in Boston.

**NW:** Right. I had a lot of fun with him. I had coffee and donuts for the first time in my life. He introduced me to that.

**BH:** And you are like seventeen or eighteen at that time.

**NW:** I had already had my sixteenth birthday. When I left, I was fifteen, and by that time, I had turned sixteen.

**BH:** Do you remember any of the other passengers on the ship?

**NW:** Not particularly. I had already learned how to play bridge when I was thirteen, so my dad and I partnered and played bridge against some other people that were on the passage. The biggest thing that I remember, that you know, we were on our way to New York at the beginning of the 1939 World's Fair. Then we stopped in Gdansk, which is a Polish port city, before we had gotten on. They took on the band that was going to play in the Polish pavilion in the World's Fair in New York.

**BH:** So you got to hear the polkas on the way over.



[laughing]

**NW:** They entertained us. However, what I did most of the time was play ping-pong with them. But they were fun people. Not many people could speak anything that I could understand.

**BH:** So this is actually a freighter, not a passenger ship?

**NW:** Right, well it was a freighter that carried seventy-five passengers.

**BH:** And a crew of?

**NW:** I have no idea. The crew stayed in the Foc's'le.

**BH:** Foc's'le, that's the front part of the ship. [laughing]

**NW:** The forecastle.

**BH:** So you got back onboard, and you wound up in New York harbor.

**NW:** Actually in Jersey City. In the Hudson. It is just across from Manhattan. That was the home of the Moore-McCormick lines.

**BH:** Did you, on the way in to port, see the Statue of Liberty.

**NW:** Oh sure, we passed it coming in. We saw it all. Ellis Island, the whole thing. But we didn't have to stop at Ellis Island. That was no longer being used. When we arrived in Jersey City, our family had awaited our arrival and took us by motorcade to New York City, across the river.

**BH:** What do you mean by "motorcade"?

**NW:** Well, there were several, a bunch of people. They couldn't all come in one car.

**BH:** You had that many relatives?

**NW:** Oh yes, we had a bunch of relatives. First of all, I had two uncles and their families, plus we had older relatives.

**BH:** These were your father's brothers?

**NW:** Yes.

**BH:** And their name was Wintory also?

**NW:** Well no, their name was Weinberger. That was our names. We were the only ones who changed anything. Everybody wants to know why, and I say, "Unfortunately, the one you would have to ask died nearly forty years ago, and that was my mother." I think she was seasick and dreamed that up; although, I would be less than honest if I didn't say that I was tickled to death once we got to Fort Smith that we had changed the name, because there was another family by that name.

**BH:** I was going to say I knew a Louis Weinberger, but you weren't related in any way, just the same name. Weinberger actually means what?

**NW:** Nothing. Well it would actually mean, I guess, someone from a wine mountain. For example, my relatives that moved to Israel changed their name to Carmi, which is from Mount Carmel, which is a big wine region in Israel, so Carmi would mean the same thing. Mother just thought that name sounded German. She has often been accused of trying to get rid of it because it sounded Jewish, but I can assure you that had nothing in the world to do with it. She wouldn't even be that devious to think about in those terms.

She felt it sounded German, and she didn't want anything ever again to remind her of Germany, which is funny, in retrospect, because she and I enjoyed speaking German to each other. Not that she wasn't fluent in English at that time. Although my wife at that time used to say that she spoke "Genglish," that she would start off in German, switch into English and back to German and back to English. Every once in a while my wife would punch me and say, "Now what was that last part?" I think she did that on purpose.

**BH:** You told us last time about trying to find a job in New York City.

**NW:** Well, I did find one with some relatives and worked for a little while. And then, of course, my father decided, the family wouldn't let him go to work because he didn't speak English. I am very close to my relatives, so I don't want to place blame, but the thing was that none of them spoke English either. But anyway, my father decided he was not going to be dependent on alms, so he took off to an organization called Hias, H-I-A-S, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which was formed in the 1880s when two-thirds of American Jews immigrated into the United States from Eastern Europe. The early immigration was in the 1850s from central Europe, and then in the late 1880s-90s until 1924 were all Eastern European Jews.

**BH:** And from the Ukraine and Russia.

**NW:** Then, of course, the McCarren-Walters Act was passed. It was the first official anti-Semitic act passed by the United States Senate, which was designed to stop that immigration, and it effectively did. Now, if you were British, you could come to this country whenever you wanted. But if you were Eastern European or if it turned out that you were German or Jewish and wanted to come to this country when Hitler came [to power], it was very difficult. It was enacted in 1924, and to the best of my knowledge, it is still in the books. It wasn't that you were totally shut out. They put such strong numerical limits on immigrants where they didn't really want to get them from that it was hard to get out.

**BH:** Your dad decides to leave New York City?

**NW:** Right. He goes to this Hias, and they say if you want to leave with children, there is one community that we know of that is looking to give a start to a family in the United States, and that is in a town called Fort Smith, Arkansas.

**BH:** They were doing more of that in Little Rock because of the size. I think Blake and other people have worked on that some.

**NW:** Little Rock had nothing in the world to do with this. I don't know how these names came to Hias, because at that time, Fort Smith had a local rabbi, and maybe he was instrumental in contacting them and telling them about being willing to give a family a start.

**BH:** So your father said, "Alright"?

**NW:** Yes, he just accepted it without knowing where Arkansas was or where Fort Smith was. But anyway, my



**THE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILROAD DEPOT** in Fort Smith at which the Wintory family arrived in the summer of 1939.

(Photo from Janie Glover Collection and used with permission of the Pebley Center, Boreham Library, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith)

uncle and family in New York were tickled to death to buy us one-way tickets [laughing] from New York City to Fort Smith, Arkansas.

**BH:** On the train?

**NW:** We arrived at the Kansas City Southern Depot on Rogers Avenue, which is where the hotel sits now, on July 8, 1939. The temperature was 104 degrees. Mother, who was a very large, obese woman, stepping off of that air-conditioned train, I thought she was going to have a melt-down on the platform there. [laughing] I mean, it took your breath away. They kept those trains cold. And we stepped off of that onto that concrete, no cover overhead or anything. It was brutal. I mean, to me a sixteen-year-old boy, I couldn't care less. My father loved hot weather, so it was mother. The little ones, they didn't care.

**BH:** There were six of you; you had. . .

**NW:** I had three siblings, there were six of us. By that time my brother had turned three.

**BH:** And his name?

**NW:** Michael. And my sister had turned two.

**BH:** And her name?

**NW:** Well, her name was Cora, C-O-R-A. And my little

sister, by that time, she was one and a half. My brother was already close to being four, and my sister was close to being three, and the little one was one and a half.

**BH:** And her name?

**NW:** Petra. They are all still living. My brother lives in, outside of Phoenix. My oldest sister lives in Denver. My youngest sister lives in California. She just recently moved to a new place.

**BH:** So you stepped off just a little to the east of here.

**NW:** Where the Holiday Inn City Center sits. Many years afterwards, even when trains quit pulling in there, Railway Express had its office there.

**BH:** That was what it was when I remember it.

**NW:** That was still true in the '60s. The congregation had rented a home. We were met by twenty-two members of the congregation. They, by car, took us from the railroad station to our new home on 212 North Twenty-second Street, which is now the Northside parking lot. And they had rented this two-story home, which was a pretty nice house. Rent was twenty-five dollars a month. The kids had their bedrooms, and the parents had their bedroom, and I slept on the upstairs sleeping porch, which in the summertime

was too hot and wintertime was too cold, but it was home. I began to catch on to American football.

**BH:** What was the first name that you learned in Fort Smith from these twenty-two people who met you?

**NW:** I can't remember who met us. At the time, they were all strangers.

**BH:** Men and women?

**NW:** Well, actually at the station they were mostly men.

**BH:** Anyone your age at the station?

**NW:** Not at that time. There were five of us Jewish boys who were all very close in age. Unfortunately, one of them I lost track of, two of them are dead, and two of them are alive. The two that I was closest to are both dead.

**BH:** What were their names?

**NW:** Maurice Kasten. His parents had a home on Grand Avenue. There was Bert Lieberstein. His father had a store on the north side of Garrison Avenue between Fourth and Fifth streets.

**BH:** What kind of store was that?

**NW:** Family apparel, a little bit of everything. I have heard of several Jewish families who had stores like that.

**BH:** You begin to go to the temple?

**NW:** Well, right. Mother didn't.

**BH:** I was going to ask, "Did she get reconnected to religious life?" But she didn't?

**NW:** No. Never did.

**BH:** Where was the temple then?

**NW:** North Eleventh and E Street. It was finally torn down when it was bought by the Lutheran church. It's an empty lot now.

**BH:** The first one I remember, maybe the only one after that, was the one on Thirty-ninth Street. Is that where the congregation moved after Eleventh and E?

**NW:** North Forty-seventh Street.

**BH:** I mean North Forty-seventh Street. Right.

**NW:** That was built in the '50s, occupied in 1953, I think. The other building was condemned.

**BH:** It was built by the Jewish congregation and not taken over from the—

**NW:** It was built by the congregation.

**BH:** And so there was a rabbi at the time in town?

**NW:** Oh yes, there had been long before then.

**BH:** Do you happen to remember his name, the one who was there?

**NW:** Yes, Sam Teitelbaum. In fact, he died not too long ago. T-E-I-T-E-L-B-A-U-N. I don't know when he came here, but I know he was here in '36 and '37.

**BH:** In April, you're in Copenhagen, and in July, you're in Fort Smith?

**NW:** Exactly.

**BH:** That's a whirlwind.

**NW:** We stayed in New York for a few months.

**BH:** That's a big change in short period of time.

**NW:** The fondest memory I have, when I opened the blinds out of my bunk in the train, we had stopped, and there

was a lot of shaking going on, and I couldn't figure out what it was. We were in Chester, where they disconnected one of the engines because to haul it over the mountain.

**BH:** Yes, you needed it.

**NW:** When I raised the blinds, I saw this wagon pulled by a mule with this farmer in overalls unloading big cans of milk. [laughing] Now, when you talk about a city boy, raised in a city of 4.5 million, having just left a city of 8 million, seeing that, I just thought, "Oh, my God, where are we going?" [laughing] You know, I could just see us being down on the farm, and I am not a farm boy by any means. Not that I am saying anything about people that are on the farm. I am talking about me. I am not a farmer, by any means. I have no problem with farmers. Without them, we couldn't eat. I have the highest regard for them. That doesn't mean anything. I have the higher regards for astronauts, but I still wouldn't want to be one. So it has nothing to do with how high you regard someone, but you don't want to be the same thing.

**BH:** But here you are in Twenty-second Street, and you are going to get your life back to normal. And you're not on a farm, but you're in a small Arkansas town. And so—

**NW:** It didn't take me two weeks to get acquainted and get going. In fact, three weeks after I got here, I got a job. There was a Jewish doctor here in town, very highly regarded, Dr. Davis Goldstein. He was with Cooper Clinic, and he was very friendly. His best friend was actually, Wade [pause], well, what were the drugstores we had here?

**BH:** Godt Brothers . . .

**NW:** Wade. . . on Rogers Avenue.

**BH:** Laws? No. Cooley?

**NW:** Cooley! Wade Cooley was his [Dr. Goldstein's] best friend. He bought a new Chrysler product every year from Ross Motor Company, which was on the corner of Towson and Rogers, and he got me a job working for Ross Motor Company as an automobile painter's helper for eight dollars a week. But we only worked 55.5 hours for that eight dollars. My dad, shortly after that, got a job at a local furniture store in the shipping and receiving room for twelve dollars and fifty cents. So the two of us—

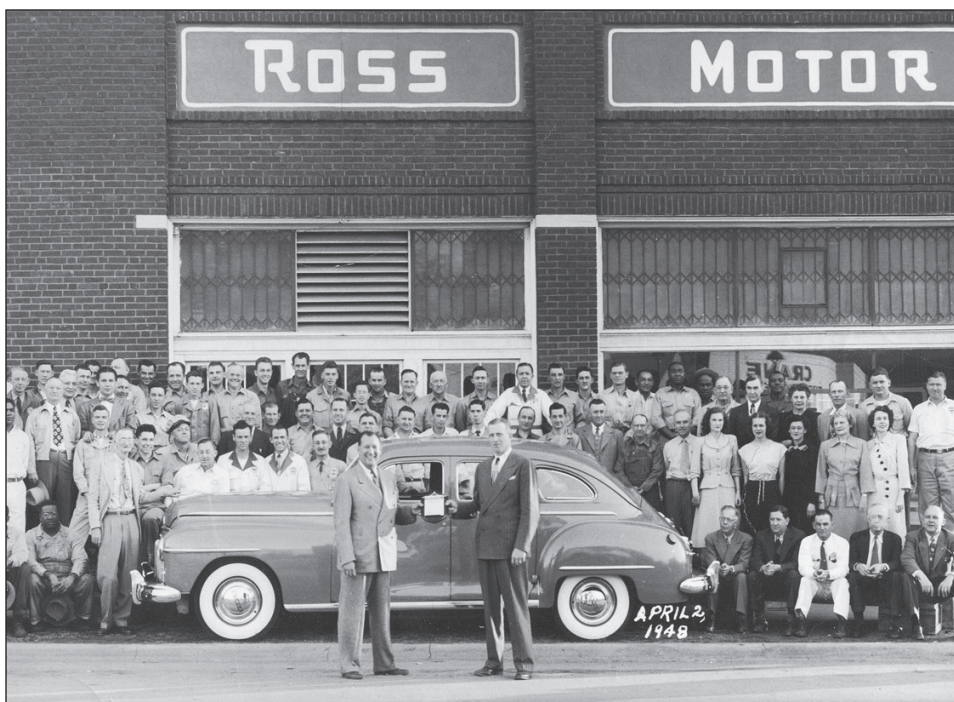
**BH:** What company was that?

**NW:** Arcade Furniture Store, which is now where Goins is. Well actually, Goins was where the Arcade Department Store was, and where father worked, the Arcade Furniture Store, was where Davis Furniture was. And he worked, of course, back on the alley where the shipping came into the building.

**BH:** Still no English, speaking German.

**NW:** Speaking no English. Of course, my favorite story is that on the anniversary of the first year of his going to work there that he became store manager. [laughing] These poor immigrants now can't learn a language, can't do this and can't do that. First of all, we had to swear, make out an affidavit or have an affidavit made that we would never become dependent on any kind of municipal, state, or





**(LEFT)** Employees of Ross Motor Company, which was at 101 Towson Avenue. Mr. Rutherford Ross hired young Nic Wintory soon after his arrival in town. Nicol worked there until joining the U.S. Army in 1943.

**(BELOW)** Nicol in a Ross Motor Company shirt c. 1941.

*(Photos courtesy of Wintory family via Carole Barger and the Fort Smith Historical Society)*



federal [governments], we were not to receive any of those benefits. We had to be self-supporting or supported by those people who made affidavits with the U.S. government that they would support us in case of . . . I am happy to say that once we left New York, we have never been supported by anyone for a nickel. And that is without speaking English, and by the same token, within a year, knowing English well enough to be a store manager.

**BH:** So that is pretty good. But he knew the business well. He knew how to manage.

**NW:** He was the management type, but he was not a college graduate or anything like that. He had, I guess when truths are known, something like the equivalent of a fourth grade education. But then, he only spoke about four languages.

**BH:** He spoke Danish and German, as you did. . .

**NW:** No, he didn't speak Danish at all. He didn't have to. He spoke German, Polish, Yiddish, and English. And, I mean, these are distinct languages.

**BH:** You had at least three of those languages, plus . . .

**NW:** Well, I had French.

**BH:** You had French too, right.

**NW:** But I didn't speak Polish.

**BH:** No, but you had Yiddish. Well sort of, I guess.

**NW:** I knew Yiddish some, but I spoke English, French, German, and, at that time still, Danish, although I have forgotten virtually all of that, because I never had any formal instruction on that. I just picked it up.

**BH:** Well, Nic, how long did you stay at Ross Motor Company?

**NW:** Well I left it briefly. I stayed there a total of four years. Like I say, I started as a painter's helper, then I was promoted. It sounds funny, but I was promoted to the grease

rack. But the point is, they saw what I could do sales wise. So there were two of us working on that grease rack: Happy and myself. Happy kept griping about the fact that dang Nic spends more time on the telephone than he does on the grease rack. Because what I was calling these customers, telling them that they needed this and they needed that and they should do a grease job, and where he was doing the grease job, I think for fifty cents, I was able to end up getting about two or three dollars out of these people. He did, of course, a lot more jobs, but for every one of my customers, he would have to do about six or eight of his just to equal it, you know. He did not appreciate me very much, but Mr. Ross just loved it, because all of a sudden, we were making money on the grease rack. So I stayed there, and at night I attended the—the family named Frammell, you may remember, used to have a shop here—

**BH:** I remember Billy Frammell.

**NW:** Leon Frammell. They had a school where they taught automotive tune-up, and I attended that class, learned how to do an automobile tune-up. So they transferred me . . .

**BH:** There's a little chain here from the time your father drove the Mercedes, and you asked him what the grease, what the button was. And now you are on the grease rack and going to Leon Frammell's, which was close to Wheeler Avenue.

**NW:** I learned it and got out of the grease rack to the tune-up department, and that, of course, is a higher classification position because you were a tune-up specialist.

**BH:** Did you consider going out to Fort Smith Junior

College at that time?

**NW:** Well, I was, all throughout that time, I was taking classes at Northside in a variety of subjects. When I was eighteen, I was the head of the junior congregation. That was a youth group at the synagogue. And we always had a youth group Sabbath. That meant that the youth group put on the services. So, since I was the president at the time, I was supposed to give the talk, and I sat down and wrote this great speech and then set about memorizing the speech. Well, as I got going on it, all of a sudden, I couldn't remember where I was, and I frantically went through my notes. It seemed to me that it was thirty minutes. My dad said it was like thirty seconds. The point was that I was just mortified, and I decided that if you are going to be a public speaker, you better learn how to do that. So I took a class at Fort Smith Junior College conducted by Mr. [James] Reynolds, who was the dean of the college.

**BH:** I remember Mr. Reynolds. I remember writing about him. Was that around 1940, Nic? We are not at war yet?

**NW:** No, so I must have been seventeen. It is hard to remember these things specifically. Anyway, I took this class, Public Speaking, and which I had actually made sort of a career out of subsequently. And I never worked with text. I always worked with notes. By notes, I mean keywords, not even sentences, just to remind me what I want to cover.

**BH:** You are a gifted speaker.

**NW:** Well, I wasn't, [but] thanks to Mr. Reynolds.

**BH:** At the time, they had a debate team.

**NW:** No, I wasn't familiar with that.

**BH:** It was led by J. Fred Patton.

**NW:** Well, I met him early on. It wasn't like I was a student at the school. I was just taking night classes.

**BH:** Well, we are probably to the, there are a couple of things I want to ask you generally today before we end today's session. And can you come back next Tuesday?

**NW:** God willing.

**BH:** There are a couple of things that I wanted to ask you. Were you paying much attention to events in Berlin while you were in Fort Smith?

**NW:** Well, we were. We were watching the news, especially once the war started. We were horrified by Hitler's advances, especially in France, not so much the East, although that is where we lost relatives. Then, of course, I could not get in [the U.S. Army] when I volunteered.

**BH:** That was in the other interview you did with Joe Wasson, and we will cover some of that a little bit. There was an activist at this time, a guy by the name of Rafael Lemkin who was going around trying to explain to everyone that the Germans were, under Hitler, trying to eliminate a whole culture. He is the one who coined the phrase "genocide." He was a Polish Jew, and he was active in the late '30s and early '40s, and I didn't know if your paths had

crossed with him or not. It has crossed with so many.

**NW:** No.

**BH:** What essentially makes the difference, or is it just semantics, between a temple and a synagogue?

**NW:** Well, there is a difference in that Orthodox Jews refer to them only as synagogues, because they say there is only one temple. That is the one in Jerusalem. Moderate, Conservative, and Reforms Jews call their [places of worship] temples and/or synagogues. Synagogue is always proper. So if you don't know what you are getting yourself into, say synagogue. That way you won't offend an Orthodox, and any liberal Jew concedes it's a synagogue although ours is called a temple. Fort Smith's is called Tilles Memorial Temple.

**BH:** Speaking of the Tilles family, were you well acquainted with other Jewish families?

**NW:** I ended up working for Mr. Tilles.

**BH:** What about Louis Weinberger, who is a prominent person in town?

**NW:** Right, and a very good friend, as it turned out. When I came back from World War II, I went to every man's store trying to buy a white shirt. Couldn't find them, you know. I went to see Louis, because his was more like an army store, but he still had clothing and stuff, so I said, "I sure would like to have a white shirt." "How many do you want?" [laughing] You know. Then I went to—I told you what I was earning—and something happened where I needed a suit. Well, I went to the Arcade Men's Store, and they were trying to give me a little rake, you know. Then I thought I would go see Louis. Louis handed me a suit and said, "Try it on. That's your size." I tried it on, and he said, "Do you like it?" I said, "Yea." "Well it's yours. You pay me a little money when you can." That is the kind of guy that he was. He was the most generous. Of course, he could afford to be, because as we used to say, "Every time he went broke, his wife had a new mink." [laughing]

**BH:** I am glad you said that jokingly. [laughing]

**NW:** But the thing is that he was really a very charitable, kind person, and a great sports enthusiast. He would throw a party at his house. A bunch of people would show up, and he would be out in the driveway listening to St. Louis play ball.

**BH:** Yes, he liked the Cardinals.

**NW:** He sure did. And you know where he lived? He lived on the corner of Rogers and Greenwood, where the pharmacy is now.

**BH:** That was Louis's house? Well, this opens up a whole new topic, the Jewish community and your life in Fort Smith. The last thing I wanted to ask you today, Mr. Wintory, is as a teenager, how would describe yourself?

**NW:** Having a terrible time because you see, every time Mother and Dad would be invited out, they would ask the families' children to come and visit with me so I wouldn't be lonesome while I was at home babysitting the younger brats. [laughing] So here I sit, and these sixteen- or seventeen-

year-old girls all sitting on the floor and looking at me like someone from the zoo, like the great ape, and they asked me stupid things. And keep in mind that I had a British accent. So they said to me, "Say something." [laughing] And I am looking at them, and of course, as a sixteen-year-old, I have other thoughts, and it had nothing to do with what they were asking about, I can tell you for sure. And it was really a difficult time because I wanted to be part of it and not just be some kind of showcase.

**BH:** Did you consider yourself extroverted or reflective or intellectual?

**NW:** Well, by comparison I would—I hate to use the term "intellectual."

**BH:** Why?

**NW:** Well, what I mean by that is that it isn't like, well, if you put me on my favorite program, "Jeopardy," I couldn't go past the \$400 questions. I know a lot of stuff, but calling me intellectual is overdoing it.

**BH:** Because you really respect the word.

**NW:** Right. To me an intellectual is someone with a couple of Ph.D.s. And I take pride in the fact, as I have told you already, I am probably the only tenth-grade dropout who has ever taught at the University of Arkansas [laughing], which is pretty unique!

**BH:** It is, and it shows that there is a lot of ways to arrive.

**NW:** There is a lot of ways to learn. That is the big thing. I taught at Westark, night classes: German, Hebrew, and Fashion Merchandising. [laughing]

**BH:** This probably brings us to a close for this interview session, but Fort Smith and World War II experiences await us.

**NW:** That will be fine, and I enjoy doing this with you. With everything that I tell, just like one thing always leads to another, so that is why we transgress.

#### **Interview No. 4 August 19, 2008**

**BH:** Mr. Wintory, I'm Billy Higgins. We are here on Tuesday, August 19, 2008. This is the fourth of our interview sessions, and we have been discussing your life in Berlin and your family's—I wrote, "escape," would you call it "escape"?—to Denmark and then on to New York and finally to Fort Smith, Arkansas, which is sort of where we left off. You had mentioned the train ride in here and seeing the cows and the milking, which acquainted you that you were actually in a rural area now.

**NW:** For the first time in my life.

**BH:** And the train station here on Rogers Avenue, and if you would continue with your memories about your arrival in Fort Smith. There might be a little overlap, but you talked about the house on what street?

**NW:** North Twenty-second Street.

**BH:** Close to Northside.

**NW:** Right. In fact, it is now a parking lot at Northside.

**BH:** Did you happen to meet, this is just sort of an aside, but back there in 1939, did you happen to meet Mr. John Kerwin, who I think lived on Twenty-third Street.

**NW:** You're talking about the one who had the sporting goods store?

**BH:** Yes sir.

**NW:** Yea, I remember him well. He was a friend of mine. But I didn't know him then. I met him years later.

**BH:** Well, so the Wintory family, as you were known as at that time, arrived in Fort Smith in 1939. You talked about obtaining your first job with Rudd Ross, and you talked about making the calls to customers, so that must have been when you were. . .

**NW:** Sixteen.

**BH:** Sixteen years old. And did you begin to attend school in Fort Smith?

**NW:** Not really. I attended night school from the day I got here. But I never went back to school after I was in this country. I took courses, but as far as formal education, it wasn't until I—

During the Korean War when I was being prepared to get a commission in the Army, they gave me a GED test for high school and college, two years of college. It was the first time that I had ever been tested. I didn't do too well in high school. I only ended up at the 96.4 percentile, and with the college, I ended up on the 92.3 percentile.

**BH:** Not only your intellect, but your schooling in France and in Germany had carried you this far.

**NW:** So I actually never attended formal school in this country of any kind, which as I told you, didn't keep me from teaching classes at the University of Arkansas. So, it proves to me that education is not something that you start at age six and end at age eighteen or even at age twenty-two or something. It is a continuing process.

**BH:** Mr. Wintory, can you discuss a little bit about how your mother adjusted to Fort Smith and how she kept house?

**NW:** Yes, I'd be glad to. The biggest problem that she had, which I already mentioned to you, is that she was a very large woman. The heat in Fort Smith really, was really difficult for her. Keep in mind that when we first got here, the height of air conditioning was the ceiling fan, which we had on so strong that the curtains stood ninety degrees to the floor. [laughing] Because, you know, she was slowly dying in the heat. I mean 104, just to give you a final reference: When it reached 85 in Berlin, school was let out. We got what's called "heat vacation." So that gives you an idea of the relative situation. But she had, since she had never cooked in her life, ever, until we came to Fort Smith, she learned it the hard way, making lots and lots of mistakes.

I think I may have mentioned it before: On her first effort, she counted the number in our family. There were six of us, so she took six cups of rice to put in her bowl, and we had rice all over the kitchen. [laughing] She just didn't know.

But she not only learned, she became a gourmet chef.



This became a hobby of hers. Our friends used to love to come to parties when mother was cooking because they learned new dishes and new ways of fixing things and so forth. And she enjoyed it, of course, like I said, as large of a woman as she was, she was her own best customer, which was always strange, because my father was always a smallish person. She must have outweighed him by 100 pounds.

**BH:** So in the house on Twenty-second Street were your mom, your dad, you, and three siblings.

**NW:** Right. But we only lived there, for some time. I can't remember why we moved, but the next place we moved was on the corner of North Sixteenth and D Street, right on the corner. First of all, there was a place across from there called the Windsor Apartments. In fact, they may still be there, on North Sixteenth Street.

**BH:** Did your father get a loan and purchase this house?

**NW:** Oh no. It was offered to him for \$1,200, but he couldn't see himself going into debt. As long as we lived there on South Seventeenth Street, he might have paid for that house.

**BH:** So you were renting that house from some landlord. Do you remember his name?

**NW:** We completely remodeled it for the landlord and everything else, and I think our rent was thirty-five dollars a month. In all the years that we lived there, a number of years—

All of a sudden I am getting a bit confused. I think we moved from North Twenty-second Street to North Sixteenth Street.

**BH:** That's what you said, "Sixteenth and D."

**NW:** Right. And then from Sixteenth and D to 715 South Seventeenth Street. And that is where we spent ninety percent of our time in Fort Smith. That is where my brother and sisters grew up, and they went to Peabody Grade School.

**BH:** Did they graduate from Fort Smith High School?

**NW:** Yes. They all did. My oldest brother, shortly after graduation, enlisted in the Air Force and stayed there for twenty-two years. My little sister went on to university and got a degree in education and ended up with a master's degree in education administration. My youngest sister went to OU for a while and then developed some health problems and then got married, and I don't think she ever finished. She worked for one of the deans at the University of Oklahoma. She was very good at business, great business sense but she, education was not her strength.

**BH:** But at this time in Fort Smith—1939, 1940—you were a robust family, all living together on Seventeenth Street, and do you gather in for the evening meals as you did in Berlin?

**NW:** We all ate every meal together except maybe breakfast because the kids went to school and dad went to work and I went to work. I had to be at work before my siblings had to be at school.

**BH:** In '39 and '40, when you would meet around this

table and your mom is getting better at cooking, what are the topics? Are you talking about Berlin?

**NW:** No. Not really. Talking more about what is going on here. And, like I say, we spoke what you might call Genglish, where Mother might say something in German, and Dad would answer in English. The kids could understand German but never learned to speak German except for oldest sister because she ended up teaching German in California junior highs, middle school as they call them out there.

**BH:** This clip that you have from Berlin, I am interested in pursuing that. It becomes a memory, a made memory. You don't revisit your life in Berlin on a daily or weekly basis.

**NW:** No, no no.

**BH:** But you know what is going on. You know what Hitler is up to.

**NW:** Yes, we knew like everyone else. The extent of the disaster, we didn't really know until the war was over, you know, until American troops went into the concentration camps and saw—We knew that people disappeared, and we knew about concentration camps, but we still didn't know the fullness of the disaster.

**BH:** So you were concerned about local things. Can you talk about the Jewish community in Fort Smith in '39 and '40?

**NW:** Well, at that time it was a very lively community. We had probably some sixty-plus families with probably between 250 and 300 members. It was very active. Our synagogue was on the corner of North Eleventh and E Street.

**BH:** Was that one of the centers of your life? The synagogue?

**NW:** Well, it played a good-sized part since we had activities and we would socialize and I was elected president of what they call the Junior Congregation, which was anyone—let's say sixteen to marriage. I know when I was president, we had like twenty-two members. So that gives you some ideas, and now we have twenty-two families period, most of them individuals, no big families or anything like that. So it was active, and I attended fairly regularly, and I went much of the time partly, because we were all very fond of the rabbi who was serving the congregation at the time.

**BH:** I think you gave me his name.

**NW:** Teitelbaun. I think I told you that earlier. And we liked him a lot. It was a nice environment.

**BH:** Were there other people in the congregation like yourself who had come from Europe?

**NW:** Yes. There was another family, exactly like in our situation, who came here because they did have some distant relatives here. Their name was Levy, L-E-V-Y, and I can't think of the fella's name right now, but there was a son my age by the name of George who graduated high school here in Fort Smith and went to Hendrix College, graduated from there and has been living in Dallas for the last umpteen

years. I really don't know—he was not really one of my close friends for not any particular reason other than we just wasn't—

**BH:** Was he a German Jew?

**NW:** Yes. I don't think they came from Berlin, however. I don't remember where—might have been from Frankfurt or somewhere.

**BH:** And that family felt like they escaped as well.

**NW:** Yes, but much earlier than we did.

**BH:** The congregation that was, most of the congregation were American Jews.

**NW:** Yes, well. . .

**BH:** They have been here for a generation or two.

**NW:** Most of them were not first generation; they were second generation. I mean, there were still some first generation, but they were old ones. I will give you one example. There was a family here by the name of Nakdimen, N-A-K-D-I-M-E-N, who owned City National Bank when it was downtown, which is now the Chamber of Commerce building. The father also owned the Poteau Telephone Company.

**BH:** They had been in this area for—

**NW:** A long time. Then they had a son by the name of Hiram, and you might remember we used to have a radio station here called KWHN, which was KW Hiram Nakdimen.

**BH:** The most powerful station in town, I believe.

**NW:** At the time, and maybe still, I don't know. But anyway, he was a founder of the station. They were quite well-to-do, and I was not close to them at all. They were members of our congregation, and I am sure they were contributors, but they were not what you would call frequent attendees. They are sort of like what I call an Easter Sunday Christian. They came to the High Holy Days, one evening and one morning, and that was it.

**BH:** The congregation, they actually valued you, did you get the feeling that—and here you were president—did you feel like you were celebrated a little bit? Were you—because of your escape—

**NW:** We had become, at that time, Americanized. That was history.

**BH:** That was a rapid transformation that you had.

**NW:** Well, you know, when I went to work for Ross Motor Company, I think I told you that, here I am speaking the King's English in an automobile paint shop. And the guys, being foreign, being Jewish, I really didn't fit the pattern of an automobile mechanic in Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1939.

**BH:** They don't speak the King's English.

**NW:** I spoke better English than they did.

**BH:** Exactly.

**NW:** But the point is, you know, they sent me to the parts department for a can of vacuum or a—I remember still—they sent me to get chamois skin oil. You know, anything that they could make me run from here to there to

ask for things, and everyone just stood around and watched as I asked for that stuff and then just busted a gut laughing. But I didn't know what the hell they were talking about. If my boss says, "Go get me some chamois skin oil," well then I took off to the parts department to get him some chamois skin oil. Of course, every time they saw me going to the parts department, everybody would stop what they were doing to see what was going to happen [laughing].

**BH:** But you didn't let that ruffle your feathers.

**NW:** Oh no. Here I am sixteen years old. In Germany, you couldn't drive a car until you were twenty-one, and I was already driving automobiles and this, that, and the other thing. You know, it was a little embarrassing. It became more embarrassing later when I realized what they were doing. I didn't know what chamois skin was. I couldn't even figure out how to spell it until I see it was chamois, which is French for a goat. So I didn't know. I thought it was spelled S-H-A-M-M-Y. That is what they wanted me to get, I'll get it.

**BH:** That is the way they pronounced it.

**NW:** But there was lots of good will at the shop. There are always people who found it difficult to deal with me. I always felt it had more to do with religion rather than with being a foreigner. I would say that ninety percent of them, if not more, accepted me and became good friends. We all worked, and when we got through, we had this big room with about eight shower heads, and we would all shower and change from our coveralls into our clothes. It was great.

**BH:** You didn't mind going to work.

**NW:** No. They had the St. Louis ballgames to where you—a volume—to where you could hear it from one end of the shop to the other, and it was nearly a block long.

**BH:** They were Cardinal fans.

**NW:** Right. They were all—that was the closest team, and still that way I think. So I would listen to the games without knowing what they were. Of course, I finally did. I had some idea because I had been invited to watch the Fort Smith Giants play at Andrews Field. So I got an idea, but I wasn't familiar with all the terms that the broadcasters used. I had never heard of the seventh-inning stretch or all the things like that to a foreigner wouldn't mean a thing. But listened to Harry Caray, you may remember.

**BH:** Oh yes.

**NW:** But I would say that I enjoyed my years at Ross. It was the camaraderie, you know.

[Inaudible]

**BH:** I was going to ask you before about some other members of the community. Some names and some of this is personal because, I think I have mentioned to you that I knew the Sugarman family. Where they in the community in '39?

**NW:** Yes. In fact, they were always very generous contributors. They owned Structural Steel. They were well-to-do and were always generous with the congregation.

**BH:** Sam and Barney are the two names I remember.

**NW:** Yes. Sam was the senior, and, well, there was a partner of course, but I can't think of his name right now, but it was Dorothy's father, Dorothy Rappeport's father.

**BH:** Yes, his name was Katzer. His first name is [Sander].

**NW:** I don't recall.

**BH:** And I think I mentioned to you before, his son, Maurice Katzer. He was an engineer, and he had a big influence on me as I was growing up as we lived two doors apart. He taught me many things like to play chess and ride a bicycle. So later I worked for Fort Smith Structural Steel.

**NW:** Oh you did? I didn't know that.

**BH:** I worked there for a while, and Myron Rappeport—

**NW:** He and I are good friends. I just recently, just within the last month or so, quit the club—we were both member of the Noon Civics Club—and I saw him every Friday at noon.

**BH:** And I knew the Sugarmans. Barnie Sugarman took a big interest in the Golden Glove.

**NW:** He was a boxer. But Sam was, Sam and Dorothy's father [Sander] Katzer, I guess, were partners in Structural Steel. I don't know to what extent or—

**BH:** Sander Katzer, I believe it was. And he told me once—he is not a talkative person—but he, himself was a migrant here from Ukraine. I don't know exactly what time.

**NW:** I don't remember him at all, for some reason or another. There was no social contact from my family to their family.

**BH:** Which families do you remember having social contact with?

**NW:** First of all, some of the people like Rose Mark was a friend of my mother's. They owned the Mark store on the Avenue. I really, just off the top of my head, I really can't name the people. You know, we were just involved with the members of the congregation.

**BH:** And you told me about Louis Weinberger.

**NW:** He was a—I don't know that mother and his wife, Rose, were all that close, but Louis and I and my dad were friends. But then there were also Jewish families who even then didn't, even then, affiliate, for example, the Cohns we talked about earlier, you know, he had Arcade Men's Store. I don't know that he was even affiliated. In fact, he was a Jewish, there was no question about it. But as far as him being a member of the congregation, I don't know. I don't think I ever saw him in the synagogue. We have a saying that if you are a Jewish, whether you are going or not, it makes a difference to [neither] the Jews nor the Christians, but in any event, you are a damned Jew. You know what I am trying to say? You can't get away from it.

**BH:** And there was, I know from my time growing up here, that the Boston store was owned and operated by the Ney family. I don't know what their connection to the community was.

**NW:** Well, they were also contributors to the community

and have been always. They were—I cannot recall ever seeing them in the synagogue. But on the other hand, there was nothing we ever did that they didn't contribute to. So I didn't know Mr. Ney's father. He had already died by the time that I came to Fort Smith. He came, I think, from Bavaria; I am not sure about that. I was, personally, very close to Mr. Ney, Jerome Ney. First of all, I worked for the company for five years.

**BH:** You worked for the Boston Store?

**NW:** Right.

**BH:** And what was your job? That was the department store that was maybe equivalent to Dillard's.

**NW:** Well, as far as Fort Smith is concerned, it was kind of the Lord & Taylor. It was upscale. Hunts was the medium, Penneys was the bottom.

**BH:** Do you remember the tea shop? And the book store?

**NW:** Oh sure, sure. The Tea Room. I ate—when I came back to Fort Smith and worked for Mrs. Tilles, I had lunch at the Tea Room every day. In fact, the chef of the Tea Room was also the person who always prepared our Passover dinners at the Temple.

**BH:** Do you remember his name?

**NW:** No, it will come to me.

**BH:** Let's go back to '39 and '40 for just a second here and when war news did begin to affect you personally—because you did enlist at one point, did you not?

**NW:** Yes, I tried to enlist the morning after.

**BH:** After Pearl Harbor?

**NW:** Right. On the 8th. I thought I told you about that. But I was rejected because I was considered an "enemy alien."

**BH:** You must have told that on the other tape; that World War II interview. And I do want to get into World War II very much, but you did attempt to enlist on December 8.

**NW:** Right. And I was turned down because of being an enemy alien. I might just point out that there—I just had to explain that to someone just the other day—there are actually two U.S. Armies, which you might not be aware of. There is what is called the United States Army and then there is an Army of the United States. The United States Army is the regular army. The Army of the United States is like a reserve army. So one is USA the other is AUS. As an alien, you could get into the AUS, but you could not get into the USA. So I became eligible for the draft. Once I became eligible for the draft, which took some time, I then enlisted under the draft as an AUS soldier.

**BH:** You were in the reserve force. Activated reserve.

**NW:** Right. So, the point is that our ranks were all temporary. You know, whereas in the regular Army, whatever rank you achieved was yours.

**BH:** You had different service numbers, too. Did they utilize your German speaking skills in the Army?

**NW:** If you consider sending me to the Pacific to fight the Japanese [was utilization], I would say to a very limited





**(LEFT)** Nicol as a corporal in the U.S. Army stationed at Fort Screven, Georgia, in 1943.

**(ABOVE)** Nicol and army buddies in the Philippines, in 1945. Nicol is seated on the right.

*(Photos courtesy of Wintory family via Carole Barger and the Fort Smith Historical Society)*

degree. [laughing]

**BH:** Well, there could have been German submarines [laughing] in the area.

**NW:** That was my favorite story, you know. Here I am—at that age I was still fluent in French, German I have never forgot to this day—here I am bilingual, which would have been a huge help in Europe. So, by their wisdom, I ended up in the Pacific where my language skills were of absolutely no use whatsoever. But by the same token, I survived. I didn't have to go to the Battle of the Bulge. No telling what might have happened to me if I went the other way. Although a cousin of mine who decided he wasn't going to go to the Army—"Well, by God, if they want me, they are going to have to come and get me"—and they drafted him. He ended up a master sergeant in the intelligence service as an interpreter of prisoners of war with his own Jeep and his own driver. [laughing] So, probably if I had done nothing, I would have gotten what he got, but I was too patriotic. I was going to get in there as soon as I could because I felt that this was a war that had to be fought, and I had to be one of them who fought it. What happened to me was out of my control, of course.

**BH:** The war was over, in the Pacific, it was August 1945.

**NW:** Yea, well I didn't get home until—I was discharged on December 25, 1945.

**BH:** Where were you discharged?

**NW:** El Paso, Texas.

**BH:** Did they give you a mustering out bonus?

**NW:** Yes, I got my \$300 and a bus ticket to Dallas where my family met me. I was already married; we kind of skipped over that area.

**BH:** You were married before your army service?

**NW:** Well, I was. I entered the army in June of '43 and got married on August 1 of '43.

**BH:** To a Fort Smith woman?

**NW:** Yes. Well, we were dating, you know.

**BH:** And what is her name?

**NW:** Marian Keck, K-E-C-K, daughter of Doctor H. M. Keck, the owner of what was then called Colonial Hospital on Dodson Avenue.

**BH:** Was she in the Jewish community?

**NW:** No, she was raised a good Southern Baptist.

**BH:** You married a Christian?

**NW:** I have never married a Jewish person in my life. There has never been anyone to marry. I didn't have the money to go off to college, which ninety percent of the Jewish boys do here, and meet Jewish girls somewhere else.

**BH:** So, she was a Southern Baptist. Was she a practicing Southern Baptist?

**NW:** No, she is a graduate of Hendrix, and that will tell you how good a Baptist she was. She had a degree in music and, in fact, ended up teaching music in Fort Smith Public Schools after our children were grown.

**BH:** And how many children did you have with Marian Keck?

**NW:** Four. My oldest son's name is Stephen Keck Wintory. My next son was Kenneth Manford Wintory, also named after my father-in-law. The third one is Doctor Terry Joel Wintory. We didn't like Joseph, which is not bad, but we picked something that was close, so we picked Terry Joel Wintory. And then I had a daughter, whose name is Lynn, L-Y-N-N, Nicole Stringer now, also a Hendrix graduate. My oldest son graduated from Oklahoma State and studied later at SMU and Dayton University. He moved around quite a bit in his work. And wherever he went, he went to that university, you know. He ended up with his master's degree in Dallas. My son Ken was a graduate of Oklahoma State in marketing. My youngest one is a graduate of Houston University and went to medical school and is a practicing orthopedic surgeon in Denver now. After graduating from Hendrix, my daughter got her Juris Doctorate from the

Arkansas School of Law in Little Rock and is a practicing attorney, or is now, in Arizona, although it sounds a little funny because she practices in Arkansas. She moved around in Utah and Arizona, and so rather than to try to get licensed there, she decided to continue to work for Arkansas attorneys. So she has been with an Arkansas attorney for many years now, and he FedEx's cases to her, and she writes briefs and appeals and all of that.

**BH:** So Marian met you [in Dallas after you were discharged] along with your family?

**NW:** Right. In fact, she and my mother were very close.

**BH:** You returned to Fort Smith?

**NW:** Yes, and we lived with Doctor and Mrs. Keck for a few months until we were able to buy a house on South N Street on the 2000 block, which is between Jenny Lind and South 21st Street. We lived there for seven years, I guess, at which time I was at the Boston Store, and they transferred me to Fayetteville.

**BH:** There was a Boston Store in Fayetteville?

**NW:** Yes, right on the square.

**BH:** They transferred you there as a manager?

**NW:** Yes. I came to the Boston Store, of course, to run their basement operation. That is what they hired me for because, you know, I was with my father. I don't think I mentioned that, but after I returned from the war, my father gave me a partnership in his little furniture store, which he had opened in 1941. By the time I had come home in 1946, he had accumulated a net worth of about \$40,000. He bought the store for about \$400.

**BH:** Where was this store?

**NW:** 610 Towson, right where Griffin Construction is.

**BH:** What was the name of the furniture store?

**NW:** Wintory's Furniture. I went to work there immediately. I stayed with him for just about five years, exactly five years. Then the Korean War broke out, and I had been a reservist ever since I got out of the Army in '45, and of course, was immediately recalled and was back in by October of '51. By that time, I already had three boys, and I could have gotten out of it but I thought that was the best excuse in the world to get out of the situation in the store without hurting my father's feelings. So, I permitted them to recall me, and Father was very nice. He realized I couldn't support a wife and three children on what I was going to make in the Army so he continued to make my house payments for me, fifty-five dollars a month.

**BH:** In those days that was serious [money]. But the store was a success.

**NW:** Well, it was until finally, in later years, my father finally went broke due to the fact that Fort Chaffee was like a swinging door. It would open up, and my father, who dealt largely in used and cheap furniture, and all these little old ladies would come in and buy stuff to furnish rooms for the soldier's wives. And then when the gate closed, which it did periodically, these little old ladies called my dad to come get the stuff because they didn't have the means to pay for it. So

he would go from an empty warehouse to a full warehouse, but no money coming in. That happened to him a couple of three times, and finally the last time he just more or less went out of business. That broke him because he had to finance the purchases through a bank. Well, all of a sudden, the bank demanded payment. You know, they wouldn't pick up the furniture that he had, and he couldn't sell it quick enough to pay the bank.

**BH:** Those were tough times for the family.

**NW:** Well, those were very tough, very tough. By sheer good luck at that time we discovered—it had been discovered—that some former employee of my father's and his brother's firm [in Berlin] had assumed the name of the former company and called to the German government and claimed that they were representing my father and his brothers and demanded an opportunity to restart the business. And they did, under my father's and his brother's corporate name.

**BH:** Back in Berlin?

**NW:** Right, in Berlin. Well, the Gentile attorney, who was one of my father's very best friends, saw a truck running around with that name on it, and he arrived in New York and just, I mean, just chewed him up one side and down the other and said, "You would come back to Berlin, open this business again, and not ask me or talk to me even. If you didn't want to hire me as your corporate council, that is your business, but the least you could do is go for a cup of coffee with me." My father says, "What in the world are you talking about?" He said, "Your trucks are running all over town." Well, my father had just gone through this deal, and there was this other uncle who had never really—he would never really get settled. He lived in New York, lived with my father a number of years. He also contributed to my father going out of business because that uncle didn't have any business sense. My father let him—gave him a free hand to do things, and he bought things that you couldn't have sold if you had to. You know, like he bought 200 baby rockers at one time. He just, so my father finally unloaded him to his other two brothers in New York, and they were trying to get rid of him because he couldn't do anything with them, either. So when they heard this and having heard that my father had lost his business, they said, "I have got something for you and your brother. You are going to Berlin to see what the hell is going on." So they walk into that business after they get there, greet the people and said, "We want to thank you for having started our business again, and we will now take over, and you all find yourself somewhere [to go]. You have no right taking the use of this name." So they got on their knees and begged, and of course, my father and his brother have been out of it for a lot of years. This was 1959, it has been twenty years after we left Germany and twenty-two or -three years since they had lost the business to the Nazis. So, they decided to work into some kind of partnership agreement with these guys, and my father went back to work in Berlin for six years.





**THE WINTORY FAMILY** in Fort Smith, c. 1953. Nicol is left top and clockwise from him is his mother, Charlotte, his father, Israel, his brother Michael, son Stephen, son, Kenneth, sister Petra, sister Cora, son Terry, wife Marian Keck Wintory.  
(Photo courtesy of the Wintory family.)

**BH:** And did your mother accompany him?

**NW:** Just the last couple of years. She, in the meantime, had rented a house in Hillcrest, a very nice house, and lived there very nicely. If you will recall, I told you that when living in France, I lived with an uncle and an aunt, and they had gone to what was Palestine. Well, of course, in the meantime that had become Israel, but life was pretty hard, and they were getting up in years you know. In fact, my mother's sister was a couple of years older than my mother and her husband also, so they decided to come to Fort Smith to live. They bought a house on South Twentieth, I think it was. They rented a house on South Twentieth.

**BH:** From Israel to Fort Smith?

**NW:** Yes, well they, Mother and her sister were reunited, but I was not even living in Fort Smith anymore at that time. I had been living in Tulsa. I was so close to my aunt that I was just thrilled. I told you I lived with her. I was just tickled to death to see them come. My aunt died in 1962 of cancer and is buried in a cemetery here.

**BH:** And what was her name, sir?

**NW:** Hertha Freymann, H-E-R-T-H-A F-R-E-Y-M-A-N-N. Her husband, Guenther, which is actually G-U-E-N-T-H-E-R, returned to Israel after she died because they had some close friends over there and—

**BH:** He lies buried in Israel?

**NW:** Well, he suffered terrible depression after she died. He was treated in Tulsa at St. John's Hospital. He was trying to commit suicide. My father had to find him and save him and all of that, so I was glad to have him there in Tulsa because I could go visit him. He got better. They gave him what was then called shock treatments, and he did get better, but he decided that there was really nothing for him in Fort Smith. Other than my parents, they had all of their friends in Israel. So he went back to Israel and died there later. I continued to correspond with him. I was very close with him, too. He was a little odd, a little strange. He had bought a collection business from a Jewish fella here in Fort Smith who was retiring, and when I say collections, I mean—

**BH:** Bill collector.

**NW:** Bill collector, sure. You know, people give you accounts to collect. He did that and made a living out of it. But anyway, I forgot where I was.

**BH:** Well, we are actually about an hour into this session, and we are about to run out of tape, so this might be a good place to close, and when we start back next Tuesday, we can finish up your business career here in Fort Smith and your post-Korean War experience.





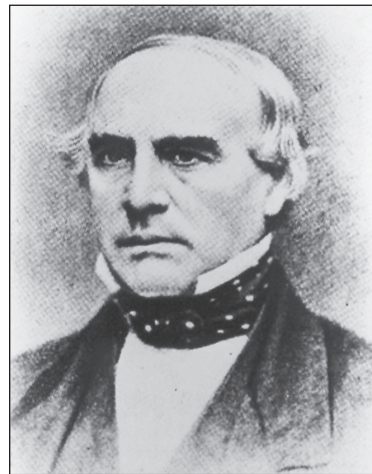
**BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL ROUTE** through Indian Territory and on to San Francisco from Fort Smith where the St. Louis and Memphis legs converged. (Map courtesy of Library of Congress.)

# The Butterfield Overland Mail Company

By Roy Fisher

**J**ohn Butterfield's operation of a stage line through Indian Territory is directly linked to the Gold Rush and to the explorations of Captain Randolph Barnes Marcy whose company of dragoons accompanied the Fort Smith Expedition bound for the gold fields in the spring of 1849 and in so doing found, and mapped in detail, a safe, expedient way to California from Fort Smith through Dona Ana near El Paso. According to historian Eugene W. Hollen, Marcy's book *Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the Year 1852* gave a most accurate and "vivid description" of the Great Plains where not many successful expeditions "heretofore had ventured."

In front of many audiences, and that included Congress, Marcy would declare that Fort Smith was the best jumping-off place not only for westbound wagon trains but for a transcontinental railroad as well. Marcy made four expeditions through the Southwest in the 1850s, becoming more knowledgeable about the geography and landforms of this region than anyone else in the U.S. Army. The qualities needed for traversing the plains were specified in his reports about the Marcy Road: good watering holes; plentiful grass for the animals; wood for fires and repairs; no steep grades or overly dangerous river crossings; and a scarcity of Native Americans blocking the way. Many people recognized



**JOHN WARREN BUTTERFIELD,** 1801–1869, founder of the Butterfield Overland Mail Company. (Drawing courtesy of Smithsonian National Postal Museum.)

his expertise, and his best-selling 1859 book, *The Prairie Traveler: A Handbook for Overland Expeditions*, probably found its way into every wagon headed west to California. Although he describes several possible routes including some crossing the northern plains, Fort Smith is pictured on the frontispiece of his book, maybe

subtly indicating his preference. Marcy would rise to the rank of brigadier general during the Civil War and become Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's chief of staff, but he is relatively unknown, and there is no statue of Randolph B. Marcy in Fort Smith, a city that he adopted and promoted on the national stage.





**WILLIAM H. BUCKLEY'S** design for a centennial commemorative stamp. (Courtesy of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.)



**LEARD CEMETERY ON TEXAS ROAD**, the route taken by the Butterfield stage in 1858.



**IN 1858**, a prominent New York magazine ran this woodcut of a Butterfield Overland Mail stage with a team of four leaving Tipton, Missouri, en route to Fort Smith listing seven passengers aboard: John Butterfield, Waterman Ormsby, both of New York; John Foster Wheeler, his wife and two children of Fort Smith; and T. B. Corbin of Washington, D.C. (Drawing courtesy of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper)

Fort Smith, of course, did continue to provide a starting place for many on their trek to the gold fields of California, but it did not become, as Marcy recommended, the eastern terminus of a transcontinental railroad. The Pony Express, too, decided on a route that would start in St. Joseph, Missouri. But Marcy's reports swayed one important decision-maker, President James Buchanan's Postmaster-General Aaron V. Brown, a

Tennessean. On April 20, 1857, Brown advertised for bids to operate the first overland mail service from the Mississippi River through what are now seven western states to San Francisco, California. The last stop before entering Indian Territory would be Fort Smith, and from there, Marcy's Road would be followed. Fort Smith would be the convergence of two routes, one from Memphis, Tennessee, and the other from St. Louis,

Missouri. Fort Smith, the westernmost Arkansas city and a logical place to start the wild western legs of the Overland Mail Company, thus was poised to become a center of commerce and distribution for the entire frontier region.

In June, 1857, the Post Office Department opened the nine bids it had received, and John Butterfield and partners won the contract. Butterfield had experience as an operator of stage lines in New York and had the reputation of being the best stager of all time. The official name was designated on this contract as the Butterfield Overland Mail Company. The contract ran for six years. Service was to be by four-horse coach or spring wagons, and stations had to be at least ten miles apart. The trip was to take twenty-five days. Butterfield had one year to make all the preparations.

During this year, a tremendous amount of work had to be done to get ready for this 2,800 mile overland stage line: water wells dug; 139 stations to be constructed; 800 operators to be hired, trained, and placed; 1,500 horses bought and distributed to the various stations; 100 spring wagons built. The cost of all this: \$1,000,000.

In planning the enterprise, Butterfield decided to use different coaches depending on terrain and conditions of a particular area. On the roughest roads, like from Fayetteville to Fort Smith over the Boston Mountains, he would use a lightweight coach called a celerity wagon. When arriving in Fort Smith, passengers would switch to a less expensive, but durable "mud wagon." For much of the route, Concord coaches were used, coaches that measured four feet in width and had an interior height of four and a half feet. Wood seats, though leather covered, were hard, but there was upholstering with padded leather and damask cloth for the interior of the coach.

The first Butterfield Overland Mail stage left St. Louis for San Francisco on September 16, 1858, with 57-year-old John Butterfield aboard, shouting to all who could hear him: "Remember, boys, nothing on God's green earth must stop the United States Mail!"

The first passenger, maybe the only one who purchased a ticket for the entire trip, was *New York Herald* journalist Waterman L. Ormsby, who wrote about his experiences during the trip. When asked if he would do it again, he replied, "Had I not come out over the route, I would be perfectly willing to go back, but now I know what hell is like. I've just had twenty-four days of it!" He did not say what was the worst of the days, but reputedly, the ride from Strickler in southern Washington County to Cedarville in Crawford County was "the roughest ten miles between St. Louis and San Francisco." Ormsby may well have had dreams about snorting horses, shouting drivers and cracking whips. Passengers tried to stay seated in the coach without getting sick from the motion. Dust had a habit of covering everyone as it poured in through windows and openings. He may have

had second thoughts about the trip even before reaching the Red River . . . many did.

Stages arrived in Fort Smith and departed from the City Hotel at 410 Garrison Avenue behind which was a large barn that could hold more than fifty horses. City Hotel, though owned by John Rogers, was operated by J. K. McKenzie. The City Hotel and the rest of the buildings on the block burned in a big fire on September 20, 1860. The site of the hotel and Butterfield stage station is now occupied by La Huerta's Restaurant.

The first Butterfield stage arrived in Fort Smith from Memphis late on September 19, 1858. An hour later, at 2 a.m., the St. Louis stage arrived after taking fourteen hours to cover the sixty-five miles from Fayetteville. Even at this hour, people gathered at the City Hotel to celebrate these first arrivals. The thundering stages made enough noise that city folks heard them coming for miles. The welcome included firing a cannon, lighting lanterns, and blowing horns. Citizens were excited to see passengers clamber out and John Butterfield hand down the U.S. mailbag that he was carrying.

Less than two hours later, the through passengers, including Ormsby and Butterfield, reboarded, and the driver, a Mr. McDonnell, left the City Hotel amid shouts of huzzah and hooray. He trotted the team down Garrison Avenue to near the Catholic Church where the road veered right, and he guided the horses on toward Texas Road, which ran through a thicket of oak before passing Leard Cemetery.

The Indian Territory portion of the Overland Mail route had twelve stations before reaching the Red River. At each, the team was changed, and in some stations, passengers were fed a meal. The stage seats could be made into a sort of bed for since the stations had not much in the way of overnight accommodations for passengers, and the coach seldom stayed at a station for very long.<sup>1</sup> The cost of a one-way trip from Fort Smith to San Francisco ran about \$200 without meals and took some twenty-two days of travel. Passengers buying a ticket for a shorter segment were charged fifteen cents per mile. The typical coach drawn by four horses could carry a driver, a relief driver or guard, four to six passengers, and up to 600 pounds of mail.

The end of the Overland Stage came just three years after its start because Butterfield fell into debt and lost the contract. The contract was picked up by his creditors, Henry Wells and William Fargo, and Butterfield went back home to Utica, New York. The Civil War led to a steady decline in Fort Smith as a transportation center, a decline speeded by the coming of the railroads farther north. Wells-Fargo abandoned the Fort Smith to California service over the Marcy road and instead ran a stage route through the central part of the country starting at St. Joseph and proceeding through Atchison, Kansas, to Salt Lake City, to Virginia City, Nevada, to





**ROY FISHER'S MAP OF STATIONS THAT HE VISITED AND DESCRIBED IN THE NOTES TO THE ARTICLE.**

Sacramento. When the railroads took the freight and passenger business away from stagecoaches, Wells-Fargo adapted and changed its name to the American Express Company.

For one to retrace the Butterfield stage route today can be exciting and challenging. It is easy to locate the station names, but modern development has disrupted or disguised much of the original route.

Nevertheless, going back into time and finding those stations, taking photographs, and trying to imagine how life was then for the traveler was an experience that led to this *Journal* article. If you are interested in doing the same, the author provides you with his notes about his Butterfield stage route traveling experiences.

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## NOTES

1) Watson's Station, Skullyville: Take U.S. Highway 271 south from Fort Smith for about nineteen miles; turn



**MAIN STORE AT THE EDWARD'S STATION** as it looks today. (Photo by and courtesy of Bruce Schulze, webmaster and designer of [civilwaralbum.com](http://civilwaralbum.com).)

right at County Road 22A/County Road D1220. Stone marker.

2) Trahern's Station: Take Hwy 271 south and exit on U.S. 271/Highway 59 South; Follow County Road East 1300; go about 6.3 miles. Judge James N. Trahern's



grave is located on the south side of the road.

3)Holloway's Station (Edwards' Store): Continue on Highway 270 to Highway 270 Southwest

4) to Red Oak. The Edwards Trading House is located on the north bank of the Canadian River, near the mouth of the Little River. Here, wrote Captain Randolph B. Marcy, "was the last place where emigrants moving westward could obtain supplies." It is about three miles northeast on Highway 82 and extremely hard to find. The Edwards Store was located five miles east of Holloway's Station. Although it was not an official station, just about all the coaches stopped there to get something to eat and drink. It was popular and busy with Mrs. Edwards serving hot meals and bread. There are some remains of the store, but it is behind a fence and hard to distinguish from the car. Visit with Anna Volk at the Red Oak Library for additional instructions and fascinating comments, i.e. did you know there actually was a man named "Rooster Cogburn?"

5) Riddle's Station: Take Highway 270 west to Section Line Road at Lutie, about a mile and a half east of Wilburton. Look for the Old Ridge Cemetery.

6) Pulsey's Station: Continue on Highway 270 west about forty miles; turn left on O-1 East about seven miles south of Gaines Creek and three miles south of Higgins.

7)Blackburn's Station: Take Highway 63 West to N4070 Road; turn left 3.9 miles; turn left at E1 400 Road about 1.5 miles to North 409 Road; turn left 1.5 miles.

8) Waddell's Station: Atoka County, County Road, three miles west of Wesley; very difficult; this stop known as the "Old Beale Place."

9) Geary's Station: Highway 69 South; turn right at E1760 Road/Lake Shore Drive; slight left at Lake Road southwest of Stringtown; Near Geary's Place on North Boggy, the road converged with Texas Road.

10) Boggy Depot: From Atoka take Boggy Depot Road west; turn left at Park Lane; take first right. Follow sign four miles Highway 7 south; bridge on Clear Boggy River. Chief Allen Wright of the Choctaw Nation was a native of Boggy Depot. He suggested the name Oklahoma, which meant in Choctaw, "Red People." The Fort Supply/Boggy Depot road became a prominent route for white settlers to California in 1849 and for white settlers to Texas in 1864.

Fort Washita: Not an official station, but well worth the time to visit is this onetime large military outpost. According to historical interpreter Ron Petty, "the place is crawling with ghosts." This is where Mrs. Marcy once waited for her husband to return, enduring reports (false) that the Comanche had killed her husband. The fort, commanded by Zachary Taylor before the War with Mexico, was garrisoned with 3,200 soldiers, about twenty percent of the whole army at the time.

11) Nail's Station: From Highway 75 South, take O-22; turn toward Cado/Kenefic; turn right at O-22 West; turn left at O-48 South; turn right at E11990 Road; Nails Crossing, two miles southwest of

Kenefic, east side of Blue River.

12) Fisher's Station: Take Highway 75 South; turn right at Choctaw Road/East 2120 Road/Hollis Roberts Road about two miles; turn right at Carriage Point Road/N3690 Road.

13) Colbert's Ferry: Continue on Highway 75 South about twenty-eight miles; take the River Road exit; turn right at Franklin Drive/Old River Road to West Toll Bridge Road. A remarkably small marker tells about Colbert's Ferry. You can see Colbert's grave from the road, but it is on private property. Colbert died on March 11, 1893, and is buried near his house. There is a small house right by the grave.

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You may visit this link for more on the route, the stations, and maps:  
<http://www.civilwaralbum.com/indian/butterfield1.htm>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "Waterman L. Ormsby, the Butterfield Overland Mail," ed. By Wright, Lyle H. and Josephine M. Bynum (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1942). As for sleeping, most of the wagons are arranged so that the backs of the seats let down and form a bed the length of the vehicle. When the stage is full, passengers must take turns at sleeping. Perhaps the jolting will be found disagreeable at first, but a few nights without sleeping will obviate that difficulty, and soon the jolting will be as little of a disturbance as the rocking of a cradle to a sucking babe. For my part, I found no difficulty in sleeping over the roughest roads, and I have no doubt that any one else will learn quite as quickly. A bounce of the wagon, which makes one's head strike the top, bottom, or sides, will be equally disregarded, and "nature's sweet restorer" found as welcome on the hard bottom of the wagon as in the downy beds of the St. Nicholas. White pants and kid gloves had better be discarded by most passengers.



**LIEUT. CHARLES POTTER** (right) confers with his lead mechanic regarding the status of the 50th Photo Section Jenny in Fort Smith on May 5, 1919. (Franklin O. Carroll via Alan L. Roesler)

# The Victory Loan Flying Circus in Fort Smith May 5, 1919

*‘The Spectacle Was The Greatest Ever Witnessed Here’*

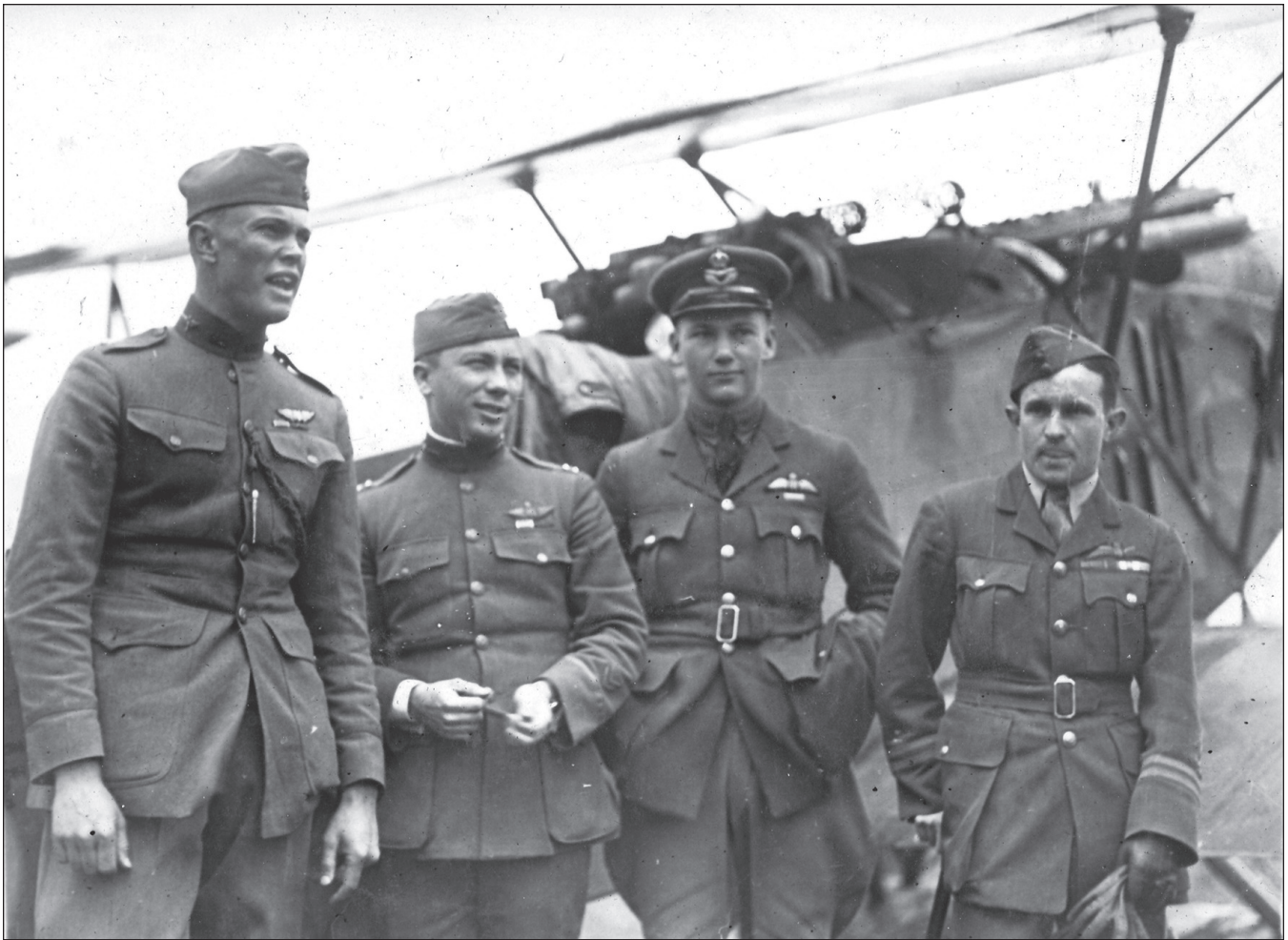
By Alan L. Roesler

In the spring of 1919, the U.S. government began its final war bond drive, known as the Victory Loan Drive. This was the last of the series of five Liberty Loans, the U.S. government’s fifth bond issue relating to World War I. Subscribing to the bonds became a symbol of patriotic duty in America and introduced the idea of financial securities to many citizens for the first time.<sup>1</sup> Authorized by the Treasury Department, the Victory Loan campaign intended to present the “greatest flying program” ever previously offered in America, providing entertainment while trying to promote the sale of Victory Loan Bonds to support the Allied cause and help pay off WWI costs. This involved three flying circuses of aviators touring the United States,

giving sham battles in the air and performing aerobatics over the principal cities as a feature of the Victory Loan campaign, starting April 10 and ending May 10, 1919.

For this event, the country was divided into three sections of Victory Loan flights: Eastern, Middle-West, and Far West. The U.S. Air Service provided the Middle-West Flight with eighteen airplanes, as well as a special thirteen-car train to transport them from city to city. This train, designated the Victory Loan Special, consisted of three “Twelve Section Drawing Room Standard Steel Sleeping Cars,” nine wide end-door baggage cars for loading the disassembled airplanes and airplane spare parts, and one diner car.<sup>2</sup> The travel itinerary for the Middle-West Flight,





**(ABOVE)** *The Southwest American published an almost identical photo of “The Four Big Aces” on May 4, 1919, p. 8. At left is Maj. Edgar G. Tobin, shown wearing his fourragère in the colors of the French Croix de Guerre, awarded to the 103rd Aero Squadron (because it had been Mentioned in Dispatches twice) on February 8, 1919, per General Orders 28, War Department, was a six-victory ace. On his left (to right) Captains William P. Erwin, an eight-victory ace with the 1st Aero Squadron; Thomas C. Traill, an eight-victory ace with 20 Squadron RAF; and, Andrew Beauchamp Proctor, a 54-victory ace with 84 Squadron RAF, stand beside a Fokker D.VII in Chicago, April 16 or 17, 1919. Chicago was the seventh city visited on the Middle-West Flight’s tour of the Midwest. (Franklin O. Carroll via Alan L. Roesler)*

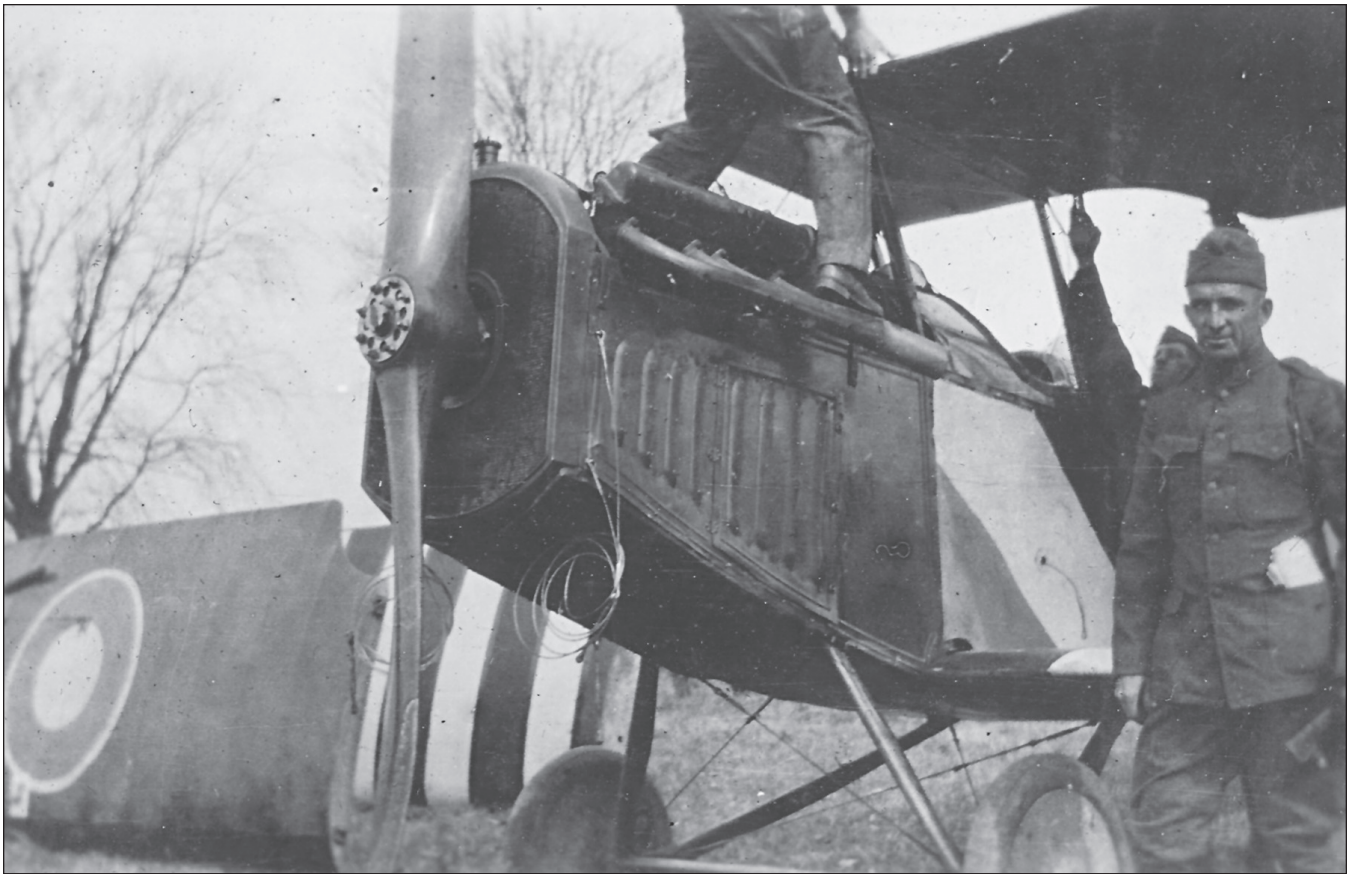
**(Right)** *The Southwest American also published this photo of “The Commander” on May 4, 1919, p. 8, with the following caption: “Major George E. Stratemeyer, J.M.A. S.C.” Maj. Stratemeyer, a Junior Military Aviator, Signal Corps, was the Middle-West Flight’s Commanding Officer and Executive Officer in charge of the special train. (Franklin O. Carroll via Alan L. Roesler)*



also known as Flying Circus No. 2, included Fort Smith as one of twenty-five cities to be visited during the thirty-day tour.<sup>3</sup>

The Middle-West Flight consisted of twenty-two officers and fifty enlisted men. The officers included the most notable pilot who had served at the front, Maj. Edgar G. Tobin, a six-victory ace with the 103rd Aero Squadron, as well as experienced pilots from Kelly Field and Ellington Field in Texas. In addition, another American ace and two British Royal Air Force aces were assigned to

create even greater interest and enthusiasm. The original plan envisioned using all of the enlisted men from the 103rd Aero Squadron to service the airplanes, since this unit was the only U.S. Air Service squadron to have been awarded the fourragère of the Croix de Guerre, and their legitimate association with the tradition of the Lafayette Escadrille would be a drawing card. However, when given the choice, many of the men refused. Consequently, only thirty-five of the fifty enlisted men were from the 103rd Aero Squadron, with the other fifteen being drawn from



**THE MECHANIC ON THE RIGHT**, while working on the “Dynamite” Jenny in Fort Smith on May 5, 1919, is wearing his fourragère of the Croix de Guerre, one of the Middle-West Flight’s 35 enlisted men from the 103rd Aero Squadron (formerly Lafayette Escadrille) who was authorized to wear this shoulder cord. (Franklin O. Carroll via Alan L. Roesler)

the 93rd and 185th Aero Squadrons.<sup>4</sup>

The Middle-West Flight left Ellington Field in Houston the evening of April 9, bound for New Orleans to fly its first scheduled show the following morning. From there, its travel itinerary took the crew northward, providing an air show in a different city daily until they reached Duluth, Minnesota, completing their outbound, eastern leg before they swung westward, first to Minneapolis and then to Grand Forks, North Dakota. From there they traveled south on their westward, inbound leg of the tour, reaching Fort Smith on May 5 to fly their twenty-fifth air show in their third to last city. Camp Pike in North Little Rock, on the other hand, since it was on the outbound leg of the tour, had sponsored the third air show. In terms of equipment, this meant that many of the airplanes were already damaged or worn out by the time they reached Fort Smith, resulting in only eight planes being available for the air show here, whereas ten had flown at Camp Pike on April 13, 1919.<sup>5</sup>

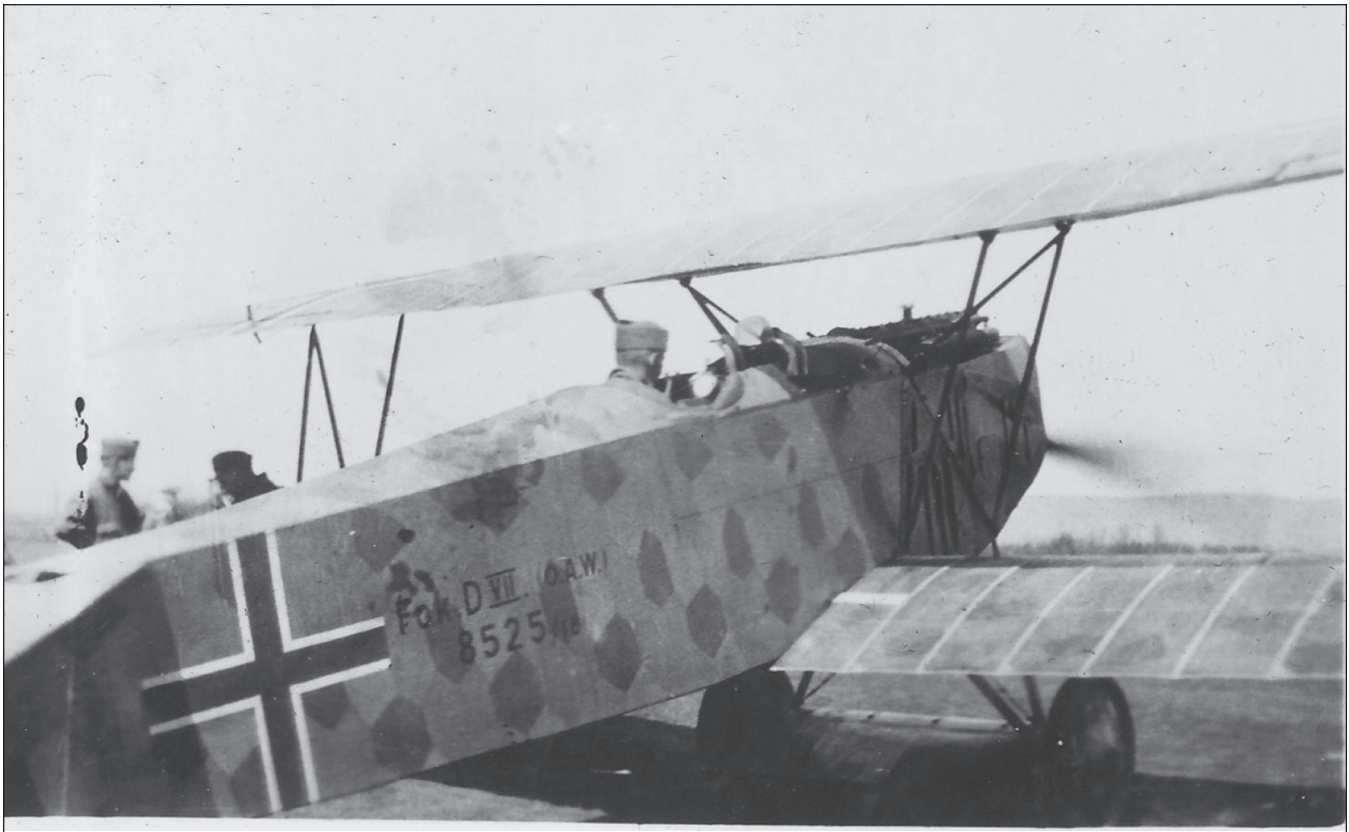
The Victory Loan Special carried thirteen single-seat fighters, including five captured German Fokker D.VIIs, four French Spad VIIs, four British SE-5s, and five two-seat Curtiss [JN-4H/JN-6H] Jennys, although normally only two Fokkers, two Spads, two SE-5s and five Curtiss Jennys actively flew during any one show. There were spare motors and spare parts for all machines, except the

Fokkers, although the mechanics were only supposed to perform minor repair work when damage occurred.

The Middle-West Flight utilized an advance agent, 1st Lt. Donovan R. Phillips, who visited Fort Smith on April 28 in advance of the special train. His job was to get in touch with the local Victory Loan committee and with them pick out the proper flying field, which needed to have the size and dimensions to permit the landing of these airplanes under any wind conditions, as well as be near a railroad siding to facilitate the unloading and loading of planes before and after the air show. He had to arrange for proper police protection and assure that high-test gasoline in 100-gallon quantities would be available in Fort Smith on May 5 when the special train arrived. He gave the *Southwest American* newspaper at least two photographs to include in its announcement article of the upcoming air show, after which the newspaper published photos of “The Four Big Aces” and “The Commander” of Flying Circus No. 2 in its May 4 edition.

Because the special train had to traverse the Midwest on railroad tracks owned by sixteen different companies, after the engine of one railroad company delivered the special train to a city where a different railroad company owned track rights, that railroad company’s engine would then pull the special train to its next destination. For





**LOOKING SOUTH TOWARD** the Ouachita Mountains, mechanics flight test Fokker D.VII 8525 in Fort Smith on May 5, 1919.  
(Franklin O. Carroll via Alan L. Roesler)

example, the day before Flying Circus No. 2 arrived in Fort Smith, it flew an air show in Muskogee, Oklahoma, where the Midland Valley Railroad (M.V.R.R.) owned track rights and had its headquarters and shops located. Hence, an M.V.R.R. engine pulled the special train from Muskogee to Fort Smith, entering from the south via Poteau, Oklahoma, due to trackage rights over the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway between Rock Island, Oklahoma, and Fort Smith. Upon reaching the downtown area, the Missouri Pacific Railroad switched the train northwest across the Helen Gould bridge, where it was then turned left at the north end of the railroad bridge onto the Moffett switch, which was close to where the train unloaded the eight airplanes to fly that day.

The Helen Gould railroad bridge crossed the Arkansas River, connecting Fort Smith to Moffett, Oklahoma, which in 1919 was two blocks southwest of and paralleled present-day U.S. Highway 64. The Gould railroad bridge had wooden planks laid between and outside the rails to allow pedestrians, horses and wagons, and automobiles to cross for a fee, with a toll shed located on the Fort Smith end of the bridge. However, the bridge owners agreed not to collect tolls on that Monday of the air show, so that everyone could cross the bridge and get to the flying field established on the Williams and Alexander plantations.<sup>6</sup> Although this area is not specifically identified in print, analysis of a 1947 topographic map considered that



**THIS 1947 TOPOGRAPHIC MAP** still shows the Helen Gould railroad bridge crossing the Arkansas River two blocks south of the U.S. Highway 64 bridge. The author used this map to analyze the most likely location of the May 5, 1919, Victory Loan Flying Circus flying field. In Section 28, southwest quarter and Section 29, southeast quarter, just west of Fort Smith, note the flat ground, lack of irrigation ditches, access roads surrounding these two sections, and close access to Moffett for parking the 1,500 autos reported to have parked in that vicinity on May 5. (Courtesy of Justin Farnsworth)

the flying field needed to be relatively flat and clear of irrigation ditches and have parking available for 1,500 autos around Moffett. It needed to have surrounding



access roads and the capability for the flatbed trucks used for towing the airplane parts unloaded from the special train, to reach the flying field. Hence, the only area that meets these criteria is located in the SW¼, Section 28, and if they blocked off the section line road separating Sections 28 and 29, they could utilize most of the SE¼, Section 29, T11N, R27E.<sup>7</sup>

In this scenario, the best unloading place for the trucks would then have been along the section line road between Sections 28 and 29. Former Army and Navy men, who volunteered their services to guard the field and the airplanes, provided security under the command of ex-Army Captains Coffey, Miles, and Wood. There was also a squad of horse-mounted volunteers to do police duty in handling the crowds and maintaining order. School authorities announced a half-holiday for all of the schools that day. Following is the *Southwest American* newspaper article reporting on the events of May 5, 1919:

#### **FLYING CIRCUS EXALTS THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE; GREATEST LOCAL SHOW**

Tail spinning nose diving, looping the loop and every stunt in the category of flying was witnessed by hundreds of people yesterday in Fort Smith when the birdmen of the flying circus piloted their machines over the city in the flight of the Victory loan drive. All the wartime tricks of flying were exhibited, the enormous crowd being exalted as they watched the machines and their pilots who have won immortal fame on the battlefields of France.

There were no accidents. The weather was perfect and everything conspired to make yesterday a gala day. The spectacle was the greatest ever witnessed here.

The flying circus arrived yesterday morning at 6 o'clock arriving from Muskogee. The special train carried 13 cars. Immediately upon arrival, the train was switched across the Gould bridge and placed on the Moffett switch, where a long line of trucks was waiting to transport the machines to the field. Upon being unloaded, the machines were taken to the Williams-Alexander plantation and assembled.

Early the crowd began to grow and by the time the planes had been assembled and their motors tested the fence was lined with people. Considerable difficulty was experienced in keeping the crowd back, so eager were the people to get a glimpse of the monster birds.

The first plane to leave the ground was a Curtiss observation plane piloted by Lieutenant Potter and carrying Lieutenant Wiggins as observer and photographer. They flew at an altitude of 2000 feet taking photographs of different parts of the city. Several oblique views were taken and the photographs will show the blocks at an angle. It was stated by Lieutenant Wiggins that 3500 feet was the greatest altitude from

which the city could be photographed yesterday on account of low drifting cloud banks.

One by one, the machines were inspected and tested. When the final inspection had been given them, they were piloted to the field from which they made their flights at 1:30 p.m.

The special carried 15 machines in all. Only eight of them being used, as the rest of them were out of commission. The machines used were five Curtiss, one French Spad, one British S.E.-5 and one German Fokker, obtained on the front in the thick of the German retreat.

#### **Machines Bear Insignia**

The German Fokker was so camouflaged as to render it less distinct while in the air. All the other planes were painted and decorated and bore the markings of the squadron to which they had been attached. Some of these markings were rather humorous. On one was the picture of a goat; another bore the picture of a black cat in a fighting mood, while still another bore along its top the picture of a serpent. The planes were known by such names as the "Red Devil," the "Blue Car," etc.

In speed the S.E.-5, Spad and Fokker are about equal, making around 130 miles an hour. These are single seated planes and used for scout work exclusively. The Curtiss planes have a speed of 90 miles an hour and are used for purposes of observation and fighting.

#### **Start of the Show**

At 1:30 p.m. sharp, the machines left the field with a great roar and swirl of propellers. The Curtiss planes rose, fell into formation and circled back and forth over the city. The faster planes thrilled the enormous crowds by tail spinning, nose diving and by flying low to the earth, immediately over the heads of the people. The flight continued for an hour and a half, only two machines being forced to a landing to test their engines.

A sham air battle was given the spectators, the French Spad giving fight to the German Fokker. Needless to say as in real warfare, the Fokker was driven off. Time after time, the Spad maneuvered into position and, had it been the real thing, the Fokker would have been sent crashing to earth. As it was, however, the people had to content themselves with seeing the Spad get high above the Fokker and swoop down upon it like a monster bird of prey. This was a thriller and required a little stretch of the imagination to realize what the flyers have been up against.

Flying high the Curtiss planes passed over the city dropping [pasteboard] bombs, which read, "How many victory notes would you be willing to buy if these were German bombs falling on your homes? Liberty bonds keep these from being German bombs. Victory notes pay for peace."

### **Masses of Spectators**

On every side of the flight field, the people were packed along the fence in dense rows. Hundreds of automobiles dotted the countryside. Men, women and children with the sweat streaming down their faces and with the dust covering their persons trudged along in eager haste, bent upon missing not the slightest detail of the flight. There was only one disappointment to which the spectators were subjected—that of not being able to go up.

With the flying circus were four famous aces. Major Edgar G. Tobin, officer in charge of flying, with six German planes to his credit; Capt. W. P. Erwin, military aviator, with 11 German planes to his credit; Capt. Andrew Beauchamp Proctor, Royal Air Force, with 54 German planes to his credit; and Capt. Thomas Traill, Royal Air Force, with six German planes to his credit. No flights were made yesterday by any of these famous aces.

All the pilots of the planes were comparatively young men. This was more noticeable when one looked upon the faces of the four famous aces who have upwards of a hundred enemy planes to their credit. Major Tobin is tall and slender and appears to be hardly more than a youth.

When asked concerning his experiences, Capt. Erwin remarked, "Oh, nothing exciting!"

Capt. Traill is a young man and typically British. He is quiet and unassuming and it is difficult to get him to talk. His experiences, he says, are nothing, really.

The king of them all, Capt. Proctor, is, perhaps, the most remarkable. He is young and small and carries a cane. All throughout yesterday afternoon, he rode horseback up and down the flight field, remarking that next to his beloved plane he loved a horse. Looking at him one would never suspect that he had mounted the air and done to the death 54 men and sent them crashing to earth in their machines. Capt. Proctor says he will remain in the country until the Victory loan drive is over.

The officers and men were served lunch at the Red Cross station by the Red Cross. This station was in charge of Mrs. Al Pollock, chairman of the Fort Smith Red Cross canteen committee. There was also provided a station for first aid. Music was provided by the Municipal band.

### **Great Auto Procession**

At the close of the program shortly after 4 o'clock, there occurred the most remarkable automobile demonstration, which was ever seen on the streets of Fort Smith. It had not been scheduled as an automobile parade, but there were over 1,500 automobiles in the line which reached from the grounds on the west side, across the Gould bridge, wound around the west side of the Missouri Pacific station and far up Garrison Avenue.

The continuous string of cars was 31 minutes in unbroken procession in crossing the bridge. There were city cars and cars from the farms, and not less than four counties were represented in the line. At the same time, scores of Sequoyah county cars were speeding toward Muldrow in a second automobile line. Every car in the line across the bridge was filled to its limit. Among them were big trucks, which were packed with people.

It was a well-mannered bunch of people who left at the close of the performance. They felt that they had been given their money's worth. In looking upon that part of the service of the army that played so important a part in crushing out the Hun, they felt that they had been well paid for having subscribed to all the loans and the Victory loans.

The planes were knocked down, loaded and the special left last night at 8 o'clock for Shreveport." <sup>8</sup>

Some of this quoted article bears comment, since it is not entirely accurate. For example, there were actually eighteen airplanes on board the special train, not the fifteen reported, and the five German Fokkers used by the Middle-West Flight were not actually "obtained on the front in the thick of the German retreat." In reality, the Fokkers were taken from a cohort of factory-new machines manufactured by the Ostdeutsche Albatros Werke in Germany and accepted by the U.S. Air Service at Coblenz on January 1, 1919, in accord with terms of the Armistice agreement.<sup>9</sup> Once they had been shipped to the United States, all five were later shipped to Ellington Field prior to the Middle-West Flight's departure on April 9, including three coming from McCook Field in Fairfield, Ohio, one from Norfolk, Virginia, and one straight from the docks in Baltimore.<sup>10</sup>

The plane known as the "Red Devil" was a Curtiss JN-6H from the 50th Photo Section at Ellington Field, which took the aerial photographs over Fort Smith on May 5. Its nickname stemmed from the right side of the fuselage being painted a "flaming red." However, the two photos taken of this same ship in Fort Smith on May 5 reveal the left side of the fuselage to be white, with a Turkey Vulture painted with wings spreading from the front cockpit halfway to the tip of the rudder. A sinuous red line along the top of the fuselage, forming the demarcation between the right (red) and left (white) fuselage sides may have been interpreted as the "serpent" noted in the newspaper article. Alternatively, it could also have been referring to a Curtiss JN-4H nicknamed the "Dragon" Jenny, painted to resemble a dragon with teeth and dragon wings.

The "Blue Car" referred to another Curtiss JN-4H with a blue painted fuselage, on which the Deuce of Spades was prominently painted on both sides

of the fuselage below the pilot's cockpit. The other two Curtiss JN-4Hs also had nicknames, such as the "Dynamite" Jenny (photographed in Fort Smith), which was the ship noted in the newspaper article as having a goat painted on the left fuselage side. The fifth Curtiss was nicknamed the "Texas Longhorn" Jenny, noted in the newspaper article as having an arching black cat painted on the left fuselage side, although its nickname came from the head of a Texas Longhorn painted on the right fuselage side. Irrespective of paint schemes, the Curtiss JN-4H and JN-6H models used by Flying Circus No. 2 remained as the principal primary trainers of the U.S. Army for the first five post-war years.<sup>11</sup>

Regarding the "four famous aces," Capt. William P. Erwin actually had eight official victories, not the eleven reported.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Capt. Thomas C. Traill had eight official victories, not the six reported, of which six were over German Fokker D.VIIs, the top German fighter and the same type as the one used in the Fort Smith air show.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Capt. Andrew Beauchamp Proctor, who stood just five feet, two inches tall, carried a cane because he had been wounded in the arm by ground fire on October 8, 1918, after scoring his fifty-fourth victory of the war, a German Rumpler two-seater destroyed northeast of Mametz, France. His victories included sixteen German observation balloons, the most heavily defended and difficult targets to destroy—the most such victories of any British Empire pilot. On November 30, 1918, Great Britain had awarded him its highest award, the Victoria Cross, "for deeds of bravery between 8 August and 6 October 1918." He left the hospital in March 1919 to assist the Middle-West Flight's tour and aid the Victory Loan bond drive.<sup>14</sup>

"There will be many social functions without a doubt, and much entertainment," the officers were forewarned prior to departure from Ellington Field.<sup>15</sup> Although this typically included being taken to banquets at hotels and participating in associated parades in the host city, this apparently did not happen in Fort Smith, the unintended parade of automobiles afterward "across the Gould bridge. . . and far up Garrison avenue" notwithstanding. In retrospect, before and after the air show, the Helen Gould Bridge was just too big of a physical barrier to surmount. Nevertheless, perhaps the following poem, published in the Society section of the *Southwest American*, portrays Fort Smith's mood, ranging from euphoric to melancholy, after the Victory Loan Flying Circus came to town.<sup>16</sup>

#### THE FLYING CIRCUS

Mighty lot of autos parking row on row.

Mighty lot of sunshine shining down below:  
More or less excitement, all eyes upward turned,  
A whirr, a blur, a purr—as you were.

*Alan Roesler, who lives in Mesa, Arizona, writes about air shows visited by the Victory Loan Flying Circus, Middle-West Flight. He has in his sights a biographical article on Lt. Wendel A. Robertson, a seven-victory, 139th Aero Squadron pilot known as "Fort Smith's American ace (of World War I)."*

#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The Act of Congress that authorized the Liberty Bonds is still used today as the authority under which all U.S. Treasury bonds are issued.
- <sup>2</sup> War Department memo from the director of the Air Service to the commanding officer, Ellington Field, regarding the Victory Loan Drive, March 21, 1919, p. 1, item 1, and Special Train Movement detail sheet, Air Service, U.S. Army, Victory Loan Mid-West Flight.
- <sup>3</sup> Train schedule for Middle-West Flight, approved by Treasury Department, O. M. Baldinger, Major, A.S.A., Officer in Charge, Liberty Loan Flights, undated.
- <sup>4</sup> Special Orders No. 82, March 26, 1919, list of forty-four enlisted men accompanying Lt. Repress, on Transportation Request No. WQ2198813. The thirty-five enlisted men from the 103rd Aero Squadron are noted on this list. On February 8, 1919, per General Orders No. 28, War Department, because the 103rd Aero Squadron had been mentioned in dispatches twice, both officers and enlisted men were authorized to wear the fourragere of the French Croix de Guerre while they remained in service of the U.S. Army.
- <sup>5</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, 14 April 1919, p. 1.
- <sup>6</sup> *Southwest American* (Fort Smith, Arkansas), May 4, 1919, p. 8.
- <sup>7</sup> 1947 topographic map provided by Justin Farnsworth.
- <sup>8</sup> *Southwest American*, May 6, 1919, pp. 1 and 5.
- <sup>9</sup> Alan D. Toelle, Victory Loan Flying Circus, Far West Flight, unpublished.
- <sup>10</sup> Memo from Director of Air Service to Commanding Officer, Wilbur Wright Air Service Depot, Re: Disposition of German Fokker Planes, March 25, 1919. Memo from Director of Air Service to Aviation Officer, Fifty-eighth Street and Virginia Avenue, Newport News, Virginia, Re: Disposition of German Fokker Airplane Material, March 25, 1919. Memo from Director of Air Service to Commanding Officer, Ellington Field, Re: Shipment of German Fokker Planes, March 27, 1919. Memorandum from O. M. Baldinger, Major, A.S.A., O.I.C., Liberty Loan Flights, for Supply Group, Air Service Property Division, Traffic and Storage Section, Attention: Lieut. Penick, Re: German Fokker airplanes being forwarded by freight, April 4, 1919.
- <sup>11</sup> Peter M. Bowers, *The Curtiss JN-4*, Profile Publications Ltd., No. 37, Leatherhead, Surrey: Hills & Lacey Ltd., undated, p. 7.
- <sup>12</sup> Norman Franks & Frank W. Bailey, *Over the Front* (London: Grub Street, 1992), p. 37.
- <sup>13</sup> Christopher Shores, Norman Franks & Russell Guest, *Above the Trenches* (Ontario, Canada: Fortress Publications Inc., 1990), p. 366.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp. 68-69.
- <sup>15</sup> War Department memo, March 21, 1919, p. 4, item 6.
- <sup>16</sup> *Southwest American*, May 6, 1919, p. 3, unattributed.



# Richard C. Kerens

## *‘A Giant In Transportation’*

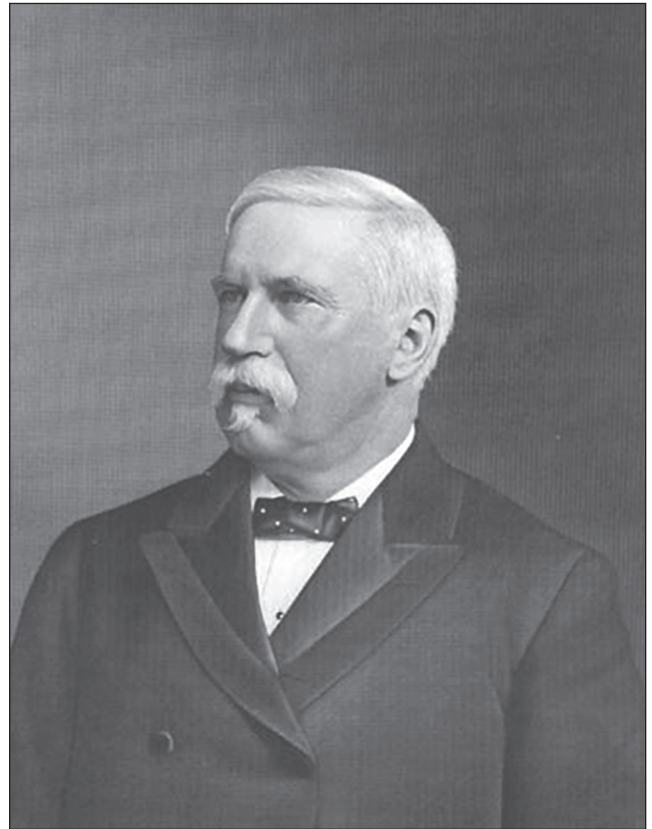
by Jerry P. Hendricks

**T**he phenomenal life and career of Richard Calvin Kerens had a humble beginning when he was born in County Kilberry, Ireland, on August 21, 1842, the second son of Thomas and Elizabeth Guggerty Kerens. This was the time of the Great Famine in Ireland and being Irish Catholic, the family had little hope for betterment. In 1843, the family immigrated to America. Their destination was the United States but by chance, as family lore tells it, they missed their U.S. bound ship, and the family boarded the next available ship, which was going to Montreal, Canada. The family included Thomas, Elizabeth and oldest son, James, Richard and the maternal grandmother, Margaret Guggerty.

They lived in Montreal for about two years while the father worked at his trade as a tailor. Their daughter, Elizabeth, was born there before the family made their way to Rochester, New York, where Grandmother Margaret died. Then they moved to Chicago. Not being enamored with Chicago, they found through word of mouth or Irish publications such as *The Boston Pilot* that many Irish had settled in Jackson County, Iowa, where there was good soil for growing oats, wheat and most important to them, potatoes. Land could be bought for four dollars to six dollars an acre. The Kerens pulled up stakes, headed to Jackson, and obtained a farm in 1854. Young Richard and his brother, James, received their only education in Jackson County. This basic education of only a couple of years' duration would be an embarrassment and haunt him throughout his life. While living in Jackson County, one daughter, Sarah, was born in 1854.

Hearing of free land in northeast Kansas, the family moved to Nemaha County, near Seneca, Kansas. A record was found of the father, Thomas, filing for and receiving his citizenship on June 20, 1859. Another daughter, Julia, was born in Kansas in 1860.

While living in Kansas, the eldest son, James, left home, which meant Richard had to discontinue his education to help maintain the farm. His farm work, however, was cut short by the outbreak of the Civil War as both nineteen-year-old Richard and his brother, James, enlisted in the Union Army and were assigned to the Quartermaster Corps. Richard was first assigned to the Army of the Potomac as a "wagon master." Later he was transferred westward to the Army of



**A DIGNIFIED SUCCESS RADIATES** from this photograph of the white-bearded Richard C. Kerens.

*(Photo used with permission of the Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center.)*

the Frontier under the command of General James G. Blunt, who had responsibility for the Union effort in Kansas, Arkansas, and the Indian Territory. Richard continued as "wagon master" in this command where he demonstrated great organizational skills transporting supplies throughout the command. This may have been the sign of where he would earn his future successes: **TRANSPORTATION.**

Richard had the good fortune of having brother James join him in the quartermasters. The responsibilities of picking up supplies, often in St. Louis, and transporting them was a perilous job with attacks being common in their transportation areas. Both guerilla units and Confederate regulars rode and fought hard to disrupt Union supply lines.

During one of these wagon train trips, he met

his future brother-in-law, who was also in the quartermasters, Samuel McLoud, and they became close friends. On September 1, 1863, the Union Army under General Blunt occupied Fort Smith, and Richard along with Samuel McLoud got their first glimpse of the fort and the frontier town which became the headquarters of the quartermaster unit that distributed supplies to Union troops and loyalists in western Arkansas and the Indian Territory. While based in Fort Smith, Kerens associated with local families and became a good friend to another quartermaster soldier who would make an impact on Kerens' early civilian career, Logan H. Roots.

Richard's future bride, Frances, was living in Fort Smith during the occupation. She had been born in St. Louis on November 2, 1848, to John Paul Jones and Catherine Chambers. Her parents were natives of Ireland. The father died, and Catherine moved herself, Frances, and her son, John, to Fort Smith prior to the war.

This is where Catherine later met and married a well-known widower and Irishman, Michael Manning. He apparently adopted the two children, as they both intermittently took the family name of Manning. Michael Manning had come to Fort Smith to work on rebuilding the fort on May 10, 1840, and holds the distinction of being the first Catholic to permanently reside in Fort Smith. The family lived in his log residence at North Fourth and Hickory (now known as North D). In the 1840s, Michael Manning had donated two adjoining lots of his property at North Third and Hickory on which to build the first Catholic church, St. Patrick's. Prior to that, church services had been held in his home. Frances Jones Manning was educated in Fort Smith by the Mercy nuns at St. Anne's Convent.

Richard Kerens took a real liking to Fort Smith and made many lifelong friends here, both in and out of uniform. Too, he must have seen opportunity in the town and its location for he decided to begin his first business enterprise in Fort Smith. Immediately upon his discharge, he bought a sizeable number of army surplus horses, mules, and wagons and opened a livery business. He met with quick success, taking on a partner, Logan Roots, an old quartermaster pal, who was politically well placed locally and nationally within the Republican Party.

Throughout the war, a great concern for Richard was the well-being of his mother and three sisters in Kansas, a concern amplified by the 1863 death in Kansas of his father. Kerens' family lore has it that he convinced his quartermaster friend, Samuel McLoud, to travel to Kansas and return with the Kerens family. The timeline of when the move took place is clouded, but on July 24, 1866, Lizzie Kerens, Richard's sister, witnessed the marriage of Tobias Kelly and Mary Neville by Father Laurence Smyth of St. Patrick's Parish. Thus, Richard's

family was now with him and with their safety ensured, he could focus more on his business and his growing relationships within the community. In particular, he liked and enjoyed his parish priest, Father Smyth. Their friendship was to grow and continue for thirty-four years.

Fort Smith citizens grew to like Richard and his prosperous livery business. Always on the lookout for opportunities, Kerens, with his stable of horses, mules, and wagons, went after and secured a contract to deliver mail from Fort Smith to nearby Van Buren. *The Fort Smith Herald* of November 4, 1867, reported the following:

The northern mail comes every morning by 7:00 over the new road to Evansville and Dutch Mill and our friend, Kerens of the livery stable has established a daily line to Van Buren and as the northern mail is distributed he takes it to Van Buren. We are getting fast service here since the opening of the Dutch Mill Road.

Not to leave an opportunity lying on the table, Kerens started carrying passengers along with the mail and then expanded those services all the way north to the Missouri line.

His businesses were doing well, and so was his social life, especially with his lady friend, Frances "Fannie" Jones (Manning). No doubt they became acquainted at St. Patrick's or through their numerous mutual friends. At the same time, Richard's sister, Elizabeth, and Samuel McLoud were becoming a couple. Not surprising, it was a double wedding. Fannie Jones Manning married Richard Kerens, and Elizabeth Kerens married Samuel McLoud, and the couples served as each other's best man and bridesmaid. The wedding took place on June 2, 1867, and was performed by their friend, Father Smyth, in his room as the new frame church was two months from completion. *The Fort Smith Herald* of June 4, 1867, reported:

The above marriages took place Sunday evening and two of our worthy and enterprising citizens have been captured by a couple of our most beautiful young ladies. Sunday was the first fair day we have had for many days, may it be an emblem of a fair and prosperous journey for our young friends along the pathway of life.

Following the war, there was a great opportunity for transporting the mail, especially to the West. Logan Roots and Richard Kerens recognized the potential these new routes offered. As ardent Republicans and Union veterans and with that party in power, their chances of being awarded these contracts were excellent. They travelled to Washington to induce the Post Office to award them contracts for a daily service and came home

with their contracts. Upon returning to Fort Smith, they started stage lines to carry the mail and passengers. The business thrived for the young partners. Mail contracts to the West were a bonanza where fortunes could be made.

With so much at stake, public attention was directed to how these contracts were being obtained, and official inquiries in Washington were held. Roots and Kerens' mail business was prospering, but they had to defend their contracts. In the end, they were absolved of any wrongdoing, but the cost of defending those contracts substantially reduced their profits, and they sold the business.

Doing well in Fort Smith, Richard and Fannie felt it was time to build a house. They chose two lots at the corner of North Third and Hickory, formerly the site of the original St. Patrick's log church. Their decision to build their home at this location may have been influenced by the fact that Fannie's mother and Michael Manning lived next door as well as the fact that their church had been on this location. They made an agreement to purchase the lots with Bishop Edward M. Fitzgerald's agent, but when the paperwork and legalities were to be completed, Richard was away on business as he would be increasingly. Fannie had to complete the legalities on December 9, 1867, and most likely had to oversee the construction of the new home.

The U.S. Court was moved from Van Buren to Fort Smith, and William Story was appointed judge of the new court. Logan Roots was appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant as U.S. marshal of the new court. Roots then appointed Richard Kerens as chief deputy U.S. marshal. Richard's responsibilities in this office were administrative duties. Deputy U.S. marshals rode throughout the Indian Territory and needed horses and feed. Not surprisingly, Richard Kerens' livery stable got the business. Within a few years, Judge Story's court became ineffective and corrupt, spending vast sums of money. In three years of Judge Story's administration, he spent \$714,000. Among the many discrepancies, Deputy U.S. marshals were turning in expense reports for posse members who did not exist. Story was called to Washington for a hearing, and he resigned upon arrival. Roots lost his job, and it is assumed that Richard was no longer chief deputy marshal.

Continuing the drive for new enterprises, on February 29, 1867, Richard Kerens and his old Army friends and business partners, Logan H. Roots and Ellis S. Mitchell joined by Bernard Baer, Dr. E. R. Duval and Arthur Gunther, formed the National Bank of Western Arkansas.

These farsighted Fort Smith citizens realized Fort Smith and the adjoining Indian Territory needed a stable banking institution for safekeeping their funds and to finance growth of the region. The immediate success

of the new bank was enhanced by profits realized from the redemption of the scrip that had earlier been issued by Judge William Story's court. Later Richard Kerens' friend and brother-in-law, Samuel McLoud, would join the board and become president of the bank. In time, the name of the bank would change to First National Bank of Fort Smith. Descendants and relatives of the Kerens and McLoud families guided the bank in becoming one of the largest and most sound banks in western Arkansas.

By this time, Richard Kerens' mother was quite well established in Fort Smith. His brother, James, had married and had moved to upper Crawford County and was raising a family on his farm. His sister Elizabeth and Samuel McCloud were doing well in Fort Smith. His sister, Julia married John Dunn, who was schoolmaster at the local Catholic boys' school, and Sarah was married to John Lauderback.

Samuel McLoud established a ferry running from downtown Fort Smith across the Arkansas River to Moffett in the Indian Territory. Richard was an investor in this business, but was not involved in the operation. The magnitude of Kerens' enterprises brightened when he and Ellis Mitchell acquired the contract for the Southern Overland Mail Service. As reported in "Railroads, Stage and Post Routes" the:

Southern Pacific Mail Line, owned by Messrs. Kerens & Mitchell, extends from New Mexico, on the Rio Grande River a distance of 850 miles, at which point it makes connections with other lines running to different cities and railroads east.

This great stage line enters Arizona on the west, at Yuma, and on the east at the Steins Peak Mountains, fifteen miles east from Apache Pass. It is a tri-weekly route, and is made in eight days from San Diego to Mesilla. The line is well stocked with horses, Concord coaches, and closed buckboard carriages. Good Concord coaches are run over most of the route.

The coaches are run promptly on the schedule time prescribed by the Government. The proprietors, superintendents, and employees, on the route, are well informed, affable, and attentive to every duty, and as a consequence, travel and transportation over the route has much increased the past two years. It is a very popular route, and well patronized.

The size of this undertaking was so great that Richard Kerens and his partner spent the next two years at the headquarters they established in San Diego. They found it best to at least temporarily move their families to San Diego.

Richard took great risks in his travels to and from his new base in California. Indian Territory was extremely dangerous due to outlaws and, as he traveled



further west, hostile Indians could be encountered.

Richard and family returned to their Fort Smith home from California, but felt that was temporary now as a great change for transportation eliminated stage lines. He knew the future of transportation lay in railroading and that meant a move of his family and headquarters to St. Louis, an emerging railroad hub.

Upon arriving in St. Louis in 1876, Kerens and his family took long-term rooms in the Southern Hotel. He set up an office from which he managed his businesses while preparing to build a railroad empire. Since his focus was on the West, he was in the right place: St. Louis remained the gateway to the West both for transportation and capital. He did not forget what helped him in his past ventures, and so he became active in the Republican Party in St. Louis.

Kerens was still in the stage line business acting as general agent and superintendent of the Texas and California Stage Line, another stage company he was operating, but he soon invested in the St. Louis Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad and in the St. Louis Southwestern (better known as the Cotton Belt) in which he became vice president. Next, he bought into the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (later called the Frisco). He invested heavily in the St. Louis and North Arkansas Railroad, and in these railroad corporations, Kerens was a director or an officer. Later, Kerens invested, along with Senator William Clark, in the San Pedro, Los Angeles Railroad and added service to Salt Lake City. Now Richard was on the Pacific Coast again.

The family thrived in St. Louis. Fannie's widowed mother lived in the large household that employed four servants, including a coachman and a maid, Emma Krone from Fort Smith. If the number of servants was any measure of prosperity and Richard's success in railroads, then it should be noted that the 1900 U.S. Census listed six servants in the Kerens' employ.

Back on the West Coast, Richard negotiated a purchase, in association with C. P. Huntington, of the Los Angeles, Pasadena and Glendale Railway. In addition to Huntington's investing so did his old partners, Mark Hopkins, Leland Stanford and Charles Crocker who were referred to as the "Big Four." The Big Four owned the Southern Pacific Railroad in California, a line nicknamed "The Octopus" because of its rough business practices and especially the heavy-handed attempts of its owners to strangle the competition.

Kerens was so taken aback by the Big Four and their ruthless tactics, he began to fight them. Senator Stephen Elkins and Richard were backers of Terminal Railway, and together they wanted to make San Pedro in southern California a port city for the Terminal Railway. Kerens and Elkins succeeded in opening San Pedro harbor over the resistance of the Octopus, but at a great cost.

As evidence of a widespread empire, Kerens maintained offices in St. Louis, on Wall Street in New York City, in Los Angeles as president of Los Angeles Terminal Land Company, and in Salt Lake City as vice president of San Pedro Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad.

The family grew in St. Louis, with the birth of Vincent in 1876, Madeline in 1881, and Gladys in 1885. After living at the Southern Hotel for several years, Richard and Fannie built an imposing three-story mansion with a ballroom on the third floor near Forest Park at Vandeventer Place.

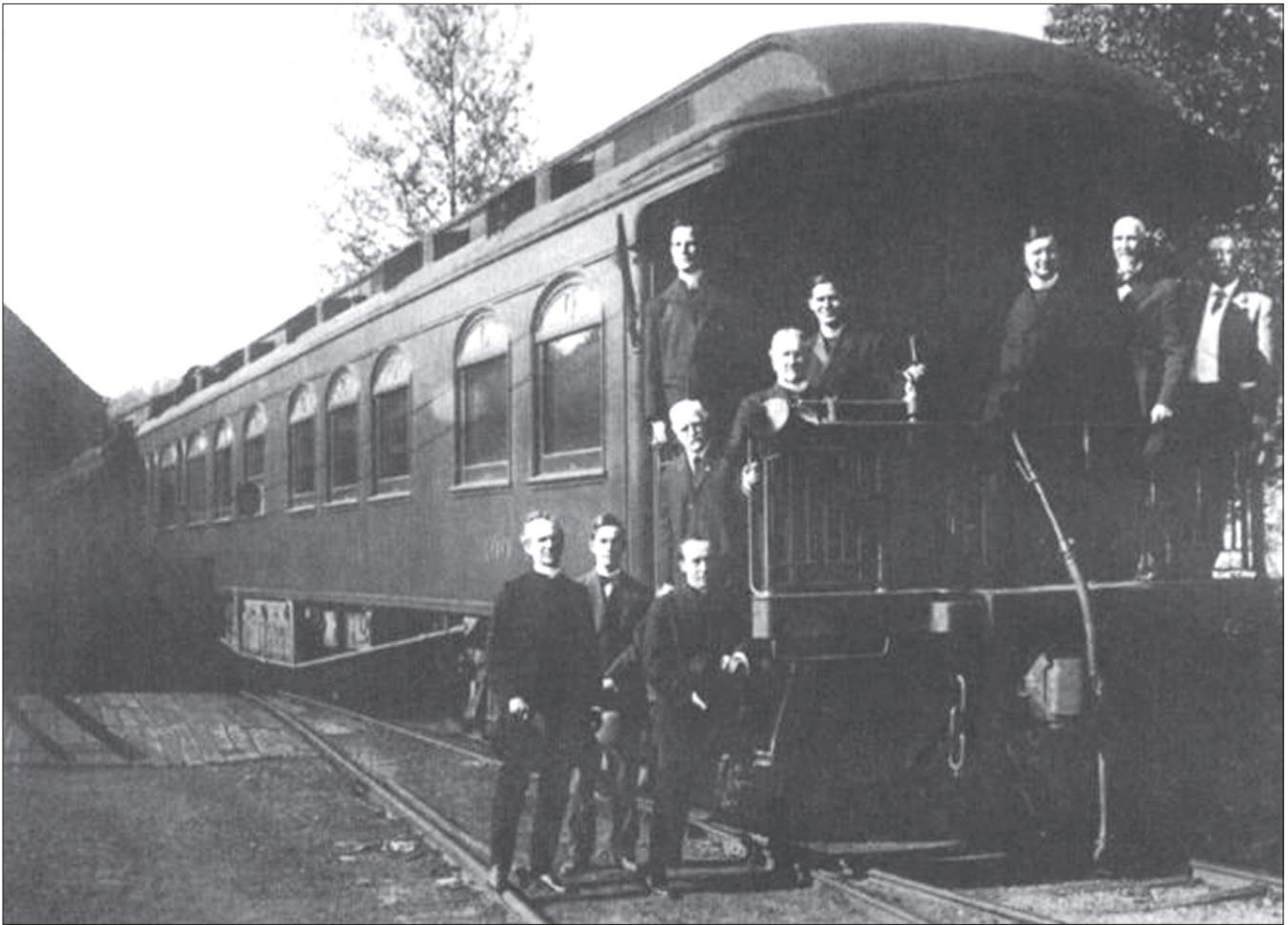
Richard dove head first into state politics with the Republican Party and became a member of the Republican National Committee in 1888. He attended the national convention in 1892 with delegate credentials. He served as national treasurer of the Republican Party and associated closely with Chester Arthur, Benjamin Harrison, William McKinley, and Ulysses S. Grant.

Powell Clayton, a former Republican governor of Arkansas during reconstruction and a backer of railroad development, wanted to revitalize the resort town of Eureka Springs, Arkansas, which was known for its healing waters. Clayton contacted his friend, Richard Kerens, and described his plan. A railroad would be built from Eureka Springs to connect with the Frisco trunk line in Seligman, Missouri, thereby enabling tourists from all parts of the country easy railroad access right to the resort. Kerens personally visited Eureka Springs and liked what he saw.

Kerens and Clayton, Northerners and veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic brought to Arkansas because of the Civil War, would build the Eureka Springs Railroad. The hotel development would be another entity called the Eureka Springs Improvement Company. Kerens invested in and was on the board of both. Among company investors were friends from Fort Smith, Logan Roots, Bernard Baer and George T. Sparks. Two-thirds of the needed funds to build and equip the railroad were invested by Roots and Richard Kerens. The plan was to clean up the tattered old resort after buying the land they needed. Kerens was so enthused that he bought up additional tracts of land.

The manifold project of getting right of ways, laying track, building a train station, sprucing up the town, cleaning up the many springs and starting construction of the grand Crescent Hotel on top of the hill overlooking the town below got under way. Kerens was on the original board of directors of the hotel as indicated even today on a plaque in the hotel lobby.

On his first trip to Eureka Springs, Kerens had noticed the dire condition of the local Catholic Church. He knew that his good friend Father Laurence Smyth's brother, Michael, was the founder of the Eureka Springs



**(ABOVE) PASSENGER RAILCAR WITH DIGNITARIES** including Richard C. Kerens, bearded on steps, and Powell Clayton, bearded on platform.



**(LEFT) A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE INTERIOR** of the Katharyne luxury railcar after Edward Doheny had acquired it from Kerens in 1900 and renamed it the Estelle in honor of his wife.

*(Photos courtesy of the author.)*

parish. He hoped he could help this church.

Richard's mother, Elizabeth, came to Eureka Springs to meet him. When the time came for her departure, Richard waved goodbye to her as she was standing on a hill. That was the last time he was to ever see her. When he returned to St. Louis, he learned of her death at her Fort Smith home on February 10, 1892. Richard decided then that he would erect a memorial chapel on that very spot where he last saw her. He spared no expense and built a rock chapel of byzantine design like St. Sophia's in Istanbul, Turkey. He furnished the inside of the chapel in a fine manner and christened it the Kerens Memorial Chapel. Several years later, he again helped that little parish by expanding the Kerens Memorial Chapel to make it suitable for saying Mass and deeded the land to the church. He stipulated that





**ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY CHURCH** with *Crescent Hotel* in the background. (Photo by Peggy Higgins.)

it be named Church of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, (his mother's patron saint), and that pews three and four were to be identified and reserved for the Kerens family. If no members of the family were at Mass, the pews were open to the "worthy poor" of the parish. Each of the two pews is today marked with Richard's signature. He wanted the church to hold services according to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church. As an extra bit of generosity, he deeded adjoining land to the parish.

Archbishop John J. Glennon of St. Louis, who was a good friend of Kerens, dedicated the church on April 25, 1909. Richard's and Fannie's children from St. Louis and Fort Smith were in attendance as well as other family members and friends. A choir from St. Louis sang at the dedication, and it was a glorious day for Richard and Fannie, all of their family, and



**DEDICATION OF THE ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY CHURCH** in *Eureka Springs, 1909*. Archbishop John J. Glennon is at the center, with Richard C. Kerens on his left.

(Photo courtesy of Historical Museum, Cornerstone Bank, Eureka Springs, Arkansas)





they did, he wanted them to be comfortable, and he knew he could work more efficiently while en route. Thus, he ordered a specially designed car from the Pullman Company and had the name of his daughter Katharyne painted on the sides of the car in a tasteful manner.

Kerens was an investor and official in the Texas and St. Louis Railway that ran through Navarro County, Texas. The railroad acquired 270 acres on the line and laid out a town site, which they named for Kerens, who, ironically, never visited the town. Kerens backed Senator William A. Clark and brother J. Ross Clark in constructing the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad, and Edward Doheny brought in Kerens as a board member in the Mexican Petroleum Company. After Kerens died, Doheny purchased the "The Katharyne."<sup>3</sup>

Two powerful politicians, Senator Jerome Chaffee of Colorado and Kerens' friend, a soon-to-be senator from West Virginia, Stephen Benton Elkins, had purchased coal and gold producing land around Madrid and Cerrillos, New Mexico. They had a problem: It was loaded with freelance miners whom no one had been able to dislodge. The solution was put in the hands of the man they put on the ground, Richard Kerens. He cleared the land of squatters by eviction and prevented them from re-entering, thereby getting the mine in full operation. He had to live in Madrid to get the mission accomplished. Richard was a part owner in the mine.

Kerens' biography by daughter Madeline states, "He was associated with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe." His son-in-law, Edward D. Kenna, was vice president and general counsel of this railroad. There are three stained-glass windows in St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe dedicated to Richard and Frances Kerens.

Richard Kerens traveled in the political, business, and religious power circles of the country, never forgetting Fort Smith or his old parish. When his friend, Father Smyth, was building his brick church at the head of the avenue, Richard donated the main altar and the large rose window, dedicated to his mother, that faces northwest over Garrison Avenue. His sister, Elizabeth Kerens McLoud, was charitable as well. In the depth of the Great Depression, Immaculate Conception parish was planning to build a grade school. She stepped forward and paid all cost of materials and labor for building the school auditorium and roof garden, which amounted to paying for almost half of Immaculate Conception school.

Richard Kerens gave his time and talents in charity and civic causes. He was a member of the U.S. Intercontinental Railway Commission. In 1893, he was commissioner at-large from Missouri to the Columbian Exposition, and in 1904, he was president of the Fifteenth Trans-Mississippi Commercial Congress. He was a trustee of Catholic University in Washington,



**AMBASSADOR RICHARD C. KERENS** in front of the U.S. Embassy in Vienna, Austria, surrounded by his military attaché and footmen in culottes and powdered wigs. Kerens represented "Republican simplicity" by contrast in his dress.

*(Photo courtesy of the author.)*

D.C., and a founder of the Catholic Church Extension Society of Chicago. In 1904, the University of Notre Dame awarded Kerens the coveted Laetare Medal, an annual award given to an American Catholic "whose genius has ennobled the arts and sciences, illustrated the ideals of the church and enriched the heritage of humanity." It is the oldest and most prestigious award for American Catholics. Kerens was known for his open-handed charities of every creed, one being the City Hospital of St. Louis, which had been threatened with having its lights turned off. He came forward and paid the electric bill for a month in advance, saving it from being in darkness. He made a foundation gift of \$20,000 to Father Dunne's Newsboy Home and the same amount to St. Louis University. He founded the Richard C. Kerens Scholarship at Notre Dame.

Frances Kerens was a liberal supporter of the Convent of the Good Sheppard in St. Louis and served as president and chairman of the board, assuming the



responsibility of a large debt for repairs. When she finished, there was a new convent. She had earlier convinced Adolphus Busch to donate the land. When she was done, the Convent had \$10,000 in its treasury. She extended her charities to the Magdelina

Sisters and The Little Sisters of the Poor. She was charitable to the Sisters of Mercy under whom she received her education in Fort Smith. She was especially helpful in bringing to St. Louis the Helpers of the Holy Souls, who had left France to take refuge in the United States. Eight of these religious refugees went to St. Louis, where Frances rented a house for them and, with the assistance of her husband, took care of them until they could become self-sustaining. In her daughter's words, she had an executive mind and a kind heart.

As a crowning event in his rags-to-great-riches career, Richard C. Kerens was appointed as U.S. ambassador to Austria-Hungary on December 21, 1909. He served in this position during the William Howard Taft administration, not bad for one who started out with a handful of horses and mules in his livery stable in Fort Smith. On arrival in Vienna, Richard and Fannie took up residence and embassy offices in the opulent Rothschild Palace. He made his Presentation of Credentials to Emperor Franz Joseph on April 12, 1910. Richard and Fannie entertained royalty and nobles, and she originated the practice of having an open house on Thanksgiving Day and Independence Day.

Richard's term was generally uneventful until the "Petroleum War" between the Austria-Hungary government and Standard Oil. This had to do with the oil importation limits set by the Austrian government, a heated and long-running dispute. Ambassador Kerens intervened, trying to help his old friends at Standard Oil. The Austrian government firmly told him that this was not within his responsibilities as an ambassador and to stay out of the affair. This was a rare turndown for him, but he followed the demand. He and Fannie truly enjoyed the remainder of their stay in Vienna. Prior to his term ending, June 23, 1913, incoming President Woodrow Wilson asked him to stay on. Kerens declined. They were ready to go home.<sup>4</sup>

Frances "Fannie" Kerens died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 28, 1914, only a year after Richard's ambassadorship ended. She was a fine lady, a good partner, and a trusted confidante to her husband. In memory of his beloved wife, Richard Kerens donated \$75,000 to construct the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at the St. Louis Cathedral.

Richard was with daughter Gladys in Merion, Pennsylvania, when he died on September 4, 1916, at age seventy-four. His obituary reported an elaborate funeral, attended by distinguished businessmen, high government officials, and religious leaders, but perhaps the most telling of the character of Richard C. Kerens was "The attendance of over 100 boys from Father Dunne's Newsboy Home."

In his *History of Fort Smith*, George Tilles said: "Kerens was one of the remarkable citizens who ever graduated from Fort Smith and his life story demonstrates the possibilities within the reach of the American citizen."

*Jerry Hendricks, retired from Weldon, Williams & Lick, Inc. where he worked for forty-three years, has traveled frequently to Ireland. He and his wife, Wincie, serve on the Board of Directors of the Fort Smith Historical Society.*

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Pinecrest in Elkins, West Virginia, is on the National Register of Historic Places
- <sup>2</sup> Four towns in four states, Texas, West Virginia, New Mexico, and California, are named for Richard C. Kerens
- <sup>3</sup> Edward Doheny was reportedly the inspiration for Sinclair Lewis novel, *Oil!* on which the movie "There Will be Blood" was based. Doheny was subpoenaed by Congress to testify in the Tea Pot Dome oil lease scandal during the Harding administration.
- <sup>4</sup> Within a year of Kerens' departure, Austria-Hungary invaded Serbia bringing on World War I. Franz Joseph would be the penultimate Hapsburg ruler of the Austria-Hungarian Empire.



# Sarah “Sallie” Ridge Paschal Pix

## *Between Two Worlds*

By Melanie Speer Wiggins

### Part I

In 1814, the year Sarah Ridge was born, the newly established U.S. government was battling the British in the War of 1812 and attempting to deal with the problem of those American Indians who inhabited the North American continent east of the Mississippi. Thinking it best to acculturate them into white society, Congress and the first presidents encouraged the tribes in the eastern United States to change their ways by abandoning old customs, speaking English, taking up farming, and converting to Christianity. A percentage of some groups did so, especially among the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Seminoles, and Chickasaws whose ancestral lands lay in the southeastern United States.

A Cherokee warrior named “The Ridge,” well known for his fighting and oratorical abilities, had become a leader and official spokesman for his tribe.<sup>1</sup> The Ridge married Sehoya, and the young couple built a modest log cabin in the Great Smokey Mountains of northern Georgia where they had five children. Nancy came first, then John, born in 1803; an infant who died; Walter (or “Watty”), who was mentally impaired; and in 1814, Sarah, called Sallie then and throughout this narrative.<sup>2</sup> The Ridge family lived in the traditional Cherokee way. Ridge roamed the pine-forested hills hunting game while Sehoya tended crops, prepared the food, kept house, and cared for her children.

By 1821, the entrepreneurial Ridge had earned enough money to construct a two-story log home in a Cherokee settlement called Oothcaloga (today’s Rome, Georgia). At about that time, Sehoya anglicized her name to Susannah. After The Ridge joined Andrew Jackson’s force in the 1814 Creek War, he earned the rank and was thereafter called Major Ridge. Other ambitious Cherokees were building up wealth as well, buying slaves and constructing handsome homes and plantations, as they adapted to white man’s culture and succeeded in the white man’s economy. An architect was hired to enhance the Ridge place by adding large rooms at the back, covering the logs inside and out with wood planks, and painting the exterior white.

Surrounding the house were cultivated fields, ornamental shrubs, vineyards, flower gardens, a nursery, and orchards of peach, apple, quince, cherry, and plum trees. Staple crops included cotton, tobacco, wheat, oats,



**PAINTING OF YOUNG SARAH RIDGE** by Daniel Welfare of Salem, North Carolina.

(Courtesy Chieftain’s Museum, Rome, Georgia.)

indigo, and potatoes. Cows provided milk and butter for the table and beef for the smokehouse; hogs rooted half wild around the plantation and woods; a herd of sheep provided wool for Susannah’s weaving.<sup>3</sup>

Once settled, Major Ridge built a mercantile store in 1822, a ferry on the Oostanaula River, and a toll road, all these businesses together providing a steady stream of income. A short distance away, Ridge’s brother David, his wife, and two sons were living in their new house, and Sallie enjoyed the company of her two cousins, who adopted the names Elias Boudinot and Stand Watie.

On a nearby plantation lived John Ross, a friend



**PORTRAIT OF SARAH'S MOTHER, Susannah Ridge, as imagined by artist John Holloway.** (Courtesy of Chieftain's Museum, Rome, Georgia.)

of Major Ridge. The two had been associated in dealing with tribal problems, Ross referring to Ridge as his mentor, and to cement their friendship, they built a pathway between their homes, the "Ross to Ridge Trail." After Ross was named principal chief in 1828, he fiercely upheld the Cherokees' property rights against the state of Georgia and further white encroachment.

Major Ridge, along with John Ross and others, made trips to Washington City to plead Cherokee rights with Congress, while Susannah managed the farming operations and household. Susannah taught her daughters, Sallie and Nancy, to ride sidesaddle, weave fabrics, sew, make rush baskets, and use hundreds of local plants for healing. A dark-skinned and vivacious young girl, Sallie especially enjoyed riding her horse.

In his role as a country gentleman, Major Ridge purchased an elegant carriage with fine horses, and for the house, English china, sterling silver flatware, and expensive furniture. Sallie, her parents, brothers, and sisters dressed in the latest fashions and were waited on by slaves that Ridge had purchased. Aside from field workers, there were household slaves who cooked, cleaned, ironed, and took care of all other chores, thus Sallie Ridge seemed to be a pampered young lady.

Major Ridge knew that there was one important element missing: education. Missionaries had been setting up small boarding schools in the South, and such a school located at Brainerd in southern Tennessee caught Ridge's attention. Nancy and John enrolled there and were described by the school's journalist as "son and daughter of a chief" and "tawny son and daughter of the forest. [They] have rich clothing, many garments, & some knowledge of letters."<sup>74</sup> John and Nancy studied at Brainerd for a short while, but Nancy left school to be married and died in childbirth.

Major Ridge succeeded in getting Sallie enrolled at the Salem Female Academy in Salem, North Carolina. Founded by Moravian missionaries, the school with seven brick buildings facing the town square gave

the impression of a pretty, orderly European village. Sallie entered the academy on December 24, 1826, and roomed in the girls' boarding house, a two-story brick structure with shuttered windows and a steep, red-tiled roof. The girls and teachers lived in the attic—a long dormitory with storage cubbyholes along one side, four windows with blue muslin curtains, and narrow beds in straight rows. On the beds, rawhide thongs, laced through holes in the sides and ends, supported mattresses stuffed with grain husks in summer and feathers in winter. There were rawhide-bottom straight chairs, small tables and dressers, washstands with bowl and pitcher, and wooden pegs on the walls for clothes.

A small "sick room" and two large classrooms occupied the second floor, and there the students spent most of their time. They learned reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and elementary needlework. Simple meals of soups, crusty bread, meats, and potatoes, and an occasional pie cooked in the Single Sisters' kitchen were served in the basement on long tables. The students used pewter tableware and plates and drank milk or coffee from bowls.<sup>5</sup>

At the time Sallie entered the academy, she was fifteen or sixteen, older than most of the other girls, and had a better command of English. A school diarist wrote: "at night she undressed as did the others but wrapped herself in a blanket before retiring."<sup>76</sup> A second referral to Sallie said that when a lady led a touring group of girls to the classroom, the teacher called their attention to Miss Ridge: "I vainly endeavored to catch her eye and the expression of her countenance, but she manifested not the slightest degree of curiosity at the entree [sic] of so many strangers—never raised her head from the garment at which she was busily employed, presenting a strong contrast . . . to those by whom she was surrounded, displaying most fully the indian [sic] character."<sup>77</sup> Sallie evidently had the ability to maintain her dignity when confronted with rudeness, a trait that would keep her in good stead for years to come.

During the two and a half years Sallie spent at Salem Academy, her father arranged to have her portrait painted by artist Daniel Welfare. Eliza Vierling, a schoolteacher, accompanied Sallie to the studio and described her costume as "a green dress with gold bodice and a red shawl draped over her left shoulder. Her hair is parted down the middle and hangs in shoulder length ringlets. She wears a blue ribbon around her neck and tied over her left ear."<sup>78</sup> The red shawl had been given to Sallie by her father when she was accepted by the school and was a proud part of her outfit. The artist carefully rendered the dress but depicted Sallie as a somewhat insipid looking white maiden, in spite of her handsome features and dark complexion.

In 1828 Sallie returned home, arriving at the time

a great catastrophe befell the Cherokee Nation. A gold rush exploded in northeast Georgia sixty miles from the Ridges' home and within the boundaries of Cherokee territory. Thousands of ruthless prospectors flooded the area and wreaked havoc in their frenzy to mine gold on Cherokee land. Some of the newcomers sought their wealth by providing services to the prospectors. One of these was a young, self-taught lawyer named George Paschal, who would soon cross paths with Sallie Ridge. He struggled to make a living with his law practice and by managing a small hotel in the gold rush town of Auraria. Though he failed to make much money, he learned a great deal about the plight of the Cherokees and grew familiar with the fabulous wealth of the Ridges, Rosses, Vanns, and others.

In December 1830, the Georgia Assembly announced a plan to confiscate Cherokee land, some of which had gold mines, and thereafter redistribute it to whites through a series of lotteries. Paschal and family were ecstatic over their prospects to win something with their eleven chances. Paschal later wrote:

Their country [Cherokee] was mountainous and healthful, and Switzerlanders were never more devoted to their hills. Many of them owned slaves, who cultivated extensive farms for their masters. Among them were mansions as aristocratic and tasty as any in Georgia . . . We were opposed to any cruelty toward the Indians, but we wanted the land.<sup>9</sup>

To their dismay, the Paschals won nothing of value in the lotteries, but those who did win began to use brute force to get the Cherokees off their properties, resulting in homelessness, starvation, and misery for these deposed Native Americans.

Friction between the Jackson administration and the native peoples grew stronger, as a removal law was passed by Congress in 1832. By means of false promises and meaningless treaties, this law, and its followup legislation, stood to be ruthlessly enforced.

Convinced that their cause was hopeless, Major Ridge, his son John, his nephews Elias Boudinot and Stand Watie plus a few others who represented several hundred tribal members signed the Treaty of New Echota in December 1835, ceding Cherokee land in Georgia. In return, the United States promised to give them two years to move out, \$5 million as compensation, travel provisions, and one year's subsistence.<sup>10</sup> For signing the treaty, the rest of the tribe, headed by John Ross and numbering 12,500, ruled under tribal law that the Ridge group had committed treason, the penalty for which was death. Major Ridge, Stand Watie and Elias Boudinot were well aware of their jeopardy.

In January 1837, when the two-year period had

expired, the Ridges and their relatives, plus about 450 others, gathered at New Echota, Georgia, in preparation for their journey to the West. As they waited in tents, they were given rations by the U.S. Army, which had been summoned to make sure they remained peaceful and unarmed when they departed.

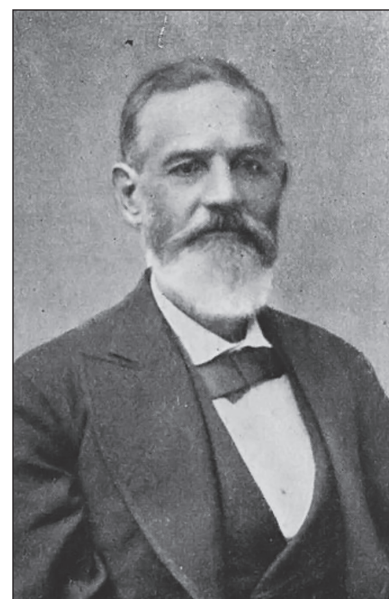
Rations consisted of one blanket, one pair of shoes, salt pork, bacon, and corn, and in some cases, cloth, thread, and needles.<sup>11</sup> One

of the soldiers guarding the Cherokee migrants was George Paschal, who, having given up on his prospects in Auraria, had joined a militia group assigned to Florida to help drive out the Seminoles. Midway there, orders came for him to go to New Echota instead.

While waiting to depart from Georgia, Major Ridge fell ill, which forced a delay in his family's departure, and during this time, George Paschal met Sallie Ridge. Well aware of her status, he began to court her by giving her a beautiful black horse. She was twenty-two years old, "a full dark Cherokee . . . a young lady of superior talent . . . very interesting in her person and appearance," reported the *Atlanta Constitution*. The story went on to say that she was a "most accomplished rider, graceful in form and movements, well dressed, mostly in blue calico, and more than one man wanted to marry her."<sup>12</sup>

On February 27, just two days before her family left New Echota, Sallie Ridge married George Paschal at the mission chapel in Brainerd, Tennessee. She and her new husband remained at New Echota, and George resigned from the army. Sallie received from her father a supply of gold to help her in the uncertain future.

Prior to boarding the river boats that would take them to Indian Territory, the Ridge group numbering 466 was transferred to Ross's Landing, and many got roaring drunk; from there they spent three weeks traveling on crude, barge-like vessels and steamboats to their destination. It was a long, arduous river journey that lasted three weeks and was described in the journal



**PORTRAIT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON PASCHAL.**

(Courtesy of Texas State Library and Archives Commission.)





**SKETCH OF VAN BUREN, ARKANSAS, WATERFRONT, CIRCA 1830.**

*(Courtesy of Eula Hopkins and Dwight Hopkins.)*

of attending physician Dr. Thomas Lillybridge. He noted that the vessels were damp, unheated, and had little protection from snow and rain. "The Keel Boats are without Stoves or fires in them . . . & present to those accustomed as many of the Emigrants are, to the many comforts of civilized life, rather a revolting spectacle."<sup>13</sup>

After two weeks, they reached Memphis and then on to the shallow, treacherous Arkansas River. Because the Ridges and Boudinots had cooperated in making the treaty, they were given accommodations for part of the trip on a steamboat, and they arrived at Van Buren, Arkansas, on March 26, 1837. Word of mouth had it that the best part of the Indian Territory lay at Honey Creek north of Van Buren. The majority of the group headed there, all in excellent spirits. At their destination, the Ridges and Boudinots bought a couple of small homes and proceeded to start building their own, which they accomplished in a short time. Major Ridge's son John set up a store and ordered supplies of mercantile goods from New York to provide the settling Cherokees with building materials and household goods. He and his father extended credit to many of them.

After a long overland trip, Sallie and George arrived there in early summer 1837, and George, along with

several other family members, went to work in John's store. They were all busy getting their lives in order and hoping to exist in peace.

But disaster was about to fall on them. By January 1839 the remainder of the Cherokees in the East had begun to straggle into Indian Territory; they had been through nightmarish forced marches from their homes, suffering terrible hardships throughout the harsh winter. Approximately 4,000 died along the way from exhaustion, hunger, and disease, and their leaders blamed the Ridge group for their travails. It came to be called "The Trail of Tears," though there had been many such trails by other tribes.

Once in Indian Territory, the Cherokee Nation, most of it under the control of John Ross, set out to punish the signers of the New Echota Treaty, which it was said in council, had contributed to the current miseries.

On June 22, 1839, assassinations against the Ridge faction were carried out by Ross executioners. Just before dawn, thirty armed men surrounded John Ridge's house, stormed inside and with guns forced Ridge to walk outside into the front yard. There, two held him tightly while others stabbed him thirty times. His wife, Sarah, son John Rollin, and mother Susannah were kept inside. It took only a few minutes for John Ridge to die,



**ARKANSAS CREEK WHERE THE ASSASSINATION OF MAJOR RIDGE OCCURRED ON JUNE 22, 1839.**

*(Photo courtesy of the author.)*

and the killers quickly left.

Major Ridge, who was traveling by horseback that day to a small town in Arkansas, stopped at a creek to water his horse. He had been followed by armed Cherokees who ambushed him from nearby woods and shot him dead with rifles. The bloodletting had not yet finished, as two more murders or executions were planned for Ridge's nephews. At Park Hill, Elias Boudinot was supervising construction of a house when three men seized him, stabbed him, and cut him to pieces with knives and tomahawks. A witness to the murder raced on horseback to Stand Watie's store and found him there in time to warn him. Watie then mounted the horse and sped away to safety.<sup>14</sup>

Ross-faction-Cherokees harassed John's wife, Sarah, at her farm, and in terror, she gathered up her children and belongings and fled to Fayetteville, Arkansas. Susannah Ridge did not have the money to move away, so she remained at home with her son Watty. Stand Watie also stayed at Honey Creek while Sallie and George Paschal moved to Van Buren.

By 1839 Arkansas River commerce had steadily increased after the first steamboat, the *Robert Thompson*, landed at Van Buren in 1822. To supply the

boats with fuel for the boilers, numerous wood yards were established along the river, one of which was set up by Thomas and David Phillips. Phillips Landing had a boat dock and store and the surrounding settlement, Columbus, sported a racetrack. In 1836, John Drennen and David Thompson bought Phillips Landing and it became part of the town of Van Buren, one mile away. That same year, Drennen built a one-story home on Third Street overlooking the town, with much of the construction material brought in by steamboat from Cincinnati.<sup>15</sup>

When Arkansas Territory became a state in 1836, the need for attorneys increased, and in 1838, Van Buren was designated Crawford County seat, a factor that may have convinced George Paschal to bring his family and settle in Van Buren. He soon constructed a brick building for his law office at Third Street and Main, near the original 1838 courthouse. *The History of Northwest Arkansas* describes the first court session as being held in "a little log house of but one room and a shed room for the clerk's office. It was located on Water Street, close to the river, halfway between the corner of Main and the foundry."<sup>16</sup>

In 1840, George formed a partnership with Andrew



Campbell, who rode throughout the territory collecting payments for credit instruments. George had been commissioned by John Ridge's wife, Sarah Northrup Ridge, to settle her husband's estate and to procure from the U.S. government the \$5,000 promised the Ridges. Although Paschal wrote a prodigious number of letters to Congress, he never succeeded in making them pay. Around the first months of 1841, George completed the construction of a two-story brick home on Third Street, a short distance up a steep hill from his Main Street office and just below John Drennen's house. From the thickly wooded hillside, the Paschals could view the bustling village on the river, and they were high enough to be safe from occasional but dangerous flooding.<sup>17</sup>

While George rode around to circuit courts and built up his law practice, Sallie stayed at home much of the time bearing children. Her first baby had been born at Honey Creek on May 1838, a little girl named Emily Anderson; her next three children were born in Van Buren, George Walter on March 1, 1841; Susan Agnes Paschal on February 20, 1843; Ridge on July 27, 1845; and Emily Agnes Paschal, on September 23, 1847.

Initially, Sallie had arrived in town suffering from acute grief over the sudden and brutal deaths of her beloved father, her brother John, and her cousin Elias Boudinot. There was no comforting her, and George wrote in a letter to John's widow, Sarah, in Fayetteville that he believed Sallie was "pretty well lost to all human and divine. She has pretty well lost the use of herself, and really it seems that further resort to medicine is unnecessary. . . . Her disease, you are aware, is of the mind. The continual lurking of a vengeful spirit which I neither can comprehend nor know how to cure."<sup>18</sup> Aside from a mental breakdown, Sallie frequently experienced chills and ague, causing her to be bedridden and out of sorts.

In a later letter to Sarah Ridge in Fayetteville, George told her that Sallie was suffering from "rheumatism that so completely prostrates her that when down she cannot rise without the most excruciating pain nor move a limb without the most tender assistance." He further explained that "she is most regular in her habits—she scolds the negroes when she first wakes—gets up about breakfast time, then flogs them all around, partly because they won't mind and partly because they do not understand dusting furniture, making pastries & . . . the finished laundries."<sup>19</sup>

Soon after the Paschals settled in Van Buren, Sallie purportedly wrote a lengthy letter to the *Arkansas Gazette* in Little Rock berating the U.S. government for not doing more to bring her family's assassins to justice.<sup>20</sup> Its pompous rhetoric appeared to be the work of her husband, George, who probably wrote it on Sarah's behalf, even though she was able to write basic, satisfactory English. In later letters to her family,

she said that she hated to write and that George was continually correcting her spelling. He fixed one of her letters thirty-two times.

In all, Sallie Ridge spent nine years in Van Buren, experiencing personal traumas. Emily Agnes, born at Honey Creek, died at the age of six in Little Rock on November 15, 1844; and three-year-old Susan, called "Soonie," died in Washington City in 1846. Sarah had traveled to both places with George so that they could spend a little time together, as her husband was rarely at home. The loss of their two lovely little girls hit the Paschals hard, and it seemed that Sallie's grief had no end.

In spite of hardships, George and Sallie managed to survive, although barely; the law business was not bringing in much income, and George tried to make extra cash by speculating in local real estate. In the 1840s, Van Buren was thriving with river trade and new hotels and businesses springing up. Most were located close to the river and along Main Street: a wholesale and retail grocery; The Mansion House (hotel and boarding house); a small dry goods store; saloon and billiard room; saloon and restaurant featuring "a nice dish of tripe or . . . baked possum"; and three mercantile establishments. In addition there was a land office, tin shop, gun store, barbershop, blacksmith, law office, and brickyard.<sup>21</sup>

As Van Buren grew with the addition of more boarding houses, hotels, and saloons, it became quite rowdy. An early traveler to the town wrote:

Some Indians were racing their ponies through the streets for the mere excitement of the thing. Here you might see half a dozen swarthy faced young men, with long black hair floating over their bare shoulders, issue from a grocery, unhitch their apparently sleeping nags, spring upon their backs, and with a wild screech fly up the road, whooping and yelling till their noise died away in the distance [and] another group would come barreling into town with the same screeching and clattering of hoofs.<sup>22</sup>

With Indian Territory just a few miles away, the closest tribes (Cherokees and Choctaws) were able to go into town to get supplies and visit the taverns. Tribal people were frequent attendees at the local racetracks—one at Fort Smith and one in Van Buren. At these events, a great deal of fighting and betting went on, as well as heavy drinking. In Indian Territory, the Choctaws staged a traditional ball game and announced it in the Van Buren paper, explaining that the ball ground was near the Kiamichi River in the Pushmatahaw District and that "great fun as well as excitement is anticipated." Yeofe Nokne, the writer, explained that his team had some "strong bullies" and that "ball dances, shouting, and all manner of aboriginal



antics will diversify the game, with acts after the fashion of the buffaloes of the prairie.” He added that their celebrated Conjuror, the Bear Bone, was now busily engaged in “his spiritual line, drilling his subordinate conjurers . . . in order to overpower the conjurers of the opposite band.”<sup>23</sup>

Disapproving of all the raucous activities in Van Buren and nearby Indian Territory, George Paschal determined to do something about it and formed a committee to build the first church in town. To this end he began to solicit donations, while writing to several missionaries he had known, inviting them to come to preach at the new Republican Church. To Reverend Daniel Butrick he said:

You have doubtless heard that this very town of Van Buren is more notorious for vice and immorality than any place in the whole west. . . . They have a ball every three months, horse races are often, and now and then there is a regular fista-cuff fight. And although our own population are [sic] generally sober, yet the transient people support about a dozen grogeries.<sup>24</sup>

To Reverend Cephas Washburn he stated: “We are to have a thundering bell that can be heard over the sounding hammering, the din of the grog shop, the music of the ballroom and the noise of the turf [racetrack].”<sup>25</sup> Eventually, the church did get built, the bell rang, and area ministers took turns conducting services.

By the end of 1842, George had made a name in legal circles and was appointed to the Arkansas Supreme Court, a position that required periodic journeys to Little Rock. However, after Paschal’s legal partner was murdered four months later, he resigned from the court to tend full time to his practice. Back in Fort Smith, he continued to try to get remunerations from the U.S. government for the Ridges and Boudinots, but to no avail, even though he made several trips to Washington to plead their case.

Sarah Ridge and Sallie had become close friends, and when she felt well, Sallie would make the arduous trip through the rugged Boston Mountains to visit her relative in Fayetteville. On one such visit, a letter arrived from George, berating Sallie for not writing to him:

When had she [his wife] a kind expression to send to anybody? I will do you the credit not to attribute this to neglect or want of feeling. I trust that it issues from no other feeling than unusual apathy. [I have never said anything] in regard to your intellectual or social attentions that I do not truthfully feel. Nevertheless, I have long since despaired of success in wishes of this kind. Pardon this seeming severity. If unwarranted, forgive it, if merited,

consider your age and ask yourself whether you could not improve.

And finally, he admonished her for spanking Emily, saying that he was unable to contest “the rules of government prescribed by his wife.”<sup>26</sup> George Paschal was frustrated with his Cherokee spouse for not living up to his high standards.

Three days later (August 23, 1841), George was forced to pen a second letter to his wife. He told her that he was shocked that after returning from church he could not find his small pocketbook containing about sixty dollars. “I had no doubt that Millie [the slave] had appropriated it. All searches proving of no use, brother gave her a severe flogging. She promised to bring the money back but has not done so.” (George’s brother was there visiting.)

Furthermore, George explained that he had unlocked Sallie’s bureau, and “I cannot find a dollar of gold or silver.” He feared for the extent of their losses and added, “Please write me where you kept the gold, in order that we may know what has become of it. . . .” He signed the letter, “Affectionately, George W. Paschal.”<sup>27</sup> No correspondence from Sallie regarding this request is known, but in all likelihood, she did not bother to reply, even though by law husbands totally controlled their wives’ money.

George’s pecuniary difficulties continued, ending in total failure to win any funds from Congress on behalf of the Ridge and Boudinot families, and he complained to Sarah Ridge that he had spent a year in Washington, bringing him nothing but debt. Later, he claimed to have caused the government to pay the Ridges and Boudinots \$5,000 each, funds that were granted them by the Treaty of 1846.<sup>28</sup>

Sarah Northrup Ridge refused to pay George Paschal, so Paschal sued her children for “everything they have on earth,” meaning their inheritance, since by Cherokee law, her children’s possessions should have passed to Sallie, their aunt. To this end, George went to Washington to “procure the whole of the \$10,000 allowed by Treaty to the Ridges. . . . I most solemnly declare him to be a swindler and a scoundrel,” wrote J. W. Washbourne, son-in-law of Sarah Northrup Ridge in May 1847.<sup>29</sup>

## Part II

By 1845, reports were appearing in newspapers that the new state of Texas had wondrous benefits to offer: cheap, fertile land, professional opportunities, and a healthful climate. Having heard of the chances of success, especially in the legal department, George had been making trips to visit his brother, Isaiah Paschal, an attorney in San Antonio, and at the end of 1847, he had acquired a license to practice law in Texas. At some

point, the brothers formed a partnership, as announced in the Van Buren paper on April 22, 1848. The ad stated that George W. Paschal would permanently reside at Galveston and his partner at San Antonio. It is doubtful that George consulted his wife about this move; he had been spending most of his time in Texas checking out the situation in Galveston, and “he made occasional trips home to visit,” wrote family historians.<sup>30</sup> For the time being, he had kept his office open in Van Buren and was operating in two places.

While George was busily setting himself up in Galveston, Sallie remained at home with her children; she had given birth September 23, 1847, to Emily Agnes, and now there were George, age six, Ridge, two, and baby Emily. Fortunately, she still had possession of the house, her slaves, and her money. Realizing that she had been totally abandoned by her husband, she packed up her furniture, family clothing and valuables, seven or eight slaves, and boarded a steamboat at Van Buren. The trip took her down the Arkansas River, then into the Mississippi, and south to New Orleans. There, she boarded a second boat and crossed the Gulf of Mexico to Galveston, where she landed in early summer of 1848. On August 31 of that year, she purchased a large lot in a prime location close to Broadway, the main town thoroughfare, and paid \$2,200.<sup>31</sup> She then ordered a pre-cut, two-story house and had it shipped from Maine and hauled to her lot at the southeast corner of Avenue H and Fourteenth Street. Once assembled, the frame house had twelve-foot ceilings, an exterior staircase, carriage house, and large cistern.<sup>32</sup>

A visitor to Galveston in 1847 wrote that he toured the town in a “fine carriage” and noticed the “clean and spacious streets and a number of churches, a fine market house, town hall and offices for the municipal court and adjunct offices.” He said that the dining was good and that there were several hotels, stately mansions with luxuriant gardens, and many shops with necessities and luxuries.”

<sup>33</sup> In the central business district near the wharves, George Paschal had set up his law office at Church Street near Tremont, and at some point, he moved into Sallie’s newly-built house.

The years 1849 and 1850 were terrible ones for Sallie. A sickly baby, John Franklin, was born February 18, 1849, and died after only six weeks. It was her third little one to pass away and a cause of great sorrow. Later that year, her mother, Susannah, died. In a letter to her cousin Stand Watie on March 14, 1850, she wrote: “This world is not the place we can expect happiness. It teaches us not to live for ourselves, but for the good of others.”<sup>34</sup>

In the summer of 1850, the annual siege of yellow fever hit Galveston, and untold numbers died. No one knew what caused the dreadful disease, called “Yellow Jack,” with symptoms of high fever, headache, backache, dizziness, nausea, jaundice of the eyes and skin, and vomiting. Hemorrhaging from the mucous membranes

led to the “black vomit,” a characteristic of the last stages. Although excruciatingly painful for the victims, about a fourth of them were able to recover. Later it was discovered that the disease stemmed from *Aedes aegypti*, a variety of mosquito that bred in swampy areas of the city. Raised houses had been built on shallow, watery land with poor drainage, and stagnant pools lay everywhere. Although not contagious, the Yellow Jack was feared to be, and tending the sick was considered extremely hazardous. (Yellow fever is a virus transmitted by the mosquito. A victim either survives and is thereafter blessed with a lifelong immunity or dies.)

There were no trained nurses in town and only a few doctors, so local citizens volunteered to help care for the afflicted. Sallie Paschal treated disease victims in her home with excellent nursing (by then, George had moved out). Typical treatment consisted of home care, rest, simple diet, doses of quinine, applications of ice, and sponge baths. Apparently, Sallie’s ministrations were successful, as she did not lose a single patient. She included in her remedies a tea made from orange tree leaves, which could be found in the vicinity. It is possible that the use of orange leaves stemmed from a Cherokee belief in “analogy”: their word for biliousness was *daloni* and their word for “yellow” was *dalonigei*. Thus, they treated biliousness with medicine made of a plant with yellow bark, root, or flower, all of which were called *daloni*; and orange trees would fit the description. After the fever siege, Dr. Edward Randall, who had heard of her great efforts, pronounced that she was “a wonder” and praised Sallie for her work.<sup>35</sup>

Though Sallie accomplished much in her nursing of the sick, she had yet to deal with her marital problems. George had become completely alienated and disdainful, and after he moved out, she hired a lawyer, Lorenzo Sherwood. On December 5, 1850, Sherwood filed a petition on behalf of Sallie for divorce, a daunting prospect at that time and with no guarantee of success. In 1850, grounds for divorce were simple. The courts could grant a decree in two situations: one was in favor of the wife where the husband “shall have abandoned her and lived in adultery with another woman”; the other “where either the husband or wife is guilty of excesses, cruel treatment, or outrages toward the other, if such ill treatment is of such a nature as to render their living together insupportable.”<sup>36</sup> As for personal property, the law read, “All property . . . of the wife . . . shall be the separate property of the wife: Provided, that during the marriage the husband shall have the sole management of all such property.”<sup>37</sup>

In her petition, Sallie said that for some years past, her husband George:

has manifested at times a great aversion to your Petitioner, and has at times and on many occasions neglected and refused to allow and acknowledge the Petitioner’s claims as his wife . . . and has continued to mortify & wound the

feelings of the Petitioner, but which your Petitioner has patiently borne in hope that her said husband would cease to treat your said Petitioner with so great repugnance.

Continuing, she explained that often George would not allow her in his presence and that for the last two years had excluded her from his bed, society, and confidence—so much so that the marriage had broken down or ceased to exist. She requested that the court grant a divorce and allow her to keep her property and retain custody of her children.

In his seven-page legal reply to the petition, George, who had hired three attorneys to represent him, outlined his possessions and debts. His properties included three slaves; part ownership of the Galveston house; home furnishings; horse and buggy; law books; and real estate holdings, most of which had liens against them. As for other debts, he had a lengthy list of those. The defendant's presence in court was not required, and once the jury had considered Sallie's evidence, they promptly returned a decision. On January 7, 1851, they pronounced that they found the allegations in her petition to be true and ordered the marriage dissolved; the children would remain in Sallie's custody until the age of fourteen; the defendant would pay support of \$100 annually and at the end of ten years the sum of \$2,800; and the slaves were awarded to Sallie as well as the house and lot with all furnishings and the horse and buggy. George would get his law library and office furniture, plus his numerous debts.

For a woman in 1851, such a successful divorce was almost impossible to obtain, but Sallie knew the Cherokee divorce custom—that the wife had only to pile the husband's possessions outside the front door of the cabin, and he would be obliged to leave. She felt that in any society, she could assert her just rights.

Four years passed while Sallie tried to untangle her financial problems with Watty's estate (he had died), payment from the U.S. government, and other matters. To get help, she enlisted her cousin Stand Watie. She made a few difficult journeys to see Stand and her mother in Indian Territory, but the arduous 600-mile stagecoach ride put a severe strain on her. On one of the trips to Honey Creek, she wrote to Stand, "I am so lame that I cannot sit up to comb my hair. I am lying in bed while I scribble you these few lines. My own back is so lame that I am unable to bear the jar the children make in walking across the floor of my room."<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, Sallie described her desires regarding her slaves, some of whom she would trade or sell, but she tried to make sure that those in the same family remained together. Interestingly, she told Stand that some of her men could "work our passage to New Orleans," meaning that she would hire them out to pay for her trip back to Galveston.



**SARAH RIDGE PASCHAL AT ABOUT AGE FORTY.**  
*(Courtesy of Paul Ridenour and McNeir Family Collection.)*

At home, Sallie was seen about town in her elegant carriage, always dressed in her finest clothes. One day, she was enjoying a buggy trip along the wide beach and decided to have some fun: she whipped her horse into a gallop and tore across the sand at full speed. Bystanders thought that she was fighting a runaway steed and came to the rescue. When they finally stopped Sallie's glorious ride, she told them that she was forcing her horse to run, as he was going too slowly.<sup>39</sup> No doubt the beach escapade was one of her few enjoyments in the proper town of Galveston.

On the serious side, Sallie knew the importance of education for her children. She enrolled George, then fourteen, in Forshey's Military Academy. In her association with the academy, Sallie apparently met one of the students, Charles Sisson Pix, son of a well-to-do local businessman, C. H. Pix, who had moved to Texas from London, set up a shipping brokerage business, and bought considerable real estate around town. Sarah and Sisson struck up a friendship and, probably thinking the other to be quite wealthy, they wed on May 18, 1856. He was nineteen and she, forty-one.

For obvious reasons, the union did not turn out well. Sisson had the idea that he could make a fortune (with Sallie's money and slaves) raising sugar cane on Smith Point, across Galveston Bay, and Sallie went



along with the plan, trading her home for that of Elianor Frankland. With scarcely a settler in the area, Smith Point was wilderness, and the Frankland property did not have sufficient acreage to raise sugar cane, so Sallie purchased cattle, and the Pixes became ranchers. While growing up, Sallie had learned much about cattle-raising, and her experience sustained the couple in the ranching business.

Shortly after the strange Pix marriage, George, then fifteen, and Ridge, eleven, informed their mother that they detested Sisson; and with that they left to live with their father, George Paschal, in Austin. At the same time, Sallie gave birth to a son, Charles Forest Pix, on July 24, 1857; and now the family consisted of Sallie, Sisson, 10-year-old daughter Emily Agnes, and baby Charles Forest.

Pix soon got embroiled with a neighbor, Henry Heiman, over land lines, with the result that Sisson tore down the Frankland house and, using slave labor, built a new one a short distance to the east on a slight ridge. It was constructed of clapboard painted white, had four rooms, a long porch across the front, and two brick fireplaces back to back. On each end was an outside stairway leading to the attic, where the slaves lived. In this dwelling, Sallie was to spend the rest of her life, from 1859 to 1891.

After the Pixes moved into their new home, Sisson revealed his mean side: He spotted a mattress lying in the yard that the slave girl, Millie, had forgotten to bring in after airing, and he flew into a violent rage. He fetched a blacksnake whip from the barn and ordered the girl to take off all her clothes and lie face down on the mattress. Then he proceeded to lash her across her back and legs until blood ran. After observing this from the front porch, 12-year-old Emily Agnes ran to her room, grabbed her pistol (she was an expert marksman) and raced into the yard to shoot Pix; but before she could fire, Sallie grabbed her arm and stopped her from killing her stepfather.

Undeterred, Sisson continued his violent ways by setting the family Newfoundland dog on a mad bull, but the bull won the battle, killing the dog. After burying their pet, the family grieved his loss, and Emily Agnes “always hated her stepfather” after his acts of cruelty.<sup>40</sup>

The year 1860 brought the election of Abraham Lincoln, and on April 12, 1861, the first shots were fired in the Civil War, changing the lives of Americans in drastic ways. At the time, George and Ridge Paschal were living in Austin, Texas, with their father, who had imbued them with fervent Unionist loyalties. George, then a law student, had reached the age of twenty and was itching to fight. Union ships had blockaded the entrance to Galveston, so in mid-summer 1861, he traveled to Smith Point to carry out a plan to escape from Texas. When he confided to Emily Agnes that he wanted to get into the Union army, she bought a small cat-rigged sailboat for him to make good his escape. Late one night, he gathered a few clothes and his slave, Andy, and they embarked in the darkness, going



**PORTRAIT OF SARAH, HUSBAND CHARLES SISSON PIX, AND THEIR SON, FOREST.**

*(Courtesy Paul Ridenour and McNeir Family Collection.)*

south toward the Gulf of Mexico. Andy, who believed they were headed for Galveston, kept telling his master he was steering the wrong direction, but to no avail. They sailed right out Bolivar Roads and stopped alongside one of the Union ships, where sailors hauled the two aboard. To destroy the evidence, the crew dropped an old cannon onto the sailboat and sank it. George then enlisted in the Union army.<sup>41</sup>

When they heard about this escapade, Confederate military officials in Galveston suspected that George’s brother, Ridge, might follow suit. Ridge Paschal had arrived at Smith Point in 1862, a time when the South urgently needed fighting men and was using drastic action to round up all they could find. After a marshal made two failed searches at Sallie’s house for Ridge (he was hidden in a haystack the first time, then in the attic), the third time they were successful in surprising Ridge, took the boy by force, and with Sallie in tow, sailed to Galveston, where CSA General Xavier B. Debray interviewed the prisoner. Sympathetic to Ridge’s story, the general allowed the boy and Sallie to return home.



**SARAH'S SON, LT. COL. GEORGE WALTER PASCHAL, JUNIOR, IN UNION ARMY UNIFORM, 1865.**  
(Courtesy DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University)

Mrs. Sallie Pix was not happy about the actions of the Confederate army and let its officers know in a letter to General John B. Magruder, the heroic officer who, with his "cottonclads" had made a bold attack on the Union ships on New Year's Day, driving them away from Galveston. His status as the savior of the island made no difference to Sallie, who blasted all her guns at him: "You are the master by whose order I and my family are being chastised. . . . May I humbly ask you the cause? . . . That armed men should come to take my sick child out of his bed, march him three miles through a prairie exposed to the scorching rays of a July sun!" She went on to say that when she punished her slaves, she always informed them of her displeasure and that she was taking it for granted that he was "equally humane." Furthermore, she opined, "this cool impudence is unequaled this side of Russia."

The attack went on for many pages, reprimanding the general for unfair treatment and extolling the noble efforts of her husband, Sisson Pix, in training a militia group at Smith Point for the Rebels. In the last paragraph of her letter, Sallie jibed:

I have been in Texas fifteen years & am well known to many persons in Galveston. I have not told you more than half our annoyances. But do you not think we have had enough. Therefore in future will you not forbare [sic] to afflict us.<sup>42</sup>

Although there was no further trouble from Confederate generals, the Civil War brought severe hardships to the Galveston area. The Union blockade had cut off essential supplies for daily living, and many citizens fled Galveston, which had no staples such as flour, coffee, sugar, matches, or medicines. Women had to revert to old-fashioned methods of survival. At Smith Point, the farm was sustaining them, but Sisson was earning nothing from his militia efforts and now had a damaged hand. To help her husband earn some income, Sallie begged her cousin, Stand Watie, to put Sisson in a paying position. At that point Watie was a brigadier general in the Southern army and headed an Indian regiment, "The First Indian Brigade." In July 1864, after much insistence from Sallie, General Watie agreed to take on Sisson as a kind of aide or assistant, but details are not known, except that Sisson did go to Indian Territory and remained there until the end of the war.<sup>43</sup>

In the spring of 1864 Sallie described her situation to cousin Stand Watie:

Emily my daughter & my little son Forest, with three negro women & two boys, are all alone on this Point. The nearest neighbor being 12 or 15 miles off, unless we except two men who have brought their wives & occupy a vacant house nearby. They are worse than nobody, as the men annoy us when they are at home by shooting our cattle and killing our hogs. I am timid and do not like to be left without some protection. Ridge is engaged in gathering beeves [wild cattle] to feed the army.

Continuing, she wrote that she had hired out three negroes for six months but did not get enough income to "buy me a spinning wheel & two pair of cards, and my income for the past year or two is less than half my take. The farm will furnish us bread & meat, but we need clothes very badly and money for our taxes."

<sup>44</sup> According to family historians, Stand Watie did help Sallie pay her property taxes so that she could remain in her house.

People all over the South were suffering in 1864, and in that year Sisson's mother wrote to Sallie that

the Pix family was out of money and needed help. On their behalf, Sallie wrote a letter to her missing son, George, in care of Union Army headquarters, telling him that she was sorry he had joined the federal service but forgave him. Further, she requested that he assist in getting Mrs. Pix and daughter safely back to Galveston from Philadelphia, and if possible, for them to bring as much clothing as they could, “especially 2 or 3 musquitoe [sic] bars.” Ending the letter, she explained that they had no coffee or tea, but the things they were raising on the farm gave them plenty to eat.<sup>45</sup>

When the Civil War ended, Sallie’s newly freed slaves were forced to find other jobs as best they could. She could not afford to pay them wages, and her Confederate money was worthless. With the slaves gone, she had only herself and young son Forest to manage the small farm and cattle herd. Emily Agnes had left in 1867 at age twenty to work for her father in Austin. Even when Sisson returned, he did not offer much help; instead, he started to spend time with the Dick family and their twelve children. Emma Dick, age thirteen, caught Sisson’s eye (he was thirty-two), and they began a secret affair that lasted for several years. In 1872, the pair ran off to Galveston and set up housekeeping together.

Sallie, now fifty-eight, was forced to struggle on, helped by her fifteen-year-old son Forest, who had learned to ride and shoot a shotgun. He was able to bring in a bit of income by hunting wild ducks and geese for the Galveston market. Two years later (1874), while visiting Galveston, the boy contracted malaria and there died. Sallie had the body brought back to her house in a wooden coffin, but Pix refused to let her bury him at Smith Point, so the body lay in her yard for eleven months. After her son George heard of the situation, he rode to Galveston, confronted Mr. Pix, and told him that “any further hindrance would result in him being beaten half to death.”<sup>46</sup> The result was that George paid for a vault for the body and had Forest buried near the house under a live oak that the boy had planted as an acorn.

Living alone, Sallie somehow managed to keep going. In September 1875, a deadly hurricane struck the area, the worst since that of 1837. With no warning, the storm bore into the land with high winds, driving water from the bay inland and wrecking several homes on the shore of Smith Point. Because Sallie’s house sat on a ridge away from the shore, it did not suffer severe damage, but Sallie had to spend the entire time huddled inside listening to the shrieking and moaning wind, creaking and crashing of tree branches, and wondering if the roof would fly off. It was a terrifying experience. Afterward, high water covered most of Smith Point, and damage was

extensive in the area: At Wallisville, several homes and businesses were destroyed, and area farmers and ranchers suffered heavy losses of livestock and crops.<sup>47</sup>

Sallie’s farm became desolate, with fallen fences and fields full of weeds, and she was helpless to do anything about it. Two years after the storm, Sallie’s daughter Emily Agnes, her husband, William McNeir, and son, Forest, arrived at Smith Point to help Emily’s mother, who was in dire straits. William had no talent for business or farming, but he landed a job as a teacher at a small nearby school; however, his service in the Civil War had affected his health, and he fell ill and died August 8, 1879. His death left Emily Agnes, Sallie, and two children, Forest and his new little brother, George Paschal McNeir, born in 1877. The McNeir family in Washington gave them assistance by sending cash and clothing, and Stand Watie paid the taxes on the house for fifteen years. “We struggled and starved,” wrote Forest McNeir, “but got along somehow, picking blackberries and wild plums, which we sent to Galveston on the Mail Boat, which made two trips a week if the wind was fair.” At times, they went to bed hungry and often had little or nothing to eat for breakfast. Every day, they hoped that the mail boat would return with groceries bought with payment for the small amounts of food they had sold. Forest said, “The family purse was empty most of the time.”<sup>48</sup>

When Emily Agnes learned that Sisson Pix had run off with a teenage girl and abandoned her mother, she became furious and insisted that Sallie divorce him. At the age of sixty-five, Sallie did not have much of her old fight left and wanted to forget the idea, but Emily Agnes persisted. Finally, the two women enlisted an attorney, William Chambers, and filed a divorce petition in Wallisville on January 16, 1880. It stated that Pix had left Sallie with the intention of abandonment and was still gone and that Sallie had conducted herself with propriety and had managed the household affairs. Further, it stated that Pix had, since he left, “ever since neglected and refused to provide for her support and maintenance.” And, continued the petition, Sallie owned the house, horses, and about sixty head of cattle, which Pix had failed to help maintain and for which she had to pay fifty dollars plus taxes. Emily Agnes had previously loaned her \$500, and Pix had “failed to use and expend it for her support and comfort.” Lastly, Sarah claimed a shotgun worth seventy-five dollars, previously owned by son Forest, now in the possession of Pix. The petition asked that the court award her payment for half the gun value, all the cattle and horses, and to dissolve the marriage.<sup>49</sup>

Sisson’s response was that Sallie’s requests were “insufficient by law,” and he prayed that the court



would rule in his favor, granting him Forest's shotgun "as heir," and that the cattle be divided into "two equal portions." On March 8, 1880, the judge ruled that the marriage was dissolved; that all the cattle, cows, and calves be equally divided between plaintiff and defendant; and that the horses be given to the plaintiff.<sup>50</sup>

The granting of half her cattle to Sisson Pix came as a terrible blow to Sarah, whose prized possession was her small herd. At the hearing, Emily Agnes demanded that Sisson reveal how much money he had possessed when he married Sallie. The answer: nineteen dollars. Outraged at his reply and stung by defeat, Emily Agnes remained in Wallisville and spent that night composing a fiery, seven-page amended petition, which she filed the next day. In it, she made it crystal clear that Sallie had acquired her home and cattle on Smith Point from Elianor Frankland in exchange for her house in Galveston, which was separate property granted in her previous divorce. The plea fell on sympathetic ears, and a motion for a new trial was filed. When the case went to court on September 9, 1880, the judge ruled that Sallie would recover from Pix all the cattle in Chambers County branded FP, all the horses branded FP, one gray stallion branded DW, and one double-barrel shotgun. Pix would be awarded nothing and would be obliged to pay the court costs, as well. Immediately after Judge Hobby made his pronouncement, men rushed out of the courthouse volubly telling one another, "That little widow [Emily Agnes] won her case in spite of Pix's lawyer and her own, too. . . . When she offered her lawyer a check for \$50.00 as his fee, he said, 'Mrs. McNeir, I should not take this money, because people are saying you won this case,' To which Emily replied, 'Never mind that; your fee was fifty dollars and we pay our debts.'"<sup>51</sup>

Just after the divorce, more trouble ensued. Emma Dick's five older brothers—George, Thomas, Lee, Raphael, and Benajah—were night-riding around Smith Point, armed with .44-caliber Winchester rifles and six-shooters, terrorizing inhabitants by shooting through their windows and doors. In addition, they brazenly stole cattle, butchered them, and sold the meat to locals. The hides were loaded onto a boat manned by Benajah, known as "Ninny," and transported to Galveston. No one could stop them, and local ranchers were getting irate over their losses. They summoned the sheriff, who delegated them as a posse, and together they rode to the Dicks' landing, where they found a pile of fresh, salted hides with Robert White's brand on them. Ninny came out of his house and walked to the landing with a shotgun and two dogs. There, the sheriff questioned him about the hides, but he denied knowing anything about them. When Ninny spotted Charles Wilborn in the posse, he started yelling insults and offered to fight him. (A month

previously, Ninny Dick and George Dick had waylaid Charles as he exited from the marsh with a shotgun and some ducks. George covered him while Ninny took his own gun and punched out Charles's front teeth with the muzzle, saying that his girlfriend would not be kissing him anymore.) Now at the dock, both men started to raise their weapons, and Charles fired, seriously wounding Ninny Dick. The sheriff, sitting on a log nearby and whittling a stick, arrested Wilborn and sent for a doctor, but the Dick family took matters into their own hands and transported Ninny across the bay to Sisson Pix's house in Galveston. Shortly thereafter, Ninny died, and somewhat later, a jury acquitted Charles Wilborn on grounds of self-defense.<sup>52</sup>

Determined to stop the thieving and terror, local cattlemen drew up a deed for the Dick property and took it to the Dick ranch one night. They presented John Dick with cash, he agreed to accept it and signed the deed, swearing to leave the county under the threat of being shot on sight. "Their sons, though under bond, went with him on the boat one night, taking their saddles and guns," wrote George McNeir, "and Chambers County has been a good place to live ever since."<sup>53</sup>

Although free of worry about her cattle being stolen, Sallie Pix yet faced seven more years of hardship. Emily Agnes, George Paschal, and Forest worked hard doing everything they could to assure their survival. They collected firewood, rode their horses for miles collecting plums, figs, and grapes to sell in Galveston, gathered oysters, captured wild cattle, and did other hard work. When the boys grew old enough to shoot, they became expert marksmen and killed great numbers of migratory ducks and geese, which brought excellent prices in Galveston. George and Forest even constructed a sturdy sailboat that they named *Cora Dean*, and they became first-rate sailors. With their assistance and the help of an Englishman named Mr. LeBert, who arrived one day and became Sallie's tenant sharecropper and handyman, the little family managed to eke out a living.

Throughout her time on Smith Point, Sallie was well known as a healer, who could and did use local plants and simple remedies for minor wounds and ailments. With the only doctor thirty miles away in Wallisville, neighbors frequently come to her for her knowledge of Cherokee healing methods. Sallie and Emily Agnes spent many an hour nursing the sick and wounded with great success, an invaluable service in that day and one for which Sallie would be long remembered.

On January 8, 1891, at the age of seventy-seven, Sallie Ridge Paschal Pix passed away. For her burial, the family clothed her in a simple dress that her grandson George had made for her. They laid her to rest in the small cemetery near her son Forest, under the big oak tree; and through the years, other family members were interred there as well. A simple

wrought-iron fence was built around the tombstones, a marble angel stood guard, and the old oak spread its branches over all.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Cherokees had several names during their lifetimes, and as a young hunter, Sarah's father was called Kah-nung-da-tla-geh, "The Man Who Walks on the Mountaintop." White men called him The Ridge. Years later, he adopted the name Major Ridge.
- <sup>2</sup> Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and Decimation of a People* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 34.
- <sup>3</sup> Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 188.
- <sup>4</sup> *Brainerd Journal*, May 14, 1817, Houghton Library, ABC, 18.3.1, II as quoted in Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, 98.
- <sup>5</sup> Frances Griffin, *Less Time for Meddling: A History of Salem Academy and College 1772-1866* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1979), 40, 55, 160.
- <sup>6</sup> Eliza Vierling, "Bits of Old Salem Gossip," unpublished manuscript, Salem College Library Historical Collection, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
- <sup>7</sup> "Diary of Juliana Margaret Connor," June 23, 1827, Southern History Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- <sup>8</sup> Vierling, "Bits of Old Salem Gossip."
- <sup>9</sup> George W. Paschal, *Ninety-four Years: Agnes Paschal* (Washington, D.C.: McGill & Witherow, 1871), 291.
- <sup>10</sup> Twenty-fourth Congress, first session, *Senate Journal*, May 30, 1836, 547.
- <sup>11</sup> Cherokee Ration Books (Signal Mountain, Tennessee: Mountain Press, 1999), various pages.
- <sup>12</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, October 27, 1889, 5.
- <sup>13</sup> Grant Foreman, Ed., "Notes and Documents: Journey of a Party of Cherokee Emigrants," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 18, No. 2 (September 1931): 232-245.
- <sup>14</sup> Grant Foreman, "The Murder of Elias Boudinot," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* XII, 1, (March 1934): 21-24. In 1890, John Ross's son, Allen, testified that he had been with his father all day the day of the murders and that Ross had no knowledge of the planning and executions.
- <sup>15</sup> Clara B. Eno, *History of Crawford County, Arkansas* (Van Buren, Arkansas: The Press Argus, n.d.), 73.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.
- <sup>18</sup> George Paschal to Sarah Ridge, April 14, 1840, Eno Collection, quoted in *Flashback*, 23 (February 1973): 3, 4.
- <sup>19</sup> George Paschal to Sarah Ridge, November 8, 1840, in Eno Collection, George W. Paschal Letter Books, quoted in *Flashback* 23 (February 1973): 6, 7.
- <sup>20</sup> *Little Rock, Arkansas. Gazette*, December 21, 1839.
- <sup>21</sup> Eno, *History of Crawford County*, 95, 96.
- <sup>22</sup> Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), 202.
- <sup>23</sup> Van Buren, *Arkansas, Intelligencer*, June 8, 1844.
- <sup>24</sup> George Paschal to Daniel Butrick, July 2, 1840, in Eno Collection, George W. Paschal Letter Books, quoted in Eno, *History of Crawford County*, 455, 456.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 454, 455.
- <sup>26</sup> Eno Collection, George W. Paschal Letter Books, 3, May 29, 1841, in Eno, *History of Crawford County*, 243-246.
- <sup>27</sup> George Paschal to Cephas Washburn, July 2, 1840 in George W. Paschal Letter Books, Eno, *History of Crawford County*, 247.
- <sup>28</sup> George Paschal to Sarah Ridge, January 27, 1846, Eno Collection, "Paschal Letters (1840-1847)," *Flashback*, 23 (February 1973): 16, 17. Paschal dropped the lawsuit before it went to court.
- <sup>29</sup> J. W. Washbourne to Hon. William Medill, May 27, 1847, Office of Indian Affairs, "Paschal Letters (1840-1847)," *Flashback* 23 (February 1973): 17, 18.
- <sup>30</sup> Amelia W. Williams, "Paschal, George Washington," *New Handbook of Texas* 5 (Austin: Texas Historical Association, 1996): 80; Katherine Agnes Paschal McNeir Stuart, "A Brief Biography of the Indian Princess: Sarah Ridge," typescript, 10.
- <sup>31</sup> Galveston County Deed Records, Book F, Page 604, 605.
- <sup>32</sup> Forest McNeir, *Forest McNeir of Texas* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company), 20.
- <sup>33</sup> "The City of Galveston," *De Bow's Review* 3 (April 1847): 348.
- <sup>34</sup> Sarah Paschal to Stand Watie, March 14, 1850, *Cherokee Nation Papers Collection*, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Roll 40, Folder No. 4440.
- <sup>35</sup> Stuart, "A Brief Biography," 11, 12.
- <sup>36</sup> Oliver Cromwell Hartley, *A Digest of the Laws of Texas* (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Co.: 1850), 282.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 737.
- <sup>38</sup> Sarah Paschal to Stand Watie, June 22, 1852, *Cherokee Nation Papers Collection*, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Roll 39, Folder 4090.
- <sup>39</sup> Stuart, "A Brief Biography," 27.
- <sup>40</sup> George P. McNeir, "Sarah Ridge Paschal Pix," typescript, 9.
- <sup>41</sup> McNeir, *Forest McNeir of Texas*, 22, 23.
- <sup>42</sup> Sarah Pix to General John Bankhead Magruder, August 3, 1863, in National Archives War Department, Collection of Confederate Records, RG 109, accessed at [www.footnote.com/image/#46532877](http://www.footnote.com/image/#46532877).
- <sup>43</sup> And for Stand Watie, that was not until June 23, 1865, at Doaksville, Indian Territory, when he became the last Confederate general to surrender his army.
- <sup>44</sup> Sallie Pix to Stand Watie, May 25, 1864 in *Cherokee Nation Papers Collection*, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Roll 47, Folder 6880.
- <sup>45</sup> Sarah Pix to George Paschal, May 27, 1864, in National Archives War Department, Collection of Confederate Records, RG 109, accessed at [www.footnote.com/image/#46519703](http://www.footnote.com/image/#46519703).
- <sup>46</sup> George P. McNeir, "Sarah Ridge Paschal Pix," typescript, 12, 13.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-18.
- <sup>48</sup> Forest McNeir, *Forest McNeir of Texas*, 2, 3.
- <sup>49</sup> Sarah Pix v. Charles Pix, Petition, Cause 149, District Court Minutes, Chambers County, Texas.
- <sup>50</sup> Sarah Pix v. Charles S. Pix, Divorce Decree, March 8, 1880, District Court Minutes, Chambers County, Texas.
- <sup>51</sup> George P. McNeir, "History of Smith Point," typescript, 11, 12.
- <sup>52</sup> *Galveston Daily News*, August 12, 13, 15, October 3, 4, 1884.
- <sup>53</sup> George P. McNeir, "That Dick Affair," typescript, 3, 4.

# Who Knew?

**T**he Fort Smith Historical Society welcomes inquiries pertaining to Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas. There are volunteers who are knowledgeable in different segments of Fort Smith's history. They will know the answer or will suggest where to look for that answer.

The George W. Shunk query caused us to scratch our heads more than once. Just as we thought we had thought we had met Mr. Shunk's final resting place, another roadblock was thrown in front of us. To veer off the path is not always a bad thing.

## George W. Shunk Query

### Question from L.H.:

I am trying to locate the burial site for George W. Shunk. I have confirmed through the genealogy dept at the Fort Smith Public Library that he was interred at Oak curtesy of the town of Fort Smith, according to a newspaper obit by Fentress, (Found later that: The Fort Smith Public Library has a book provided by Fentress Funeral Home. It contains copies of obituaries that appeared in the local papers. In this book there are Putman, Funeral home copies too. George Shunk's burial was handled by Putman Funeral Home.) His date of death was Oct. 24, 1929. I used the search engine on the Historical site Oak Cemetery page for him and his wife, Mary Agnes Shunk, but came up with no records found. Who do I contact to locate these two graves? Thank you for your time.

\*\*\*

### Answer from M.J.:

So sorry to be so slow answering your query, I am afraid that I did not fare well. You wanted to know the final resting place of Mary A Shunk and George W Shunk. I did list the other "Shunks" that were found while looking for George W and Mary Agnes Shunk's records in Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas, perhaps at least this will help you gather family records. George W Shunk was buried by Fentress Funeral home who reported his burial to be in Oak by the City of Fort Smith, Sebastian,

Arkansas in what was possibly a paupers grave. I did not find any actual grave site of George and Mary Agnes Shunk in Oak Cemetery, I am so sorry to say. This rightly is a disappointment and I apologize to you.

The Fort Smith Main Library 3201 Rogers Avenue, Genealogy Department houses the old Fort Smith, Arkansas, Fentress Funeral Home records from September 10, 1909-January 4, 1979. To rule out all error I decided to visit and look at each record source in person. Not that I expected any other outcome, the record did verify that the Fentress Funeral Home Records state that the body of George W Shunk was interred in Oak Cemetery.

I also visited the Sexton House. The building provides office space and a storage area to preserve burial records. The museum within the Sexton House displays pictures, historical artifacts and documents, a multi-media center is also available. A pavilion is beside the museum. Graveside services are required to be held in the pavilion now, which is so nice for families in inclement weather. The Oak Cemetery is on the National Register of Historic Places and is one of the oldest burial sites in the State of Arkansas.

I am filling you in on what the Cemetery offers now and how there are safeguards for the records now. These records are also on a computer in under the Fort Smith Parks and Recreation web site. The Sexton also uses the book by Sue Clark "Oak Cemetery." The bottom line is the Sexton confirmed that he had no records for Mary Agnes and George W Shunk in Oak Cemetery. He is not allowed to add George W and Mary Agnes to the list of burials in Oak Cemetery unless the City Clerk's Office makes it official. I understand this totally. The Sexton referred me to a "Barbara" whose office is in the Creekmore Park Community building.

I then visited the office of Fort Smith Parks City Clerk's office located in the Creekmore Community Center, 3301 South M Street, Fort Smith, AR 72903. They are linked with the City Clerk's Interment Records; those records confirm that the City Clerk did not have a record of a burial of George W Shunk in Oak Cemetery Fort Smith, Arkansas. The manager of this office was on vacation and Barbara suggested that we meet later when he was back and had a few days to get caught back up after his vacation. I did



call Barbara two weeks later and she was out of the office. I am ashamed to say since then I have dropped the ball. Barbara did explain that any change to the burial records for Oak Cemetery would have to come from the City Clerk. I understand that fully.

One important thing to note: George W. Shunk did die on October 24, 1929, the day that the Stock Market crashed in our Country. There would have been quite a bit of confusion during this time and it could account for there being no other record of the burial of George W Shunk by the Sexton or City Clerk. I am sure that was a confusing time for everyone. I have included the following records in hopes that they might help your search in some way. (If it does,) I will pick up the ball again and see if there is anything I can do to help you. This may be as far as it gets though. I must tell you how impressed I was with each and every one I talked to while looking for the grave sites for George W Shunk and Mary Agnes Shunk.

#### **Records found:**

Shunk, George—Sebastian County—October 24, 1929—Roll number: 19241933

*The following records can be found on the Fort Smith Public Library searchable Sebastian County Marriage Records Index.*

This index includes individuals married in Sebastian County (Fort Smith and Greenwood) from years 1863-June 14, 2001. The years of 1847 and 1861 are included as well. The Source Information is found in the Sebastian County Clerk's marriage records. These records are updated periodically. I included marriage data of Shunks for you. During the dates listed above there were not any Brides with the maiden name Shunk. The Shunk Grooms married in Sebastian County during this time are:

#### **Sebastian County Marriage Records Index**

##### *Record 1*

Year: 1986

County District: Fort Smith

Book: 00107

Page: 117

Bride Name: LEE, SHEILA MARIE

Bride Age: 25

Groom Name: SHUNK, CHRIS JACKSON

Groom Age: 32

Date of Marriage: 19861216

NELSON SCOTT

##### *Record 2*

Year: 1993

County District: Fort Smith

Book: 129

Page: 715

Bride Name: BROONER, BRENDA GLEE

Bride Age: 47

Groom Name: SHUNK, CRIS JACKSON

Groom Age: 39

Date of Marriage: 19931207

DONALD E. CARTER

##### *Record 3*

Year: 1929

County District: Fort Smith

Book: 00003

Page: 301

Bride Name: FAINE, BONNIE

Bride Age: 23

Groom Name: SHUNK, PAUL

Groom Age: 25

Date of Marriage: 19290914

J M MOODY

According to the Arkansas State records, George Shunk died in Sebastian County—1929 October 24, Roll Number 19241933.

#### **1900 Census**

George W Shunk 59

Mary A Shunk 43

Agnes M Shunk 18

Alice M Shunk 18

Blanche Shunk 15

Hattie G Shunk 12

Edna Shunk 8

Dollie Shunk 7

Grace Shunk 4

Cathleen Shunk 2

#### **1900 Census**

Name: George W Shunk

Age: 59

Born: Sept 1840

Birthplace: New Jersey

Home 1900: Loyalhanna, Westmoreland, Pennsylvania

Race: White

Gender: Male

Relation to head of house: Head

Marital Status: Married

Spouse's Name: Mary A Shunk

Marriage Year: 1879

Years Married: 21

Father's Birthplace: Pennsylvania

Mother's Birthplace: Pennsylvania

#### **1900 Census**

Name: Mary A Shunk

Age: 43  
 Born: Feb 1857  
 Birthplace: Pennsylvania  
 Home 1900: Loyallhanna, Westmoreland,  
 Pennsylvania  
 Race: White  
 Gender: Female  
 Relation to head of house: Wife  
 Marital Status: Married  
 Spouse's Name: George W Shunk  
 Marriage Year: 1879  
 Years Married: 21  
 Father's Birthplace: Pennsylvania  
 Mother's Birthplace: Pennsylvania  
 Mother—Number of Living children: 11  
 Mother—How many Children: 11

t

**Burial Records for Shunks interred in Fort  
 Smith, Sebastian, Arkansas**

Daisy Shunk  
 Died: April 9, 1952  
 Age: 48  
 Interred: Rose Lawn  
 Year: 1952

George Shunk  
 Died: 1947  
 Interred: Rose Lawn  
 Year: 1947

Grace Shunk  
 Died: Dec. 28, 1964  
 Age: 81  
 Interred: Rose Lawn  
 Year: 1964

Paul Shunk  
 Died: April 16, 1955  
 Age: 50  
 Interred: Rose Lawn  
 Year: 1955

(These searchable records can be found through  
 the Fort Smith Public Library website. <http://sophie.fortsmithlibrary.org/irgendbmenu.html>)

The source of these records is the official "Record  
 of Report of Deaths Filed with the City Clerk of  
 Fort Smith Arkansas." Deaths were first recorded  
 with the City of Fort Smith in 1881, and continued  
 to be recorded at the city level until 1965. Many  
 local deaths were never recorded with the city. These  
 records are in the process of being indexed, and will  
 be updated periodically. The period currently covered  
 by this index is 1881-1924.

The deceased included in this list are buried  
 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The information was  
 taken from interment records from the following  
 cemeteries: Calvary (Catholic)—to 1991; Forest  
 Park—1910-1988; Rose Lawn & Holy Cross—1930-  
 1991; U.S. National Cemetery—to 1990; Washington  
 Cemetery—1943-1996; Woodlawn Memorial Park—  
 1959-1989.

There are no Shunks listed in, "Oak Cemetery  
 Fort Smith, Arkansas," written by Sue Clark. This  
 book includes interment records from the Sexton's  
 Office and the City Clerk's Office. Interments at the  
 City Clerk's Office began in 1902. The interment  
 records from Oak Grove Cemetery contain records  
 from 1875 to 1893. The City Death Records and  
 Birnie Funeral Home Record Books were used to fill  
 in the years 1893-1902, which were missing from the  
 interment books.

**Arkansas Death Index, 1914-1950 -10/24/1929  
 Arkansas Death Record**

**City Death Records:**

The source of these records is the official "Record  
 of Report of Deaths Filed With the City Clerk of  
 Fort Smith Arkansas." Deaths were first recorded  
 with the City of Fort Smith in 1881, and continued  
 to be recorded at the city level until 1965. Many  
 local deaths were never recorded with the city. These  
 records are in the process of being indexed, and will  
 be updated periodically. The period currently covered  
 by this index is 1881-1924.

Last Name- SHUNCK (?)  
 First Name- FRANCES  
 Middle Name- MRS.  
 Died- APR 1905  
 Book- 2 Page 143  
 Year of Death- 1905

Last Name- SHUNK  
 First Name- GEORGE  
 Middle Name- None Given  
 Died- June 23, 1947  
 Book- 6 Page- None Given  
 Year of Death- 1947

Last Name- SHUNK  
 First Name- DAISY  
 Middle Name- L  
 Died- April 9, 1953  
 Book- 6 Page- None Given  
 Year of Death- 1953

Last Name- SHUNK  
 First Name- PAUL

Middle Name- None Given  
Died- APRIL 15, 1955  
Book- 6 Page- None Given  
Year of Death- 1955

End of Answer

\*\*\*

**Answer from MJ:**

More on George Shunk  
LH,

We always send our queries to the other volunteers who have agreed to do look-ups. When it was sent to the volunteers, our volunteer CB noticed that I did not have anything looked up from "Find-a-Grave." When I looked, there it was!

(Since you had a copy of the obituary provided by the library and it said that George Shunk was buried in Oak Cemetery, I did not look up the obituary. I was trying to determine if Mr. Shunk was actually buried in Oak Cemetery since the paper said he was and the cemetery and all other records did not show George Shunk being buried there.)

(The article is a bit hard to read, I went to the library to see if I could get a cleaner, clearer copy of the article but did not get a copy much better.)

\*\*\*

**Note from volunteer CB:**

MJ, I can find no records for the man or his wife, but have only the same records you have already seen. I don't know what could be done to be of more help. Wonder if "Find a Grave" internet site might have any way to help. CB

The article read:

**FUNDS ARE VOLUNTEERED  
FOR FUNERAL OF SHUNK**

Although forsaken by his relatives, George Shunk, 89 years old, the "little gray-haired", man who died in a Fort Smith hospital early Thursday, will not be given a pauper's funeral. The mayor of Fort Smith, the sheriff of Sebastian county and the citizens of Fort Smith have volunteered funds for his funeral.

Funeral service will be conducted at 10:30 o'clock Saturday morning at the Putman Funeral home. Burial will be in Oak Grove Cemetery. The minister has not been selected.

On a personal note, in a Fort Smith City Directory, George Shunk was a retired window glass

blower. My Grandfather worked at the same glass plant as George Shunk. His job was Traffic Manager, he was in charge of getting in the shipments of raw materials and shipping out the finished products. I am sure they probably knew each other. My Grandfather was younger than your relative but died in August of 1929 just a couple of months before your relative. He died of what is a routine surgery now, a ruptured appendix.

\*\*\*

**Answer from CB:**

Please see the email below from Aaron Lee. She is assistant to Mike Alsup, parks department director. You know Oak Cemetery is under the park department care.

Have you checked the funeral home records at the library? This new spelling might clear up the mystery:

\*\*\*

**Answer from AL:**

Good morning CB! I'll have to check with Mike to see what he says, but I found a George Shurick on the Oak website. He was buried 1929. I wonder if they could have gotten the name wrong in the paper. Also on the old hand written books it looks like George Shurick, but in Sue Clark's book she has him listed as George Shurich in 1929. Who knows... maybe Shurick & Shunk are two different people. It's hard to tell. I'll send this message on to Mike also to see what he says. Sorry that I didn't find more info.

Aaron Lee

Fort Smith Parks & Recreation

\*\*\*

**Question from CB to AL:**

To: AL

Subject: Fw: Interest in the Fort Smith Historical Society Society-Oak Cemetery

Please see the emails below, and tell me if there is anything we can do. There are no records to show that George Shunk was buried in Oak Cemetery in 1929, but MB, our researcher, has found this news article about his death and burial. Is there any way for us to include him in Oaks records?

I don't have BC's email, so will trust this to you.

Thanks,

CB

Fort Smith Historical Society



# Book Reviews

**Robert J. Willoughby. *The Brothers Robidoux and the Opening of the American West*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2012, 252 pp.**

In telling the story of the Robidoux family, University of Arkansas—Fort Smith Professor Robert Willoughby has given us a most informative and carefully researched book on the opening of the American West and the fur trade.

The family was composed of French-speaking, Catholic fur-traders and merchants in Montreal. Sometime after the British took over Quebec in 1763, the Joseph Robidoux, father and son, came to the recently established French-speaking town of St. Louis on the west bank of the Mississippi. The area that would later become the states of Missouri and Arkansas, among others, had recently been transferred from France to Spain so that it remained under a Roman Catholic government. The first record of the Robidoux family in St. Louis is dated April 1771. From that time forward, Joseph Robidoux II became a real estate investor, broker, bakery owner, farmer, and fur trader.

Joseph II and his wife raised six sons in St. Louis, born between 1784 and 1798. Willoughby's book chiefly concerns the activities of the six brothers and especially the eldest brother, Joseph Robidoux III. The latter began to lead expeditions to trade with the Indians for fur up both the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers starting in 1803. Joseph Robidoux III spent most of the remainder of his life along the Missouri River between what would become in our time the Kansas City and Omaha metro areas. He traded with half a dozen or more tribes then living in the region. Sometimes he worked for Pierre Chouteau Jr. in St. Louis, sometimes for other fur companies, and sometimes on his own. For decades, he maintained business enterprises and a family in St. Louis, but spent most of the year 300 or more miles distant trading with the Indians and apparently living with Native American concubines. He learned several Indian languages and dialects. Long after Anglo-Americans poured into the lands of the Louisiana Purchase, Joseph preferred ethnically French assistants, but he seemed to have no problem obtaining Indian trading licenses from William Clark, the American superintendent of Indian Affairs in the region.

Brother Antoine Robidoux moved to Howard County, the first extensive area of settlement in central or western Missouri. But five or six years later, Joseph sent an

expedition, which probably included both brothers Antoine and Louis, to Santa Fe in the newly independent Republic of Mexico. These brothers eventually became citizens of Mexico and exploited the rush to trap beaver and other fur-bearing animals in what are today the Colorado Rockies and eastern Utah. In 1844, Louis abandoned Santa Fe for southern California, settling near modern Riverside, east of Los Angeles. After the Americans conquered California from Mexico, Louis, then a wealthy rancher, was a commissioner of Los Angeles County.

As the fur trade on the lower Missouri River dried up, a town grew up around Joseph III's trading post that became St. Joseph, Missouri. It was incorporated in 1842. By 1847, more immigrant trains were organizing for the overland journey to Oregon in St. Joseph than in Independence. The brothers operated trading posts aimed at immigrants far to the west along the Oregon and California trails. In 1859, when the railroad reached St. Joseph from Hannibal, for a few years Robidoux's town became the railhead for much of the American west.

Willoughby's book closely relies on sometimes sparse written sources, but the importance of this family saga to western history is unquestioned.

*Reviewed by Robert W. Frizzell, Director of Library Services, Boreham Library, University of Arkansas—Fort Smith.*

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**Taylor Wright, *The Fall of Avalon: Into the Abyss*. Charleston, South Carolina: Astral Fantasy Ink Productions, 2012. Pp. 284. No index. \$13.00; \$8.00 Kindle ebook.**

Writing is a cumulative exercise affected and informed by an author's experience and observations, honed and crafted through the trials of editing and error-correction of revision. When the fiction is magical fantasy, the author also relies on imagination. From there, her words are borne on the page, the place where her world meets the reader's journey, and where both rely on the other's suspension of disbelief.

In her 2012 self-published work, *The Fall of Avalon: Into the Abyss*, young Fort Smith author Taylor Wright casts a prosaic spell that is occasionally broken by the vernacular of this modern world in which teenagers have

ready access to telephones and Magic is a game played in groups. However, the fictive and finite intersect at the point of cognitive dissonance in a plot device describing a “fairy enthusiast” who makes dolls of rotting sprite corpses. “That’s what happens when adults tell you something doesn’t exist,” her sister explains. “Eventually your mind is warped and evidence right in front of you goes unseen . . . If you grew up being told something is absolutely true, then anything else is ignored no matter how plausible and deserving of thought it is. And that’s not fair to anyone.” But the inequity doesn’t stop there.

While Wright elucidates the machinations of subterfuge, she does not describe here the particulars of the schemes afoot in the novel. Similarly, perhaps ironically, her most evocative descriptions lie in the graphic detail of the death-by-torture of a woman with uncanny knowledge about the elusive Avalon. Despite this vexatious objectification and heavy doses of anachronistic and often pedantic detail, the story is character-driven. The protagonist, Sir William, is an insufferable dolt prone to childish clichés and selfishness on the order of a Byronic hero. His best friend is his equally frivolous dragon, Lucien; the two are literally empathetically linked. The ephemeral king Adolphus does not delight in his Arthurian lineage. Though he values respect over rites, he uses language incongruous with his station.

There are the requisite appearances of mythic beasts including the jaculus and the cockatrice, ignorant villagers from eerie backwaters including one inauspiciously named Cletus, and the dishearteningly familiar treatments of female characters. Claire is self-effacing, blushing, smart but provincial and full of potential. Adolphus claims that her conscription will be her “opportunity for self empowerment,” then paradoxically quips that her service “is not about me,” referring to himself, but “about you as an individual and the progress I want for you.” Stephanie is damaged and thus dangerous, sarcastically sanguine, and double tough, but both she and Claire find themselves incapable of creating rational arguments in their own favor; instead, they resort to puerile retorts, withdrawal, or even violence when their emotions are challenged, disregarded, or unrequited.

The most successful alchemy in Wright’s tale is in the place names she appropriates from famous men—Freud, Leuwenhoek, and Korsakov—and from the Hungarian word for literature, Irodalom. Having founded Astral Fantasy Ink Productions and concluded this book with the promise “To be continued,” the author should seek more of the gold among the dross in her sophomore publication.

*Reviewed by Jacquelyn Harper West, B.A. English, UAFS, and an employee of the University*

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**Kevin Jones, *Fort Smith: Postcard History Series*. Charleston, South Carolina: Acadia Publishing, 2012. 127 pages. \$21.99**

Kevin Jones, assistant professor of English Education at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith gives new life to old memories in *Fort Smith: A Postcard History Series*. With this picture book of possibilities, Jones allows the reader to reflect upon places out of our past and look forward to the potential of building a better future. When we look into the physical spaces of our past, it allows us to take stock of where we find ourselves in the present. With both the past and present in literary and visual perspective, it allows the reader to imagine the future what-ifs and opens the possibility to draw from untapped potential waiting to manifest itself.

The book is divided into three sections: “Belle Point, The First Fort”; “Origins of Fort Smith: Progress, Peace, and Prosperity”; and “A City Looking Forward to the Past.” Thus, the author presents a framework for a river valley odyssey when the reader is ready for the journey. The old fort, “Judge Parker’s Court,” riverboats, muddy scenes of Garrison Avenue, a riverfront before a free bridge into Oklahoma – the foundational identity narrative of Fort Smith melts into early twentieth century cityscapes and the burgeoning of the city’s regional manufacturing and cultural importance. Churches, storefronts, residential abodes, municipal buildings, political rallies, and rodeos—the series leads us through the buildings, the public discourse, and the civic identity that determined the future of Fort Smith. When we look forward through the past, we see smart public places, places people want to be in and be seen in. They are dynamic urban spaces, places that attract young energetic professionals, artists, small-business owners, and curious tourists that tease at what added potential they, too, could give this place. It is city to be walked on foot that embodies both charm and function. This is the image Jones paints and asks his readers to reflect upon.

When people come and go from a place, they often tell others of the experiences and memories they made—both good and bad. We are naturally curious to know and hear opinions about places and personal adventures of other people while comparing them to our own experiences. On the go between destinations, sending a postcard to a friend or loved one was a classic method for sending “snapshot experiences” long before Instagram, Tweeter, and Facebook made their debut as contemporary twenty-first century electronic social norms. Postcards show us not only how Fort Smith *wanted* to be perceived, but how or what others *saw* as they scribbled a few lines together and prepared these time capsules for the evening mail. Some photographer, often unknown, through his

professional eye and style gave each postcard a unique character and message, and made it appealing to the postcard buyer. Jones supplies each picture with a succinct and informative caption allowing the reader to place the photograph into a historical perspective. In bringing together these photographic jewels of Fort Smith's past, Jones sought out genealogists, archivists, historians, and cultural custodians who generously shared their collections to make this book greater than the sum of its parts. The author has provided source information that will aid serious researchers and the merely curious when they desire to find an original source.

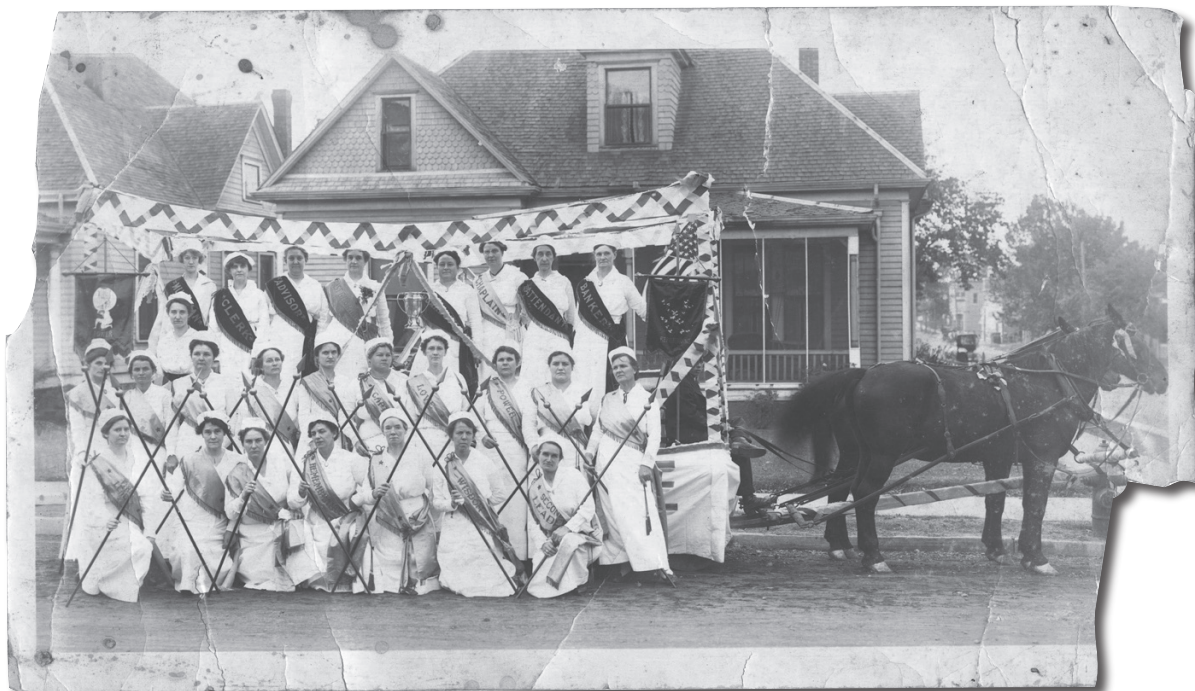
As a young man, I am far removed from the moments revealed by these photos, never knowing those who wrote their messages on the postcards that bore images of our city. Growing up in late twentieth century, I, a third generation resident of Fort Smith, was thrust into a city of strip malls, chain restaurants, abandoned stores, aesthetically unpleasing desert-like parking lots, gated neighborhoods, and neglected sidewalks. And

then, verdant hillsides where naturalist Thomas Nuttall once sought answers to biological mysteries of our area gradually became void of trees. But these changes are neither foreboding nor absolute. Faint images and echoes remain if you know where to look or listen carefully.

Not all the seeds have been lost or gone to rot. The places and stories that grace this book are the very places and ideas I sought in my adolescence to make sense of an otherwise chaotic world. They still exist in both real and mythical form—we just need to take heed of what they try to tell us or what we might learn from them. Bring your sextant and find courage, a destination with the future is to be made! If we travel the path and toil together, “she’ll hold—she’ll hold.” Kevin Jones has given us a map, after all. Seek this book, and begin your journey back in time. It might make the future palpable, or at least resiliently tangible.

*Reviewed by Loren McLane,  
Park Historian, Fort Smith National Historic Site*

## Mystery Photo



*Can you help identify this picture from the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith Pebley Center photo archives. If you can, please let us know at (479) 788-7213*



# Early Day Bloviating About Fort Smith

Introduction and transcription by Jerry Akins

**E**arly day businessmen of Fort Smith were not reticent when it came to promoting their interests and Harry Wildman, author of this article, was a good example of that. Harry Wildman's name doesn't appear in any of the newspaper business ads or in the 1840 and 1850 U.S. Censuses for Fort Smith. He sounds like one of the land speculators of the era, or any other era for that matter. But he appears to have a love for the area, as well as a business agenda. He describes every aspect of the town in, sometimes, extravagant words, sometimes bordering on the incredible. Wildman is almost as fervent about his annoyances with city management and some citizens.

This article from the December 22, 1847, issue of *The Fort Smith Weekly Herald* is transcribed verbatim.

## NOTES ON WESTERN ARKANSAS

BY HARRY WILDMAN

### CRAWFORD COUNTY—FORT SMITH

The city of Fort Smith is beautifully situated, on a plain of moderate elevation immediately below the junction of the Poteau river with the Arkansas, adjoining the west line of the state, which here crosses the Arkansas river, running about ten degrees, west of north, to the south west corner of Missouri. Its appearance as it strikes the eye of the beholder on turning the bend of the river below, is highly picturesque, and the buildings of the Fort and the City, give it the appearance of a place of considerable magnitude. The site is thirty or forty feet above high water mark, excepting a narrow slip immediately along the bank, which is also several feet above high water mark. The principle (sic) portion of the city is on a gradual ascent from the river, hence its fine appearance on approaching it by water. It is remarkable for health; and I hazard nothing in saying it is unsurpassed in Arkansas in point of mildness and salubrity of climate. As an instance of the great healthiness of the place, there have not been five deaths of children over five years of age for seven years. Taking into consideration the fact that the city is situated on a long navigable river, and possesses a considerable population; this is indeed remarkable.

The commercial advantages of Fort Smith are great. Being situated at the head of navigation, and on the Indian line, it is bound to rank among the first cities in the west. It is at present the centre of a vast trade, with the Indian tribes, and an extensive and well settled back country. People from as far south as Red River, and as far north as Missouri, trade here. More goods are sold at this point than any place in the state. There are now in operation twenty mercantile establishments—most of which do a wholesale, as well as retail business. There are eleven other businesses houses, and all do a thriving and profitable business. Trade is always brisk—the streets generally teem with wagons

loaded with produce, or which came from a distance to barter and trade, or to purchase goods. The river is nearly always alive with persons passing and re-passing for the purpose of trade in skiffs and boats, and steamers, which ascend the river have generally a large share of lading for the point.

But the commerce of Fort Smith is nothing to what it will be in the future. Here is the great starting point to Northern Mexico, California and Oregon. It is the best and always a practicable route up the Arkansas in the direction of Santa Fe, Oregon and California. The best route to Chihuahua is up the Canadian, thence across by the head waters of the Brazos and Colorado to the Puerco [sic] of the Rio Grande. There is plenty of water and the finest grazing on the routes. Emigration to northern Mexico and Oregon from southern and western states must eventually take this direction. Should we acquire northern Mexico by treaty, of which there is very little doubt, Fort Smith will be the great rendezvous of emigrants and traders. It possesses advantages over every other point, and public attention must be directed to it. The day is not far distant when a good MacAdamized road will be constructed from this point to some point on Red River, through which channel the whole of the Red River trade must flow in this direction. A McAdamized road is also contemplated north to the Missouri in this direction. The trade is now great from both of these directions, and must necessarily increase, as the resources of the country, become developed. The citizens of Fort Smith may congratulate themselves on possessing with their neighbors of Van Buren, great commercial advantages.

There are many good mechanics in Fort Smith, and several manufactories, where industry and enterprise are exhibited, on a scale that would do honor to the country 'down east.' The printing press, will speak for itself, and our moral and neutral Editor, should be well encouraged by our citizens. His efforts, which have been great, deserve the greatest success. He now publishes one of the largest and finest papers in the state, and the neatness of execution, and fine mechanical arrangement, do credit to our far western artists. Prosperity, subscribers and the 'needful' be showered upon him.

The soil of the country adjacent to Fort Smith is fertile and finely situated; it produces wheat and oats, corn, cotton and tobacco, and is settling up very rapidly, where the land has not been entered by land speculators. Here is the place for the industrious emigrant—the enterprising farmer. Let him come—he will find land cheap, a healthy country, and can sell every thing which he raises for cash at a good price. He will find a market at his own door for all his surplus. The soil of most of the Indian country north of the Arkansas, is as rich and productive as any in America, and the trade in furs and peltries is rapidly giving way to that in corn and cotton. There

is also much fine and well cultivated country west, in the Choctaw, Creek and Chickasaw nations; all of the surplus produce of which is brought to Fort Smith.

Being sheltered on the north and northeast by a range of mountains from 2000 to 3000 feet high, the climate of the Arkansas valley within the county of Crawford, and several counties below, is much milder than in the same latitude on the Atlantic coast, or in any other portion of the Mississippi valley. The climate and soil in the vicinity of Fort Smith, is finely adapted to horticulture. All kinds of culinary vegetables grow well and abundantly—the plants of the tropics, as well as those of the icy north. In the orchard, apples flourish finely and peaches, pears and cherries are unsurpassed. Some of the finest and largest apples I ever witnessed were produced on the farms of Maj. Rector and Mr. Stagner, near Fort Smith. The grape would grow vigorously and produce abundantly. The attempts made have generally proved successful, and all that is lacking is industry and a proper knowledge of its culture, to render the produce of the vine one of the staple articles of the country. The fig and the olive would flourish here as companions of the vine; and the orange and the lime would require but little shelter during winter. The florist would find a climate and soil which equal his most sanguine expectations. The most gorgeous flowers native and exotic, beautify and adorn gardens. The woods and prairies are covered with the most beautiful specimens. Those who wish fine gardens had better call on friend Mayers', and he will find every variety of seed. If they will work, they need not be under the necessity of purchasing vegetables.

The city of Fort Smith was laid out in the fall of 1839, by Captain John Rogers. The Capt. commenced like other pioneers, but soon found that comfort and profit went hand in hand, and abandoning his 'shantee' as soon as 'circumstances' would permit, erected comfortable and commodious buildings, from the pine of the key stone state; where not only his own family, but all wayfarers can get accommodated in the best style and in most comfortable hunger killing manner. Everything is 'done up brown' and in abundance. The 'fat of the land' for the sleeping man, he will find to his liking—not forgetting the 'fluids' as well as the 'solids' can be procured by calling on Henry and Mike and other interesting individuals, who are foes of dull care and cold comfort. Tom of the 'Exchange,' who would give you any thing but what his name indicates. Gib and Rinn and others who live in a spiritual atmosphere can here bear one out that other creature comforts are not lacking. Our friend lark of the 'Saloon' could also accommodate a hungry, dry fellow. But the liquoring taste is fast giving way to the cause of temperance; and the 'Fort Smith Temperance Society,' now numbers on its list of members, a large portion of the population. Many a rubicund-phized votary of Bacchus, has ceased pour out, or rather in, libations to his shrine, and with a bold hand and a stout heart has signed the declaration, dissolving him forever from the bonds of the jolly god. The ladies too, have joined in the cause, and when youth, beauty and innocence plead at the heart—who can resist? What say you Mr. Compositor?

Well—we began like the French author at the beginning—of Fort Smith.—We will do as the Democracy—progress. After the place was laid out by Capt. Rogers, it commenced improving rapidly, and soon sprang up to be one of the largest and most considerable business towns in Arkansas. The improvement still

continues. There is great demand for lumber and building materials, and there is no necessity for laborers to be idle. The sound of the workmans' implements is heard early and late. The business of building goes on finely. Our friends Johnson and Grimes are about erecting a large brick store house on Commercial Row, and Messrs. W. M. Barnett & Co. are enlarging their establishment on the corner of Front street and Garrison Avenue, they design a portion of it for a Tin and Sheet iron manufactory, where Darby & Bennett may not cry in vain 'and still they come.' Edward Czarnikow is playing the pidgein in building a new store. Dr. Main and several others are engaged in building, and it is hoped that our town will increase in size 30 percent the present season. The Presbyterian Church will soon be finished, and the contract for building the new Catholic Church has been let out, and before spring will probably be completed. A capitalist could invest his money in nothing that would produce a larger amount of interest, than property in Fort Smith. There are seldom any vacant houses, and rents are enormously high. There is a great demand for houses, and capital could be profitably invested by purchasing vacant lots and building substantial houses on them. Why do not our men of property build! Why not improve the place! I see some men of abundant means, putting up temporary shantees, in the most business portions of town. This is wrong. They will only encumber the lots, rot down in a few years, and in the end be more injury than benefit. But enough.

The facilities for education are as good in Fort Smith as any other place in Arkansas, and in a short time will equal any in the west. There is now an Academy with one hundred students, which ranks among the first in the state. The township has a school fund of from 5000 to 7000 dollars, and if properly managed, the interest will always support a good common school in the place. The School section, which was sold to Rt. Rev. Bishop Byrne of the Catholic Church, will shortly be the site of a college. I understand that it is designed to be large and calculated to accommodate as many students as any similar institution in the west. As the situation is beautiful and healthy and near the great navigable river of the state, a more eligible portion could not have been selected, and there is every reason to believe the institution will be prosperous.

It is hoped that the worthy members of our body corporate will continue to direct their attention to the improvement of the streets and alleys. They complain of the want of means; but if they will only levy a property tax, they will raise funds enough to improve and beautify the place. A good wharf is wanting. A tax upon real estate would raise money enough to construct one. The property holder who receives as rent from 10 or 20 percent on the capital invested, ought not to complain; it would increase the value of his property far more than it would diminish his rent. It is said that the landing belongs to the proprietor of the town—How is this Captain? If it be so, would it not generous as well as right and proper to donate two hundred feet along river to the corporation for a landing? You would not feel the loss, and it would enhance the value of your property—but we shall see.'

*Jerry Akins is the author of Hangin' Times in Fort Smith: A History of Executions in Judge Parker's Court (Little Rock: Butler Center Books, 2012).*

# 1913 Newspapers

## ***SOUTHWEST TIMES RECORD*** **January-June 1913** **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 Times Record*.

**January 8, 1913**

### **HENRY REUTZEL**

Henry Reutzel, well-known Fort Smithian, died Tuesday night at 11 o'clock at his room at the home of Mrs. Mary Kingwood, 117 North Eighth street. The remains were removed to the Putman undertaking establishment and will be taken this morning to the home of his sister, Mrs. Lizzie Bracht, of 1220 North D street. Funeral announcement later. Deceased was 68 years old and had been a resident of this city nearly all his life. For many years he had suffered from locomotor ataxia, but until within the past few days had been able to get about the city. He is survived by two brothers, Charles and John Reutzel, and two sisters, Mrs. Lizzie Bracht of this city, and a sister living in Philadelphia, besides several nephews and nieces resident in this city.

\*\*\*

**January 15, 1913**

### **GARDNER NAMED VICE PRESIDENT**

There were no changes in the election of directors and officers in Fort Smith's three national banks Tuesday but an important change took place at the annual meeting of the directors of the Arkansas Valley Trust Company. At this institution John Gardner who has been sec'y-treas. for several years was re-elected treasurer and also elected vice president succeeding C. E. Foley of Eufaula, Okla. C. E. Speer was re-elected vice president. Two resident vice presidents were required owing to the growth of the institution.

Woods Netherland who has been chief clerk was elected secretary. Major C. R. Breckinridge was re-elected president.

The First National bank directors at their meeting Tuesday night elected Samuel McCloud president; J. M. Sparks, vice president; F. A. Handlin cashier and A. S. Bullock assistant.

The American National bank directors at a meeting Tuesday elected Col. T. W. M. Boone, president; C. W. Jones, vice president; P. A. Ball, cashier and A. S. Dowd, assistant cashier.

The Merchants National bank elected directors and officers Tuesday night. The officers are W. J. Echols, president; J. B. Williams, vice president; C. S. Smart, cashier; R. F. Dickens, assistant.

\*\*\*

**February 6, 1913**

### **FRAZIER READ LAID TO REST**

The funeral of James Frazier Read was held at 2:30 o'clock Wednesday from the home of his parents, 213 North Sixteenth street; Rev. Dr. M. McN. McKay of the First Presbyterian church officiating in the sorrowfully impressive services which were held both at the house and at the grave in Forest Park cemetery; pall bearers, selected from among the former classmates and professional and social associates, were: Walter Eberle, Dave Williams, Sam Woods, Malcolm McKay, Collier Wenderoth, Hudson Cooper, Harry Daily and Russell Saunders.

Hundreds of friends feeling a kindred loss and sorrow to that of the stricken father, mother and sister, in the cruelly tragic ending of the young life which had been so bright with promise, gathered to pay the last tribute of tears and flowers. So profuse had been the floral tributes that the casket was banked in flowers.

It required the undertaker's flower wagon and four automobiles to carry the flowers from the home to the grave. A very large proportion of those who had assembled at the home joined the cortege to the cemetery.

\*\*\*

**February 14, 1913**

### **A BUSY POLICE COURT**

The city police court pulled down \$165 in cash fines



and forfeitures Thursday. The chief offender was a stranger who gave the name of Brewhecker who had been checked in a hilarious attempt to paint the red light district during which he is alleged to have shot one of the inmates through the foot. He was fined \$100 for toting a gun and will answer the shooting charge Saturday. John Mallett caught \$50 on a vag charge complicated with undue activity in the red light district, with a possible white slave charge in the background. Ed Uilson, brunette, was handed \$50 fine for beating a board bill. The police are looking up his record on a tip that he is wanted at the state pen.

\*\*\*

### February 18, 1913

#### GRAND OPERA HOUSE TO BE CONVERTED TO A MERCHANTILE HOUSE

Another \$25,000 Garrison avenue building improvement is assured for this spring for the housing of another big mercantile establishment, and the architect's building plans are about ready to place in the hands of contractors for bids on construction. The new improvement will be the rebuilding of the Grand opera house into a three story mercantile house, which will go far to make the Fifth street carners a prominent mercantile center.

For some time the owner, M. C. Burke, has been negotiating with parties for the rebuilding and occupancy of the building, and the deals are practically closed. Within the past two years at least three prominent theater managers have sought to secure the Grand and have it rebuilt into a modern theater. Last year a leading Denver manager offered a very advantageous proposition on a ten year lease, but to turn the building permanently into a theater did not appeal to Mr. Burke. Last year three prominent St. Louis merchants negotiated for the building for a wholesale house, figuring on putting in a \$50,000 business, but developments which neither he nor they could control blocked the deal. This time there will be no such complications.

The building interior will be entirely rebuilt with three floors on lines approved by the lessees. The exterior will be remodeled with the best modern front on both Garrison and Fifth street. Said Mr. Burke: "There are many developments in this city which will go far to instill new vigor into Garrison avenue as a mercantile center from Sixth street to the river. The proposed river bridge at the foot of Garrison avenue will be one of the chief of these."

The plans for the new building will be ready in a few days for bids, and the construction will be one of the prominent pieces of business building construction for the early spring.

\*\*\*

### February 27, 1913

#### COMMISSION MEETING IN THE FIRST WARD

The first meeting in the commission campaign in the wards at Grober's store Wednesday night indicated the remarkable hold which the movement, for a simplified and direct people's administration of city government, has taken upon the voters of this city. There were 150 voters present. Hammer's bank was present and woke the echoes in that part of the city. The meeting was organized with Col. George Sengel, chairman, and A. A. McDonald, Judge L. F. Fishback and R. T. Powell were the speakers. The meeting was very enthusiastic and the ward committee are confident that the First Ward can be counted on to give the commission government a substantial majority on March 5.

A second meeting will be held tonight in the same ward at McAteer's store in Fishback addition with two or more speakers. A meeting will also be held tonight in the Second ward at fire station No. 1, also in the Third Ward, and in the Fourth Ward at Barry's store on Little Rock and B streets. The committee is also holding noonday meetings at the various factories and will continue to so until the eve of the election. The first meeting was held at the Ballman-Cummins factory Wednesday noon. In addition, the scores of workers are making a continuous personal appeal to the voters wherever they come in contact with them, seeking opportunities to discuss the points of the charter and answering questions about the charter and meeting all objections of those who may be yet opposed to or undecided on the commission government plan.

\*\*\*

### March 27, 1913

#### HALLIBURTONS READY FOR BUSINESS SOON

Halliburton Cigar company is the name of a new industry that will embark in business about the first of April. The firm is composed of R. W. Halliburton of this city and Orlando Halliburton, Jr. formerly of Little Rock, two enterprising young men who require no introduction in the business world of this city and surrounding territory. The company has leased one of the large rooms in the new Kennedy building at 20 South Sixth street and is now actively engaged in preparing for its opening.

The Halliburton company will deal exclusively in wholesaling high grades of domestic and imported cigars, tobaccos, smokers' sundries, celebrated lines of candies and chewing gum. In this respect it will be the only exclusive house of its kind in Fort Smith and adds another institution that will materially assist in spreading Fort Smith's fame as a wholesale center.

The company is installing the most modern fixtures for its plant. The giant humidors are built in compartments in order to separate the various grades of cigars and have a capacity of 10,000,000 "smokes." The company will embark in business with a brand new stock and already has received a considerable shipment of imported cigars.

\*\*\*

**March 30, 1913**

**A BIG ELECTION DANCE  
AT THE CASINO TUESDAY NIGHT**

You can hear the full election returns while the dance goes on at the big Election Ball to be given at the Casino, Electric Park, on Tuesday night April 1. The best music that ever played for a dance in Fort Smith is promised. The dance will be in charge of Roy DeRoss and Manager Mack and many novelties in dancing will prevail.

Among the features will be the NewPort Parade, the very latest thing in Grand Marches, and dancing in the moonlight, a decided feature for the amusement of those present.

Special arrangements have been made to receive the full election returns at the Casino. The admission will be 75 cents a couple, extra ladies free. Political punch will be served free to all. Dancing starts at 9 p.m.

## Letters From Readers

Inquiries will be published in the *Journal* as space allows and should include the following:

- ❖ Your full name and address
- ❖ Full name of ancestor about whom you desire information
- ❖ Definite time period (birth, marriage or death date, or date appearing in a certain record at a definite time period.)
- ❖ Specific place of residence at a certain time period.
- ❖ State the relationships (names of parents, names of children, names of brothers and sisters, or in-laws.)

Material should be submitted using word-processing programs supported by Windows. Do not abbreviate any words; put all surnames in capital letters; capitalize only the first letter of given names and places; write dates as follows (Day, Month, Year, example: 25 January 1978.)

### Suggestions for Submission of Articles

We welcome the submission of articles, previously unpublished, covering significant historical events and persons in the Fort Smith and surrounding area. Manuscripts, including quotations and footnotes, must be double-spaced, using *The Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press). Footnotes should be numbered consecutively in the text, assembled at the end of the article, along with a list of any additional sources. The author's name, address, phone number and email address should appear only on the title page. Manuscripts may be submitted on CD disks, using word-processing programs supported by Windows. Photographs should be submitted in digital format.

All correspondence and manuscripts should be submitted to:

#### Managing Editors

*The Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society*  
P.O. Box 3676  
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3676.

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When making a gift to honor or remember someone important to you, please remember 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.

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.

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.

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 this area.

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 (-) - dash between page numbers indicates the name of the person, place, etc. is carried throughout the story.  
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# Fort Smith Walking Trail of Historical Downtown Plaques

## Downtown Map





**Historic Plaques:**

1. John Rogers Founder of City (B-3)  
North 2nd Street
2. 1860 Fort Smith (B-3)  
Garrison Avenue & North 2nd Street
3. Bass Reeves (B-3)  
200 Garrison Avenue
4. Marble Hall 1863 (113)  
318 Garrison Avenue
5. W.J. Murphy/Eads Brothers Building (117)  
414 Garrison Avenue & North 2nd
6. Phoenix Block (279)  
516 Garrison Avenue
7. New Theatre in 1911 (100)  
1004 1/2 Garrison Avenue
8. Immaculate Conception 1906 (420)  
west side of North 13th Street & Garrison Avenue
9. Texas Corner 1858 (120)  
north side of North 10th Street & Garrison Avenue
10. Great Cyclone (87)  
921 Garrison Avenue
11. First National Bank of Fort Smith (50)  
521 Garrison Avenue
12. Fishback Block 1872 (80)  
407 Garrison Avenue

Fort Smith has 12 historical plaques within walking distance in our downtown area. All plaques are equipped with QR Codes which allows smart phone users to scan the code that will open their browsers to online slide shows with audio narration. These plaques hold an amazing wealth of Fort Smith history that dates back almost 200 years. Begin your quest to find out more about Fort Smith!

## Visit Our Website — [www.fortsmithhistory.org](http://www.fortsmithhistory.org)

*Find the links listed below to aid your research!*

❖ **Arkansas Stories**—A site dedicated to the stories, studies and songs from Arkansas' past, Arkansas' future.

❖ **Arkansas Freedmen of the Frontier**—The African-American experience in northwest Arkansas is chronicled here. It has a lot of great links and information.

❖ **Arkansas Historical Association**—The mission of the Arkansas Historical Association is to promote the preservation, writing, publishing, teaching, and understanding of Arkansas history through the publication of the Arkansas Historical Quarterly as well as other activities.

❖ **Arkansas History Commission and State Archives**—The Arkansas History Commission is one of the oldest existing state agencies in The Natural State and Arkansas' official state archives are maintained by the commission.

❖ **Black Men Who Rode For Parker**—A site dedicated to the African-American deputy marshals who enforced the law in the federal court district of western Arkansas and Oklahoma. Judge Isaac Parker presided over the district in the late nineteenth century.

❖ **Center for Local History and Memory**—The Center for Local History and Memory at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith grew out of student-faculty efforts in 1997 to collect oral history interviews to document the first seventy years of the college.

❖ **Arkansas Civil War Sites**—The Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission website with

information on Arkansas' participation in the 150th anniversary of our country's struggle with itself.

❖ **The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture**—The Encyclopedia of Arkansas Project is proud to present these initial entries.

❖ **Fort Smith Trolley Museum**—For more than 20 years, Fort Smith's trolley museum has worked to educate people about transportation history, restore and maintain antique trolley cars, and even give riders a trip back in time in those streetcars.

❖ **Fort Smith Museum of History**—The Fort Smith Museum of History acquires, preserves, exhibits and interprets objects of historical significance relevant to the founding and growth of Fort Smith and the region.

❖ **Fort Smith Air Museum**—Located at the Fort Smith Airport; the museum is a treasure trove of facts and artifacts that tell the story of Fort Smith's aviation history. Our readers might also enjoy this site on The History of Flight, submitted by one of our readers (Tony, a history researcher and student of Ms. Brooke Pierce in Delaware)—the site provides a fantastic time line that breaks down the early history of flight in America.

❖ **Historic Fort Smith**—A page containing some general information about Fort Smith history, heritage tourism in the city and links to other sites.

❖ **Oak Cemetery**—A recognized National Historic Landmark with more than 152 years of history is home to the burial sites of outlaws hanged by order of Judge Isaac C. Parker, marshals, deputy marshals, an Arkansas governor, fifteen mayors of Fort Smith, and the

founder of Fort Smith, John Rogers.

❖ **The Old State House Museum of Arkansas History**—Set in the oldest surviving state capitol west of the Mississippi; it houses a multimedia museum of Arkansas history with a special emphasis on women's history, political history and special programming for children.

❖ **Richard C. Butler Center for Arkansas Studies**—The Center for Arkansas Studies presents what we hope will one day become the premier online resource for historical information related to Arkansas.

❖ **South Sebastian County Historical Society**—The South Sebastian County Historical Society, located in Greenwood, Arkansas, is an excellent resource on the history and landmarks of the area.

❖ **Wikipedia Entry for Fort Smith**—The online, user-created encyclopedia has a descriptive entry about the largest city in western Arkansas.

### More Genealogical Links

❖ **Fort Smith Library Genealogy Department**—One of the greatest resources of local genealogical information to be found in the city. The Fort Smith Public Library is also a frequent gathering place of local historians and history buffs.

❖ **Crawford County, AR cemeteries**—A rich resource for Van Buren and Crawford County.

❖ **Leflore County, OK Genealogy**—Find birth and death records in support of your genealogical searches involving Leflore County, Oklahoma.



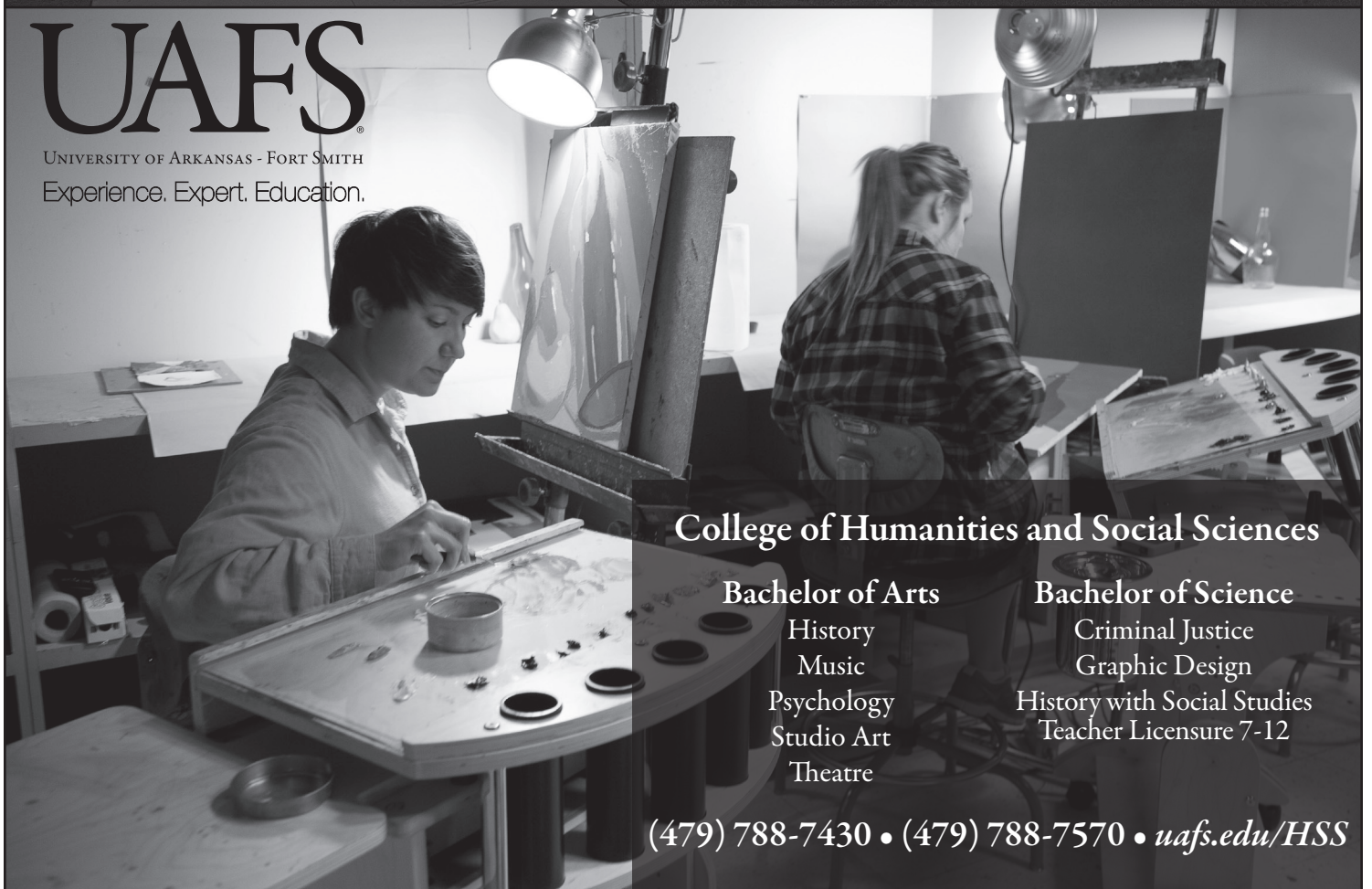


South entrance to the new Boreham Library at UAFS.

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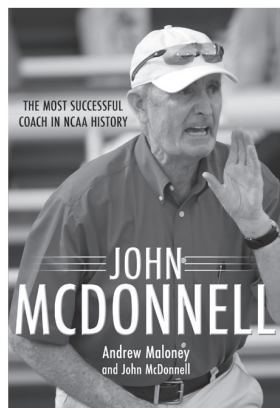
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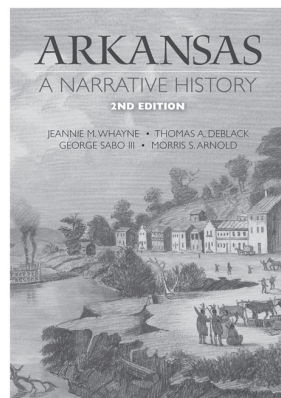


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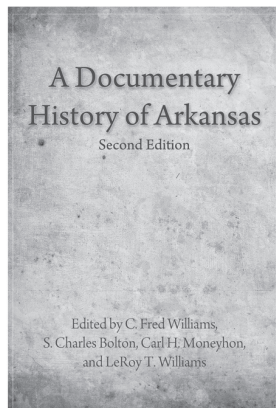
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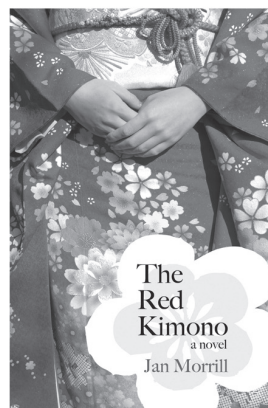
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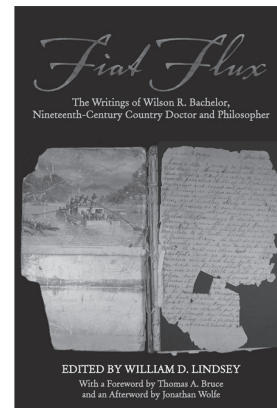
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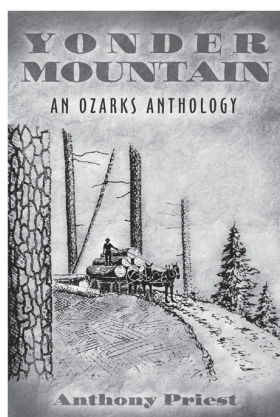
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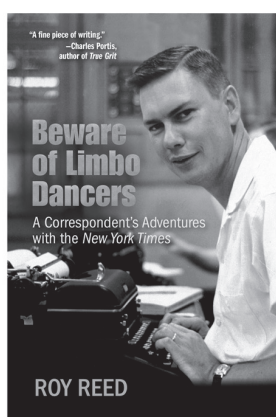


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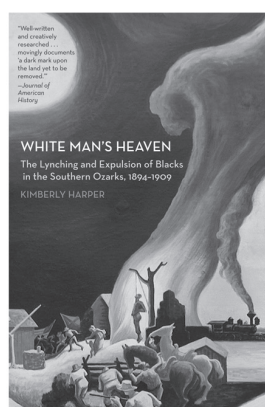
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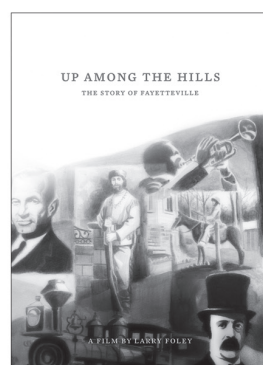
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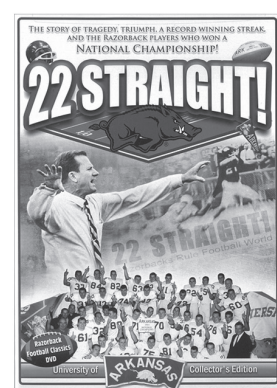
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