



The JOURNAL



The Boys of Fort Chaffee



The Marielitos at Fort Chaffee: Misunderstood and Misrepresented



The Murder of Paul Rush: Granddaughter Remembers



Wildcat Mountain: From WPA to Methodist Facility



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

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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: 1958 Fort Chaffee All-Stars basketball team (Army photo by Tom Becker)
Lower left: Cubans on the steps of the barracks at Fort Chaffee (Photo courtesy of Chaffee Museum)
Lower center: Paul Rush (Photo courtesy of Joyce Faulkner)
Lower right: Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium shown in a 1930s postcard.

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News & Opportunities

Historical Society Celebrates 40 Years

Editor's Note: The Fort Smith Historical Society began forty years ago in 1977. Carolyn Pollan, the first president of the Society, gave this account of its founding:

Mrs. Thelma Wray, librarian at the Fort Smith Public Library, confirmed to me that there were Fort Smithians interested in forming a Historical Society. On October 29, 1976, a group of eleven persons met at the Library Community Room to discuss the need to protect our written and oral history. They were: Christine Allen, Eloise Barksdale, Violet Burton, Fadjo Cravens, Jr., Edwin Hicks, Taylor Joyce, Gladys Krone, Amelia Martin, Doris West, Thelma Wray, and myself.

At a subsequent meeting on December 3, 1976, it was decided that it was the time to form a Historical Society. Financing of publishing and organizational procedure were discussed and a Constitution and By-laws Committee led by Taylor Joyce as chairman, along with Gladys Krone, Amelia Martin, and Fadjo Cravens, Jr., were appointed.

On April 15, 1977, the original group, along with other interested persons, met at the Fort Smith Public Library and adopted the Constitution and By-laws, elected officers and established our purpose of the Fort Smith Historical Society, Inc., to locate, identify and collect historical data; to publish source materials and historical articles pertaining to the city of Fort Smith and the immediate surrounding area. This purpose differed from the South Sebastian County group, which primarily collected genealogy. Officers elected at the founding of the Fort Smith Historical Society were president, Carolyn Pollan; vice-president, Christine Allen; secretary and treasurer, Thelma Wray; and corresponding secretary, Amelia Martin. Board members selected were Taylor Joyce, Robert Taylor, Bernice Cole, Fadjo Cravens, Jr., and Violet Burton.



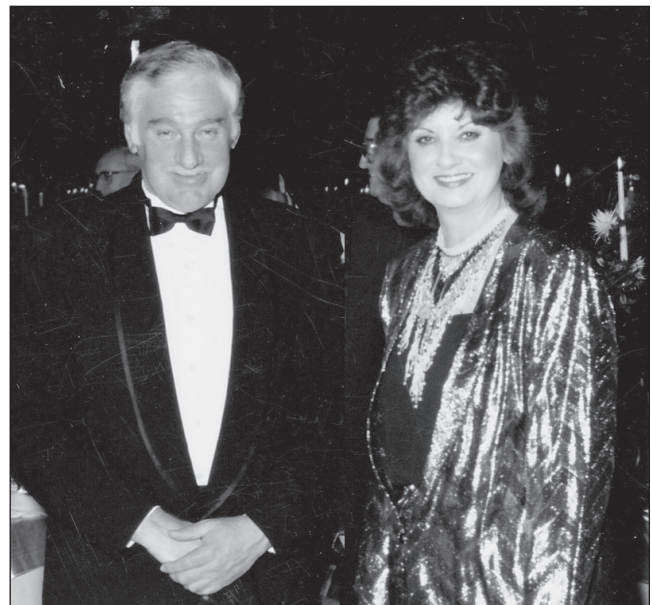
POLLAN restored the 1840s-era Rogers-Tilles House located at 400 North Eighth Street in Fort Smith to serve as her local legislative office as well as to provide space for the Patent Model Museum that she brought to the city.

The original intent of the Board was to print two Fort Smith Historical Society *Journals* for the year 1977 and thereafter go to four *Journals* a year. Good sense prevailed however, when the two people who volunteered to help edit the *Journal* said, "We can only volunteer for two *Journals* a year." The two volunteer editors were Amelia Martin and myself. Amelia was a terrific editor, and she soon took the lead in this co-editing endeavor, and she was a delight to work with.

One day while working on a new edition of the *Journal* at the crowded table in her living room, her husband, Dr. Art Martin, suggested we do a story on Fort Smith streetcars. We both said, "Hey, that's a great idea," and he was immediately assigned that story, but the best part, it was the birth of the Fort Smith Street Car Association, which is still carrying on its mission under the leadership of Bradley Martin to the delight of all who belong or ride one of the original streetcars.

CAROLYN POLLAN

Carolyn Pollan was first elected to the Arkansas House of Representatives in 1974, becoming one of three Republicans in the 100-member body. She was also one of three women in the legislature then. She represented Fort



CAROLYN MARRIED GEORGE POLLAN (1938-2017) in Fort Smith in 1962, and the couple had three children, Cee Cee, Rob, and Todd.

Smith for twelve two-year terms. That saw her heavily involved in lawmaking and budgeting for state governments headed by five governors, David Pryor, Bill Clinton, Frank White, Jim Guy Tucker, and Mike Huckabee, three Democrats and two Republicans. Pollan sponsored or co-sponsored over 250 pieces of legislation during the '70s, '80s and '90s.

She chaired the Committee on Children and Youth and helped write and pass legislation that provided assistance to unprivileged or distressed youngsters who had landed in the state human services system and/or needed a second chance at school. She was the longest-serving Republican and longest-serving female in the Arkansas House of Representatives.

Carolyn Pollan earned a Doctorate in Education from Walden University and served on the John Brown University Board of Trustees for over twenty-five years. Following her twenty-four years of service in the Arkansas House of Representatives, Pollan joined Governor Mike Huckabee on his senior staff for legislative leadership. Dr. Pollan was appointed to a six-year term on the Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission by Governor Huckabee.



ATTENDING MEMBERS of the Fort Smith Historical Society's January monthly meeting

Fort Smith Historical Society Quarterly Meeting

Annual Officers and Board Election
April 12, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Fort Smith Public Library,
Community Room, Main Branch

You are Invited to
The Fort Smith Historical Society's

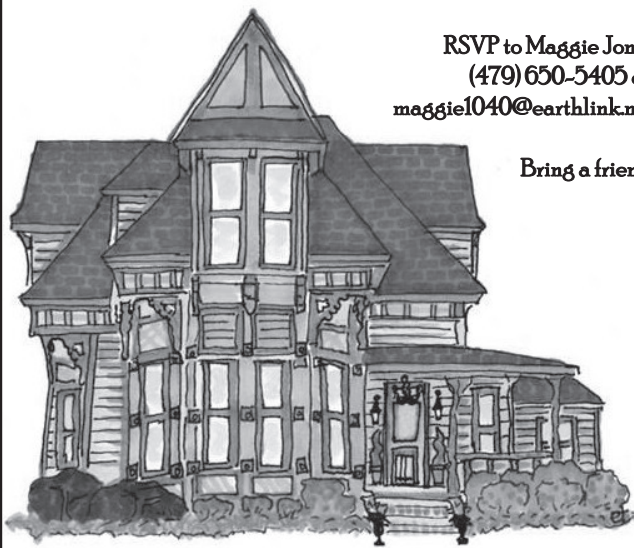
Spring Meet & Greet

at the beautiful home of Jeri and Charlie Moffett

Sunday, April 30
2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
412 May Avenue, Fort Smith

RSVP to Maggie Jones
(479) 650-5405 or
maggie1040@earthlink.net

Bring a friend!



Fort Smith Museum of History

320 Rogers Avenue
479-783-7841

For continual upate on programs and exhibits, please
follow the link the Museum Notes 2017
<http://www.fortsmithmuseum.org/newsletters>

Clayton House

514 No. Sixth Street
479-783-3000

Fourth Sunday programs at the Clayton House begin at 1 p.m. with refreshments and conversation. Presentations start at 1:30 p.m. Reservations may be made by calling 783-3000 or emailing claytonhouse@claytonhouse.org. These are free to members of the Fort Smith Heritage Foundation.

For non-members, a \$10 donation toward the preservation and programs of the Clayton House, 514 North Sixth Street, is asked.

Arkansas Historical Association

76th Annual Conference

April 20-22, 2017

Pocahontas, Arkansas

You may register for the conference using this link:

<http://arkansashistoricalassociation.org>

77th Annual Conference

April 19-21, 2018

Fort Smith, Arkansas

Drennen-Scott Historical Site

Visitor Center 221 N. Third Street

Van Buren, Arkansas

479-262-2750

uafs.edu/humanities/drennen-scott-house

Crawford County Chronicles programs are scheduled for the first Sunday of every month.

For reservations and more information contact Tom Wing, Director of the Drennen-Scott Historical Site on Facebook: Drennen-Scott Historic Site, or email at drennen-scott@uafs.edu.

St. John's Episcopal Church

Southern Style Mind Stretchers

Ruth Skinner Building across from St. John's Episcopal Church, 214 North Sixth Street.

May 16, 2017, 6:00 p.m. Brandy Ree, Ph. D.

"A Mission to Teach Undergraduates Biology."

Memorial and Commemorative Gifts Important to the Historical Society

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 both to 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 the area.

Gifts are tax deductible and may be made in any amount. Send your contributions to:

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The Murder of Paul Rush



PAUL RUSH AND JOYCE FAULKNER

(Photo courtesy of Joyce Faulkner)

Joyce Faulkner reflects on her grandfather's life and the mystery surrounding his death

Editor's note: Paul Rush opened Rush Manufacturing in Fort Smith in the late 1940s. The company made upholstered furniture. Rush was murdered in his plant the night of May 13, 1962. His stepson Fred Rush, was convicted of the murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. The conviction was later overturned by the Arkansas Supreme Court, and Fred was freed. Rush's granddaughter, Joyce Faulkner, shared her memories and thoughts in two oral history interviews in September 2016. Excerpts from those interviews are printed below and shed light on the life and death of Paul Rush and Rush Manufacturing Company.

Joyce Faulkner: Papa was self-taught, and he learned from working. His older brother, Lester, was not as interested and didn't have the innate talent that Paul did. Paul not only had talent, he had taste, and he had a good eye

for what I call mathematics or physics. He understood the relationship of what could bear weight and what couldn't. And he was very interested in the structure of each piece of furniture that he designed. Somebody else could have an idea, and he could look at it and figure out what was wrong with it and take that idea and make it his own and make it better. That was probably his biggest strength.

He married my grandmother, Frankie Mathews, and had my mother back when he was working in those factories where he was learning. From what I understand, they were together for several years, but eventually he moved out. Then, he met Virginia. Whether it was a romantic relationship right away I don't know, but it was definitely a business relationship. At the beginning of World War II, he was too old for the draft. He was a year older I think. Later, when they really needed people they might have taken him, but by then he had the business going.

This is how he started his own business: Paul and Virginia found somebody who was selling chair springs. They purchased a railcar of them. They went in together; she invested what she had, he invested what he had, and they bought these springs, and they started building furniture with springs in them. That was in her garage during the first part of the war. Then they started to build even more elaborate furniture. He had all his background from the years of working in the industry.

He was a visionary, too. He saw that at the end of the war, all those guys would be coming home to Fort Smith, and he knew they would build a lot of houses, and those new homes would need furniture. And that was the heyday, the late '40s and early '50s for Rush Manufacturing. I imagine it was for Fort Smith in general, but specifically for Rush Manufacturing. They were doing so well because he was looking to create furniture that was inexpensive enough that folks living in these small homes could buy them.

I was an only child and his only grandchild for six years, and our family pretty much reflected his customer. Papa bought a house for my parents on Jenny Lind in Fort Smith. It was a small two-bedroom house, and he would furnish it and then change furniture out, so we always had new furniture in that house.

Billy Higgins: And Sunnymede (postwar housing development on North O Street) was being built then so he had to furnish those houses, I guess?

JF: Yes. There were all different styles. The first that I can remember were streamlined and square-ish. It was the late '40s and that was considered modern at the time. Cushioned and the arms were kind of square. Then I remember him bringing in rocker recliners. I must have been maybe three or four when he was working with them, and we had several in that house on Jenny Lind. I think that he was trying them out. I think the ones he sold were probably more elaborate.

BH: What do you remember about his work force?

JF: Well, the way he had it worked out with Virginia is that they designed together. She had the sewing room and cutting room on the second floor. I remember that because when they were babysitting me, I went to the factory with them. They would lay out maybe fifty, sixty layers of fabric and then they would put the patterns they had created on top, and I got on top of that fabric and drew in chalk around the patterns.

BH: So, you were a worker too?

JF: I was a worker, too. The next day the women who worked in the sewing room would take those pieces that we cut out the night before and would start putting them together. The knife was electric, and I wasn't allowed to be near. I thought I should have been. It had a buzzy sound. I thought that was cool. Anyway, the ladies would sew the



VIRGINIA AND PAUL RUSH
(Photo courtesy of Joyce Faulkner)

pieces together. And then downstairs is where all the upholsterers were. Papa had people who were building frames in one section and a place where people who were putting the springs and the cushions together. The upholsterers, they did everything. It wasn't really an assembly line, it was more like a functional specialty. I don't remember specific names. I remember them as being — they treated me terrific every time I'd come in there because I was Papa's little granddaughter, and they were always nice to me. It was fun to go there. I don't think my sisters — well, Papa was dead before my youngest sister, Micki, was born, but my middle sister, Maeva, was born in '55. Our father was in the hospital for a bit during that time frame, and we saw Papa more while Daddy was away. After he came home, we didn't see Papa as much. Maeva, who he adored, didn't get to spend the same amount of time with Papa as I did, and that made a difference on how well she knew him.

I do remember sometime in the '50s, they had all these Rush Manufacturing trucks, and they really belonged to Virginia. I called her Gingie. I would go out and climb around on the trucks and pretend to drive the big furniture van. They were green, I remember, to begin with. And then I think they changed color later, but they were green and said Rush Manufacturing on the side.

BH: Were they used to haul the finished product to stores or to the market?

JF: Yes.

BH: And how far did these pieces range out? All the way to Dallas, for instance?

JF: I know they did go to Dallas. They went to Dallas a lot, and I know they had clients there and sold to furniture stores there. How far north they went I don't know. But they were used a lot, that was a big part of their business, owning those delivery vans.

BH: Did he have a brand name for his furniture that stuck or was it just called Rush Manufacturing, or were these chairs...?

JF: He was a wholesaler. I know he did sell some to actual furniture stores, but I think that there was maybe somebody in the middle, too.

BH: I see.

JF: And he might have even been in the middle himself for all I know. He was very business-centric. His businesses were his life, and he was interested in every part of them. Sometime in the early '50s people were stealing gas from the trucks where they parked them there near the factory. And so, Papa hired a night watchman. I remember being awakened in the middle of the night because the night watchman had shot somebody and the poor fellow was killed. The night watchman saw somebody and yelled at him to stop. From what I understood, the man started to run away, and the night watchman meant to shoot over his head and mis-aimed. Papa not only took care of the night watchmen, who was traumatized, he also took care of the family of the man who was killed.

BH: I see.

JF: His feeling was that it was a very poor community. If the guy had come to him and asked him, he would have given him money. Papa did that a lot. And so, he took care of them.

BH: That's a good story, yes.

JF: Yes.

BH: We had a story earlier by a couple of employees, I believe they were at Rush Manufacturing, who went on strike. This is probably beyond your memories, but the strike I don't think was ever settled. I understand that it gave rise to a furniture company that still exists in Fort Smith called the Union Furniture company. Two people who had been employed by Rush would take the lead in organizing and managing that company. Do you know anything about that story?

JF: I don't know anything about the company. I do know that he (Paul Rush) was sensitive and very hurt by the idea of the union. He felt like he could do well by his people, and they didn't need a union. So, he was very offended by the idea. I heard this through his sister, my

great aunt Frances, that Papa had got into fights over it with a union organizer. Physical fights. I don't know if that's true or not because she was quite a storyteller herself. I know this as a writer; you hear something and you interpret it. I don't know if she was interpreting it or if she had the facts.

BH: Exactly. But he did go to Waldron and start a company, right?

JF: Yes.

BH: Were you aware of when that happened?

JF: Yes, and the reason I remember that is when that my father started working for him. My father was Bill Plummer. He was a veteran of Iwo Jima and had what we would call now PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Papa moved us to Martin Street in Cavanaugh, into a bigger house. My sister Maeva was about two years old. Papa had Dad working in Waldron. The people from Fort Smith who wanted to work in Waldron came to our house every morning and rode in the back of a truck that Dad drove to Waldron. So, they went back and forth that way. That was about the time that Daddy was getting very sick. He stopped sleeping. All he did was work and smoke and drive back and forth. That was right after we moved to Martin Street, so it had to be '57, '58 something like that when Papa built at Waldron.

BH: Do you know how long that plant continued there?

JF: It was still going...pretty much all of them crumbled a few years after Papa died. It's like they couldn't make it on their own without him. He was like the spark, and he died in '62, so I would imagine most of them were gone by '64, '65. At least on the way down.

BH: And Paul Rush did meet an untimely death.

BH: Seems like you were very close to your grandfather.

JF: I was very close. Papa used to take me when I was little, besides getting to cut out the patterns (at the plant), he would take me to the wrestling matches. I had a gold bobby pin that he got me from Gorgeous George.

BH: That was at Jimmy Lott's wrestling place, wasn't it?

JF: It probably was. You know I was real little. I was probably five or six when he would take me, and he would hold me up on his shoulders so I could see what was going on.

BH: You were talking about his closeness and you said you had a little story.

JF: Oh, I was going to tell you about Waldron. I went down to Waldron only a couple of times. I did go to V&R (Virginia and Rush, a warehousing subsidiary) quite often. And, it was more in my mind because it had a Chevron (gas station) in front, and the upper part was strictly manufacturing. As my dad got more ill, and he couldn't work as well with lots of other people, Papa built

a shop in our backyard, and there was a crew that he had there that my dad managed. Then as he became less able to do that they tore down the bigger building and built a smaller one. That way my dad could work alone and maintain Papa's industrial sewing machines. That way, Dad's emotional issues, you know survivor's guilt, didn't interfere with Papa's work schedules. I wrote a book about Daddy's war experiences in the Battle of Iwo Jima, *In the Shadow of Suribachi*. It is historical fiction. Some of it is set in Fort Smith. A lot of it is family stories. And some is about what happened with his friends.

BH: It's based on the actual events?

JF: Yes, it is based on actual events. The ten chapters that are at the battle are my dad's stories, and they're corroborated by other Marines. The Battle of Iwo Jima is one of the most documented battles there is. Dad told me these stories after he had all the shock treatment, and he couldn't stop talking about it. His friends that died there—his unit was killed off to a man except for him twice. The first were friends. The second time he never learned the guys' names before they were killed. My dad's memories of them are the gift he gave to me. And I feel a responsibility to write about them. But back to Papa, he always took care of us, even when that was a hard thing to do.

BH: "Union Furniture Manufacturing Company was formed in 1959 by about twenty-five union employees of Rush Manufacturing in Fort Smith, a manufacturer of upholstered furniture, following a lengthy strike." Two of the founders were Ruley Sutton, a specialist in upholstery for seven years, and Helen Bradley, a pattern maker and seamstress, both twenty-six years of age.

JF: I don't remember those people. I do remember that era, and I do remember, like I said, Papa was kind of wounded about it. But more from the perspective that he thought he was doing a good thing, and I think that a lot of people in those days felt that way about the unions, especially in the South.

BH: And especially in the furniture manufacturing in Fort Smith. Because we've interviewed others [who] were not happy to see the unions come in.

JF: Well, I think it was just part of the culture of the area. When they all started these businesses, at least I know when Papa started his, it was a labor of love. There's all kinds of stories within the family of things he went out of his way to do for employees, and he felt like they didn't need to talk to him as a group, that they could come right up to his office and talk to him. If you think about it, we didn't have the culture of many years with unions that we do now. It was somewhat new; it was a new concept at least to Papa and an unwelcome one.

BH: And yet, as you mentioned about your grandfather, he himself came from working-class people as did



PAUL RUSH

(Courtesy of Joyce Faulkner)

others—not all did, some were pretty well established when they went into the furniture industry—but there were others like your father who came from the factory floor themselves.

JF: I think Papa viewed himself as an entrepreneur and as an artisan. And that everything he did and everything he created he thought was his. You know what I mean?

BH: Yes.

JF: Now, I have heard—I don't know this for a fact, I heard this long after he died—that he was accused sometimes of stealing somebody else's design. But what I understand he would do is that he would go to the shows and see hundreds of different things, and he would kind of merge them together and come up with something of his own. There's nothing that I knew of where he just out-and-out copied somebody. You know people influence each other.

When I was growing up women didn't have a lot of options, and I wanted to be an engineer. I kind of thought the factory would be mine, and that had to do with Virginia being a co-owner. She was my role model. I could look at her and say, "Lookie there, I don't have to be all of the predefined roles, I can be anything that I want." And that was kind of unusual in my era. I think it came from Papa and his attitude of "If you can do it, Do It." On the other hand, I think that when it went down, you had a big fight after Papa's death between Virginia and his sister, my Aunt Frances—my Great-Aunt Frances. It was over who would own it, who would run it, and of course, Virginia felt like was hers—it was half hers to begin with. My Aunt Frances had worked at the Boston Store in a position of

power—head of a department or something, and that was quite admirable in my eyes. She worked there for years. Then she became a Realtor and sold upscale homes in the town. But she really had her eye on Rush Manufacturing, and so that was some of the split after Papa was killed. It was between those two big female personalities. I have often thought that had they worked together, they might have been able to save Rush Manufacturing.

BH: We have in our library here a collection of Judge Paul Wolfe papers. He was the presiding judge over the [Paul Rush] murder trial. There were a lot of clippings in there, and I went over some of them, and this what was in the paper, “Paul Rush died of a gunshot to the base of his skull. The murder occurred on May the 13th 1962.”

JF: Mother’s Day.

BH: Wow. And that was traumatic for you.

JF: Yes. Yes. Well, essentially, and you may not—even if you read the newspapers and the documents, you wouldn’t know this part of it, but, everybody in our family was terrified. Absolutely terrified. All our houses were broken into. After this happened, at one point my sister and I were in a first-floor bedroom—I mean the house was a one floor but—we had twin beds. There was a window between our beds and a little night stand there, and somebody cut the screen, opened the window, moved that little table, and there were footprints on the carpeting. So, you know, that’s enough to absolutely terrify.

BH: Sure. Sure.

JF: As you can imagine. And people in the family left the area. My grandfather’s brother, Lester—they were living in Tulsa—and they moved all the way to California they were so afraid. Now Fred, who was Virginia’s son, Papa adopted. He was only twenty-six years old at the time of the murder. And, he was a...maybe a lady’s man. I kind of chuckle at it, because I didn’t see him that way, obviously. But he was smart, and he was friendly, and as far as I knew, there had never been issues. You know Papa arranged for Daddy (Mr. Bill Plummer) to have a part of the business, but Dad was too ill to manage it. He did the same for Fred. Fred was trying, but he was only twenty-six. The original agreement between Paul and Virginia, and I heard this from the time I was little, is that when they started the business that Papa and Gingie divided it in half in some fashion. Her part would go to Fred and his kids, and Papa’s part would go to Momma. I wasn’t born yet when this was decided, I don’t think. Neither were Fred’s kids for that matter. When I was born in 1948—the day I was born—Papa took out an insurance policy with me as the beneficiary. And he did the same thing for Maeva, my sister who was born in 1955. When he was murdered that was double indemnity. And that’s how I got to go to college, which was my dream. That was his gift to me, and I got to go to college. And so, all our expectations were that was

how it would be. Mama would get Papa’s half, and Maeva and I were taken care of with the insurance. However, because he was murdered and there was no will and Papa and Gingie were married, that meant that by law it all belonged to Virginia as the widow. Of course, my Aunt Frances had expected something from it, too, and she stirred everybody up, and by default, my mother became angry. I personally thought that’s the way it should be. If it was me, that’s how I would have expected it to fall. So, there were huge gaps in the family because of the murder and because of the inheritance. That someone was breaking into our house, though, sounded to me more like an outsider than a family member.

BH: Did you ever have a suspect about who broke into your house that night that you were describing.

JF: I never had a clue, no. Others said that their things were rummaged through. I don’t remember that in our house except that someone did come through my window, which in a way with both of us there asleep seems more like a threat than actual, “I’m going to steal anything from you.” That kind of thing, and Dad was so anxious anyway, it literally pushed him to the wall, you know he was terrified for us. So, there was all of that going on at the same time. As a child, I was thirteen, I was old enough to know it was all going on, and I was old enough to have an opinion, but they didn’t give me the inside stuff completely.

BH: Yes.

JF: So, when I went back—and I never believed it was Fred. I never believed it was Fred for a lot of reasons, that had killed Papa, but mainly because he got shot, too.

BH: Yes, I saw that.

JF: He got shot, too. However, when I was fourteen or so my other grandmother, she was into all the true crime stuff, and she got the picture, that magazine with the picture of his body. And I remember being very shocked by it, and it was not, not that good of a picture, but, you know, it’s a crime scene picture, essentially. How *True Crimes* magazine got it, who knows? But there was glass on his shirt, he had fallen back across a chair frame. And that building, do you know which building it is there? Now, there’s a park right next to it.

BH: The building is still there, right where R & B produce was, is that...?

JF: Yes. I think that’s where it was. And people were there at the time. People were working in the produce company next to it. That was our factory. He had a show room, and that was the part of the company that Fred was running—but of course, Fred wasn’t running it, Papa was running it. If you go downstairs—it has a very scary set of stairs—and the basement was rock and stone and whatever, and there was no railing on those stairs. Fred’s story about Papa going by his factories every night is true because I

used to go with him. Papa would drive by all his buildings and check everything and make sure the windows and doors were locked. He was just obsessive about that, especially after the night watchman accidentally shot the burglar a few years before this.

And the story is that Fred was driving past V&R, which was his responsibility, when he saw a light on that shouldn't be on. But he had all his kids with him. He had, I think, two kids in the car and his third wife who was pregnant. So, they went to get Papa. And when they came back, Fred left his wife and two kids in the car outside while they went in. Now, if you had arranged to kill somebody, would you bring your family?

BH: That is pretty convincing.

JF: Yes. So, they go in and they go upstairs first, and then they decide to go downstairs. Now when you go down those stairs, like I said there's no railing, they're treacherous, and there was no light at the top—when they tried to flip it on, the light wouldn't come on. So, Papa went down the steps, and Fred was on the steps, and Papa had to climb up onto a chair frame in the dark and pull the string for the lightbulb. When he fell, apparently, the lightbulb was all broken on his chest.

BH: Oh, I see. That's where the glass came from?

JF: Yes, which implies to me the light was on. Now, Fred was shot, and it was like a fraction of an inch from his aorta. So, the idea that a friend shot him in the dark didn't go down with me, either. Fred was hysterical. He ran back out and down to where the people were processing the vegetables. He was screaming, absolutely terrified. And, that's how the alarm was called in....Now the thing it says to me is that he knew who killed Papa, and he was afraid of whoever it was. At the funeral, I was the last person to go up to the coffin. As I stood there, Fred came up behind me. He was all bandaged up, I remember. He became hysterical again, distraught, terrified. The reason I remember it so clearly is that he grabbed my shoulder, and I spun around and looked into his eyes. They had to guide him out because he was beside himself. So, I thought all kinds of other possibilities, I just didn't believe it was Fred.

BH: In the trial, what did they give as his motive?

JF: Supposedly that he wanted the manufacturing company. I thought, "You know what, he's going to get it anyway," and Papa would have given it to him. You know, it's like killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

BH: Yeah.

JF: It didn't ring true to me either at thirteen-fourteen-fifteen. Now, my mother accepted it, and my Aunt Frances did too. But my Aunt Frances was working with the one witness—the one lady who testified. So, I was suspicious of that, too. You know it's odd to be that young and to be totally at odds with your family because they all wanted it to

be true. Because then they would know who it was and we wouldn't all be so afraid. You know what I mean?

BH: Yes. And how late at night when the event occurred?

JF: They woke me up at midnight, so it was probably 10:00-10:30, something like that.

BH: Did Frederick ever appeal this verdict?

JF: Yeah, he was released. There were two appeals. Here's the thing; the people, because there was four of them in the conspiracy...his cousin Raymond and the two girls that were prostitutes.

BH: They were both prostitutes?

JF: Supposedly. Now look at it this way, if you are twenty-six years old and you've got a third wife, two kids, another one on the way, how do you pay for prostitutes?

BH: No, that doesn't seem the way things work either.

JF: No. No. It was probably Papa's prostitutes between you and me, that's my guess. You know, that's how people did business back in the day. I look back on it now and think, "Oh my God, I'm aghast," but that's what I personally think.

BH: How old was Paul Rush at the time? I guess that's in the paper but I didn't...

JF: Fifty-six when he was killed. He was born in 1906.

BH: Yeah, you had mentioned that. So, he (Fred) was convicted, given life imprisonment, appealed, and then was released...?

JF: Yes. He ended up having two or three trials. I thought it was three. But here's the other thing; one of the prostitutes, Pat, was supposedly the witness. The other one, Carolyn, her trial didn't even last a day, and she was acquitted. Raymond, who was supposedly the shooter, his trial didn't even last a day, and he was acquitted. But with the same evidence, they convicted Fred.

BH: Yes, I...

JF: It didn't sound right to me. I talked with the sheriff when I was there in 2000, and he said—and I wanted to know why they didn't continue looking to find who it was—and he said they thought they had solved it and it was Fred. You know, I am sure that's probably true. I have thought all kinds of things, Billy. I thought maybe it did have something to do with the union stuff, or it was a burglary. That seemed right to me, because in that cellar, that basement had a door that opened out into the loading dock where they would load in all the big rolls of fabric.

BH: Yes.

JF: And they had been losing a lot of material in all the locations. One thing I did think, though, is that Fred knew who it was and was scared to death.

BH: Say that one more time.

JF: I said—and we're talking my theories...

BH: Yeah, right. Right.

JF: That Fred had to have seen who it was and was probably scared to death.

BH: Fred was afraid?

JF: Yes. Afterwards, after being shot.

BH: Yeah? Oh! Frederick was. He was afraid. Okay. I get that now. He was not—I can't imagine Paul Rush being afraid, but Frederick is different.

JF: Yeah. And you know, like I said when they went down the steps, the story he told is that the light was out, but it sounds to me like the light was on. You know, just me looking at the transcripts and going, scratching my head as an adult going, "How could that be?"

BH: Yeah. Yeah.

JF: So, like I say there's burglary—entirely likely, something to do with the union stuff, you know I don't know what was going on with that...certainly there was a lot of...they called in the Syndicate back in the day instead of the mob. It was the Syndicate in that era. You know when you've got a big business, and you're probably being hit up for any kind of thing.... I don't know since I haven't talked to any of the other businesses, and I don't know if that was a reasonable thing to be thinking.

BH: Do you know of any prior encounters with assailants or anything that Paul Rush might have had? Did he have any other adversaries that might turn to violence?

JF: I do know a story that my Aunt Frances told. I can't imagine it because my knowledge of Papa didn't include anything like this. But this what she—this is what she told, I think, my sisters; but Paul had an encounter with a union organizer, and they had a fight, and supposedly he (Paul) hit him with a tire iron or something. I don't know that's true. I never heard it when I lived there. That's something my sisters have heard.

BH: Yeah. Yeah, and those things get legendary status, but if not entirely true there's probably a big grain of truth in it.

JF: Here's a story about Papa, another one too. This is through the family as well. He had a temper supposedly. Now, I never saw it when I was a kid. You know, he's not going to show out in front of me. But supposedly he got mad at one of his upholsterers, and they had a fistfight. And they fought until they were tired or whatever, and the guy says, "Well okay, I guess I'm fired," and he (Rush) says, "Nah, let's get to work," and he goes home, and he changes his shirt, which was all bloody, and brings a shirt back for this guy who he had the fight with.

BH: (Laughs)

JF: So, he had a huge temper, but then when it was over, it was over.

BH: What was the fate of Frederick Rush? He would probably be eighty years old now. Has he survived, is he still around?

JF: He passed away in the 1990s. There's some interesting stories about him. After he was released—and you can get the appeal, I think, it was the Arkansas Supreme Court that overruled the trial—I never knew how they convicted him in the first place. It was very, very weak. But, Fred went on and got an education, became a programmer, and he worked for one of the big companies, and I'm drawing a blank on what it was, but he did very well. He had the two kids with the Mexican lady, Esawa, and then he had—I can't remember who the second one was, and then the third one, I think her name was Charlotte, and they moved to Memphis. He had more kids. He raised all those kids, and they all became doctors and engineers.

BH: Wow.

JF: My younger sister, Maeva, was afraid of Fred. She was real little. She never knew him as a family member, you know, she only knew that family thought he killed Papa. So, she went to see Virginia many years later because we weren't allowed to see her after 1963. During the visit, Maeva met Fred. And he said to her (that) he didn't do it. Now she didn't believe him because she had been raised to believe that he was the one who did it. And she called me to tell me this. Then, maybe two or three weeks later, he drowned in his toilet, the toilet in Virginia's house.

BH: Joyce, back to you here for a moment. You had talked about aspiring to be an engineer as a different age in those days' limitations and stuff. You were talking about being a furniture engineer, is that correct?

JF: Well actually, I just kind of—as a young girl, a young kid—thought I'd have that factory. I didn't think about owning it so much as working in it, you know. But, I became a chemical engineer so....

BH: You became a chemical engineer?

JF: Mmmh. Worked in the oil and gas industry.

BH: Ah, so you did become an engineer?

JF: Heck, yeah!

BH: Was that at UA Fayetteville?

JF: No, here's what happened; you know, like I said I got the money, and I went to two years at the University of Arkansas in writing. And then got married to an engineer, and we travelled around and had our kids. So, ten years later, I went back to school at the University of Pittsburgh and got my engineering degree in 1981.

BH: How profitable was Rush Furniture Manufacturing at the time? Was it highly successful in your opinion?

JF: I was under the impression that he was doing well. I know that right before he was murdered, his family split apart. He and Virginia had a spat, and they were going to get a divorce. She told me that it was a minor spat and that—this is going to make sense to you in a minute—anyway, apparently, he sold a bunch of stock or took a bunch of stock because he thought that they were going to

get divorced and had somebody at the bank move it over into my Aunt Frances's name. Then Papa and Gingie made up. So, you know, at that time, I can't even imagine how much it was, but it was a fair amount. He was able to get cash very easily. I know he bought our houses. I went to Immaculate Conception School and St. Anne's and so did Maeva. We both took dancing lessons. From what I understood later, he paid for all that. So, clearly, they were doing well.

BH: Yes. Yes.

JF: The range of it and the dollar number I can't tell you. I wasn't part of it.

BH: Well, I just wanted to gauge the general success of that, we're trying to...One of the little things we do, too, is try to measure the impact of these furniture manufacturers on the overall economy of the town.

JF: Well, he loved it, and he wanted it to get bigger, I know that. He always was trying to build and grow it. Waldron was doing well. Rush Manufacturing was doing well. V&R, I think was a startup at the time, so how well it was doing I don't know.

BH: What sort of extracurricular activities did Paul have? Was he interested in the rodeo or the Hardscrabble Golf Course?

JF: He took me to the rodeo all the time. He loved the wrestling as I said earlier. He was really into that. I know that they would go off to the big furniture shows all the time. It was very luxurious and nice. This one time, they took my parents who were just overwhelmed with how nice it was. He loved cars, he bought a new car every year.

BH: What kind of car?

JF: He was a tall big guy, and he drove big, fancy sedans. One year he bought a—I think that must have been 1957—he bought a Thunderbird, and it had the little round window.

BH: Oh, wow.

JF: It didn't last the whole year before he traded it in because it was too small for him. (Laughs)

BH: Well, they were small.

JF: But he liked...I remember, you know, big fancy cars. Of course, that was during the '50s, and they were all big. Now here's the other thing that he was into: he loved shopping. He would go buy fancy things and bring them in, anything new. He was very interested in, you know, how things were going on the world. Oh! I forgot to mention to you, this is in the same conversation with Virginia, I remembered, is that the reason for the divorce, the break-up, but they got back together, is that she had found pictures of those prostitutes in Papa's desk. And they had a fight over it, so that's why I'm thinking those were Papa's business women, not Fred's. It's just, you know, who would have the money for it?

BH: But he did the shopping and...

JF: He loved shopping. He loved fancy things. He loved clothes; he was always dressed to the nines. You know, he built a home for his mom. There were the two younger siblings who had, I think it was cerebral palsy or multiple dystrophy. By the time they were twelve, they were afflicted, and they died in their early forties. So, he built a house for his mother and arranged for people to come in to help her take care of those two kids until they passed. It was a nice house. He bought our house. So, he was into real estate and, you know, things like that.

BH: Did Paul and Virginia entertain socially in their home, or anything like that that you remember?

JF: Yes, they did. And, of course, I didn't get to go to a lot of them.

JF: Papa had a lot of women who worked for the company, secretaries, women working in the sewing room; and a lot of women had jobs out in the plant. After he was killed, the cops couldn't find the gun. They didn't know if it was a long gun or a short gun, like a .22. At the time, I guess we all assumed it was a pistol of some kind. So, one of his employees, called my mother. She said, "I need to come show you something." She came out and had a Ouija board. (Laughs)

BH: Ah!

JF: And she came and at our table in the dining room she laid out the Ouija board, and the Ouija board had told her that only my mother could find the gun.

BH: Hmm.

JF: And that the gun was somewhere down by the river. We all get in the car (laughs) and go down to the river, and—and this was after our house had been broken into and somebody murdered—so we're all scared to death anyway. So, we go down there, and we're just about to get out and wander around to where the Ouija said the gun was, and somebody stepped out of the woods, and my dad, of course, freaked out. We all ran back to the car. And he got that car out of there—you know, like the spinning tires? (Laughs) So Ouija was setting us up to be killed, too. (Laughs)

BH: (Laughs) Well, no gun then, huh?

JF: We were close enough if only Mom could find the gun.



Joyce Faulkner was born in Fort Smith and graduated from St. Anne's Academy. She holds a bachelor's of science in chemical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and an MBA from Cleveland State. She is the author of four novels, two collections of short fiction, and a book of humor. She has collaborated on many nonfiction pieces, children's picture books, magazine articles, and anthologies.

The Boys of Fort Chaffee

As remembered by Jim Bexley and Gene Trotter



THE BARRACKS AT FORT CHAFFEE WHERE JIM BEXLEY LIVED
FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS.¹

***Editor's note:** Jim Bexley and Gene Trotter were interviewed in December 2016 and January 2017 as part of the Pebley Center, UAFS, Oral History Program. Their categorized memories below are interview excerpts. Endnotes added by the Journal editors expand some of the events mentioned in these memoirs.*

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT AND ARRIVAL AT FORT CHAFFEE

Jim Bexley: I got my notice and had to report to Jackson (Mississippi). I was inducted on November 30, 1956. They bused me and some other guys I didn't know to Fort Smith, Arkansas. We arrived here at the bus station and an Army truck transported us to Fort Chaffee that day.

Gene Trotter: I got drafted, yeah. I got a letter from the president (laughs). I had already graduated from college, and I had coached a year of high school basketball. I got the letter in May just about the time school was out. I reported in to Nashville on June 12, 1956, and they put us on a bus. We ended up at Chaffee.

JB: The hitch was two years' active duty, two years' active reserve after you got out, and two years' inactive reserve. You had a six-year obligation.

GT: All of us had reserve obligations when we got home. We had to get in a reserve unit, I got into the National Guard and was in for six years after I got home.

RECEPTION CENTER

JB: You go through an induction deal. After about a week, then you are assigned to a unit for eight weeks' basic training.

GT: Arnold Short was there at the same time in the Reception Center.² Jimmy Davie was a sportswriter that I had known when I was playing at Austin Peay (University), and Jimmy wrote for the *Fort Smith Times*, the local paper. He was in the Army but he was doing sports at night, and he would look every day to see who was coming in, and there were a lot of big names coming in then, you know, Arnold Short being one of 'em and he recognized my name, and he wrote an article in the paper about us and we got a visit from the post commander. He

asked us if we wanted to stay there and play basketball, and we both, of course, did, and I kind of knew from the beginning that I would be at Chaffee the whole time.

BASIC TRAINING

JB: During basic training, one week, I think it was the sixth week, you spent out in the field, and I happened to be there in January and I was out there sleeping in a little old tent, and that was the roughest part.

GT: Basic training was eight weeks of rigid, probably more rigid that it is today. We went to the rifle range, we did that for a couple of weeks, and we had grenade training, hand-to-hand combat. Of course, the physical part of it was pretty tough. We had some kids that struggled with the physical part of it.

We had a basic training yearbook. But all the action pictures were generic, I didn't recognize anybody in any of the action pictures. But, we had a yearbook, and I still have it at the house, and I get it out and look at it every once in a while, refresh my memory....I didn't take basic training with many of the guys that I ended up with. One of them, one guy named Leo Fogarty (from Rochester, Minnesota) who was one of our group, he and I took basic training together, we went into the Army the same day and got out the same day. The rest of the guys I met when I got down to Specialty School for the second eight.

SPECIALTY SCHOOL

JB: During this period I was interviewed for further training assignment. Fort Chaffee was a training base, but it also had either four or five specialty schools. They had Army Administration, for which I interviewed and was accepted. They also an Army training school for mechanics. They also had a training school, I'm talking about back in '56, they had a training school for cooking, cooks. And they had two more, either one or two more, and I cannot recall what they were.

Anyway, I was assigned to an outfit, and I started just a few days after I finished my eight weeks' basic training I started what was called the Army Administration school which before that time had been clerk/typist school but they had changed the name, it was more than just typing. It was Army Administration, which was an eight-week training school. So, I went through that and during that period I was interviewed to be an instructor at this Army Administration School, and they accepted me. They don't hire you, you know, they just assign you. So, I was assigned to the Army Administration School, and our company was called Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, United States Army, Fourth Division, and I stayed, I remained an instructor at Army Administration

School until I was discharged from the Army.

GT: Army Administration School. Best I can remember is the upper portion of Chaffee up by the gate was all artillery and that was guys who had already finished eight weeks of basic and eight weeks of specialized training, and they were just an artillery unit, one of the biggest ones in the Army, I understood. Then the middle portion, down by the main PX, was basic training. Then our unit was all the way down at the end, and it was the second eight specialty training. Best I can remember there was about five schools down there. I know there was Army Administration, radio school, auto mechanics school, maybe a cooks school. There was about five schools on that end of the post, and most of those guys who finished the schools were shipped out to other jobs in other places.

LIVING ON THE POST

JB: We entered through the main gate, and our barracks was at the very end of that street. There was a group of barracks just like these, twelve or fifteen just like these. I spent the whole two years living in the barracks.

Had to make the bed up every day. Common latrine. No air conditioning. When I went in, we had boilers. In the first eight weeks, you had to get up early, around three o'clock or three-thirty. Now you didn't do it every day, you'd get it for a week, you'd get KP, which is kitchen patrol; you'd have to get up about three, three-thirty, go to the dining hall and start helping the cooks prepare the food for breakfast. Spent a lot of time peeling potatoes. The Army serves potatoes almost every meal. We also had guard patrol a week at a time, and you'd have to serve as a guard for a twenty-four-hour period. You had to get the boilers going, you'd stoke the boilers with coal, and then they converted to gas (while we were at Chaffee), and we didn't have to shovel the coal.

GT: We lived on post, yeah, me, and Bexley, Arnold Short, Gene Wofford, Bob Vanderwerf. We lived in the barracks, an open barracks, probably forty of us, most of 'em all the guys that played various baseball, basketball, that type thing. That was not very pleasant living out in the open barracks. There was always someone who went to town who came in late making noise. It was kind of unpleasant, but it was such a great bunch of guys, I just don't know how you could have assembled a better group of guys. I always felt I was so lucky, you know, to be associated with all those guys that I was in the Army with and just a great group of guys, there wasn't a bad egg in the bunch.

SATURDAY NIGHT ON THE TOWN

JB: About eight or ten of us ran around together all the time. (On Saturdays) We'd always start at the Squeeze Inn,



1958 CHAFFEE ALL STARS: Top row, from left, Don Thome, Arnold Short, Duane Mettler, Bob Huckaby, Tom Tagatz, John Anderson and Bob Vanderwerf. Bottom row, from left, Jackie Brandt, John Rowles, Gene Wofford, Al Avant, Jim Plumedahl, Bill Seaberg, Coach Bill Reyenga.

(Photo by Army photographer Tom Becker)

we'd then go to the Glass Hat, and then we'd move to the Branding Iron, that was our last stop. On Saturday night, it'd stay open 'til midnight. Then they had to close, they couldn't sell alcohol after midnight. Until our money ran out, we did that every Saturday night, we went to town. We had passes, we could come and go any time we wanted to and had civilian clothes.

We had cars, you know, most of us. I had one, Gene had one. This Vanderwerf would do or say anything in the world, and our company officer was our age and wanted to be our friend, but he was a lieutenant, and he thought he was above us. He made about \$200, and we made much less. He wanted to go and associate with us, so, we go to the Branding Iron one night and (at closing time) he said, "You boys go on home back to Chaffee, now." He had heard us talking about going to Moffett (Oklahoma). Moffett was totally off limits. When you crossed the Arkansas bridge, Fort Smith as you know is right on the Oklahoma state line, and the river divides Arkansas and Oklahoma and when you cross the river you are in a community called Moffett, and the whole town is off limits, you couldn't even stop and buy gasoline there. But they had two or three old juke joints that stayed open all night long. We didn't gamble much, we spent all our

money on beer. But when the Branding Iron closed, if we had a little extra money, we'd cross the river and go to Moffett to one of those joints over there and drink until three or four o'clock in the morning. So, this one particular night, our officer at Chaffee, we all walked out together when the place closed, and he said, "You guys go on back to Chaffee now. I don't want you getting into any trouble. Go on back to Chaffee, be careful." Bob Vanderwerf told him, "Sam, we're Moffett bound, if we don't break down!" Our old cars, they were junker cars, they spent as much time in the garage as on the road.

GT: Vanderwerf, Gene Wofford, Bexley, and me, there was four of us in the car. Vanderwerf cut a doughnut in that parking lot, and of course none of us needed to be driving, but he cut the doughnut hollering out the window, "We're Moffett bound, if we don't break down!" We never went to Moffett, I don't know why he said that. I was never in Moffett. Moffett was off limits.

POST ATHLETICS

JB: Arnold Short played college basketball at Oklahoma City University and made All-American, a small school and in 1956, he was chosen as a member of the U.S. Olympic team but he got hurt and did not get to play, but he was good



enough to play. He was great. He played at Chaffee two years. After he got out of the Army he didn't play NBA, but he could have. But he didn't want to leave Oklahoma, he was a country boy, and he played with the Phillips (66) Oilers, a semi- professional...AAU, they were not on the NBA level, but, comparing them with baseball, they would be like a double A or triple A in baseball terms. He played with them twelve or fifteen years, he was a star for them. He finished his career in an executive position but he resigned—Arnold was real religious—he resigned from Phillips and went into the ministry, but he wasn't a preacher, he was a lay preacher. He was a great tennis player, also, and he ran the tennis program for the city of Oklahoma City. He died about two years ago. (September 26, 2014)

GT: We played ball there, and anybody that was a sports fan would love to come to one of those games because, you know, you'd see Arnold Short on our team, K. C. Jones on Fort Leonard Wood. There were big names on about every team, Leonard Wood had six All-Americans on their squad when we played them. I can't remember all of them, but K. C. Jones was one, and there was a set of twins called the Judson brothers who played at Illinois, they were on that team, and there was a guy from Notre Dame who was an All-American on the team. That gym seated quite a few people, they'd let some of the trainees come to the game and it would be packed every time.



COMPANY CO LT. E. LEARY gives private Jackie Brandt his honorable discharge in 1958.

JB: I had some good friends (at Chaffee who were) big-time, well-known athletes. I became good friends with a guy named Jackie Brandt who was raised Omaha, Nebraska, and he was my age.³ He signed a baseball contract with the St. Louis Cardinals before he came into the Army. And he played one or two years of minor league baseball then St. Louis brought him up in about 1956. He was a rookie in 1956, and he was having a heck of a good year, a heck of a good year, but they traded him during the



THE 1958 FORT CHAFFEE VOLLEYBALL TEAM, top row, from left, Arnold Short, Dick Tennant, unidentified, Bob Vanderwerf, and Gene Wofford. Bottom row, from left, unidentified, unidentified, unidentified, and Don Thome.

year to the New York Giants, the Giants were still in New York at that time. Jackie Brandt got drafted and served two years (at Fort Chaffee).

GT: Brandt won a Gold Glove with the Giants. He and Willie (Mays) won it the same year. He was playing left at that time, and Willie was playing center. He was going to be Grand Marshal in a parade in Omaha this summer (2016) and when he came through here (Waverly, Tennessee), he comes through to visit me every time he comes, and had his uniform, he was going to wear his uniform, he was going to wear his Oriole uniform but he had his Gold Glove and he showed it to me, the first time I had ever seen it. And it is with the Giants and you know Matty Alou was the right-fielder on that ball club and lacked one vote of winning a Gold Glove and it would have been the first time that a complete outfield had won Gold Gloves in the same year.

GT: Gene Wofford was a good player. He played at Arkansas State Teachers College up at Conway. He was probably a better baseball player. He pitched a no-hitter in college with Schoolboy Rowe in the stands. After the game, Schoolboy took him out and bought him a sandwich and signed him to a contract with the Detroit Tigers. He pitched a year of C ball. Back then, you had B and C and

D, A and double A. Now college ball has taken the place of all those low minors, but Gene pitched a year of D ball with the Detroit organization. And we also had another minor leaguer who was in the Detroit organization, that made it to double A, named J.C. Sells. J.C. was a left-handed first baseman from Greenville, Tennessee. But, yeah, Wofford was a good athlete.

GT: The Fourth Army baseball tournament one year was held at Fort Chaffee. We played a team from Fort Bliss came in there for that tournament and every player in their starting lineup and played some level of professional baseball. Their first baseman was Norm Cash. In my class, all the guys that came in that went through the second eight at Chaffee (specialty schools) that were pretty big names like Jackie Brandt, you know, those people, went through our school. They sent through Army Administration School because they wanted to make clerks out of them. Every Monday, I would ask, any professional athletes here? One day it was Don Demeter, who played centerfield for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Bill Mazeroski came through there, Moe Drabowsky came through there, a lot of big names came through Chaffee. A lot of them were six-months guys. They would do six months in the Army and then go into the reserves.

JB: (The gymnasium at Chaffee) was close to being like Barnhill (former Razorback court) wouldn't hold as many people, but the floor...was just as good. Bill Seaberg...me and Gene Wofford made us a five-dollar bet that K.C. Jones would hold Arnold Short to less than twenty points.⁴ Arnold was averaging about thirty or thirty-five points a game. So, they came down to play two games. We bet Seaberg five-dollars per game that Short would score twenty or more points. The first game, he got about twenty-three or twenty-four. The second game he got about thirty. K.C. was all over him and K.C. was a great defensive player...but Arnold Short....

These men are all enlisted men, all draftees, most of them were college graduates and many were college athletes. Paul Griffith was a professional baseball player from Mississippi, great athlete, great baseball player. He never made it to the Major Leagues but he played about three or four or five years in triple A and he finally quit. He was so competitive with Jackie Brandt. Jackie wasn't jealous of Paul, but Paul was jealous of Jackie. He worked harder and he tried harder and he probably outdid Jackie. He probably hit better and he probably played better baseball than Jackie did (for the Post team). But Jackie, he was just a...he was there for a good time.

CHAFFEE GOLF COURSE

JB: Mason Rudolph was a very competent amateur golfer who got drafted in the army, same time. He was from Clarksville, Tennessee. I'm not sure if Mason won the national amateur, don't believe he did, but his college golf team at Memphis State won the NCAA. He was like Jackie (Brandt), Special Services. His assignment was the golf course. He was the assistant pro and we got to know Mason real well, about twenty of us. We all ran around together.

GT: He won some tournaments and made money, you know, he was good enough to finish in the money a lot of times. I used to go and watch him play in Memphis, the Memphis Open when he was in his prime, and I was young enough to enjoy stuff like that, and I went several times. He'd finish in the money, 'course money then wasn't like it is now. I can remember when top prize in the Memphis Open was \$6,000.

He was assistant at the golf course, and there was some sergeant who was in charge of it, and I do remember that General Dunn used to play every Thursday with Mason, and there was a couple of doctors who came out from town and played with them. I think Mason and General Dunn beat 'em, they played for money, I don't know how much, back then.

He played in some tournaments. Mason won the, I believe he won the Fourth Army tournament and the All-Army tournament. And then he played and won, I believe, the National Amateur tournament while we were at



MASON RUDOLPH is shown on the Chaffee nine.

Chaffee. I can't remember exactly if that's the case or not, but I believe he did.

ELVIS

JB: Elvis was drafted in '57.⁵ We had been there about a year when the word was all over Chaffee that Elvis was on the base and that he was going to get his hair cut at the barber shop. When you got drafted and inducted into the Army, they gave you a burr haircut. They didn't shave your head, but they cut it real short, they called it a burr cut. So, we got word that he was going to get his hair cut one afternoon around four-thirty, five o'clock. And in that (Army Administration) school when we weren't teaching, we were kind of free. We had to spend an hour or two in the office, but after working our lesson plans and stuff like that we were free. We went swimming, we played golf, we did everything in the afternoon. So, we all drive down to the barber shop to see Elvis get his haircut, there must have been 500 or 1,000, most of them high school kids.

Elvis did not go through basic training there. He was inducted there and he stayed there for about a week and then he was transferred somewhere else (Fort Hood, Texas) for basic training.

GT: We saw him at the Reception Center coming in but he didn't take basic there, they shipped him out to Fort Hood, Texas. We went down and hung around just to eyeball him, you know, and we saw him get his first haircut, his first haircut in the Army was at Fort Chaffee. That picture I've seen on TV so many times of him coming out of the barber shop and him knocking the hair off his neck, that was at Fort Chaffee and we were standing, me and all my bunch were standing probably twenty feet from him when that happened. And I've told people, you see that picture? I was standing right there watching when that happened. I think that was in 1958, early 1958.

I never heard why he didn't stay here for basic training.



BOYS OF CHAFFEE REUNION IN 2006, fifty years after their induction into the U.S. Army. Back row, from left: Bob Vanderwerf, Dick Tennant, and Gene Trotter. Middle row, from left: Jackie Brandt, Gary Fruith, Mason Rudolph, and Gene Wofford. Bottom row, from left: Dale Quist and Jim Bexley.

You know there was a big deal when they found out he was coming to Chaffee and they had some situations where they kind of told everybody what to do—don't approach him individually...they had an area roped off and anybody not in uniform couldn't get inside the rope. But he was out playing volleyball, and there was probably 200 women on the bank, of course they couldn't go inside the ropes. They had a sergeant assigned to Elvis to kind of keep people away from him, I guess, but every time he caught that sergeant not looking, he would shake his hips and those women would scream and faint; I guess it was a good thing they shipped him on out, I don't know, but it was the biggest thing that hit Fort Smith in a long time.

MILITARY BEARING

JB: I was assigned as instructor in this Army Administration school, and all the instructors were college graduates, there was about 100 of us, 125 of us, I don't know exactly how many, but at least 100 of us. It was an eight-week school, and all of us, with the exception of maybe ten at most that had not, ninety percent of them had graduated from college.

GT: The four-leaf clover was the Fourth Army patch

and the one stripe, of course, is private first class and that's what most of us were until about the last six months we were there, most of us were promoted to Specialist Third Class, which is a little bird-looking thing. You had to meet the dress codes, there were certain things you had to do, those dress uniforms, of course, they...when we went in the Army they were issuing everybody brown boots, and when we were, maybe in the middle of our basic training, they changed over to black boots, and we had to dye our boots black. That didn't work out too good, they didn't take to the dye too good, but anyway it was either that or buy a new pair at the PX, they never did issue us any black boots.

In the summer they let us wear open collar and Bermuda shorts, but that uniform we'd have to put it on to get paid or on special occasions or they made pictures, you know, they'd want you to put the dress uniform on, and we had the brown khakis in the summer and what you call OD's in the winter, then they changed over to green, but I never owned a green one, they changed over while we were in the Army, but I never bought one, you had to buy 'em. And those old OD uniforms were scratchy, I hated them, winter uniforms I didn't like them at all.

I don't remember after getting out of second eight weeks ever marching. We would go to the parade deal a lot during basic training for reveille when they lowered the flag at night. It was easy going after the second eight weeks, they just wanted us to show up for work. On Saturdays, sometimes, we'd have special training. The commanding general walked into the orderly room of our company, Headquarters Special School Command, and nobody called attention. He walked all the way back to the office and nobody called attention and he threw a fit.

So, the next Saturday there was 800 troops out there being taught military courtesy. And the guy teaching the class was the one who failed to call attention when the general walked in! Lot of times on Saturday, we'd have classes on various things, you know, but other than that, we'd pretty well, show up for work, and of course the ball players...you met all your obligations, much like having a job, it wasn't real restrictive is what I am saying.

THE CITY OF FORT SMITH

JB: I have a good friend who played football at Mississippi State, we got to be really close friends at Fort Chaffee, Billy King. He had some friends who played football at the University of Arkansas, and they were in Fort Smith. They introduced Billy to a young lady who was going to the University of Arkansas, about twenty-one years old, or twenty-two, named Mary Lou Bradford. Her daddy owned a furniture store on Garrison Avenue. Billy got to going out with Mary Lou, and Mary Lou wanted to introduce me to a friend of hers so we could all go out together. She introduced me to Sally Slack, who went to Fort Smith Junior College. We started going together when I had about six months, eight months left in the Army. We were together almost every night after a month or so. And we fell in love with each other, and then finally I got discharged. She didn't go back to college then, she graduated later on. She worked for her daddy, who owned a retail bakery, Slack's Sweet Shop. We got married in June of '59. I worked in Atlanta, Georgia, New Orleans, Biloxi, Mississippi. Sally being from Fort Smith, we were going back and forth, Christmas, vacations, at least a couple times a year to visit her folks, and finally in '63, my company that I worked for was going to open an office in Fayetteville, Arkansas. They interviewed me, it would have been a promotion for me, the local manager. They interviewed me to transfer to Fayetteville, Arkansas, as manager, and open a new office, start a new business for them really, a new location so Sally and I moved back to Fayetteville and stayed here.

GT: I loved Fort Smith and always looked forward to going back. It changed so much, you know, Fort Smith was a pretty small town when we were there, but Gene Wofford



GENE WOFFORD AND GENE TROTTER are shown on the basketball floor of the Chaffee Gymnasium during a reunion.



MASON RUDOLPH AND GENE TROTTER at a reunion of the boys of Chaffee.

and I went to church in Fort Smith, the Methodist Church there, about every Sunday. We'd go to church and then we'd go to Porta's restaurant and eat fried chicken, they had really good fried chicken. Gene Wofford and I were pretty regular at the Methodist Church and would wear civilian clothes, but every Sunday nearly somebody would, they recognized us as being G.I.'s I guess, invite us home for lunch. I often thought if I were going to re-locate to another city, that (Fort Smith) would be a place that I would like to go.

REUNIONS

JB: We became really good friends, all of us, really bonded together. Kind of like a fraternity in college and I still got a few of my friends that I was in the Army with sixty years ago. And we still get together annually. It's down now to only about five of us or six.

I came up with this list of all the people that was in our training school and I had addresses from 1958 where they lived before they came into the Army and I had a heck of a time, but I located about, probably about fifty of them. Our first reunion was in 1999 and was held in Fort Smith, Arkansas. We stayed at the Point's Inn. They had a sign out there, Welcome, the PGA tournament going on at the time and also Fort Chaffee Warriors. I named us, the Fort Chaffee Warriors, and I've got lots of letters I wrote all these guys, I bet I wrote fifty or more letters.

GT: Bexley and I met in Florida one time before we ever started the reunions, and Jack Rowles, we called him Jolly Jack, he was a pretty good athlete from Minnesota and after the get together down there, Jack died and I told Bex, we need to start getting these guys together and if we're ever going to do it. And we got on the internet and started finding people we hadn't had contact with in many years. First reunion we had, we had really a good turnout and we had it in Fort Smith.

It's unbelievable how we did bond. A great group of guys. Actually, we just love each other and that first reunion we had in Fort Smith everybody got up and spoke a little bit and I told them, "I want you guys to know, I feel so lucky having been sent to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, and having the opportunity to meet you guys and be your friend, it was one of the better things that's happened to me in my life." And I feel that way.

Jim Bexley and Gene Trotter shared their memories for this article. Bexley is an insurance claims adjuster in Northwest Arkansas and Trotter is a realtor and retired basketball coach.

ENDNOTES

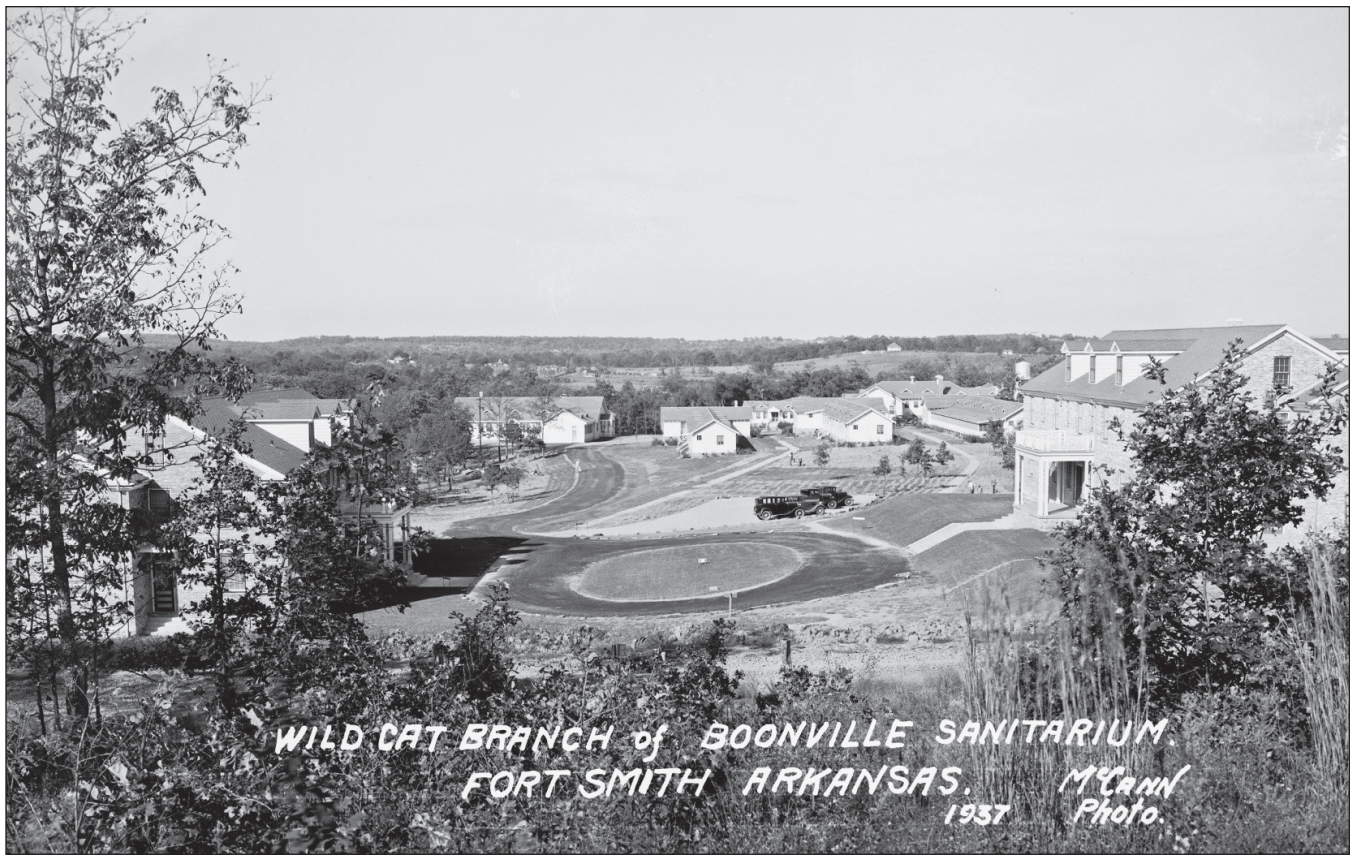
- ¹ The restored barracks pictured was where most of the soldiers remembered in this piece were bunked.
- ² Arnold Short, a six-foot-three-inch guard, was an All-American college player at Oklahoma City University and a second-round pick in the 1954 NBA draft, thirteenth overall pick by the Fort Wayne Pistons, but chose to play in the National Industrial Basketball League. The *Daily Oklahoman* named him as one of the top 100 athletes in Oklahoma history. Short was named All-Army in basketball. He was ordained a pastor in the United Methodist Church and inducted into the Oklahoma Tennis Hall of Fame, class of 2007.
- ³ John George "Jackie" Brandt, b. 1934, played 137 games for the San Francisco Giants in 1959 after his discharge from the Army, hitting .270 with twelve home runs and thirty-nine assists, and that year, he and Willie Mays were named National League Gold Glove winners for left and centerfield. The right fielder award went to Henry Aaron. The next year,



1999 REUNION headquarters in Fort Smith.

the Giants traded Brandt to the Baltimore Orioles, where he played the next six seasons as the regular centerfielder. While at Chaffee, Brandt was married, lived in town, volunteering his time with the American Legion program and the Fort Smith Boys & Girls Club. He and his wife, Sarah, had a son born while here.

- ⁴ Bill Seaberg had a chance to play against K.C. Jones in college at the 1956 NCAA Tournament (championship game score, Dons 83, Hawkeyes 71). Seaberg got seventeen points in the game along with his teammate, All-American Carl Cain. Bill Russell got twenty-six for USF, which claimed its second straight NCAA title. Jones was not in the game because of an NCAA ruling declaring him ineligible for tournament play that year because he played one game in 1953.
- ⁵ Elvis Presley boarded a bus in Memphis, Tennessee, on Monday, March 28, 1958, and arrived at Fort Chaffee that evening. He had his first meal in the Army on Tuesday, March 25, a G.I. haircut on Wednesday, March 26, played in the volleyball game on Thursday, March 27, and departed on a bus Friday morning. He arrived at Fort Hood, Texas, after a ten-hour trip. Elvis went through basic training at Fort Hood and then got orders for Germany.



THIS 1937 PHOTOGRAPH by Bob McCann shows the Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium from the east, or rear, of the campus.
(Courtesy of Fort Smith Museum of History/McCann Photo Collection.)

Wildcat Mountain

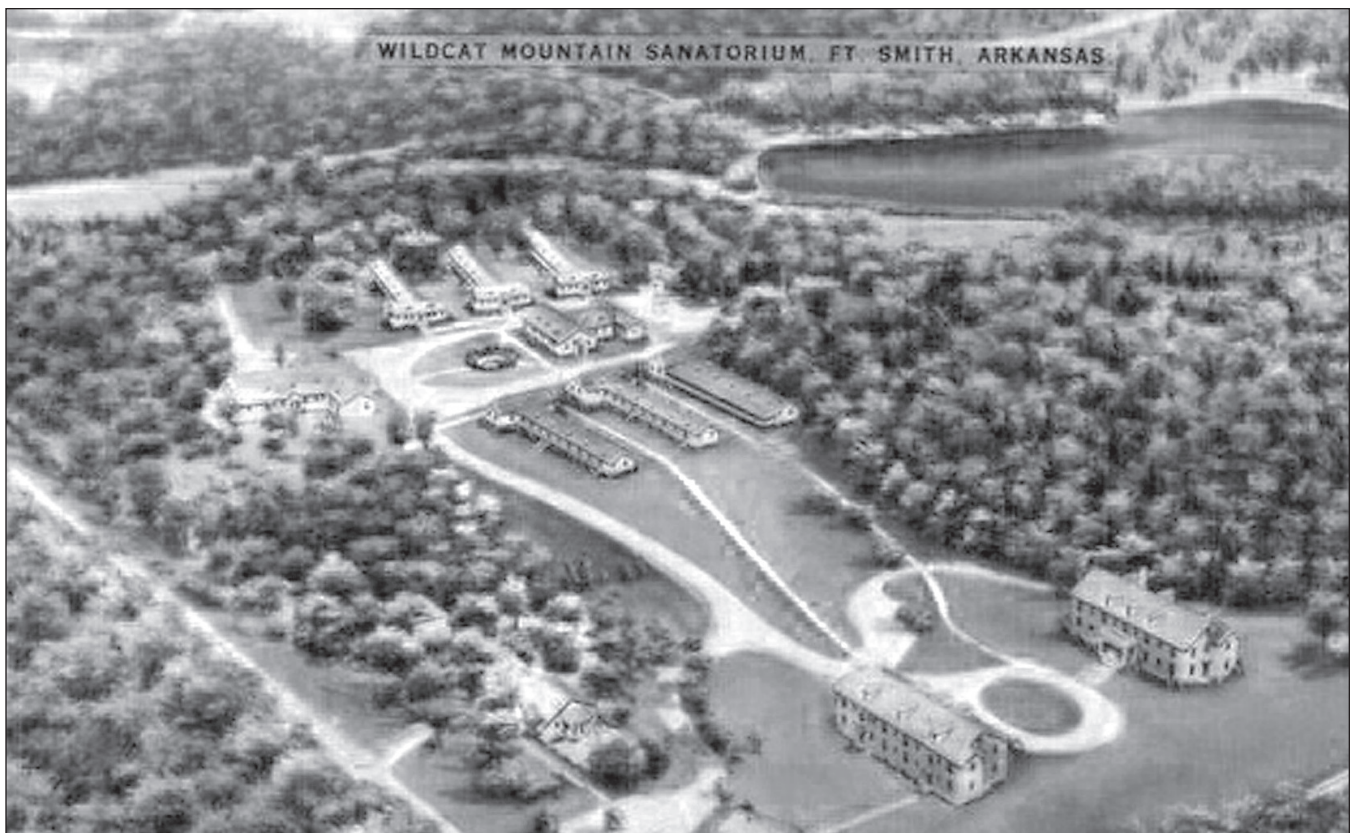
Methodist facility's roots date back to WPA

By Taylor Prewitt

Wildcat Mountain was eight miles east of Fort Smith when the white stone pillars were placed in the 1930s at what is now the intersection of Seventy-Fourth Street and Euper Lane. The white stone pillars haven't moved. But Wildcat Mountain is now in the city limits of Fort Smith. The name indicates that the area was then, or had been, wilderness

Wildcat Mountain Lake, now Carol Ann Cross Lake, was part of the eighty-acre tract that includes the present Methodist Village, previously the site of a WPA project for housing transient workers during the Depression years, and subsequently the site of the Wildcat Mountain Tuberculosis Sanatorium.

Frank Euper collected the final \$500 payment on the \$1,500 sale price to transfer the Wildcat Mountain tract to the city of Fort Smith in early January 1935.¹ The city then used the property to house workers for the Transient Bureau colonization project. Erection of barracks was underway as the purchase was completed. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created in the early months of the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt for the purpose of providing employment for people without work, doing jobs that would increase the public good. In this case, people on the relief rolls in Mena and other areas near Fort Smith were brought to Fort Smith, where more work was available. Chief among their projects was construction of the new Sebastian



A 1930s POSTCARD shows an aerial view of Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium. Wildcat Mountain Lake, now the Carol Ann Cross Lake, is at upper right. Wildcat Mountain Road, now Seventy-Fourth Street, is at the top, and Euper Lane is on the left.

County Courthouse, an art deco, state-of-the-art facility that was completed in 1937, featuring a jail on the top floor, rather than in the basement. The federal government built two barracks at Wildcat Mountain, and when the camp opened, it could “accommodate several hundred transients.”²

By that time the Wildcat Mountain camp included “nine or ten buildings with stone foundations, and a brick veneer nurses’ home and physicians’ home.”³

As the need for housing transient workers was decreasing in the late 1930s, the Arkansas Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Booneville found itself needing more beds. The *Arkansas Gazette* reported on January 2, 1937, that the Board of Control of the state Tuberculosis Sanatorium recommended that it “take over and operate Wild Cat Mountain camp in Sebastian County as a sanatorium unit.” This camp was “eight miles from Fort Smith and about 40 miles from the sanatorium at Booneville.” The WPA provided funds to construct four more buildings, allowing the facility to accommodate 100 patients. A postcard image from this period shows thirteen buildings, including two three-story structures on the east side of the property (the back side, furthest from Seventy-Fourth Street, or Wildcat Mountain Road).



LEO NYBERG, state legislator from Helena, promoted measures for dealing with tuberculosis in Arkansas and died of tuberculosis at Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium in 1940, at the age of 34.

The first forty-three patients arrived on March 26, 1937, and the Wildcat Mountain Annex was soon filled to capacity.⁴ The Booneville sanatorium used Wildcat Mountain primarily for far advanced and terminal cases. Among these was Leo Nyberg, a state legislator from Helena who was the chief advocate for development of the state sanatorium. He himself developed tuberculosis and became a patient at Booneville and was subsequently sent to the Wildcat Mountain

Annex where he died on March 7, 1940, at the age of thirty-four. The state legislature had passed the Nichols-



JOE IRWIN, whose father had tuberculosis and was a resident at the Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium, holds one of the two rings that held the chain across the entrance to the grounds. This pillar and the one across from it on Euper Lane formed the entrance to the WPA camp and are all that is left of the original WPA construction.

Nyberg act in 1938 to fund the construction of a new hospital building at the Booneville site. It was completed in 1941 and was named the Nyberg building, five stories high and accommodating 511 patients as well as office space and ancillary services.⁵ His obituary stated that he “became widely known across the US for his fight to build a first class system of tuberculosis treatment centers in Arkansas.”

Joseph Chalmers Irwin II (1888-1958), father of Joseph S. Irwin of Fort Smith, was also a patient at Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium, though not as a terminal case. He was an engineer in the Panama Canal Zone when a sore throat was diagnosed as tuberculosis of the throat. He returned home to Fort Smith in 1946 and was admitted to Wildcat Mountain and then transferred to Booneville. When streptomycin became available for treatment of tuberculosis, he transferred to a private sanatorium in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1949 for treatment there and returned home in 1950 as an arrested case. He discovered, however, that his friends would not see him because of fear of catching tuberculosis. He tried returning to work at the state highway department, but his friends and colleagues were afraid to be around him. So, he finally decided to return to the Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium as an arrested

case where he counseled patients. His wife said he was doing a lot of good there, and this provided him a social outlet. He stayed in his room at the sanatorium during the week and returned home to be with his wife on weekends. He died in 1958 at the age of seventy.⁶

Donna Nelson of Siloam Springs, Arkansas, was a nursing student at Kansas City General Hospital in 1945 when she developed tuberculosis and returned to Arkansas to enter the Arkansas State Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Booneville. She described her experiences at Booneville and Wildcat Mountain in an oral interview in 1992. “One break in the boredom arrived when, after about six weeks, they came around and asked if anyone would consider a transfer to ‘Wildcat.’ Thinking that anything would be better than where she was Donna volunteered to move.”⁷

Wildcat consisted of veranda type barracks with porches and open-air areas for the patients to sun and rest. Again Donna shared her room with a roommate and quickly became a part of the “community.” Although Wildcat offered a change of pace from the Booneville facility, it did not prove to be an escape from the life and death issues associated with the “dread disease.” Soon after she arrived a girl in the room

next door died. Donna still remembers her shocked reaction.

Patients at both the Booneville location and at Wildcat Mountain slept in screen porches because fresh air was considered to be conducive to healing. Visitors stood outside the screen porches to converse with patients through the screen to avoid becoming infected.

Census in the Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium declined in the 1950s as effective treatment for tuberculosis became available, and in 1952 space was made available for residents moved from a facility located on the present site of the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. This was the Sebastian County Hospital, and it was used as an infirmary and home for elderly, destitute citizens. "A few able residents tilled up small plots to grow vegetables for use in the hospital's kitchen, which prompted Fort Smithians to call the place the 'county poor farm.' A fund of \$75,000 was required to remodel the hospital buildings for the college's use and to provide adequate alternate facilities for the 30 elderly occupants of the home."⁸

"The college started the fall term in 1952 on the new campus, the 'old folks' having moved into more appropriate quarters on Wildcat Mountain Road the day before the junior college moved in." These "more appropriate quarters" were at the Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium. The thirty residents from the County Hospital were housed in a separate building, but the occupancy declined rather quickly, and this use of the sanatorium did not last very long.

Sanatorium care provided the best hope for control and cure of tuberculosis as long as there was no effective medication, but with the advent of effective oral agents such as isoniazid and streptomycin, care began to shift to general hospitals, outpatient clinics, and the patient's home. The Wildcat Mountain Annex closed its doors on December 1, 1958, and the large sanatorium at Booneville, which once housed more than 1,000 tuberculosis patients, finally closed on June 30, 1973.

The Depression came and went. Tuberculosis sanatoriums came and went. And in the 1950s, major changes suddenly occurred in the care and housing of the elderly. The Hill-Burton Act of 1946 provided large amounts of government funds for hospitals. Old age homes, such as the one that moved from the Westark Community College site to Wildcat Mountain Road, soon began to empty out and close as they sent their infirm elderly residents to hospitals. But hospitals were not geared for long-term care; they lobbied the government for help, and lawmakers provided funds to build custodial units to house those who needed long periods of "recovery." And so, the modern nursing home was



THIS PLAQUE ON ONE OF THE TWO PILLARS marking the entrance to the Wildcat Mountain grounds indicates that the WPA established these two pillars at the entrance to the camp in 1936, the year before the camp for transients closed and the Wildcat Mountain Sanatorium was established.

created, not primarily to help those who needed a place to stay in their old age, but to provide a place for acute care hospitals to send their long-term patients.⁹

It was in this setting that the Methodist Nursing Home was established on the site of the recently closed Wildcat Mountain Tuberculosis Sanatorium as a nonprofit entity to be operated on a non-sectarian basis by the North Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Church.

Reverend Ethan Dodgen, who had served as district superintendent of the Fort Smith District of the North Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Church, recalled in a letter dated March 6, 1980:

Reverend Elmo Thomason, T. L. Hunt, and Roger Lynch met with me sometime in 1958 or 59 to discuss developing a Methodist Nursing Home on property the city had offered for that purpose. We contacted the Board of Hospital and Homes in Chicago and they sent a representative of the Board...to counsel with us....[The] matter was brought before a district conference and a campaign was organized and trustees elected. Funds were raised in the city and from the churches of the Ft. Smith District to begin the building project....

The North Arkansas Conference Journal, 1960 (p. 63) contained the report of the Board of Hospital and Homes of the Conference with this recommendation:



HUGH WOLFE, at right, was administrator of the Methodist Nursing Home when it opened in 1961. His wife, standing beside him, was the registered nurse. Other staff members are standing at the entrance of the facility.



THE METHODIST NURSING HOME received its first resident on March 19, 1961, with thirty-three beds: fifteen double rooms and three single rooms.

"We recommend that the North Arkansas Conference accept the Fort Smith Nursing Home that is now under construction to operate under the direction of the North Arkansas. We further recommend that the following be elected trustees of the Nursing Home: W. A. Downum, David Conyers, Dr. Will H. Mock, W. P. Connell, Elmo Thomason, Dr. Harold Wright, T. L. Hunt, Roy Martin, and Stanley Evans." . . . The report was adopted by the Annual Conference in session, (p. 30) June 10, 1960.

The *Arkansas Gazette* reported that the "new \$300,000 Methodist Nursing Home on Wildcat Mountain" was dedicated March 1, 1961, with a dedication address by Bishop W. Kenneth Pope of Little Rock.¹⁰ Other speakers included Vice Mayor Charles Mankin; R. A. Young, Jr., building committee chairman; T. L. Hunt, chairman of the Board of Trustees; and Dr. Ralph Crigler, who presented a tribute to the late Roy C. Martin, who had been "instrumental in launching plans to build the home," according to information printed by the nursing home at the time of its fortieth anniversary in 2001.

Hugh Wolfe was the first administrator, and his wife was the registered nurse. There were fifteen double rooms and three single rooms; at the time of the dedication, half of the thirty-three beds had been reserved. J. S. Davis and Son Construction Company was general contractor, and Chester Nelson was the architect.

"Operating as an arm of the Methodist Church in its approach and concern to the proper and adequate care of convalescents and the aged, this Nursing Home is the first in the United States within the Methodist denomination built specifically for this purpose," according to the information leaflet for the opening. "Guests include members of several denominations," it was added.

The North Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Church transferred ownership of the thirty-acre property to Methodist Nursing Home of Fort Smith, Inc. on February 14, 1963.

A three-acre plot on the northwest corner of the property was conveyed to Bost School for Limited Children, Inc. in 1966.

Part of the nursing home property was deeded to Methodist Village, Inc. on February 28, 1974, and Methodist Village was built with financing by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. At this time the last of the remaining buildings from the tuberculosis sanatorium were demolished to make room for the Village apartments, which provided affordable independent living.

The concept of assisted living arose in the 1980s, and memory care developed as a specialized part of assisted

living care. When payment of the HUD loan to the Methodist Village was completed in late 2014, the board began planning the addition of a forty-five-bed assisted living unit to include seventeen beds for memory care. The skilled care unit has now grown from thirty-three to 138 beds, with occupancy consistently over ninety percent. The plan is to develop the Village into a Life Plan Community that will replace the current skilled-care unit and add a new independent living community.

Wildcat Mountain, no longer eight miles from town, has continued to evolve from Depression-era housing for transient laborers, to treatment of tuberculosis, to the rapidly changing face of senior care.



Taylor Prewitt is a retired heart surgeon and author. He is on the Board of Directors at the Methodist Village Home.

Author's Note: I am indebted to Shelley Blanton, archivist at the Pebley Center of the Boreham Library at University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, for providing assistance in searching newspaper and other archival materials for this review.

Endnotes

- 1 "City makes final payment on Wildcat Mountain tract," *Fort Smith Times Record*, January 3, 1935.
- 2 Amelia Martin, "Fort Smith Depression Era 1930-1940," *Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society* 15 (September 1991): 12-14.
- 3 "Committee will study offer of Wild Cat Mountain Camp," *Arkansas Gazette*. January 2, 1937.
- 4 Amelia Martin, "Arkansas Tuberculosis Sanatorium Wildcat Mountain Annex," *Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society* 21 (September 1991): 12-14, Sept.
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The Marielitos at Fort Chaffee in 1980

Misunderstood and Misrepresented

By Erin Langford

During the spring of 1980, more than 25,000 Cubans travelled to Fort Chaffee, an Army base on the outskirts of Fort Smith, Arkansas, by way of Mariel, Cuba, earning them the nickname “Marielitos.” Average Americans viewed these “boat people” negatively with growing distrust based on stereotypes perpetuated by comments from Fidel Castro’s government, the United States involvement in the Cold War, and American media. Compared to previous waves of Cuban exiles, the Marielitos faced unfavorable conditions with little support from the United States. By analyzing the differences between the Marielitos and earlier Cuban exile groups, dissecting media portrayals that created the negative stereotype, and by explaining what constituted criminal behavior in Cuba during the years before the Mariel boatlift may dispel the myth of Marielito refugees as pure criminals.

To understand the major issues with the perception of Marielitos one must consider the socio-economic statistics of Cuban immigration from the decades before Mariel, the members of groups classified as “Golden Exiles” of the early 1960s, and the refugees of the “Freedom Flights” of the early 1970s. People in these earlier immigrant groups, to a certain extent, supported Cuban leader Fulgencio Batista, held private property, and obtained higher educations. Castro initially considered these groups as being the problem with Cuba, that is they helped create inequality of classes. For Castro, this was not a loss of talent or intellectual elites, a “brain-drain,” for the Cuban economy or culture. It was simply the expulsion of traitors to the revolution and capitalists.¹

The first major group of Cubans, those in the “Golden Exile” wave, included skilled upper and middle-class white Cubans in medicine, government, and members of the military who opposed Castro’s Communist take-over. Many of them—over the age of thirty—brought families, valuables, and cash, enabling a smoother integration into American life.

Many of those Cubans had ties to the United States



ON THE STEPS of the barracks at Fort Chaffee.

(Courtesy of Chaffee Museum)

through business, culture, vacations, and their children who may have attended school stateside. As political asylum seekers, Americans welcomed them warmly, thus creating the myth that these “golden people” stood up to oppressive Communism with such bravado it would be un-American not to help.²

Offers of aid came in from all over the nation, organized by the Cuban Refugee Center and other voluntary relief agencies (VOLAGs) such as the Catholic Welfare Bureau. Several intense public relations campaign created by charity groups and spearheaded by journalists at *The Miami Herald* and *Parade Magazine* created goodwill toward “Goldens.” Efforts from various charity groups ensured Cubans received a welcome fitting of any individual wanting to live in a democracy. “They are appreciative of any opportunities here to work in the freedom for which they have sacrificed heavily... With the communist menace now close to our shores you and your community face a new challenge to show the Cubans who flee from it the heart in our way of life.”³

With their physical property seized for redistribution, “Goldens” received aid from United States government agencies in the form of financial support, while dozens of religious and private charities donated clothing, held language tutorials and cultural education, and offered

employment opportunities. Pictures of “Goldens” published in newspapers nationally focused on families with young children, women dressed in fashionable clothing, and men ready to work. These images tugged on the heartstrings of most Americans leery of Communists and swayed those who might be willing to help righteous neighbors in distress. It is important to mention that “Goldens” also held every intention of returning to their homeland one day.⁴

Coconut Grove, Florida, resident Alina Garrido recalled in an interview for Miami Stories at the History Miami Museum, “No one in my family thought it was forever. But even as a goodbye, it felt very sad. My mother told me we would be staying in Miami for a long vacation, but I knew better. I overheard a conversation between my mother and father. They were afraid that Fidel Castro was installing a communist regime and that they would lose custody of the children to the state....”⁵ It is important to mention between the arrival of the “Golden Exiles” and the “Freedom Flights” a large number of Cuban children made their way to the United States, unsupervised, under “Operation Pedro Pan.” Hundreds of Cuban parents shared the fear Garrido’s parents held and took action to save their children from growing up under a tyrannical Communist government.⁶

The next group of Cuban refugees to consider are the 260,000 people who arrived during the “Freedom Flights.” These immigrants included families and skilled middle-class workers (teachers, laborers, and engineers) unable to leave the island earlier. Toward the end of the flights, an elaborate process, enacted by the Castro régime to keep other professional and skilled laborers from leaving the country, forced all trips to require exit paperwork. Anyone wishing to leave Cuba could take five American dollars and thirty pounds of luggage—nothing more. Portrayed as risking life and limb living under Castro’s oppressive control, these Cubans received political asylum and refugee status with full support from the United States government and private citizens. The “Freedom Flights” consisted of daily airlifts from Cuba to Miami, organized by major Miami airlines from the winter of 1965 through the spring of 1971. A socio-economic profile of this group reveals more Cubans who did not necessarily consider themselves white, but more of a mixture of classes disrupted by Castro’s redistribution plans.⁷

In stark contrast, the 125,000 people who risked their lives making the 136 nautical mile trek from the port of Mariel on the Northern edge of Cuba, classified as “undesirables” and portrayed in the United States media as criminal, represented every imaginable social, political, religious, sexual, and economic group found on the island nation.

They fled en masse, some supported by families in the United States who chartered shrimp boats, private yachts, or any sea-worthy vessel they could afford. American fishermen and boat captains took to smuggling and charging Cuban-Americans exorbitant fees to help bring family members or friends over. The Cubans already living in the United States and the ones leaving Mariel did not know that the Cuban government had plans to add criminal escoria trash and gusanos worms from Cuban prisons to the departing ships.⁸

The boats leaving Mariel during the “freedom flotilla” did not share the orderly departures previous exiles experienced via air travel, helping perpetuate the myth of criminality, low economic status, and violence. The United States Coast Guard conducted over 900 search and rescue missions during the months of the boatlift and received calls for help from capsized boats. The number of Cuban deaths at sea during the exodus remains unknown.⁹

Photographs in *The Miami Herald* and other national newspapers depicted images of disheveled, dark-skinned Cubans coerced onto overloaded boats. Media outlets portrayed these refugees as being so dangerous that Cuban Army officials had to force them off the island by gunpoint; at least that is what readers might interpret from the images. In reality, of the 25,000 Cubans who made it through the gates at Fort Chaffee, 392 found themselves classified as “anti-social” and 600 were stigmatized as mental patients; hardly criminal or violent to others. Roughly, 1,306 of the Mariel entrants through Fort Chaffee had questionable backgrounds, meaning they lived alternative lifestyles or practiced unorthodox or non-mainstream religions. They were not what United States officials considered violent offenders.¹⁰

Marielitos posed threats to the social status of Cubans already living in the United States, who integrated into both the economic and political world of Miami, New York, and other East Coast cities. According to author María Cristina García, even established Cuban exiles across the United States wanted little to do with Marielitos out of fear for their own reputations. Cuban-Americans who sought family members they had not seen in years had reservations and negative opinions about the behavior of some Marielitos: “They’d say, ‘Oh my God, what did I bring here? Once here, many Cubans said, ‘I brought my brother, and he’s a lazy one.’” This begs the question, if their own people did not want to deal with them, why would or why should anyone else?¹¹

Another issue with perception of the 1980 group was what political status should they be ascribed. Marielitos are referred to in official United States government documents in efforts to circumvent United Nations protocols as “parolees, immigrants, political prisoners, emigres, and

entrants” after it became apparent that Castro released a small portion of violent criminals. In fact, Marielitos were the first group of people from a Communist nation denied full refugee status entering the United States. The United Nations, in a 1951 convention on the topic, defined a refugee as “a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence, has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a political social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.”¹²

Two months before the first Marielitos arrived in Key West, the ninety-sixth Congress passed the amended Refugee Act of 1980. The act established a task force to aid refugees, set guidelines for unaccompanied minors, create training programs for language skills education, employment training, and provide funding for those processes to take place. Congress took advantage of a few exceptions pointed out by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR,) when they suggested that refugee status was not necessarily permanent and that it would not apply to criminals who acted against the United Nation’s mission of peace.¹³

These stipulations allowed for more rigorous testing and longer holding periods that groups prior to 1980s did not experience. An editorial piece in the *Arkansas Democrat* discussed the issue: “...their (Marielitos) lack of status in this country as either refugee, immigrants or aliens makes them free folk—that the state can’t detain them against their will.” John Coleman, Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) official, stated, “These people have admitted they committed criminal actions of one kind or another in Cuba. They are the types of crimes that would normally have prevented their entry into this country under immigration laws.” Whether the state of Arkansas could legally hold the refugees, they did. Other states did as well.¹⁴

Many of the refugees suspected of harsh or violent crimes in Cuba found themselves in prisons in Atlanta, Georgia, and Oakdale, Louisiana, after processing at Fort Chaffee. It was not until 2005 that the United States Supreme Court ruled it illegal to hold Cubans from Mariel indefinitely. Some served their sentences fully by 2005, yet remained unreleased or awaiting deportation. While violent offenders and criminally insane individuals made up a small percentage of Marielitos, the language used by Coleman and other officials in media reports suggested, without any evidence, that all the people making their way to Fort Chaffee had violent criminal records of some kind.¹⁵

Residents of Fort Smith, surrounding communities, and

the state shared mixed feelings about the Cubans at Fort Chaffee. Some offered support through their local churches and charities, like the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.

Some groups rallied outside the gates of Fort Chaffee requesting immediate naturalization of the Cubans. The *Southwest Times Record* featured a front-page editorial that offered caution and patience: “Justice demands no one be judged without the facts. Fairness demands that everyone be afforded a chance to prove himself worthy...should we not consider also that these new refugees may be the bitter vintage of Castro’s own grapes of wrath and the victims of oppression....”¹⁶

Others, like Northwest Arkansas Ku Klux Klan (KKK) members, arrived in Barling to protest at the main gates of Fort Chaffee. Some of these residents held signs that read, “Go home Cubans,” and, “God keep America free!” Several men promised, in an interview with Joanne Norton of the *Southwest Times Record*, to behave like “white people.” How, exactly, is a white person expected to behave? This off-color comment helps to understand the attitude that many Americans held toward the Marielitos: xenophobia. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines xenophobia as “attitudes, prejudices and behavior that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity.”¹⁷

Marielitos became the epitome of unwanted outsiders—Communist, non-Christian, and visibly non-white. While Castro’s government did not ban religion, it became difficult to practice openly. In Cuba having a darker skin tone was not a necessarily a bad thing, but in the United States, it cost sponsorships. Dan Williams of *The Miami Herald* described an incident in which Luis Estaban Lassus, a qualified student and volunteer who worked with the Red Cross at the Fort Indiantown camp, lost sponsorship after the sponsor learned of his being black.

People called in, according to Catholic Ministries workers, specifically requesting whites only. It is easy to understand the opposition, as many Fort Smith residents, (Americans for that matter) likely had little interaction with Cuban people or their culture outside of Hollywood representations like Desi Arnaz in the 1950s and 1960s. While there was a black population in Fort Smith, it was relatively smaller than that in other Arkansas regions. Residents also likely grew up exposed to anti-Communist education during the Cold War era. Twenty-eight-year-old Lassus, in response to his denied release from the camp said, “We were told in Cuba that the Americans would abuse us and sic dogs on us. But I rejected that notion, so

this was a shock.”¹⁸

One of the men interviewed in those first few days of Cuban arrivals believed the Cubans did not hold anti-Communist sentiments because they asked for aid rather than guns to fight back against Castro. Another man, gaining access to the terminal at Fort Smith Regional Airport, ran onto the tarmac wearing a KKK costume in an effort to stop an airplane with Cuban passengers from landing. The *Southwest Times Record* reported one local business owner suggested that the arrival of the Cubans would be detrimental for both Americans and other Cubans. In a separate interview, protesting locals refuted the fact that they might be racist, instead, claiming worries about potential spies or Cuban nationals strategically placed by Castro.¹⁹

Fort Smith mayor Jack Freeze, stated, “People here decided they didn’t want the Cubans before they saw them. The press had already said they were bad. I knew they couldn’t be productive. There might be a Desi Arnaz or two out there, but mostly they were going to be killing one another.” No interviews from Mayor Freeze or other government officials in Fort Smith indicate a desire to have the Cuban refugees anywhere near the city. According to the U.S. Army After Incident Report, then-Governor Bill Clinton repeatedly told federal officials he believed Chaffee should not be a consolidation camp, even after White House staff requested his approval on the issue. A revolving door of state and federal officials visited the camp, had their photos made with Cubans, and spoke with INS or Army officials about security—none of them stayed for more than a few days.²⁰

At Fort Chaffee in May, fighting between a mob of 200 anti-Castro refugees and three men, later referred to as Castro sympathizers, evinced the lengths refugees would go to in efforts to stop others from risking their freedom. An unnamed military official offered this to the *Southwest Times Record*:

Some people have expressed fear about communists among the refugees. I think what happened here last night should put these people at ease. The communists are not at all that popular with the real refugees who have suffered unbelievably under Castro. When you look at what happened, 200 people ready to prove their love for this country and only 3 who want to go back to Cuba, those are pretty good odds in our favor. Most of these people are desperate for freedom, and they have risked everything and will do almost anything to win it.²¹

Clashes, protests, and poor behavior displayed by a small number of refugees at Fort Chaffee added to the

growing fear among local residents of those housed on base. Captions for photographs in newspapers cast doubt on the arrival of Cubans. “Seemingly peaceful Fort Chaffee will become a beehive of activity.” National headlines that went from a positive message of “Cubans land shouting freedom!” to “Anger Still Close to Surface Among Refugees Who Wait” and “Riot at Fort Chaffee” only helped increased apprehensions. Other articles described with prejudice about camp conditions and mental patients housed on base: “Fort Chaffee, the insane who huddle under blankets are sedated lest they harm themselves for attention. Homosexuals swish along dusty streets in drag. Young women bear children conceived in the American resettlement camp. These are the unwanted Cubans.”²²

In an incident in late May 1980, 200 Cubans crossed the border of the camp into the city of Barling by simply stepping over ropes draped on sawhorses. If the Cubans housed at Chaffee posed that much of a threat, why was the security fence a few strands of rope and wood planks? Confused Cubans walked down Fort Street in Barling, which led to residents brandishing weapons. Cubans who participated in the “riot” (no known injuries with all detainees returned to camp safely and without attacks on their part) did not constitute a majority. Gene Eidenberg, an aide to President Jimmy Carter, said, “What happened at Ft. Chaffee was a disturbance but it became a riot in the public mind. The national media defined the character of 127,000 Cubans...people wandered off the base on a hot summer night to stretch their legs, they were scared, nervous, bored, but not about to take on the U.S. Army.”²³

Concertina wire fences, erected in efforts to secure a perimeter around the camp, did not give peace of mind to local citizens and only made the camp environment tenser. Promises to the refugees of quick processing and reunions with families did not go as planned. An After Incident Report published by the U.S. Army cited unfulfilled promises by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) as main reasons leading to refugee protests on May 26 and May 28. For the Cubans, how frustrating it had to be to see family members waiting outside of the barricade while being stuck inside a military installation, awaiting release.

It must have been a reminder of why they wanted to leave their oppressed homeland in the first place. Former camp commander Brigadier General James Drummond said, “I hate that fence. It’s oppressive to the spirit. It categorically labels the Cubans as ‘detained.’”²⁴

The “riot” on June 1, known to the Cuban detainees as *El Domingo*, was an expression of protest by a frustrated group of people looking for answers. Slow turn-around time from INS officials and conditions in camp brought about the protest of 1,000 Cubans, with some burning of buildings. Rock throwing by 300 Cubans escalated quickly.

This incident fueled headlines for weeks with reports of extreme criminality and rampant black market practices among the refugees. While confiscations of weapons did occur, and black market activities did take place (as reported in the After Incident Report) several other serious events occurred and did not receive as much attention as the riot of June 1. In October, a psychiatric patient escaped from the maximum-security area, injured a military police officer with a rake, and was shot and treated at a Fort Smith hospital. Several buildings burned from suspected arson as well. It should be noted that during this same time-period, several thousand people found sponsors or left the fort to join waiting family members.²⁵

As camp population swelled more groups gathered to protest, among them people who suggested there had been too many immigrants as a strain on the Fort Smith economy, making a direct reference to the Vietnamese who arrived in the late 1970s. An Arkoma resident, identified as Betty Hughes, told *Southwest Times Record* reporters: "We don't have room for them. We've got enough foreigners now," as she protested outside the gates of the complex. Military officials from Fort Chaffee were on record suggesting most Cubans would not stay in the Fort Smith vicinity once they obtained sponsorship. Cubans at Chaffee received no job training and little language classes. The State Department and Army made available to the detainees thirty teachers and twenty aides to service 8,100 people.²⁶

Lack of education, declared by State Department officials as politically untenable, forced refugees to produced arts and crafts projects to while away the time, some even sold them to Army employees or security to make money. They played baseball, held boxing matches, and shouted to people on the other side of the fences *Libertad* liberty. Job training for the refugees would be giving them an opportunity not available to most Americans in a poor economic environment. State Department official Don Whitteaker suggested, "Vocational training is a long-term project...in our opinion, it's better to get the refugees on the outside as soon as possible and let social services pick them up in the normal system....People want a refugee with a trade, who had an education to come out of this camp. And that is truly unrealistic."²⁷

Actually, arrival of Cubans at Fort Chaffee created a number of temporary jobs for the area. Estimates on job creation at Chaffee range from 500 to 2,000 available positions, giving a much-needed boost to the stagnant Fort Smith economy of the 1980s. The *Southwest Times Record* reported that approximately 200 people applied for the available 300 to 400 temporary jobs in early May.

Perhaps many Americans simply did not want to work with a group of people stigmatized as criminal or criminally insane.²⁸

The population of Marielitos consisted of seventy percent single men under the age of thirty. A status report from Fort Chaffee explained, in a population profile, single black males made up roughly ninety-five percent of the population of the camp by June 1981 with estimates of the overall population processed at twenty-five to forty percent self-identified as "black." These men came to age living under the Communist regime of Castro, which created difficulties in finding sponsorship, even if they had nothing to do with the party. Thirty-year-old Alejandro Garcia, interviewed by the *Observer-Reporter* on May 5 shared, "If you're not a member of the (Communist) party or a member of the political organization, you find everything more difficult there, particularly for young people."²⁹

Estimates made in Information Bulletin, No. 1 by the U.S. State Department show 5,684 refugees having trouble with sponsorship by July 25, a little over a month after their initial arrival at the fort. There is sufficient evidence to support that by June 28 any person with suspected criminal activity went into housing on the opposite side of camp from families or unaccompanied minors, in efforts to protect "real" refugees from the small violent criminal element. Separated by fencing, level two detainees found themselves under constant supervision by U. S. Marshals, National Park guards, and federal police. According to *The Miami Herald*, as of October 1980 162 people lived in level two. Detainees in level two further separated into "returned refugees" or "fence jumpers" who lost sponsorship for numerous reasons and actual criminals. Conversion of a holding area into a detention center for "trouble makers and escapes" was finished by June 28. A solitary confinement cell in one section housed the most hardened or dangerous entrants. The cell is available to visit as part of the historical district at Fort Chaffee. The graffiti, made by prisoners, is still legible some thirty-five years later.³⁰

Many younger Marielitos saw the Cuban Revolution in the light of the pro-Castro education they received in state-run schools in Cuba. Initially, the revolution benefited lower-class black Cubans. No longer kept out of beach resorts or certain sectors because of skin tone, the revolution offered a release from the entrenched segregated system that had afflicted Cuba. However, these onetime sympathizers of the revolution eventually felt cast aside by the actions of the Cuban government that included broken promises of equality and care, lack of quality food, and lack of employment opportunities. This reaction created a quiet outrage of artistic and

political protest. Another reason for dissention was the Communist government's treatment of homosexuals or religious individuals as disrupters of society or as criminals.³¹

A further investigation into what constituted crime in Castro's Cuba in the late 1970s and early 1980s aids in understanding the Marielitos taken in at Fort Chaffee. The Ley de la Peligrosidad (The Law of Threats) and the 1973 Law No. 1249 outlined all actions that the Communist regime considered contradictory to acceptable and moral behavior. Participation in the black market, speaking out against the government, any dissident activity, being homosexual, or other anti-social acts was punished by sentences to prison or work camps for months. One such criminal, seventeen-year-old Emilio Manuni Rodrigues was imprisoned for years convicted of stealing a bicycle. In 1979, the Cuban government passed a "Dangerous Law" that charged vagrants, Jehovah's Witnesses, alcoholics, and prostitutes with various crimes, punishable with prison terms. This "criminality" confused many about the Marielitos and their background. In *Gramma Weekly*, Fidel Castro mentioned giving the option to "thieves of chickens, sheep, hogs and other things, prostitutes, gamblers and drug users" to leave Cuba and take refuge in "Yankee paradise."³²

A specific way for young men to land in prisons was a refusal of military service, which many did. Focusing their energy at home, they saw no reason why they should fight for Communism in Africa or Latin America even though conscription was compulsory for any male over the age of fifteen. The Cuban Constitution, as described in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Report on Cuba in 1979—Section D, mentioned the only exemptions from military service had to be medically approved handicaps. Blindness, mental retardation, or another debilitating illness meant no active military service.

Falsifications of medical records meant jail-time for all involved in the charade. Getting out of compulsory service did not end governmental control over the lives of those exempted. These individuals found themselves under a sort of house arrest, with bureaucratic oversight, meaning they could not leave Cuba until they were at least twenty-seven, which would have put them beyond draft age if they attempted to flee to the United States. Castro wanted no Cuban leaving the island nation—legally or not—involved in U.S. efforts against the Communist Viet Cong and later against the Russians in Afghanistan.³³

For those Marielitos with no criminal record whatsoever, roughly eighty-five percent, the ability to leave Cuba was bittersweet. Opportunities to meet with



CUBAN GROUP at Fort Chaffee with teacher
(Courtesy of Chaffee Museum)

family they had not seen in years, own their own businesses, further their educations, and practice the faiths they chose did not make it easier for them to leave their homes and a way of life some knew since birth. Mirta Ojita, a *New York Times* contributor and author of a family memoir titled *Finding Mañana: A Memoir of a Cuban Exodus* once said, "We left the way one leaves a cherished but impossible love; our hearts heavy with regret but beating with great hope."³⁴

Thousands of Cubans seized the opportunity to leave the island nation with the idea that the United States would be a safe-haven chockfull of opportunity. Many of them ended up in detention at Fort Chaffee with little understanding of their situation. They became determined to fit in to American culture and obtain sponsorships: they held Fourth of July celebrations, Thanksgiving dinners, ran newspapers like *La Vida Nueva*—The New Life—and produced radio broadcasts in camp. On May 31, the After Incident Report documents that a baby boy was born in the camp.

How could anyone think a woman willing to making such an arduous journey while nine months' pregnant did not want to work for a better life than what she faced in Cuba? On July 14, a Cuban couple were married at the Sebastian County courthouse in Fort Smith. These people are the gusanos—people who were tired of living in a country they felt was lost to them, people who wanted the ability to have a life worthy of living.³⁵

By late October 1980, consolidations began from several other detention centers across the United States to Fort Chaffee. Estimates by the U. S. Army put the population of the camp in late September 1980 at less than 3,000. Moving detainees from Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania and Eglin Air Force Base in Florida added approximately 5,885 people to the camp, bringing the total Cuban residents at Fort Chaffee to 8,349 by

October 23. Cold weather in northern states without adequate facilities helped select Fort Chaffee for the growing resettlement project, and in addition, Fort Chaffee personnel and facilities had previous experience with Vietnamese immigrants.

But, by February 1981, the Marielito crisis at Fort Chaffee was coming to an end. Portions of Chaffee used for task force offices and for Cuban housing were closed. Personnel were reassigned and refugees moved on. On February 19, 1981, the last twenty-three Cubans were released or resettled elsewhere.³⁶

The Marielitos processed through Fort Chaffee are among the most misunderstood immigrant groups to come to the United States. The stigma surrounding Marielitos has some ashamed of saying they are members of the Mariel group. Some in the older generation of Cuban-Americans believe Marielitos personified the characteristics of Communism that ruined their homeland. Comparisons between earlier exiles and Marielitos expose perceived tenacity and righteousness of earlier groups while diminishing the very real struggle Marielitos went through.

Americans alive during the boatlift view Marielitos negatively some thirty-five years after the escape from Cuba. While perceptions are slowly changing about this diverse group, their rough introduction to American society, overall portrayed negatively through national newspapers, immersed the entire group in doubt and xenophobia.

The stigma on Marielitos can only change if more Chaffee staff share first-hand accounts of their interaction with refugees and if more of the refugee population processed there come forward to share experiences about their lives before leaving their homes. There is a major project in the working stages from *The Miami Herald* to create a massive database of refugees, organize information about passenger manifests for each boat used in the flotilla. Perhaps interviews and descriptions of jobs, homes, and family activities shared in this database will help humanize Marielitos even more.

While it is true that criminals were released from Cuban prisons and put on the boats leaving the port of Mariel in 1980, they were a minority among the throng of immigrants simply wanting a better life. Of that minority, even fewer would be considered violent criminals, rapists, murderers, arsonists, or child abusers. A larger number of people released by Castro fell into the categories of petty thieves, political dissidents, and social deviants—among them homosexuals and members of fringe religious groups. These people, unwanted by their government, simply desired that which drove millions to the United States before them: basic human rights, unending

possibilities to shape their own lives, and to experience true liberty.



Erin Langford is a UA—Fort Smith graduate and a former intern at the Museum of Chaffee History. Her paper on the Marielitos won first place in the University's 2016 Undergraduate Symposium.

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A WEST GERMAN CARGO SHIP is shown at a lock along the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System.
(Photo courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)

Fort Smith and McClellan-Kerr

Arkansas River Navigation System

Interview with Bob Worley

Bob Worley, an attorney and practitioner before the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington, D.C., represented the furniture companies and other shippers in Fort Smith as plans were being developed for the navigable system that bears the names of two long serving U. S. senators, one from Arkansas and one from Oklahoma. Equalized freight rates for companies west of the Mississippi and other key factors were involved. As the interview excerpts below show, skilled arguments and a little bit of good fortune were needed to achieve this river navigation wonder. Bob Worley has been inducted into the Arkansas River Valley Hall of Fame located in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and honored by the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

Billy Higgins: Mr. Worley, the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River navigation system had its beginnings in 1963 with construction of it completed in 1971, an eight-year project. When did you first become involved with this river navigation system?

Bob Worley: I first became interested in the river in about 1946 when I came here after World War II. One of the first things I had heard or read about the river was by Clarence Burns editor of the *Fort Smith Times Record*. He wrote a number of articles about the river and its need for navigation, but he also stressed the importance of controlling the flooding in the furniture district. Also, it had washed out the Kansas City Southern Railroad tracks from Spiro to Fort Smith.

BH: So, Mr. Burns with the *Southwest Times Record* was editorializing and that caught your attention. Were you at the time working with the furniture industries in Fort Smith?

BW: Yes, I represented all the furniture industries in Fort Smith and other woodworking firms, like (Fort Smith) Rim and Bow.

BH: Ward was down there by the river.

BW: Ward, Ballman-Cummings, Fort Smith Folding Bed and Table, Garrison, the Fort Smith Chair Company and Mitchell Manufacturing Company. Each time there would be heavy flooding they would have to move all their equipment upstairs and it wasn't a very good situation.

BH: They were in the flood plain.

BW: They were in the flood plain and not only did Mr. Burns write several articles about the need for something to be done but he also made several trips to Washington advocating the navigation and flood control. One of the first things they did was to build the levee. I also represented firms along the Mississippi River that had port operations. I was familiar with what was needed for the ports along the Arkansas River.

BH: Mr. Worley, you say represent them, you were a lawyer involved with court cases and rate cases?

BW: I worked for seven years for Kansas City Southern and Frisco Railroads and was studying economics of transportation at the college of advanced traffic in Chicago. I left the Frisco Railroad in Chicago in 1952 and came to Fort Smith and decided I wanted to get into the legal aspects of transportation. The regular courts had no jurisdiction over railroads or truck lines or barge lines. The Interstate Commerce Commission was established not only with judicial power but legislative power. They could find things wrong in the past and think of things to be done in the future. After I came back to Fort Smith I passed the Bar Exam in 1954 to practice transportation law, that one specialty. I was a practitioner before the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Federal Maritime Commission. That is the main reason I became interested in the things on the Arkansas River.

Transportation was so important to furniture industries they hired an attorney who specialized in transportation law. In the early years, transportation costs east of the Mississippi River were about half the cost west because of the large volume of industry back east. It was a constant challenge for industries west of the Mississippi River to get equalization in transportation costs.

As industry increased in the west, railroad costs came down and that was one factor that helped in getting somewhat equalization. But it was a constant challenge until probably late 1980s.

BH: In representing the furniture industries, you would

take your case before the Interstate Commerce Commission and where would that venue be?

BW: We would first try to negotiate with the railroads direct. They had associations set up in different territories and sometimes we were successful in negotiating and if not we litigated. That was just a constant process. You at first endeavor to negotiate, then you would litigate. In 1968, we won a precedent setting case before the Interstate Commerce Committee against 112 eastern railroads. and afterward required equalization of freight rates serving Arkansas with rates east of the Mississippi River. That precedent setting case was a big help for the future.

BH: It allowed the furniture industry here to compete in the east and therefore to flourish in Fort Smith?

BW: Yes. Not only the furniture industry. but the poultry industry, too. Before, for example, Georgia could ship poultry to the West Coast cheaper than Arkansas could.

BH: The Interstate Commerce Commission dealt only with railroads or did they deal with waterways?

BW: Railroads, truck lines, and barge lines. Steamship lines were under the Federal Maritime Commission.

BH: So being interested in all phases of transportation you get involved with the Arkansas River Navigation Bill. How did that get through Congress out here in such a remote area? It was expensive, right?

BW: Yes, it was very expensive and in a way it was almost a miracle but I guess the key was two powerful senators, Senator (John L.) McClellan from Arkansas and Senator (Robert) Kerr from Oklahoma. From my perspective, we probably wouldn't have the navigational river had it not been for those two senators.

BH: I noticed they were both born in 1896, and they were both, I think, part of the conservative Democratic Party tradition. I guess they knew each other and both had clout in the U. S. Senate at the time?

BW: Yes, that was, from my observation they had a lot of strength and prestige in the Senate.

BH: Did you have dealings with the Corps of Engineers as they constructed this system?

BW: Yes, we had a lot of dealings with them. In fact we set up an association of port operators association of Arkansas and Oklahoma. We felt that we would have better success with numbers instead of one on one, and there was excellent teamwork between the Corps and this port operators association. This was something I really didn't expect. Before it seems like the Corps was like you do it our way or no way. But it was amazing how they worked with us. For example, the only place we could find in Fort Smith where you could have multiple modes of transportation, rail, barge, and truck, was on the Poteau River. And there's 1.7 miles up the Poteau River from the

Arkansas and it was not part of the navigation system initially. But we brought this to their attention because we wanted the Corps of Engineers to be responsible for dredging or maintenance along the Poteau the way they did on the Arkansas. It was amazing, it seems like within two months they obtained and got a bill through Congress and it allowed that extension up the Poteau.

But having experience with the Mississippi ports, we anticipated some of the needs of the McClellan-Kerr and the Corps were very cooperative. In fact, it seemed like they would go out of their way and do things that maybe they weren't really supposed to.

BH: The result of that, the Port of Fort Smith is part of the Arkansas navigation.

BW: The furniture industry in Fort Smith was served by three railroads. The first railroads in Fort Smith were built and owned by the city and when they turned that over to the railroads there was an agreement that all three railroads would serve the furniture industry and that (agreement) still exists today if you are in that furniture district.

BH: And so those three are Kansas City Southern, Frisco, and Missouri Pacific?

BW: That competition was really important. Not only did they serve different areas but some areas they were competitive. If you had one railroad serving an industry or a city, you didn't have much leverage but that was important having the three railroads in Fort Smith. Of course, early on, before my time, there were two other railroads, Fort Smith & Western was here. Another interesting aspect was the general merchandise truck lines started discouraging furniture the Interstate Commerce Commission asked us to come to Washington and talk to them about the subject. One of the main things that we recommended to them that they should take judicial knowledge of the fact that furniture was not really compatible when you mix it with all the other products in the truck or a car, They did that and the problem was solved quickly. North American Van Lines and all the other household moving carriers can get authority to haul furniture. Before that time, North American Van Lines could not haul new, packaged furniture. That was an important change in the cost of distributing furniture out of Fort Smith.

BH: There's still a substantial coal mining industry in eastern Oklahoma.

BW: Yes, and there's still coal moving by barge out of there. And there's wheat moving out of Kansas into Tulsa, big bulk products of farm products, you know? Bulk goods. And of course, you've got the port in Fort Smith, the one in Van Buren, and of course there is one in Ozark. At Dardanelle, there's a couple. There's even one down at Subiaco. They were loading rock out of there, including



(Stamp image courtesy of the
Arkansas Encyclopedia of History and Culture)

stone for riprap. And Granite Mountain Quarries, they did a lot of barge shipping.

BH: Where's the Granite Mountain Quarries?

BW: They're in Little Rock, and south Little Rock. And they had operations—the people who own the Granite Mountain Quarries in Little Rock was one of the largest contractors for the Corps of Engineers in making levees. They even did work on the upper Missouri River and along the Gulf Coast. They have some of the largest private ships, tugboats, in the country.

BH: In your experience, which would you consider the best-managed ports, so far as doing what they're supposed to do in loading the economy of the area?

BW: Probably the Tulsa Port of Catoosa. And Bobby Keenan down at Dardanelle. He had foresight...For example, Whirlpool was moving steel by barge into Memphis, and would move it from there over here by truck. Whirlpool was one of our clients. He found out who the steel companies were and he was calling on the steel companies back east to get them to ship the product into Dardanelle, and then truck it just from there into Fort Smith. And that was one of the first regulated products that moved into Fort Smith. It was unloaded there at Bobby Keenan's port. He was also one of the founders of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Port [Operators] Association. So, there's a lot of people involved in getting barge transportation.

BH: Since some Fort Smith residents, such as Mr. Burns and yourself, played such a large role in the development of the Arkansas River navigation system. I can remember when there were billboards, Bob, in Fort Smith that said "Fort Smith Port Smith: Twice the City." Can you remember those billboards?

BW: I had forgotten about it, yes, but I do remember.

BH: Being on the Poteau, is that limited in any way?

BW: Well, the Port of Fort Smith was supposed to be a satellite, a small beginning port. Kansas City Southern swapped their land that had the Union Railroad Station on

Rogers Avenue for several hundred acres of land in the bend of the river north of the furniture industry along what is now the Clayton Expressway. Kansas City Southern told city officials that they would build a port. I kept telling them I didn't think they'd do that. Barge transportation was in Fort Smith before they appointed a port authority. I was on that port authority, and we brought in a flat barge with a crane on it, brought it up the Poteau River, tied it to trees along the bank. Barges were secured to the trees, and the crane would lift the steel, for example, from that barge onto trucks on the banks of the Arkansas River. That's the way the port started in Fort Smith. We advocated at that time—and I still do—having a large industrial area. To buy the land back from the Kansas City Southern and put in a large port facility there, and have all that land for industrial development, and do it the way Tulsa did, and the way Little Rock did, and the way Pine Bluff did. In about 1980, I went off the port authority. And well, it's never happened. I still think it, for the future, is something essential, but...one man's opinion.

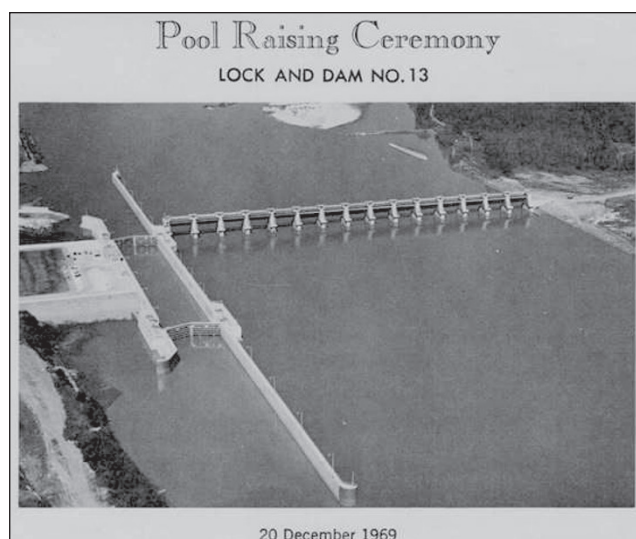
BH: You're still engaged, because you've been down to the Fort Smith port in recent years. In what capacity are you engaged with it? As a friend of it, or?

BW: Well they asked me to serve on it again about four years ago, a think a four-year term, and I agreed to do it. And I guess it's good that I did because at that time it came up as to whether the Corps would dredge (up the Poteau), and there was no record, the Corps had no record of it (the original agreement).

But the city attorney at the time, Jerry Canfield, had a copy. Since he was the city attorney, he attended some of the port authority meetings. And he was in on the request that we had made to the Tulsa Corps to get navigation extended. So anyway, I guess that history was somewhat beneficial to them.

BH: Well, I think that's an excellent idea, I think you've had excellent service, so much congratulations from us to you for being recognized in this Arkansas River Valley Hall of Fame. That was in 2011, and I just happened to see it in the paper, you never mentioned it, and I think it is a big deal, Bob. Did you happen to know McClellan or Kerr personally?

BW: Well, I did McClellan. One of the challenges when the Arkansas River was first established, the Interstate Commerce Commission certified fifteen barge lines to operate on the river. Of course, a new river, there was little traffic at first. And the barge lines, instead of operating their own towboats, they hired an owner operator of towboats, Jim Walden of Helena. We were at a meeting in Tulsa, the Arkansas Oklahoma Port Operators Association, and to the surprise of everyone, Jim Walden got up and said "If you all want transportation on the Arkansas River



(Photo courtesy of Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce Collection in the Pebley Center at the University of Arkansas-FortSmith)

you're going to have to contract to operate my boats. Cause if you don't, I'm going to take them off the river." That shocked everybody. But, fortunately with my transportation legal experience, I knew that that would never happen, because certificated carriers had that legal responsibility and we could prevail. But, it was a long way from what the law said and getting it done. So, we made an appointment with Senator McClellan and he arranged to have the chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission and some of the barge lines to meet with us and that matter was settled right quick.

Dick Litzinger of Whirlpool went up there with us, because in Fort Smith they were the largest user of the barge lines for regulated products like steel. Well, for a couple of days there, I had a few conversations with Senator McClellan. And I had met Kerr, but just, you know, as one of many.

BH: Well, they certainly left their names on a big part of the landscape in this part of the world. You had told me once about a little business up in Northeast Arkansas operated by a woman who became involved in the equalization of rates.

BW: Her name is Mrs. Mertie Harris, and her husband at that time was Dunklin who operated a silica sand mine at Guion, Arkansas, on the White River. This pure silica sand is mined just about two football fields away from the river, but they were dependent on the railroads (for shipping the sand). Dunklin died at a young age during the depression and Mertie took over and managed the firm, put two children through college, and had a nice business. That silica sand is one of the purest in the nation, it (the vein) runs all the way from Guion, Arkansas, north to Ottawa,

Illinois, prized for glassmaking and foundry work. And, she had a large business. She would ship silica sand to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to a large glass plant there, also to Atlanta, Columbus, and Birmingham. Then later on, she started losing business because, as I found out, her transportation charges mile for mile were seventy percent higher from Arkansas into eastern markets than the rates were for businesses over there. Now, they had some silica sand east of the river that wasn't as high of purity, but they could take and wash it and scrub it, and bring it up to be competitive. So, as they did that Mertie's company, the Silica Products Company, was losing their business. I filed suit against one hundred and twelve eastern railroads. And we had a two-week hearing in Memphis, and we brought in a lot of former customers of Silica Products Company, presidents and vice-presidents of their companies, because they realized if railroads could discriminate against Silica Products Company they could discriminate against them, too. So, they were willing to come and testify and after the hearing, the Interstate Commerce Commission ordered the railroads to equalize, make a seventy percent reduction, and ordered that in the future if they lowered their rates east of the river, they had to lower rates in Arkansas to the same amount. So, that was a precedent setting case. I didn't realize how precedent setting it was until about three years later. At a National Industrial Traffic League meeting in New York, I presented a report to the group. I think I was Chairman of the Finance Committee at that time. As I was leaving this young boy, about twenty-two or three, followed me out, introduced himself, and he said "Are you the Bob Worley who filed a suit against the eastern railroads for Silica Products Company?" I chuckled and said "Well, yes, but how in the world did you ever hear of that case?" He said "I just graduated from the University of Pittsburgh, and that case was required study in the business course that I took." So, that was rather surprising.

BH: Yes, and rewarding I'm sure. That's a great story, Bob.

BW: Well, it was just being in the right place at the right time.

BH: I have read your book, which is over in the Pebley Center, *A Glimpse In the Rearview Mirror*.

BW: Over the first twenty-four years of my life.

BH: And describes some of your service in the China-Burma-India theater with the U.S. Army during World War II. Bob, thank you very much.

BW: Well, thank you



Attorney Bob Worley is an Interstate Commerce Commission Solicitor and Board Member of the Hardwood Tree Museum.

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Book Review

David S. Turk, *Forging the Star—The Official Modern History of the United States Marshals Service*. Denton, Texas: North Texas State Press, 2016. Pp. 540, Bibliography, Photos, Appendix, Index. \$29.95 hardcover.

The title summarizes quite well the subject of the book, a comprehensive account of the development of the Marshals Service from the 1930s through 2012. David S. Turk, who is the historian of the United States Marshals Service (USMS), traces the agency from the time when it was loosely organized to its evolution as a centrally controlled agency with bureau status within the Department of Justice. Turk offers readers a look into the fascinating and sometimes thankless, sometimes dangerous world of the Marshals Service.

The Marshals Service is the oldest federal law enforcement agency in the country. Along with the federal judiciary, the Marshals (the current name U.S. Marshals Service would come much later) were created by the Judiciary Act of 1789. According to Turk, the mission of the Marshals was quite broad. Not only did they apprehend fugitives, but they were tasked with operating the federal census and pursuing counterfeiters. They had wide latitude to cross jurisdictional lines, and operated not only in the U.S., but in foreign countries such as China.

But the image of most Americans is the lone Marshal on horseback chasing outlaws in the federal territories where in many cases they were the only law. This image was solidified by the romantic stories of famous Marshals such as Wild Bill Hickok and Wyatt Earp and further burnished by fictional works such as "Gunsmoke" and "True Grit."

Turk takes great pains to point out that the modern Marshals Service is much different from the legend. True, they still apprehend fugitives, not on horseback with a six-shooter at their side, but with all the tools of modern law enforcement. Apprehending fugitives is but one of their missions. The Marshals protect federal judges, escort federal prisoners during transport, protect federal witnesses, and manage seized criminal assets.

The evolution of the Service has not been an easy one. Turk describes an agency that, entering the twentieth-century, was having an identity crisis. It had lost some of

its missions to other, newly formed agencies such as the Census Bureau and the FBI which took over the job as the chief federal investigative and enforcement agency. There were organizational issues. Having been moved from the Department of State to the newly created Department of Justice in 1861, where it resides today, there was the issue of internal organization of the agency.

Originally, the agency was loosely organized into ninety-four districts, corresponding to the number of federal district courts around the country. Each presidentially appointed Marshal was responsible for his district, and answered only to the president. Marshals hired deputies as they saw fit. Even the badges were different from district to district. Centralization began in the 1940s with the standardization of badges, and training and professionalization were emphasized. In the 1950s, further moves were made to provide more oversight of the Marshals. By the mid-1960s, an Executive Office for U.S. Marshals was established in Washington to provide oversight of all the district offices. By 1969, the Marshals achieved full bureau status with the creation of the Office of Director, U.S. Marshals Service.

In addition to tracing the growth and organization of the USMS, Turk gives many fascinating highlights of the Service. During World War II, the job of the Marshals was internal security. A somewhat humorous event occurred when a German U-Boat foundered off the coast of Texas. Chief Deputy Helen Crawford was sent to arrest the captain who, though his vessel was helpless, initially refused to surrender to a woman. Deputy Crawford pointed her gun at him; he complied.

Turk touches on numerous other stories, such as the Marshals' role in bringing Jimmy Hoffa to justice and in the strange case of Patty Hearst. But the most compelling stories deal with the Marshals and the troubles of desegregation and the Civil Rights era. Marshals were given the job of enforcing integration of southern schools in the face of fierce and sometimes violent resistance.

Two such incidents stand out. One occurred in Montgomery, Alabama, when Dr. Martin Luther King was to give a speech at a church. King was already inside the church when a white mob of three hundred people began to move toward the approximately fifty Deputy

Marshals who were there for King's protection. When the mob began throwing rocks and burning cars, Marshals answered with tear gas, driving off the mob and protecting King.

Another, even more violent incident Turk discusses occurred when James Howard Meredith sought to enroll at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Here, not only were the Marshals dealing with a violent mob, but they had to face down state troopers. Rocks and even buckshot was thrown at the Marshals. One Marshal was struck in the neck by a gunshot, severely injuring him. One rioter began driving a bulldozer from a nearby construction site toward the Marshals, but a courageous deputy mounted the vehicle and arrested the driver and then turned the dozer toward rioters to block their way. Dozens of Marshals were injured, but Meredith was able to enroll at the university, and he graduated several years later.

Turk recounts that the Marshals had a tragic but inadvertent role in Dr. King's death. King arrived in

Memphis, Tennessee, to march in a rally of sanitation workers fighting the city's policies toward them. Because King didn't have a permit, a restraining order was issued and delivered by a Marshal. The march was delayed by the order, and King was assassinated the next day.

Dozens of stories are related in *Forging the Star* and suffice to say that the book is a well-researched, detailed account of the Marshals Service of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries.

A massive volume, *Forging the Star* might seem a bit daunting for the casual reader to approach. However, Turk has included comprehensive appendices and endnotes that provide an entry point to further research on the Service. Given that agencies such as the FBI and DEA get most of the press, it is only right that Turk has given the U.S. Marshals Service its due.

Reviewed by Eric Baker, Ph.D. Dr. Baker is on the faculty of UA – Fort Smith where he teaches political science. He is a guest columnist for the City Wire.

Surprise your favorite people
with membership in the

Fort Smith Historical Society

They will love *The Journal* and you.

Who Knew?

A father sent a heartfelt letter to his son in hopes that he would someday read it and be reminded of his father's unconditional love. The next best thing happened, a loving great-granddaughter found the letter, and cared, loved them both enough to find out what happened to her great-uncle. Looking back in history may answer some questions and cause us to ask a few more.

We are not documenting the life of a national hero. We all are not super powers. We are mortals who all are precious beings, have love ones, and deserve respect. We are all important.

Question: Hi—my great uncle Fred Paul Hunt (1888-1965) lived in Fort Smith from at least 1960 to 1965. He's buried at Fayetteville National Cemetery. Is there any chance you could locate an obituary or any other information on him? MH

Answer: MH, I am sorry to inform you that I have rather sad news about your Uncle Fred Paul Hunt's death. I found the following article/obituary in the *Northwest Arkansas Times*, (Fayetteville, Arkansas) newspaper of March 3, 1965.

Body of Ft. Smith Man Found Near Winslow Tunnel

WINSLOW — The body of a man identified as Fred P. Hunt, 78, of Fort Smith was found just south of the Frisco railroad tunnel near here about 5 p.m. yesterday. Death was apparently natural.

The body was discovered by an unidentified railroad employee according to Deputy Sheriff Lloyd Stockburger, who investigated.

Hunt had been a resident of Fort Smith for about eight years and had been seen in Winslow on (Sic) MONDAY.

(Sic) on Monday.

(Sic) death is pending completion of an investigation by the coroner, Dr. Morris M. Henry.

Hunt was born Jan. 8, 1889 in Omaha, Neb., the son of Alfred and Sophia Zagicek Hunt. He was a retired railway mail clerk and a veteran of World War I.

Survivors include three sisters, Mrs. Louis G. Gerdes and Mrs. Leo Kirkman of Grand Island, Neb.

and Mrs. W.L. Shaw of Seal Beach, Calif.; and one brother, Victor E. of Escondido, Calif.

Arrangement will be announced by the Watson Mortuary. MB

Answer: MH, *Northwest Arkansas Times*, 6 March 1965 – Fayetteville, Arkansas

Funeral Services

Fred P Hunt graveside rites 1 p.m. Monday at the National Cemetery.

I am going to also pass this along to some other researchers to see if they remember any other details of your uncle or his death. They seemed to conclude natural causes judging from the obituary.

If you need to know more information; you might see if there are any records in the Washington County Sheriff Department, Winslow is in Washington County, or any records still available for Watson Mortuary. Please let us know if we can be of further help to you. MB

Question: MB, Thank you so much for taking the time to find this news article about my great uncle. It is sad to think of someone passing away alone like this. I never knew him and to my knowledge he was not close to his brother, my grandfather. I have letters written by my great-grandfather talking about his regrets for not having a better relationship with Fred. If anyone does have more information about Fred or his wife Oris Dell Bain, please let me know. It looks as if he moved to Fort Smith after she passed away in 1957.

Thanks again for your efforts. Much appreciated. MH

Question: MB As you can see from this poem Fred's father wrote when they did not know where Fred was, sounds like Fred liked to travel/wander even at age 57. Sad, I know. Hope you can read his writing. MH

Answer: MH, I read the letter as:

"Oh: my Boy don't you remember
As about this world you roam,
Don't Vivid pictures come before you
Of a Mothers love and home,

Long ago you grew to Manhood,

Left the house that guarded you,
In the days that you now wander,
Don't those thoughts come back to you,

We know not were to find you
To send to you a Christmas Cheer,
Christmas time brings these reflections,
From the ones you once held dear,

Why you remain away in Silence,
It is hard to understand,
Never seeing Sister, or Brother,
Just seeking some new place to land,

As you travel along life's highway,
When at last you, (cease), seace (sic) to roam,
I prey (sic) that God, In his mercy,
Will reward you with a home."
For my Boy Fred,
When found.
Christmas 1945

— MB

Answer: MH, I can read the father's handwriting.
What love he had for his son!

May I post your query, the answer and reply in our *Journal*? It might inspire the family history writer to dig deeper, as you did. Or even prompt parents who have lost contact with a child to write a letter or copy the poem, put it in the family Bible or safe place.

When the child or their offspring finally are united with the letter, they will know they were always thought of and loved. They will also know that their parents wanted the very best for them and that makes the sad story happy.
Thank you! MB

Question: MB, That would be great. Neat way to communicate about families and their dynamics.

PS—I worry my kids won't be able to read the script in all the old letters I have. Guess I need to teach them!
Thanks again for your interest. MH

Answer: MH, Don't worry about future generations reading cursive, if the Dead Sea Scrolls could be deciphered, your great-grandfather's handwriting will be no problem for them. MB

Answer to MB: MH remembered letters passed down to her through her father. MH Only had the first page of a letter from Fred Paul to his Father:

Omaha, Sept. Dear Dad: Well, after receiving your reply (I) can say that I am glad that I have a Father who possesses the understanding and sympathy to take

such a viewpoint. Indeed now (,) I regret very much.
(Date unknown.)

ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

1900 US Federal Census Boone, Manchester, Nebraska Hunt, Fred, Son, Male, White, Jan 1888, 12, Single, Neb, Eng., Wis., Read, write, Spell English

1910 US Federal Census Omaha, Douglas, Nebraska - Douglas Street

Hunt, Fred P. Boarder, Male, White, 22, Single, Nebraska, Father-English, Mother-Wisconsin, English, Postal Clerk, Railway Mailer, Wage, not off any in year, reads, writes.

June 5, 1917—living 514 W 14, Columbus, Ohio Born January 8, 1888. Born Omaha, Nebraska. Presently working Railway Mail Service 23. Employed by Government.

World War 1 Draft Registration Card #1127 No. C19 (Card Front), June 5, 1917

Fred Paul Hunt, 29, 514 W 14, Columbus, (Platte), Nebraska, Born January 8, 1888, Born Omaha, Nebraska. Presently working Railway Mail Service 23. Employed by Government. Employed 1, 4 Division; no previous military; wife, married. Signed, Fred Paul Hunt. June 5, 1917.

Registrar's Report 26-1-49-A (Card Back)

Med. Height, Med. Build, Brown Eyes, Brown Hair, not balding, not disabled. E.S. Newlan, signature of registrar, Precinct C, Columbus, Nebraska

1925 Iowa State Census Record Woodbury, Sioux City, Iowa

Hunt, Fred P. Head, Male, White, 38 Married, attendee Hunt, Oris D. Wife, Female, White, 38, Married, attended high school completed 12 years, in US 38 yrs., in Iowa 1 yr., can read and write.

Fred P. Hunt sent a letter to his sister, Helen Hunt Kirkman, when she married Leo F. Kirkman in Grand Island, Nebraska (Written sometime after May 20, 1925, their marriage date.)

Sioux City, Iowa 805 Nebraska St. June

Dear Helen and Leo: The letter you sent me with the announcement was held up for more than a week or in other words, temporarily lost due to the fact mail carrier has refused to make delivery because of the dog. So it went over to the general delivery. I am sorry this occurred as I know you well might have thought I was too indolent about writing.

Of course we would have liked to be there. Oris

returned on Monday, and it was good so far as I am concerned.

It was quite superfluous to tender congratulations, as both of you, I am sure realize that we wish you the very best out of life that is obtainable.

The wife will, in a few days, send you something for a wedding present and you, I feel confident will not be displeased. Accept my sincere apologies for this unavoidable delay in acknowledgement. Come and visit us when you can get away. Very Sincerely, Your Brother
(PS) I sent for her to return here at once from Colorado for some reasons that were necessary and she regretted that she was unable to stop and see you folks at this time.

City Directory 1929 Denver, Colorado—Hunt, Fred P (Oris D) h 4- 1260 Corona page 1318

City Directory 1930 Denver, Colorado—Hunt, Oris D Mrs., Maker, Armstrong-Turner Millinery Co. h 3- 1260 Corona page 1323

1930 Federal Census Denver, Denver, Colorado, 945 Dahlia Street

Hunt, Ora D, Head, Rents, Value of home 10, Female, white, 42, married, 25yrs old when married, can read and write, Born Missouri, Father-Illinois, Mother-Indiana, speaks English, is a designer in a Millinery Industry, wage, worked all year, not a veteran.

Bain, Ida, Mother, Female, white, married, 69, widowed, 18 when married, can read and write, born Indiana, Father-Pennsylvania, Mother-North Carolina, speaks English, is not employed.

City Directory 1931 Denver, Colorado—Hunt, Oris D Mrs. Mkr. Armstrong-Turner Millinery Co. h 3- 1260 Corona page 1322

City Directory 1932 Denver, Colorado—Hunt, Oris D Mrs. Mkr. Armstrong-Turner Millinery Co. h 3- 1260 Corona page 1311

City Directory 1933 Denver, Colorado—Hunt, Oris D h 1260 Corona page 1183

City Directory 1936 Denver, Colorado—Hunt, Oris D (wid Fred P) h 13 Elati page 1323

City Directory 1937 Denver, Colorado—Hunt, Mrs. Oris D h 13 Elati page 1271

1940 Federal Census Denver, Denver, Colorado, 2349 Court Place

Hunt, Oris D, Head Female, White, 52, Widow, High School one year, Born Missouri, lived in same town in 1935. Employed for Pay-No, Public Emergency Work-yes, worked 52 weeks in 1939, Seamstress, WPA, Class of worker- GW, Income in 1939- \$600. Did this person receive income of more than \$850 from wages, tips or salary-No.

City Directory 1945 Denver, Colorado—Hunt, Oris D smstrs. New Method Clnrs r2347 Tremont page 670

Question: MH, Why did Oris report herself as the widow of Fred P. Hunt in 1936? (above) Does not make any sense does it? **1940 Federal Census, Denver, Denver, Colorado** (above) Oris Hunt is listed as a widow also. We know that Fred Paul Hunt did not die until 1965. MB

**(Front of Card) Serial Number U 576
World War II Draft Registration**

Fred Paul Hunt, 408 W. Koenig, Grand Island, Hall, Nebraska; mailing address the same; 54 years of age, born Omaha, Nebraska, Jan 8, 1888. Name of person who will always know your address: Mrs. L. G. Gerdes, (sister), 408 W Koenig, Grand Island, Nebraska; Fred is self-employed, has a Sign Business-Sales and Installation; 408 W Koenig, Grand Island, Hall, Nebraska. (Signature of Fred Paul Hunt)

(Back of Draft Card) Registrar's Report

White, 5'8", 150 lbs., Brown eyes, gray hair, ruddy complexion; scar on left hand back of thumb; Arthur H. Bass, Registrar; Hall, Nebraska; Date of registration, **April 27, 1942**; Hall County Local Board, Room 501, Masonic Bldg., Grand Island, Nebraska (Stamp of Local Board).

1957 Oris Bain Hunt was born August 12, 1887 Cainsville, Harrison County, Missouri died 1957 Colorado; buried in Crown Hill Cemetery, Wheat Ridge, Jefferson County, Colorado, inscription on her marker, "In loving memory." Parents were Thomas Gillespie Bain and Mary Ida Heldman Bain (1860-1953). Married to Fred P. Hunt, worked as a millinery designer, she is buried next to her mother and adjacent to a brother, Homer Gilbert Bain (1882-1973). Plot: Block 66

Fred Paul Hunt
Date of birth 8 Jan 1888,
Date of Death is 1 Mar 1965,
Interment Date: 8 March 1965,
Fayetteville National Cemetery,
700 Government Avenue,
Fayetteville, AR 72701. Grave:
Section 8, Site 4.



AGE THREE



Who Knew is a regular feature of the Journal. Historical inquiries are selected and edited by Mary Jeanne Black, Inquiry Coordinator of the Fort Smith Historical Society.

1917 Newspapers

The first half of 1917 found Fort Smith in high spirits and, “officially” bone dry, save for the abundance of bootleggers carefully avoiding the detection of authorities. It was a time of tremendous change and many of Fort Smith’s most prominent ladies came together to lead the charge for Women’s Suffrage. Baseball was the sport of the decade, and the Fort Smith Twins baseball team tried their luck with a new manager. Also new was the city’s government, which was swept into place by a contentious election, fueled by accusations of corruption and influence peddling, openly aired in the newspapers of the day.

For months, the war in Europe had loomed large over the United States and on April 6, at the request of President Woodrow Wilson, Congress declared war on Germany. The city responded in grand patriotic style! Sewing clubs sprung up to make comfort clothing for our doughboys, resolutions were passed, and businessmen held military style drills in the plaza off Garrison Avenue. Confederate veterans offered their services as well, and everyone, everywhere, was on the lookout for German spies—even on Mount Magazine, where a supposed radio signal tower turned out to be a scaffolding left by Army engineers. The war also brought opportunities, including the war department’s approval of plans to build a bridge across the Arkansas River. The possibility that Fort Smith might gain one of the Army’s newly approved southern camps had everyone excited. Ultimately, the camp (Camp Pike now renamed Camp Robinson) went to North Little Rock and later played a significant role in the history of World War I.

But the real story of 1917 was the business boom. The huge supply of natural gas recently discovered had brought many new industries to our city, and factories were swelling with new employees. South Fort Smith was rapidly expanding, and local farmers throughout the area began growing selected fruits and vegetables to meet the needs of the city’s new canning factory. It seemed that everything was changing and improvisation was the rule of the day. It was, after all, the beginning of the jazz age.

Tuesday, January 2, 1917

NEW TWIN MANAGER WIRES ALL’S WELL

George Mullin, just selected manager of the Twins for the 1917 season, Monday wired George Ellefson, secretary of the



The Floral Decorations
At the
Southwest American's Cooking School
Are Furnished by
George Rye
"Some Florists"
The Plaza Phone 116

1917 AD FOR GEORGE RYE FLORIST

local organization. “Everything satisfactory.” Mullen made a proposition to the local directors, which had been accepted, and his wire was in response to notification to that effect.

The exact date of Mullin’s arrival from his home at Kokomo, Ind., is not known, but it is expected he will reach here early in February.

Tuesday, January 2, 1917

YOUTHS HELD FOR ASSAULT TO KILL

Willie Bunch and Pernell Dillard, boys of 17 years or less, were arrested by Constable Virgil Tomlin Monday afternoon at one o'clock, the first arrests of the new year on war and its charging them with assault to kill the 12-year-old son of Mrs. Nora Stephenson, a widow who lives at 600 N. 2nd St. The affidavit on which the warrant was issued was made by Mrs. Stevenson, before Judge P. C. Fisher.

The Stevenson boy was shot with an air rifle several days ago, the shot striking him just in the outside corner of the left eye, and glancing off the bone. His injury was not serious, but a fraction of an inch to the right might have produced a very serious or even fatal wound, according to his physician.

The boys were released on the promise of their parents to bring them to court Tuesday morning for a hearing in the matter.

Tuesday, January 2, 1917

ACURACY DEMANDED IN VITAL STATISTICS

George T. Carr, now city clerk and local registrar of the State Department of vital statistics has prepared and will this week mail out to all physicians in the Fort Smith District, a circular letter in which he will advise them of their duties connected with the making of official vital statistics, and request their cooperation in making such statistics accurate and trustworthy. He calls their attention to the fact that in case of births, report must be made within ten days: it must contain name and address of father and mother, including the mother's maiden name, Christian name of child and where such child was born.

He calls attention to the fact that in reporting deaths, a vague description such as "old age," "heart disease," etc., does not comply with the law and they are not such as to enable the government to classify causes of death. He gives no hint at intended sarcasm but asks the medics to "write legibly." Any layman who has undertaken to read a prescription will appreciate the point.

There is a general understanding that the new system is not highly important. This is far from the truth. In the first place, it is a system of the United States government, upon which its vital and racial census is based. In addition, such an accurate record will be of value to every family throughout the coming years as a record. An illustration recently occurred to a man who was born in Fort Smith that has been forgotten for many years. He was appointed to a position by the federal government, one of the qualifications for which was official information of his nativity and the time and place. He wrote to the city and the old slipshod records were vainly searched. Had the officials failed to find an old lady living on the north side, who could testify, the man would have lost his job. Such statistics are also invaluable in estate matters, property titles and establishment of (sp) heirships.

Thursday, January 4, 1917

MILL CREEK FARMERS CONTRACT FOR TRUCK

J. G. Bodenheimer, president of the Holland-American Fruit Products Co., returned from Mill Creek Tuesday night with the signatures of nine farmers in that neighborhood to contracts for acreage, as a preliminary to the location in this city of a \$60,000 canning plant. Mr. Bodenheimer expressed himself as well pleased with the response he is receiving from the farmers of this vicinity, and predicts the early

completion of plans for the erection of the cannery.

Those signed Tuesday to grow fruit and vegetables for the plant are C. M. Vanderburg, W. J. Rice, A. Homan, W. H. White, C. W. Whitson, W. P. Pepper, J. W. Maness, H. H. Walton and E. K. Walton.

The movement to locate the cannery here received the endorsement of the Ad Club at its luncheon Tuesday, when a resolution was adopted recommending that local farmers contract with Mr. Bodenheimer for the raising of fruit and vegetables for the purpose of furthering the Profitable Farming campaign in Sebastian county to the utmost.

Friday, January 5, 1917

CUTLERY PLANT IN OPERATION BY FEBRUARY 1

The Solid Steel Scissors company's plant will be in operation by the first of February, according to an announcement made Thursday by Hugo Bruninghaus, one of the officials of the company, and the number of employees will be increased 50 per cent over that originally announced. The construction of a 25X50-foot addition to the present plant is in progress, and the wing will be completed by the time the machinery for the factory arrives.

The scissors plant was to have begun operations a week ago, but the freight congestion in the north which delayed the arrival of several pieces of machinery, has made necessary the postponement. About 25 men will be employed as soon as work is started, and the force will be increased as the expanding trade of the factory demands it.

The workmen who are to begin the operation of the plant are coming here from Fremont, Ohio, where they were located before the establishment of the plant here. Local men are to be trained for the new positions as they are created.

Friday, January 5, 1917

JOINT INSTALLATION OF MACCABEES' OFFICERS

Cherokee Tent No. 2, and Fort Smith Tent No. 14, Knights of the Maccabees, held a joint installation of officers Thursday night in Maccabee hall. Sir Knight Past Commander J. W. Pelley officiated as installing officer. After the installation short talks were made by the record keepers of both tents, at the close of which the entertainment committee gave a luncheon at the Guler café officers installed are:

Cherokee Tent No. 2.

J. R. Englebright, past commander;
W. J. Reed, lieutenant commander;
J. F. McGraw, record keeper;
J. W. Beard, chaplain;

J. J. Collins, sergeant;
 W. T. Schlieff, master-at-arms;
 F. M. Burger, first master guard;
 Frank ????, second master guard;
 Charles H. Daniels, sentinel;
 W. B. Wyatt, picket.
Fort Smith Tent No. 14.
 T. B. Daniel, past commander;
 W. C. ????, commander;
 J. S. Johnson, record keeper;
 H. R. Hollenbeck, chaplain;
 J. F. Moore, chaplain;
 T. A. [unreadable], master at arms;
 John L. ????, first master guard;
 James ????, second master guard;
 G. M. ????, sentinel;
 E. D. Bell, picket.

Friday, January 5, 1917

NATIONAL SUFFRAGE ORGANIZER SPEAKS IN CITY SATURDAY

Fort Smith women will be given an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the latest developments in the campaign for a national equal suffrage amendment when Miss Josephine Miller of Little Rock, national organizer of the National Woman Suffrage association, speaks in the circuit court room Saturday night at 8 o'clock. Miss Miller arrived in Fort Smith Thursday afternoon prepared to convince the women of this city of the necessity for the suffrage amendment.

A preliminary meeting will be held in the parlors of the Goldman hotel Saturday morning at 10 o'clock, and every Fort Smith woman is invited to attend, the better to learn the objects of the local organization.

Mrs. A. G. Blacklock, chairman of the Fort Smith Suffrage association, will preside at the morning and night meetings. Judge W. A. Falconer will address the meeting Saturday night. The other officers of the local organization are Miss Alice Mills co-chairman; Mrs. John G. Gardner, secretary, and Miss Margaret [unreadable], treasurer.

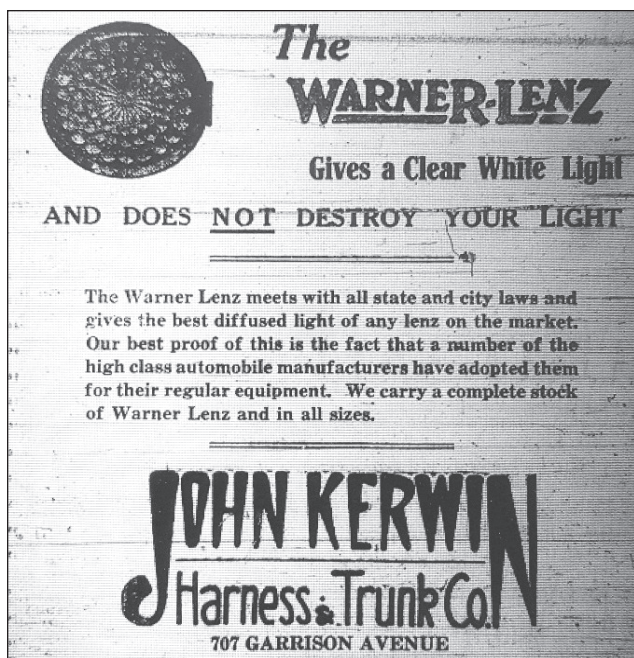
Friday, January 10, 1917

ONLY TWENTY BIRTHS RECORDED IN PERIOD OF EIGHT YEARS HERE

Were you born in Fort Smith?

If you were, the chances are you cannot make legal proof of the fact. Nor can you prove your age, if you belong to the great majority of native Fort Smithians.

During the eight years from 1901 to 1909, just 20 births were recorded in this city. And only three doctors filed birth



The
WARNER-LENZ

Gives a Clear White Light

AND DOES NOT DESTROY YOUR LIGHT

The Warner Lenz meets with all state and city laws and gives the best diffused light of any lenz on the market. Our best proof of this is the fact that a number of the high class automobile manufacturers have adopted them for their regular equipment. We carry a complete stock of Warner Lenz and in all sizes.

JOHN KERWIN
 Harness & Trunk Co.
 707 GARRISON AVENUE

1917 ADVERTISEMENT for the John Kerwin Harness & Trunk Co., 707 Garrison Ave.

certificates. Conditions similar to this existed before 1901, and 1909 until the present, although in the last two years they have improved somewhat. Under the present enforcement of vital statistics law, more births are recorded in a single month than were in all of the eight years mentioned above.

That the registration of vital statistics may result in great benefit to the registeree was shown Tuesday, when a former local boy, who is now in the navy applied to Registrar Geo. T. Carnall for proof of his birth. He wanted it, he said, because an \$8 increase in his monthly pay check would be made if he could prove legally his American birth, and thus become eligible for promotion.

No record of his birth could be found. His only recourse is to certify to the correctness of his birth entry in the family Bible, if it is recorded there, or show a certificate of baptism, if he has one.

Mayor Read and the city commissioners became interested in the vital statistics subject yesterday, and looked up the birth records of their children. The only one that could be found was for one of Commissioner Kuper's children. Not one of Mayor Read's offspring were noted in the city's books.

"The doctors are showing more diligence than ever before in recording vital statistics." Said the registrar.

Thursday, January 11, 1917

DWIGHT INDIANS HERE FOR COURT BATTLE FRIDAY

The basketball teams of the Fort Smith high school and

the Dwight Indian school of Marble City, Okla., will meet in the biggest event of the season here on Friday night at the high school gymnasium. Both boys and girls teams will play.

Dwight Indians are considered among the fastest basketball teams of eastern Oklahoma, and the fact that practically all the players are Indians adds interest to the games. The advance sale of tickets for the Friday night game is fast depleting the stock, and as the gymnasium will seat only about 600, it is advisable to buy early.

The Indians will play in this city as the first jump in a tour of several Arkansas and Louisiana cities, including Little Rock, Hot Springs, Texarkana and Shreveport.

Saturday, January 13, 1917

PLAN TUBERCULAR SANATORIUM HERE

Plans for the establishment in this city of a sanatorium for the care of persons believed to be incurable consumptives, will be taken up within the next few days at a meeting of representatives of all the clubs and civic organizations of Fort Smith, and of the Sebastian County Medical association.

This was decided at the meeting of the City Federation of Women's clubs Friday afternoon, when the hospital committee reported that preliminary plans for the sanatorium were ready for consideration. The sanatorium, as now planned, will be adequate in every way to care for the tubercular cases which are not admitted at the state sanatorium at Booneville.

Tuesday, January 16, 1917

AGED MAN REVIVED BY USE OF PULMOTOR

Henry Siebert, 413 North Eighteenth street, was saved from asphyxiation Sunday afternoon by the prompt use of the fire department pulmotor.

Mr. Siebert, who is 75 years old, is suffering with an attack of pneumonia, and when the gas stove in his room was blown out while no one was present, he was unable to relight it. Later in the afternoon he was found unconscious by a member of the family, and the air of the room heavily laden with gas fumes. Mr. Siebert was revived shortly after the pulmotor was applied, and no permanent injury resulted.

Tuesday, January 16, 2017

MRS. MARGARET HICKEN IS DEAD

Funeral services for Mrs. Margaret Hicken, for more than sixty years a resident of Fort Smith were held from the late residence, 423 North Eighth street, Monday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Rev. Edwin F. Wilcox, former pastor of St. John's Episcopal church, assisted by Rev. A. E. Lyman-

Did you win a 3-lb. can yesterday? If not you may today—we are giving four 3-pound cans of Bonnette Coffee away at the Cooking School each day.

“BONNETTE” COFFEE

is being used in the Southwest American's
Cooking School at Catholic Hall

South 13th Street—This Week



Be sure and notice carefully the coffee made there—how delicious and appetizing it is.

When drinking “Bonnette” you are testing the best coffee that skill and science can produce both in preparation of the roasted berries and the making of the actual coffee.

You will have solved the problem of making good coffee when you begin using—



BONNETTE Coffee



Fort Smith Coffee Company
Importers and Roasters

1917 AD FOR THE FORT SMITH COFFEE COMPANY

Wheaton, present pastor, officiated. Interment was made in Forest Park cemetery. The pall bearers were Neal Carr, Dr. W. T. Cate, H. E. Turner, Frank A. Handlin, Arch Monro, and Dr. J. G. Eberle.

Mrs. Hicken was one of the most prominent of the pioneers through whose efforts Fort Smith was transformed from a frontier army post into the metropolis of northwest Arkansas.

She was born in Liverpool, England, December 9, 1841, but was brought to the United States by her parents when a small girl, and the family moved soon after to Fort Smith, where her father became a leading jeweler. In 1860 Mrs. Hicken married H. G. Hicken, a local merchant, and shortly after the couple became prominent in their support of those who were left behind when the young men of the city were called to the army of the confederacy. Mrs. Hicken, after the war, was one of the founders of the Varina Jefferson Davis chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and took a leading part in the organization up to the time of her death.

Mrs. Hicken was a charter member of the Fortnightly Club, and did much to secure the Carnegie library for this

city. She conducted a public library here for ten years before the establishment of the Carnegie institution. Mrs. Hicken was a lifelong member of the Episcopal church, and Rev. Wilcox's trip to the this city from Joplin, Mo., where he now is located, was a mark of the great respect and love in which she was held by the Episcopalians of the city.

Mrs. Hicken is survived by one daughter, Miss Sue Hicken, and a stepson, in South America.

Tuesday, January 16, 1917

MUNICIPAL COURT BILL FOR FORT SMITH TO BE INTRODUCED TODAY

A municipal court, with jurisdiction over all misdemeanors committed in Fort Smith will be established in this city if a bill to be introduced in the house today by Representative Carl W. Held of Sebastian county, is adopted by the legislature. The measure was completed yesterday by Harry P. Warner, who has been working on it for several days.

The bill, in effect, does away with the local justice and police courts. The municipal judge would have concurrent jurisdiction with the justices of the peace and police judge. He would receive a salary of \$2000 a year. The bill also provides for a constable, at \$1800 yearly, and two deputies at \$75 a month each, thus eliminating the fee system. The municipal court judge would not have the power to perform marriages or act as a notary. Trials by jury would be granted on request. The municipal court here would be similar to that now operating in Little Rock, and to those proposed in bills now pending in Hot Springs and Pine Bluff.

The question of constitutionality of the court has been upheld through a decision by the supreme court in sustaining the legality of the Little Rock municipal tribunal. Such a measure as the one now proposed has been long advocated in Fort Smith.

Tuesday, January 19, 1917

DAVID SPEER IS CALLED BY DEATH

Fort Smith lost a substantial and honored citizen Monday night when David Speer, president of the Speer Hardware company, died at his home, 804 North Seventh street, at 10:30 o'clock. Death was sudden. Mr. Speer had been in failing health for the past six months. He had been confined to his bed for the last three weeks. Mr. Speer was 77 years of age.

Mr. Speer was president of the Speer company since its organization in 1893 and has been a resident of Fort Smith since 1887. He leaves three children, Mrs. Hattie Merriman

and two sons, Ralph and Fred Speer, of this city, in addition to his widow.

Funeral arrangements have not been completed.

Saturday, January 20, 1917

MAYOR MENTIONS BUCKLING PAVING IN HIS REPORT

"The buckling of the wood block paving on Garrison avenue caused considerable annoyance," says Mayor H. C. Read in his monthly resume of conditions in Fort Smith, filed with the city clerk yesterday. "This was attributable to excessive moisture and freezing, occasioned by heavy snow and doubtless to blocks having been placed too close together without a proper allowance for expansion. The cost of these repairs is borne by the contractor, who gave five years' maintenance bond, but the work is done under the direction of our engineering department."

The police department made 206 arrests in December, a total of \$736.25 in fines and forfeitures—\$330 in forfeitures and \$406.25 in fines. The expenses of the department were \$1,550.21, of which \$1,415 went for salaries and the remainder, \$135.21, for miscellaneous items. The net expense of the department was \$813.96.

The court tried 155 cases of which 18 were appealed or turned over to the state. Forty-five cases were dismissed or suspended: 66 prisoners were committed, and five were turned over to the juvenile officer. There were 41 forfeitures and 31 fines assessed.

Regarding the finances of the city, the mayor says:

"Deficit in general fund, \$16,366.09 but up to date we have paid only \$808.03 interest as against \$732.93 for same period last year."

Speaking of the general condition of the city the mayor remarks:

"The Athletic smelter began work early in the month and expects to be in operation in ninety days.

"On December 8 the Wildcat company brought in a 10,000,000 foot gas well.

"The Municipal Christmas tree was a grand success. One thousand bags of candy, nuts, fruits and toys were distributed by the committee.

"The Salvation Army rendered most efficient help in this and the Fort Smith Light and Traction company are deserving of special commendation for furnishing current and lighting the tree, also for the large number of free street car tickets given the poor children to get to and fro the tree.

"I take this occasion to thank all the committees and individuals who engaged in this very arduous labor of love.

"There were seven cases of typhoid handled during the month, of which all but one were dismissed as cured:

twenty-six cases of measles, and 16 dismissed.

"It is worthy of note that in this country scarlet fever is seldom fatal, as it is in northern climates."

Sunday, January 21, 1917

BUD LEDBETTER TAKES FIELD TO OUST BOOZE

Special to *Southwest American*

MUSKOGEE, Okla., Jan. 20.—Bud Ledbetter, former sheriff of Muskogee county, former chief of police of Vinita, and for over ten years, during both territorial and statehood days, a deputy United States Marshal, has been commissioned deputy marshal again by Marshal B. A. Enloe, Jr. Mr. Ledbetter will assume his duties at Muskogee Monday.

Ledbetter gained fame during the territorial days by his capture of Al Jennings, the notorious outlaw, single-handed. He is also famed for the number of bootleggers he has run to earth.

His appointment as a deputy marshal, with instructions to purge Muskogee of every liquor seller in the city and vicinity, is hailed here as sounding the death-knell for the bootlegger.

Ledbetter will be in charge of a new staff of 15 deputy marshals, all of whom will devote their entire time to ferreting out the liquor sellers.

Wednesday, January 24, 1917

83 PER CENT OF NEGROES VICTIMS OF TUBERCULOSIS

That 83 per cent of the negroes who live in Fort Smith are afflicted with tuberculosis, was the statement made by Dr. S. J. Wolferman last night, on authority of Dr. S. W. Harrison, prominent negro physician of this city.

Over three times as many negroes in the south die of tuberculosis as do white people, according to Dr. Wolferman.

He presented startling figures to show the prevalence of the disease among the negroes of the southern states, and declared that they are among the principal carriers of the disease, spreading the contagion to the white people with whom they come in contact.

As a measure of protection to the whites, as well as for humanitarian reasons, Dr. Wolferman urges the erection of a tuberculosis sanatorium for the negroes of this state, or at least for the care of negro sufferers.

A resolution requesting the Sebastian county members of the Arkansas legislature to support the measure for the establishment of a negro sanatorium in Arkansas was passed by those who attended the anti-tuberculosis

association meeting here last night.

Wednesday, January 24, 1917

GLASS PLANT WILL BE IN OPERATION BEFORE MARCH 15

The plant of the Fort Smith Mirror and Glass company, owned by Enos Porter of Shelbyville, Ind., will be in full operation by March 15, according to present plans. Mr. Porter gave this information on his arrival here. The building is practically completed and opening of the plant is only awaiting the arrival and placing of the machinery.

Word has been received by the company from the manufacturers that the machinery for the Fort Smith plant will be shipped on February 6. Mr. Porter estimates a week for its transportation and a month to set it up.

The Fort Smith plant will buy glass in large quantities and make mirrors for use of the furniture factories here and for other customers. In addition the company will handle a large glass jobbing business.

Thursday, January 25, 1917

SLIPS ON BANANA PEEL, BREAKS ARM

A banana peel on the street at the junction of Fifth and Eleventh street car lines caused Mrs. W. T. Thompson, of North Tenth street, to fall and break a bone in her left arm at the elbow joint Wednesday afternoon. Mrs. Thompson was carrying a baby and fell on top of the youngster, but did not injure him.

Friday, February 2, 1917

PROPOSES MACHINE GUN COMPANY HERE

Mayor Henry C. Read has written Colonel Henry Stroup commander of the Second Arkansas National Guard regiment, urging Col. Stroup to carry out his plans for the organization of a machine gun company in Fort Smith. The colonel, in a communication to the mayor, yesterday, asked the latter's opinion of the project.

"We want a company of fifty men, and we will make it the finest company in Arkansas," Colonel Stroup's letter says. The men desired must be over 24 years old, and must be unmarried. Plans for the organization of the company will be taken up when the Second Arkansas returns from the border.

Sunday, February 4, 1917

BROOM FACTORY COMING HERE; WILL EMPLOY THIRTY AT START

With an initial force of 30 employees and a capacity of 100 dozen brooms a day, the Southern Broom company,

constituting a merger of the Dixie Broom company's plants in Little Rock, Ark. and Hugo Okla., will begin operation in Fort Smith within 30 days, it was learned Saturday.

The Dixie company's headquarters are in Hope, Ark. W. M. Coffey, one of the principal stockholders in the corporation, has been in Fort Smith for a week, in conference with W. W. Robb, of this city, now connected with the Add-A-Tread Tire company, but formerly manager of the Southern Broom company of Fort Smith. Mr. Robb, who has been out of the broom business since his plant burned here several years ago, probably will be manager of the new factory. Mr. Coffey will move to this city to be associated with Mr. Robb. The firm will manufacture carpet and whisk broom of the better grades. The Dixie company has about 10 large jobbing accounts and the orders for most of these will be manufactured here.

The exact location of the plant has not been decided upon, but probably will be this week. The equipment to be installed will cost between \$2,500 and \$3,000.

Uncertain Date, 1917

ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN VOTERS ENDS SUDDENLY

Assessing women and payment of poll taxes so that they can take advantage of the provisions of the recently adopted Riggs bill permitting women to vote in primary elections only, was brought to an abrupt end Tuesday—the first day for women to qualify—when R. O. McConnell, of Greenwood, ordered the assessment to cease until Earl U. Hardin, prosecuting attorney, renders an opinion as to whether or not women must pay a poll tax.

The Riggs bill does not state that women must pay a poll tax to vote, but says they must be qualified voters. Unofficial implication of the word "qualified" has led local authorities to the opinion that in order to become qualified they must pay a poll tax—the same requisite that is demanded of male citizens in order to qualify them to vote.

Nine women assessed with the county clerk Tuesday and paid the poll tax to the tax collector. Mrs. Leota Cunningham Pettigrew, clerk in the county clerk's office obtained the first receipt. Others who paid were Mrs. Mary E. Cravens, wife of Col. William Cravens, dean of the Fort Smith bar, Miss Daisy Cravens, Miss Dymple B. Johnson, Mrs. Jossamine Fishback, Mrs. Emma E. Lyman, Miss Anna Bayley, Mrs. H. M. Stanley, Miss Bertha M. Stanley.

Sunday, April 1, 1917

AUTO TIRES TO MADE HERE AT EARLY DATE

Automobile tires will soon be manufactured in Fort Smith. Following his first anniversary in business in Fort

Not a Motion Picture

NEW THEATRE

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, JAN. 3

LIAM ELLIOTT,
RAY COMSTOCK
MORRIS GEST

THE MOST
WONDERFUL
PLAY
IN
AMERICA



EXPERIENCE

BY
GEORGE V. HOBART

Direct from Nine Months in New York, Seven Months in
Chicago and Five Months in Boston
A Love Story of Youth, His Trials and Temptations
TEN BIG SCENES COMPANY OF EIGHTY-TWO PLAYERS

PRICES 50c, 75c, \$1.00, \$1.50, \$2.00

1917 AD FOR THE NEW THEATRE IN FORT SMITH

Smith, Friday, D. N. Robb, manager and owner of the Add-A-Tread Tire Company, Saturday placed orders for a large quantity of machinery which will enable the plant to build automobile tires in their entirety, and to make a wide variety of other rubber goods. Already the plant is building tires, with the exception of the rims, by the "add-a-tread" process.

Just a year ago Friday D. N. Robb moved to Fort Smith and opened the Add-A-Tread Tire Company. With a single boy helper, he started to repairing automobile tires. From time to time he has added another workman, until now he employs seven people, and turns out 200 to 250 tires a week, as compared to 25 to 35 a week when he opened the plant.

Recently Jack Jackson, one of the few really expert rubber manufacturers of the nation, joined the Add-A-

Tread force, and will be associated with the firm hereafter. Mr. Jackson has had 17 years experience in the rubber business. As soon as the machinery arrives, the plant will begin turning out a variety of rubber products, under the direction of Messrs. Robb and Jackson.

Deliveries of machinery are uncertain and no definite date can be set for the manufacture of the first tire in Fort Smith, but Mr. Robb expects to be fully equipped within the next two or three months.

Sunday, April 1, 1917

Van Buren Arkansas

CONFEDERATES OFFER SERVICES IN CASE OF WAR

At an informal meeting held in the office of Mayor J. E. Powers Saturday afternoon the following Confederate veterans agreed to offer their services to President Wilson as a landwehr[sic] company or guard force in case of war with Mexico or Germany: Judge W. H. McKinney, W. T. Ingraham, Judge H. B. Hale, W. H. H. Shibley, T. W. Davis, Silas Wright and John Stewart.

"We are willing to go to either the seaboard or to the Mexican border," said Mr. Ingraham, "for though old we are still capable of putting up a good fight. Besides, we have not forgotten the things we learned over fifty years ago when we followed 'Pap' Price and dodged General Lyon in Green county, Missouri. All that we ask is good treatment for men of our ages—and plenty to eat. Before we die we ought to make up time in good cating[sic] for the four years of the civil war."

"But seriously," announced Judge Hale, "I am here to tell you that Van Buren and all Arkansas are just as loyal as New York and the East, and once more we wish to serve under the national flag."

The noonday drill hour for business men and others so inclined has struck Van Buren. Manager Bostick of Bostick's Drug Store, informed a representative of the *Southwest American* Saturday afternoon that there are a number of men competent to drill a squad in Van Buren.

Sunday, April 1, 1917

Read Carefully

(full page advertisement appearing in the last Sunday paper before the city elections)

Why are some of the leading business men and bankers working for the Street Car company ticket to be elected?

Mr. Ney, President of the Boston Store, has been out soliciting votes for the Traction Co. ticket.

Mr. Ney, isn't it a fact that the Street Car company has been giving you special rates for electricity as low as three

cents, and two and half cents, when your competitors have been paying a much higher rate?

Mr. Chauncey Lick is another one who is out soliciting for the Street Car company's gang. Mr. Lick, isn't it a fact that all you are paying is two cents for electricity?

Mr. Frank Handlin and Mr. Sicard, President and Vice President, of the First National Bank, went to Little Rock and used their influence with some of the legislators and senators to kill the muny electric light bill. Isn't it a fact that you are getting electricity for your building at a very low rate also.

Dare any of the above to make an affidavit denying that they are not getting electricity at a much lower price than the published rate.

John C. Gardner is out soliciting and attending the meetings of the same crowd. John admitted that he took a commission of \$400.00 for his bank for the sale of school bonds.

John didn't deny that he went to St. Louis and brought the bond man to Fort Smith and took him in the back room of the American National bank where the \$450,000.00 bonds were sold at \$18,400.00 discount.

Isn't it a fact that every one of you bankers have been trying to persuade your customers to vote for the Street Car company ticket?

Now isn't it a fact that you are willing to sacrifice, in case of emergency, the other candidates so you get Kuper in? Why—because Mr. Kuper, commissioner of finance has been paying 8 per cent to you bankers out of the city's money.

And isn't it a fact that hundreds of thousands of dollars were kept in your banks without interest until a law was passed in the legislature forcing the banks to pay interest on public funds.

And since the law has been passed, the city has been getting as high as \$800.00 a month interest.

No wonder you are after the same commissioners to be kept in office. You have kept Kuper in office now for twenty years and are turning heaven and earth to put him back in again.

The reason why they want the old and tired friends is so they won't have to audit the paying books. Mr. Kuper has already gone on record as having objected to the books being audited. Let Mr. Kuper answer why a public officer should be against auditing the books. Is there anything to be ashamed of or afraid of?

If the books are audited, they may be found the same as the school board books.

Tuesday, April 3, 1917

AS TO C. A. LICK

In all frankness the *Southwest American* desires to say to its readers that the page advertisement which appeared in its

columns Sunday morning was published under precisely the same terms which any person interested in the city campaign might have used advertising space in this paper. It may be of interest to the few who have taken violent objection to its subject matter to say that the citizen who was responsible for the advertisement is one of the substantial taxpayers of this city. He is also a close student of city affairs and in a position to be accurately informed about the undercurrents which sway the affairs of this city. And there is no more public-spirited citizen nor one whose purse talks more consistently with his voice.

Without discussion of the accuracy of his statements, those who have taken exceptions to the statements may as well understand that for months there has been a general understanding from creditable sources that adroitly hidden favors which in effect amounted to rebates were not unknown in this city. In fact members of the city commission will not deny that such charges have been brought to their notice with request that they enforce the law relating to published service rates. The *Southwest American* has given no publicity to these reports but has confined its campaign to official records which have not been and cannot be truthfully denied. So far as the advertisement related to C. A. Lick, this newspaper, for itself, has no disposition to dispute with him pro or con on the subject. It does not claim to know.

Tuesday, April 3, 1917

The city election campaign has closed. From the first gun to this morning's issue the *Southwest American* has confined its campaign against the re-election of any of the old officials. In doing so, it has called no names, made no attack upon nor criticism of any nominee personally. It has confined its campaign to publishing records and matters having solely to do with the qualifications and affiliations which determine whether a nominee is fitted to serve the people. Has any effort been made to deny the accuracy of the records thus published?

There has not.

If the Invisible Government is willing to go into the election today with the admission that they have no other answer to the voice of the city, the water plant and the improvement district records than the shrieking of hard names it is equivalent to what the law sharps call a "plea of confession and avoidance."

Wednesday, April 4, 1917

CLEAN SWEEP AT CITY HALL

The new deal made a clean sweep and J. H. Wright is the mayor, T. A. Bayley, commissioner No. 1 and Mike



A 1917 AD for J. H. Wright, a candidate for Fort Smith mayor. Wright won the election.

Smith commissioner No. 2 of Fort Smith. Twenty-three hundred and ten votes were cast in Tuesday's election. Mike Smith led the ticket with 1,310 to Bruce's 1,000. Bayley held second place with 1,240 to Kuper 1,067. Wright with 1,208 votes led Bourland by 97 votes.

Not for many years has this city been so awakened in any city election as that of Tuesday. Active voting began early in the morning and steady streams of voters visited the polls, cast their ballots and then went about their business.

A noteworthy feature was that every voter evidenced that he had his mind made up fully as to just what his ticket was going to be, and he went in and voted it. Card passers about the several polling places proved about the most useless possible appendages to the election.

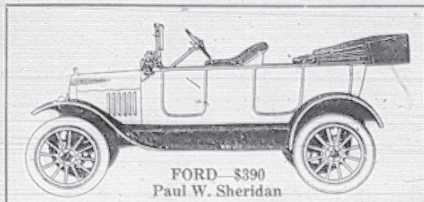
Before the hour of opening the polls in the morning Election Commissioners Issacson and Jasper accompanied by an office to qualify the judges and clerks visited the several precincts with lists of election officials who had

Here Are the Winners, Correct Name of the Cars and the Firms That Sell Them

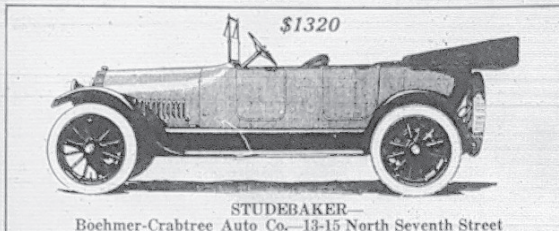
Checks for the amount will be mailed to winners today.

Winner—First Prize: Hartzell Board, R. F. D. No. 1, Fort Smith.
 Winner—Second Prize: Bowlin Clark, Jr., Van Buren, Ark.
 Winner—Third Prize: Miss Katherine Pettigrew, 504 No. 20th St., City
 Winner—Fourth Prize: Lillian Coleman, Cowington, Okla., Box 13.

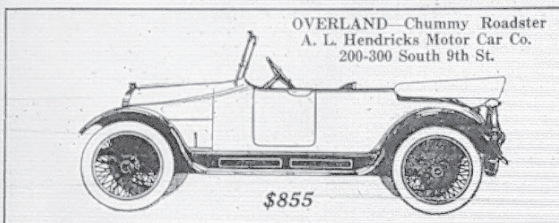
The progressive dealers who co-operated with the Southwest American in making the contest a success wish to thank the several hundred contestants for the interest shown. While everybody could not win a prize we believe your efforts were well worth the while. Watch the cars on the streets—find out the name and who sells them, and at the same time keep posted by reading the automobile ads in the Southwest American. You will find it both interesting and profitable.



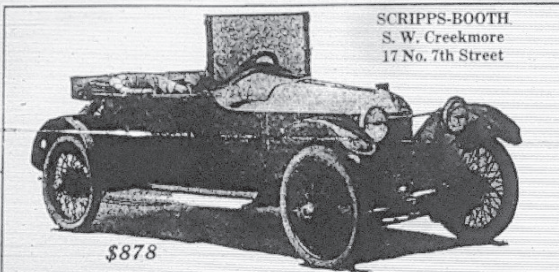
FORD—\$390
 Paul W. Sheridan



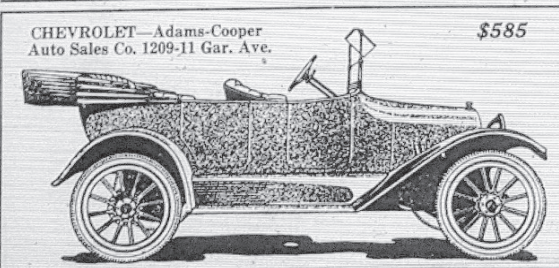
STUDEBAKER—
 Boehmer-Crabtree Auto Co.—13-15 North Seventh Street



OVERLAND—Chummy Roadster
 A. L. Hendricks Motor Car Co.
 200-300 South 9th St.

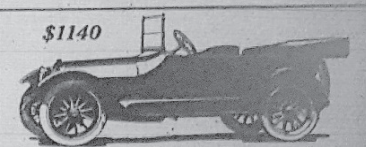


SCRIPPS-BOOTH
 S. W. Creekmore
 17 No. 7th Street



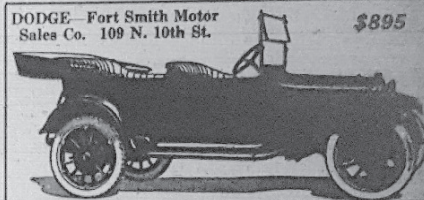
CHEVROLET—Adams-Cooper
 Auto Sales Co. 1209-11 Gar. Ave.

\$585



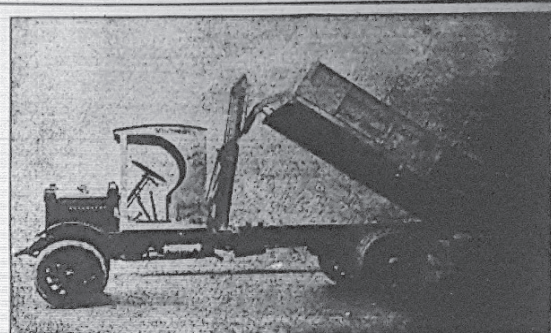
\$1140

BUICK—
 Fort Smith Buick Auto Co. 17 N. 7th St.

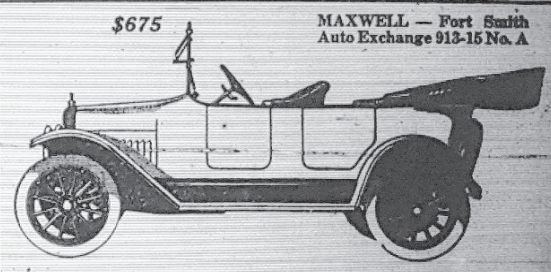


DODGE—Fort Smith Motor
 Sales Co. 109 N. 10th St.

\$895

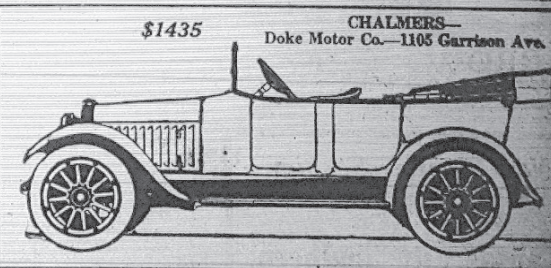


3 1/2 TON SERVICE TRUCK—\$3435
 Adams-Cooper Auto Sales Co.—1209-11 Garrison Avenue



\$675

MAXWELL—Fort Smith
 Auto Exchange 913-15 No. A



\$1435

CHALMERS—
 Duke Motor Co.—1105 Garrison Ave.

A 1917 AD SHOWING VEHICLES AND THE LOCATIONS OF DEALERSHIPS IN FORT SMITH.

served in the primary. In several of the polling places they found those present who had been placed on the list last week but the former judges and clerks were qualified in most cases.

There was a noticeable absence of election day hacks and automobiles owing to the charter provision against such use. Another departure from the previous practices was that the ballots were put in the box without such attempts to check

and count results as had previously been done.

Wednesday, April 4, 1917

GOOD BUSINESS BEING DONE BY MIRROR PLANT

One of the first of Fort Smith's new industries to get its products on the market is the mirror factory of E. R. Porter

which is now running and which will increase its force as the trade demands. Tuesday morning a representative of the *Southwest American* visited the factory and was shown through the departments by C. B. Willard, manager of the big plant. In the first place the factory is a model of comfort and neatness, being 350 feet long and 60 feet broad. Al Pence, chief engineer of the factory belonging to Mr. Porter in Shelbyville, Ind., has almost finished the installation of every piece of machinery and will stay on the ground until everything is in ship shape order to the last bolt.

The factory received a car load of plate glass Tuesday morning which it unloaded and stored for use. Orders entirely satisfactory to the management are coming in every day. The plate glass for use in windows forms the jobbing side of the business. But the plate glass is also cut into mirrors of all sizes and shapes. In the manufacture of mirrors only the finest of French and American plate is used. Mr. Willard is looking for every sort of fancy patterns for mirrors. The making of mirrors is a unique process from the moment of the cutting of the pattern until the pattern runs through the various great wheels, where it is at last polished to the utmost clarity and fineness.

A Bone Dry Sufferer.

"We are facing one difficulty today," said Mr. Willard, "and that difficulty is about our alcohol. In finishing mirrors we must have alcohol in which to dissolve our shellac: for mirrors are backed by shellac and nitrate of silver. William Porter, superintendent of the plant, is out now with two inspectors going over the alcohol business. We have to give the heaviest and most technical bonds to handle alcohol; but the matter will be arranged. Our mirrors are then finished with nitrate of silver."

The first man in Fort Smith to purchase a mirror was W. E. Smith of the Fort Smith Barbers Supply Co. The mirror, which is a beauty, is in Mr. Smith's possession and will soon be installed.

Thursday, April 5, 1917

BUSINESS MEN PRACTICE DRILL

Business men of Fort Smith gathered in force at the Plaza Wednesday at noon to enroll for the noon day civilian military drill. The conditions of the drill were explained to the crowd, namely that their services were voluntary and that in joining the squad no man assumed any obligation whatever.

Dr. S. J. Wolferman, who has been active in the movement since its inception, acted as enrolling clerk, and in a short time secured the following roster though many had no chance to sign who will sign when the squad meets at 6 o'clock Thursday afternoon to decide whether the drills shall occur three times a week, or daily.

Tom Fr. Williams	Fred Cooper	M. T. Dyke
H. L. Stokes	A. M. Darby	Louis Weinstein
F. S. Read	N. Dyke	F. A. Grimm
C. J. Brokman	D. W. Goldstein	L. D. Reid
A. N. Sicard	C. Thompson Jr.	H. E. Price
John E. Curzon	R. L. Euper	W. C. Whitmarsh
R. S. Carver	W. B. Wilmans	J. H. Kirkpatrick
E. F. Chambless	E. G. Epler	Fred Klein
H. B. Caldwell	Will Cohn	Park Walker
Echols Webber	Wendell Robertson	John B. Williams
H. K. Watrous	Raymond McBride	Buck Williams
Jos. C. Watt	F. R. Griffin	F. W. Dyke
O. A. Fentress	A. H. Black	A. L. Kendall
J. B. Freeman	Jas. Davidson	Walter G. Eberle
J. D. Baugh	W. P. O'Neal	R. T. Little
Lester Ney	L. Czarlinsky	O. C. Ferrier
W. S. Hicks	E. D. Bedwell	Louis Cohen
J. Hinton	B. Czarlinsky	H. H. Redner
T. H. Stokes	Hoyt Bruce	Chas. Coffey
J. L. Brady	Jack Fink	Rupert Condrey
R. H. Brown	Otto Kirkes	John W. Howell
C. H. Baltzell	Goldon McManus	M. L. McClelland
Paul Isaacson	S. E. Donoghue	Wood Netherland
Jas. Sinclair	E. M. Wiest	S. J. Wolferman
W. L. Fox	Clarence Burg	M. F. Waten

Thursday, April 5, 1917

GERMAN SECRET WIRELESS ONLY SMALL DERRICK

Special to *Southwest American*

MAGAZINE, Ark. April 4.—The reported wireless telegraph plant on top of Mt. Magazine or Blue mountain as it is called, is nothing but a derrick-like affair of three or four feet, built entirely of timber and has undoubtedly been erected and used by a corps of United States engineers making a geodetic survey, according to Lieut. Walter Hall in charge of Magazine company of Arkansas national guards, who has just investigation. Lieut. Hall and a number of guards searched the mountain a greater part of yesterday, all of last night and a portion of today for the alleged German wireless plant.

Lieut. Hall dispatched four men tonight to make a search of Pettit Jean mountain, opposite Mt. Magazine, for a similar structure reported to have been erected on that mountain. A force of government engineers, it is reported, made a survey over the mountain during the winter months. They were last heard of in November. According to a group of campers found by Lieut. Hall and his party, these engineers stated they were using the miniature derricks to determine whether or not the mountains were rising or sinking.

The report that Lieut. Hall's party found a number of

blueprints and maps in an abandoned shack was denied by Lieut. Hall tonight. Military headquarters at Little Rock were advised that a secret wireless plant was at work on Mt. Magazine and directed Lieut. Hall to investigate.

Friday, April 6, 1917

BISCUIT PLANTS OFFERED FOR ANY PURPOSE TO U.S.

The Fort Smith Biscuit company on Thursday offered the full capacity of its plants in Fort Smith and St. Joseph Mo., to the federal government, for any purpose to which they might be put. The plants are especially adapted to the making of hard tack and other food supplies.

The offer, the first of its kind announced in this city, was made known at the noon luncheon of the directors of the Business Men's club, who endorsed it and instructed the secretary to forward it to the war department by telegraph.

A resolution urging employers of men to offer old positions or new ones equally remunerative to all men who enlist in the federal service during the present international crisis, was passed, and it was announced that the Reynolds-Davis Grocery company, the Fort Smith Wagon company and the W. A. Johnson Clothing company had already decided to take such action.

The Holland-American Fruit Products company was accepted as a new member of the club. The company is now erecting its canning plant between Fort Smith and South Fort Smith, on the Suburban railroad line.

Secretary Ray Gill was named as the representative of the Business Men's club on the executive committee of the Arkansas Press association during its convention here. Other representatives will be named from the Noon Civics, Rotary and Ad clubs, the Merchants association and from the newspapers.

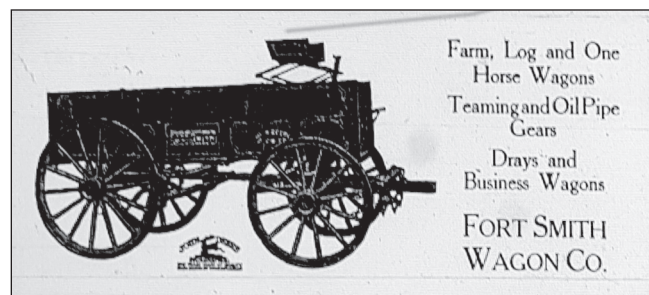
The movement for a state organization of commercial secretaries was endorsed and Secretary Ray Gill was authorized to attend and participate in the meeting at Little Rock on April 21.

Several committeemen are expected to start out this morning to clean up the remaining assessments on the second factory fund. They will meet at 9 o'clock and continue the work the major portion of the day.

Friday, April 6, 1917

SCISSORS PLANT IS INTERESTING PLACE; VISITORS WELCOME

There is one factory in Fort Smith which will be of especial interest to the lovers of fine arts when "Seeing Fort Smith Day" rolls around—and that factory is the Solid Steel Scissors company factory, where the finest of curved



1917 AD FOR FORT SMITH WAGON CO.

cutlery scissors only four inches long are being made. This company recently located in Fort Smith.

Dr. George Zimmerman conducted a representative of the Southwest American through the factory from the forging room to finishing and shipping rooms, and a most instructive tour it was.

Perhaps nothing on earth looks so discouraging to the lay eye as the bits of solid steel out of which the scissors are made as they lay in rusty piles over the long floor of the forge room. The beautiful, finished product however is a revelation in what handicraft and powerful machinery can do. And the intermediate departments are equally interesting, for they prove how the ancient art of Tubal Cain can work wonders with fire and hammer and with all the machinery that has been invented as the primordial art evolved itself from the crudities of the far off past to the perfection of the present day.

To Add \$25,000 to Plant.

"We are making the small four-inch curved cuticle scissors now," said Dr. Zimmerman, "because we must toddle before we can walk. Soon we shall be making the three and a half inch curved scissors, and within four or five months we expect to manufacture tweezers, the finest of forceps, large and small, the most delicate of manicure sets and flexible files and later we expect to put in a fine leather goods department. It will require \$25,000 to finance this department.

"We have had two mail order demands for our present output and there is no question but that in time we shall have one of the most prosperous business in Fort Smith. At present we are making, or that is, finishing thirty dozen scissors per day, but as soon as we get our various departments balanced and regulated in their work we shall reach 125 dozen per day. At present our forging, nickel-plating and polishing departments are ahead of the game. We are working twenty-five men in the factory now and of course shall have to put on more men as the business grows."

Dr. Zimmerman welcomes visitors. As a guide and a lecturer upon his business he is perfect. No more enthusiastic exploiter ever came to Fort Smith. He will take the visitor through the forging department which is a building separate from the factory, through the departments of grinding and

polishing, the inside work where the bows are cut in the scissors, into the nickel plating room, and the finishing room, where the long rows of bright scissors hang on a wire ready for packing and at last to the shipping room. Dr. Zimmerman is a type of business man who believes, as the scriptures of old proclaimed: "A people without vision perisheth."

Tuesday, May 21, 1917

FORT SMITH TO BID FOR CAMP; MEET TONIGHT

A plan of action that is hoped will result in Fort Smith being designated as a site for one of the several concentration military camps the government is to locate in the south will be adopted at a mass meeting to be held in the circuit court room tonight. A committee canvassed the business, wholesale, jobbing and manufacturing district today urging employer and employee to attend the meeting.

The army board that is now touring the south inspecting prospective concentration camps will reach Little Rock Wednesday and a committee of citizens from Fort Smith will be on hand to furnish the board with information on the claims of the city. The army board is headed by Col. George P. Howell.

The Rotary Club at a meeting Monday night instructed a committee consisting of Parke Walker, chairman Hoyt Bruce, R. S. Carver, I. H. Nakdimen, Ray Gill and W. B. Wilmans to send a 100 word night telegraphic letter to Major General Leonard S. Wood at Charleston, S. C. urging that Fort Smith's claims be given urgent consideration. This telegram was an elaboration upon Fort Smith's railroad facilities, its belt line railroad, unlimited natural gas, street car facilities, electricity and climate. The club has in view South Fort Smith as a site.

Earlier in the day Chairman Walker communicated by telegraph with Senator Joe T. Robison and Arkansas congressmen asking for assistance to the local project. In reply these representatives stated that all applications and inquiries should be addressed to Major Wood as he was to be sole judge in selecting the sites following recommendations from visiting army boards.

Mayor J. H. Wright also sent General Wood a telegram in which the advantages of Fort Smith were forcibly presented.

H. Nakdimen telegraphed his person friend, Col.

Theodore Roosevelt to recommend Fort Smith as a site. Mr. Nakdimen supplied Col. Roosevelt with a complete line of information as to the advantages here.

The City Federated Clubs have also entered into the work to assist in obtaining the camp and Mrs. J. S. Holt, head of the clubs, has so advised Chairman Walker of the Rotary committee.

W. E. Decker is in communication with Washington friends in regard to using their influence toward Fort Smith's selection.

A bill has been introduced in the United States senate and is now in the hands of a committee designating Fort Smith as a site for one of the training camps for the new army. The bill also would authorize the use of the old federal jail in this city as headquarters for the camp.

The bill was introduced before the war department order was issued leaving the selection of sites solely in the hands of Major General Leonard Wood, commander of the southeastern department, who is stationed at Charleston, S. C. It is probable that the effort to locate one of the camps in this city will take no cognizance of the bill, but will center on presentation of Fort Smith's advantages to Major

General Wood directly, or to his representatives.

The camp sites must be selected in the immediate future, as it is planned to construct cantonments for 22,000 men at each of the camps before Sept. 1, when the first contingent of the selective draft army will be called into service.

Tuesday, May 31, 1917

HOPE TO BEGIN WORK ON BRIDGE BY AUG

Within the next week engineering surveys will be made of the Arkansas river at this station for submission to the war department in order that within the next three or four weeks approval may be received for building the 3000 foot solid concrete bridge from Garrison avenue across Arkansas river into Sequoyah county Oklahoma. Every effort will be made to the end of beginning actual construction of the bridge on or before August 1.

Hedrick and Hedrick, consulting engineers of Kansas City were Wednesday night awarded the engineering contract by the board at a meeting which had been adjourned from the preceding night at which engineering bids had been received and considered. Prior to awarding



AN 1917 AD ANNOUNCING the opening of Whitaker's outdoor swimming pool on Kelley Highway.



AN ARCHITECT'S 1917 RENDERING OF THE GARRISON AVENUE BRIDGE.

the contract or calling in the bidding engineers Wednesday night, the bridge board felicitated itself and the district upon the fact that the bidding engineers had in every instance been of nationwide standing and of the highest type of engineering service and responsibility.

Ira C. Hedrick remained before the board just long enough to plan the necessary preliminary steps to completing the engineering contract. He then boarded a train for Kansas City en route to Des Moines, Iowa, where his fame is supervising bridge construction. He stated that the surveying engineering will come here at once from Kansas City and make the river survey for the war department. The river must be surveyed for half a mile below the site and a mile above.

A force of engineers will also at once commence the taking of soundings of the river for the pier foundations. While this work is being done, detailed plans will be agreed upon and estimates upon which advertisements for contracts will be made.

"In Kansas City it is the boast of experts and builders that the Kaw river sand is the best in the world for concrete construction." Engineer Hedrick said to the board Wednesday night. "I have carefully inspected the bed of the river, and within a thousand feet of the proposed bridge site, there is an almost inexhaustible bar of sand and gravel which I have no hesitancy in saying is even better than the Kaw river sand."

Before his departure Engineer Hedrick conferred with the board upon details of handling construction contracts which shall secure to the district the very inside of the material markets in the matter of cement and reinforcing steel. The only business before the board being the engineering bids, an adjournment was taken after the conference.

Saturday, June 9, 1917

FORT SMITH IS BEING CLEANED

The present city administration will have been in office two months on June 13 and of the record made in that time each of its officers is justly proud. It is the fortune or misfortune of a new city administration to inherit the

unfinished work of its predecessor as well as to form its plans for the future.

Here is the record during the past two months:

It has cleaned up all burglaries during the past six months.

It has broken up the joy riding habit and has made Fort Smith uncomfortable for automobile thieves.

It has put the junk thieves out of business by carefully following clues which lead to their prosecution.

Through the efforts of the police it has secured indictments against all of the leading bootleggers of the city.

So far as moral health of the city is concerned it has forced all disorderly houses that were running under whatever guise into the district by the river.

And the administration is young yet with its head full of plans and with the determination to make them realities.

Saturday, June 9, 1917

HARDING CO. WILL BUILD PLANT HERE

Charles H. Harding of Clarksburg, W. Va. will probably sign two contracts today, one with the Business Men's club and one with the Wildcat Oil and Gas company, by which he will establish in Fort Smith one of the largest glass plants in the country. The factory site will be located on one of the Kelley tracts opposite the car barns.

The name of the new business concern is the Harding Window Glass Co. The company will be incorporated under the laws of West Virginia in the sum of \$100,000. Mr. Harding has been elected president and general manager; W. J. Echols, vice-president; H. C. Hoffman of Clarksburg, treasurer, and Wayne E. Harding of the same city, son of C. H. Harding, secretary.

"I hope to sign contracts for site and gas Saturday morning," said Mr. Harding to a representative of the *Southwest American* Friday night, "so that we can get to work at once, for it will take six months to build the plant. We have decided upon the following buildings for the plant: Main building, 80 by 174 feet, with a stem 70 by 179 feet; flattening and cutting room, 250 by 140 feet, and the warehouse, 60 by 180 feet.

"In addition to these buildings there will be the power house, the raw material house, the box shop and the office building. When in operation the plant will work 250 men, all of whom are well-paid employees. Of this number of men I shall bring 75 per cent of them from the glass company back east and take the remaining 25 per cent from the local field.

"This alone will mean the addition of over 1,000 to Fort Smith's population. I have been in Fort Smith all day looking over matters and as soon as I can get to work I intend to bring my family here. I know that they will like the town as well as I like it; and I count myself a citizen already."

Mr. Harding was the builder of the famous Tuna plant in Clarksburg, the premier plant in the first glass town of America. His plant in Fort Smith will be a reproduction of the Tuna plant. Concerning Mr. Harding and his new Fort Smith business, the *Clarksburg Daily Telegram* of June 6, says:

"There is an abundant supply of natural gas there, which is obtained from a large gas field nearby that is just being opened up with prospects of an unlimited supply for years to come. It is the intention of the new company to install a sixty blower plant and to operate forty-eight blowers by the hand-blown method.

"Thousands of friends of Mr. Harding in this community, where he has for many years been active in industrial business and civic affairs, will regret to learn that he has arranged to go into business elsewhere but all will wish him continued success in his new field of endeavor. He has planned to move the members of his family to Fort Smith in the near future and the community will regret also, to lose them."

Saturday, June 9, 1917

TORNADO KILLS MAN AND WIFE AT UNIONTOWN

RUDY, Ark., June 8.—Two lives were lost in a tornado that struck Uniontown about 8 o'clock Thursday night. The dead are Levy Roden and wife, both of whom were more than 70 years of age. Mrs. Roden was instantly killed. Her husband died at 7 o'clock this morning from his injuries.

The home of J. M. Lemon was blown from its foundations and rolled over without hurting any of the inmates. A. G. Oliver's store was completely destroyed. A number of barns were blown down.

The storm came from the west. It was followed by an unusually sever rain storm which did much damage to crops.

Sunday, June 14, 1917

WE WANT YOU TO SEE SOUTH FORT SMITH

Don't take our word for it—go out and see for yourself. South Fort Smith is the fastest growing town in the Southwest—new industries have located here and more

coming. This is the most desirable property for the wage earner or the small investor. Don't let this opportunity pass you without investigating.

A Few Desirable Acre Tracts and Lots Still Unsold

If you want to get out in the open—out where the air is fresh and where you will have room to make your own garden, we repeat—invest your money in South Fort Smith. But do it now. These lots and acre tracts are bound to advance in price soon. If you ever had a golden opportunity this is it. Investigate.

YADON & DOBBINS
EXCLUSIVE AGENTS

Sunday, June 17, 1917

21 NEW PLANTS, WITH \$2,000,000 PAYROLL, IN FORT SMITH IN PAST YEAR

Twenty-one manufacturing establishments, producing more than 40 kinds of industrial products, with an actual cash investment approximating \$1,435,000 in plants and equipment, with an annual payroll estimated at \$1,936,000 and giving employment to 2,170 people is Fort Smith's industrial record within the past year. Just a year ago this month the Fort Smith Spelter company's quarter of a million dollar smelter at South Fort Smith began operation. The location of that institution was the opening chapter of a period of industrial activity unprecedented in the southwest.

The *Southwest American* gives a tabulated list of the manufacturing plants which have been located in Fort Smith since June 1, 1916. The majority of these plants have been located within the current year 1917. The list includes only manufactories which have been fully established and are in industrial operation or plants which have closed contracts for immediate location and operation.

The list includes twenty-one new manufacturing enterprises, all save five or six of which have constructed or have entered upon the actual work of constructing and equipping their plants.

With one or two minor exceptions, every plant represents new men, new outside capital, skilled labor brought here from a dozen states.

The twenty-one factories represent not less than forty lines of manufactured products, every one of which is standard all over the world and every line for the first time manufactured in this field.

Many of the leading lines are for the first time manufactured west of the Mississippi river, and some for the first time west or south of the great eastern manufacturing cities.

There are many smaller manufacturing enterprises in this city which have been recently put in operation, but none of

Sunday, June 17, 1917

FORT SMITH INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS IN PAST YEAR

In the following list of new factories and manufacturing plants, none are included save such as have been located in this city since June, 1916, and none save such as are now in operation or under factory building construction or contract. Factories marked with an "O" are in operation and those under construction are marked with a "C."

Name of Factory	Products	Investment	Annual Payroll	Number Employees
Ft. Smith Spelter Co.	Zinc	\$250,000	\$200,000	275(O)
Athletic Smelter Co.	Zinc	\$300,000	\$225,000	300(O)
C. H. Harding Glass Company	Window Glass	\$100,000	\$375,000	375(C)
Radiant Glass Co.	Lamp and Lantern Chimneys	\$125,000	\$500,000	450(C)
Model Window Glass Company	Window Glass	\$70,000	\$200,000	150(C)
C. A. Friedrich, et al. Glass Goods	Blanks for lens grinding	\$50,000	\$60,000	75(C)
Fort Smith Mirror Plate Company	Mirror Goods	\$50,000	\$20,000	25(O)
Fort Smith Metal Products Co.	Iron Beds and Auto Accessories	\$70,000	\$90,000	100(O)
Solid Steel Scissors Company	Surgical and general stock	\$30,000	\$60,000	75(O)
Wm. Haas & Sons Handle Factory	General Handle lines	\$20,000	\$20,000	25(C)
Best Mercantile Co.	Stock Foods and Vegetable Oils	\$25,000	\$20,000	50(O)
Holland American Fruit Products Co.	Canned Fruits and Vegetables	\$30,000	\$50,000	100(O) in season
Mo-Ark Oxygen Gas Company	Oxygen and Acetylin Gases	\$10,000	\$8,000	10(O)
H. F. Molenkopf Engraving Co.	Engraving	\$10,000	\$6,000	5(C)
Watson & Aven	Creamery and Dairy Products	\$15,000	\$15,000	20(O)
L. Feenburg & Co.	Cloth, Metal, Paper Products	\$30,000	\$30,000	50(O)
Fagan Bourland & Company	Ice and Storage	\$35,000	\$10,000	10(O)
Southern Broom Co.	Brooms	\$30,000	\$15,000	30(O)
Hayes Grain Co.	Feed and Grain	\$25,000	\$15,000	25(C)
Ozark Refining, Co.	Refined Petroleum Products	\$15,000	\$15,000	10(O)
Fort Smith Commercial Laboratories	Commercial Chemical Products	\$10,000	\$12,000	10(O)
21 Factories...		\$1,435,000	\$1,936,000	2170

them has been listed in the above table, nor do their investment, output nor payrolls figure in the totals given here.

Every man conversant with the developments of the past few months in this city, knows of an important number of other prospective manufacturing enterprises which are practically certain to be added to the list within the coming weeks. Of these some have even gone so far as to secure title to factory lands on which to erect their plants. None of these factory prospects figure in the above table.

Hundreds of New Families.

It would be fair also to include in the factory growth new lines with machinery and enlarged building space which have been added or are being added to previously established manufacturing plants. To do so would have increased the footings of the above table in each column by a very large per cent.

But that has not been done, the intention being to give as accurately and conservatively as possible the entirely new factory growth of the year.

Every precaution available has been taken to compile the record with careful conservatism. So far as the limited time permitted the figures have been verified from authentic sources. Fort Smith citizens may rest assured

that a careful survey irrefutably demonstrates that within the past year and up to the present time the volume of Fort Smith manufacturing industry has been enlarged in the several lists of either new or enlarged industries, by not less than 2,000,000 actual investment, far the larger portion of which has actually gone or is going into new factory plants and machinery. It is equally certain that in new or enlarged manufacturing enterprises between \$2,500 and \$3,000 have been added to the payrolls of the city and that the pay envelopes have been enriched by considerably more than two million dollars annually.

It is equally demonstrable that this new influx of skilled labor in special lines is bringing and will bring between five and eight hundred new families permanently to this city. The reader may estimate for himself the many and varied ways in which all this manufacturing growth must and will carry Fort Smith far in its long cherished purpose of becoming in fact the Pittsburgh of the southwest.

Date Uncertain, 1917

CANNING PLANT PURCHASES SITE

Deeds have passed for the location of the Holland-

American Fruit Products company's factory on four acres of land on the J. L. Nelson tract on the Jenny Lind road opposite the old fair grounds. The location was decided upon several days ago, but became known only on Friday afternoon. Work will be rushed from this time forward upon the completion of the factory. Engineer J. H. Deitz ordered 50 carloads of cement and other material which will go into the factory and expects early delivery of his shipment.

Friday, June 22, 1917

MAKE COMFORTS FOR AMERICAN SOLDIERS

Fifty ladies met at Carnegie library Thursday afternoon and formed a unit of the National Navy League, whose members are to supply the American sailors and marines with extra comfortable clothing. Mrs. Ben Cravens was chosen president of the unit, Mrs. John Fink, vice-chairman and Mrs. James A. Rutledge secretary.

Mrs. R. Scott Robertson was chosen chairman of the ways and means committee that will secure endowments to a fund to be used in purchasing materials from which the comforts will be made.

The unit has promised 150 sets, consisting of a jacket, muffler and wristlets, to the American navy. The members will meet three times a week until they become versed in the art of knitting and thereafter they will make the garments at their homes.

Sunday, June 24, 1917

ANOTHER FORT SMITH BOY INTO AERO CORPS

Cydric Pyle, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Pyle, 508 North Twenty-first street arrived this morning from Little Rock for a brief visit with his parents preparatory to going to the

University of Texas for training in the United States aero service. Pyle who has been training at the reserve corps camp at Little Rock received orders Saturday to proceed to Austin where the university is located. He is the third Fort Smith boy to pass into the aero service.

Sunday, June 24, 1917

WIDOWS APPEAL TO JUDGE TO LET SONS WORK DESPITE LAW

So many requests have been received by Judge Paul Little of the circuit court from widows and parents in needy circumstances to permit their boys to engage in employment that it is prohibited because of their age by the Arkansas child labor laws, that Judge Little is seriously considering advocating a non-enforcement of the law during the present disturbed conditions. The state law prohibits boys of 14 years of age or younger from being employed by any person other than their parents.

Judge Little has received personal visits from many mothers and fathers who insist that it is necessary for them to permit their boys of that age to work in order to assist in supporting the family. Some of the cases of widows are extremely pathetic, Judge Little says. The present high price of living necessities has made it doubly hard upon these unfortunates to eke out an existence, although they could live comfortably or at least with more ease if they were permitted to let their boys go to work during the school vacation period.

Judge Little is of the opinion that it would be proper to permit the employment of such children on condition that their employment is healthful and not dangerous.



Al Whitson selects newsworthy and historically significant items from Fort Smith newspapers of 100 years ago.

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).
- 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, months, 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 Fort Smith and the 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 additional sources. The author's name, address and 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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NOTES: # —Some sort of graphic, other than a portrait, is used.
 * —A portrait of the person(s) named is on page indicated.
 (---) —For such as title, marital status, degree, etc.
 "----" —For nickname or special emphasis.
 (-) —Dash between page numbers indicates the name of the person, place, etc., is carried throughout the story
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- **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 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 twenty years, the Fort Smith 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 Regional 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 proudly 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, Arkansas, Cemeteries**—A rich genealogical resource for Van Buren and Crawford County.

- **LeFlore County, Oklahoma, Genealogy**—Find birth and death records in support of your genealogical searches involving LeFlore County, Oklahoma.



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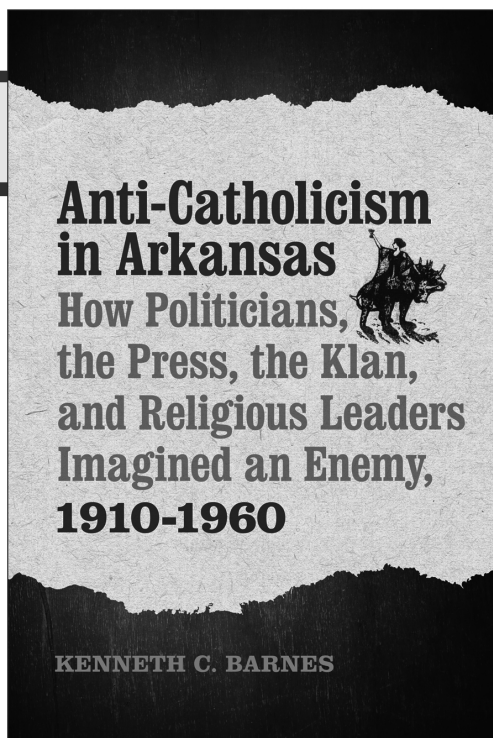
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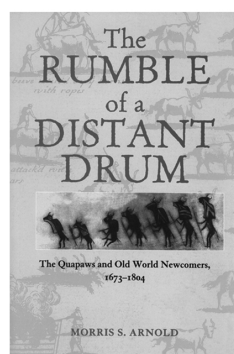


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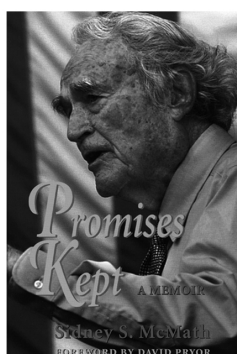
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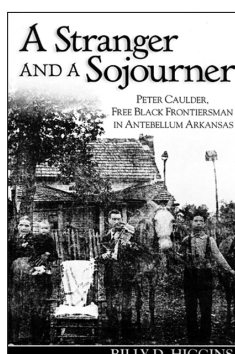
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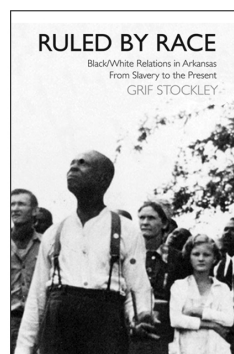
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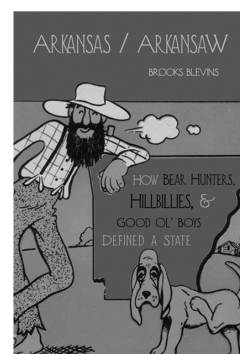
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