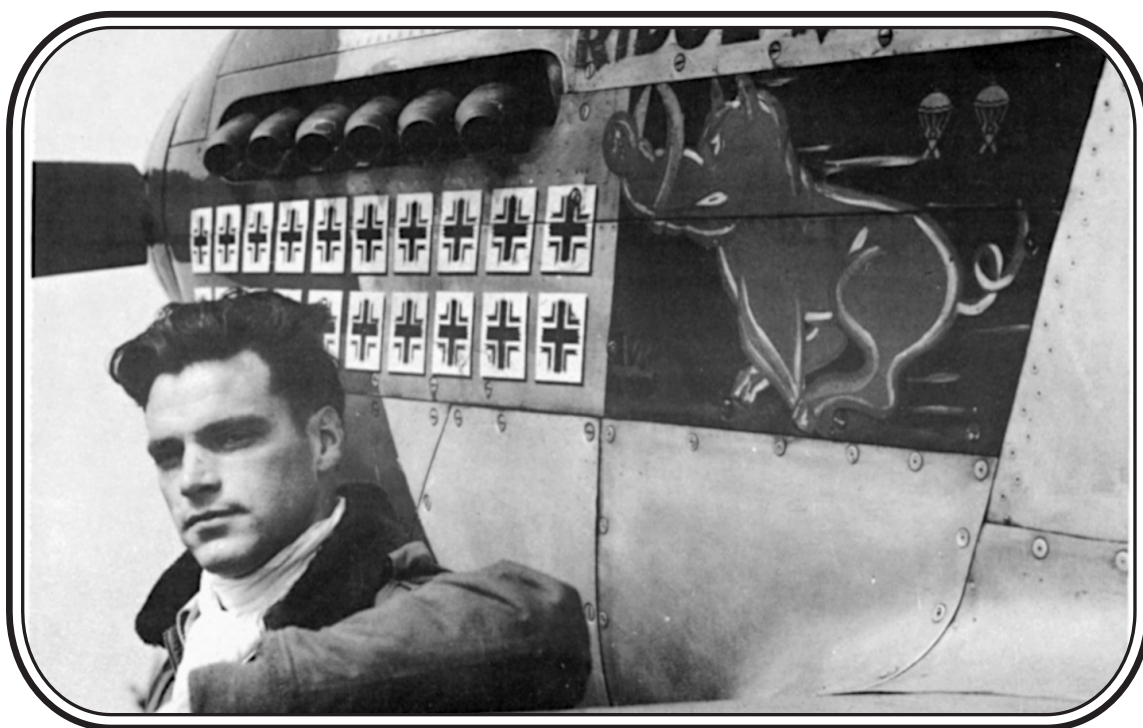




# The JOURNAL

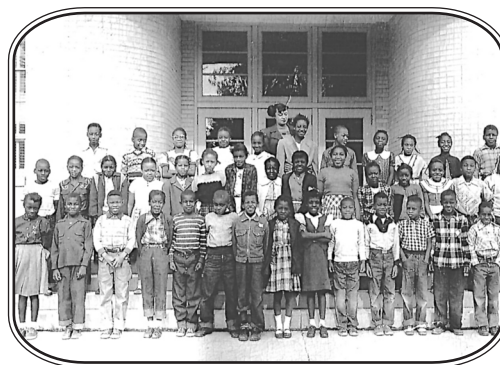


## Major Pierce McKennon

*Arkansas' 'Boogie Woogie' Playing Air Ace*



*The 1985 Joyce Family Murders*



*Howard School: Then & Now*

Vol. 44, No. 1, April 2020



**MISSION:** The mission of the Fort Smith Historical Society, Inc., founded in 1977, is to publish the *Journal* of the FSHS and through the *Journal* and other activities to locate, identify, and collect historical materials; to publish primary source material and historical articles that pertain to the city of Fort Smith and the vicinity. Preservation of Fort Smith history is our primary mission, and we always welcome the loan of historical material, including photographs, letters, diaries, and memoirs, and will return it promptly.

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#### **SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS FOR POSSIBLE PUBLICATION IN THE JOURNAL:**

A submitted article is peer-reviewed by members of the *Journal's* editorial board and approved before publication. The due dates for manuscript submission are February 15 for the April issue and July 15 for the September issue. The story should be relevant to the city of Fort Smith and/or this area and significant to the history of the border region. Manuscripts must be based on historical documentation with notes, bibliography or a list of sources. We recommend that authors search through the literature on their subject. We encourage photographs, charts, or maps to accompany the article. These visual aids must be released by the owner, who is to be properly accredited and appropriately captioned.

##### **Specifics**

1. Manuscripts of 3,000-7,000 words may be submitted to the Editorial Board of the *Journal* electronically using the email address of [billy.higgins@uafs.edu](mailto:billy.higgins@uafs.edu), editor, or [stoliv44@gmail.com](mailto:stoliv44@gmail.com), Sherry Toliver, President of the Society, or [mblack3086@aol.com](mailto:mblack3086@aol.com), Mary Jeanne Black, Inquiry Coordinator.
2. Title page should include article title and author name.
3. Manuscripts should be double-spaced in Times Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins. Pages should be numbered, preferably with author name, in the top right corner.
4. Notes and bibliography cited according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Turabian). Book, journal, and newspaper titles should be italicized.
5. Photographs and maps should be submitted with manuscript in digital format of at least 300 dpi resolution and must be captioned with 1-5 sentences. Photographs and maps must be credited as to source.
6. Author photograph and short bio submitted at the end of the manuscript along with mailing address, phone number, and email address.

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AMELIA WHITAKER MARTIN  
Journal Editor & Co-Founder 1977-2004

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# The JOURNAL

VOL. 44 NO. 1

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**COVER PHOTOS:**

Main photo: Major Pierce McKennon courtesy of Morgan Aviation Books and the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*.

Lower right: Joyce family photos courtesy of Cindy Griggs

Lower left: Howard School courtesy of Sherry Toliver

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# News & Opportunities

## Fort Smith Historical Society Quarterly Meeting

Monday, May 4, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Fort Smith Public Library

Community Room, Main Branch

Annual election of Board of Directors and Officers.

\*\*\*

## Arkansas Historical Association 79th Annual Conference

April 16-18, 2020, Conway, Arkansas

Theme: "Breaking Barriers"

AHA Memberships are \$20 per year and include four issues of the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* and all events of the annual meeting.

You may find Arkansas Historical Association 79th Annual Conference updates using this link:  
<http://arkansashistoricalassociation.org>

\*\*\*

## Clayton House Programs

514 North Sixth Street

479-783-3000

❖ **Fourth Sunday programs** at the Clayton House begin at 1:00 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](mailto:claytonhouse@claytonhouse.org). These are free to members of the Fort Smith Heritage Foundation and for non-members, a \$10 donation toward the preservation and programs of the Clayton House.

❖ **"Sippin' on 6th Street" Fundraiser**, Saturday, June 13, 2020, 6:30-10 p.m.

For more information about these and our other events, check our website – [claytonhouse.org](http://claytonhouse.org) or our Facebook page or give us a call!

\*\*\*

## Friends of the Fort

Sunday, May 3, 2020

Walking tour of Coke Hill. More information at Facebook page or by emailing [friendsofthefort@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthefort@gmail.com)

\*\*\*

## Fort Smith Museum of History

320 Rogers Avenue

479-783-7841

### Upcoming events at the Museum

For program times, descriptions, reservations, and current exhibits, please use the Museum website:  
<http://www.fortsmithmuseum.org/newsletters>.

Yarnell's Ice Cream, made in Arkansas since 1932, is featured in the Museum's old-fashioned soda fountain. Come in and treat yourself.

\*\*\*

## Drennen-Scott Historical Site

Visitor Center

221 North Third Street

Van Buren, Arkansas

479-262-2750

[drennen-scott@uafs.edu](mailto:drennen-scott@uafs.edu)

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](mailto:drennen-scott@uafs.edu).

\*\*\*

## St. John's Episcopal Church Mind Stretchers

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

Admission is free and snacks in keeping with the lecture theme are served.

6 p.m. for all programs.

History Changes!



May 21, 2020: Kathy McGregor “‘On the Row’: The Prison Story Project.”

\*\*\*

## Fort Smith Regional Art Museum

1601 Rogers Avenue, Fort Smith

479.784.2787

info@fsram.org

### CURRENT EXHIBITS

- ❖ Dr. W.E. Knight Porcelain Gallery in memory of Dr. Henry Udouj
- ❖ Tim Ernst – Arkansas Wilderness \_ Mother Nature at her best in the “Natural State.” April 24-August 30, 2020. Opening reception April 23, 5-7 p.m.
- ❖ Lectures, Workshops, Education Programs, and Events throughout the year. Contact RAM for full schedule of activities, exhibits, and children-centered art classes.

\*\*\*



DOCUMENTARY FILM COURT ROOM SCENE

## Goingsnake Documentary

After the Civil War, Reconstruction, that is reorganization and re-entry of southern society to the Union, western Arkansas and Indian Territory became a new battleground ripe with violence and exploitation.

This tumultuous era and the federal bench in Fort Smith with its Indian Territory jurisdiction provided subject and setting for Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith's popular and informative 2018 play, “The Western District.”

Dr. Goldsmith spent three and half years digging into historical archives, museum backrooms, private collections, and over 500 pages of Congressional Record to document 1871-72 federal court corruption. Now, utilizing similar research and script writing skill, Dr. Goldsmith and an award-winning production team are at work making a feature length documentary on another important but

neglected portion of the Western District's historical record.

Dr. Goldsmith seeks to enlighten modern audiences about a murky time period and a murder that took place west of Siloam Springs on April 15, 1872. The incident involved the Beck and Proctor families, the Cherokee Nation's version of the Hatfield's and McCoy's. The tragedy began when at the Hilderbrand Mill, Zeke Proctor found Jim Kesterson, who according to some accounts, left Zeke's sister destitute to live with another woman, Polly Beck. The confrontation turned violent and shots rang out leaving Polly Beck dead and Kesterson wounded. Afterwards, arrested by Goingsnake Sheriff Jack Wright without incident, Zeke maintained his innocence and claimed that the shooting of Beck was an accident.

The shooting death of Polly Beck was a Cherokee-on-Cherokee case which came under tribal jurisdiction, and, for that reason, not within reach of the U.S. Marshal at Fort Smith. So it was that Zeke Proctor's trial for the murder of Polly Beck was set for a Cherokee trial at Whitmire schoolhouse near Christie in the Goingsnake District, presided over by Cherokee Judge Blackhaw Sixkiller.

Unhappy with this venue, Jim Kesterson rode to Fort Smith and convinced an officer of the federal court to issue a warrant to arrest Proctor for attempted murder, a situation that did fall under Fort Smith's jurisdiction since the capital crime and the charges involved Kesterman, a white man and U.S. citizen.

To bring in Proctor, deputy marshals arrived at Proctor's trial and a gunfight involving some thirty people erupted. In moments, Goingsnake became the deadliest shoot-out in “Wild West” annals. When the smoke cleared, eleven men lay dead, with thirteen wounded. Eight of the dead were Deputy U.S. Marshals, now memorialized in the U.S. Marshals Museum's Hall of Honor. Goingsnake was the largest loss of life in a single law enforcement incident in U.S. Marshal Service and Cherokee Nation history.

The U.S. Senate launched an investigation and two stories emerged. Cherokee witnesses claimed that Beck friends in the posse burst into the courtroom as the trial was proceeding causing the gunplay. On the other hand, surviving members of the federal posse alleged that they were ambushed.

In response, President Ulysses Grant issued an executive order which in essence, shut down at the time further investigation into Goingsnake, a shove into the closet which prevented closure of the issue and left to this day controversy and bad feelings.

Dr. Goldsmith has begun a film project to rectify that. Through eyewitness accounts, he deciphered exact details of the two existing accounts. The documentary re-enacts both the deputies' version of events and the Cherokee

Nation's side of the story, begging the question "Who shot first?" The documentary allows the audience to decide, was Goingsnake a massacre or a tragedy of unfortunate events?

Dr. Goldsmith is preparing this documentary for a possible acquisition by PBS but is open to all forms of film distribution including theatrical release, film festivals, and streaming services. Part of the funding for the project will be raised from public support. Dr. Goldsmith, his production team, and the Fort Smith Historical Society (FSHS) are together in a call to history-minded people and concerns for tax free donations that will be used to produce the Western District-Goingsnake documentary. If you wish to contribute and be credited for your support, please contact Brandon C. Goldsmith directly or through the Fort Smith Historical Society, P.O. Box 3676, Fort Smith, AR 72913.



**DOCUMENTARY FILM POSSE RE-ENACTORS  
POSE FOR ACTION**

\*\*\*

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# Fort Smith's Historic People

To salute the bicentennial of our fair city, the *Journal* added this new series. Three previous issues and five future issues will carry bio-identifiers of people who through their presence here as resident or visitor or chronicler have interacted with the environs and left impressions on the historical record. In this way the Society seeks to widen confirmed knowledge regarding Fort Smith and the vicinity through documentation of these people—and sometimes machines—from both primary and secondary sources.

The lists are chronological and cover generational spans, roughly every twenty-five to thirty years. Overlaps are unavoidable.

The years within Part IV include the Jim Crow years, discoveries of important natural gas and coal deposits, massive shipment of cotton bales, philanthropy, transportation advances with railroads, trolleys, automobiles, and airplanes, opening of hospitals and clinics, and more furniture manufacturing in Fort Smith.

From the 1910 U.S. Census count of 11,587 the city's population doubled to 23,975 by 1920. "Fort Smith has crossed the Rubicon" wrote a contemporary newspaper editor. With the city's industries and its demands for labor bringing revenue and a larger work force, a new kind of energy could be felt. Many persons listed in Part IV represented social and economic maturity of the second-largest city in the state.

## Part IV — 1885-1915

**1. Charles W. Jones** lived at 415 North Fifth Street with his wife, Halie, from 1896 to 1922. Charles Jones was general manager of the Fort Smith Lumber Company, which at one time operated four mills and owned 94,000 acres of timberland. He was president of the American National Bank in 1910.

**2. William J. Johnston.** The Johnston family lived at 623 North Sixth from 1895 to 1924. Will Johnston, grandson of founder of our city, John Rogers, was a mayor of Fort Smith in 1910 and postmaster, as well as the owner of Johnston Freight. Johnston was concerned with public improvement, which led him to serve on the board that brought in the first public water works. He was a director of Fort Smith Lighting and Traction (street cars), a founding member of first gas company, and vice chairman of the board of the group that built the first Fort Smith-Van Buren bridge.

**3. Rudolph Nye.** Founder of the Boston Store, a department store that operated for almost 100 years in Fort Smith selling nothing but the best merchandise and clothing. Nye, an investor and owner of a large Garrison Avenue hotel as it was being constructed, contacted a friend in the cotton and banking business in St. Louis, Jacob Goldman who furnished funds for the hotel. The Fort Smith landmark, six stories and 225 rooms opened in 1910 as the Goldman Hotel. See Ben Boulden, *Hidden History of Fort Smith*, and see the Boston Store exhibit at the Museum of Fort Smith History.

**4. Susan Neis Bonneville,** who had just become a widow, purchased the house at 318 North Seventh Street in 1878. Her husband, General Benjamin Bonneville, a widower for many years, was seventy-five years old when he married twenty-five-year-old Susan Neis. They had a magnificent wedding service at Immaculate Conception church and a reception at Adelaide Hall where the happy couple greeted some 250 well-wishers and toasted and imbibed until 4:00 a.m. The general passed away before seeing his eightieth birthday. Susan lived in the home until her death in 1910. See Julia Etter Yadon, Sue Ross Cross, and Randall Ross Viguet, *Reflections of Fort Smith* (1976), pp. 14-15.

**5. Lewis Friedman** was a successful Jewish liquor dealer in town and occupied the 414 North Seventh Street residence from 1906 to 1922. His grandson quipped that Lewis stored enough liquor in the basement during Prohibition to quench not only his thirst but also that of his friends. Friedman's name is on two buildings downtown: Friedman-Wegman on Seventh Street and Garrison Avenue, and Friedman-Mincer at Tenth Street and Garrison. Friedman served as Fort Smith postmaster, from 1930 to 1944.

**6. Charles A. and Margaret Birnie** owned the 424 North Seventh Street residence from 1882 into the early 1920s. Charles and his uncle, George Birnie, operated a furniture business and later branched out to build coffins. Among their customers were those hanged after receiving a guilty verdict in Judge Isaac C. Parker's court, including Cherokee Bill. This led Charles and his brother Henry to form a funeral home. The Birnie family took their first granddaughter on a trip to Fayetteville in the late 1800s, and the baby died before reaching their destination. Supposedly, the child was buried somewhere in the front yard.



**FLORENCE BARNES  
CLAYTON**

**7. Florence Barnes Clayton** married William Henry Harrison Clayton in 1869 in Pine Bluff, her home. While her husband came from Pennsylvania as a Union officer during the Civil War, Florence was a “Southern Belle,” a third generation Arkansan. Her lineage traced back to Hewes Scull, an early resident of Arkansas Post. The couple moved to Fort Smith in 1874, after President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Clayton prosecuting attorney for the Western District of the Federal Court. Isaac C. Parker arrived the next year, and the judge and prosecutor worked closely together in their jurisdiction over western Arkansas and parts of Indian Territory. Florence had eight children, six girls and two boys. The couple bought the house on North Sixth Street in 1882 and added the front bay window and the porch. The Clayton House today is a museum and historic center in the Belle Grove Historical District of Fort Smith. See Julia Etter Yadon, Sue Ross Cross, and Randall Ross Viguet, *Reflections of Fort Smith* (1976), pp. 14-15.

**8. Tom C. Davis**, a partner with his father at Reynolds-Davis Wholesale Grocery, built the home at 423 North Seventh Street in 1888 and lived here with his family until 1911. Tom Davis’ granddaughter, Ann Woods Patterson, who appointed by three different presidents, served as U.S. ambassador to Egypt, Pakistan, and Colombia.

**9. William Blair**, president of the Fort Smith Lumber Company and American National Bank, built the residence at 708 North Seventh Street in 1898 as a surprise Christmas present for his wife, Mary, and reportedly carried her across the threshold on Christmas Eve. Mary became a widow in 1903 and later sold the house to Dr. John Amis, a prominent physician.

**10. Charles Smart**, the original owner of the dwelling at 319 North Eighth Street from 1890 to 1900, was a cashier for fifty-eight years at the Merchants National Bank, beginning at age sixteen. His wife and the wife of Dr. Herbert Moulton were sisters.

**11. W. N. Ayers** came to Fort Smith from Ohio, and in 1894 was president of Ketcham Iron Company and later became an owner of a furniture manufacturing plant. He built the house at 820 North Twelfth Street.

**12. Marcus Sternberg**, a fur and hide dealer who emigrated from Germany, built the magnificent Queen Anne-Eastlake style home at 715 North Twelfth Street for his wife, Sarah, in 1887. The Sternbergs, along with their four children and Kate Guer, an Irish servant, resided here for twenty years before selling to Charles Krone, a cigar manufacturer.

**13. Dr. Herbert Moulton**, an ophthalmologist and wife Lynn built their first home here, at 905 North Twelfth Street, in 1892. The Queen Anne architectural style house has its original quarter sawn red oak flooring downstairs and pine flooring upstairs. Carriage house and servant quarters in the back remain.

**14. Martin Dyke** and his family owned and operated a lumber company in Arkansas for over 100 years. Dyke purchased the house at 920 North Twelfth Street from the original owner, Thomas Reed, prior to 1920, and the Dyke family lived here until the early 1940s. See “Directory of the Wood-Using Industries of Arkansas,” *Lumber Trade Journal*, November 15, 1914, p. 41.

**15. Dr. William Riley Brooksher II** was a pioneering radiologist in Fort Smith. His brother, an M.D., lived across the street. W.R.’s son, William Riley Brooksher III, an M.D., lived in the same house as his father had, 1015 North Twelfth Street, beginning in 1898. The patriarch of the family, William Riley Brooksher I, born in Georgia, a Confederate veteran, moved his family to Marion County, Arkansas, after the Civil War and then later relocated to Fort Smith.

**16. Fagan Bourland**, Fort Smith businessman who operated a ferry, a wholesale grocery, a hotel, and a saloon, was elected mayor four times, and his wife was twice arrested for attempted murder of Bourland’s mistress. Bourland is shown in the 1911 Fort Smith Police Department photo, second from left on front row. *Insight 2000*, article by Amelia Martin, p. 103. Picture courtesy of Julia Etter Yadon, Sue Ross Cross, and Randall Ross Viguet, *Reflections of Fort Smith* (1976), p. 65.

**17. George Tilles** used his slogan, “Talk with Tilles about Life Insurance” and other aspects of his business acumen to further the economic and building boom of Fort Smith. He was a founder of the first telephone exchange here, as well as the Men’s Progress Club—precursor to the Chamber of Commerce. Fort Smith’s Tilles Park and the Rosalee Tilles Home for Orphans were wonderful family contributions to Fort Smith and its people. See Nancy Ellen Carter, *Talk with Tilles*.

**18. William A. Black** elected to the Arkansas General Assembly with votes of workers and coal miners in the county drafted legislation for a state geologist office that could regulate use of destructive blasting methods. He sponsored a bill to set up a county superintendent for public schools to secure uniform educational opportunities. Black and the three other





**FAGAN BOURLAND**, Fort Smith businessman who served four terms as the city's mayor, poses (second from left in the front row) with the Fort Smith Police Department in 1911.

(Courtesy of Julia Etter Yadon, Sue Ross Cross and Randall Ross Viguier in *Reflections of Fort Smith*)

delegates from Sebastian County were comfortable with the label "Southern Progressives" and as such backed anti-trust laws, restricting patent medicines that contained alcohol or drugs, and mine safety inspectors. See Nancy Steel, ed. *Insight 2000: A millennium project of the Southwest Times Record*, article by Billy D. Higgins, p. 82.

**19. John Bullock** was the original owner of the 1910 built home at 1102 North Thirteenth Street. He was superintendent of a furniture company.

**20. L.M. and Lena Alford** opened a mercantile store in 1886 furnishing the latest products to Fort Smith and Indian Territory. The business flourished and expanded to four stores. After L.M. died in 1933, Lena moved the sales store into the family home at 1020 Lexington Avenue where it continues as Alford's Carpets. See, *Insight 2000*, article by Roger Combs, p. 54.

**21. William J. Murphy** owned one of the largest saddle and harness companies in the Southwest. The house at 923 North Thirteenth was a gift to his wife, Molly, and was designed to host premier social events. Built circa 1895 and described as a "sophisticated expression of Classical Revival architecture, the house" is on the National Register of Historic Places.

**22. Chauncey Lick** was instrumental in the early development of Weldon, Williams & Lick Printing Company. From an emergency call to produce tickets for a star performance at the Grand Opera House on Garrison Avenue, Lick helped organized a company still a major Fort Smith industry that came to be known as the "largest ticket printing business in the world" with clients such as Ringling Brothers Circus and the New York Yankees. Lick's son, Captilles, managed the New Theater. See Carter, *Talk with Tilles*.

**23. Clifton Rodes Breckinridge** was a member of the U.S. Congress from 1882-1894 and later Ambassador to Russia, the first Arkansan appointed to a major European diplomatic post. Assigned to the Dawes Commission in 1903, Breckinridge came to Fort Smith to work with the Choctaw and Cherokees nations and his family lived in a carriage house while their residence at 504 North Fifteenth Street was being built. In 1905 he formed the Arkansas Valley Trust Company of Fort Smith. See *Encyclopedia of Arkansas* article by James F. Willis and James Duane Bolin, "Clifton Rodes Breckinridge: The Little Arkansas Giant," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 53, 1 (Winter 1994): 407-427.

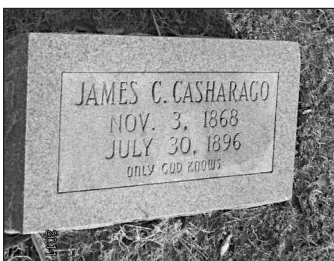
**24. E.D. Bedwell**, a newspaperman from Missouri, founded Bedwell Coal Company in Huntington, Arkansas, in 1895



**THE FORT SMITH CADET BAND**, created by Anton Lundgren, is shown in 1913.  
(Courtesy of Julia Etter Yadon, Sue Ross Cross and Randall Ross Viguet, *Reflections of Fort Smith*)

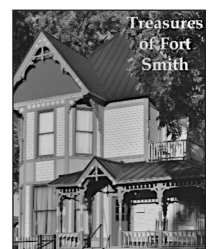
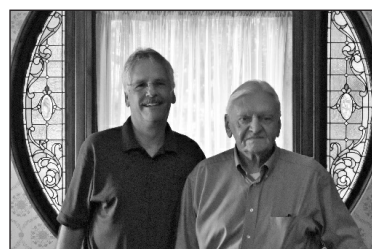
and resided in Fort Smith. His ownership and partnerships—Stewart Coal & Mining Company, Buckwheat Coal Company, Hackett Excelsior Coal Company—controlled a large portion of the coal production in western Arkansas. A specialty, Sunshine Smithy coal, was sold to blacksmiths from the Mississippi to the Pacific Coast. See Dallas Tabor Herndon, *Centennial History of Arkansas* (1922), Vol. 3, pp. 1030-1031.

**25. Anton Lundgren**, native of Sweden and veteran of the Spanish American War, came to Fort Smith at the turn of the century to play in the pit orchestra of the New Theater on Garrison Avenue. In 1913, he organized what he called the Cadet Band, dressed them in a version of West Point uniforms, performed concerts at the county fair and the Electric Park, and marched in parades on Garrison Avenue. Lundgren sought to take the Cadets on a musical tour with a crowning stop as representatives of Arkansas at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Funding ran short and thwarted this ambitious attempt. Picture courtesy of Julia Etter Yadon, Sue Ross Cross, and Randall Ross Viguet, *Reflections of Fort Smith* (1976), p. 58.



**26. James C. Casharago**. Born November 3, 1868, in Arkansas. His father was an Italian immigrant and storekeeper. On July 30, 1896, convicted of murder and appeal upheld, Casharago, still proclaiming his innocence, died at age twenty-seven on the gallows in Fort Smith, the last person hanged here by the federal court. His relatives took the deceased and buried him in Thorn Cemetery in Greenbrier, Faulkner County, Arkansas. The man who sentenced him, Judge Isaac C. Parker, would die in Fort Smith abed three and a half months later. Thus, ended the executions for which Parker had become known. See Jerry Akins, *Hangin' Times in Fort Smith*, Butler Center Books (2012).

*Unless otherwise noted with entry, information on people and their houses in Part IV are from Wayne Bledsoe and Jim Kreuz, Treasures of Fort Smith, 150 Century-Old Homes (2019).*





# The Joyce Family Murders

By Joyce Faulkner and Karen Daggs

## The Joyce Family

**T**he Joyces were well-known and well-liked in Fort Smith. Joe Dale Joyce, a veteran of World War II, was a smart, organized, straight-shooter who was respected by his co-workers, neighbors, and family. His wife, Martha Kiene Joyce, had a sparkling smile, an adventurous spirit, and a great sense of humor. She was devoted to Joe, and he to her.

They married in 1950 and bought their home a stone's throw from Dodson Avenue shortly after that. It was the perfect place to raise a family—close enough to Garrison Avenue to be convenient, suburban enough to feel relaxed and comfortable. They built a life based on love, responsibility, and fun, reflecting the character of the Joyces themselves. Soon they had four children—Cindy in 1952, twins Sara and Joe David in 1954, and John in 1955.

Martha and Joe were doting parents, and their household revolved around family events and activities. “Dad was about doing the right thing,” the Joyces’ youngest son, John, remembered. “He had a sense of order. He liked everything to be picked up and put up.” Joe had a routine. “We all knew when he’d be up, when he’d have his cup of coffee, when he’d be shaving, when he’d be out the door, when he’d be home for lunch, when he’d be home for dinner.”

“Dad was an athlete when he was in high school,” John remembered almost as an afterthought. “Back in Greenwood, Arkansas.”

Joe David, Joe’s older son, chuckled. “Dad liked to cook. Usually on weekends, he’d cook up a ham, best hams ever. A lot better than you get today, at least in my memory.”

Some of Joe David and John’s best memories are of when Joe took them hunting. “We were in the outdoors, out in God’s creation. It was fun just to be with Dad,” John said. Joe had a rule: If you shoot it, you eat it. They’d hunt squirrels and birds rather than deer. John remembered cleaning a squirrel and browning it in its own fat before making gravy to go with it. “Good eating,” he said. “Except when you bit down on a pellet.” That was part of the adventure, of course.

Joe encouraged his boys to participate in scouting. “I was in Scouts with my brother,” Joe David said, “Dad helped out on that.” “I got as far as Life,” John said.



JOE DALE JOYCE AND MARTHA KIENE JOYCE



THE JOYCE CHILDREN, *from left, Joe David, John, Cindy, and Sara.*  
(Photos courtesy of the Joyce family)



(ABOVE) *Joe Joyce and parakeet*

(RIGHT) *Martha Joyce on ox*

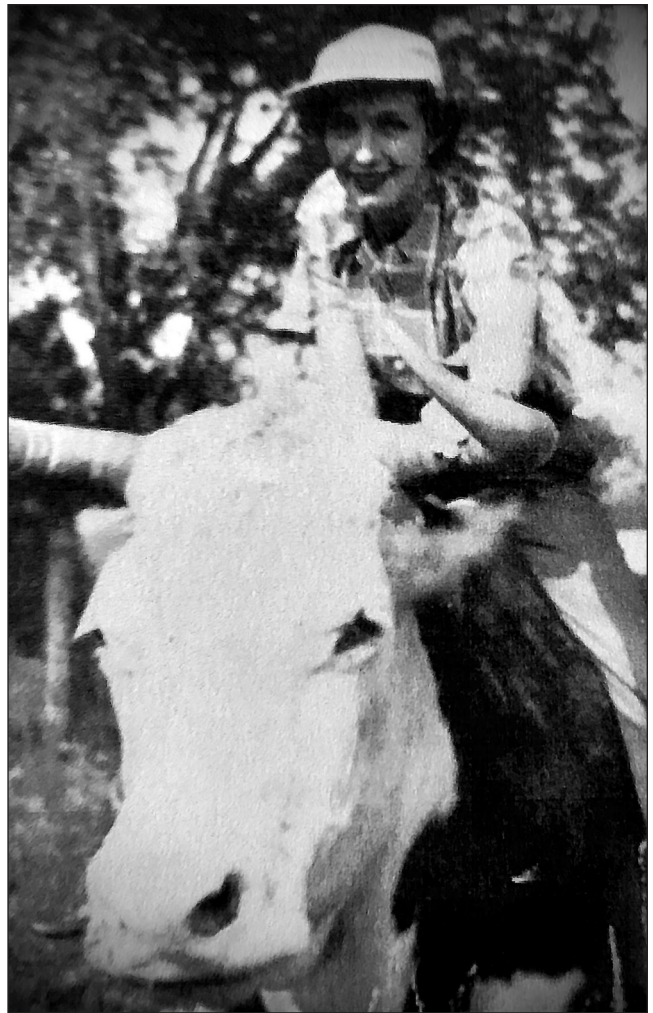
(Photos courtesy of the Joyce family)

“I got Life,” Joe David chuckled, “but I could’ve done better. That’s how it goes.”

Martha was all about fun. She loved fishing and she loved “skunking” Joe—getting the biggest or most fish on an outing. Whenever there was snow, she got everyone in the car and searched for a place where she could do “donuts” safely while the kids squealed with anticipation.

One of John’s favorite stories about his mother began when Cindy’s beau, Ross Griggs, came to ask Mr. Joyce for her hand in marriage. Joe sat in his rocking chair with his back to the hallway. Ross was on the couch across from him, nervously building up to the big question. “Now Mom had false teeth,” John chuckled as he told the story. “And as Ross was mid-question, she appeared behind Dad and popped her false teeth out at him.” Ross cracked up, leaving Joe at a loss until he realized Martha had been messing with her new son-in-law to be.

The Joyces lived out their love story every day of their lives. “Joe’s eyes sparkled when he talked about Martha,” said Mary Jeanne Black, who was a family friend and worked in the same company with Joe. Cindy, Joe David, and John agreed. “There was no doubt in anyone’s mind



how much they loved each other,” John said.

Cindy shared a story that illustrates her parents’ relationship. “It all began when Dad’s tomato plants weren’t producing. While he was out of town on a business trip, Mom attached some lovely tomatoes to his plants as a surprise.”

“She tied those tomatoes onto the vines with sewing thread,” John added.

Martha and the kids were watching out the window as Joe discovered his plants had miraculously borne fruit—and as it dawned on him how it happened and who did it. “Dad let several weeks go by before he ‘surprised’ Mom with beautiful roses that he attached to her non-blooming rose bushes,” Cindy continued.

“The roses were plastic,” Joe David laughed.

Once, Martha and her co-workers spent a day off from their phone company jobs visiting a local ranch. The women had a great time horseback riding. Martha was the only one brave enough to ride an ox. That image is one of Cindy’s favorite photos of her mother.

Joe was an animal-lover too. “They had a dog that would grin when you told it to,” Mary Jeanne Black said.



“And they had a rabbit that dug holes in their yard and popped up to taunt the dog.” In fact, one of Cindy’s treasured photos of her father shows him with a parakeet on his shoulder, and a second one pictures him with a baby owl.

Throughout those years, Joe and Martha worked to provide a good life for themselves and their children, Joe as a salesman and Martha at the phone company. “We all helped at dinner,” Joe David said, “because Mama worked.”

“One of us would set the table, someone else would help with the cooking, someone else would clear the table and wash the dishes afterward. We all pitched in,” John said, “including Dad.”

Like several other Catholic families in that neighborhood, the children went to Immaculate Conception and then St. Anne’s Academy or St. Scholastica. After school, their playmates were often classmates and fellow scouts.

As their children grew up and began to marry and have children of their own in the 1970s and 1980s, Joe and Martha settled into a happy and secure middle age. They welcomed opportunities to watch over their grandchildren and orchestrate extended family events. Their little house still bustled with neighbors, friends, and relatives coming and going throughout the day.

\* \* \*



**SARA JOYCE  
MCCURDY**

Sara Joyce McCurdy was beautiful in all the ways a person can be. Everyone said so.

“Sara made an impression on me, even in Kindergarten,” said her St. Anne’s classmate, Martha Gross-Osbun. “She was tall and so pretty, confident and nice to everyone even at that age. I have fond memories of our visits. We’d walk home from school to their

house. It was always a welcoming place. Her parents and brothers were

friendly and kind—a very close family.”

“Sara was my twin sister,” Joe David said. “She was loving. She was always good to me. In high school, I was getting into some sort of tussle with somebody...and she jumped in and kinda helped get things broke up. She was



**TWINS JOE DAVID JOYCE AND SARA JOYCE**

like that. We had the same friends, the Millers, the Bowers.”

“Sara was my protector,” John said. “Down to earth and smart as a whip. You could talk to Sara about anything.

In the early 1980s, Sara and husband Steve McCurdy lived next door to Joe and Martha. Sara was a valued employee at Sears. Childless after several years of marriage, she focused on her nieces and nephews, her siblings, her parents, and her neighbors and friends.

\* \* \*

#### **Thursday, December 12, 1985**

December 12, 1985, looked to be a busy day for the Joyce family. That morning, Sara drove her 1977 Buick LaSabre to work. A little later, Joe picked up Cindy Joyce Griggs, who was also employed at Sears, and took her to her office. He and Martha planned to attend a funeral that morning and then have lunch with Sara back at their house around 11:15 a.m. Joe and Sara would then leave her car at a repair shop and he would drive her back to work by noon. Back home, he and Martha would prepare the house for the Christmas tree, rearranging furniture and unpacking lights and ornaments. When Cindy’s two boys got out of school around 2:30 p.m., Joe planned to bring them back.

Around 12:30, one of Sara’s co-workers stuck her head into Cindy’s office. Sara wasn’t back from lunch. As minutes ticked by and Sara still hadn’t returned to work, Cindy called her parents. No answer.

When John Joyce’s wife, Pam, and their two small children arrived at the Joyce home a little after 1 p.m., both Joe and Martha’s cars were in their usual spots and Sara’s

Buick was in her driveway next door. No one at either house answered her backdoor knock. Pam's children had a small gift for their grandparents—a Christmas ornament for the soon-to-be-decorated tree. Pam went to the front door of the Joyces' house. The curtains were closed. She had never known her in-laws to draw them during the day. She tried the door. It was locked. Spooked, Pam Joyce shooed her children back to their car. Something was wrong. She drove home and called first Cindy and then John.

Hearing Pam's story, Cindy hung up and telephoned her husband, Ross, who was a Fort Smith firefighter. Around 2:15 p.m., Ross Griggs arrived at the Joyce home. He noticed that Sara's car was gone. Like Pam, he found the back door locked. However, the front door was now ajar. He entered cautiously. Joe Joyce was tied hand and foot to an overturned chair in the living room. A gauze and tape bandage covered his mouth, nose, and eyes—and a necktie was tied around his neck so tightly that Ross had to cut it off. As he looked around him, Ross saw Joe's rifles and shotguns lined up on the floor nearby. He reached for the Joyces' telephone. After calling the police and an ambulance, he attempted CPR. But Joe had no pulse, and his body was already discolored. Regretfully, Ross accepted his father-in-law's death and stopped.

Where was everyone else? Ross looked around. Sara was lying face down on the floor in the middle bedroom. Before going to her, he searched the house for Martha. She lay on her back on a bed in the back bedroom still wearing her coat and gloves. Like Joe, gauze and tape covered her face. Like Joe, she had been dead for a while.

Ross Griggs went back to Sara. Her arms were tied behind her back. A belt and wire coat hanger encircled her throat. Although she had no pulse, her body was not as discolored as Joe's or Martha's and she was warmer. Hoping against hope, Ross unbuckled the belt and threw it aside. The coat hanger had been twisted around her neck multiple times. It cut deep into her flesh and difficult to remove. When Ross got it off, he began CPR. Fort Smith police officers arrived at the Joyce home shortly after Ross's call and the ambulance after that. Despite Ross's best efforts, it was too late. Sara was dead on arrival at Sparks Regional Medical Center only blocks away.

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### Reactions

Still unaware of what Ross had found or that police were investigating the horror inside her parents' home, Cindy's anxiety increased. "I kept calling the house. Finally, someone answered who clearly wasn't my family," Cindy remembered. "Not any one of my family." The stranger in her parents' home asked her to identify herself. Then Ross

came on the line. "He just said something horrible has happened."

While Cindy was talking to Ross, out of the corner of her eye, she saw Sears security officers coming for her. "They'd heard the news on their police scanners and were coming to tell me."

Back at the Joyce home, the police questioned Ross. "When something like this happens," Cindy said, "They look at family first. But eventually, they let him go and he came for me. He told me Mom and Dad were gone. I was still hoping Sara might be saved, so I wanted to go to the hospital." They got the bad news when they arrived at the ER. Cindy teared up at the memory. "Sara was the last to die," she said. Staggered by the enormity of it all, she began calling relatives from the emergency room starting with her Uncle L.A., Joe's brother.

They arranged for Ross's father, Carl Griggs, to pick up their boys, who were still waiting at school, and take them home with him. Once her children were safe, Cindy wanted to go to her parents' house. "They wouldn't let us in," she said through tears. Her parents were still inside at that point. There was nothing Ross and Cindy could do but finish notifying family and friends of the horrible murders and wait for Carl Griggs to bring their children. When they arrived, Cindy told them the awful news.

Sara's twin, Joe David and his wife and children, lived in another state. They rushed home arriving that night. John and his wife and children were in shock too, grappling with the horrifying idea that the murderer was probably still inside the Joyce home while Pam was knocking on the doors with their kids in hand.

The next morning, while the Joyce family, their friends, and relatives gathered in another location to deal with their grief, Cindy returned to her parents' home. The police wanted her to sort through Joe and Martha's belongings and help them determine what, if anything, their murderer (or murderers) might have taken.

Although it gave Cindy something concrete to do, it came at her rawest moment. The first thing she saw as she came in the front door was Sara's coat thrown over the back of the sofa. "A detective asked me if I was sure," Cindy said. "Was I sure this was my sister's coat? Really?" As they guided her through the house, the investigators were kind and respectful. "Do you see anything that is missing," one of them asked. "Quite a lot was missing," she said recently. "Money was missing, a bag of coins, guns were missing. A set of binoculars. Knives." The killer took her mother's handbag and jewelry. The investigators asked her to describe everything in detail—and they wrote it all down. "Do you know why the living room furniture is out of place?" One of them asked her. Cindy sighed. "For the Christmas tree."

At one bittersweet moment, Cindy noticed an envelope filled with cash hidden behind a mirror in her parents' bedroom. Martha had been helping Cindy's son save for a bicycle. Her mother, in her last moments, was willing to surrender her own belongings to the intruder, but not her grandson's money. That memory, thirty-five years later, brought tears to Cindy's eyes.

Ross had found Sara in the bedroom she shared with Cindy when they were children. As detectives led Cindy into it, she froze—overwhelmed. She turned to the men and told them that she needed a drink. Perhaps sensing her need for a moment of privacy, they left her alone. As she stood there, she felt Sara in the room with her, laying her head against hers like they did as children. It was a moment of comfort before the detectives returned with her water. Years later, Cindy realized that she had been standing on the very spot where Sara had died.

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### **Investigation and Arrest of the Killer**

At approximately 3:30 a.m. on December 12, a stranger with long hair and a small chin beard checked into the Fort Smith Regal 8 Inn on Garrison Avenue. Shortly before 11:00 a.m., a witness saw him walking toward May Avenue. Between 11:00 and 11:30, he entered a shop on May and asked directions to Linwood Street. Those directions took him within a block of Joe and Martha's home. The next time anyone saw him was just before 2:00 p.m. He was driving a 1977 Buick LaSabre near Pocola, Oklahoma. Police soon found the car abandoned at Tres Flores restaurant at I-40 and U.S. 112. It didn't take long to confirm that it was Sara's.

At a nearby service station, the stranger hitched a ride back to the Fort Smith bus station. Witnesses who saw him there said he had a blue purse that matched Cindy's description of Martha's. From Fort Smith, he took the bus to Little Rock, paying for the ticket with silver dollars. When he arrived, he tried to sell jewelry and silver coins. The people he approached with these items were able to describe them in detail. Unable to make a quick sale, he checked into the Downtowner Motor Inn.

The next morning, December 13, the man tried to pawn property stolen from the Joyces' at Maxie's Pawn Shop.

Law enforcement entities around the state were on alert for the suspected killer by this point.

Within minutes, they received information that a person matching the description of the man seen driving Sara's car toward Pocola tried to pawn jewelry in Little Rock and was trying to hitch a ride back to Fort Smith.

While arrest warrants were being obtained, Arkansas State Police (ASP) dispatched a unit to keep an eye on the



**POLICE INVESTIGATE HOMICIDES** *at the Joyce home in December 1985.*

*(Photo by Dave Hughes of the Southwest Times Record)*

hitchhiker. Before the suspect found a ride with an uninvolved citizen, a second team of undercover ASP officers, one wired for sound, hurried to the Little Rock bus station in an unmarked car. They offered the suspect a ride to Fort Smith if he would pay for the gas. He agreed and climbed in. As they drove west, the original ASP unit followed at a distance monitoring both the conversation in the undercover car and providing backup support if needed. Meanwhile, the stranger made himself at home and chatted amiably as they drove toward Fort Smith. As he got more comfortable, he boasted about killing people and threatened the driver and other passenger if they told anyone. Near Clarksville, sixty miles east of Fort Smith, they pulled into a gas station and ASP officers arrested the man they had brought from Little Rock, Mark Edward Gardner, and turned him over to Fort Smith police who had come to meet them.

While the Fort Smith authorities processed the suspect, back in Little Rock, officers retrieved the jewelry he'd left at Maxie's Pawn Shop and took the items to Clarksville where Cindy identified them as pieces missing from Martha and Joe's home.

The next day, December 14, Little Rock police acquired a warrant and searched the suspect's room at the Downtowner Motor Inn. There they found more of the Joyces' stolen possessions. On December 16, one of the officers returned to the Downtowner Inn and retrieved some things observed but not seized during the original search. Employees had removed and secured them anticipating their importance. One of the forgotten items was Martha's distinctive blue purse that witnesses in Pocola and the Fort Smith bus station had seen the suspect carrying.

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### Fort Smith Reactions

Public interest in the Joyce tragedy was high. *Southwest Times Record* reporter Dave Hughes followed the unfolding story, took photos, and wrote extensively about it. An article published shortly after the event cited police officers coming and going from the Joyce home. Hughes reported that after Ross discovered the bodies, almost every Fort Smith detective was called to the scene. He described friends, neighbors, and relatives arriving and leaving in tears a few moments later. And he quoted acting Police Chief Bill Young, who said, "It's a nice residential area, nice middle-class working people..."

The people of Fort Smith reacted to Joe and Martha and Sara's murders first with shock—and then with fear. Why our city? Why that neighborhood? Why the Joyces?

Sara's friend, Martha Gross-Osbun, said, "It shook me to the core to hear what happened to that precious family in their warm and comfortable home."

Another classmate simply said, "I'll never get over it."

The randomness of the crime was terrifying. Interviews with people who knew the Joyces became more difficult to get. Reporters were unsure if this was because police had asked them not to talk to the media or if the people around the Joyces were simply too upset to say much to the press. Perhaps no one was comfortable opening their doors to strangers anymore. Poignantly, on December 14, 1985, the *Southwest Times Record* reported that Joe Joyce routinely retrieved the morning newspaper for a disabled neighbor. On Friday, with no one to fetch it, the paper lay on the sidewalk late into the day.

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### The Autopsy Reports

On Friday evening, December 13, 1985, the state medical examiner's office in Little Rock released a preliminary autopsy report. Despite earlier first-responder speculations to the press, Joe, Martha, and Sara had not been shot. They died due to strangulation. Sara had been sexually assaulted, although there seemed to be confusion whether rape was accomplished or attempted. All three had scrapes and bruises on their heads. They died sometime between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

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### The Funeral

Joe was a member of the United Methodist Church in Greenwood; however, their children couldn't bear to separate him from Martha and Sara, so the following Tuesday, December 17, 1985, his coffin sat with theirs before the altar at Immaculate Conception Church. Following the funeral, a procession took Joe and Martha Joyce to the National Cemetery where they were buried side by side. Afterward, the procession continued to Holy Cross, where Sara Joyce was laid to rest.

Before the funeral, Cindy sat with Ross in their car outside the church, building up the courage to go in. When they did, Cindy now remembers mostly small things. Images. Faces. It's all lost in the fog of time. However, she does remember the priest saying, "God didn't do this. A man with free will did." And she thought, "Yes, that's right. I know this."

"They were good people," Joe David Joyce said. "They probably helped a lot of people I never knew about. If you'd been there for the funeral and seen all the people that showed up for that...people they knew through work, through Greenwood."

Aside from Cindy, Joe David and John and their families, Joe was survived by two sisters and five brothers. Her mother, stepfather, and brother survived Martha Kiene Joyce.

"My grandmother!" Joe David's voice broke. "It tore her apart. When you're older and you lose your daughter...."

"She'd already lost a son in Korea," Cindy said. "But this...."

"They were all Neil and Dan knew," Cindy described her boys' relationship with Joe and Martha and Sara. "Sara was the most fun aunt. She was delightful and funny and cool."

"My nephews knew them. Their Granny and Pop babysat them. They picked them up and did things with them," Joe David said, "but my kids and grandkids were cheated on that deal."



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### Legal Proceedings

On Monday, December 16, 1985, Fort Smith Prosecuting Attorney Ron Fields filed one count of capital murder against Gardner in the Twelfth Circuit Court in Sebastian County. Because the defendant had difficulty finding lawyers who didn't know or have connections with the Joyce family, Circuit/Chancery Judge Don Langston appointed private attorneys John Van Winkle and Neal Kirkpatrick.

On January 11, 1986, a Peoria County, Illinois, grand jury returned indictments charging Gardner with aggravated sexual assault, home invasion, residential burglary, and armed robbery for crimes he committed in Illinois before he came to Fort Smith.



**DON LANGSTON**  
*12<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit  
and Chancery Judge*

On January 21, Defense Attorney John Van Winkle requested a thirty-day psychiatric examination at the Arkansas State Hospital in Little Rock. He wanted to see if his client was mentally competent at the time of the Joyce murders and whether he was competent to help with his own defense. Judge Langston ordered the tests though there was a six-week waiting period at the facility.

In April, the accused was declared mentally fit to stand trial. After all the evidence had been amassed and evaluated, Ron Fields amended the charges to two counts: One for the capital murder of Joe and Martha because multiple victims died in one incident, and a second count of capital murder because Sara was sexually assaulted before she was murdered.

In May, pre-trial motion hearings began. Defense attorneys Kirkpatrick and Van Winkle moved to suppress evidence and to change the venue to Van Buren. They argued that the state could not support the allegation that their client raped or attempted to rape Sara, and since that was an aggravating circumstance, the second capital charge should be dropped. Prosecutor Ron Fields responded that while he avoided open court testimony about the sexual attack, he did make lab reports available to the defense. Van Winkle argued that pre-trial publicity had impacted his client's ability to get a fair trial in Fort Smith and that Martha's blue bag was improperly seized two days after the original search of his client's hotel room in Little Rock. Judge Langston denied defense objections and set the date for jury selection to be completed by June 4.

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### Jury Selection

Jury selection began on Monday, June 2, 1986. The Sebastian County Courthouse bailiffs took extra security precautions. Supervised by Sheriff Bill Cauthron, deputies inspected prospective jurors with metal detectors. They asked members of the public to file through a security check, where guards compared their faces to photos of the defendant's ex-wife, children, friends, and mother. Although there hadn't been any specific threats, Deputy Terry Geren assured the press that "this was standard practice for a capital murder case." By the end of the process, these citizens were chosen to be jurors: William Stewart, Alex Catsavis, Linda Huge, Celia Martinez, Carolyn Milkert, Ruth Benson, Lola Hall, Eddie Bray, Michael Olsen, Ina Teller, Dean Bland, and James Curtis. They all agreed they could sentence someone to death if necessary, and all said they could give a life sentence if appropriate.

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### The Trial

The trial was an ordeal for Cindy, Joe David, and John Joyce. The killer, apparently spooked by Cindy's presence, asked that she not be allowed in the courtroom. "Perhaps it was just as well," Cindy said recently. "It was good to know I made him nervous, that I had the power to do that at least." Except for her time on the stand identifying her mother's belongings, she sat outside during the proceedings. Ross, Joe David, and John kept her informed about what was going on during breaks.

Ross testified about finding Joe and Martha and Sara the afternoon of December 12, 1985. Several Fort Smith witnesses described their encounters with the accused that same afternoon. Three witnesses identified Gardner as the stranger they saw near Pocola, Oklahoma. Sandy Repogle reported getting behind a green Buick that drove slowly through a two-way stop before making a U-turn on a hill. Irritated, she noted that the driver was a man with long hair as he went past her. Candy Flippen testified that she saw the man enter the gas station next door to the Tres Flores Restaurant in Pocola where Sara's car was found at 1:30 p.m. Andrew Wade said a long-haired man entered the station around 1:30 p.m. and paid him ten dollars to drive him to Fort Smith.

Jean Tackett, relief operator at the Regal 8 Motel, said she began trying to contact Gardner, who had used his Illinois driver's license as identification, around 1 p.m. December 12. Wanting to see if he planned on checking

out, she called every fifteen minutes until he answered the phone. Although he paid for a second night, he turned in his key and never returned.

Pam Leroy, an employee at the Fort Smith bus station, identified the accused as the long-haired man who bought a ticket to Little Rock the afternoon of December 12. It left Fort Smith at 3:50 p.m.

Five Little Rock residents talked about their roles in the killer's identification and arrest. Shortly after the bus from Fort Smith arrived, Roger Self met the long-haired man at Lynn's Restaurant inside the Little Rock bus station. When the stranger offered to sell Roger some jewelry, something didn't feel right. Self had already heard about the Joyce family murders in Fort Smith. He told the fellow that he wasn't interested. While the man tried selling the odd assortment of items to other employees, Self telephoned his brother-in-law, who was an Arkansas State Police officer. With Self's report, the ASP, at the request of the Fort Smith Police Department, joined the investigation.

ASP officer Phillip Rea caught the case along with his partner Frank Tappen. Assigned to go undercover, they offered the man with the stash of obviously stolen goods a ride back to Fort Smith. On the way, their suspect threatened to kill Rea and Tappen if they turned out to be policemen. He also told them that he was possessed by demons and that he wanted them to drive him into the countryside to retrieve some cocaine. Rea slowed, concerned their ASP backup wouldn't be able to keep up with them, and if they couldn't, this situation might turn ugly fast. Pulling off I-40, Rea stopped at a convenience store, where he and Tappen arrested Mark Edward Gardner.

Maxie Itskowitz, owner of Maxie's Reliable Loan Office in Little Rock, testified next. He said the accused, using his Illinois driver's license as identification, pawned several pieces of jewelry for fifty dollars.

On the stand, Cindy identified the jewelry the killer either had in his possession or had already pawned, when he was arrested. In the process, she gave jurors a personal view of who Martha was. For example, when the prosecutor handed her a one-carat diamond ring, Cindy explained that she'd been with Martha when she picked it out and that Martha had just finished paying it off a few weeks before she died. A chipped amethyst ring and a diamond sunburst had belonged to Martha's cherished aunt who willed them to her. Cindy remembered them because Martha kept them in a jewelry box that she and Sara played with when they were children. She identified Sara's wedding bands and a pendant that her sister wore.

\* \* \*

**"We, the Jury, find Mark Edward Gardner, aka T. C. Thompson, aka Tim Thompson Guilty of Capital Murder of Joe and Martha Joyce."**  
Signed James T. Curtis, Foreman.

**We, the Jury, find Mark Edward Gardner, aka T. C. Thompson, aka Tim Thompson Guilty of Capital Murder of Sara McCurdy."**  
Signed James T. Curtis, Foreman.

### **The Verdict**

In the end, Cindy, Joe David and John and their families now knew without doubt that this was the man who invaded the home they grew up in—and took jewelry and binoculars and money—and three precious lives. The jury agreed.

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### **The Appeals**

Judge Langston sentenced the killer to death by lethal injection on both counts. New defense lawyers automatically began a series of appeals to save the convicted killer's life. For Cindy and Joe David and John Joyce, this process kept the hurt fresh and unresolved. "The old me never believed in the death penalty," Cindy said, "But this was a very bad man. He continued doing bad things even while in prison." She did want the killer to be executed and soon to get it over with. "I was afraid that the whole thing would cause more damage, more trauma for us." Of course, what if he escaped? What if they released him sometime in the future? What if he killed again? In the end, of course, it was not up to the family to decide the fact or the timing of the killer's fate. Those decisions belonged to the state of Arkansas.

The Office of the Arkansas Attorney General shepherded the case through fourteen years of appeals. Initially Clint Miller managed that process and then Kelly Hill. Both kept the Joyce family informed. As the years passed, defense appeals seemed increasingly desperate and unlikely, at least to a layman's eye. For example, the killer's team filed an appeal for a new trial because Judge Langston denied a request for a change of trial venue. They argued he should get a new trial because he was refused access to all pre-trial transcripts. They claimed that the death penalty constituted "cruel and unusual punishment" prohibited by the Fifth Amendment, and that his Miranda rights were violated when the undercover cops did not give him the warning on the ride back toward Fort Smith. Given

that those arguments were adjudicated in prior cases, those arguments were dismissed.

Then, the killer maintained that when police searched his room in the Downtowner Motel in Little Rock and did not recognize the purse they found as Martha's, they could not recover it the next day without another warrant. He argued crime scene photos, failure to excuse jurors for cause, whether being asked to show his tattoos at trial violated his Fifth Amendment right against incriminating himself, and chain of custody. All denied.


The most interesting and compelling issue the defense cited had to do with DNA analysis, just becoming a well-known and trusted technique in the 1990s. The appeal centered around a defense motion to dismiss the second count, that in the course of committing rape or attempting to commit rape, the murderer caused Sara's death. The appeal claimed there was no proof that the killer had raped or attempted to rape her. Since that was an aggravating circumstance, the "unproven" count led to a death penalty. Although charging the killer with murder in the course of a rape was argued and denied because probable cause is enough for that, as the date of execution loomed closer, the killer did try to show that male DNA found with Sara created doubt, but results came back that the female sample belonged to Sara and the male was "consistent with DNA extracted from Mark Gardner." In the 1980s and 1990s, that was as positive as science could get. Combined with other evidence against him, this result was definitive.

It was a long, frustrating process for Cindy, Joe David, John Joyce and the extended Joyce and Kiene families. Throughout it all, they waited anxiously to see what would happen next.

Joe David asked with anger why Gardner was free to wander into their childhood home that cold winter's day and murder his parents and beloved sister. His Uncle Paul Kiene, Martha's brother, was anguished that the killer was paroled from a twenty-nine-year sentence for violent crimes in Illinois only months before he came to Fort Smith. The stated reason was prison overcrowding. Paul wrote, "Our family became victims of a human experiment involving a known criminal, and whether or not he would continue his violent behavior. The Illinois Parole Board made a high-risk decision regarding this and our family has paid."

Paul noted the suffering of Rose and Don Paetsch, an Illinois couple, who were terrorized, robbed—Rose was brutally raped—by the same assailant. According to testimony, Gardner wanted to murder them; however, his cousin and accomplice persuaded him not to carry out his intentions. That incident happened only a few weeks before Gardner killed the Joyces.

Finally, all that was left for the murderer was a plea for



Arkansas Department of Correction

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Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71611-8707  
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www.state.ar.us/doc


September 9, 1999

Nancy Brewer  
Sebastian County Circuit Clerk  
P.O. Box 1179  
Fort Smith, AR. 72902

Dear Ms. Brewer:

This to certify that Mark Edward Gardner was discharged by the Arkansas Department of Correction on September 8, 1999, due to Death by Lethal Injection.

An original, notarized Order of Discharge is attached.

Sincerely,  
  
Larry Norris  
Director

LN/tj

cc: Internal Affairs  
Inmate File  
File

FILED  
CLERK  
SEP 13 AM 8  
CL-85-163

clemency. Finally, there was something the family could do. Cindy and her Uncle Paul wrote letters to the Post Prison Transfer Board and to the governor describing their fears.

Paul wrote in July 1999, "Almost fourteen years have passed and we still live in fear, particularly my sister's surviving daughter, Cindy Joyce-Griggs, who gave incriminating evidence during Mark Gardner's trial. During this testimony, Gardner looked at Cindy, this being the only noticeable eye contact made with anyone other than his defense attorneys. This look...could only be perceived as threatening, and following sentencing, Gardner sent a letter from Tucker Prison to Cindy, with a question about guilt. Fear becomes very real when it is known that a rapist and murderer, having already ravaged two families, may be freed legally or engineer his escape from prison."

In a family statement and press release, Paul urged a final resolution to the long ordeal using the highest moral argument. "The writer personally visited with him [Gardner] on death row to forgive him, while not exonerating him....Past news coverage of other executions attended by victims' families highlighted vengeance. We do not feel the same way. It is absurd to think that the execution of this man is a penalty that equals the crimes



**FROM LEFT, JOE D. JOYCE, MARTHA KIENE JOYCE, SARA JOYCE MCCURDY**  
(Photos courtesy of the Joyce family)

and serves a vengeful purpose. The primary purpose in this death sentence is to protect other humans from being harmed by Gardner in the future.”

Cindy wrote to the board describing not only her own suffering, but that of Ross who found Martha and Joe and Sara in the most horrendous situation imaginable in a place where “He’d only known love” before. She told them about her young son dreaming about Granny and Pop and Aunt Sara and not wanting to wake up to a world without them. She shared that her other son found the idea of his beloved grandparents and aunt being murdered so terrifying that for months, his mind blanked out how they died. She finished her letter with a plea, “I respectfully ask you today not to excuse Mark Gardner for murdering my family. I ask you to hold him responsible for his actions by allowing the punishment prescribed for him by law to proceed as scheduled on September 8, 1999.”

The board declined another stay.

\* \* \*

### **The Execution**

Cindy was afraid that going to the execution would cause more harm to her and her brothers. Still it was an experience she accepted to protect her family. “I owed this to Mom and Dad and Sara, because they didn’t have a voice. They didn’t have a voice if I didn’t show up.”

At the appointed hour, guards escorted Cindy, Ross, John, and their Uncle Paul to the execution site. Gary Dooley waited for them in their car. He and his wife,

Gayle, were artists who’d once lived in the house behind Joe and Martha. He had come to provide moral support.

“The sidewalk leading to the building was lined with roses,” Cindy remembered. Witnesses viewed the killer’s last moments through monitors. “He knew we were there,” she said. “But he didn’t acknowledge us.” She was there, but she didn’t watch the killer leave this world. She couldn’t. The fear this murderer might kill again died with him, but when Cindy and John left the facility, Joe and Martha and Sara were still dead.

\* \* \*

### **Conclusion: The Joyce Family Now**

“Some things you don’t realize when you’re a little kid, maybe you take it for granted, but as you get older you reflect back [and] you realize how really great things were and how much love and thought went into what your parents did for you,” Joe David said.

“I have only good memories of Mom and Dad and Sara Ellen,” said John Joyce. “Dad was not only a mentor, he loved us and he took care of us—he took good care of us.” Given that the killer was probably still in the Joyce house when Pam and their kids went to visit Joe and Martha that afternoon, John feels blessed that they avoided the fate of his parents and sister. Pointing out the lives of responsibility and service his children have led, John said, “God had other plans for them.”

Cindy, Joe David, and John believe that “The legacies of our beloved sister Sara and our Mom and Dad live on in



our family and friends who cherish their memories. They were strong, loving people of integrity, who were silenced before ‘their time’ by evil.”



*Joyce Faulkner is a retired engineer, a novelist, a historian, and part owner of Red Engine Press. She is a Fort Smith native and graduate of Immaculate Conception School and St. Anne’s Academy who returned to her hometown after fifty years to explore interesting historical events in the area in order to write about them.*



*Karen Daggs is a retired HR assistant. She is currently a researcher for Red Engine Press. She finds the work both interesting and rewarding.*

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*Editor’s note: Members of the Joyce family contributed to this article, and the Fort Smith Historical Society is in hopes that publishing this significant history might bring closure for the extended Joyce family in their long grief about this terrible loss of their beloved parents and sister.*

## 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

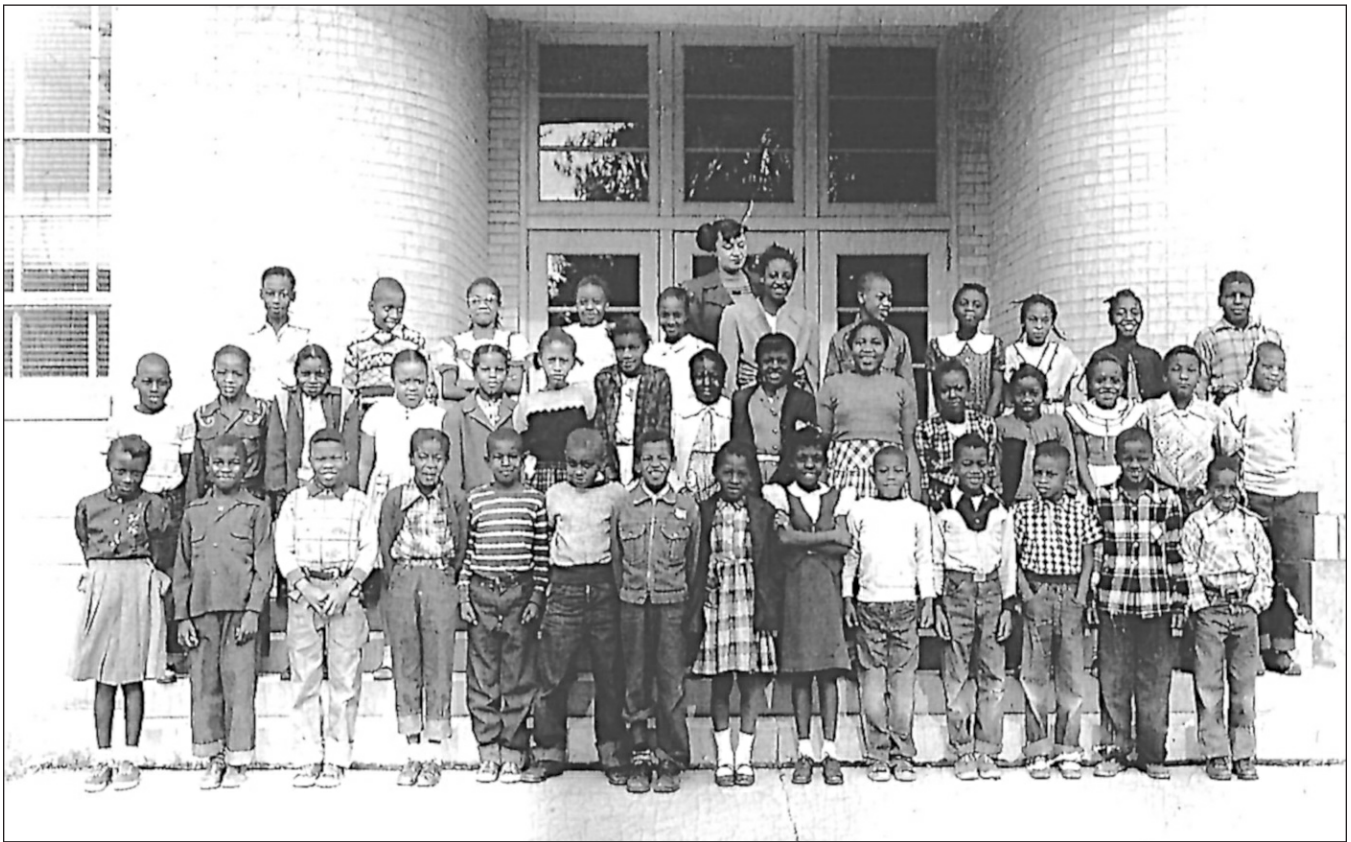
We welcome the submission of articles, previously unpublished, covering significant historical events and persons in Fort Smith and the surrounding area.

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



**HOWARD GRAMMAR SCHOOL CLASS IN 1952.** *Teacher in the center back is Ms. Alice Walker.*  
(Photo courtesy of Sherry Toliver)

# Howard School: Then and Now

*School founded in 1890s for African-American youths*

**by Edna Howard**

**D**uring my study of African-American history at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, I researched the *Fort Smith Times Record* April-August 1900 for news reports pertaining to local African Americans, and I found articles that helped satisfy my curiosity, especially those pieces directed toward African-American education in Fort Smith.

The school most mentioned in the early news reports was Howard High and Grammar School in the Fort Smith Public School District. Now, the school is known as Howard Elementary School. I would like to compare the historic Howard School with the present-day school. I intended to write the article for the benefit of colored readers, but also for anyone concerned with the education of the colored youth in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

The word “colored” was used in most articles. The word Afro-American is mentioned once in the articles I read.

One article by E. O. Trent, principal of Howard school at the time, showed his talent of communicating well with words.

Trent described the school buildings on North Eighth Street being of modern architecture. The 1900 Howard School was composed of two handsome brick buildings with one for the grammar school, and the other for high school. The writer mentioned Lincoln High School because it was nearby on North Ninth Street and was for colored youth also.

At the time of the article, the attendance at Howard School was 400 pupils, a rise from 386 students in the previous year. There were eight teachers for this number of students.

These figures were for the combined total of grammar and high school at Howard School.

Out of the total number, forty-two were in high school

with twelve students in the senior class.

Trent proudly stated that Howard School had a library with 300 volumes. Each grade had its appropriate literature that was selected by those “in authority.” There was a lot of enthusiasm in the article which gave me a proud feeling for a principle to be so involved in the well-being of the students.

Attendance in the two 1900 schools was ninety-one percent. The writer stated that tardiness was unknown in many of the grades, and in others were reduced to its minimum. Evidently, African-American students in Fort Smith’s segregated school system did not have a problem with going to school.

According to the article, students were required to complete four years satisfactorily in the prescribed courses. Some of the classes were natural science, Latin, English, and higher mathematics. There was no mention of the grade school courses.

By 1900, forty students had graduated since the founding of Howard High School in 1892, and many had gone on to further their education at colleges in Ohio, Kansas, and Tennessee. One graduate of the high school, Stephen W. Harrison, valedictorian of the class of 1888, deserved special mention. He completed college at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, and went to Smithville, Texas, to begin practice as a physician.

The faculty at Howard were educated in well-known colleges throughout the United States, such as historic Oberlin College in Ohio, and it stood out to me because it had been mentioned in our UAFS history class. Some other colleges attended by Howard teachers included University of Michigan, Howard University in Washington, D.C., and Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Today, Howard Grammar and High School is called Howard Elementary. It is still part of the Fort Smith Public School System and is devoted to teaching preschool through the sixth grade.

In an interview with Ms. Velmar Greene, principal of Howard in 2008, Ms. Greene stated that she has an enrollment of 406 students, ironically almost the same as the 1900 count for the combined grammar and high school attendance.

Things have changed since the beginning of African-American Howard Grammar and High School. Mrs. Greene stated that 38 percent of her students now are from Hispanic culture, slightly more than the African-American culture, which stands at 35 percent. The rest of the ethnic groups at Howard Elementary include Native American, Asian, and Caucasian cultures. Ms. Greene stated that her attendance rate for students is ninety-four percent which is just slightly higher than in 1900. She stated that the elementary school offers courses in language arts,

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*By 1900, forty students had graduated since the founding of Howard High School in 1892, and many had gone on to further their education at colleges in Ohio, Kansas, and Tennessee. One graduate of the high school, Stephen W. Harrison, valedictorian of the class of 1888, deserved special mention. He completed college at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, and went to Smithville, Texas, to begin practice as a physician.*

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including English, reading and spelling, math, social studies, music, art and physical education. These courses are like those in 1900. She said there is no graduation, the students just moved on to local junior high schools in the School District. This was different from 1900 when there was a high school.

I interviewed Mr. Dennis Britt, the school janitor of twenty years. He was impressed with the school and enjoyed his work there. He stated that the school had been remodeled twice since 1960. I was surprised that the location was not on the site where the first Howard School stood a few blocks down the street.

I later had a telephone interview with Ms. Ruby Palmer, who advised me that the school originally had been located where Eighth Street park is today across from Quinn Chapel Methodist Church. She said the new school was built in the 1950s.

Ms. Palmer remembered that after the seventh grade, the students transferred to Lincoln High School to complete their education. This was unlike 1900 when the grammar and high school were on the same campus. She mentioned that Howard Elementary had a year-round school program until about 2001 when it was stopped.



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*Howard High School graduated the first nine students in 1892, the same year that Lincoln Grade School was built. Around 1900, Lincoln became the High School and Howard the Elementary School.*

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There was no mention of the length of the school term in the 1900 articles.

Ms. Palmer taught at Howard Elementary for thirty-eight years. She received her teaching degree at Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical & Normal College (Arkansas AM&N, now the University of Arkansas—Pine Bluff). She received her master's degree from the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. Ms. Palmer stated that the faculty had received their degrees from various colleges and universities, some in Arkansas.

An article of May 3, 1900, reported that a teacher at “Howard Colored School” had been arraigned for cruelty to two students. The article, titled “Whipped Hard,” did not reveal the teacher’s name.

My comparison of Howard High and Grammar School in 1900, and Howard Elementary School in 2008 showed that the schools served the same purpose—education. But today, since our neighborhoods are mixed in cultures, diversity is common in public schools unlike in the era of segregated public schools in Fort Smith (1885-1966).

*Editor’s Note: Howard’s cornerstone is dated 1885 and the school was named for Gen. O. O. Howard, Commissioner of the Freedmen’s Bureau after the Civil War. Howard School had classes for all grades until Lincoln Grade School was built around 1892. Howard High School graduated the first nine students in 1892, the same year that Lincoln Grade School was built. Around 1900, Lincoln became the High School and Howard the Elementary School.*

*Lincoln students adopted Pirates as the nickname for its athletic teams.*

*Lincoln High School’s last class graduated in 1966, and the school closed with integration. Ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade Lincoln students who integrated Northside and who graduated from Northside in 1967, 1968, and 1969 still refer to themselves as Lincoln graduates.*

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**LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL MONUMENT** marks site where the school stood for seventy-four years.  
(Courtesy of the author)

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*Author Edna Howard attended St. John the Baptist Elementary in Fort Smith and St. Scholastica High School, and holds a B.A. from University of Arkansas-Fort Smith. She is a widower (husband Norman) with two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.*



# Chickamaugas Reclaiming Identity

*Native Tribe Often Mistaken as Part of Cherokee Nation*

**By Chief Jimmie W. Kersh**

**T**he Chickamauga Nation is a confederacy of Chickamauga tribes from the states of Arkansas, Georgia, and Tennessee, with citizens of those tribes existing in thirty-five states who share ancestral lines and cultural identity dating back to the late sixteenth century. The existing tribal government consists of a national chief, state chiefs, and state assistant chiefs. The Chickamauga Nation holds that it is a federally recognized tribe but does not receive its rightful support from the U.S. government. The answer to why that is can be found in the history of the tribe and its mis-identity as a branch of the Cherokee.

The Chickamauga are a Native American people with culture and religion associated with ceremonial mound complexes of central and southern North American continent such as Spiro, Cahokia, Etowah, and the Tennessee river valley. The association with these other aboriginal people is shown in similar pottery, effigies, and architecture.

Chickamauga are sovereign, independent people but have mistakenly been lumped in with the Cherokee, a totally separate people, linguistically, geographically, and politically.

The Chickamauga are of Mississippian, Muskogean, and Mobillian descent while the Cherokee are of Iroquoian, Huron, and Algonquin descent.<sup>1</sup> Confusion may have set in as eighteenth-century British and colonial traders thought of the two disparate people as a single entity because the Chickamauga spoke a dialect of trade called Southern Cherokee.

The Treaty of 1785, the Hopewell Treaty, in which at least three delegates signed as Chickamauga, combined the two tribes as “all the Cherokees of the other.”<sup>2</sup> Despite this, the Chickamauga never considered themselves to be Cherokee. Return Meigs, the Cherokee agent who oversaw U.S. interests in relocations, played a pivotal role in continuing their association with the name Cherokee. Cherokee played a significant role in assassinating, pillaging, and murdering the Chickamauga, and Chickamaugas resented being called “Chickamauga Cherokee.”

In the eighteenth century, Chickamauga living in areas of present-day Tennessee and Georgia intermarried with



**CHIEF DOUBLEHEAD**

Spanish, French, and English colonists, as well as with Creek, Choctaw, Seminole, Chickasaw and Cherokee, but never did the Chickamauga imagine that they would disappear as a people because of intermarriage. Chickamauga Chief Bloody Fellow proclaimed, “Even should they themselves become white by

intermarriage not a drop of Indian blood would be lost; it would be spread more widely, but not lost.”<sup>3</sup> Then and now, the Chickamauga take this into account when they proclaim they are full-blooded.

When French and Spanish missionaries came to “teach” Indians about the Bible, the Chickamauga held onto their own ancient religion passed down from generation to generation.

The missionaries, however, made a point that applied directly to the Chickamauga situation, that God hated the sin of moving ancient boundary markers, such as revealed in these passages: Deuteronomy 19:14, “You must not move your neighbor’s boundary marker....” Proverbs 22:28, “Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set.” Proverbs 23:10, “Do not remove the ancient landmark....” The Chickamauga believed the treaties they made with the white men as setting boundary markers that were to remain in place, never to be moved.

The year 1792 was monumental for the Chickamauga. Whites settling in violation of the Treaty of Holston became a flash point for traditional Chickamauga. John Sevier wrote Secretary of War William Blount notifying him that the Five Lower Towns had declared war on the United States and there was a divide in the Cherokee nation.<sup>4</sup> Blount wrote Bloody Fellow (Chickamauga Chief) admitting that the “President failed to meet promises he made to Cherokees by keeping settlers from encroaching



**(ABOVE)** *The blue heron is a sacred bird of the Chickamaugas.*

**(LEFT)** *Chief Bowles*

on Cherokee land, but denied any settlement happened after the treaty was signed.”

Advised that Bloody Fellow kept Cherokees from entering Cumberland, Secretary of War Henry Knox informed Governor Edward Telfair of Georgia that “five hundred warriors from Chickamaga (sic) towns and some banditti Upper Creeks plan hostilities against the U.S. and will strike the Cumberland settlements. Knox authorized the governor to “make defensive preparations.”<sup>8</sup> Knox provided “Blount with his assessment of the situation with the southern Indians and projected additions to the military establishment in the South....” Blount was asked to end the Chickamauga conflict with the Chickamauga.<sup>5</sup>

In late October 1792, Congress and President George Washington got involved in the Chickamauga issue. Knox sent a letter to Governor Henry Lee of Virginia that Congress was to “discuss war and peace with Chiccamagas (sic) [and] only defensive action by state [is] to be taken in dealing with Indians.”<sup>6</sup>

Washington, in his Fourth Annual Address (1792), specifically identified the Chickamauga as a separate tribe and confirmed their possession of the Five Lower Towns and authorized payment of annuities by the U.S. government, which was the normal way of dealing with Native Americans facing displacement from their traditional lands.

Moving ancient boundary markers and breaking treaties is the recurring theme for the Chickamauga. Their desire to remain in their traditional Native American lands challenged not only the United States, but rogue land speculators who found allies in state militias and volunteer militias to help drive Natives from ancestral lands. Blount warned Chickamauga chiefs that violence must stop and

the terms of the Treaty of Holston will be followed or “whites will retaliate with no regard for the age or sex of their victims.”<sup>7</sup>

Earlier, a group of Cherokees had contacted Estevan Miro, Spanish governor of the Louisiana Territory (before the Louisiana Purchase Treaty of 1803 placed these lands under American jurisdiction) and the governor had given permission for them to settle in Spanish territory west of the Mississippi River.<sup>8</sup> One of the first to come west of the Mississippi was The Bowl who settled on the St. Francis River. These early emigrants who resisted assimilation and sought to retain traditional religious and hunting economy were referred to as “Chickamauga Cherokees,” also known as Lower Towns Cherokees.<sup>9</sup> Thomas Jefferson wrote to Chickamauga leaders that he would trade land with them in the East for lands in the West. Most in the tribe thought that was too good an offer to pass up.

### **Moving to Arkansas**

Those moving west of the Mississippi thought to retain their traditional culture and religion. Most preferred to hunt, fish, ranch, and farm as far from the white man as he could be.

On July 20, 1809, Tahlonteskee and seventeen followers came upriver to Hiwassee and presented Return Meigs with a list of Lower Town Cherokees who wished to move over the Mississippi under the conditions agreed upon with President Jefferson. The list was a long one of 1,023 people, including 386 men and 637 women and children. Later, an additional 107 Cherokees joined the group as it made preparations to move.<sup>10</sup> Evidently the move included the whole village and its possessions such as 1,273 head of cattle, 369 horses, 868 hogs, forty-six spinning wheels,

thirteen looms, thirty-six plows, and other smaller items. They took with them sixty-eight black slaves.<sup>11</sup>

Tahlonteskee's group settled mostly south of the Arkansas with his capital near Dardanelle, on the Illinois Bayou. Major William Lovely, "arrived on the Arkansas the following July to establish a Cherokee sub-agency at the mouth of Illinois Bayou further to the northwest in Osage claimed territory. Lovely, a white man, was delighted with the country, dubbing it the 'Garden of the Worlds.' But, he pointed out, 'We have to pound the Corn into Meal having no Mills in all this part of the World every Article is Scarce & very high, flower which is brought by the traders on the Mississippi is from 18 to 24\$ per barrel.'" <sup>12</sup>

Most of the Chickamauga chiefs who arrived in Arkansas after 1809 settled south of the Arkansas because Jefferson's letter did not deny them from settling there. The most unfavorable factor of Jefferson's letter offering the trade of land was that it was not an official treaty between the United States and the Chickamauga.

In 1817, both the U.S. Senate and President Monroe gave advance approval of objective of a contemplated treaty to sanction a Cherokee reserve in the West.

Although some powerful Eastern chiefs, such as Pathkiller, an adamant opponent of the treaty, were not in attendance, Andrew Jackson on July 8, 1817, secured enough Cherokee signatures to accomplish the deal.<sup>13</sup> This Treaty of 1817 referenced the Thomas Jefferson letter to Tahlonteskee and provided for the Chickamauga official treaty land in Arkansas.

The Treaty of 1817 had sweeping ramifications for Cherokees living on both sides of the Mississippi River. Because Pathkiller and several other prominent Eastern Cherokees, such as John Ross and Major Ridge, did not participate in the negotiations of the treaty, many members of the eastern band contested its legitimacy and the Cherokee council refused to ratify it. The council also continued to oppose splitting the tribal annuity with the Arkansas group—called for in the treaty's fourth article—and unrealistically demanded that the Arkansas Cherokees return to their ancestral homelands. Despite the protests, federal officials proceeded as if the treaty were a done deal. For all practical purposes, it was. Jackson, ever the proponent of American expansionism, believed the treaty offered "justice to all," and in truth his opinion mattered the most.<sup>14</sup>

While the treaty was agreeable to the Chickamauga, there was one thing missing, the "Clear opening to the setting of the sun" that was promised in the text of the treaty. "In August 1819, the Western Cherokees wrote to

President James Monroe requesting the "clear opening to the setting of the sun" that had been promised them. The lead signers of the letter were Takatoka, Dick Justice, Glass, and John Jolly, followed by John Mclemore, Walter Webber, Thomas Maw (son of Hanging Maw), and Thomas Graves.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of the 1809 Jefferson letter offering a land trade, many of the chiefs took their people south of the Arkansas River and settled there while others moved north. The lands in the south along with the "clear opening to the setting of the sun" were promises made by the United States to the Chickamauga. The Treaty of 1819, however, did not grant the "clear opening to the setting sun." An 1820 U.S. Geological survey map specifically defined the lands south of the Little Rock to the Red River as "Cherokee," but again, the Chickamauga noted that the U.S. was moving boundary markers so white people could covet and steal their lands.

In 1826 the Arkansas Cherokee tribal government passed a law making it a capital offense for any Cherokee selling or trading treaty lands to the United States or to white men. In 1828 a, "delegation comprised of Black Fox, John Rogers, Tom Graves, Thomas Maw, George Marvis, John Looney, and Sequoyah...traveled to Washington to "arrange and finally adjust with the President of the United States or others all the unsettled matters."<sup>16</sup>

There was certainly no intention by the Cherokee council that this delegation should become involved in a treaty that would trade away their Arkansas lands, nor had the delegation any such thoughts. But once they reached Washington, the Cherokees were detained in their hotel for well over a month while government officials cajoled, whiskeyed, and bribed them into signing an agreement, the Treaty of 1828, for exchanging their Arkansas land for that of Lovely's Purchase.<sup>17</sup>

The 1828 Treaty would be an illegal contract today because the signatories would have been intoxicated and incapable of giving consent. In addition, "the government bribery included twelve hundred dollars for Thomas Graves; five hundred dollars for George Guess (Sequoyah), plus rights to a saline spring on Lee's Creek of present Oklahoma to replace one in Arkansas; five hundred dollars to James Rogers."<sup>18</sup>

After 1828, it became necessary for the Chickamauga to hide in plain sight. Most had lived in "white homes and clothes" for decades and were hard to tell apart from white neighbors. Then, in 1837, Arkansas codified their own anti-miscegenation laws forbidding Indians or blacks to marry whites. The Chickamauga in Arkansas had been marrying whites for decades and now ownership of lands of mixed marriages became almost impossible to prove.

In Missouri, the state's Thirteenth General Assembly



passed, “An Act to Restrain Intercourse with Indians,” which made it illegal for Indians to be within the state. Indians: Subsection 2. No person shall give to any Indian a permit to come or remain within this state; nor a permit, or other instrument of writing, with the intent to induce any Indian to come or remain within this state, except the proper agent, under the authority of the United States. Subsection 11, It shall be the duty of the Governor to transmit a copy of this act to the agents of all the Indian tribes on the borders of this state, with a request to such agents not to grant a permit to any Indian to come into this state for the purpose of hunting, or without necessary business, or who is not of a peaceful character.”<sup>19</sup>

These laws drove the Chickamauga not only to hide in plain sight, it forced them to try to persuade U.S. Census Marshals that they were white. Families told their children never to talk about their ancestry out of fear that they would lose their homes and land or even worse, be killed for their land and homes. While the secret was held onto in public settings, the Chickamauga in private continued to the best of their abilities to retain their culture, religion, and language and over two centuries, most have retained allegiance to bands and tribes of Chickamauga. Since the Treaty of 1828 and the 1836 statehood of Arkansas, there are Chickamaugas today who have been able to retain the religion and language. Many family reunions and gatherings of the Chickamauga try to instill the culture. Even so, technological advances and inculcation into the American society has worked to devastate remaining cultural identity of the Chickamauga people.

Today, the Chickamauga Nation attempts to reconnect with and re-establish their language and religion and revitalize their culture. Since they already hold Federal Recognition, in July 2019, their National Chiefs traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with lawyers of the U.S. Senate Indian Affairs committee concerning being placed on the Serviced Tribes Roll. The National Chiefs were charged by the legal team with the task of researching their anthropology and history and having their research verified by academic experts in those fields. They have just recently announced that more than 45,000 pages of research has been submitted to numerous academics across the nation to verify their anthropology and history.



*Jimmie W. Kersh, a Chief of the Chickamauga, holds a master's degree in teaching from Arkansas Tech and a master's degree in religious education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In Fort Smith, Kersh maintains the headquarters for Arkansas Chickamauga and contact is PO Box 11441 Fort Smith, AR 72917. Phone is*



**THE NATIONAL CHIEFS OF THE CHICKAMAUGA**  
*stand in front of the Arkansas Capitol in Little Rock. From left are National Chief Richard Botts, Chief Dr. Chris Spruell, Chief Jimmie W. Kersh and Chief Johnny Chattam.*  
(Photo courtesy of the author)

(479) 646-5567. E-mail is  
[ChickamaugaNationAR@ProtonMail.com](mailto:ChickamaugaNationAR@ProtonMail.com).

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- <sup>10</sup> Meigs to Chisholm, November 2, 1809, Records of Cherokee Agency in Tennessee (M-208), National Archives.
- <sup>11</sup> Passport signed by Return J. Meigs, American Register or General Repository of History, Politics, and Science, January 10, 1810, 6:316-18.
- <sup>12</sup> Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States: Territory of Arkansas, 1819-1836* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1953), xiv, 706. .
- <sup>13</sup> Markham, 79-80, 82.
- <sup>14</sup> S. W. Hoig, *The Cherokees and their Chiefs: In the Wake of Empire* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998) 133.
- <sup>15</sup> Markham, 79-80, 82.
- <sup>16</sup> Hoig, 139.
- <sup>17</sup> Series of letters between U.S. government and delegates of Cherokees West, February through July 1828, Letters Received, OIA, Cherokee Agency West (M-234), National Archives.
- <sup>18</sup> McKenney to Duval, May 28, 1828, Letters Sent by Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1831 (M-21), National Archives.
- <sup>19</sup> Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri, 13th General Assembly; 1845; 307.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

From the Whitehall Treaty of 1730:

That the Cherokees shall not suffer their people to trade with the white men of any other Nation but ye English, nor permit white men of any other Nation to build any forts, cabins, or plant corn amongst 'em, or near to any of ye Indian towns, or upon the lands which belong to the Great King, and if any such attempt shall be made, you must acquaint the English Governor therewith, and do whatever he directs, in order to maintain and defend the Great King's right, to the country of Carolina.

— W. O. Steele, *The Cherokee Crown of Tannassy* (J. F. Blair Publisher, 1977), 147.

*"The Cherokee population in this region grew so rapidly that in 1805 John B. Treat opened a trading post at Spadra Bluff, near present-day Clarksville, to serve the emigrants."*

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### APPENDIX II

"A part of the Cherokees, known by the name of Chickamagas, inhabiting five Villages on the Tennessee River, have been long in the practice of committing depredations on the neighbouring settlements.

"It was hoped that the treaty of Holstin, made with the Cherokee nation in July 1791, would have prevented a repetition of such depredations. But the event has not answered this hope. The Chickamagas, aided by some Banditti of another tribe in their vicinity, have recently perpetrated wanton and unprovoked hostilities upon the Citizens of the United States in that quarter. The information which has been received on this subject will be laid before you. Hitherto defensive precautions only have been strictly enjoined and observed.

"It is not understood that any breach of Treaty, or aggression whatsoever, on the part of the United States, or their Citizens, is even alleged as a pretext for the spirit of hostility in this quarter."

— National Registry; National Archives; Founders Online, George Washington Fourth Annual Address to Congress.

### APPENDIX III

"As cessions of Cherokee land continued at frequent intervals during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the number of Cherokees emigrating to Arkansas increased. Many of the new arrivals settled further west, between the Arkansas and White river valleys. The Cherokee population in this region grew so rapidly that in 1805 John B. Treat opened a trading post at Spadra Bluff, near present-day Clarksville, to serve the emigrants. A land cession obtained by the federal government from the Osages in 1808 (negotiated in St. Louis by William Clark, the renowned explorer) opened vast tracts of land in the northwest part of the state. Between 1809 and 1812, approximately 2,000 Cherokees settled along the White River and in the Arkansas River valley upstream from Little Rock."

—George Sabo III, *Paths of Our Children: Historic Indians of Arkansas*, (Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey, 1992) 96-98.



**MAJOR PIERCE MCKENNON** of Fort Smith, Arkansas, stands beside his P-51 Fighter, “Ridge Runner.” Each of his twenty victories is symbolized by a German cross painted on the nose of his aircraft. The two small parachutes over the back of the Razorback pig indicate that he was forced to bail out twice.

(Courtesy Morgan Aviation Books)

# Major Pierce McKennon

*Arkansas’ “Boogie Woogie” Playing Air Ace*

**By James J. Hudson**

“**T**his will be a rough mission,” First Lieutenant Pierce W. McKennon of Fort Smith, Arkansas, mused to himself as he pulled his six-foot frame into the snug little cockpit of the P-51 Mustang fighter plane.<sup>1</sup> Schweinfurt had been a veritable hell of flak and a nest of aggressive highly capable German fighter pilots for many months. On 14 October 1943, only six months before, a fleet of 228 American B-17 and B-24 bombers had lost 60 planes while attempting to knock out the ball bearing plants located in that central German stronghold.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the losses had been so heavy as to win the title “Black Thursday”<sup>3</sup> and

virtually end daylight bombing on such strongly defended targets so deep in enemy territory. Today, 13 April 1944 (another Thursday), Schweinfurt was the target again! This time, however, the American bomber formations would be escorted by long range fighters—a comfort not available to them the previous October.

With the help of his crew chief, Sgt. Joe Sills, McKennon squirmed into his parachute, fastened his safety belt and shoulder harness, pulled on his RAF type flying helmet, plugged in his radio cord, and adjusted his oxygen mask. After these chores were taken care of, the handsome young flyer moved carefully through the 21 steps in the “pre-



starting” cockpit check. Now he was ready for the signal to “press” which would be given by the 4th Fighter Group Commander.<sup>4</sup> The signal was not long in coming and the engines of the 4th’s forty-eight red nosed Mustangs roared simultaneously to life. During the next few minutes the pilots taxied to the end of the airfield, faced into the wind, and prepared to take off. As Lt. McKennon’s own unit, the 335th Fighter Squadron, was the last to take off he had ample time to glance about the Debden airdrome and reflect on whether in a few hours he might be touching down again to its comforts. These thoughts were short lived, however, for it was now his time to turn into the wind, push on maximum power and start the take-off run. As the airspeed indicator touched 100 mph he gently eased back on the control stick and felt his Mustang, “Ridge Runner,”<sup>5</sup> become airborne. A quick glance to the right told him that his wingman was in position a few feet away. Then the Arkansan began his turn to the left to join the squadron circling the field.

One climbing circuit of the Debden Airdrome was sufficient for the three squadrons comprising the 4th Fighter Group to move into formation. The group was made up of experienced pilots, many of whom traced their combat careers back to Eagle Squadron days before America entered the war. With the formation completed, the “Debden Terrors” set course toward the east to Germany. Soon the green of the English countryside dropped away to the rear and the pilots climbed up over the choppy blue of the North Sea. At 1245 hours (12:45 p.m.), some 50 minutes after takeoff, they crossed the Belgian coast at 25,000 feet altitude and leveled off to pick up cruising speed. The rendezvous with the “Big Friends” (B-17s and B-24s) was to occur at 1341 hours at a point a few miles west of the target city—Schweinfurt.<sup>6</sup>

Time passed slowly as the sleek little fighters cruised on at 300 mph. Moving his head from right to left and back again in what the fighter pilot called the “Messerschmitt twitch,” Pierce McKennon’s keen eyes searched the sky in all directions. In spite of the fact that young McKennon was not responsible for navigation he was vaguely aware of checkpoints passing five miles below. Liege, the Rhine, Koblenz, and Frankfurt followed one after another. Except for an occasional burst of flak all seemed quiet and the Arkansan let his thoughts wander back to more peaceful things—to his home at 216 North 21st Street in Fort Smith, his mother, his winning of a tri-state piano contest, and finally to the freshman German course under Dr. A. E. Lussky at the University of Arkansas. Pierce had had much trouble with the course and it seemed ironic that he was now fighting over the land where that language was spoken by almost everyone.<sup>7</sup>

Suddenly the plane’s radio crackled with the urgent



**PILOTS OF THE 4TH FIGHTER GROUP** *relax after a tough mission over Germany. Pierce McKennon (with a cigarette behind his ear) is leaning forward to explain his fight with a Focke-Wulf-190.*

cries for help from the bombers a few miles ahead. All thoughts of home were erased from McKennon’s mind as he pushed the throttle forward to keep up with his formation now speeding to the rescue. In an instant he saw below him the bomber formation lumbering along dead ahead of his own position. Two or three Flying Fortresses (B-17s) were already aflame and slowly falling out of their neat formation boxes. Almost at the same instance his eye caught the source of their distress. A score or more of Focke-Wulf 190<sup>8</sup> fighters had completed their first attack on the bombers and were now queuing up for a second firing pass from above and slightly behind. It was into this melee that the 335th Fighter Squadron plunged.<sup>9</sup>

The Arkansas flyer soon found himself going around in a “mad circle trying to find a FW-190 to latch on to.” Everyone seemed to be firing and the sky was full of tracer bullets. Then off to one side he spotted two Focke-Wulfs flying line astern and a little below the general dogfight. Rolling his Mustang over, he dived with full throttle upon the rear-most “Jerry.”<sup>10</sup> The German leader broke into a sharp turn to the left and the second FW-190 followed suit. McKennon’s vision dimmed as he turned sharply to keep the second German aircraft in his gunsight. After two complete circles the American was able to maneuver into firing position and “gave him several bursts” with his six .50 caliber machine guns but could “not observe the results.” Finally the German “straightened out” and McKennon “took a long burst getting strikes on the engine and fuselage.” The Hun did not seem heavily damaged but suddenly the glass canopy flew off the FW-190 and the pilot bailed out.<sup>11</sup> The Arkansas boy watched the enemy fighter spin down through the broken clouds below then climbed to rejoin his mates as

the 4th Fighter Group resumed its escort task. This time, because of the long-range fighter, the Schweinfurt hornet's nest would claim only a few of the "big friends." Late that same afternoon Sgt. Joe Sills happily supervised the painting of a ninth German cross on the nose of McKennon's P-51. Before the war was over the amiable Fort Smithian was to be credited with 21.68 victories-twelve in air-to-air combat and 9.68 destroyed on flak protected airdromes.<sup>12</sup>

Born in Clarksville, Arkansas on 30 November 1919 Pierce was the youngest of three sons of Dr. Parma Dixon and Inez Winningham McKennon.<sup>13</sup> Dr. McKennon, soon to be known as one of the leading dentists in Arkansas, moved his family to Fort Smith in 1921 and it was in that western Arkansas city that Pierce grew up as a laughing, happy-go-lucky boy. Encouraged and constantly helped by his charming mother, Pierce turned to music at an early age. So talented was he at the piano that he won several state contests and one tri-state prize while still in high school. On graduation from St. Anne's Academy, Fort Smith, he was given a music scholarship to the University of Arkansas.<sup>14</sup> Although the fighting in Europe enticed him away from the University long before he won a degree he was to thrill audiences all over Canada and Great Britain with his "boogie woogie" renditions. Several night clubs offered him a job and many told him he "should be playing and not flying."<sup>15</sup>

Not only was young Pierce McKennon interested in music but he also excelled in sports-especially in boxing and track. In 1937 he won the state Civilian Military Training Corps boxing championship for his weight division. Still later he was on the college track team for a brief period. At home Pierce and John Earl, his middle brother, spent many noisy hours in gymnastic contests much to the annoyance of his studious eldest brother Parma, who was already contemplating following his father into the field of dentistry.<sup>16</sup>

Armed with his music scholarship and a letter of introduction to Professor L. A. Passarelli of the Romance Language Department, Pierce entered the University of Arkansas in the fall of 1937.<sup>17</sup> He gave up music as a major during his first semester and decided on a pre-medical program, but his grades in freshmen chemistry and German got him into scholastic difficulty and in February 1938, he dropped out of the University. For the next several months he attended Fort Smith Junior College. In the spring of 1939, he returned to the University of Arkansas but never finished his degree.<sup>18</sup> The flying bug had bitten him and in the winter of 1940-41 he joined the United States Army Air Corps as a flying cadet.

McKennon's first flying was at Hicks Field, Fort Worth, Texas. After approximately fifteen hours of dual time in Stearman bi-plane trainers he flew solo for the first time. On



**MCKENNON FAMILY'S FORT SMITH HOME**  
*near Northside High School.*

4 April 1941, after still more dual time and five hours of solo flying, Pierce McKennon was "washed out" of the Army Air Corps.<sup>19</sup> Refusing to heed his check pilot's final words that "flying just isn't in you,"<sup>20</sup> Pierce within a few weeks made his way to Canada and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force.

In Canada McKennon found that the RCAF meant business and that they were in a hurry to produce war pilots. One either made it or was dropped with no fuss or furor. In a letter to his mother Pierce described Eglinton Hunt Club in Toronto, where he was to complete pre-flight training, as a place "darn near like West Point. Discipline is really strict and the penalties severe."<sup>21</sup>

Buckling down to the hard work, the young Arkansan passed the pre-flight program with "flying colors." "I have gotten really good in wireless," he wrote his mother. "I took three of my buddies' final exam in it." "There are so many of us" he continued, "that they don't know one from another..."<sup>22</sup>

A few days after completing pre-flight training Pierce was transferred to Windsor, Ontario, for first stage flight training. On 8 August 1941 he had his first dual flight in Fleet Finches and on 27 August soloed after only eight hours with an instructor.<sup>23</sup>

The RCAF worked the cadets hard. "I fly about an average of four hours a day," Pierce wrote his mother in September. His confidence in himself had returned. "I don't want to appear bragging but I am learning to fly pretty good," he told his mother.<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the rigorous flight training Pierce McKennon found time for relaxation. An occasional visit across the border to Detroit “for a show,” dates with Mary MacKennon, a comely lass from Moncton, New Brunswick, and the piano filled his off-duty hours. At every weekend dance or party Pierce was a success with his “boogie-woogie.” “They have plenty of pianos and they are trying to make me wear out all of them,” he informed his mother.<sup>25</sup> “Pierce could have earned over \$100 a week in any of the large night clubs in Canada for piano playing as he was a favorite where ever he went,” wrote one of his Canadian friends.<sup>26</sup>

Late in September 1941, “Mac,” as Pierce McKennon was affectionately called by his friends in Canada, began the second phase of his flight preparation at an airfield near Aylmer, Ontario. Here he trained in the Harvard (known in the United States Army Air Force as the AT-6), a lowwing monoplane with a retractable landing gear. Things continued to go well with the “washed out cadet” as the months of October and November passed. Instrument, formation, acrobatic, and cross-country flying were the order of the day.<sup>27</sup> “Mac” continued to prove himself a capable aviator and as the moment of the presentation of the coveted wings of the military pilot approached only the frigid Canadian weather seemed to trouble him. “I am about to freeze to death up here....I sure miss that sunny old South,” he wrote his mother in September.<sup>28</sup> Still later he requested her to send “my pajamas if I have any there, also any old jerseys....they would be good to fly in.”<sup>29</sup>

On 14 December 1941 Cadet McKennon became Sgt. Pilot McKennon and proudly sewed on his RCAF wings. To his family and friends “Mac” had at last proved the U.S. Army Air Corps wrong but in his own mind the final proof would have to come in the skies over Europe. He paid a quick visit to Fort Smith during the Christmas holidays, but seemed anxious to be on his way to England and the combat zone.<sup>30</sup>

Despite his eagerness to try his spurs in combat, Sgt. Pilot McKennon was destined to spend many more months in training. He arrived in Scotland in January 1942 and shortly thereafter was transferred to Hastings, Sussex County, some 60 miles southeast of London, where he had “a room overlooking the English Channel.” During the next several weeks there was little to do except visit historical sites and other points of interest in “England and southern Scotland.” His letters, usually addressed to “my darling mother,” were full of comments about Trafalgar Square, Westminster Abbey, Picadilly Square, Tower of London, search lights, barrage balloons, bombed out buildings, and English girls who were so friendly that they frequently asked one “to come home and spend the night with them.”<sup>31</sup> Apparently, he had difficulty in acclimating himself to English weather

for during the early weeks of his stay he referred to the climate as “terribly damp and cold.” “I sure long for sunny Arkansas,” he commented in one letter,<sup>32</sup> and in another he indicated that he hoped to be posted to a squadron in the Far East or in North Africa—apparently to get away from the rain and fog of an English spring.<sup>33</sup> In many of his letters he seemed almost homesick and frequently worried about the health of his brother John Earl, then very ill with tuberculosis in the Booneville, Arkansas, Sanatorium. He also “hoped” that Parma, his eldest brother, a dentist assigned to the 142nd Field Artillery Group in training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, would not be sent overseas. Frequently he would send his regards to “my best girl, Ann [Williams],” the little four-year-old who lived next door to the McKennons in Fort Smith.<sup>34</sup>

Toward the middle of March 1942 Pierce McKennon was attached to a Royal Air Force fighter training unit at Shropshire, 40 miles northwest of Birmingham. Almost immediately his mood changed, for he was now back at the flying game. After four weeks of practice on the Miles Master, a two seated trainer, he was ready for bigger things. On 18 April he checked out in the Hurricane, a first line fighter and the backbone of the RAF Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain. Two weeks later he flew the famed Spitfire.<sup>35</sup> Now “Mac” felt he was on his way. For the next several months he practiced weather flying, acrobatics, reconnaissance, and dogfighting under the careful tutelage of veteran RAF fighter pilots.<sup>36</sup>

Late in June 1942 Pierce was assigned to a Spitfire squadron and his joy was apparent in a letter to his mother on 28 June when he wrote, “I am really in it.”<sup>37</sup> If, however, he imagined that the new assignment meant combat patrols over enemy territory and wild dogfights with the “Jerries” he was doomed to disappointment. The squadron was based in a rear area in the north of England and had as its prime objective further training. In September Pierce wrote Dr. J. W. Hickman, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Smith, “My work here isn’t very exciting. I am attached to a Spitfire Squadron which will soon be moving further south in England. It is there I expect to have my first fight with Jerry.”<sup>38</sup>

During the summer months of 1942 “Mac” fretted about transferring to the United States Army Air Forces, the former Army Air Corps. America had been in the war since the previous December and many of his RCAF friends had decided to throw in their lot with the USAF. Young McKennon, however, was not convinced that the transfer was the wisest course. In October he wrote his mother that he planned to stay with “the RAF awhile because speaking truthfully, and having been in the war longer than we have, the RAF is further advanced than we are, and at present is an all round better air force.”<sup>39</sup> Apparently, his mind was still



open on the subject, for on 24 November, Sgt. Pilot Pierce Winningham McKennon of the RCAF became Second Lieutenant McKennon of the USAF.<sup>40</sup> The transformation in his thinking may have come about as a result of the social pressure of his American friends who had made the switch, or, perhaps, it was due to the promise of higher pay and an officer's commission in the USAF. There can be little doubt, however, that the boredom of assignment to a rear area RAF squadron had much to do with the decision. His RCAF discharge read simply "Pilot. Above average. He is very keen to be operational and should make an excellent fighter pilot."<sup>41</sup>

For several weeks after his transfer to the USAF McKennon was assigned to Headquarters, Eighth Air Force, and attached to the 6th Fighter Wing for further training in Spitfires. Although Pierce chafed at his failure to get into the "real war" he was building up flying experience and becoming a superb flyer. His Log Book on 7 February 1943 showed nearly 400 hours of flying time with approximately half of that time in Spitfires. Actually, he was to be a much more polished product than most when he finally got into combat.

McKennon's days of waiting were over when on 18 February 1943 he, along with several other RCAF transfers, was ordered to report to the American commander at Debden Air Base, some forty miles north of London, for duty.<sup>42</sup> Next day he was assigned to the 335th Fighter Squadron, 4th Fighter Group.<sup>43</sup> The 4th Fighter Group was flying Spitfires and the Fort Smith flyer found himself at home immediately. Furthermore, many of the group's pilots were transfers from RAF Eagle Squadrons and thus had had many similar training experiences. Perhaps a majority of them had actual combat time—several could already claim victories over the Nazi flyers. The 4th was commanded by Col. Chesley Peterson, the most celebrated of the Eagles, who had knocked down a Jerry during the Dieppe raid in August 1942.<sup>44</sup> The group also numbered among its members Lt. Col. Don Blakeslee, who later replaced Peterson as Group Commander and went on to become one of the really great air combat leaders of the Second World War. Before VE Day he was to fly over 500 missions and well over 1,000 combat hours. In addition, Debden was the home base of Don Gentle of Piqua, Ohio, who was to become the first to pass Captain Eddie Rickenbacker's record of 26 victories, and of such future aces as John T. Godfrey and James Goodson.

Most of the original members of the 4th Fighter Group were mavericks in one way or another. Young McKennon, never a stickler for military protocol fitted in well. Only a few days before his graduation from RCAF flying school he and four other cadets had been put on report for "failing to appear on parade." The charge was dropped.<sup>45</sup> On still

another occasion he and another pilot had been temporarily "grounded" for flying under the newly constructed Niagara Bridge.<sup>46</sup> Fortunately, the Canadian authorities decided to channel this reckless, daredevil spirit to the combat zone and "Mac" went overseas. A few months later the Arkansan was the subject of a report which read: "At approximately 1130 hours on 1 April 1942, 2nd Lt. P. W. McKennon of the 4th Fighter Group appeared in front of the Sales Store, New Oxford Street, London in a cap which in appearance was so disreputably mangled as to reflect serious discredit on the American Forces. The cap bore no resemblance to the usual officers cap, and appeared to be more like a skull cap."<sup>47</sup>

The commander of the 4th Fighter Group was seemingly more interested in how McKennon fought the Hun than in how he dressed in London, for no punitive action was taken. Two years later while "Mac" was serving as commanding officer of the 335th Fighter Squadron he revealed the same distaste for senseless protocol when he "chewed out" a young lieutenant for ordering Joe Sills, McKennon's crew chief, "to come to attention and salute" him while Sills was working on the flight line. According to the story, McKennon, then a major, invited the young officer to transfer to another squadron. The close relationship between "Mac" and his ground crew paid off for Pierce never was forced to abort a mission due to engine trouble after Sills became his crew chief.<sup>48</sup> Right or wrong, Pierce felt protocol technicalities were of no great importance in combat situations. Never, however, did McKennon violate air discipline in battle conditions as did many of the glory-seeking air aces. Always he worked for the safety and success of the team.

On 27 February 1943 McKennon flew his first combat mission—an escort for British Ventura bombers in a raid on Dunkerque. His Flight Log Book summed up the mission with the remarks: "Flak heavy—nothing happened."<sup>49</sup> This was followed by a couple of uneventful convoy patrols "off Barrows Deep." However, the young lieutenant was not unhappy for at last he "was in it" and he knew the action would pick up.

The Spitfire V, then being flown by the 4th Fighter Group, had a short cruising range (approximately two hours), thus the possibility of bearding the German fighters deep in France or the Low Countries was out of the question. Nevertheless, the ex-Eagles loved the graceful, highly maneuverable, little ship and when they heard that they were soon to be re-equipped with the American P-47 Thunderbolt they were far from happy. Little was known about the Thunderbolt, and it was "anticipated that it would be about as good as the P-40, which the RAF had sent to the Middle East because it wasn't good enough for combat with German pursuit craft."<sup>50</sup> The "Bolts," as the P-47s were soon to be dubbed, began appearing on the Debden airdrome early in

March 1943, and on 22 March Pierce flew the type for the first time. His only remark in his Flight Log Book was a "sweet kite."

The new fighter could not turn as sharply as the lighter Spitfire and, because of its weight, it climbed slowly, but its 2100 horsepower radial engine gave it a speed of 430 mph. The Thunderbolt had excellent high altitude performance and carried eight .50 caliber machine guns. The pilots of the 4th Fighter Group soon discovered that this "seven-ton milk bottle" could out dive anything in the skies. Col. Don Blakeslee, soon to be commander of the group, summed it up by snorting: "By God it ought to dive it certainly won't climb."<sup>51</sup> Like the big fighter or not, pilots of the 4th spent the next six weeks getting ready for combat in it. As the Operational Diary of the 335th Fighter Squadron read "most of the pilots felt the P-47 a better plane but were a little sorry to see the old Spits go."<sup>52</sup>

Debden Airdrome, a permanent RAF base leased to the USAF, was a big comfortable place. The roomy, permanent type living quarters and mess halls were a far cry from most makeshift air bases occupied by other American fighter and bomber groups in England. During the period of transition to the new Thunderbolt several parties "with all the trimmings" were held and Pierce McKennon quickly became a favorite of the whole group. An account of one of these affairs, reported in the Operational Diary, stated that, "Lt. McKennon slapped out the St. Louis Blues on the piano in true 'boogie' style much to the enjoyment of everyone present."<sup>53</sup> Pierce had won a music scholarship to the University of Arkansas by his sensitive renditions of the great classics, but at Debden it was "The Slow Train Through Arkansas" and "That Hypothetical, Theoretical Son-of-a-Bitch Colombo" that carried the day.<sup>54</sup> In fact, McKennon played both types of music with equal expertness. One of his Debden contemporaries described "Mac" as tall and well proportioned, fast agile. He had an acute sense of mimicry and gift for slapstick. Every moment was a rhythm. At the piano in the lounge during periods of bad weather, Mac was a one-man morale section....His performances were blent of the dance of fodians and the whirl of dervishes, Lennox Ave., and the whistle of trains in the night and the dead pan of Ned Sparks. A cigarette would hang on the starboard underlip; a beer mug would ring the piano at 10 o'clock to his flailing, nimble fingers....*A Slow Train Through Arkansas* was picking up speed on a piney-wood grade....what chance did a fellow like Beethoven have at Debden.<sup>55</sup>

But it was not all play at Debden. On 13 May Lt. McKennon flew his first operational mission in the P-47 when his squadron escorted B-17s in a raid on St. Omer in France. Three days later his career as a fighter pilot almost came to an early end in a fighter sweep over Flushing,

Holland. In McKennon's words,

The Group Commander ordered a starboard turn to attack a formation of Huns. As we swung around I was tail end Charlie [the last man in the formation]. I looked up and saw four FW-190's on my port side and knew it wasn't going to be long. Sure enough they came down on us, and I knew I would be the first one on the list. I could see the wing guns of the lead FW flashing. It was really pretty and I damn near looked too long. He shot up my tail assembly pretty bad. The only way I could give him the slip was to roll her over [his own P-47] and hit for the deck [dive to low altitude]. I went into a vertical dive and nothing can catch a Thunderbolt in a dive. I turned up at least 700 miles per hour....shot across Holland and eluded them.<sup>56</sup>

During the next two months the Arkansas pilot flew a dozen missions of the fighter sweep and Ramrod<sup>57</sup> type. Because of the comparatively short range of the P-47 being used in the spring of 1943 none of these missions were of more than two hours duration and seldom penetrated more than 50 miles into enemy held Belgium and France. Bombers could not be escorted all the way to the target and the Luftwaffe realizing this frequently withheld interception until the American fighters had to turn back to England.<sup>58</sup> With the advent of the "belly tank" (auxiliary fuel tank) in July 1943 the whole bomber escort picture changed.

28 July was the day of the "first belly tank show in the ETO" and, also, was the first time any Allied fighter craft had been briefed to penetrate beyond France into German skies. As the German pilots queued up for the attack on the Fortress formations over Emmerich they were astonished to find themselves under Thunderbolt attack. Before the dogfight ended no less than nine ME-109s and FW-190s had gone down under the machine guns of the 4th Fighter Group.<sup>59</sup>

On 30 July 1943 Pierce McKennon scored his first aerial victory when he shot down a "yellow nose" FW-190 over Zalt Bommel, Holland. The Arkansan described the action as follows:

I was flying at about 27000 feet around the second box of Bombers when I noticed a Fort over on one side and out of formation, being clobbered by two FW-190s. The first FW made his attack out of my range but as the second one came in I cut my throttle and dived on him. He spotted me coming down, broke away immediately and went into a diving turn starboard. I shoved everything forward and went after him, closing rapidly all the time. He turned into a sharp climbing turn to port. I gave him a two second burst that missed, but closed to within about 150 feet and got in a three or four second burst with about 15 degree deflection.

Something flew off his port side and large quantities of white smoke came pouring out. He flicked violently to starboard and I almost hit him. I passed within a few feet of him and saw his engine afire with long streamers of flame and smoke.<sup>60</sup>

A short time later the Hun fighter plowed into the countryside. Lt. McKennon's Squadron destroyed five and damaged three others in the same action.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, the belly tank was getting the Americans into the Luftwaffe's nest where the action was hot.

Although the 4th Fighter Group continued to roll up an impressive score against the Luftwaffe, McKennon was to have another long wait before scoring again. During the next five months he was to fly 23 tough missions to such German cities as Emden and Bremen. On most of these operations he flew as a wing man in the Squadron formation. From this position he had few opportunities to engage the enemy as the chief function of the wing man was to protect the element or flight leader. Junior officers were usually assigned the wing position and moved up to element (two ships) or flight (four ships) leadership as the older pilots were killed or completed tours of duty and returned to the United States.

During the fall of 1943 a new green-colored P-47 was delivered to the 4th Fighter Group at Debden. There was nothing unusual about the acquisition of a new Thunderbolt in a combat squadron but this one was different. Painted on its side in large Gothic type were the words "The Town of Piggott, Ark."

It had been purchased by the sale of bonds in the little Northeast Arkansas town. McKennon and Sgt. Arnold Camp of Camden, Arkansas, quickly spotted the fighter and within a short time they were properly photographed in front of "The Town of Piggott."<sup>62</sup> Although there is no evidence that Mac actually flew the plane in combat, the "Piggott" had a distinguished combat career.

McKennon was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in September 1943 and by January 1944 he was considered experienced enough to lead combat flights. With this advancement he was ready to participate in a significant way in the Air Force's "Big Week" air offensive against the Luftwaffe which started on 19 February 1944.<sup>63</sup> On Sunday 20 February Lt. McKennon blasted a FW-190 from 200 yards astern and "the pilot bailed out" over the German city of Marienburg.<sup>64</sup> Two days later he damaged a FW-190 in a wild World War I type dogfight over Koblenz, and then maneuvered in such a manner as to cause a ME-109 to crash.<sup>65</sup> On Friday, 25 February 1944 young McKennon was to score his third kill of the week and his fourth total victory, when as leader of a flight he sent a FW-190 crashing a little south of Luxembourg.<sup>66</sup> On the same day the Squadron Operational Diary commented that McKennon "is going

pretty hot lately but he deserves all credit for he does know his flying."<sup>67</sup>

The 25 February "kill" was to be McKennon's last combat mission in the P-47. During late February and early March the 4th Fighter Group began the transition to the fighter pilot's dream plane, the P-51 Mustang.<sup>68</sup> So "hot" was the Fort Smith flyer during the proceeding weeks that he was chosen to conduct the G-Suit (gravity suit) experiments with the new aircraft. For several days in late February the inhabitants of Debden were treated to a real acrobatic show as "Mac" wearing the experimental suit put the new machine through its paces. Toward the end of the month the 335th Fighter Squadron and its parent group completed the change over to the Mustang.<sup>69</sup> McKennon named his P-51 "Ridge Runner" and under the name on the side of his plane was painted an angry snorting Arkansas Razorback.

The "Debden Terrors" now had their "seven league boots." The P-51 was capable of ranging deep into Germany and with auxiliary tanks could fly completely across central Europe to Russian bases.<sup>70</sup> On 4 March 1944 Col. Don Blakeslee led the first American fighters over the German capital, an event which convinced Herman Goering that Germany had lost the war.<sup>71</sup> McKennon was forced to turn back from that historic mission when his wing man developed engine trouble over Holland and had to be escorted back to England.<sup>72</sup>

Although keenly disappointed at missing the first Berlin show, Pierce and "Ridge Runner" did not have to wait long to see "Big B," as the sprawling city on the Spree River was called. On 6 March he was one of forty-eight 4th Fighter Group pilots to escort the bombers back to Berlin. The reception was warm! Stung by having their capital city assaulted the Hun airmen threw every fighter available into the air to turn back the Americans. The result was blazing dogfight over the very heart of the city. The chatter of .50 caliber machine guns and 20mm cannons, the howl of straining aircraft engines, the sight of crippled planes streaming flame and smoke, the rain of debris from exploding bombers and fighters, accompanied by the white canopies of young Germans and Americans parachuting to safety, must have been a tremendous show to those Berliners who dared to expose themselves to watch. McKennon described it laconically in his Flight Log Book as the "biggest show I have ever seen-Jerries all over the place-got an ME-109-he hit the deck."<sup>73</sup> His Combat Report, however, gave a more complete description of the destruction of the aircraft which made him an ace with five kills. The Combat Report read:

I was flying Green 3 in Greenbelt. The section was climbing to get to some smoke trails at 1 o'clock to the bombers. When from the port side we saw about 50 plus in on the bombers. We jettisoned our wing tanks and started



diving on them. From then on out the section was split. A ME-109 came over me about 500 feet and started turning toward me. I pulled up in a steep turn and got on his tail. He started diving and I followed giving him a short burst. I got strikes on the cockpit, engine and wing roots. He started smoking rather badly going toward Berlin. I got a dead line astern shot and got in some more strikes. He led me right down over the airdrome which was Templehof. I have never seen so many Jerry A/C as I saw there. They were in the circuit and some taking off. I followed this guy right over the drome and gave him another short burst when making a port turn. It was at about 500 feet in this port turn that he flicked on his back, went in and exploded over at one edge of the airdrome. I pulled up and started after another 109 but due to oil all over my windscreen, he got away.<sup>74</sup>

The whole mission required a little less than four and one-half hours during which the ex-Razorback had flown 600 miles to Berlin, fought in an epic air battle, and returned to his base in England. Later, a tired but happy Arkansan watched as his ground crew carefully painted a fifth German cross on the nose of "Ridge Runner."

German fighter plane strength reached alarming proportions in the spring of 1944 and it was obvious, to almost every military strategist, this force would have to be knocked out before any invasion of the Continent could be undertaken.

Thus, the Eighth Air Force embarked on an offensive to destroy the Luftwaffe in the air and on the vine. American fighter units picked fights with the German Air Force at every opportunity and the recently beefed up bomber command proceeded to concentrate on aircraft factories to prevent replacements. Consequently, February, March, and April of 1944 were to be the great days for the USAF fighters. Hun fighters were still plentiful and fought ferociously to protect their aircraft factories. The result of the dual campaign was defeat for the Germans, with the official Air Force history concluding that "the air battles did more to defeat the Luftwaffe than did the destruction of the aircraft factories."<sup>75</sup>

In the blazing air battles of the spring the 4th Fighter Group was to score heavily and become the first American group to pass the 500 victory mark. Pierce McKennon was to play a large role in running up this impressive score. On 21 March McKennon, now a flight commander, shot down over Bordeaux a FW-190 whose "pilot bailed out."<sup>76</sup> Early in the afternoon of 29 March "Mac" led his flight into an air engagement over Brunswick, Germany. In a twisting, turning dogfight that started at 19000 feet and ended at 5000 feet, Pierce knocked down an ME-109 for his seventh air kill. His own aircraft was slightly damaged by the wreckage of the exploding German fighter.<sup>77</sup> While escorting a Fortress formation on 8 April McKennon became involved

"in the biggest fight I have ever been in." His Combat Report read:

I was flying Greenbelt White 3 when we saw a large formation of about 85 plus A/C flying SW about 2000 feet below us. They passed under us, headed for the bombers, getting a few before we got tangled with them. I cannot give a very coherent description because it was the first flight like it I have ever been in. FW-190s were all over the place and every time I turned around I started shooting. I made attacks on about five different 190s; one of which I got strikes on.

Then glancing over to one side of the fight Pierce noticed a FW-190 and a P-51 locked in combat and dived to the rescue. Swinging in at a sharp angle he "clobbered" the German "pretty good" and watched him "hit and litter a field with pieces."<sup>78</sup> On the following day Pierce shared in the destruction of two Junkers 88 bombers on the Lingen-Plarlune Airdrome.<sup>79</sup> One day later, while escorting the "Big Friends" on a raid in the Tours, France, area McKennon spotted several enemy aircraft on the Romorantin air field and roared down in a strafing run. Crossing the field at 400 mph he watched his machine gun tracers rip into an unidentified single engine aircraft but the intense antiaircraft fire made it impossible to confirm a victory.<sup>80</sup>

McKennon's ninth aerial victory, a FW-190 fighter over Schweinfurt, described in the opening pages of this article occurred on 13 April. Air victory number ten was represented by a new model "long nosed" FW-190 shot down from 25,000 feet in the Rhin Canal area on the afternoon of 18 April.<sup>81</sup> Kill number eleven came next morning when McKennon "got strikes all around the cockpit and wing roots" of a silver colored Messerschmitt fighter "and parts went flying in every direction."<sup>82</sup> "Pretty good for an old beat up piano player," he elatedly wrote his brother a day or so later.<sup>83</sup> Few would have disputed his statement.

On 23 April 1944 McKennon was promoted to the rank of captain, and although he had been overseas a long time and had more than enough missions to qualify for rotation back to the United States, he was eager to continue combat flying. "We are having some sweet fights with the Huns and it is the biggest thrill in the world," he had written his mother in early April.<sup>84</sup> Still later that month he wrote, "It will be quite a while before I come home because by staying my chance for advancement is much better."<sup>85</sup> About the same time he informed John Earl "I would like to be enjoying some of that good old Arkansas weather .... [but] am just beginning to roll up a fair score."<sup>86</sup> Apparently his plans were paying off for in May he wrote that he expected soon a promotion to major as he was then serving as squadron operations officer-a position calling for that rank.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, Pierce was "getting to be an old timer" in the 335th,



**“THE TOWN OF PIGGOTT, ARKANSAS,”** a Thunderbolt fighter plane purchased by the sale of war bonds in the little Northwest Arkansas town of the same name, was delivered to the 4th Fighter Group during the fall of 1943.

since many of the old Eagle Squadron boys were being transferred back to the Zone of Interior or were being lost in combat.

Late in June 1944 Captain McKennon, veteran of 140 combat sorties and wearing the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal (each with three oak leaf clusters), returned to Fort Smith for a 30-day rest leave. Although the Pierce may have hoped to spend the time relaxing with his family and friends he was soon caught up in civic club luncheons, newspaper interviews, and public adulation. As an air ace with thirteen official kills and five others damaged to his credit he was a real live hero. It was only natural that the handsome wavy-haired youth would attract attention.<sup>88</sup> The people of Piggott, Arkansas, wanted him to appear at a ceremony in that city on 4 July, an invitation McKennon reluctantly declined. In his letter to the committee he explained that because of the necessity of reporting back to England in a few days he would not be able to come to northeast Arkansas. In his letter he went on to express his warmest “thanks to the people of Piggott” for the Thunderbolt purchased the year before.”<sup>89</sup>

Without a doubt, the young captain could have remained in the United States as an instructor in the fighter training program, but the combat magnet pulled him back to England. Certainly, men of his experience were needed in positions of leadership in operational squadrons. Whether it was a desire for more combat, advancement, or simply a sense of duty, McKennon returned to the 4th Fighter Group early in August and on 22 August was made commander of his old unit, the 335th Fighter Squadron. On 25 August he flew his first sortie in nearly four months when he led his squadron in an escort mission to Schwerin, Germany. Two

days later he flew a mission to Liege in Belgium—both flights were uneventful.

Captain McKennon’s third operational flight as a squadron commander came close to being his last one when on 28 August 1944 he was shot down by flak near Neuweiler, France, some 20 miles behind enemy lines. For three weeks he was listed as “missing in action.” Since the Normandy invasion in June, the 4th Fighter Group, like most other fighter groups in the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces, had been engaged primarily in strafing German trucks, trains, and canal traffic in an effort to paralyze German armies and isolate the battle field areas. The fateful mission on which McKennon was shot down was such an operation. Spotting several locomotives in the Sarreburg marshalling yards “Mac” had led the 335th down to the attack and within a few minutes two of the locomotives had blown up and thirteen others had been severely damaged. As the Mustangs zoomed away from the smoking marshalling yards Pierce’s “Ridge Runner” was hit by light anti-aircraft fire. A few minutes later his engine quit and the Arkansan was forced to bail out from an altitude of 1,000 feet. Members of his squadron circling their downed commander saw him land in a plowed field, quickly unbuckle his chute, and run into a nearby woods.<sup>90</sup>

After hiding in the woods for several hours McKennon spotted a French farmer working in a field a few hundred yards away. Risking the possibility that the Frenchman might turn him over to the German authorities, Pierce ventured over to where the farmer was laboring. The Frenchman’s first expression, “Oh! Amelican,” was a friendly one and in a matter of an hour he put the pilot in contact with “Paul” a youthful member of the French

underground. "Paul," an active member of the maquis organization, proceeded to hide the American in a cave under the city dump. In the cave there was a board to sleep on and plenty of wine and cheese. Brush was piled over the entrance to the cave to make it more difficult for German patrols to find. In a few days, after the German search for the downed airman subsided, Pierce was provided with civilian clothes along with fake identification papers and moved to an attic in the home of an elderly school teacher. On being asked by the teacher if there was anything special he needed, Pierce replied, "Yes, a bath." A wash tub was filled and the pilot was told he could bathe in the kitchen where he would be "alone." However, it was not long before there was a knock at the door and McKennon discovered that "alone" meant with the teacher, his wife, and a neighbor woman as spectators. After remaining doubled up in the tub for several minutes Pierce finally stood up and completed his bath.<sup>91</sup>

For the next several weeks McKennon hid during the day and assisted the maquis in their sabotage activities at night. At the end of the war he was awarded the French Croix de Guerre for his action with the underground movement.<sup>92</sup> Toward the middle of September, when it appeared the Germans were at the point of discovering his hiding place, Pierce and two other downed Allied pilots were moved to a deep salt mine nearby. It was necessary to descend several hundred feet into the mine by rope ladder and the stay in this location was far from comfortable. Fortunately, the underground was able to get the flyers through the lines and back to England in a few days.<sup>93</sup>

Captain McKennon reported back to his squadron on 22 September, and a week later was restored to his former position as Squadron Commander and given a new "Ridge Runner." One of his first actions after returning to England was to write his mother, who had been notified in August of his being missing. "Don't worry about me," he said, "because I am in fine shape and don't have a scratch on me....I got to see a lot of France and learned a little French."<sup>94</sup> A month later he confessed to his mother that,

I thought being shot down would break my nerves and I wouldn't ever be any good for combat flying anymore but it did the very opposite. I feel better and have more nerve than I ever had. Personally I don't think my nerves will ever break-they are too good for that.<sup>95</sup>

During October-November-December 1944 the 4th Fighter Group continued the routine escorting of B-17s and B-24s deep into Germany, where, if no air opposition was met, the fighters dropped down to tree top level to strafe airdromes and surface transportation. In fact, during the fall and winter of 1944-45 the Luftwaffe seldom challenged the American P-47 and P-51 fighters in the air-instead they



**LT. GEORGE GREEN** sits in the lap of Major Pierce McKennon at the end of a sensational air rescue on March 18, 1945.

(Courtesy Morgan Aviation Books)

conserved their strength to attack the bombers when and if they could catch them unescorted. McKennon's mission reports during this period reads like a tourist guide of Germany-Berlin, Giessen, Hamburg, Cologne, Mainz, Leipzig, Koblenz, Merseburg, Munster, and Dresden were only a few cities visited with destruction. His sole air victory during these months was a FW-190 shot down some ten miles south of Bonn on Christmas Day.<sup>96</sup>

In the opening months of 1945, the fighter forces were frequently turned loose in grand free-lance low level missions to seek out and destroy Hitler's hoarded air forces. To encourage strafing- attacks on flak-infested airfields, the Eighth Air Force had some time earlier started the practice of giving "kills" for aircraft destroyed on the ground. Strafing had long been considered the most dangerous of all air operations and many of the great aces of the war were lost in low level attack.

On 18 March 1945 Major Pierce McKennon, only recently promoted, was involved in one of the most unusual incidents of the Second World War. He was leading the 335th Fighter Squadron in an attack on Prenzlau Airdrome, some 40 miles from Berlin, when flak suddenly blanketed the sky. Pierce felt his plane lurch violently to one side and hastily checked the cockpit for signs of trouble. A single glance at the instrument panel revealed that the engine oil pressure had dropped to zero. This meant one thing to him-the engine had been hit by flak and it would be only a matter of moments until he would have to crash land or bail out. But a strange thought flashed through his mind now. Flak had knocked him out of the sky the previous summer and he simply could not believe that lightning could strike twice in the same place. "I have had my bad luck....I will be okay from here on," he had then reasoned. The smell of smoke



and burning oil quickly dispelled his momentary disbelief and convinced him of his danger. Drawing on his earlier experience in bailing out over enemy territory, Pierce maneuvered away from the populated area near the airfield. At 4000 feet he pulled back the cockpit canopy and prepared to jump.<sup>97</sup> "I almost killed myself," he wrote his mother,

getting out of the aircraft—I got caught on something in the cockpit when I was only half-way out. The plane was in a dive and the slipstream was so strong that it held me against the fuselage. The plane was going straight down when I tore myself loose. I figured right then that this was my last ride because of the position I was in it was 99 times out of a hundred that I would hit the tail and you can't do that and live. Anyway, as luck would have it I missed the tail by a couple of inches—my chute opened OK and the landing wasn't too hard.<sup>98</sup>

Picking himself up from the ground and struggling to get out of his chute, McKennon became vaguely aware of a Mustang trying to land on the narrow little meadow into which he had parachuted. On the third attempt the fighter plane touched down and skidded to a stop only a few yards from McKennon. The engine continued to idle at low RPM as the bubble cockpit canopy slid back. When the pilot stood up and motioned to him to run to the plane, McKennon saw that it was his wing man, Lt. George Green. Sprinting up to the mustang, Pierce saw Green shed his flying gear to make room for a second man in the cramped little cockpit of the single-seater. No word passed between them as both knew what was being attempted was absolutely forbidden in every Air Force rule book. For Green it probably would mean a court martial if successful—a German prison camp if unsuccessful.<sup>99</sup>

McKennon released the wing tanks to lighten the plane and reached into the cockpit to adjust the wing flaps for short take off. Meanwhile, Green stood on the wing keeping a watchful eye on a German factory a few hundred yards away. As the smaller of the two men Green would have to sit in McKennon's lap and attempt to fly the plane. The whole rescue effort was made even more precarious as several German soldiers, armed with machine guns and accompanied by police dogs, came running toward the two Americans. However, one of the 22 pilots circling above quickly ended that threat by diving down to strafe the approaching Huns. Now with both pilots squeezed into the little fighter, Green shoved on maximum power and prayed that they could clear the trees which lined the tiny field. Just as it seemed that the Mustang would certainly crash it groaned into the air and hurdled the trees by inches. But the unbelievable rescue effort was far from over—it was still 600 miles back across Germany, Holland, and the North Sea

to England and safety. Heavy rain and poor visibility below 15000 feet forced Green to climb to high altitude. On one occasion during the climb McKennon lost consciousness due to lack of oxygen. After that the two pilots alternated in using the single oxygen mask.<sup>100</sup> Two and a half hours later the cramped and exhausted pair landed at Debden, completing a rescue which was in 1948 dramatized in the Hollywood movie, "Fighter Pilot."<sup>101</sup> "What that boy did for me has been done only three times this war successful," Pierce wrote a few days later. He added in the same letter:

We were both lucky, especially myself. I shall never be able to repay George although I am going to do everything in my power for him. I am getting him a D. F. C. for it and will promote him to Captain.<sup>102</sup>

On 9 April 1945, only three weeks after his sensational rescue, Major McKennon, flying his third "Ridge Runner," led his squadron in one of the classic airdrome strafing sorties of the European war. Having broken an uneventful escort of B-17s in a raid on Neuburg at the scheduled time and place, McKennon led his unit toward Munich in search of grounded aircraft. Flying at 6,000 feet, a reconnaissance disclosed some sixty of the enemy's care fully hoarded planes parked along a road and among trees in the Munich-Brunnthal area. Although he had twice previously been forced to bail out of a flak-damaged plane into enemy-held territory while participating in strafing operations, Major McKennon personally elected to test the fire from defensive gun positions before leading the squadron down to attack. Making three lone passes at the field, in which he destroyed two enemy aircraft, he was then joined by the rest of his mates. Before the operation ended the 335th Fighter Squadron had destroyed fourteen German aircraft and damaged fifteen others.<sup>103</sup> Of this number McKennon claimed two JU-52 transports and one ME-410 fighter destroyed and a third JU-52 damaged.<sup>104</sup> This ran his total victory list to seventeen destroyed and another eight damaged.

Pierce McKennon flew his last combat mission of the war when on 16 April he participated in a 4th Fighter Group strafing attack on a German airdrome in the Prague, Czechoslovakia, area. Prior to attacking the parked aircraft on the ground one squadron circled at 4,000 feet to draw flak and spot the locations while the others, after an interval of one minute, swept in line abreast at tree top level on their strafing run. As the attention of the antiaircraft gunners was concentrated on the squadron circling above, the line abreast attack at deck level caught them completely by surprise.<sup>105</sup> Within a few minutes the .50 caliber machine guns of the Mustangs had converted the airdrome into an inferno. Approximately 100 Hun planes were destroyed with a loss

of only a half dozen American fighters. This smashing success ran the 4th Fighter Group score over the 1,000 mark and made it the top American group in the Second World War.<sup>106</sup> McKennon's share of the Prague massacre included two Dornier 217 bombers, one unidentified twin-engine transport destroyed, and one ME-410 fighter badly damaged.<sup>107</sup> For all his success on this final mission the Arkansan came close to paying for it with his life, when on his sixth firing pass he was hit by an explosive shell. He described his narrow escape in a letter to his brother:

While strafing an airdrome a Jerry gunner put a 20mm explosive shell in my cockpit. I got shell fragments all over the right side of my face and small hole in my right forehead. Luckily my eyes were missed. I bled like a stuck hog but managed to get my ship back to friendly territory and land.<sup>108</sup>

Three weeks after the Prague mission the war with Germany came to an end with Pierce McKennon's score standing at 20 aircraft destroyed (twelve of these in the air) and nine others damaged. He had flown 204 combat sorties, 560 operational hours, and had earned the Distinguished Flying Cross (with four clusters), the Air Medal (with 16 clusters), the Purple Heart, the French Croix de Guerre, and the Distinguished Unit Citation. Indeed, he was one of the top U. S. Air Force fighter pilots of the Second World War. Even to McKennon's own demanding standards he had proved conclusively that the flying instructor at Hicks Field, Texas, had been wrong in "washing him out" as a flying cadet. Perhaps in the end he was even grateful for the whole sad episode for it had channeled him through the RCAF and the careful training by RAF combat veterans.

With the end of the war Major McKennon remained in Europe with the Army of Occupation. "It is a good break for someone with intentions of staying in the army-and, of course, you know that is my desire," he explained to his mother.<sup>109</sup> He continued to command the 335th Fighter Squadron until 22 September 1945 when he was made the Operations Officer of the 368th Fighter Group in Straubing, Germany. During the next several months his duties were varied and a little "boring" but he did have time to see much of western Europe and learned a little of the German language Professor Lussky had tried to teach him at the University of Arkansas. In April 1946 he returned to Fort Smith for a 30 day leave before reporting to his new assignment at Luke Field (near Phoenix), Arizona.<sup>110</sup>

On 13 May 1946 Pierce McKennon was married to the beautiful Beulah Irene Sawyer of Fort Smith.<sup>111</sup> Pierce and "Bootsie," as she was called by friends and relatives, had known each other since childhood but it was not until his Christmas leave from RCAF in 1942 that they became seriously interested in each other. After a brief honeymoon

the Pierce McKennons moved to Arizona.<sup>112</sup>

During the next several months Major McKennon served as a fighter instructor at Luke and Williams Fields, Arizona. Much of his time was spent in flying P-51, P-47, and F-80 (one of America's first jet fighters) aircraft. In January 1947, McKennon now a regular Air Force officer, was transferred to Randolph Field, Texas, to instruct aviation cadets. He was not happy in this type of work and worked hard to get an assignment to a tactical fighter squadron. "Mac" had demonstrated remarkable courage in aerial combat against enemy fighters but had once said, perhaps half-jokingly, "there are two thing I fear-flak and student pilots."<sup>113</sup> Flak was to knock him down twice and force him down a third time during the war. A student pilot would kill him.

On 18 June Major Pierce Winningham McKennon, the 26-year-old flying ace who had miraculously escaped death many times during World War II, was killed in the crash of a training plane some sixteen miles northeast of San Antonio, Texas. At the time of the accident he was riding as a check pilot with a student engaged in practicing "forced landings." Apparently, the engine of the AT-6 trainer quit while near the ground and the plane stalled and "spun" into a field. Both pilots were killed by the impact.<sup>114</sup>

At 2 p.m. Monday 23 June 1947 Major McKennon was buried with full military honors at Forest Park Cemetery in Fort Smith. His old friend, Dr. J. W. Hickman, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, officiated while six Air Force officers served as pallbearers. As the honor guard stood at attention six P-51 Mustangs dipped over the grave in a last salute to the flyer who had served his country so well.<sup>115</sup> As Plato wrote over two thousand years before "only the dead have seen the end of war." At last Pierce McKennon was home from the wars.<sup>116</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 Miscellaneous note, undated, in Pierce McKennon personal military records file now in the hands of his mother, Mrs. P. D. McKennon of Fort Smith, Arkansas.
- 2 Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, (eds.) *The Army Air Forces in World War II* (7 vols., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), III, 9.
- 3 Martin Caitlin, *Black Thursday* (New York: Dutton, 1960).
- 4 The term "press" (to start engines) was a carryover from RAF days. Most of the early pilots of the 4th Fighter Group had been members of Eagle Squadrons active in the RAF before the United States entered the war.
- 5 Painted on the side of McKennon's plane "Ridge Runner" was a picture of the Arkansas Razorback Hog.
- 6 *335th Fighter Squadron Operational Diary*, 13 April 1944. Henceforth this item will be referred to as Operational Diary. The original copy is housed in the Federal Records Center,

- Alexandria, Virginia.
- 7 Pierce McKennon's University of Arkansas transcript reveals that he took the course twice without success.
  - 8 The FW-190 was one of the two top German fighter planes of the war. Powered by a 1,700-horsepower air-cooled radial engine, this single-seater aircraft was capable of approximately 410 mph. It had excellent high-altitude performance and was perhaps superior to the ME-109.
  - 9 *Operational Diary*, 11 April 1944.
  - 10 "Jerry" was the popular term for the German in the Second World War as "Hun" had been in the First World War. The term "Hun," however, was sometimes used, as was the appellation "Kraut" in World War II.
  - 11 Combat Report, 11 April 1944.
  - 12 "Gene Gurney, *Five Down and Glory* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), 218. McKennon's own records show twelve air victories and eight on the ground for a total of 20.
  - 13 See Royal Canadian Air Force Discharge Record and United States War Department Adjutant General's Office Form 66-I. Both of these are in Pierce McKennon's personal U.S. Army 201 File now in the hands of Mrs. Parma D. McKennon of Fort Smith, Ark.
  - 14 Interview by author with Mrs. Parma D. McKennon, Fort Smith, Ark., 22 August 1963.
  - 15 Letter, Pierce W. McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Windsor, Ont., 4 September 1941. This letter is now in the McKennon collection housed at 216 North 21st Street, Fort Smith, Arkansas. Unless otherwise noted all letters quoted in this article are in the McKennon collection.
  - 16 Interview by author with Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Fort Smith, Ark., 20 November 1962.
  - 17 Letter, J. E. "Pat" Garner to Professor L. A. Passarelli, Fort Smith, Ark., 7 September 1937.
  - 18 University of Arkansas Transcript for P. W. McKennon.
  - 19 See Pierce McKennon's Flight Log Book.
  - 20 *The Fort Smithian*, (Fort Smith, Ark.) 29 June 1944.
  - 21 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Toronto, Ontario, 13 July 1941.
  - 22 Ibid., 5 August 1941.
  - 23 Flight Log Book. The Fleet Finch was a popular primary trainer used extensively in Canada.
  - 24 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Windsor, Ontario, 4 September 1941.
  - 25 Ibid., 3 August 1941.
  - 26 These are the words of Rex Gravitt told to Pepe Mabrey, a friend of the McKennon. See letter, Pepe Mabrey to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Los Angeles, California, 17 July 1943.
  - 27 Flight Log Book.
  - 28 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Aylmer, Ont., 26 Sept. 1941.
  - 29 Ibid., 5 November 1941.
  - 30 *Fort Smithian*, 29 June 1944.
  - 31 See letters to Mrs. P. D. McKennon dated 14 Feb. 1942, 21 Feb. 1942, 5 March 1942 and 1 May 1942 in the McKennon collection.
  - 32 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, overseas England, 23 May 1942.
  - 33 Ibid., undated.
  - 34 John Earl McKennon, at this writing fully recovered from his illness, is manager of the Lafayette Hotel, Long Beach, California. Parma D. McKennon is now Head of the Denture Department, Veterans Hospital, Little Rock, Arkansas, and holds the rank of colonel in the National Guard.
  - 35 The Spitfire, a low-wing, single-seater powered with a Rolls-Royce engine continued to be the principal English interceptor until the end of the war. Later models were capable of approximately 400 mph.
  - 36 His flight commander had "been through Dunkirk and [had] 18 victories." McKennon's Flight Log Book tells the story of the months of fighter training.
  - 37 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, overseas England, 28 June 1942.
  - 38 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Dr. J. W. Hickman, overseas England, 20 Sept. 1942.
  - 39 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, overseas England, 20 Oct. 1942.
  - 40 U.S. Army, European Theatre of Operations, Special Order 165, 24 Nov. 1942 in McKennon's military records file.
  - 41 RCAF Discharge in McKennon's 201 file.
  - 42 Hdq., AAF Station F-342, S.O. No. 46 in McKennon's 201 file.
  - 43 Hdq., 4th Fighter Group, S.O. No. 8 in McKennon's 201 file.
  - 44 Grover Hall, *1000 Destroyed* (Dallas: Morgan Aviation Books, 1946), 9.
  - 45 RCAF, Charge Report, 11 December 1941 in McKennon records file.
  - 46 Letter, Pepe Mabrey to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Los Angeles, Calif., 17 July 1943.
  - 47 Letter, Ralph Pulsifer, Col. AGD, Adj. Gen. to Commanding Officer, 4th Fighter Group, 1 April 1942. This letter is in McKennon's personal 201 file.
  - 48 Letter, John Earl McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Long Beach, Calif., undated but written in response to an inquiry by the author in the summer of 1963.
  - 49 Entry for 27 Feb. 1943.
  - 50 Hall, 13. Actually, the Curtis built P-40 Hawk was as fast as the Spitfire V (app. 375 mph) but it weighed nearly 4,000 pounds more. The extra weight seriously hampered its maneuverability.
  - 51 Hall, *1000 Destroyed*, 18.
  - 52 Entry for 22 March, 1943. Aviation writer David C. Cooke in his book *Fighter Planes That Made History* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958) describes the P-47 as "the roughest and toughest fighter ever built by any country for any war."
  - 53 *Operational Diary*, 28 March, 1943.
  - 54 Hall, 76.



- 55 Ibid., 77.
- 56 *Southwest American* (Fort Smith, Ark.), 18 October 1943. In his Flight Log Book McKennon stated the dive was 500 mph which is a more likely figure. See entry for 16 May 1943.
- 57 Ramrod was the term used by the Eighth Air Force for bomber escort type missions.
- 58 William R. Emerson, "Operation Pointblank," Harmon Memorial Lecture Series at the U. S. Air Force Academy, 1962.
- 59 Hall, 19-20.
- 60 Combat Report, 30 July 1943.
- 61 Operational Diary, 30 July 1943.
- 62 *Southwest American*, 18 October 1941. See also Piggott (Ark.) Banner, 4 July 1947.
- 63 The main objective of the "Big Week" effort was to knock out the German Air Force and took the form of bomber attacks on aircraft factories while Allied fighters destroyed the defenders in the air. The operation was successful in forcing a German strategy change. During the succeeding months the Luftwaffe refused to commit itself to full scale opposition to the daylight bombing campaign. Instead it would offer only token resistance to some missions then concentrate heavy opposition to others. See Craven and Cate, *Army Air Forces*, III, 47.
- 64 Combat Report, 20 February 1944.
- 65 Operational Diary, 22 February 1944.
- 66 Combat Report, 25 February 1944.
- 67 Powered by a 1450 horsepower Rolls Royce Merlin liquid-cooled engine the P-51 was capable of 440 mph. As it was 4000 pounds lighter than the P-47 it was much more maneuverable. It has been called the finest of all American fighter planes and was considered superior to the ME-109 and FW-190.
- 68 Operational Diary, 25 February 1944.
- 69 Operational Diary, entries for 9 February-29 February 1944. The G-suit enabled pilots to make tighter turns without "blacking out."
- 70 The 4th Fighter Group escorted the "heavies" on one shuttle bomb raid to Russia in June 1944.
- 71 "After the war Goering confessed that the day he first saw rednosed Mustangs over Berlin was the day "I knew the jig was up." See Hall, *1000 Destroyed*, 90.
- 72 Flight Log Book, 4 March 1944,
- 73 Flight Log Book, 6 March 1944,
- 74 Combat Report, 6 March 1944.
- 75 Craven and Cate, *The Army Air Forces*, III, 63.
- 76 Flight Log Book, 21 March 1944.
- 77 Combat Report, 29 March 1944.
- 78 Ibid., 8 April 1944.
- 79 Ibid., 9 April 1944.
- 80 Combat Report, 10 April 1944.
- 81 Ibid., 18 April 1944.
- 82 Ibid., 19 April 1944.
- 83 Letter, Pierce McKennon to John Earl McKennon, Debden, Eng., 23 April 1944.
- 84 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Debden, Eng., 10 April 1944.
- 85 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Debden, Eng., 17 April 1944.
- 86 Letter, Pierce McKennon to John Earl McKennon, Debden, Eng., 21 April 1944.
- 87 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Debden, Eng., 1 May 1944.
- 88 Bulletin, Fort Smith Kiwanis Club, 29 June 1944 in McKennon file.
- 89 Letter, Pierce McKennon to C. Mowery, Fort Smith, Ark., undated but apparently written in late June 1944.
- 90 Operational Diary, 28 August 1944. See also W.D.A.G.O. 66-1 in McKennon records file.
- 91 Escape narrative in McKennon records. There is a letter from a Paul Bodot in the McKennon file and it seems likely that he is the "Paul" of the escape effort.
- 92 W.D.A.G.O., 66-1.
- 93 Escape narrative. Only a few hours after Pierce was moved from the salt mine a stray bomb from an American bomber dropped down the shaft and completely destroyed the mine.
- 94 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Debden, England., 25 September 1944,
- 95 Ibid., 25 October 1944.
- 96 Combat Report, 25 December 1944.
- 97 Hall, 263.
- 98 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Debden, Eng., 27 March 1945.
- 99 Hall, 264-265.
- 100 Ibid., 266-167.
- 101 When *Time* magazine panned the movie for unrealistic hokum several letters-to-the-editor were received listing names and cases of such pickups during the war. One such letter concerned McKennon's rescue. See *Time*, 11 January 1949, 5.
- 102 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Debden, Eng., 27 March 1945.
- 103 Operational Diary, 9 April 1945. For this action McKennon was recommended for the Silver Star.
- 104 Combat Report, 9 April 1945.
- 105 Report, Airdrome Strafing Methods, 16 June 1945.
- 106 Hall, *1000 Destroyed*, 272-273.
- 107 Combat Report, 16 April 1945.
- 108 Letter, Pierce McKennon to John Earl McKennon, Debden, Eng., undated.
- 109 Letter, Pierce McKennon to Mrs. P.D. McKennon, Debden, Eng., undated but apparently written in the summer of 1945.
- 110 W.D.A.G.O. 66-1.
- 111 *Southwest American*, 10 May 1946.
- 112 Interview by the author with Mrs. P. D. McKennon, Fort Smith, Ark., 22 August 1963. One son, Pierce, was born to this union.
- 113 Ibid.

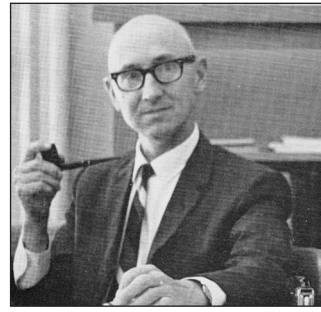
<sup>114</sup> *Southwest American*, 19 June 1947.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 June 1947.

<sup>116</sup> When the Air Force considered renaming Little Rock Air Force Base in the 1950s Pierce McKennon's name was seriously considered. However, since the names of several other Arkansas heroes were submitted to the Air Force Memorialization Committee no action was taken.

**Editor's Note:** *This article, which appeared in the Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring 1964): 3-35, was reprinted in this issue of the Journal with permission of the Arkansas Historical Association. Members of the Fort Smith Historical Society gratefully acknowledge this historical gift by the AHA to the people of Fort Smith. The editors of the Journal considered that with fifty years since Dr. Hudson researched, wrote, and published this article, many current residents in the city may not be aware of the breathtaking feats of Pierce W. McKennon and his*

*service in the cause of freedom during World War II.*



*A significant side story is about the author, James Jackson Hudson, a native of Charleston, Arkansas. He flew 191 missions over North Africa and France during World War II, thus participating in the kind of training, dedication, and combat in the skies that he*

*classically described in the McKennon article. J.J. Hudson gained a Ph.D. in History from University of California-Berkley after the war and renown as professor of History at the University of Arkansas and, from 1973 to 1986, as dean of the Graduate School. Hudson died in 1991 and is buried in Charleston.*

## Memorial and Commemorative Gifts Important to the Historical Society

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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.

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# Who Knew?

**W**ho Knew the Fort Smith Historical Society (FSHS) is meant to cover the history of "Fort Smith and the surrounding area?" In the last issue of the *Journal*, we said there will be, "More to follow," from Willie Ware Nance's *The Fighting Men of Arkansas*. The brave men and women during World War II in the last *Journal* were from our immediate area. Now, we get to veterans from our surrounding area.

\*\*\*



**T/4 Joseph Raymond Fry**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dock Fry, was born on July 4, 1909, at Charleston, Arkansas, and after completing his education at Charleston High School and Arkansas State Teachers College, was employed as a district manager of the *Southwest Times Record* prior to his entrance into the Army on October 26, 1942, with his

National Guard unit. Following completion of basic training at Camp Barkeley, Texas, and a specialized course at Fitzsimmons General Hospital, Denver, Colorado, where he qualified as a laboratory technician, he sailed for the South Pacific early in 1944 as a member of the 142nd Field Artillery, Medical Corps. Overseas twenty-one months, he served through the New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, Southern Philippines and Luzon campaigns and one month after the close of the war with the Army of Occupation in Japan, and was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with designation for all engagements. He was honorably discharged at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, on November 5, 1945.

US WWII Draft Card; Serial Number 00750; order 687; Name of Person who will always know your address, Mrs. Sallie Fry, Mother; Employed by self, Charleston, Franklin, AR; Signed J. Raymond Fry. Born: July 4, 1901, Charleston, Franklin County, Ark; Death: June 29, 1986, Fort Smith, Sebastian, Arkansas; Burial, Charleston, Franklin, Arkansas, Garden of Memories Cemetery. Marker: FRY, J Raymond, WWII, married January 13, 1942, to Myrtle M. (August 15, 1920-March 15, 1999). (p. 963).



**NURSE KILLED**—Lieutenant Josephine Kearney, 24-year old army nurse with the American Forty-first Evacuation hospital in Germany, was injured fatally in a fall from a horse, and funeral service was held for her Oct. 17 at a Catholic church in Heidelberg. A graduate of St. Edwards Mercy hospital nurses' school, she was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Kearney of Paris.

**2nd Lt. Josephine Kearney**, daughter of Frank and Elizabeth Kearney, born at Weleetka, Oklahoma, May 28, 1921, moving to Arkansas in 1936. She received her education by attending St. Michael School, Henryetta, Oklahoma; Wewoka (Oklahoma) Public School and Paris (Arkansas) High School, and graduated from St. Scholastica, Fort Smith. Entering the Army Nurse Corps October 1, 1942, she received basic training at Brookes General Hospital, Ft. Sam Houston. After ten months' training in the United States, Lt. Kearney



**JO KEARNEY,  
NURSING  
GRADUATION  
PHOTO**

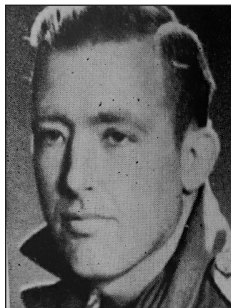
departed August 20, 1943, for England, and served twenty months in England, two months in France, and four months with the Army of Occupation, 130th Station Hospital in Germany. She was accidentally killed October 16, 1945, at Marburg, Germany. She was survived by her parents, who lived in Paris, Arkansas. (p. 966)

According to the 1940 Census, Josephine's father, Frank, was a mail carrier with the Paris, Arkansas, Post Office; her mother,

Elizabeth, worked home, household. Josephine's siblings: sister, Rosemary, 12; brother, James, 11; sister, Frances, 5; sister, Lyetta, 8 and sister, June, 3 years old. A later report: Josephine, "Jo" was injured fatally in a fall from a horse, and funeral service was held for her October 17 at a Catholic church in Heidelberg. A graduate of St. Edward Mercy hospital nurses' school. Application for Headstone



or Marker, November 11, 1948, Frank Kearney, (father), Paris, Logan County, Arkansas. Reburied Mount Calvary Cemetery, Paris, Logan County, Arkansas.



**1st/Sgt. Charles Cecil Johnston**, son of Mrs. Dan W. Johnston of Clarksville, Johnson County, Arkansas, was born on December 12, 1917, in Walla Walla, Washington, and moved with his parents to Arkansas in 1919. He attended Clarksville High School and the University of Arkansas before entering military service on

December 23, 1940, with the National Guard. He received basic training at Camp Robinson and in January 1942, he was sent to the Aleutian Islands with Company E, 153rd Infantry. Returning to this country in July 1943, he was sent to Italy the following spring and there took part in the Rome-Arno and Po Valley campaigns. With a total of thirty-three months of foreign service, he was awarded the American Defense Service Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Asiatic-Pacific Ribbon, with one Battle Star, European Theater Ribbon, Sharpshooter's Medals (rifle and carbine) and a Marksman's Medal (.45 caliber pistol). He was honorably discharged from the service July 11, 1945, at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. (p. 956)

World War II Draft, Serial No. 2073; Order No. 1123-A living 311 Grandview Avenue, Clarksville, Arkansas. Birth Date—December 12, 1917, Walla Walla, Washington. Died June 28, 1993. Interred, Oakland Memorial Cemetery, Clarksville, Johnson County, Arkansas. Spouse: August 28, 1956, married Myra King Nesline.



**Cpl. Johnny E. Bock**, born on January 27, 1922, son of John and Bozena Bock of Clarksville, Arkansas. Johnny Bock attended Clarksville High School and completed his education at Arkansas Tech at Russellville and College of the Ozarks at Clarksville. Entered the military service on October 14, 1942, trained at Camp Robinson,

Arkansas, and became an administrative specialist serving with Infantry units. After two years in this country, he was sent to the Italian front in August 1944, and during his eight months overseas served in the Rome-Arno campaign and was awarded the Good Conduct Medal and the European Theater Ribbon with one Battle Star. Corporal Bock holds the Infantry and Marksmanship Medals. Honorably discharged at Le Garde General Hospital, New

Orleans, Louisiana, July 11, 1945.(P. 958). Death November 18, 2002, burial Oakland Memorial Cemetery, Clarksville, Arkansas. Marriage October 10, 1947, to Joyzelle Bock (March 23, 1920-September 3, 1991).



**Ship's Cook 1/c Gordon Clifton Tilley**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Tilley, was born at Russellville, Arkansas, on May 20, 1915. He received his education by attending Paris Grade School. Entering the Navy on September 11, 1942, he received boot training at Great Lakes, Illinois, and by attending Commissary Steward's

School and Service School at Naval Training Station, San Diego, he qualified for ship's cook, first class. Leaving the United States November 4, 1942, he served in the South Pacific theater two and a half years. He received an honorable discharge at Memphis, Tennessee, December 11, 1945, and lived in Paris, Arkansas. (p. 964)



**T/4 William J. Reitz**, son of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Reitz, was born June 16, 1923, in Toluca, Illinois, moving to Arkansas in 1926. He attended Paris High School and the University of Arkansas. Entering the Cavalry, Corps of Engineers, December 12, 1942, he received basic training at Fort Riley, Kansas, and attended

Service School at the University of Minnesota, qualifying as personnel technician. After serving in the United States for more than three years, he was honorably discharged March 2, 1946, at Fort Dix, New Jersey. (p. 972)

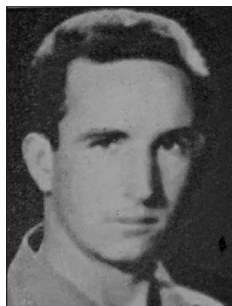
Parents, George W. and Winifred Reitz, per 1930 Census. Lived in Paris, Logan County, at time of marriage. Marriage October 9, 1951; Spouse Ruth Maus; Atkins, Pope County, Arkansas; Death December 2, 1997, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. Burial in Atkins Catholic Cemetery, Atkins, Pope, Arkansas.



**M/Sgt. William R. Mabile Jr.**, son of William and Ila Mabile of Booneville, was born at Winnfield, Louisiana, on February 21, 1912, and moved with his parents to Arkansas in 1922. He attended the Monroe, Oklahoma, and Booneville schools and South Side High School in Memphis, Tennessee, before

enlisting in the Regular Army on July 15, 1931. He received his Army training at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama, and the Air Corps Technical School at Rantoul, Illinois, and is an aircraft maintenance technician. Arriving in Brisbane, Australia, in September 1942, Sergeant Mabile saw three years of foreign service, taking part in the New Guinea and Philippine campaigns. He is the holder of the Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Ribbon with two Battle Stars, Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one Bronze Star, American Defense Service Ribbon and the Victory Ribbon. He has re-enlisted in the Army. He and his wife, Thelma Vonceil, had one child. (p. 973)

According to the 1940 Census, his parents and a sister, Mary (21) lived in Bonneville. In 1935 family was living in Pratt, Kansas. William Mabile Sr. was a car inspector for Rock Island Railroad. 1920 Census, family in Police Jury Ward 2, Grant Louisiana William R Mabile, Ila Mabile, Harrold Mabile, 13; John B. Mabile, 11; William Mabile, 8; Mary E Mabile, 1. U.S. Social Security Deaths Index, William Mabile, Birth February 21, 1912. Death January 1984.

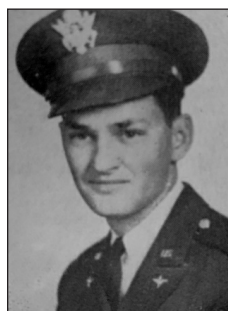


**Cpl. Winford Richey**, son of Mollie Richey and the late W.R. Richey, was born at Ratcliff, Arkansas, December 12, 1919. He received his education by attending Paris High School. Entering the Field Artillery January 7, 1943, he received basic training at Camp Maxey, Texas, qualifying for gunner. After seven months'

training in the United States, he departed August 21, 1943, attached to 937th Field Artillery Battalion for North Africa and participated in Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Rhineland, Southern France, and Central Europe Campaigns. Corporal Richey received the American Defense Service Ribbon and European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon with one Silver Star and one Bronze Arrowhead. Returning to the United States October 12, 1945, he was honorably discharged at Camp Chaffee, Sebastian, Arkansas, October 22, 1945. He lived in Paris, Arkansas, with his wife, Virginia. (p. 966)

At the time of enlistment Winford R. Richey worked for Paris Hardware Company as a hardware salesman. Per his Draft Reg. Card.

**Maj. John Jefferson Watkins**, son of Ada and William Watkins, was born April 8, 1918, in Mount Ida, Arkansas. He attended Mount Ida High school, Arkansas Polytechnic College, and Louisiana State University, receiving a bachelor's of science degree in forestry. A



member of the National Guard since January 1937, he volunteered for duty in the Air Corps July 15, 1941. Major Watkins received primary training at Phoenix, Arizona; basic, Baker Field, California; and advanced, Mather Field, California, and attended Boeing Aeronautics School, qualifying as pilot, B-25, and squadron commanding officer.

He departed August 6, 1942, for New Guinea, and remained overseas for a year and eight months, participating in campaigns of Papua, Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea, New Britain, North Solomons, and Buna. He was awarded American Defense and American Theater Ribbons, Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with five Oak Leaf Clusters, Victory Ribbon, and Presidential Citation with one Oak Leaf Cluster. Major Watkins was still in service at last report. His wife, Forrest C., and their children, lived in Mount Ida, Arkansas. (p. 978)

Death, Mount Ida, April 7, 1988, buried Whittington Cemetery, Mount Ida, Montgomery County, Arkansas. (Find a Grave, marker photo)



**Seaman 1/c John Louis Zimpel**, son of Joseph and Regina Zimpel of Clarksville, Arkansas, was born at Sterling, Oklahoma on January 23, 1918, moving to Arkansas with his family in 1920 and attending Clarksville High School, Subiaco (Arkansas) Academy, and Arkansas Tech at Russellville. Entering the Coast

Guard on October 12, 1943, he received boot training at St. Augustine, Florida, and later attended Aerographer's Mate School. A veteran of two years' service with the Coast Guard, Seaman Zimpel served as a cook during this time and received the customary service decorations. He was honorably discharged on July 16, 1945, at St. Louis, Missouri. He and his wife, Virginia, have three children. He is a brother of Ensign, Joseph W. Zimpel, also of the Coast Guard, who was lost at sea while upholding the highest traditions of the Coast Guard. (p. 957)

Birth January 23, 1918, Sterling, Comanche County, Oklahoma; death May 18, 1999, Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas.

**Ens. Joseph Werner Zimpel**, son of Joseph and Regina Zimpel of Clarksville, Arkansas, was born at Sterling, Oklahoma, on September 11, 1916. He completed his education at College of the Ozarks and United States



Military Academy at West Point, New York. Entering the Coast Guard September 21, 1941, he received boot training in Ellis Island, New York, and attended Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut. He was assigned sea duty August 1, 1944, aboard the Coast Guard cutter, USS *Jackson*.

On September 14, 1944, while escorting the USS *Worthington* (which had been partially disabled by an enemy torpedo), the *Jackson* encountered a hurricane and capsized during the storm. The crew succeeded in launching several life rafts in the heavy seas and abandoned ship. For two days the gallant little band of thirty-six seamen struggled against the adverse elements. On the second night, Ensign Zimpel and sixteen others were swept into the sea and lost. Ensign Zimpel is survived by his immediate family, including his brother, John Louis Zimpel, who also served in the Coast Guard. (p. 957)  
Status: Missing East Coast Memorial Manhattan, New York County, NY, Tablets of the Missing.



**T/4 Murry Carlton Johnson,** son of Edith May Holbrook and the late J. R. Johnson of Mena, Arkansas, was born at Pike, Arkansas, on October 16, 1910. He completed his education at Hot Springs High School and was employed as a service station operator until entering the Army on May 16, 1942. Sent to Camp

Wolters, Texas, for basic training, he later completed courses at the Auto Mechanics School at Camp Wolters and Auto Mechanics School in the Tank Destroyer School at Camp Hood, Texas. Sergeant Johnson became a crew chief of repair shops and after service in this country with the 819 Tank Destroyer Battalion was sent to the South Pacific theater in March 1944. Overseas a total of twenty-one months, he served successively in the Hawaiian Islands and the Palau Islands and took part in the Western Pacific campaign. Holder of the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with the one Battle Star, Good Conduct Medal and the Victory Medal. Honorably discharged at Fort Bliss, Texas, on December 6, 1945. His wife was the former Agnes Leland Gilbert. (p. 984)

Again, we would like to thank the family of Pfc. Willie Ware Nance for their generous donation of the book, *The Fighting Men of Arkansas*.

Pfc. Nance lost his life while fighting for his country's

freedom. After we have completed our research, the book will become a part of the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith Pebley Center archives in the Boreham Library.

The Fort Smith Historical Society includes Fort Smith and the surrounding area. We have chosen soldiers from the surrounding areas to highlight in this edition.

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### Send Queries

Fort Smith Historical Society has a Facebook page. We receive queries through the message section on our page. Or we can be reached by sending an email to: [info@FortSmithHistory.org](mailto:info@FortSmithHistory.org).

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We keep confidences when doing research. We do come across information that would be of interest to our reader at the same time.

I have heard from a couple of sources that Kay Woodward was a well-liked and fair Matron of the Rosalie Tilles Children's Home.

She was a member of St. Boniface Church, born 1880, died April 1, 1966, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas. Buried Calvary Cemetery.

If anyone has a photo of Rosalie Tilles Children's Home before it was modernized, before the porches were glassed in, please let us know.

*Southwest-Times Record*, Fort Smith, Arkansas, Sunday, March 30, 1930, p. 19.

### LARGE ADDITION TO CHILDREN'S HOME IS COMPLETED

Built with private subscriptions, this new annex to the Rosalie Tilles Children's Home will enable the home to decrease its waiting list and almost double its capacity of approximately ninety children.

The annex, of fireproof construction, cost approximately \$22,000.

The arrangement of the rooms and even the furniture is especially for the care of children and was worked out by Miss Margaret Baird, matron, and Carnall Wheeler, of the architectural firm of Bassham (sic) and Wheeler.

Just below the main floor may be seen the basement playroom, where the children may play in rainy and cold weather.

Both the first and second floors have sleeping porches and dressing rooms. The annex was built so as to make a wing on the north side complete the home assembly.



**ANNEX WHERE EVERYTHING IS FITTED  
FOR TINY HANDS TO BE OPENED SOON  
AT ROSALIE TILLES CHILDREN'S HOME  
All Fixtures in Addition Are Arranged with Idea That  
They Must Be Small for Users' Little Bodies**

By John Griffiee

Within the next few days one of the Fort Smith's best institutions will put into operation an ideal children's home—where even the handrails on the stairs are lowered so that tiny hands may grasp them easily.

The new annex to the Rosalie Tilles Children's home at 619 North Nineteenth Street at last is a reality.

Years of planning months of preparation and study of plans and weeks of actual building the like of which does not exist in the state.

It is a building where a person with a little imagination can see happy children bounding down halls prepared especially for tiny feet—snuggling in their bed arranged for youthful healthy bodies dressing in rooms where even the clothes hooks are put on a level with short little bodies bathing in tubs built shallow and diminutive persons—a veritable house in the land of the Lilliputians.

But Gulliver never saw a house like this on his travels. Its equipment may be especially for youngsters, but in size it corresponds with the original part of the Rosalie Tilles Children's Home. Two stories in height, the annex is a perfect complement to the original structure.

**Union is Perfected**

In fact, the casual visitor cannot tell where the old part stops and the new begins. The brick is the same, the mortar texture the same, and even the design is carried out.

Inside is where the difference is apparent. A hallway separates the old and new sections and is an entrance designed especially designed for the children. The new annex is floored almost entirely with terrazzo, and a few strokes with a broom and mop cleans the most troublesome spot.

Miss Margaret Baird, matron, points out that the saving in labor alone for cleaning floors will more than pay for the additional cost in flooring in a short time. The first room is a receiving room equipped with bed, chairs and bureau. Across the hall is the matron's suite with private bath and bedroom. Glassed and screened the suite offers a view to the kiddies' sleeping porch on the same floor giving the matron control over all the children on the floor without leaving her room. On the sleeping porch are 18 beds, all arranged in order.

On the south side where the rays of the sun penetrate all day long is the recreational room for the children equipped with lockers and play necessities. Across from the sleeping porch are the dressing room and toilets where every article, every hook, handle, table, and wash basin are placed from

six to 12 inches lower than is customary in order that youthful hands may reach and perform their own tasks.

**Complete View Provided**

The doors are so arranged that by standing in one the matron may see every child in any room. No nooks and crannies in this building. Every door has plenty of glass—everything is in plain view.

In the basement is the heating plant, where, by thermostatic control the heating of the entire building, including the old part, is regulated. Directly under the sleeping porch on the first floor is a play porch, half underground and half above. Where the youngsters can play rain or shine.

On the second floor is another sleeping porch with 24 beds, a dressing room similar to that on the first floor, bath room with five tubs and toilets. Then there is an extra room.

Nearby is another sleeping porch with 14 beds, built especially for the younger girls.

**Conservation Idea Held**

This home is designed for conservation—heat, health time and energy. Naturally the sleeping porches are never heated. The children go from the porch to their warm dressing rooms to dress. Night and day lights have been installed and emergency gas light fixtures have been installed. These fixtures are the only pieces of equipment in the building which have been put far out of the reach of tiny inquiring hands.

All sleeping porches facing east—for coolness.

The annex forms a connecting link with the infirmary. Completely equipped is this infirmary and completely isolated from the remaining part of the home.

The plans and specifications were prepared by Carnall Wheeler of the architectural firm of Bassham and Wheeler with the help of Miss Baird.

The cost of the annex was \$22,000 all paid by private subscriptions. Although the home is one of the 15 participating agencies in the Community Chest none of the funds used in building the annex came from the Chest. The building was constructed by J. H. Reddick, general contractor.

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*Mary Jeanne Black, Journal Inquiry Coordinator, writes the regular department, Who Knew? Material in her article are highlights from research requests and emailed exchanges to the Fort Smith Historical Society.*

# 1920 Newspapers

The opening of the roaring twenties decade found Fort Smith residents once again fighting an epidemic of flu. Though shorter, and less deadly than its 1918 predecessor, it nevertheless gripped the city and led officials to place safety ahead of commerce. But good news for the city and its citizens was just around the corner. The federal government, at the urging of Congressman Otis T. Wingo, finally released the deed to the remainder of its land holdings. The federal jail, commissary and surrounding land now belonged to the city and would be used first, to serve the needs of its least fortunate citizens. Baseball returned with a new owner, determined to put Fort Smith on the Western League's map. And that wasn't the only league of significance in this important year. For it was in this first year of women's eligibility to vote, that Fort Smith opened its own chapter of the "League of Women Voters." Even though Prohibition was shutting down bars and taverns, businesses boomed. A new ball field was under construction, the Masons found a new home and, if lucky, the Garrison Avenue Bridge might even be completed.

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## Thursday, January 1, 1920

### NEGRO BADLY HURT IN AUTO ACCIDENT

Jon Haney, colored, who lives at 720 South Thirteenth street, lies at Sparks Memorial hospital seriously hurt, the result of injuries sustained when he was struck by a Ford car driven by J. L. Beebe, a traveling salesman at Texas Corner Wednesday evening, 6:30 o'clock.

WANTED—Shoe salesman for Arkansas 6 per cent

## Today Is the Last Day of the Poe-Herden Price Thaw Shoe Sale

Hundreds have taken advantage of this sale, knowing that the regular Poe Herden stock is on sale. Standard brands, the season's best styles. Buy now for the remaining season's wear as well as next fall.



commission; specialty line work shoes. W. L. Hutchison, Box 88, Fort Smith Ark.

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## Thursday, January 15, 1920

### OLD FEDERAL JAIL BECOMES PROPERTY OF FORT SMITH

Fort Smith received a magnificent gift from the United States government Wednesday, when the senate passed the bill introduced by Congressman Otis Wingo, conveying the old federal jail property to the city. The bill had passed the house some weeks ago.

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## Friday, January 16, 1920

### FORMER DEPUTY U.S. MARSHALS, MEN WHO CIVILIZED THE SOUTHWEST, LIVE HISTORY OF THE PAST

At a recent enthusiastic meeting of the Ex-Deputy United States marshals' association, at which more than fifty of the former officers were present from a number of towns in Oklahoma and Arkansas, a considerable portion of the afternoon was devoted to talking over the old days and exchanging reminiscences of the times when every deputy took his life in his hands when it came his turn to mount his horse and start west. At the meeting there were men who had not met for months or years, and it was but natural that some of the old battles should be fought over.

Until Oklahoma became a state in 1907, the outlaw country embraced all the country between Kansas and Texas and from the west line of Arkansas to about as far toward the setting sun as dry land extended. And it was "some" outlaw country!

Bad men from all parts of the United States and from many foreign countries headed for the "no man's land" where they felt reasonably safe from the law's long arm that was always reaching for them.

The talk of the ex-marshals covered the whole time from removal of the district court from Van Buren to Fort Smith, until Oklahoma statehood, when the jurisdiction of the greatest court in history was divided and the deadly warfare

between outlaw and citizen was practically over. Matters discussed at the meeting are known to the older citizens of Fort Smith. But the younger generation knows but little of the struggle that was necessary before the country west of the city was safe for the law abiding population that now lives there.

### NEW 'MONEY' COMES WITH HIGHER FARES ON LOCAL TROLLEYS

Those who ride on the street cars, any line this morning, must either contribute a "jitney" and a copper or be supplied with the little aluminum tokens which represent a car fare. In one respect the new car fare is close akin to Chinese money in that there are holes through it. The little disc is about the size of a silver dime, made of aluminum and with a capital "F" stenciled in a center hole. On the obverse side is the legend "Good for one fare," and on the reverse the name of the company.

Thursday afternoon there was a great rush of patrons to purchase the little discs and save the discount. They purchased nine for 50 cents and more generally nineteen for \$1. It was stated yesterday by Manager D. C. Green that all conductors on the cars will carry the fare tokens to supply patrons up to fifty cent purchases.

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### Tuesday, January 20, 1920

#### MIKE SACKS BRINGS "GIRL SHOW" HERE

Mike Sacks introduced a great "girl show" to Fort Smith amusement lovers last night at the New theatre, at the opening performance of "O Baby"—and it was some show.

Not only is "O Baby" really different but the girls are pulchritudinous, the music is catchy and the comedy is actually good, the ensemble of these three essentials providing an entertainment which pleased the big audience at the New last night. Sack's was at his best—and that in itself means a lot to those who know the man—and he was excellently supported. Beatrice Miller is the leading lady—and she let everybody know where she stood, in a song which made quite a hit. Sacks and Miss Miller, with the almost 100 other men and girls of the cast provided a show which is a novelty here—a sort of combination cabaret-burlesque-musical potpourri, which kept one on the emotional jump, watching the curves and curlicues of the show itself and the actors (and actresses) therein. The folks who saw the show last night still chuckle some more this morning and made plain their satisfaction.

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### Thursday, January 22, 1920

#### LOCAL PLANT BUILDS HOMES FOR EMPLOYEES

C. P. Zenor, president of the Model Window Glass company is another employer of labor who has taken the matter of providing homes, so far as his employees are concerned, and is building a number of residences in Midland Heights.

Officer Witcher, of the police department, who with Capt. Gordon has been checking over the list of building permits in the city, says that Mr. Zenor has completed two residences at Midland Heights on Armour avenue near Stop Eight and that carpenters are at work on five more in the same locality. All seven are for workmen at the Model Glass plant.

Officer Witcher further states that a number of fine residences are building in Belle avenue and Humphrey Place near the Little Rock car line. In north Twelfth street, two fine modern houses are going in.

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### Saturday, January 24, 1920

#### EX-SOLDIER OF THIS CITY IS SUICIDE

Despondent, afflicted with melancholia, in an unbalanced mental condition and perhaps suffering from the effects of shell shock, Burley W. Henson, aged 26, a returned soldier who had seen active service in France during the war, ended his life with a razor at his home, 600 Lexington avenue, 1:30 o'clock, Saturday afternoon.

It had been known to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Henson, and to other members of the family that the young



man has been in disturbed, downcast mental condition ever since his return from Europe last August, but it was not at any time suspected that he might end his life. Just after noon Saturday he and his brother Mitchell Henson prepared to come down town, the young man remarking that he wanted to shave before he left the house. He went upstairs to his room, to shave as was thought, and when he did not come down within a reasonable time his brother went to call him.

Entering the room, brother saw a ghastly sight. The boy lay on the floor with his throat cut, the floor reddened with his blood. He was dead when discovered, and must have passed away almost instantly after inflicting the fatal wound.

Dr. Hugh Johnson, coroner, was summoned and decided that no jury was necessary. An ambulance was called and the body of the unfortunate young man was removed to the Fentress Undertaking parlors where it is held pending arrangements for funeral.

Burley W. Henson was a telegraph operator by trade and unmarried. He had not worked at the keys since returning to the United States, but had assisted at the mines of his father, who is a coal operator at Jenny Lind. He is known to have been in a despondent mental state continually since returning, though his physical health was good.

He was drafted into the United States army May 21, 1918, and went to Camp Pike for training along with Harry C. Williamson of the Fort Smith fire department who knew him well. He and Mr. Williamson trained together with Co. A. Third Training battalion, though they did not cross the seas together, but went at different times. Young Henson landed in France about September 1 and was assigned to the Fifth division. He took part in some heavy fighting in the Argonne Forest. After the Armistice, he was sent with the Fifth to Germany as a part of the army of occupation. He got home last August.

Besides his parents, Mr. Henson leaves five brothers and two sisters. The brothers are Mitchell and Lester Henson, both of Jenny Lind, Taylor Henson of Port Arthur, Texas, and William and Allan Henson of this city. The sisters are Misses Dollie and Mattie Henson, who also live with the parents. The funeral arrangements are being delayed until the arrival of the brother who lives in Texas.

\*\*\*

**Saturday, January 24, 1920**

#### **WOMEN VOTERS OF FORT SMITH FORM POLITICAL ORGANIZATION**

A large attendance and much enthusiasm marked the organization of the League of Women Voters at the

Carnegie Library Friday afternoon. The meeting began with an invocation by Dr. Pand G. Preston, which was followed by a splendid speech by J. S. Parks, president of the Business Men's club, his subject being "Citizenship."

Judge Daniel Hon spoke eloquently and a length on "The Effectiveness of Women's Vote in National and State Government."

A constitution and by-laws modeled upon those of the national organization were drafted and endorsed.

The League was organized under the auspices of the Sebastian County Equal Suffrage committee, of which Mrs. Stella Brizzolara is chairman, Officers of the newly formed league follow:

Mrs. Stella Brizzolara, chairman; Mrs. A. H. Raymond, first vice chairman; Mrs. Ralph Speer, second vice chairman; Mrs. Harry Eshelman, secretary; Miss Margaret Boles, treasurer; Mrs. C. E. Carstarphen, recording secretary; Mrs. A. S. Deacon, chairman publicity, Mrs. Kate Thibaut, chairman finance committee, Mrs. R. Scott Robertson, chairman membership committee.

\*\*\*

## "A Portable Clothes Closet"



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TRADE-MARK

## WARDROBE TRUNKS

That's it exactly. You can go from one place to another without thought of your wearing apparel. When you open your Hartman you'll find everything in order. You don't have to unpack, the garment you want can be taken out without disturbing the rest. Also full line of hand luggage, purses, bill folds and other leather goods.

Expert Work-  
manship assured



W.H. KERWIN  
Harness Trunk Co.

Leather Goods  
Repairing

**Wednesday, January 28, 1920**

**MAGNOLIA TREES IN CEMETERY  
HERE GIVEN APPROVAL**

Mrs. Daniel Hon, president of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, received a telegram from Congressman Otis Wingo Tuesday, stating that the government heartily approves the plan of the U. D. C., to plant Magnolia trees in the national cemetery in honor of Fort Smith soldiers who lost their lives in the great war.

This move was sponsored by the U. D. C. some time ago. The plan of the organization includes the planting of magnolia trees in honor of the living as well as of the dead soldiers. It is felt that by thus setting the city with these beautiful evergreen trees, not only will a fitting memorial be provided for all ex-servicemen, but the city greatly beautified. It was because the magnolia is evergreen that it is selected.

It is proposed that the planting shall be done as early in March as the weather will permit at which time a fitting program and patriotic service will be held. It is desired that there be at least as many trees set as there were enlisted men in Fort Smith. Great interest is being shown in the matter by many not connected with the U. D. C. organization, and the plan is meeting with much favor.

**NEW CASES OF INFLUENZA  
CAUSE OFFICIALS CONCERN**

Members of the board of health stated Tuesday that there are some cases of influenza in the city as reported by local physicians. It was stated that official information regarding only six cases have been received, all of them, according to the board members, considered mild. It is known however that there are many more cases than this of either mild flu or unusually virulent colds.

The board has had the matter of a possible epidemic of flu in the city under discussion for three days, yet on Saturday it was reported by Dr. A. A. McKelvey, district health officer, that so far as he could learn, there was no flu here at that time.

Since then however, it has developed that many cases exist here and it is feared that there is danger of a spread of the disease. The board of health claims to be watching the situation very closely and will take whatever steps are necessary to check any possible spread of the disease.

Six cases of influenza affecting an equal number of employees of the *Southwest American* are known to be an actuality. Jack Decker, managing editor, was removed to a local hospital yesterday. William Hamilton, Ray Carter, of the Mechanical force and S. B. Bradley, head book keeper are victims of the malady at the present time. D. B. Adams of the mechanical department has just recovered from a

severe attack. Sam Gearheart advertising manager suffered with the disease for two weeks, returning to his duties a few days ago.

**WORK ON HARDING PLANT  
ADDITION STARTS MONDAY**

It is learned that the material for construction of the new factory of the H. C. Harding Glass company is on the ground and that the work of erecting the big plant will begin next Monday.

The new factory is to have sixty blowers, and the present plant of the company, which has 48 blowers, is to be increased to the capacity of the new factory, so that when both are running full capacity not less than 120 blowers will be busy turning out the product of the plant.

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**Friday, January 30, 1920**

**"FLU" SITUATION HERE GROWING MORE  
SERIOUS, BOARD TO ACT TODAY**

The influenza epidemic in Fort Smith is not abating. It is growing more acute. One hundred and five new cases were reported Thursday to Dr. P. A. Riddler, president of the board of health. This number is 30 more than shown in the report of Wednesday.

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**Sunday, February 1, 1920**

**ANTI-"FLU" STARTED BY CITY,  
LID CLAMPED DOWN**

Sounding the warning "that influenza is not to be treated lightly," the local board of health clamped down the lid on places of amusement at 6 o'clock last evening, in its first definite step towards checking the malady which officials declare has now reached the epidemic stage in Fort Smith.

Schools and churches are not affected by the order. Eighty seven cases of influenza were reported Saturday,

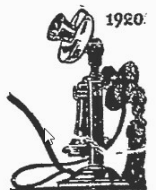
We Are As Near to You As the Nearest Phone  
Phone Fort Smith **778** Phone Fort Smith

Our Ambulance is the most modern and up-to-date Motor Ambulance in the country, thoroughly equipped with every modern appliance for the ease and comfort of the patient.

All Calls Answered Promptly  
Day or Night

**Ossar A. Fentress Co.**

1920.



bringing the entire total to date to 513 cases. Places ordered closed may not re-open until the health board authorizes such action.

Street car service yesterday was in keeping with the order issued Friday. When a car filled to capacity, the crew refused to stop to take on passengers unless there were passengers to descend. In many instances it was amusing to watch the expressions on the faces of patrons who intended boarding a particular line, when the cars passed them up.

The theatres closed their doors promptly at 6 o'clock, posting upon their front doors copies of the order of the board.

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## Thursday, February 5, 1920

### DRASTIC MEASURES TO FIGHT THE FLU EFFECTIVE TODAY

The district board of health today will begin drastic action to combat the continued spread of influenza in this city, and will start a concentrated fight on the epidemic, a fight in which it will be assisted in every way possible by the city and county authorities, the local chapter of the Red Cross and the citizens of Fort Smith generally, that the disease may be wiped out here at the earliest possible moment.

The period of watchful waiting extending over the past several days, came to climax yesterday when a total of 124 new cases of influenza were officially reported at the office of Dr. P. A. Riddler, president of the board of health—this being only a partial list, as several physicians were so busy on calls that their reports had not been received last night.

Among cases reported last night were a number which were of more serious type than any reported heretofore during the present visitation and in addition it is declared that several cases of influenza reported earlier in the epidemic, had developed into pneumonia—a condition which caused no surprise to those physicians who have feared all along that such developments would occur.

Preparations for a fight of the most vigorous nature have been under way for the past several days in anticipation of serious developments. The health authorities have been perfecting their plan of campaign, the city and county officials with the health authorities and the women of the Red Cross have been busy, not only in caring for persons already ill, in making face masks for probable use by trained nurses and qualified helpers, but also in organizing forces of nurses and caretakers, as far as possible to be ready for any emergency.

No official statement was issued last night by any of the authorities as to the action to be taken today, when the

board of health will make known its decision as to the means to be taken to combat the disease now so generally prevalent over the city.

There were conferences and consultations Wednesday and last night by the authorities, in which the situation was thoroughly discussed and it was made known authoritatively that the time has passed for further study of the conditions here—that the time is at hand for action and for most vigorous action, the nature of which will be disclosed today.

### Emergency Hospital

At the headquarters of the Red Cross, it was announced that arrangements have been perfected for the opening this morning of an emergency hospital for the care and treatment of influenza patients. This emergency hospital will be maintained and conducted by the Red Cross on the top floor of the main building at the county farm, two matrons will be in charge, and there will be caretakers qualified and in numbers sufficient to give proper attention to every patient.

## Order of the District Board of Health

On account of the epidemic of influenza now prevalent in this community, the District Board of Health finds that it is necessary to prohibit all public gatherings and assemblies. Therefore, until further notice, it is ordered that all Pool Halls and Billiard Halls; all Theaters and Moving Picture Shows; all Churches, Schools and Lodges be and remain closed; that all social gatherings and all public meetings are prohibited; that the congregation of persons into crowds, either in stores, club rooms or on the streets, or elsewhere is prohibited. The loading of street cars beyond seating capacity is prohibited.

Dated this 5th day of February, 1920.

DISTRICT BOARD OF HEALTH

P. A. RIDDLER, President.

T. A. BAYLEY, Secretary.

LAWRENCE WRIGHT, County Judge

Attention of the public is called to the ordinance prohibiting spitting in street cars, on the streets, etc. This ordinance will be rigidly enforced.

All persons are urged as far as possible to remain at home and to assist in checking the spread of the epidemic.



The emergency hospital is designed for the service of such influenza patients who cannot for any reason receive proper care and attention at home, and who are unable to undergo expenses of treatment at any of the private hospitals of the city.

#### **Must Have Volunteers**

There was generous response yesterday to the appeal in the Southwest American for volunteer workers to aid in caring for the sick and the stricken families, but although several women offered their services and many others rendered assistance in other forms, it was declared last night by Mrs. R. S. Robertson of the Red Cross that there is need for many more women workers to serve as caretakers in the homes of the ill.

"It is not only Fort Smith we must look after," declared Mrs. Robertson, "We are getting calls from towns near by which are sorely in need of our assistance, and we people of Fort Smith cannot allow our near neighbors and close friends to ask of us and not receive all that we can give them in their hour of need."

In addition to sending assistance to Greenwood yesterday, the Red Cross took up the work of obtaining several caretakers willing to go to a mining town near Paris, where many families are suffering with influenza and badly need nursing. Two or three capable women are needed and Mrs. Robertson hopes to obtain volunteers for this work in time to send them to Paris early this morning. Persons desiring and willing to thus help in the fight against the disease may telephone Mrs. Robertson, either at her home or at the Red Cross headquarters.

#### **War Veteran Volunteer**

Two local physicians tendered their services yesterday to assist the stricken people of Greenwood, Dr. Lite and Dr. Blair. Dr. Lite only recently received his discharge from the army and has been in Fort Smith only a few days, having come here to establish himself in practice. He went to Greenwood with two caretakers.

From Greenwood, Mayor McCord telephoned expressions of gratitude on behalf of the Greenwood people for the quick and substantial response made by Fort Smith to the appeal for help to be extended the stricken people of that section.

"The situation here is no worse" declared Mayor McCord. "And we are more cheerful today, although one of our citizens succumbed to the disease. We expect a physician from Little Rock in the morning to help us out."

#### **Concerted Action Necessary**

It was made plain and strongly emphasized Wednesday night that with the indications of a more serious turn in conditions here, it will be absolutely necessary for every resident of Fort Smith to lend his or her active and consistent cooperation in the fight against a further spread of the disease.

Health authorities, municipal and county officials will issue orders which they intend shall be enforced to the letter, and for the enforcement of these orders it was declared, the rank and file of the manhood and womanhood of the city will be urged to lend every assistance.

#### **SCHMIDT SIGNS FIRST PLAYER FOR LOCAL CLUB**

"Smoke Em" John Dodson, six feet one, 180 pounds, right hand pitcher-outfielder, .285 hitter bats from left side, at present employed in a coal mine at Denning, Ark., is the first ball player signed up by Charley Schmidt, manager and owner of the Fort Smith, Western association club.

Dodson played in the Dakota league last season with the Aberdeen club. He won 23 games, lost four and tied two. In 1918 he played with the Allegheny Steel club (Steel League of Pennsylvania) and hung up the leading pitcher's record of the circuit.

Schmidt stated last evening that he has dozens of applications from all parts of the country, and that he has secured options on the Little Rock and Atlanta clubs for surplus players, which will be turned loose after the Southern league season is over.

The big problem with the Fort Smith baseball owner is the question of a park. The athletic stadium management is considering ways and means by which Schmidt may utilize the grounds and at the same time secure enough money to insure the financing of the club.

#### **TOMLIN IS VICTIM OF GREENWOOD FLU**

State Mine Inspector A. W. Tomlin died about 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon at his home at Greenwood after an illness of ten days, with the flu. He is survived by his widow and two children, all of whom also are ill with influenza.

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## Friday, February 6, 1920

### **MUST HAVE VOLUNTEER FLU WORKERS**

City schools suspended their sessions yesterday, church services and all meetings of clubs, lodges, and other organizations were ordered indefinitely postponed, following the issuance of a proclamation by the district board of health Thursday morning, it being announced that all such assemblages will be absolutely forbidden until a subsidence is brought about of the epidemic of influenza now prevalent in Fort Smith and its immediate environs.

School children assembled at the school houses as usual Thursday morning only to be informed that the schools would be closed and to return to their homes and to remain there, keeping off the streets, until the flu epidemic is overcome.

Stores will not be allowed to become crowded, street cars cannot carry more passengers than can be provided with seats and the usual gatherings of men on street cars, in soft drink establishments, and other places will not be tolerated. The police have received emphatic instructions to this effect and also have been ordered to strictly enforce the anti-spitting ordinances.

In Fort Smith yesterday, there were 125 new cases and two deaths. Mrs. K. Boyd and a young child of Mrs. Ruth Johnson, in the Greenwood district; it was declared there were other new cases reported within the past 24 hours.

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## Saturday, February 7, 1920

### **THOMAS B. WEAVER PROMINENT CITIZEN CLAIMED BY DEATH**

Thomas B. Weaver, aged 32, manager of the Fort Smith Brick company, and a member of the Federal Truck and Motor company, and public spirited citizen, died Thursday night at Sparks Memorial hospital of pneumonia, brought on by an attack of influenza.

It is requested that because of the influenza epidemic, no one except members of the family and most intimate friends attend the services.

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## Sunday, February 8, 1920

### **DOCTOR LINDSEY VICTIM OF FLU FUNERAL TODAY**

Dr. Edgar L. Lindsey, well known young physician of Fort Smith, died at his home, 722 North Eighteenth street, at 3 o'clock Saturday morning. Dr. Lindsey suffered an

attack of influenza which developed into pneumonia.

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## Sunday, February 15, 1920

### **CITY IS NOW WITHOUT AN AMUSEMENT PARK, BUILDINGS ARE RAZED**

Fort Smith's only amusement park has been discarded for all time, it was learned at the offices of the Fort Smith Light and Traction company Saturday. Every building at Electric park is being dismantled and in a few days nothing will remain but the fencing. No plans are being considered by traction officials for the establishment of an amusement place here in the immediate future to take the place of the park that is now being torn down.

All buildings, including the casino, pavilion and concessions, have been razed. The material is being sold by the company to contractors and individuals. This is going into the erection of residences and other buildings. Officials of the company explained that with the great demand for building materials, they believe they can do no better from a civic or financial standpoint than to dispose of the idle properties at the present time.

It is pointed out that the buildings were not frequently used and are deteriorating not only in value but in physical worth, and it is deemed advisable to make use of the lumber and other materials instead of allowing the buildings to slowly go to waste.

When asked if the company intended to cut up the park into tracts to be sold for residence sites, officers stated this has not yet been contemplated, but some disposition of the property would probably be made in the near future.

It is the belief of those in touch with the amusement situation in Fort Smith, that a bathing and amusement park will be established across the river on the Oklahoma side, immediately after the bridge is completed. Present indications point to an absence of a general amusement park here for this summer.

### **VICTOR ANDERSON GETS PROMOTION**

His hundreds of friends in this city will congratulate Victor Anderson on his promotion to a highly important position as general manager of one of the strongest and most important manufacturing enterprises in this city. Saturday he received official notice that the board of directors of the Fort Smith Brick company had unanimously named him for the position of manager, filling the vacancy caused by the death of Manager Tom Weaver.

The position is a highly important and responsible one for, with a force of about 75 employees working full time and orders booked considerably ahead, the plant and its products is carrying the name of Fort Smith as a

manufacturing city from the Gulf to far northern states and its shipments covering the south. Monday many carloads of brick from the Brick company plant will be billed out for points in central Colorado.

The new manager, Anderson, is a self-made Fort Smith boy who has made good from the early years as a clerk in the local post office.

Several years ago he joined the sales force of the Burke Brick company and with the sale and transfer of the company to the present owners, he has been continuously with the sales department of the company, reaching the sales manager last year.

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## Tuesday, February 17, 1920

### FORT SMITH BOY MEETS HIS DEATH ON BLIND BAGGAGE

Ralph Airhart, 16 year old son of Mrs. R. T. Airhart of 1924 Lexington avenue, Fort Smith, was found dead on a Missouri Pacific train at Hoxie Sunday morning according to information which was received by the Missouri Pacific officials and the city police here Monday.

Milton Cross, brother-in-law of the lad, went to Hoxie Monday night to take charge of the body and bring it here for burial.

Information as to the manner in which the boy met his death was not obtainable here but is presumable he was killed while riding the blind baggage, his head having been crushed, presumably by being caught in the vestibule cushions.

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## Wednesday, February 18, 1920

### NARROWLY ESCAPES ELECTROCUTION AT LOCAL POWER PLANT

F. W. Lee, chief engineer of the Fort Smith Light and Traction company, sustained terrible burns on his right arm and chest, and narrowly escaped electrocution in an accident at the company's power house about 4 o'clock Tuesday afternoon.

Mr. Lee, it is said, was charging an electrical machine, and took hold of a portion of the machinery through which a powerful current of electricity was passing. He received 3,500 volts through his right hand and arm. The shock knocked him unconscious. He was hurried in a Putman ambulance to the Sparks hospital where he was attended by Dr. H. C. King.

It is said that his right hand and arm are badly burned and

he may lose one of his fingers. His chest also shows deep marks of the fiery fluid. It was stated last night that the injured man had regained consciousness and that he seemed not to be in a critical condition. Mr. Lee lives at 515 North 1st. and has been in the employ of the company for some time.

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## Thursday, February 19, 1920

### OIL COMPANY WILL REBUILD

Plans are to be made immediately by the Gay Oil company for the rebuilding of its plant which was practically destroyed by fire early yesterday morning. Officials place total damages and loss at \$15,000.

The early morning blaze attracted hundreds to the scene, North Sixth and Q streets, but spectators did not at first approach within several blocks of the blazing kerosene, gasoline, and oil drums which were shooting flames high into the air, affording pyrotechnics of unusual intensity.

Firemen fought hard to keep the fire away from two large iron reservoir tanks, which contained gasoline and kerosene and by pouring three streams of water on them, successfully kept down the heat, and saved the contents and possibly, many homes adjacent to the scene, which would have undoubtedly gone up in smoke had the tanks exploded.

Danger to spectators was great from this feature of the fighting of the fire, but no one was injured during the several hours of fighting.

Origin of the fire is undetermined. It started, however, from a small outbuilding and spread to other frame buildings before the fire department arrived, with the exception of Company No 4, all other companies were called out.

# GAYMOBILE OIL

**Insures the Greatest Motive Power  
With a Minimum of Wear and Tear**

—The terrific heat of an engine breaks down an inferior grade of oil, turning a large part of it into black, gritty sediment, which wears away the working surfaces.

—GAYMOBILE has proved itself best in every test, fulfilling every requirement EVER exacted of ANY lubricant. It supplies more lubrication per dollar because there is no waste,—“it lubricates to the last drop.”

## GAY OIL COMPANY

Service and Distributing Stations  
All Over Arkansas



Much credit is given the firemen for saving the three large reservoirs.

\*\*\*

## Tuesday, February 24, 1920

### CHAIR AND MUSTARD HELP WIN A FIGHT

Within an hour after Jess Evans was released on bond after his arrest on a charge of fighting in a local restaurant near Ninth street, he was wanted again on a similar charge.

The second fight took place at the same restaurant where the first was staged and was a three cornered affair, the other two participants being Dillard Teague and Jeff Clay. It is stated by witnesses of the battle that Teague got the better of the other two, absolutely wrecking a mustard bottle over the head of one and breaking a stool across the dome of the other.

Police Chief Ross was soon on the scene and as a result the boys were required to make bonds for their appearance in police court today.

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## Thursday, February 26, 1920

### LOCAL BOWLERS TO FORM LEAGUE

Arrangements are to be concluded this week for the formation of a bowling league to play at King's Bowling and Billiard Parlors in the American National Bank building. Play is expected to begin next Monday, March 1.

Teams desiring to enter the league are requested to select their captains and furnish lists of team members to Joe King, who will arrange the schedule, keep the standing of the teams and look after other details.

### OKLAHOMAN VICTIM OF PICKPOCKET

Judge Samuel Minor of Talihina, Oklahoma, reported to the police that his pockets were picked at the union station Wednesday and that he was relieved of his pocketbook containing \$35, some notes and Odd Fellow receipts, and the return portion of a round trip ticket purchased at Talihina.

E. Schuorz, who lives at Port Arthur, Texas, reports that thieves at the station took a paper shopping bag belonging to him, about 11:30 Tuesday night. The bag contained a Kodak valued at \$15, four rolls of film and a package of lunch.

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## Saturday, February 28, 1920

### 35 DEATHS HERE FROM INFLUENZA DURING EPIDEMIC

The 1920 epidemic of influenza in Fort Smith was officially declared at an end Friday and no further daily reports will be made to the state board of health, stated Dr. McKelvey, district health officer Friday night.

Official records show that the epidemic prevailed 33 days. During that period 1,949 cases were reported to city and state health departments and 35 deaths were recorded as a result of the disease.

Dr. McKelvey stated Friday night that for two weeks the epidemic has been subsiding and this week a few scattering sporadic cases and no deaths have been reported. At the height of the epidemic over 100 new cases per day were reported.

Unless there should be a recurrence of the disease conditions, the board of health will consider the 1920 flu epidemic a closed incident.

There were not available last night comparative figures of the epidemics for 1919 and 1920; but all physicians state that this year's recurrence of the disease was far more mild, continued less than half as long and fatal in less than one-tenth as many cases.

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**Bowling Builds  
Sound Nerves**

The worry and strain of modern business take a fearful toll of nervous energy. So business men see the need for wholesome play to recuperate.

Bowling is a game that builds sound nerves. Don't blame the weather if you don't feel well. Try bowling and you won't need an alibi for "off" days!

**KING'S RECREATION PARLOR**  
"Good players are good workers."  
613 Garrison Ave. Phone 2014

**Wednesday, March 3, 1920**

**ORGANIST BOLTON MAKES DEBUT  
AND DELIGHTS JOIE AUDIENCES  
WITH MELODIES AND CLASSICS**

Fort Smith moving picture audiences at the Joie theatre Tuesday were privileged to hear the new pipe organ, which has just been installed, played by the talented young organist Laurence (note the spelling) Bolton, of New York and Dallas, who has signed a two year contract with Manager Kirkpatrick.

The last reed pipes were set in place at 12 o'clock on Tuesday and the performance of Tuesday was really tryouts for the great organ, which has been assembled during the last two weeks, it is like every great musical instrument, "Kind of a ticklish institution" and especially is this true when one considers that all the delicate pipes which go to make up the organ have to be shipped separately and all come securely packed in excelsior. And just like human "pipes" they must have clear passages in order to perform well. The beauty of the whole depends upon the perfection and coordination of even the most minute parts.

For this reason, Mr. Bolton was slightly dubious of these first performances, and just a little suspicious of what the first tryout might uncover, but he may have set his fears at rest after the first few bars for every note was as sweet and as pure as a bell as far as the average theatre goer was able to determine. It was most satisfying and made a delightful accompaniment to the picture. A real joy and a rare treat.

**J-O-I-E**

**THIS IS THE WEEK  
WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR**  
Monday--Tuesday--Wednesday

**MARY PICKFORD**

**WITH  
HER  
WINNING  
SMILE**

—In—

**HER  
LATEST  
BIG  
SUCCESS**

**HEART O'THE HILLS**

**HER THIRD GREAT PICTURE  
FROM HER OWN STUDIOS**

PRICES	
Children	10c
Adults	30c

Coming Thursday

**"THE RIVERS END"**

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**Thursday, March 4, 1920**

**CITY HALTS WORK ON EIGHT HOUSES,  
PROBE CONDITIONS**

Following up the Tuesday action of the city commission, the mayor and commissioners on Wednesday made a tour of part of the city investigating methods of construction of new residences in process of erection in various parts of the city. The inspection will be continued today.

As a result of the Wednesday inspection, construction was stopped on eight houses pending arrangements by owners and contractors to revise their building methods.

Last night, there lay on the desk of the mayor a quart or more of sand, which, it is said, appeared to have been mixed with a very small percentage of cement, but not in sufficient quantities to bind the mixture.

"We got that out of foundation walls of one of those houses with concrete foundation laid on the grass roots," remarked one of the members of the commission.

**LITTLE ACTIVITY IN POLICE CIRCLES**

Only three cases appeared on the police docket yesterday morning. All charges of a minor nature.

Two women, giving their names of Lucy Walls and Lucy Block and Tom Joyce forfeited bonds of ten dollars each on a charge of resorting to rooms. The trio was arrested early Tuesday morning in a local rooming house.

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**Saturday, March 6, 1920**

**MASONS GET SITE HERE FOR TEMPLE**

Following the purchase of three lots, corner Thirteenth and B. street, by I. H. Nakidmen for \$4,200, plans are now under way by the Masonic orders of Fort Smith to erect the handsomest Masonic Temple in the southwest on this site.

The property was secured at auction two weeks ago. It was sold by a court order in the case of Peoples Building and Loan association vs. Don S. Neal, owner of the property.

The three lots are centrally located and are 50 by 140 feet. The site fronts on North Thirteenth street. The deed to the property will probably be made over to the local order in the next few days.

This location is within three blocks of the church of the Immaculate Conception, First Christian, First Methodist, First Presbyterian, First Lutheran and First Baptist churches and within a few blocks of the Carnegie library.

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**Tuesday, March 9, 1920**

**MEN AT WORK REPLACING BURNED OUT  
CABLES AND COMPANY PLANS FOR NORMAL  
SERVICE DURING DAY**

The Fort Smith Light and Traction company hopes to resume normal service in all the branches of its service some time during today, according to General Manager D. C. Green, who supervised the work of replacing burned-out cables and low tension wires at the company's plant. Temporary wires were strung from the plant switchboard to the main trunk wires and current for power plants and street cars was turned on again Tuesday morning.

Fort Smith was thrown into total darkness at 7:30 o'clock Monday night when the underground cables running in conduit from the power plant short-circuited, causing the massive cables to melt down, creating a big pyrotechnic display which was stopped with Pyrene extinguishers.

Street cars came to a standstill, electric lights went out,

power lines were made useless and practically every residence and business house in Fort Smith was thrown into darkness.

After investigation it was ascertained the low tension wires serving the city had been put out of commission. High tension wires serving Van Buren, Alma, Huntington, South Fort Smith and other points were not affected and these places were not inconvenienced. Smelter mines and other industries in these places were not affected.

Manager Green and all the company employees, as well as other electricians, worked incessantly throughout the night stringing new cables and wires and making new connections around the destroyed cables. These temporary arrangements will be used for four months, until permanent repairs are made, which it is believed will prevent recurrence of the condition which resulted from the accident.

The citizens of the city took the matter in a philosophical way and practically no complaint was voiced.

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**Friday, March 12, 1920**

**RAZORBACKS PLAY TWINS FIRST EXHIBITION  
GAME ON LOCAL LOT APRIL 9-10**

Arrangements were completed yesterday by Blake Harper, secretary and business manager of the local baseball association, for two exhibition games here with the University of Arkansas varsity on April 9 and 10. This is the formal opening of the baseball season in Fort Smith.

Players who have been signed by the Twins are to report here Thursday, April 1, for three weeks training and try-outs previous to the opening of the season on April 22 at Pawhuska. Harper said Thursday he had received contracts from 33 players.

A contract from a six-foot left handed pitcher is expected today or tomorrow. This slab artist has the distinction of winning two games from the "mighty" Walter Johnson, and a brace from "Lefty" Hamilton of the Browns. His name will be made public just as soon as the contract is received at local baseball headquarters.

Harper returned Thursday from a visit to Fayetteville

# NOTICE!

## *Street Railway Fare Effective FRIDAY, JANUARY 16*

*Fort Smith and Van Buren*

FULL FARE		HALF FARE	
Cash Fare	.06 cents	Cash Fare	.03 cents
9 Tickets for	.50 cents	18 Tickets for	.50 cents
19 Tickets for	\$1.00	38 Tickets for	\$1.00

SCHOOL TICKETS	
18 Tickets for	.50 cents
38 Tickets for	\$1.00
<small>Good only when school children have in their possession permit from School Principal.</small>	

SOUTHFORTSMITH	VAN BUREN BRIDGE
5-cent fare between city limits of Fort Smith and South Fort Smith. Half fare and school tickets same rate as Fort Smith.	5 cent Cash Toll 20 Tickets for .25 cents

### **Suggestions to Passengers:**

- The conductor of the car will give you change and passenger will deposit fare in box.
- The conductor is not permitted to deposit your fare in fare box. You will save yourself time as well as that of your neighbors if you have exact fare ready on boarding car.
- If you have any 5-cent paper tickets, bought with bridge fares, you can redeem them at the office of the Company.

**Fort Smith Light and Traction Company**

## **Kemp Says:**

*Go to the*

### **BALL GAME**

*Wear Blue Overalls and Ride With*

## **Blue Light**

*Taxi Co.*

*Phone 480*

*Haglin Hotel*



and Northwest Arkansas. He arranged with University officials for the exhibition games here with the Twins and also gave out the information "Soda" Davison, a Fort Smith boy, will be among the Razorback aggregation.

Baseball fans here will remember "Soda" as the hefty center fielder who clouted a homer in an exhibition game here with the Twins in 1917. This circuit clout came in the ninth inning, with one man on the sacks and the Twins one run to the good. Incidentally, this "homer" gave the Razorbacks a decision over the league club and caused them much chagrin.

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## **Saturday, March 13, 1920**

### **POLICE GIVE BOOZE TO FISH IN RIVER**

Chief Ross and Capt. Gordon of the police department Friday destroyed the thirty-six quarts of whiskey seized by Chief Ross at the station Thursday. The bottles were broken at the corner of Seventh street near the jail and the booze trickled down the sewer to join the waters of the majestic Arkansas, where the catfish were given an opportunity to violate ordinance 1203 as well as the federal dry amendment.

\*\*\*

## **Sunday, March 14, 1920**

### **SPARKS HOSPITAL WILL CONDUCT TRAINING SCHOOL TO EQUIP TRAINED SICK ROOM ATTENDANTS**

Following a suggestion made by health authorities in New York city, the Sparks Memorial Hospital training school has definitely decided to open and maintain a training school in Fort Smith in which women between the ages of 18 years and 40 years may enter training to qualify for positions as sick room attendants.

This action was taken at a recent meeting of the hospital board and the school is being established to relieve the general shortage of trained nurses. It is a known fact the demand for trained nurses is much greater than the supply. It is the plan of the local training school to receive women who possesses a grammar school education and who are of a serious and determined turn of mind. These women will be given their board, lodging, laundry and paid \$10 per month while in training.

The seriousness of the trained nurse shortage situation was explained in detail in an editorial in the *Southwest American*, February 27. That editorial explained the New York plan and the local school will conform largely to the

suggestions made in that article.

Certificates and badges will be issued qualified attendants.

\*\*\*

## **Tuesday, March 16, 1920**

### **DEAD STRAW MAN GETS BAYLEY OUT OF A WARM BED**

The man of straw that was found "dead" in Grand avenue Friday night, was able to find his way to the intersection of Jenny Lind and W. street Sunday, where he lay down and died again.

This time he succeeded in getting City Commissioner T. A. Bayley out of his nice warm bed at 2:45 o'clock Monday morning when Mack Haney, a workman at one of the smelting plants, discovered the "corpse" and rang Mr. Bayley's doorbell until he roused the commissioner. After and examination of the "stiff" the men went home disgusted and rather angry.

It is thought that someone will yet have to call an undertaker and bury the "dead" man to keep him effectually down.

### **LIQUOR AND SALOON SIGNS MUST GO SAYS FEDERAL OFFICIAL**

The old saloon and liquor signs which adorn, or rather disfigure, a number of buildings in the city must go. These "left overs" from another, but not better day, must be painted out. If you have such a blot on your building, it had better be eradicated.

Assistant United States Attorney J. S. Holt, when questioned Saturday regarding these old signs, said Section 17 of the recent national prohibition act provides that no one shall allow any sign or bill board containing advertisements of liquor to remain on his premises.

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## **Friday, March 19, 1920**

### **CONTRACT SIGNED FOR NEW STADIUM**

Contract was formally signed yesterday, whereby Robert L. Paine & Son, local contractors and builders, bind themselves to erect the fence, grandstand and bleachers at the new Stadium, and the statement was made that actual construction work will begin early next week, unless the weather prevents.

The grandstand will be of concrete, with a seating capacity of 2,800, while the bleachers will seat 1,000. There will be 100 feet of automobile parking space at each

end of the grandstand, while there will be an eight-foot board fence surrounding the Stadium grounds, which measure 400 feet square.

Grading will start today at the grounds, and it is the belief of the contractors and the Stadium officers that things will be in fine condition for the start of practice work when "Boss" Schmidt's huskies gather here early in April, to begin their training.

\*\*\*

## **Sunday, March 21, 1920**

### **WOMEN CITIZENSHIP SCHOOL OPENS ON TOMORROW EVENING AND CONTINUES THREE DAYS**

Every woman in Fort Smith and vicinity should attend the Citizenship school to be held at the Elk's club, beginning Monday evening at 8 o'clock, March 22, 23, and 24. Now that the duty of active citizenship confronts them they should not be content to assume obligations unintelligently.

All the city clubs are cooperating with the Fort Smith League of Women Voters in an effort to conduct a successful school of citizenship. There will be many helpful and illuminating subjects.

On the evening of the 22nd, Miss Marie B. Ames of the National League of Women Voters, who has been very successful in conducting Citizenship schools in various states, will explain the object of the citizenship school and show the women in a practical way just what their duties are and how best to discharge them as a citizen. She will reveal the growth of the women's movement as it has transpired in the United States. Mrs. T. T. Cotnam, Chairman of the Arkansas League of Women Voters, will also be present and lecture on "What Arkansas Has A Right To Expect of its Citizens."

Those who have been so fortunate as to hear Mrs. Cotnam speak will remember her as one of Arkansas' most brilliant lecturers, and one who is intensely interested in the progress of the state. She has worked tirelessly in her efforts to engage the cooperation of the women of Arkansas to promote the state.

The success she has attained is well marked by the fact that she is at the head of one of the most powerful organizations, the League of Women Voters. She is familiar with the needs of the state. Capt. Vincent M. Miles will discuss the history and principles of the Democratic party. Judge Daniel Hon will outline Federal and State Judiciary and Juvenile Courts for the benefit of those who wish to familiarize themselves with Court. Mrs. C. V. Clendenning, one of Fort Smith's most energetic club

women, will impart illuminating information with regard to Mother's Pensions, Child Labor and Minimum Wage Law. Municipal Government or questions of interest to the public in general will be discussed by Mayor Arch Monroe. Other speakers prominent in the local and state affairs will address the audience and a demonstration of the actual task of registration and voting at primary and general elections will be given.

The school will be absolutely non-partisan, inasmuch as no sides will be taken with any political parties. On the contrary, the lectures will endeavor only to instruct the women in the duties of good citizenship to their own judgment, although the importance of making some party affiliation will be explained by Judge H. C. Mechem in his lecture on the "Principles and History of the Republican Party."

Needs of Arkansas in an education, moral, and child welfare way will be made plain by speakers who have had actual experience in such work.

The speakers on these subjects include Mrs. J. K. Kimmons of Fort Smith public schools, Rev. R. M. Galloway of the Central Presbyterian church, and Mrs. Harry Warner, who has rendered such valuable service in child welfare work.

Twenty-five cents will be charged for the entire course of lectures—a nominal sum intended to assist the school. Invitation are being issued through the various newspapers to the women of the county and neighboring towns to attend the school, as a committee desires to reach every citizen who is interested.

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## **Saturday, March 27, 1920**

### **HISTORIC PLACE GOES TO BOURLAND**

One of Fort Smith's earliest amusement places, perhaps better known as the old Wederkranz building or the old skating rink, has been sold by J. W. Meek trustees, to Fagan Bourland, for a price said to be \$10,000. The building is located at North Eighth and A. streets, was recently occupied by the Thrash Lick Printing company and more recently by the Arko-Tex Coffin company, the present occupants.

The building is a two story brick built many years ago in a most substantial manner for a man named Clendenning, and it was the means of providing amusement, and entertainment to thousands of old residents of the city in bygone years, during its use as opera house, music academy and skating rink.

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**Sunday, March 28, 1920**



### **FORT SMITH TAKES FORMAL POSSESSION OF FEDERAL JAIL AND ALL EQUIPMENT**

In the second story of the main part of the old federal jail there is one of the largest audience rooms in Fort Smith. The room is 56 by 66 feet, well lighted and with 12 foot ceilings. The first floor has a series of exceptionally large rooms, which would make fine reception rooms for the committee and club meetings, etc. A surprisingly small money outlay would make the building suitable for various public functions.

Saturday, Mayor Monro received the government patent which formally passes title to the building and property to the city, and in the afternoon, after a conference with Judge Youmans and Prosecuting Attorney Mahoney, the Mayor and commissioner Smith, took formal possession of all the building save the south cell room, in which the stock of confiscated liquor of the government is stored.

The prosecuting attorney advised Mayor Monro he is seeking instructions from the department of justice for the disposition of the liquor. Mayor Monro told him the city could make no present use of that part of the building and there was no haste on the part of the city for possession.

The old building has a complete steam heating plant with radiators throughout. A few years ago the government had one of the best kitchen equipments of large capacity in the city, but little of the kitchen and pantry equipment remains except a six hole range, a hot water boiler, and large capacity refrigerator.

It has been extensively equipped with plumbing. Commissioner Mike Smith stated that himself and Wallace Bruce did the plumbing 35 years ago. The heating plant was installed at the same time, Charley Breslin installing the boiler and its pipe connections. Vandals have torn out and carried away hundreds of dollars worth of lead and copper and brass fixtures; otherwise, the plumbing is in good condition. Half or more of the glass has been broken out of lower windows.

The city falls heir to many hundreds of dollars worth of steel cage grating, window bars, cabinets, office fixtures, etc. The six-foot steel fence about the property could not be

replaced for many hundreds of dollars.

With the patent Congressman Otis T. Wingo of this district, who was very largely responsible for the city securing the valuable property, enclosed a personal letter to Mayor Monro in which he said in part, "I congratulate the city on procuring this valuable piece of property and any time I can be of further service to your splendid city, command me."

The government patent describes the property as a square of ground containing 87,075 square feet, bounded by Second and Third streets and Rogers and Parker avenues, with a front of 300 feet on Third street and 290.25 feet on Rogers avenue.

The patent in terms conveys the property "forever to Fort Smith in trust for a site for a convention hall, community building or other public purpose; provided however that if said land shall not be used for such purposes, it shall revert to the United States.

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**Wednesday, March 31, 1920**

### **PLANT TREES TODAY IN FORT SMITH FOR FALLEN HEROES**

Today is to be Memorial Day to heroes who fell in the world war, by planting of a hundred or more trees by the city, and by the ladies committees.

The shipment of trees—spruce and magnolia—arrived in this city yesterday.

Ten magnolias and spruce are to be planted this morning by the city in the court house square. The ladies committees will supervise the planting of 23 of these trees in a section of National cemetery which has been designated by the cemetery control for the purpose. The trees will be planted in the cemetery in the forms of a cross and triangle. The balance of the consignment will be planted in other suitable park places in the city.

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**Sunday, April 4, 1920**

### **RIGGS SLEEPS CHAINED DOWN AMONG GHOSTS**

Absolutely alone, with only the howling wind, hoot owls and croaking frogs to indicate the existence of the material, fireman Earl Riggs, fire fighter from Station No. 1, is spending the night on a cot, handcuffed and chained to a tree in an old abandoned cemetery on Kinkaid avenue, in the eastern city limits, just off Waldron road.

Fireman Riggs is spending the night among the graves



in response to an advertisement in the *Southwest American* by the Joie Theatre company, which offered \$15 to a white man or \$25 to a white woman to spend the night in a cemetery for the purpose of testing the ghost theory. The subject was brought to the fore when Manager Hoyt Kirkpatrick booked D. W. Griffith's latest picture, "The Greater Question," which will be shown at the Joie for three days, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

The picture deals with ghosts and spirits and it is claimed that it is more thrilling than spending a night in a graveyard.

Early this morning Mr. Kirkpatrick will visit the cemetery and release Riggs, and the latter will tell a reporter for the *Southwest American* what his experiences were.

In the same, Miss Belle Clowers, employed at the Smith Barber Supply House, will go through the same experience, unless she changes her mind. She has agreed to make the test and declares she will meet all obligations.

Hundreds of persons saw Riggs leave the Joie theatre last night in Manager Kirkpatrick's automobile on the trip to the cemetery. McCann took a flash light photo of Riggs in front of the theater, which will show the cot, handcuffs and chain. Another flashlight was taken by McCann with Riggs chained in a cot in the cemetery.

Many persons will recall that several years ago quite a bit of excitement was caused when it was discovered persons unknown had visited this old cemetery and dug up a number of graves.

Sheriff Claude Thompson made an investigation, but no clues were found as to the identity of the persons, nor the reason for their grave digging. It was presumed they were after possible treasure, as it has been repeatedly rumored that many wealthy persons of the south buried gold in graves during the Civil war period. The old cemetery does not contain tombstones, monuments and markers of the present day cemetery, the stones being dark brown and chopped out of native rock with no marks of identity of the persons buried therein.

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## Thursday, April 15, 1920

### MRS. GUY WILLIAMS SUES FOR DIVORCE

An echo of the shooting of Judge Paul Little last November came Tuesday of this week when Mrs. Beatrice Williams filed a petition in chancery court, asking for a divorce from her husband, Guy Williams. Attached to the petition was a plaintiff's declaration that the defendant is a non-resident of this state and plaintiff's information that he was in Texas, because of which allegation plaintiff asked

the publication of a court warning order, as is provided in cases of non-resident defendants.

But Guy Williams arrived in this city Tuesday morning from his home and place of business at Wichita Falls, Texas. He stated he was on a business visit to this city. Counsel of plaintiff then withdrew the warning order prayer and the defendant was served with summons in the divorce suit. He made no statement as to what attitude he will take toward the suit.

Plaintiff's petition alleges that she and defendant were married at Greenwood, February 23, 1913. She alleges that "shortly after their marriage, defendant began a course of cruel and barbarous treatment, and offered such indignities to the person of plaintiff, as to render her condition intolerable, by continually nagging and abusing her, continually refusing to go out in public with her and cross and crabbed at home." The complaint finally alleges that "in November of 1919, defendant deserted her without any cause and went to Texas to live."

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## Friday, April 16, 1920

### BLY PURCHASES DARBY'S INTEREST IN PRINTING PLANT

The Darby and Bly printing establishment announced to the public that the partnership has ceased to exist, Mr. Eugene Bly having purchased the entire interest of Mr. Percy Darby. They have been associated together in the printing business for fourteen years, and have it built to a point where it is one of the leading print shops in the southwest.

Mr. Bly now becomes sole owner, Mr. Darby to devote his time henceforth to music. He will specialize in teaching the saxophone, and will continue to hold orchestra engagements in Fort Smith and elsewhere.

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## Sunday, April 25, 1920

### UNIQUE PROGRAM ARRANGED FOR WESTERN ASSOCIATION INAUGURAL AT FORT SMITH

from the *Daily Oklahoman*

The most unique opening for a baseball season ever staged is planned by Charles Schmidt for the opening of the Western association season in this city on April 29, when the Twins will meet Norman Price's Huskies. He will send three teams on the field for that game, and will not only celebrate the opening of the championship race, but also commemorate his own entrance into the national game.

Schmidt received his first dollar for playing the game, in this city, and he beat his way in here from the coal camp where he was then working to get into the game.

#### **Old Timers to Come Back.**

Not only will the celebration be made a dual affair, but "Boss" Schmidt will wear the mask and windpad for two of the teams. One will be the Twins, who will on that day take part in the championship game, and the other will be the T. P. A. team, that gave Schmidt his first baseball job. It cannot be called a contract, for he was only hired by the game. The team was made up, for the most part, of ex-collegiate players, who were connected with the jobbing houses of the city, many of them being traveling salesmen. They worked at their commercial pursuits during the week and Saturday afternoon played ball. Sometimes when the expense of bringing a team here was extremely heavy, a two game series was arranged, the first game being played on Friday. Paul La Grave, secretary of the Fort Worth team, of the Texas league, later became part of that famous old team.

#### **Members Still in Fort Smith**

By a remarkable kindness on the part of old Father Time, all of the players who were in the first game with Schmidt are still in Fort Smith, and keen lovers of the game. He plans to get them into "unies" and have them occupy the field when the first ball is delivered. That will give the honor of pitching the first ball to M. J. Brun, chief of the fire department, for he was Schmidt's mate in that game. The other members of the team and their present positions in life are: Earl U. Hardin, first base, prosecuting attorney twelfth judicial circuit of Arkansas; Charles F. Reynolds, second base, vice president Reynolds-Davis Wholesale Grocery Co.; James R. Fernandez, short stop, late chief of police of Fort Smith; James E. Reynolds, city sales manager, Reynolds-Davis Wholesale Grocery Co.; E. E. Stevenson, left field, physician; Ralph Mechem, real estate dealer; P. J. Cabell, right field, manager John Witherspoon Brokerage Co.

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### **Tuesday, May 4, 1920**

#### **TWINS BUY MUELLER, AN OUTFIELDER, FOR \$700 FROM ST. LOUIS**

Announcement was made last night by Blake Harper, business manager of the Twins, that Clarence Mueller, an outfielder, had been purchased by the Twins from the St. Louis Browns. He will report in time for tomorrow's game and \$700 was paid for him.

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### **Wednesday, May 19, 1920**

#### **ELKS TEAM MEETS WAGON FACTORY MEN FOR CHAMPIONSHIP**

To decide the championship of the City Bowling league, the Fort Smith Wagon Factory team and the Elks' team will meet tonight at King's Recreation rooms in a three-game series. The winner will be awarded the handsome trophy which is on display in the window of Klein's jewelry store.

#### **DOZEN GRADUATES FROM LINCOLN HIGH**

The commencement exercises of Lincoln high begins Sunday, May 23, at 4:30 p. m., with the class sermon, at Ninth Street Baptist church. Beautiful music has been rehearsed for this occasion, including Largo from Xerxes by Handel.

On account of the fact that few parents can attend the class day exercises, the program will be rendered Monday night at Quinn chapel, A. M. E. church. The commencement exercises proper will be Thursday night at 8 o'clock at Josenberger's hall. The members of the class are:

Dovie Webb, Lula Jackson, Wilna Regues, Reba Davis, Mildred Stewart, Harry Lee Thompson, Martha Burke, Louise Bolin, Leona Cravens, Harvey Lee, Leona Gardner, Estella Smith.

A large and appreciative audience listened to the exercises of the eighth grade of Lincoln school Monday evening at Josenberger auditorium. The program consisted of songs and recitations and closed with a farce comedy "Fun in a Photograph Gallery." The class is composed of seventeen members. This makes a total of thirty-nine promotions to the high school for the school year.



**WISE MOTHERS** now-a-days choose for their children the kind of food that builds up and strengthens their growing bodies—

**ATLANTIC SPRAY CRACKERS**

Crisp and slightly browned—health itself is baked into them—with a flavor that comes straight from the oven. Atlantic Spray Crackers are just right — your children will tell you so.

**At All Grocers**

**Fort Smith Biscuit Co.**

The Only Cracker Bakery in Fort Smith

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**Thursday, June 3, 1920**

**WELFARE WORKERS ORGANIZATION  
IS FULLY PERFECTED**

The Fort Smith Federated Welfare association was formally organized and permanent officers elected at a meeting held on Monday night at Carnegie library. The election resulted in E. F. Creekmore being made president, Mrs. H. C. King, Mrs. Frank Morgan, and Mrs. Harry Warner the three vice presidents, Carl Heid, secretary, J. S. Parks, treasurer. A committee of three was appointed as a finance committee. Those were Mrs. H. C. King, Mayor Arch Monroe, and Judge Cleveland Holland. The executive board with Mrs. Harry Warner as chairman, will consist of Mrs. I. K. Bond, Mrs. H. C. King, Mrs. Nathan Stein, Mrs. Leigh Kelley, Dr. J. D. Southard and R. P. Strozier.

According to the present plans, it is hoped to have the old federal jail ready for occupancy by the first of July. The activities will include a day nursery, a free clinic, where children will be cared for and prenatal instruction and instruction in regard to care of the babies given to mothers and a community kitchen. The Day Nursery will be taken care of almost entirely by the members of the former Refuge Home Auxiliary, who since the discontinuance of the Refuge Home, have re-organized their numbers into a Day Nursery Auxiliary and by the members of the Young Matrons' Circle of the Patriotic League of the Y. W. C. A. Much of the equipment of the former Home will be reused in the day nursery, and in addition the auxiliaries will provide clothing for the small occupants of the nursery, give them three meals a day and care for all material needs. In addition to a resident matron and assistant, committees will be appointed to oversee the work of the paid attendants. The two visiting nurses, Miss Wood and Miss Taylor, will visit the nursery each day. Commissioner Strozier believes that at least 100 mothers will be released for outside work on the opening of the Day Nursery.

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**Thursday, June 17, 1920**

**BOY RANGERS TO ENCAMP JULY 12**

C. F. Williams, the leader of the Fort Smith Boy Rangers, announces that the annual camp this year will be from July 12 to July 17 inclusive. The boys, with their leader, will leave on Monday morning returning Saturday evening.

The place where the camp will be held is owned by the

Boy Rangers, and is ideally located on Frog Bayou, between Rudy and Lancaster, 18 miles from Fort Smith. The spot is designated by the Boy Rangers as the Big Piney Mountains, being covered with a thick growth of pines. The swimming hole is all that can be desired, ideal for both swimming and boating. To the rear of the camp, rugged cliffs rear their heads.

Arrangements are now being made for the camp. A new boat is being constructed to take the place of the one lost this season in an unexpected rise in the creek. A cook has been engaged to do the cooking during the encampment.

This will be the third annual camping trip of the Boy Rangers. The organization here is composed of 456 boys. Prizes will be offered for the winners in the swimming, boating and diving contests.

\*\*\*

**Saturday, June 26, 1920**

**DABNEY'S GARAGE WILL OPEN TODAY**

The formal opening of Dabney's garage, 116-118 North Sixth street, will take place today and will be celebrated by a two day's Auto show. An unusually interesting show awaits those who plan to attend. Automobiles of the very latest model will be displayed by the city's foremost dealers, as illustrated in the advertisements appearing this morning in the *Southwest American*. An excellent program of the latest music hits will be rendered by a local orchestra for dancing. The public is very cordially invited to attend.

THE SOUTHWEST AMERICAN June 26, 1920

**Announcing  
...Opening of...  
DABNEY'S GARAGE**

**116  
118  
No. 6th St.**

**You Are Invited**  
Music and Dancing Saturday Afternoon and Evening

We extend a special invitation to the public to be our guests on our opening days. We have spared no expense in giving Fort Smith the most modern Garage in the Southwest and we want you to come and see it.

**14,000 SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR SPACE**  
**Equipped to Transact a General Garage Business**

Drive In Filling Station    Ample Storage Facilities    Expert Auto Finishing and Retouching

Exclusive Agent for Stephens Tires - Automobile Accessories

FREE AIR    A MODERN GARAGE IN EVERY WAY    FREE WATER

Come! Be Our Guests Today. Good Music - Dancing

116-118 N. 6th St. **DABNEY'S GARAGE** Phone 488



Dabney's is one of the most handsome garages in the southwest. Covering 14,000 feet of floor space, the building is thoroughly equipped to transact a general garage business. A drive in filling station, free air, free water, ample storage facilities, and expert auto finishing and retouching, are a few of the outstanding features of the new service station. The firm also has the exclusive agency for Stephens tires in this territory.

\*\*\*

**Tuesday, June 29, 1920**

### **ELKAN'S COMPANY WANTS COURT TO ANNUL CONTRACT**

M. M. Elkan, bridge contractor and builder, and holder of the \$537,967.50 contract to build a concrete bridge across the Arkansas river from the foot of Garrison has applied to the federal court in equity in this city, to cancel his contract with the Sebastian bridge district: relieving him of further obligation of construction under it, and to award him a judgment against the district for \$152,498.50 for work alleged to have been compelled to do in accordance with contract plans and specifications.

The complaint which was filed Monday morning also contains an exhibit purporting to give work done estimates to May 1, of \$319,630.37 leaving a balance of \$138,635. The complaint is voluminous and includes a large number of exhibits purporting to detail cost of specified items of construction or material furnished which it is alleged were outside plans and specifications, in each instance giving the amount of extra cost. Aside from these minor items, the chief contention of the complainant is based upon the contractor's charge that the plans and specifications were framed to make appear an open cofferdam job of pier excavation in order to induce a low bid for the bridge construction. Plaintiff alleges that fourteen borings of the river were made and set out in the contract and that in not one instance did the actual excavation develop such conditions as those described in the specification blue prints. On this point, the complaint says, quoting contract.

"Borings have been made at the bridge site and the findings are indicated on sheet No. 2. The data furnished to bidders by the engineer regarding the depth of the foundation or bed rock are to be construed as approximate, and bidders must assume the risk of having to carry the excavations to a greater depth. The sinking of these piers may be by whatever the pneumatic or cofferdam systems." Plaintiff alleges that the saving clause does not apply to quality or kind of layers to be excavated, but only to depth of bedrock."

The complaint alleges that the plans and blue prints

show 14 borings to have been taken by the district engineer at various points in the river and banks and their depth [] set forth in the plans upon which contract was based. [] It is alleged that, in only one of these borings does the plan speak of quick sand as a substance to be excavated, and it is alleged that boring was not on the site of any pier. It is alleged that instead of this condition developing, quick sand has been found in most of the excavations.

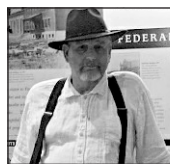
Special stress is laid upon the excavations for the big abutment joining the viaduct with the bridge and the first five pier excavations. It is alleged that at the abutment site, the plans specified, the boring being upon the exact site of the abutment. It is alleged that the boring specifications called for a foot each of sand and sandstone paving, 10 feet of stiff yellow clay and four feet of stiff clay. It is alleged that instead they found 18 feet of quicksand, and that instead of the excavation costing as it should between \$1,200 and \$1,500 it is alleged to have actually cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000 and to have delayed the bridge construction for many weeks.

Plaintiff alleges that the district engineer's borings showed shales and soapstone just above bedrock at every boring described in exact feet and inches, and alleges that in no instance was any such condition found. The complaint alleges that this misrepresentation led to the belief the steel piling of light weight and open cofferdam work could be used, and that such equipment was put in and it is impossible to make the excavations except under air pressure.

The complaint alleges that this misrepresentation of river bed conditions was "fraudulently made for the purpose of securing the lowest possible bid and plaintiff believes and alleges that such misrepresentation was intentionally made with the full knowledge of the facts to induce low bids, or failure of the engineer to make correct borings."

It is alleged that the actual difference in cost between cofferdam and air pressure excavations is about \$138,635.

For nearly three months now, construction on the bridge has been practically at a standstill. All carpenter work has been suspended since the date of the carpenters strike for a dollar an hour, at which time the bridge form men went out. Since that time the only work done was the completion of pier No. 4 and the excavating and pouring footing in No. 5 excavation.



*Al Whitson edits and writes the acclaimed 100-year-old newspaper stories department for the Journal.*

*Whitson is active in researching, administering, and presenting Fort Smith's history for civic clubs and organizations, including Fort Smith National Historic Site's Parker Court drama series.*

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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  
 (gp) —Group picture  
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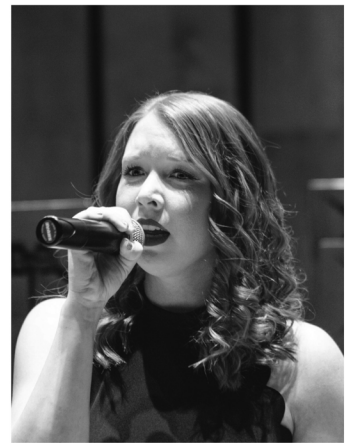
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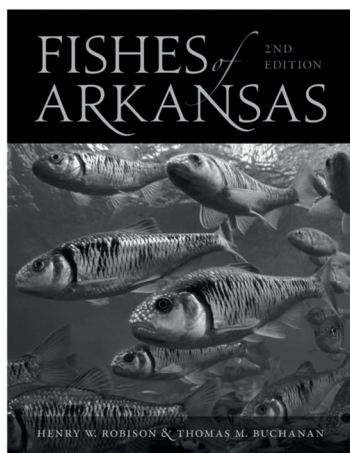
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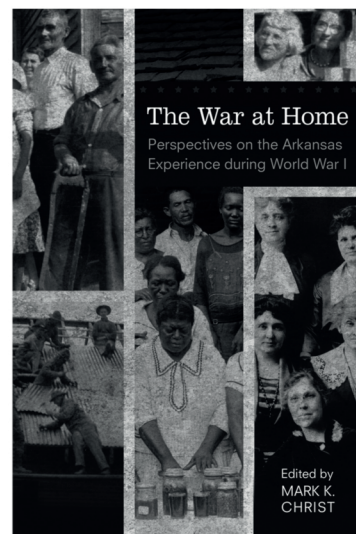
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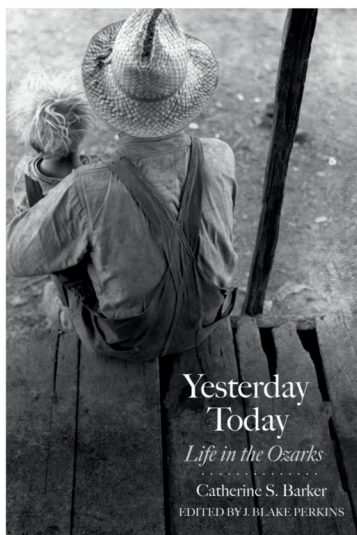
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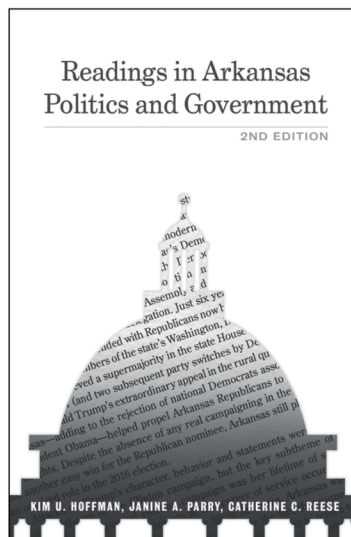
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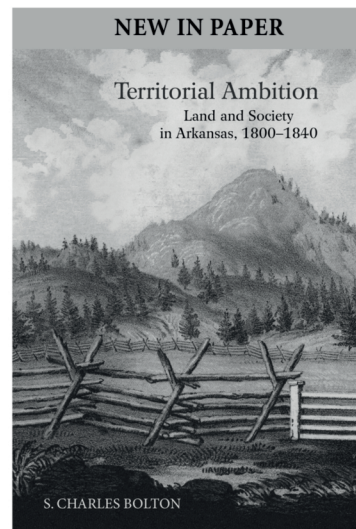
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