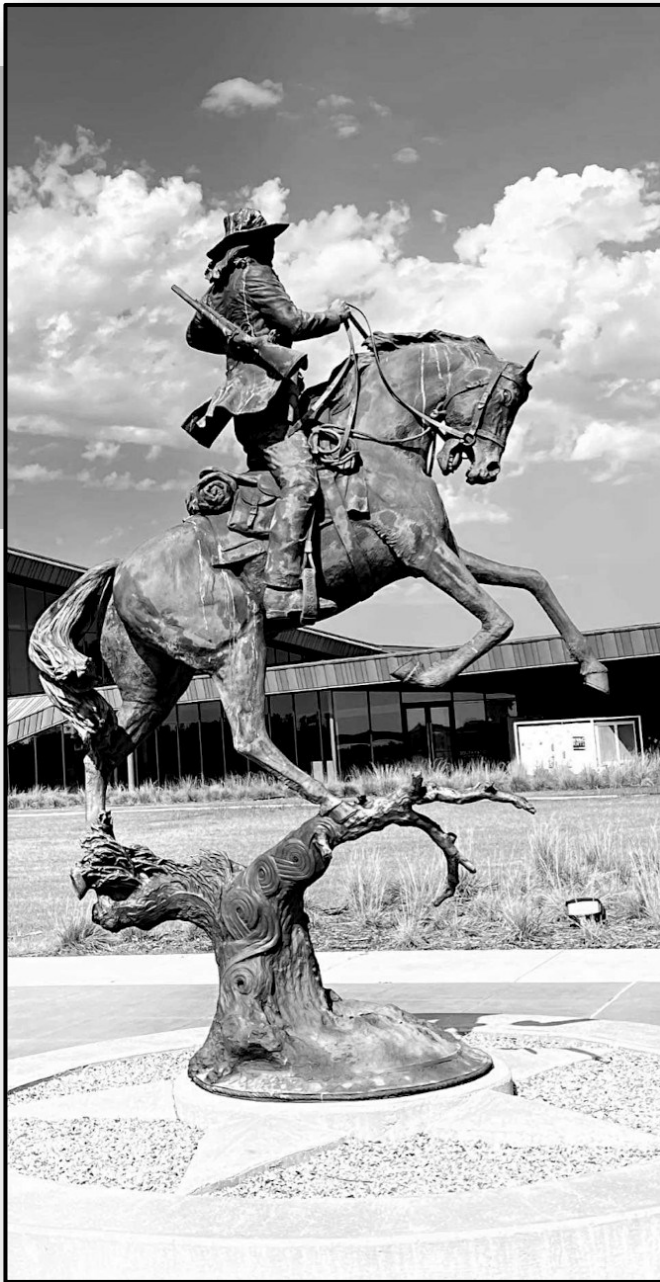


The JOURNAL



Marshals Museum Unveiled

A First Visit

ALSO



*Specters, Seances, and
Soothsayers*

*If This Land Could Talk:
Indigenous History and Fort Smith*

'90% Backbone': Roger Bost

*Task Performed by the Organization:
Part II*



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 them promptly.

MEMBERSHIP & ORDERS: *Journal* issues are available. Cost for current and past issues is \$7.50 plus a \$2.50 mailing charge per copy. Send orders to:

Editors
P.O. Box 3676
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3676

or contact us online at webmaster@fortsmithhistory.org

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QUESTIONS pertaining to the Fort Smith Historical Society or the *Journal* may be addressed by email to:

Sue Robinson, interim inquiry coordinator
and researcher, bluerob220@aol.com.

Contact her with your research and/or genealogical questions or topics.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE! www.fortsmithhistory.org
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Content tabs: Organizations, Membership,
Back Issues, Tables of Contents,
Contacts & Links, Archives and Gallery.

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 submissions 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 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 stoliv44@gmail.com, Sherry Toliver, President of the Society, or 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 should be 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. An author photograph and short bio should be submitted at the end of the manuscript along with mailing address, phone number, and email address.

Neither the Fort Smith Historical Society nor the editorial staff assumes any responsibility for statements, whether fact or opinion, made by contributors.

AMELIA WHITAKER MARTIN

Journal Editor & Co-Founder, 1977-2004

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Annual.....	\$30.00
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Joint Membership with Fort Smith Museum of History	100.00
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The JOURNAL

VOL. 47 NO. 2

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COVER PHOTOS:

(Main) *Lighthouse Statue* on the U.S. Marshals Museum grounds, courtesy of Bill Word
(Lower right) Cartoon from early Fort Smith newspaper depicting the paranormal

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News & Opportunities

Fort Smith Historical Society

2023 Monthly Meetings
are held on the
Second Monday of every month at 6 p.m.
University of Arkansas-Fort Smith,
Math-Science Bldg., Room 104

Check FSHS Facebook page and email alerts
for monthly meeting sites.

Arkansas Historical Association

83rd Annual Meeting, April 25-27, 2024
Heber Springs, Arkansas

Theme: *Picturing Arkansas: Depictions of Its People in
Art, Photography, Literature, Music, and Media*

According to CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas:

Heber Springs, the county seat of Arkansas's
youngest county, has been identified as a tourist area
from the beginning. Even before the town was formed,
the area was known for its mineral springs. Since the
formation of Greers Ferry Lake on the Little Red River
in the early 1960s, the town has become a popular
resort for camping, boating, and other water sports.

Register through the Arkansas Historical
Association website: www.arkansashistoricalassociation.org

Clayton House

514 North Sixth Street
479-783-3000
claytonhouse@claytonhouse.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

All events require reservations or pre-ordered
tickets. claytonhouse.org or our Facebook page or give
us a call at 479-783-3000!

Friends of the Fort

More information at Facebook page or by emailing
friendsofthefort@gmail.com

Fort Smith Museum of History

320 Rogers Avenue
479-783-7841

<http://www.fortsmithmuseum.org/newsletters>

UPCOMING FALL 2023 EVENTS

September

- ❖ Thursday, September 21; Time: TBD. Joyce Faulkner/Tom Wing—*Julia & Maud* book-signing and program.
- ❖ Saturday, September 23/All day: Fort Smith Historic Site Fall Festival. Our volunteers participate with a Living History programming from 1 to 3 p.m. that day.

October

- ❖ Saturday, October 7. Time: TBD. Haunted Walking Tours/Ghost Stories, led by special events volunteers. This will be advertised as part of the Downtown Octoberfest Events
- ❖ Saturday, October 14; 1 p.m.: Judge Parker's Birthday and Kid's Court.
- ❖ Tuesday, October 17; 6 p.m.: Private Trial Event/Vintage Chevy Car Club.
- ❖ Last two weekends of October/Murder and Mayhem. Specific dates TBD.
- ❖ Sunday, October 29: Witches Ride. Time and place: TBD.

November

- ❖ Wednesday & Thursday, November 1-2, Hispanic Culture & Art Programming: Day of the Dead (El Dia De Los Muertos). Programming as part of the Hispanic Exhibit.
- ❖ November 2-5: Support involvement in Charles Portis Symposium at UAFS. Specifics TBD.
- ❖ November 9; 5:30 p.m.: Program and book-signing with Harold Tristler. (Dalton Bros Book)
- ❖ Saturday, November 11: Veterans Day Parade at Fort Chaffee.

December

❖ Saturday, December 9: Christmas Parade and FSMH Open House. Time TBD.

❖ Remaining to be scheduled for Fall 2023: Programs and book-signings, two art classes as part of the programming for the Hispanic Culture and Art Exhibition.

Year-Round

❖ 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

October 14-15
Civil War Weekend

❖ Cannon programs and interpretation of the 1862 Van Buren raid by federal troops.

- ❖ Four cannons on site.
- ❖ Free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Tom Wing, Director of the Drennen-Scott Historical Site by email at drennen-scott@uafs.edu.

Facebook: Drennen-Scott Historic Site

Fort Smith Regional Art Museum RAM

1601 Rogers Avenue—Fort Smith
479-784-2787
info@fsram.org

Lectures, workshops, education programs, and events throughout the year. Contact RAM for a full schedule of activities, exhibits, and children-centered art classes.

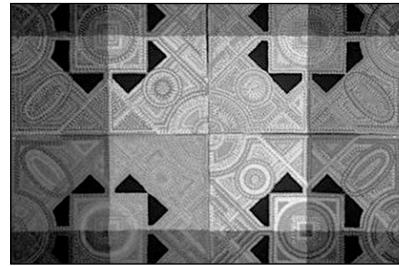
M. SPEER: AN ARTIST’S JOURNEY

Through November 5



LIZ WHITNEY QUISGARD

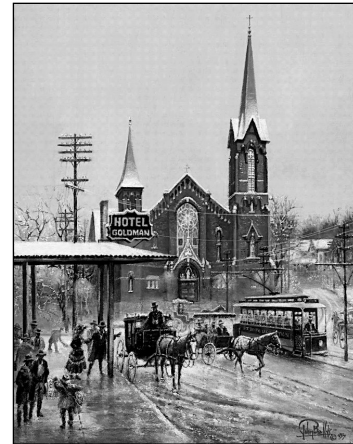
January 22-December 31



JOHN BELL JR. LEGACY PROJECT

Ongoing

Exhibits of Art and Artifacts of this significant and amazing Fort Smith artist.



Frisco Station, Fort Smith, by John Bell, Jr. Prints available at the Regional Art Museum.

John Bell Park

Clayton Expressway—Fort Smith



An up-to-date playground for children and their parents, free and accessible to all.

Fort Smith Little Theatre

401 North Sixth Street—Fort Smith

2023 SEASON

September 21-24 and 27-30

“Arsenic and Old Lace”

by Joseph Kesselring.

Directed by Brandon Bolin

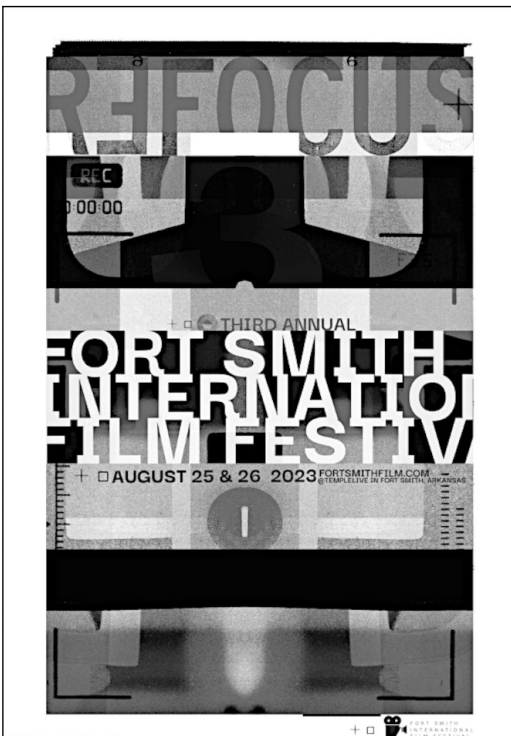
For seating and start time information, contact information is online at <https://www.fslt.org/category/2023-season/>

Season packages for 2024 will be available to purchase from November 1 through mid-February 2024.

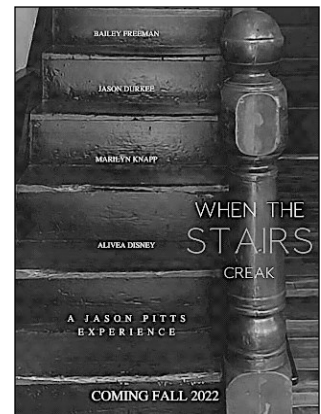
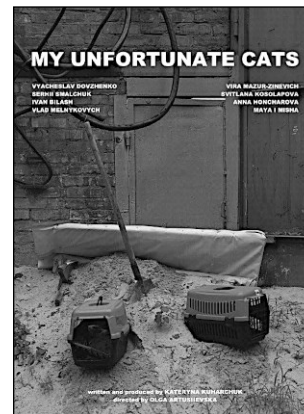
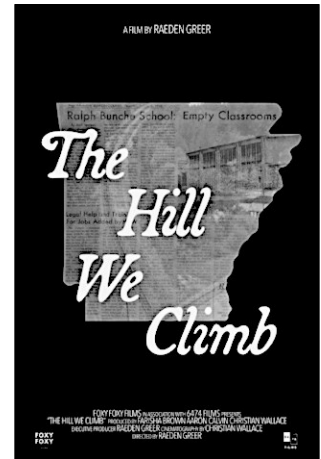
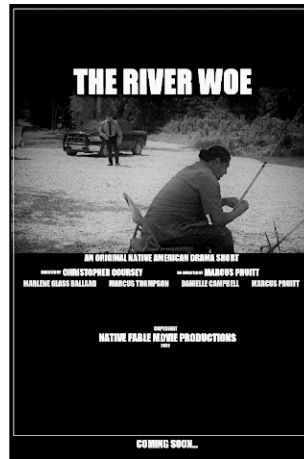
River Valley Film Society Inc.

<https://fortsmith.org/2023-fort-smith-international-film-festival>

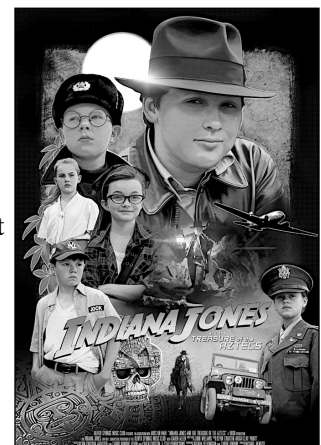
2023 Fort Smith International Film Festival



The 2023 Fort Smith International Film Festival was held at TempleLive in downtown Fort Smith on August 25-26.



Kevin Croxton’s “Indiana Jones and the Treasure of the Aztecs” is a fan film created by the Oliver Springs Music Club. Set in 1958, Indiana Jones takes up an unfinished quest from his late father-in-law, Abner Ravenwood, which turns into a race against time to find a powerful Aztec treasure before the Soviets do. The film is a



tribute to the Indiana Jones franchise, and has a cameo from actress Karen Allen, reprising her role as Marion from the Indiana Jones films.

Friday August 25 – The Opening Night Reception at TempleLive! kicked off at 5 p.m. with the NWA Screenwriter Collective with an opening address from Mayor George McGill, the evening’s screenings will demonstrate the Fort Smith International Film Festival’s mission. Highlighting our international connection was the film “I wanted to be Vittorio Gassman” Cisterna filmmaker Cristian Scardigno about Fort Smith’s sister city in Italy.

Fort Smith International Film Festival,
 FortSmithFilm.com, Brandon Goldsmith, 858-405-3278
 fwrbrandon@hotmail.com

Reprinted from the 10th year of the Journal, 1987.

Fort Smith Historical Members

Do you know how much you are loved and appreciated? Your support and assistance make possible the preservation of Fort Smith history for future generations. Without your on-going support, the Fort Smith Historical Society and *The Journal* could not exist.

We feel same about our dear members in this, our 46th year.

Our FSHS membership runs from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2025

Please renew. Your support and membership for the Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society is deeply appreciated.

Give the local history fans you know the gift of membership.

They will love the *Journal* — and you.

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THE EXTERIOR OF THE U.S. MARSHALS MUSEUM on Riverfront Drive in Fort Smith, Arkansas
(Photos courtesy of Billy D. Higgins and Bill Word)

A Visit to U.S. Marshals Museum

Long-awaited museum debuts

**Report by Billy D. Higgins
and Bill Word**

On Saturday, July 8, 2023, at around 1 p.m., we visited the U.S. Marshals Museum to view exhibits throughout the magnificent building, which had opened its doors to the public for the first time a week earlier.

In an excited group, which had met and lunched on Garrison Avenue, was noted Arkansas historian Professor Tom DeBlack, co-author of *Arkansas: A Narrative History*, the principal college textbook on the history of the state; his wife and his daughter, Dr. Susan and Susannah DeBlack of Conway; my wife, Peggy Higgins; along with Paul Austin, past director of the Arkansas Humanities Council; and Bill Word, vice-president of the



LOBBY OF THE U.S. MARSHALS MUSEUM

Fort Smith Historical Society, and myself.

Entering, we were courteously greeted at the front desk and paid the entrance fee of \$13 for adults. The



MARSHALS AROUND A CAMPFIRE EXHIBIT

space inside the museum provides a proper setting for displays and a well-designed interior imparts a favorable impression from the start. Making a short cut to the left of the entrance to see the concession and snack food area, I was amazed how beautiful the Arkansas River appeared viewed through the spacious windows. Over-the-counter hot dogs would have provided a good lunch in that room, had we not already eaten.

Beginning a tour of exhibits, we soon came across a large video screen with cushioned benches on which to sit while watching a splendid narrative of the 1872 Goingsnake trial of Ezekial “Zeke” Proctor, a Cherokee lawmaker, who was accused of murdering Polly Beck, a Cherokee woman who had married a white man. Therein was the rub: competing jurisdictions! Judge Isaac C. Parker in Fort Smith sent deputy U.S. marshals and posse to bring in Zeke. The museum’s film has a shootout reenactment of historical accuracy and constraint.

A historical timeline of the Marshals Service shows that it began with the first administration of George Washington and includes much more than Indian Territory intrusions of the Federal Court in Fort Smith. And so, following exhibits give historical facts and artifacts about such famous events at Ruby Ridge, the integration crisis of the University of Mississippi as James Meredith in September 1962 entered, escorted by a company of blue helmeted deputy marshals. Another exhibit features a school incident enforcing the *Oliver Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) by the U.S. Supreme Court, as four deputy marshals accompanied first-grader Ruby Bridges in a 1960 integration of an all-white Louisiana public school, a scene made famous by Norman Rockwell’s painting that appeared in *Look* magazine in 1964.

A particularly stand-out attraction was the life-sized figures representing four different historical guises of the Marshals Service sitting around a campfire, discussing, one would think, events each had



BASS REEVES, whose life is chronicled in Art Burton's book, *Black Gun, Silver Star* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), is the subject of an exhibit in the Marshals Museum.

participated in while carrying out a mission. One of those wax characters could be taken for the real-life Bass Reeves, a well-known deputy in these parts.

The "Wild West" is represented in the exhibits, and documentation of people and events is displayed in narrative fashion known in museum circles as "the art of storytelling." In my opinion, the U.S. Marshals Museum ranks high on the scale of this art form. The use of a saloon bar in one exhibit caught the attention of visitors. Fun, as barrooms tended to be.

Exhibits move from the western district of Arkansas and Oklahoma to concerns about aftermath reactions following the violence of Ruby Ridge and Waco, in which lives were lost, and on to how the Marshals Service used temperance and patience to resolve other confrontations in a non-violent manner. That transition affords a sense of, yes, we are getting in this museum the whole scope of the Service.

Historian David S. Turk (*Forging the Star: The Official Modern History of the United States Marshals Service*. Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 2016,) has long maintained that when opened, the museum in Fort Smith must go far beyond local border history, significant as that might be, to the many charges carried out over two centuries by U.S.



AS THE PICTURE SHOWS, use of reconstructed furniture pieces along with photographs on the wall carry the framed printed story being inspected by several visitors.



THE CARD TABLE WAS CERTAINLY a central piece in many a cowboy movie.



DISPLAYS AT THE MUSEUM, such as an exhibit featuring a railroad strike (above) and an iconic photo from a clash on Vieques Island (below), showcase the times when the U.S. Marshals have played a role in history.



THIS AUTHENTIC PHOTOGRAPH of Robert Leroy Parker, right, front row, and Harry Longabough, left, front row, and partners adorn one wall at the museum. The photo is sure to be a favorite display since the movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* about their outlaw exploits reached a wide and continuing audience.

U.S. Marshals Service Director John F. Clark announced in 2007 that after years' long review of candidates, Fort Smith had been selected as the new site for a U.S. Marshals Museum. The city leaders' campaign to "Bring it Home" had succeeded.



Marshals and their deputies.

I believe that the current administration and staff of this museum are fulfilling that obligation and doing so in a way that blends what most people expect to experience and what the important purpose and operation of the Marshals Service is and has been.

Exhibits such as those pictured in this section present powerful imagery for the viewers to contemplate as to serious public issues in a democratic republic that came to involved U.S. Marshals and their deputies.

Still, there is a need and room, we felt, for popular concepts to be at least shown in the museum, if not authenticated. The wall devoted to movies and TV shows does that. From Marshal Dillon to *The Fugitive* with Tommy Lee Jones and Harrison Ford, viewers will be most familiar with these fictional figures drawn from the lore that surrounds the U.S. Marshals Service.

U.S. Marshals Service Director John F. Clark announced in 2007 that after years' long review of candidates, Fort Smith had been selected as the new site for a U.S. Marshals Museum. The city leaders' campaign to "Bring it Home" had succeeded. Soon after that, as a university professor of history, I was invited to some meetings about the building and content of the museum. My concerns were narrow. I suggested a library and archive be included and that a major exhibit on selection and duties of census marshals in the antebellum period, who were a part of the U.S. Marshals Service until 1870, should be educational about the social involvement of the Marshals Service. Racial description by a census marshal of a person or family on the ten-year census could determine their fate. In Arkansas, for instance, if one of a person's grandparents were of African descent and three were "white," a person could be enslaved. In the long period of locating a proper building site in this

How a Museum Campaign Led to *The Lost Dalton*

By Harold Trisler

The newest addition to the Arkansas River bank on the outskirts of Fort Smith, the U.S. Marshal Museum, did not just happen overnight; Fort Smith had to campaign for it. That campaign was called “Bring it Home,” and it needed support to do just that. It needed a special something the committee making the location recommendation would not easily forget. If, somehow, the image of those fifty deputies who gave their lives for the Marshal Service could be seared into the minds of the selection committee, really for all of Fort Smith, how could they ignore that?

The answer lay with the Boy Scouts, through an Eagle Scout project.

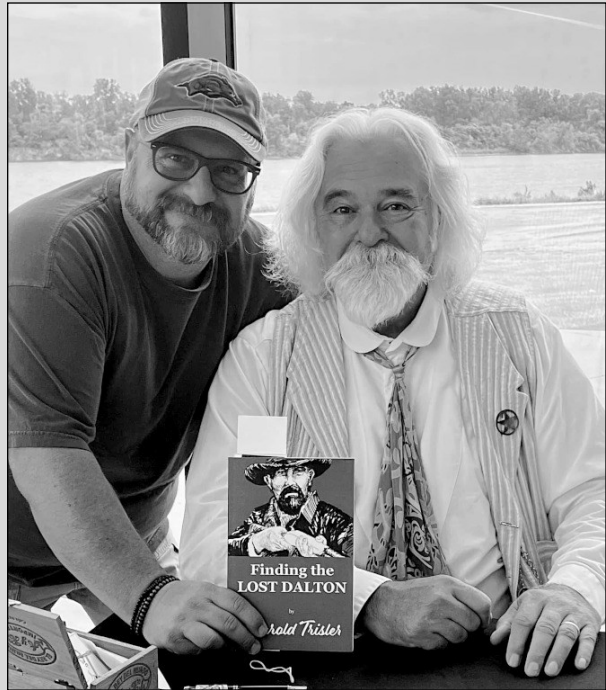
Young Trent Thompson had made just the thing needed: wooden markers with the names of deputies who gave their lives in the line of service. The markers were lined up, each one with an American flag and a candle lantern, along the

final walkway to the committee’s bus. It was glorious outside of the Fort Smith National Historic Site, but did it make an impression? The answer came when the head of the U.S. Marshal Service came to the city to make the announcement that Fort Smith had, in fact, landed the museum. He then told the jubilant crowd that the selection for the United States Marshal Service Citizen of the Year was Eagle Scout Trent Thompson. Impressed? Yes, they were. Those markers had made an impression on me too.

One of the names memorialized was Frank



FRANK DALTON



HAROLD TRISLER poses with his book, *Finding the Lost Dalton* with illustrator Brett Short.

Dalton. Seeing that name started a long quest to fill in the blanks that history had left us. There are numerous books and even movies about the “Dalton Gang,” but not a single one is about their elder brother, a Deputy U.S. Marshal killed in the line of duty. There is only one way to fix that.

That is how the idea for *Finding the Lost Dalton* came to be. I just needed the answers to a few questions: where he was killed and why? That took a little work. I found a few other things along the way like another deputy named James Cole, the Payne brothers, and what life was like for a deputy marshal working in the Indian Territory in 1887.

I put it all in the book, *Finding the Lost Dalton*, and got to sign them for a bunch of people, near Frank’s name on the memorial wall at the U.S. Marshal Museum. It was for you, Frank.

city and then raising the amount of funds for designing, constructing, staffing, and equipping a national museum, those suggestions were foregone. On

Saturday’s visit, I did see one brief paragraph in a narrative regarding census marshals. It might not be too late for a library and archive to be developed within the



LIGHTHORSE STATUE by Daniel HorseChief at the U.S. Marshals Museum.

There was no question in any of our minds that the museum, and the city that had the grit to establish it, will attract visitors for many years to come. Our hat was off to all of those who labored over the years and, evidently especially in the last year, to pop open the doors and make it happen!



museum. But these concerns are mine and not a distraction nor specific criticism from what we saw there.

After about a two-hour tour in which I saw several townspeople that I knew among the many, many people who were walking the floors doing what we were. Our group went outside, thoroughly impressed with the professional exhibits, the space well used in the building, the engaging staff, and the ways in which such a long and varied history of a unique federal government agency was displayed. There was no question in any of our minds that the museum, and the city that had the grit to establish it, will attract visitors for many years to come. Our hat was off to all of those who labored over the years and, evidently especially in the last year, to pop open the doors and make it happen!

We walked toward the river and a tall bronze statue. Dr. DeBlack, his family, and I stopped. He spent some time gazing at “Lighthouse” by Daniel HorseChief. I wondered what he thought of it. It was: “I want a replica of this statue.”

Sites to aid in your research

Find links at www.fortsmithhistory.org

Arkansas Stories

Arkansas Freedmen of the Frontier

Arkansas Historical Association

Arkansas History Commission &
State Archives

Black Men who Rode for Parker

Center for Local History and
Memory

Arkansas Civil War Sites

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas
History and Culture

Fort Smith Trolley Museum

Fort Smith Museum of History

Fort Smith Air Museum

Historic Fort Smith

Oak Cemetery

Old State House Museum of

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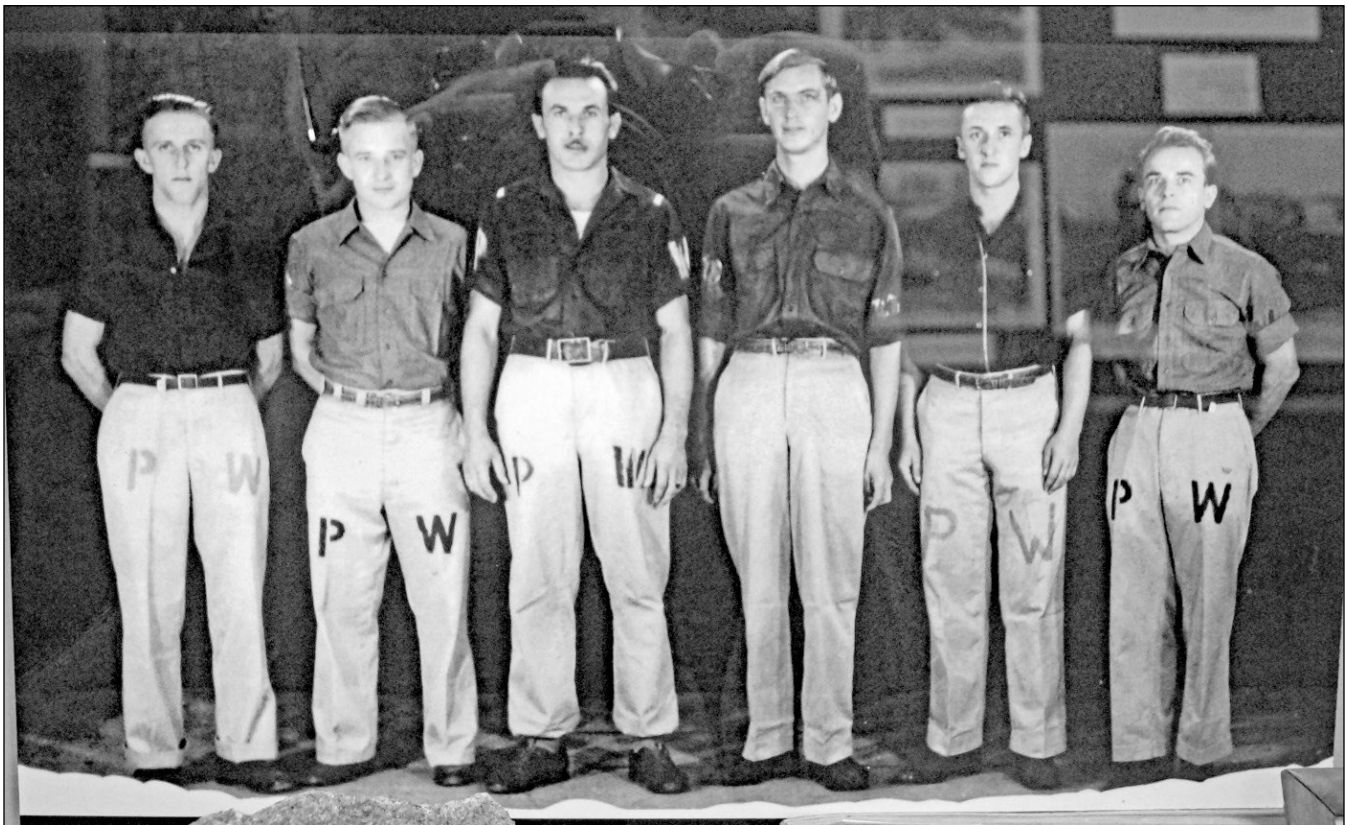
South Sebastian County Historical

Society

Wikipedia Entry for Fort Smith

Task Performed by the Organization

Contemporary report on the German POW camp at Chaffee, 1942-45



NAZI PRISONERS OF WAR at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas
(Courtesy of Chaffee Crossing Military Museum)

By Jerry Akins, with Sue Robison

When Jerry Akins discovered a document titled, “A History of the Prisoner of War Camp. Camp Chaffee, Arkansas,” he opened the pages of an eyewitness account to one our area’s most historic eras. Being a researcher and author, Akins realized the value of his find and thought immediately to have it published. In April 2023, the first segment of “The Task Performed by the Organization” was published in The Journal by the Fort Smith Historical

Society. The article covered the physical facilities, administration of the camp, the Legation of Switzerland (diplomatic representative office,) discipline, and the beginning of prisoner labor, both inside and outside the camp.

This final study of the manuscript completes a report on the information held in the original survey, which is dated September 11, 1945. Additional information to help readers understand the camp and the prisoners was provided by Tom Wing, assistant professor of history and director of the Drennen-Scott Historic Site for the University of Arkansas at Fort

Smith, who supplied a listing of the 4,000 Nazis confined at Camp Chaffee. Volunteer researcher Ann Creekilller investigated many of the Nazi military units mentioned in the prisoner list, and much of her findings are included in this writing.

This survey of the second section of the report offers a study of the business side of operating a prisoner of war (POW) camp. The War Department, which originally resisted the possibility of using prisoners for labor, eventually changed its policies and detainees were utilized in the operation of the post, and as industrial and agricultural labor in POW branch camps. The installation at Camp Chaffee saw revisions completed with prisoner labor. Working first under the police and prison officer, the prisoners ended up being the responsibility of the POW labor officer. Three provost sergeants oversaw checking work details at compound gates and inspecting them throughout the day. Daily detail and work records were under the charge of an enlisted Army clerk, who was assisted by two prisoners assigned to the duty.

It was the company commander's responsibility to furnish prisoners requested for work, to deliver them to the company gates to be dispatched by Labor Office personnel, and to be searched before leaving the camp. Time records for prison workers were posted daily. When prisoners were first made available for labor, the types of employment they undertook was outlined by the Geneva Convention and the "Tentative Regulations for Civilian Internees and Prisoners of War." These regulations were strictly followed until a more liberal interpretation evolved. After the defeat of Germany, prisoners were allowed to work on any task not deemed degrading or menial.

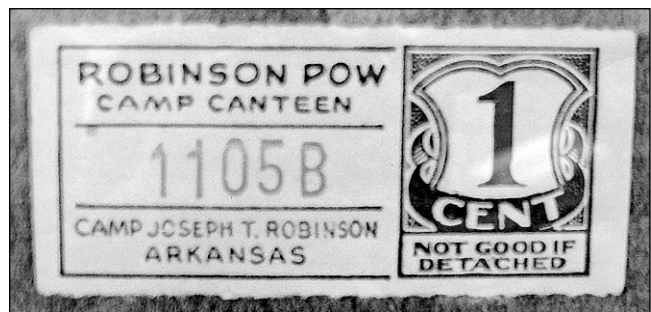
The report's writer(s) declared it was the policy from the start of the labor program to "get a fair day's work out of each prisoner of war assigned to a task." In the early days of the labor program, guards and provost sergeants checked each project to ensure the quality of the prisoner's work. Later, as prisoners took on positions in the public work force, civilian supervisors replaced Army guards on prisoner projects. There was an attempt to use non-commissioned officers from the prisoner population as supervisors, but it was never successful. The author declared that most German supervisors slowed the work of projects they oversaw, so the use of prisoner NCO supervision stopped in 1943.

In 1944, it appeared the prisoners had a change of attitude and displayed a sincere desire to work. At that time, jobs available with night shifts were offered to prisoners. Men accepting those jobs were quartered in a



WOODEN BOX SITS BESIDE AN IMAGE of a child that was drawn by a prisoner of war at Camp Chaffee

(Courtesy of Chaffee Military Museum, Rod Williamson)



(Courtesy of Chaffee Military Museum, Rod Williamson)

separate barracks and their schedules adjusted to allow for ample sleep.

In 1943, several means were devised to increase the production of prisoners working on farm details. Each prisoner was expected to cut a certain amount of spinach per day, based on the amount an inexperienced American civilian might be expected to cut. Prisoners were given a disc for each bushel they produced, and at the end of the day received credit for the number of discs they accumulated.

A prisoner's pay was eighty cents for an eight-hour day. Rating sheets were kept at the camp declaring each day's production unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or excellent for each prisoner. If the laborer received an unsatisfactory rating, he was not paid for the day. Tickets that could be used for theater admission, beer, cigarettes, candy, or ice cream were issued to those receiving satisfactory or excellent ratings: one ticket plus pay for a satisfactory mark, and two tickets plus pay for a prisoner with an excellent rating. After a

while, the premium items were removed from the prison canteen and the ticket reward system was stopped.

The report's author(s) detailed how tasks were established for most details and the prisoners were forced to meet them. If a prisoner refused to meet a task, they were placed between the fences near the main gate until they complied. The author(s) seemed to take pride in declaring: "This PW camp was one of the first to do a full day's labor and to force them to work on a job, whether they liked it, or not." As stern as the author(s)8 declaration sounds, they also reported how steps were taken to assign prisoners tasks for which they were best suited. This was not always possible and resulted in the Administration using pressure and "showing them who was boss" until the program's production was up to the desired level.

Disciplinary action was taken against prisoners for malingering, agitating, deliberately slowing, or hampering a project. Prisoners classified by the medical officers as capable of only light duty were used wherever possible. They often released full duty prisoners, relieving the latter to heavier tasks, and increasing the number of prisoners for work.

The average workday was eight hours. At the beginning of the program, prisoners in the stockade were allowed to be out for twelve hours, but after the defeat of Germany, the time limit outside the stockade was increased to fourteen hours for a prisoner assigned to a camp task. Sunday was generally accepted as a day of rest.

Between early 1943 and August 1944, most prisoners were picked up at the labor gates by their assigned agencies. After August 1944, prisoners were marched in a long column to dispersal on the main post. After work hours, they were returned to the same location and marched back to the stockade. Prisoners could be worked more than eight hours a day outside the camp, but only if arrangements were made in advance between the employer and the camp Labor Office.

In May 1944, there were 540 POWs working on the base at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. Of these, 100 were assigned to the post engineer, while another 100 worked for the Ordinance and Maintenance Department. The base mess halls, both medical and enlisted, operated with sixty prisoners on staff, while the Office of Special Services had ten prisoners on its payroll. The offices of the Quartermaster maintained the largest staff of prisoners, showing 270 on its daily roster. All other employed prisoners were used by agricultural and industrial projects. A sharp increase

All areas of a prisoner's life were overseen by the Geneva Convention. In general, it was declared that prisoners should be served the same rations as troops at any POW camp. ... In May 1945 it was declared that working prisoners received between 3,400 and 5,700 calories per day, while non-workers were held to 2,500 calories per day.

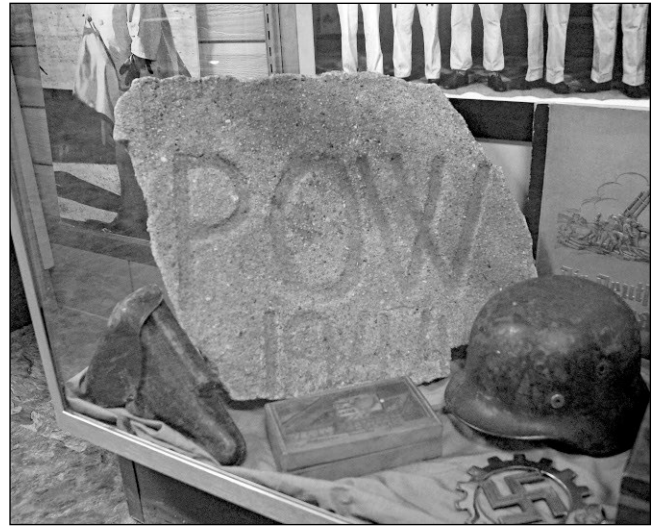


occurred in late 1944, when the total work force jumped to 740 prisoners.

Non-commissioned officers from the prison population had to agree to sign up for work before they could be assigned any position. At first, they were reluctant. Those who refused were deemed "non-cooperative" and moved to a designated barracks where they were placed on reduced rations. After the defeat of Germany, all the NCOs in the prisoner population signed on for labor assignments for the duration of their captivity.

It appears there was an unusual number of non-commissioned officers among the prisoners of war. So many, in fact, that headquarters of the Eighth Service Command directed in 1945 that any NCO not having proof of his rank should be treated as a private. Faked German seals, erasures on documents, missing pages from orders, and obvious differences in penmanship cost a thousand NCOs their rank and created a new labor force for the camp. Some NCOs chose to simply "lose" their papers rather than undergo the scrutiny put on them by the new directives.

All areas of a prisoner's life were overseen by the Geneva Convention. In general, it was declared that prisoners should be served the same rations as troops at any POW camp. In 1943, the camp received permission to substitute rationed items that were generally served with items better suited to the tastes of the prisoners. In May 1945 it was declared that working prisoners received between 3,400 and 5,700 calories per day, while non-workers were held to 2,500 calories per day. Sack lunches were provided to workers leaving the camp for assignments, and mess



(LEFT) CARVED ROCK AT STONEHOUSE RESTAURANT on Wells Lake Road. (Right) A stone found on Chaffee grounds.
(Courtesy of Chaffee Military Museum)

details were popular with prison employees.

On April 14, 1945, at 8 p.m., the POW camp was alerted for flood duty. By 5 a.m. the following day, the first 300 of approximately 1,800 prisoners used to fight the flood left the camp for Cross Lane, nine miles west of Van Buren. Once on location, the prisoners were put to work reinforcing existing flood walls. Later arrivals worked in groups of 100 to 200 prisoners at the Van Buren Missouri Pacific Railroad yard building a sandbag flood wall. The writer(s) condemned a lack of planning that prevented the program from being as successful as possible, while lauding the diligent work done by prisoners, despite their long hours of labor.

Private organizations, individuals, or certain camp organizations using prisoner labor operated under contract with the Prisoner Work Office. The Labor Officer handled all details, and all contracts with private agencies and individuals were certified by the war's Man-Power Administration as necessary for the successful conclusion of the war effort.

At the time the report was compiled, the following types of work and employers were listed as common:

- ❖ Cutting spinach (private individuals)
- ❖ Picking beans (private individuals)
- ❖ Manufacturing bricks (Acme Brick Company in Fort Smith, Arkansas)
- ❖ Unloading train delivered cotton cars at a cotton compress (Federal Compress and Warehouse Company in Fort Smith, Arkansas)
- ❖ Processing grapes (Welsh's Grape Juice Company in Springdale, Arkansas)
- ❖ Cutting broom corn (Lindsay County Broom Corn Growers Association in Paul's Valley, Oklahoma)

- ❖ Kitchen police (Officers messes on Camp Chaffee)

- ❖ Janitors and decorators (Officers messes, post exchanges, and theaters on Camp Chaffee)

- ❖ Oil painters and artists (Officers messes on Camp Chaffee)

Four branch camps operated from the Camp Chaffee Prisoner of War installation. These were in Stilwell and Paul's Valley in Oklahoma, as well as Springdale and Russellville in Arkansas.

The report boasted of the camp manager's ability to significantly increase prisoner involvement in the work program by adding tasks such as carpentry, mechanics, and equipment repair to the assignments available to detainees. The writer(s) assured readers that, "if a work program is well planned and supervision is adequate, prisoner of war labor will produce." The author(s) also noted how the work program allowed prisoners to occupy their minds with creative and productive thoughts, thus decreasing melancholy, anger, and thoughts of escape.

The report moves to Chapter Six, where the author (s) report on the social activities and privileges of the prisoners held at Camp Chaffee. According to the Geneva Convention outline for the treatment of prisoners, men held at the camp were allowed the freedom to practice their chosen religion and meet with a minister of the same faith, if possible. Toward this end, an American chaplain was assigned to the camp from April 1943 to October 1944 to organize a religious program for the prisoners. The stockade commander next took on those duties under the supervision of the post chaplain.

Two clergymen from the prisoner population, one

Catholic and one Lutheran, handled most of the religious services in the camp. They were allotted a hutment to serve as both quarters and study. Services were held for each faith twice weekly inside the stockade, and two services per month were offered at the station hospital. A public address system installed in May 1945 allowed for the broadcasting of a fifteen-minute-long religious service weekly to all prisoners inside the stockade. Religious services for deceased prisoners were handled by the chosen minister. It was customary for a memorial to be held for a deceased prisoner in the theater, followed by a graveside service in the prison cemetery.

Recreational activities began almost as soon as the camp opened, as they were also mandated under the Geneva Agreement. The schedule at Camp Chaffee included soccer, tennis, ping-pong, boxing, weightlifting, handball, and other sports. The prisoners were allowed to construct their own facility from salvage material to hold special workout equipment purchased with prisoner of war funds. A large recreation area near Compound One was used for inner-compound games. Prisoners not at the games might visit the day room for a game of chess or darts. The United States government supplied prisoners with recreational kits. These were quickly deemed unsuccessful because they contained baseballs, footballs, and other items unfamiliar to the prisoners.

In 1945, money from the prisoner's fund was used to purchase motion pictures to be shown in the compound area. Outside viewing stopped when a theater capable of seating 500 was constructed. In the summer of 1945, a regular schedule of movies was instituted. Hospital patients were presented with films once a week, and there was no charge for any program until May 1945. When the movies became part of the canteen, a fifteen-cent charge was levied for every program. At the time of the report's completion, the movies were shown in an outdoor theater constructed with money collected when prisoners purchased tickets to the shows. The theater featured special retractable light covers and two perimeter pole lights.

Music was always part of the POW camp. The detainees formed bands and an orchestra with instruments purchased with prisoner funds. Weekly programs were presented in the compound, and small bands visited hospital patients once a month.

Learning the English language was a goal of most prisoners. To that end, the public address system was used to offer simple English lessons. For more serious students, courses ranging from self-improvement to university extension classes were made available to

prisoners. Empty space in barracks and dining rooms was used for classes, which generally met after work hours. Students had at hand a library of 8,000 books in both English and German. The War Prisoner Aide Fund of the YMCA, the International Red Cross, and the German Red Cross supplied funds for the library. In 1945, copies of modern books translated from English to German were sold in the canteen for twenty-five cents.

The stockade's canteen was an important connection to the outside world for many prisoners. At first, it offered only toilet articles and writing supplies, but fruits and sweets were soon added to its inventory. Beer and ice cream were favorites of the prisoners until both items were declared critical and removed from the shelves. The barber shop was housed in the canteen, both of which were open several hours after the noon and evening meals each day.

When first opened, the camp's canteens were operated by a camp officer. After July 1944, the canteens operated under the supervision and authority of the Camp Chaffee exchange. At that time, all prisoners of war and American personal were removed from canteen operations and U.S. military personnel took control of their operations.

Camp regulations allowed prisoners visits from relatives twice a month. The Intelligence Officer had control of these visits, which were held in the stockade's Command office. The author stated it was normal for no more than two prisoners to receive visitors in any given month.

The first issue of the camp newspaper, *The Messenger*, was published in October 1943. The mimeographed paper, written in German, featured general news items, poems, puzzles, and simple English lessons. The newspaper was short-lived, as its publication was halted on January 1, 1944, due to a discipline issue. In place of a local publication, *Der Ruf* (The Call), a publication for all POW camps, was placed in the canteen for purchase.

A Fort Smith photographer furnished a camera and film to the camp to allow prisoners to have photos taken before Christmas, 1943. The photographer finished the photos in his studio and prisoners were allowed to send one photo to an address in Europe before the holiday. Photos were taken again in 1945 under the direction of the Headquarters, Eighth Service Command from Houston, Texas.

To provide the opportunity to exercise, outdoor walks were officially allowed for the prisoners. However, since the guards accompanying the prisoners kept the pace at a quick march and the time of the

exercise short, this particular activity was never popular.

In April 1945, a copy of a peace petition signed by POWs in Massachusetts was published at Camp Chaffee. Later that same month, Chaffee prisoners drew up their own petition stating they wanted Germany to surrender. A secret vote was held, and most of the German enlisted men held prisoner at Camp Chaffee signed the petition.

The closing chapter of the report, chapter seven, goes into detail about the camp's security. While chapter one described the fencing, guard towers, lights, and weapons used to maintain order at the prisoner of war camp, chapter seven deals with Army regulations governing the soldiers charged with overseeing the prisoners and their activities.

The first guard orders for the camp were published under General Order Number One, Headquarters, Internment Camp Cadre. These organizational orders were rewritten several times due to necessities guards faced while dealing with the prisoners. The first General Alert Plan was published on March 24, 1943, and was followed by revisions in October of the same year and December 1944. A January 1944 set of orders were published to deal directly with prisoners who refused to work.

Almost every activity inside the prison camp was covered by its own set of security regulations. There were general orders containing directions for prison guards, laundry guards, special orders for main gate control, perimeter guards, security at the guard house, night compound controls, and prison campfire orders. Until 1944, security regulations were classified confidential by order of the Arkansas International Security District of the Eighth Service Command.

When the new prisoner of war camp first opened there were four guard posts at the station hospital and eleven around the stockade. The guards on duty operated with the provisions of FM 26-5 Interior Guard Duty Regulations. As the number of prisoners in the camp increased, security increased until almost one-hundred enlisted men were detailed to guard duty daily. In 1943, a perimeter fence around the garrison area eliminated guards assigned to work details inside that section of the camp.

In October 1943, guards were removed from towers during daylight hours to allow them to attend gate posts during the day, and towers during darkness. A total of sixty-four enlisted men were required to operate this schedule. At the time the report was written, the author(s) stated the guard was cut to three twenty-four-hour posts, three alternating part-time

Almost every activity inside the prison camp was covered by its own set of security regulations. There were general orders containing directions for prison guards, laundry guards, special orders for main gate control, perimeter guards, security at the guard house, night compound controls, and prison campfire orders.



posts around the stockade, and one twenty-four-hour post at the hospital.

A dozen war dogs were assigned to the prisoner of war camp for use by the stationary guards. These dogs required several handlers, and a reduction in personnel reduced their use. As a rule, the dogs were used in pairs at outpost road intersections and the area surrounding the stockade. Their greatest use was during conditions of heavy fog, but this advantage did not outweigh their high overhead and the program was discontinued.

On two occasions, a detail of one sergeant, two corporals, and sixteen privates were sent to Glennan General Hospital prisoner of war patient wards in Oklahoma to facilitate the transfer of prisoners. A second detail of security personnel made up of two officers and eighty enlisted men was sent to Arlington, Texas, to guard railroad installation during a tour of President Franklin Roosevelt.

In the spring of 1945, the routine was for one of the officers on guard and an NCO to patrol the compound at night. Prior to the installation of this procedure, a prisoner was beaten during a March evening in 1945 and later died from his injuries. While there were several incidents of prisoners gathering at compound gates in objection to other prisoners being placed between the fences for discipline after various infractions, the March death caused by a beating was the only incident of that type at the time this report was written.

The original report informs its readers that, if an escape was expected, a roll call was immediately held, and all work details called to a central location. If it was determined a prisoner was missing, local law enforcement, the FBI, and the Army headquarters were

immediately notified. The executive officer, or the Officer of the Day, would search a ten-mile area surrounding the camp. Foot and motor patrols were sent out to more distant areas. Special pursuit details were dispatched only if reliable information was received about an escapee's location. If found, the prisoner was walked back to camp from where he was apprehended.

The author(s) referred to enlisted men assigned to prisoner work details as "chaser guards." In 1943, when the first work details left the prison camp, the ratio of guards to prisoners was one guard to no more than three prisoners. The number of guards decreased until, at the time of this report, each guard was responsible for up to fifteen prisoners, depending on the location and type of work performed. Some private details were turned over to civilian supervision if there were several troops present.

The camp experienced unannounced, monthly shakedown inspections under the direction of the Stockade Commander. Personnel from the Guard Detachment were charged with conducting the actual search of all buildings used by the prisoners, their belongings, and the prisoners themselves. The prohibited items most often collected from searches were civilian clothing, uncensored newspapers, and kitchen ware. From the winter of 1944 until the summer of 1945, all radios used by prisoners were inspected once a month by a representative of the Signal Corps to ensure none had short wave capabilities.

All mail and reading materials were censored by the Intelligence Officer or his enlisted assistants before being delivered to a prisoner. Information considered vital to the camp was passed immediately to the Intelligence Officer. Files were maintained on each prisoner consisting of information on behavior, work habits, discipline, and other matters. This information was transferred with the prisoner when he left the camp.

The writer(s) recorded the first arrivals at the camp as 500 men transported to Chaffee by rail and unloaded from a train that stopped near the coal pile area. The author(s) reported how 100 guards were changed to "escort these arrogant individuals from train side to the stockade." Upon arrival in the prisoner area, the Nazi soldiers were held in a neutral area while their luggage was searched, and contraband items were confiscated. The first prisoners arrived with substantial amounts of equipment and belongings, but later groups had little more than toilet articles and clothing.

Contraband articles collected from prisoners

included German blankets, canteens, civilian clothes, drawing supplies, land mine cases, cameras, and binoculars. No weapons or ammunition were ever found. After being searched, their political status was checked in their 201 files maintained by the Intelligence Officer. With this procedure complete, prisoners moved forward to assigned barracks and a much-needed shower. The entire process took about ten days, after which prisoners were assigned to work duties. Prisoners leaving the camp experienced the same procedure in reverse, ending with the two mile walk from the camp to the train.

While the report this article used as its source promised readers charts and graphs to better detail the information covered within its pages, none of those additions survived to be included in the papers discovered by Jerry Akins. In their absence, the current writers working to record this important history turned to secondary sources of our own to better understand the Camp Chaffee Prisoner of War Camp. Tom Wing provided a list of the prisoners held at Camp Chaffee for the completion of this article. Working under the long-held notion that a vast majority of prisoners were taken from Rommel's forces in Africa, researcher Ann Creekkiller investigated the military history of a few of the Nazi prisoners held at Camp Chaffee.

The official list of prisoners contains forty-four pages of information once marked "secret" by the United States, and now bearing "declassified" stamps on the upper left corner of every page. Listed on these pages are the names, internment serial number, date of birth, rank or grade, regiment, battalion, and company of each prisoner. To the far right of the page is space to denote affiliation with the SS, SD, SA, or other secret police organizations. The pages that follow show designations for NSV Police, Civil Service Official, RAD official, and Land Police. The first three prisoners listed on the first page are noted as SS, with Alfred Gehde listed as a member of the Der Fuhrer Regiment. In total, eighteen prisoners displayed the notorious SS designation after their names.

Of the recorded German military divisions listed among Camp Chaffee prisoners is the 6th Fallschirmmajor Division, a paratrooper branch of the German Luftwaffe, found on page seven of the detainee roster. This division was formed in 1944 and saw action in Normandy, where it was almost destroyed. Survivors were assimilated into another parachute division that went on to fight Canadian forces before surrendering to the British in May 1945.

Members of the 26th Infantry Division are listed on page ten of the prisoner roll. Formed in 1936, these

soldiers saw action in Russia and suffered heavy losses during the Wacht am Rhein (Watch on the Rhine) fighting at the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, which started in December 1944 and ended in January 1945. Members of Germany's 26th Infantry surrendered to Allies in February 1945.

Page nine of the prisoner roster gives the names of five members of the elite Nazi SS held within Camp Chaffee's fences. Leopold Chalup, Andreas Mugels, Herbert Fischer, and Kurt Karl were members of the first battalion of the 26th Infantry, while Gerhard Marz was a member of the second battalion. The 12th SS Panzer Division was known as the Hitlerjugend, with many of its members recruited from the Hitler Youth. They saw action throughout Europe and were sent to Hungary after the Battle of the Bulge before surrendering to Allied forces. After several accusations of brutality, including rape and massacre, were brought against the 12th Division, its commander, Kurt Meyer, was tried and convicted of war crimes.

George Hetterich was the only member of the 212th Division's 320 artillery regiment listed in the prisoner accounting. His regiment took part in fighting in Leningrad, Livonia (present day Estonia), and Lithuania before being captured in March 1945.

Eight members of the Nazi Army's 340th Infantry were prisoners at Camp Chaffee, representing the first, third, fifth, seventh, fourteenth, and headquarters companies of the regiment. This company's history shows them engaging in fighting in both Russia and Ukraine.

Page twenty-one of the prisoner list shows three members of the 1462nd regiment of the German Army's 462nd Division that once held the city of Metz, France. The U. S. Army sent forces under the command of General Patton to reclaim the city, which he did, making the three men on page twenty-one his prisoners.

Wilhelm Biermaan, Ottis Knauer, and Fritts Schaaf were members of the 999th Division of the German Army. They are distinguishable from other soldiers because they were court martialed Germans sent into combat as punishment. As members of the infamous Afrika Korps, the 999th was the only division made up of German Army prisoners.

Rommel's Africa troops are plentiful in the roster. However, they were not the only representatives of the German forces held in Camp Chaffee's prisoner of war camp. Some units display only one or two members on the roll, while others appear to have suffered the capture of a great many of their number on the same day.

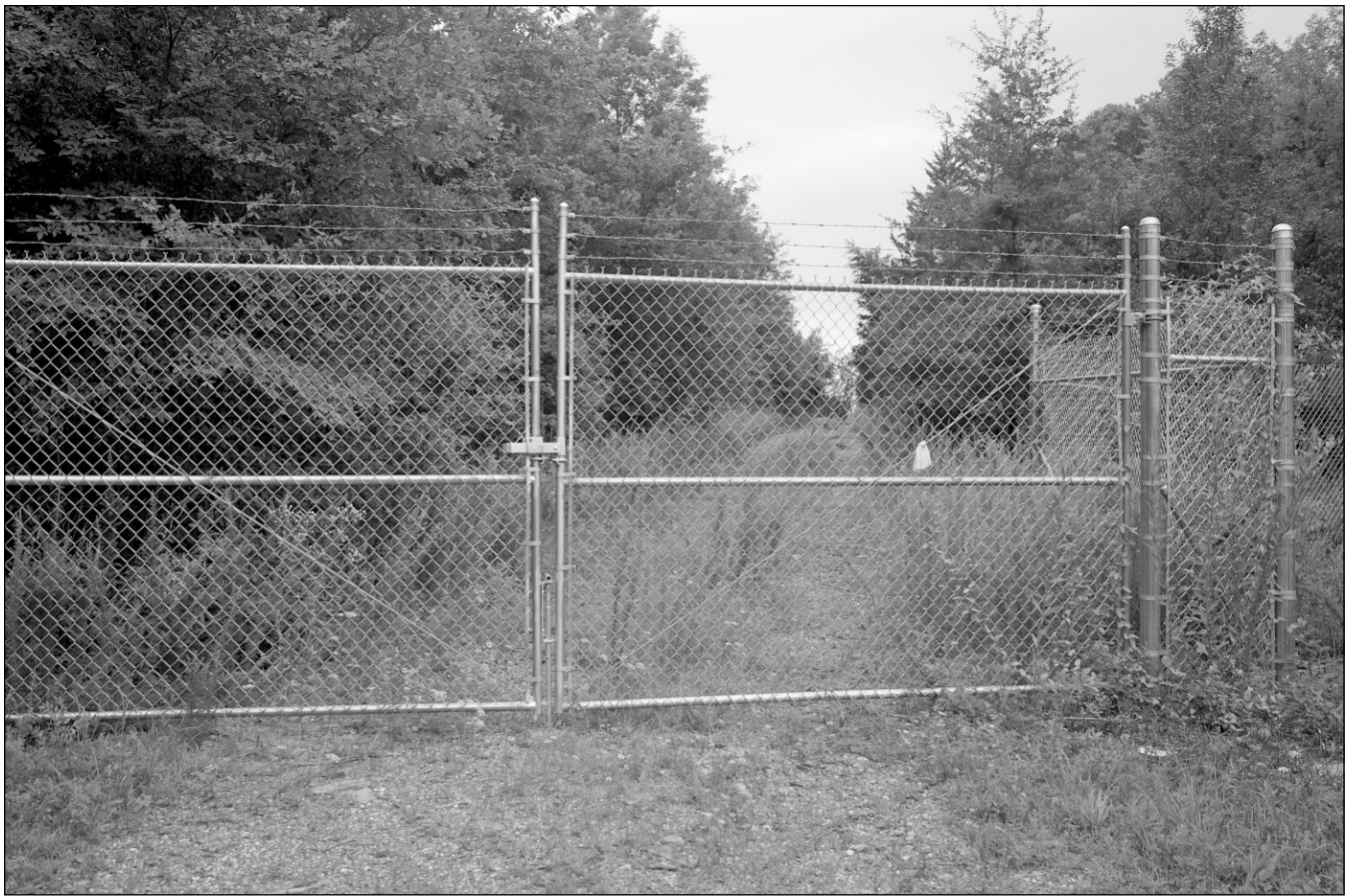
Kramer's book also records one of the most recognizable escape stories to survive the Camp Chaffee prisoner of war camp. The story of the young German who was spotted during the celebration of Mass in the Charleston, Arkansas, Roman Catholic Church is detailed by Kramer, who gave the name of the escapee as Michael Huebinger.



More than four pages of names represent prisoners captured on battlefields between September 10 and September 19, 1944. Other pages show similar large groups of prisoners taken in a what appears to be a single operation. While 4,000 prisoners are far too many for this report to research, their information is available for future historians and writers who wish to tell their stories.

Many books are currently available offering information on German prisoners. Author Arnold Kramer researched the murder at Camp Chaffee POW camp for his book, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*. Kramer records the story of a twenty-one-year-old paratrooper named Hans Geller, who was wounded twice in action before being captured, as the victim of the crime. Kramer speculated that Geller's fluent use of the English language, both written and spoken, made him a favorite of American guards on work details, which drew the attention of loyal Nazis. When Geller approached the Americans with a request to have a few Germans transferred to a different work detail because their fervent teaching of radical Nazi dogma was interfering with the labors of other prisoners, those who already suspected his loyalty began making plans for his death. Called outside one night on the premise of meeting a prisoner from his hometown, Geller instead met fellow prisoner Sargent Edgar Menschner, who beat him and left him to die in the shadows. Menschner was court martialed for the crime, found guilty, and sentenced to hang. However, petition was made to President Truman who commuted the sentence to twenty years in prison, and Menschner was sent to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to fulfill his sentence.

Kramer's book also records one of the most



CUSTER BOULEVARD OPENS INTO THE FORMER PRISONER of war camp at Chaffee Crossing.
 (Courtesy of Sonny Robison)

recognizable escape stories to survive the Camp Chaffee prisoner of war camp. The story of the young German who was spotted during the celebration of Mass in the Charleston, Arkansas, Roman Catholic Church is detailed by Kramer, who gave the name of the escapee as Michael Huebinger. After spending quite a bit of time roaming the area's back roads and downtown Charleston in clothes clearly distinguishing him as a prisoner, the German took refuge in the church and a woman sitting in the pew near him notified the priest. After taking the prisoner home and serving him coffee, the priest was able to convince Huebinger that returning to the prison was the right thing to do before giving the young escapee a ride back to Camp Chaffee.

The war in Europe ended with Germany's surrender on May 8, 1945. By the early summer of 1946, the prisoner camps at both Camp Chaffee and Camp Robinson in Arkansas were phasing out of operation. Prisoners held in those facilities were moved east by train and eventually loaded onto ships for return to Europe. July 23, 1946, is recorded as the day the final German prisoner of war boarded the *Texarkana* in



THE REMAINS OF A SMALL WALL BUILT by prisoners of war can be seen near the gate on Custer Boulevard.
 (Courtesy of Sonny Robison)

a New York harbor for a trip home. The commanding officer of New York's Camp Shanks at the time is said to have turned to a reporter as the ship pulled away from land and sighed, "Thank God that's over."

Since the Arkansas prisoner of war camps, Chaffee, and Robison, were both on military bases, their prisoner camps were returned to Army use. After some time, the government reevaluated its use of military forts, and what was by then known as Fort

Chaffee was reorganized, returning a portion of its acreage to the public.

The Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Trust was established in 1997 to oversee the development of the property. The Redevelopment Authority was created to direct the use of the land released by the government. Chaffee Crossing, a business and residential area, now occupies a portion of the lands while the U.S. Army retains control of 6,500 acres of the original land.

Under the direction of their curator, Rod Williamson, The Museum of Chaffee History maintains a vivid history of the POW camp for visitors. Photos, items confiscated from prisoners, and the story of an eighty-nine-year-old former detainee who returned to visit the camp bring life and reality to the tales surrounding Chaffee. Stone walls, walkways, and patios like one prisoners created at a rock schoolhouse, now refurbished into a popular restaurant, are reminders of the detainees. These tangible relics of World War II are solid links to the men who labored here while wearing the mark of PW on their clothing.

Perhaps the most poignant reminder of the war and the men held at Camp Chaffee is a dirt roadway leading off Custer Boulevard to the place where the prisoner of war camp stood. Now overgrown and shrouded beneath a thick canopy of trees, the old roads to the camp hide behind a tall, chain link fence topped with barbed wire. The land where the camp sat remains under the control of the U.S. Army and is closed to the public. There is no plaque to mark its existence, no

sign to tell its history. Only the remains of a small stone wall outside the fence constructed by former detainees gives any evidence of the POW camp at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas.

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More information can be found within the University of Arkansas Special Collections Department, World War II Prisoner of War Records (MC 509.) Labor Reports, Camp Chaffee POW Branch Camp #1, Russellville, 1945, and Branch Camp (Mobile), Springdale, 1944 (Box no. 2509), 1945; 1944.

Special appreciation to:

- ❖ Ann Creekkiller
- ❖ Rod Williamson
- ❖ Tom Wing

Letters from Readers of the *Journal*

Inquiries will be published in the *Journal* as space allows and should include the following:

- ❖ Your full name and address
- ❖ Full name of the ancestor about whom you desire information.
- ❖ Definite time period (birth, marriage or death date and date appearing in a certain record at a definite time period).
- ❖ State the relationships (names of parents, children, brothers and sisters, or in-laws)

Material should be submitted using word-

processing programs supported by Windows.

Do not abbreviate any words; put all surnames in capital letters; capitalize only the first letter of given names and places; write dates as follows (day, month, year; example 25 January 1978).

Send to:

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If This Land Could Speak

A Brief Introduction into the Indigenous History Linked to Fort Smith

By Korina Lopez

Editor's Note: This paper was initially submitted to the Fall 2022 Research Paper Competition on "Recentering the Past: Honoring the Land and Indigenous Peoples" organized by the History, Social Sciences, and Philosophy (HSSP) department as part of its "Creating an Actionable HSSP Land Acknowledgement Statement" Initiative.

Abstract

This paper explores the interconnected histories of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and the indigenous peoples and nations who view the area as part of their ancestral lands and who passed through it due to various removal acts. While Fort Smith is a growing and ever-changing city, it is essential to understand how it all started. From the Osage and Cherokee conflict to the Civil War and Federal Court years, an exploration of historical moments illustrates the interconnected nature of Indigenous peoples and the city. The Trails of Tears, the Treaty of Peace and Amity, and the Curtis Acts illustrate the strong influence the federal government exerted on the relationship between indigenous peoples and the city. If the land that includes Fort Smith could speak, this relationship between indigenous peoples and the city would be described as foundational. The history documented in this paper depicts moments of bravery, suffering, darkness, and light that can serve as lessons and a basis for further inquiry into this topic.

The ground a person stands on contains many stories: the tales of those who have walked that land before; narratives of bravery, of suffering, some that have gone unspoken, and some that, over time, are unveiled. Fort Smith, Arkansas's history is intertwined with that of indigenous peoples and nations who consider the area part of their ancestral lands and those who passed through it due to numerous removal acts. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the link between these two histories, to understand their significance, and to unveil the past so that people may be better educated in the present.

The Louisiana Purchase served as the catalyst for the connection between Fort Smith and the Indigenous tribes that view it as part of their ancestral lands.¹ Once the United States acquired the landmass, the American government also gained responsibility and authority over matters that transpired on that land. The Osage laid claim to the area where present-day Fort Smith is located.² They formed part of the southern Siouan tribes and are considered the most formidable.³ Known for their fierce warriors and the fear they instilled in their enemies, many stated that they were "noble and generous with their friends but terrible with their enemies."⁴ In the early 1800s, the Osage gained a new neighbor or, in their eyes, an enemy.

President Jefferson established a policy to relocate eastern tribes into an area that would be considered their own territory. This removal was not necessarily forced, but there was ample pressure from the U.S. government.⁵ In 1812, a treaty was established between the Cherokee and the U.S. government in which the tribe agreed to relocate and trade their ancestral lands for those that were on the north side of the Arkansas River. The movement of the Cherokees was further expanded in 1817, bringing them into direct contact with the Osage, who previously claimed the lands as their own. The presence of the Cherokee angered the Osage and led to several disputes over hunting grounds.⁶ These disputes grew into wars between the two tribes. The first of these wars led to the establishment of the first Fort Smith.⁷ The warfare between the tribes discouraged other settlers from traveling west as it was considered dangerous territory.⁸

In 1817, the first Fort Smith was established at the point where the Arkansas River meets the Poteau River on an area known as Belle Point. The instillation was intended to end the hostilities between the two tribes.⁹ The positioning of the fort was intentional as it was on a bluff that allowed soldiers "to have a commanding view of the countryside and river traffic." It is at this point that the histories of the city and tribes intertwine. The fort was crucial in the establishment of U.S. law in the area and was critical to the westward expansion of the country. A small settlement grew around the fort, even establishing a post office in 1829.¹⁰ Several white settlers engaged in what was considered illicit

commerce with the natives, which was one of the concerns of those operating the fort.¹¹ At that point in time, the area encompassed not only the Osage but also the Cherokees, white settlers, and U.S. soldiers. In 1819, the Choctaws were added to the mix after they established a village along the Arkansas River and, similar to the Cherokees, came into contact with their enemy, the Osage.¹² The role of the fort was to keep the peace among the tribes. It was located at a critical point since westward was Oklahoma, which in the mid-1820s was designated as Indian Territory.¹³

Located in an area of rapid change, diverse populations, and strong tensions, the fort was responsible for a very unstable territory.¹⁴ The first fort was equipped for battle, but the fight never came. The closest was a dispute between the government and the Osage leader, Mad Buffalo. On April 9, 1821, the Osage asked that the fort provide them with gunpowder to use against the Cherokee, but their request was denied. This angered the Osage, and they threatened to attack the fort. In response to the threat, soldiers pulled out two cannons which caused the Osage to retreat. This ended the near attack, but the Osage went on to wage war on the Cherokee. The soldiers in the first Fort Smith never engaged in direct combat with the tribe. Acting in the fort's capacity as peacemaker, the commanding officer of the fort, Colonel Matthew Arbuckle, along with Arkansas Governor James Miller, worked to negotiate peace amongst the Cherokee and Osage through the 1822 Treaty of Fort Smith.¹⁵

Once peace was reached in 1824, the first Fort Smith was abandoned, with the nearby Fort Gibson taking over affairs pertaining to Indian Territory.¹⁶ The Choctaw used the abandoned fort as a supply depot, and it was no longer maintained by the U.S. Army.¹⁷ In 1959, Clyde Dollar test excavated the abandoned foundation of the first fort. Further excavation and preservation work on the landmark came later.¹⁸ Even though the soldiers were gone, and the native tribes were at peace, the indigenous history linked to the area, which is current day Fort Smith, continued to progress. This history is one intertwined with tragedy.

In 1830, the federal government passed the Indian Removal Act, which forcibly moved the Choctaws, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Muscogees (Creeks), and Seminoles from their ancestral lands.¹⁹ This forced removal marks one of the most devastating and painful episodes in the histories of the tribes as they suffered through hunger, disease, and death on their journey to Oklahoma.²⁰ The accumulation of these tragic events became known as the Trail of Tears, a name given to it

by the Cherokee tribe.²¹ Many walked on foot their entire journey, while others traveled by boat. The various routes converged on the Fort Smith area. Upon their arrival in Fort Smith, many were ill and exhausted with broken spirits making the town the site of one of the most appalling moments in the region's history.²² The increase in tribes and settlers that began to occupy the area led the U.S. government to order the army back to Fort Smith to establish order.²³

Fort Smith was considered a border among nations, while the newly designated Indian Territory was considered its own separate entity.²⁴ This border required a small garrison in 1831 to prevent the illegal trade of alcohol, primarily whiskey, across the border.²⁵ Merchants in the area were known for sending gallons upon gallons of alcohol to the native tribes daily, disregarding a federal law that prohibited the possession of alcohol in Indian Territory.²⁶ This new role gained by Fort Smith reestablished the presence of the U.S. government. The residents of the area pushed to restore the fort to the status it previously held. These efforts were successful, with Congress authorizing the construction of the second fort to serve as a critical area for defense and peacekeeping in the region.²⁷

The second Fort Smith was established in 1838, 500 feet from the first. The intention behind this iteration of the fort was to protect settlers from the natives. However, with no imminent threat, the War Department made the military post into a supply depot instead. The storehouse that was established at the second fort was built in 1838 and remains the oldest building in present-day Fort Smith, reflecting a bridge between the past and the present.²⁸ The fort's role was to distribute goods to seventeen other forts in the area, until 1861, when the Civil War broke out and disturbed the peace among the tribes.²⁹

In 1861, the War Department discontinued the military occupation in Indian Territory due to the consideration that Arkansas and Fort Smith would form part of the Confederacy. Without the U.S. military, occupation was impossible to maintain. This prediction proved true as Fort Smith fell to the Confederacy on April 23, 1861, leading the federal army to remove all units west of Arkansas. The fall of the fort and the removal of the army changed the position of the natives in the war. The tribes had been allies to the Union, but without the army's presence in the territory, they no longer had protection, and the states surrounding them were loyal to the Confederacy. The Confederacy began to draw support from the natives by presenting

President Lincoln as no friend of theirs. Given the history between the tribes and the federal government, some natives began to support the Confederacy.³⁰

The Confederate interest in the natives' support was connected to Fort Smith since the Confederacy intended to use the fort as both a supply depot and a defense bastion protecting Confederate states west of the Mississippi River.³¹ The Confederacy sent Albert Pike, an Arkansas attorney and eventually a Confederate general. Pike negotiated amongst several tribes finding that only certain portions of those in Indian Territory were willing to commit their support to the Confederacy. Many opted to remain neutral. Those treaties that were signed "brought the western Indians into the Southern orbit and assured Fort Smith's role as a defensive bastion." As the war waged on, the Confederacy began to weaken. The Union Army, which had depleted the Confederates' power in those areas west of Arkansas, took it back on September 1, 1863. However, the native tribes that supported the Confederates continued to fight until 1865.³²

At the end of the war, the U.S. government and delegates from each of the tribes that allied themselves with the Confederacy met in Fort Smith to re-establish their relations with the federal government. The conference was held from September 8 to September 23, 1865. The commissioner of Indian Affairs at the time was Dennis N. Cooley, and he presided over the council's matters. On September 8, when the conference began, all the native representatives present had remained loyal to the Union during the war. Even though Cooley was made aware of this, he still opened the first day of the conference with the statement that all those who had sided with the Confederacy had "rightfully forfeited all annuities and interests in the lands in the Indian Territory." He went on to inform those present that they would have to develop new treaties that demanded more from the tribes than had been thus far developed for the southern states.

The following sessions of the conference still only included those loyalist delegates, who went on to explain that they were present to make peace with their fellow natives and not to establish new treaties with the federal government. Many of those delegates pushed the idea that since the military had vacated Indian Territory in 1861, the natives were left without protection. As a result, many felt it was necessary to join the Confederacy, arguing that those who did should not be considered guilty of committing any crimes or treason. Cooley defined a brief protocol declaring immediate peace on September 13, which

was signed by those delegates present. On September 15, delegates of those factions that supported the Confederacy arrived at the conference.³³ They denied accusations that they had committed treason and argued about various situations within the new treaties that Cooley wanted the tribes to sign.³⁴

In the end, the Fort Smith Conference only achieved a few of its goals, and division remained between the loyalist and secessionist factions of the tribes. The conference ended on September 23 and resulted in a Treaty of Peace and Amity, which stated that the tribes "were again under the jurisdiction of the federal government and that they had repudiated their treaties with the Confederacy." The significance of this conference is not exactly within the treaty that was established at it, but because it opened up negotiations between the federal government and the tribes, which would go on to take place in Washington, D.C., and result in the Treaty of 1866.³⁵ These negotiations did not result in many benefits for the natives but instead marked the beginning of the loss of much of their independence.³⁶

The fort was once again abandoned by the military, but the town of Fort Smith remained, with the U.S. District Court of the Western District of Arkansas being established there in 1872. The court had jurisdiction over western Arkansas and Indian Territory, once again facilitating the link between the tribes and Fort Smith.³⁷ The man in charge of this court was Judge Isaac Parker, who, by many accounts, was a friend to the natives. Because Parker's court was infamous for the numerous hangings that took place, it was used as a method of propaganda in Washington by those who wished to exploit the natives and their territory by claiming that the natives were uncivilized. Judge Parker also understood Congress's desire to obtain more power over the Indian Territory, so he focused his rulings on those already established treaties and federal laws that pertained to the Indian Territory and helped to slow down the exploitation of the natives and their lands. Judge Parker pushed the idea that the natives were on their own path and would eventually reach the moment when they were ready for statehood and believed that the government should not interfere in that process. Upon Judge Parker's death, he received numerous tributes not only from people residing in Fort Smith but also those in Indian Territory who viewed Parker as a friend who helped maintain justice.³⁸

The next major shift in the life of various tribes came on June 28, 1898, when Congress passed the Curtis Act. It gave the federal government control over tribal lands, allowing it to break up "communally

owned land and encourage the incorporation of Native people into American society.” The act weakened tribal forms of government, and the federal government now held control over the citizenship requirements for a person to be considered a member of a tribal nation.³⁹ The federal government’s extensive reach over the natives came about due to the goal of assimilation. The Curtis Act is viewed as a critical point in tribal history. The effects remain present today as the nation’s tribes are small in size and assimilation has taken over.

The history of Fort Smith is not one that can be told separately from that of the indigenous peoples and tribes that hold the area as part of their ancestral lands. If the land could speak, it would tell the story of native Osage who were fierce warriors, of Cherokee who entered the land prepared to defend themselves, of the tribes who crossed the land on the final leg of their journey upon the Trail of Tears, of those who fought in the Civil War, of those who negotiated treaties for peace, of those who sought justice in court, and the many who lost much at the hands of the federal government. If the land could speak, it would tell stories mixed with pride and sorrow. The land cannot speak but people can. It is the responsibility of the people of Fort Smith to give this history its voice. The past must be acknowledged, as it teaches the most valuable lessons. Acknowledging the past is essential as it establishes a path for reconciliation.



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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:

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'90% Backbone': Roger Bost

An excerpt from *Before It Got Complicated:
Medicine in Fort Smith and the River Valley 1817-1975*

By Taylor Prewitt

After five years in practice in Fort Smith, Roger Bost told his partner John Watts that he wanted to run for the school board. Why? The superintendent would not allow children with disabilities to enroll. So: join the school board. Whatever it takes. As it turned out, he did win election to the school board, became its president two years later, and Fort Smith became the first school in the state to allow children with learning disabilities to enroll and participate in special education classrooms. Such an approach to challenges would in later years lead an opponent in the state legislature to say, "For such a runt of a man, he's ninety percent backbone."

People in Fort Smith may also have said when he left town in 1965 to join the faculty at University of Arkansas Medical School, "His shoes aren't very big, but he sure does leave a big footprint." Not many physicians can put everything they have into taking care of patients and put everything they have into public advocacy—not to mention family responsibilities. The math doesn't add up. Roger Bost was one of those who made it add up. But it does require allocation of time and energy, and a willingness to change one's platform when necessary to be an effective agent of change.

Roger Browning Bost received his middle name from an ancestor, Captain John Browning, who made five voyages across the Atlantic to bring his family to Jamestown, Virginia, starting in 1620. A couple of centuries later, both his father's and mother's families came west from Hickory, North Carolina, to settle in Arkansas. There were not very many options in the Arkansas Territory, and one of them was around Clarksville in the Arkansas River Valley area, where, another century later, Roger was born October 28, 1921. His father, Roger Stone Bost, had graduated in the "first or second" class of the University of Arkansas Pharmacy Department in 1912, opened a drugstore in Mulberry, and then moved twenty-five miles to the courthouse square in Clarksville nine years later.

"Everything I ever knew about pharmacy—and about life, really—began working in that old store," Dr.



THIS CARTOON BY GEORGE FISCHER, cartoonist for the *Arkansas Gazette*, which hangs in the BOST Inc. headquarters, reflects Bost's advocacy for children's health care.

(Photo courtesy of Taylor Prewitt)

Bost recalled. "I remember jerking sodas there, running errands, and all kinds of assorted tasks growing up. Then we'd close up late at night and walk home." He attended the University of Arkansas and then transferred to College of the Ozarks in Clarksville where he could pay more attention to a childhood classmate, Kathryn King, whom he married in 1944 when he was a student at University of Arkansas Medical School. (Kathryn graduated from College of the Ozarks in 1943.) After graduation from medical school in 1945 he served in the U. S. Navy, serving at Corpus Christi, Texas. After the war he was transferred to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Fayetteville.

Upon discharge he went to Duke for a pediatric residency, then joined the Duke faculty in pediatrics.

By 1951 he and Kathryn were beginning their family, and they moved to New Orleans, where he was associate professor of pediatrics at Tulane and was on staff at Ochsner Clinic and Charity Hospital. It was in New Orleans that he developed a gastric ulcer and had a gastrectomy, which may have played a role in his maintaining a slender build for the rest of his ninety-two years.

After three years at Tulane, he elected to leave academia and go into private practice in Fort Smith, where he established the third pediatric practice in Arkansas. Dr. John Watts, who became Dr. Bost's partner in 1962, credits Dr. R. A. "Bud" Downs, a Fort Smith urologist at the time, with persuading Dr. Bost to come to Fort Smith. Dr. Pearl Waddell, a board-certified pediatrician who had practiced at Holt-Krock Clinic since 1932, was preparing to move to St. Simons Island, Georgia, and Dr. Bost found himself so swamped with patients when he arrived that it took him months to unpack his books. When Dr. Watts arrived, he found himself in a practice where they made hospital rounds twice a day, made many house calls, and when the oral polio vaccine became available, they both drove house to house administering the vaccine.

Kathryn brought Roger his supper to the hospital if he was stuck there taking care of a sick child. He enjoyed driving a Karmann Ghia sports car, rationalizing that he spent more time in the car making house calls than anywhere else. His house calls as recalled by the children and parents were legendary, including the story that on one occasion he successfully retrieved a cat that had ventured too far out on the limb of a tree, and no one could get it down.

After beginning his practice on the second floor of a commercial building on Garrison Avenue, Dr. Bost retained Calvin Schriver, a local builder, to design and construct an office building on the corner of Fourth and D Streets, between Sparks and St. Edward hospitals. It has been described as having a "unique butterfly roof and Taliesin West-inspired structural members," creating "an eye-catching design that would stand out in any city... The use of large spans of clerestory windows around the building allowed for ample natural light in all of the exam rooms but also provided maximum privacy for the patients." [2]

His office had a single waiting room for Blacks and whites, a first for Fort Smith. On one occasion he called one of the local hospitals to admit a Black child, knowing that the hospital's policy was not to admit Blacks. Upon being refused, he called one supervisor after another until he reached the chairman of the hospital board. He too refused. "You'll live to see the



DR. BOST BUILT THIS CLINIC BUILDING in Fort Smith and moved in in 1958.

(Photo courtesy of Taylor Prewett)

end of this hateful policy," Bost responded.

While maintaining such a busy practice, Roger enjoyed spending time talking to people, and as he listened, he became aware of community health issues that he wanted to address. One of his first projects was to provide support for children who were physically, mentally, or emotionally disabled. He personally solicited funds for a Child Family Guidance Center to treat emotional and behavioral problems and a day School for Limited Children for the developmentally disabled. "He went up and down town, hat in hand, asking for donations from local shopkeepers to make it a reality," recalled Kent Jones, a former director of BOST, Inc., a school that began in 1959 with six students in the basement of a house the First Methodist Church used for Sunday school classes. The Child Family Guidance Center became the Western Arkansas Counseling and Guidance Center, or The Guidance Center, which has expanded to seven locations in western Arkansas, offering a variety of services including the recent addition of a special suicide prevention service.

The School for Limited Children became BOST, Inc. now with locations in twenty-eight counties in Arkansas, serving thousands of individuals of all ages.

Katie Raines, current director of BOST, reports that its services include children's services with therapy, adult day treatment services teaching life skills and preparation for employment, and intermediate care in group settings. The largest program is home- and community-based, serving those who live at home but require anywhere from an hour to twenty-four hours a day support. A more recent service addresses mental



THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER of BOST is on 74th Street in Fort Smith.
 (Photo courtesy of Taylor Prewett)

health. [3]

BOST now owns two apartment complexes, three group homes and two intermediate care facilities. There is an apartment complex in Northwest Arkansas that is expanding because of the housing shortage there, and also an intermediate care facility in Booneville.

At a fifty-year anniversary dinner in Fort Smith in 2009, Dr. Bost, though unable to come, used a video to muse about the growth of BOST: “In 1959 from a tiny acorn (only six clients) a giant oak tree has grown (now serving 700 consumers in thirty-three counties).” He also remembered the financial support of the Junior Civic League over the years: “I think they emptied their treasury to get this program started,” he said.

The Bosts had five children: Kingsley, now a pediatrician in Poplar Bluff, Missouri; Becky and Margaret, both now in Little Rock; Virginia, now in Russellville; and Kevin Gao, now in New York City. Their home was on South Twenty-fourth Street, and Virginia recalls Fort Smith at that time as a place where she could ride her bicycle anywhere she wanted to, with a wide open neighborhood that she could play in.

Amid all his community service, however, (for which his honors included the Book of Golden Deeds award), Dr. Bost’s public role in health care in Arkansas had hardly begun. In 1965 the family moved



KENT JONES, *director of BOST*, stands with Roger and Katherine Bost.

(Photo from BOST Inc. archives.)

to Little Rock where he resumed his academic career as an associate professor of pediatrics. Continuing his interest in disabled children, he became administrator and medical director of the Crippled Children’s Hospital in Little Rock. This was a time of flux in pediatric care, with the Arkansas Children’s Hospital becoming the pediatrics department of UAMS and all pediatric patients at UAMS being moved to the Children’s Hospital, which apparently absorbed the patients of the Arkansas Crippled Children’s Hospital as well.

When in practice in Fort Smith, Dr.

took care of the daughter of Dale and Betty Bumpers, then living nearby in Charleston. The young girl had a tumor of the spine, and Dr. Bost referred her to Duke, where he had trained, and she was successfully treated for her tumor. Dr. Bost and Dale Bumpers became good friends, and after Bumpers was elected governor in 1970, he asked Bost to serve in his administration; they worked together to create the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, today known as the Department of Human Services. This was a bruising legislative fight in which Bost's "90% backbone" stood him in good stead.

Early on the agenda was a bill sponsored by Rep. Bill Stancil, who had been Fort Smith schools' first athletic director, to allow schools to accept disabled students. Bumpers also pushed through a bill driven by Bost and Arch Ford, Education Commissioner, requiring all Arkansas students to educate disabled students, in regular classrooms when possible, and mandating the state to pay for it. [4]

"With Bost's tenacity and Bumpers' political magic," the legislature agreed to make use of federal Medicare and Medicaid funds which had been available but untapped, except for nursing home funds, since the creation of Medicare in 1965. "Medical services...were extended to the disabled and many others, including poor pregnant and nursing women; the state eventually quintupled the children's colonies and spread them around the state."

Having lived in Charleston, Bumpers was determined to make health care more widely available in rural areas. With Bost's help, UAMS increased its class size and awarded scholarships to students who would pledge themselves to practice for a time in a small town. Despite the opposition of the Arkansas Medical Society and the state medical board, they narrowly won approval for osteopaths to receive hospital and pharmacy privileges.

During his time of service in the Capitol, he saw the state Medicaid program grow from \$10 million a year to \$126 million a year; he oversaw the creation of community mental health centers throughout the state; and prescription drug coverage through Medicaid funds was introduced.

Bost returned to UAMS in 1975 as professor of pediatrics and associate dean of the college of medicine. In this capacity he designed the network of Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) in 1976 in an effort to expand fundamental health services in rural areas. One of the earliest of these was in Fort Smith. Others are in Batesville, Fayetteville, Helena,

Jonesboro, Magnolia, Pine Bluff and Texarkana. This required a good bit of personal diplomacy in enlisting the support of local medical and community leaders. Such things don't just happen because someone in Little Rock signs a piece of paper.

Bill Clinton became sick and called Dr. Bost, whom he only knew by reputation, on the night before he was to announce his candidacy for governor in 1978, to ask for help. Despite Bost's protestations that he was a pediatrician, he did prescribe medication (probably children's aspirin), and Clinton was able to make his announcement. Hillary Clinton attributed the improvement to "Bill's pediatrician."

When Dr. Harry Ward was named chancellor of UAMS to succeed Dr. William Shorey, Dr. Bost was the runner-up candidate. Though disappointed, Dr. Bost escorted Dr. Ward throughout the state introducing him to his own contacts, and they became fast friends. Bost then, at age seventy-two, returned to the practice of pediatrics at Arkansas Children's Hospital, where he developed the Children's Care Center, modeling it after his own clinic he had built in Fort Smith. He retired from this position, and though he returned for short post-retirement stints, he began to decline these opportunities so that he could spend more time on the golf course. Other interests included dogs, pocketknives, hats, picking fruit, the Arkansas Razorbacks, and the St. Louis Cardinals, and he never went anywhere without an apple and peanut butter crackers. He was a Methodist and a Democrat.

I met him one time, when we both happened to be at a funeral in Little Rock in 2010. These are my notes from the meeting:

A lady standing nearby introduced herself as Katherine Bost; her husband Roger was around and came over later. He was very gracious. "Oh, yes, I know you, Taylor. I've kept up with you. You were a breath of fresh air when you came to Fort Smith."

He told us he practiced in Fort Smith from 1955 to 1965 before going to Little Rock where he was head of pediatrics at Arkansas Children's Hospital. And later Dale Bumpers and Dale Pryor had him be head of the state health department. He's 89 now—says he doesn't know why he's still around—he's rather small, partially bald, wore a semi-turtleneck shirt and tweed jacket. A few stories from his Fort Smith days: John Watts joined him in his practice, and when John called, in the course of his search, Roger asked Katherine what John's wife's name was. She didn't remember—some sort of precious stone—so he asked John, "How's Opal?" I think Garnet has

told us that story.

When he first came, Prentiss and Gladys Ware invited them to a party they were having, and Gladys took him around introducing him to the others. When she got to McLeod Sicard (president of the First National Bank), McLeod said, "Pediatrics? Well, you'll sure be busy. Everybody's got foot problems."

Roger Bost was a charter member of the UAMS Hall of Fame in 2004. He died November 19, 2013, at age ninety-two, at his home in Little Rock. After his funeral at St. James United Methodist Church in Little Rock, he was buried in Clarksville, his birthplace.

Ernest Dumas characterized Dr. Bost in his

obituary notice in *Arkansas Times*:

A less imposing man would be hard to find. Frail, short, bespectacled and bald at an early age, Roger Bost's mortal frame was outfitted with a voice so thin and reedy that he could barely be heard above the muted whispers in the legislative hearing rooms where he often spoke 40 years ago.

But, boy, did he get heard. No one in Arkansas ever did as much to lift the welfare of children, and not just children but people of all ages who at some point have found themselves or loved ones outside the latitudes of first-rate health care or social services. That may include most of Arkansas. [5]

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Specters, Seances, and Soothsayers

Early Fort Smith Newspapers and the Paranormal

By Sue Robison

The public library in Fort Smith, Arkansas, offers a resource called "The Community Archives." The archives are a collection of local newspapers and various publications from the 1870s forward. Researchers easily get lost in its pages, and, if they stay in the archives long enough, might notice something a little strange.

In its earliest days, Fort Smith's newspapers covered instances of the paranormal as though reporting on cattle arriving at a stockyard. Stories came from across the nation and around the world, as well as locations within walking distance of the newspaper offices. Publications included a wide spectrum of articles written by believers and skeptics, covering

everything from serial fiction novels to local ghost hunts. This article mentions only a few of the paranormal references in early newspapers, for they were surprisingly commonplace. The supernatural was big news in early Fort Smith newspapers.

Teachers and parents should never tell children ghost stories or other fanciful exaggerations liable to weaken the nervous system and impair the mind.

—F. A. Rogan,
Fort Smith Superintendent of Schools
Belle Grove Journal, March 1872, p. 1

We can only guess what teeth-rattling tales were told around campfires at old Belle Point outposts on the Arkansas River. One of the earliest tales of a specter put into print was the 1877 legend of a man known

simply as Choker who walked with a wooden leg. Under the headline, “Ghost with a Wooden Leg,” the *Fort Smith Herald* article begins with its author proclaiming it to be, “the only true ghost story I know.” It seems Choker, a man with an unknown past, died alone in his cabin on the outskirts of town but refused to remain in his grave. Unlike modern visions of the gory undead, Choker returned as a genial spirit who admitted his death to terrified neighbors, including the article’s author, telling them that all men die, but adding, “all of us won’t stay buried.”

Fort Smith’s newspapers featured tales of hauntings reprinted from publications across America. In 1879, *Wheeler’s Independent* enthralled its readers with the story of the Thompson farm ghost in Massachusetts. The Thompson family was in financial straits and sold interest in their farmlands to Mr. Jacquith, who moved into their large home with them to oversee the planting and harvesting of cash crops. As soon as the deal was struck, strange occurrences began at the home. Noises came from nowhere, dishes fell from shelves, rocks were thrown at the newcomer by invisible assailants, and evening antics prohibited sleep. Soon, everyone in the house attested to seeing a white-haired specter. The decision was made to place a slate on the front porch of the house one chilly night with a note requesting the ghost’s autograph. When the sun next rose, the signature of Mr. Thompson’s long deceased mother appeared on the slate.

Simple tales such as these were common in early Fort Smith newspapers. They were placed alongside other articles of interest, many on the first page of publications, and almost all without any special graphics or editorial comment. They were offered as news of the day.

The arrival of the twentieth century brought a few changes in the way paranormal articles were presented. While still plentiful, the stories began showing up more often in what were considered “ladies pages” deeper inside daily issues.

Some contributors offered logical explanations for the stories they submitted. In 1903, the *Fort Smith News Record* published a first-hand report from a haunting victim. The article told of the man’s terror when the specter of a lithesome female spirit matched his steps as he walked home late one evening and sent him running. When he was able to regain his senses, the writer revisited the site of his encounter and discovered his ghostly assailant was the shadow of a cloth draped over a pole waving in the light of a full moon.

Another local writer laid to rest the story of a ghost

haunting a section of the Frisco Railroad track behind the Fort Smith National Cemetery. The ghost was first reported by a man who walked down the track at night on his way home from work. When he reached the section of the rail behind the cemetery wall, a phantom of light appeared ahead of him, presenting itself as white flashes dancing across the tracks before vanishing into the night. The same lights were reported later by two men who were “out for a good time” when the dancing lights blocked their path on the Frisco rail. Terrified, the pair of revelers ran for the safety of Garrison Avenue.

On the third night of the haunting, an avowed nonbeliever in specters went to investigate the stories. Sure enough, the dancing light appeared on the Frisco rail. Running toward the flashes as they moved on the rail, he saw a cat dash inside the cemetery fence, lights shining from surrounding homes reflecting off its body. The lights stopped their eerie dance once the cat was safely behind the wall, removing its reflective slick hair from view.

By the early 1900s, a group of “sane men” set out to de-ghost Fort Smith in response to the number of reported local hauntings. To their opposition, females and certain minority groups stepped forward with a preponderance of evidence and dedication to prove ghostly episodes. Notices, such as one appearing in an 1898 edition of the *Fort Smith News Record* reporting that Mary Ellen Lease confirmed her conversion to spiritualism by announcing she would lecture in favor of the belief, proved the paranormal would not be easily reasoned away.

It is unknown how much interest manifested in Miss Lease’s presentation, but there is little doubt a great deal of attention was paid to a story from the Bandit Queen herself, Belle Starr. Starr was murdered in 1899, but her rumored affair with Cole Younger and his abrupt retirement from the carnival life in 1908 prompted the *Fort Smith News Record* to recall and reprint a story Belle told about the only time in her life she was overcome by fear.

It all happened when Belle was prowling Texas with her first husband, Jim Reed. They were with a gang that day but decided to separate. Belle and Jim began the 100-mile trek home when night fell, never riding together, but never riding too far apart. A storm was rolling across the wide plains and Belle looked for a place where she might spend the night. Homesteads were scarce in the area, but she found a large, abandoned cabin that appeared well kept and safe. She secured her horse and made herself comfortable in her bedroll on the floor.

She was not certain what woke her from an uneasy sleep. Her horse was restless, and she assumed it was the rapid flashes of lightning screaming into the room that shook his usual calm demeanor. She soothed him and went back to her blankets. Just as she dozed off, she heard the light footsteps of what sounded like a small animal in the room. Instinctively, Belle knew it was a cat. She was too weary to be concerned and let sleep overcome her curiosity.

Shortly, her horse bristled again, nervously protesting his constraints. Belle calmed him one more time and returned to her blankets. Just as she found her bed, she heard what sounded like a marble or rock rolling on the wooden floor. Inside lightning strikes, she saw a cat larger than any she had seen in her life sitting on its haunches and calmly rolling a marble back and forth between its front paws. She tried to scare the animal away, hissing and waving her hands at the overlarge cat. It would not move, but only looked at her with piercing eyes. Angered, Belle drew her gun and shot through the cat's head, but it continued looking at her and rolling the marble. Five more shots she fired, each squarely hitting their target and traveling completely through the monstrous cat. Still, it rolled the marble.

Terrified, Belle quickly gathered her blankets, grabbed her horse's lead, and ran from the cabin. It was some time before the horse settled enough to allow itself to be saddled. By then the rain had calmed, so Belle found a large tree to offer them shelter for the remainder of the night. The next morning, she rode up to a small homestead owned by a woman and her young daughter. There, Belle found breakfast. While she ate, the pair questioned her about where she spent the previous night. When she described the log cabin, the girl asked if Belle had seen the ghost of an old military officer who built the home. Belle told the girl she had not seen the officer, but she saw something, at which the girl called out, "You saw the cat!"

Not all men turned their backs on the paranormal. When Arthur Conan Doyle, British author and creator of legendary sleuth Sherlock Holmes, embraced spiritualism it was news heard round the world. Local newspapers featured stories of Doyle's communications with the deceased and his 1916 claim that the world beyond the grave would one day be unveiled to the living. Doyle even attempted to answer the question mankind has asked since its inception, "What Happens When You Die?" in a 1922 article.

Local newspaper readers were probably shocked to see a front-page article written exclusively for them by the famed spiritualist. The article, "Sir A. Conan Doyle

Describes Your Soul for Readers of the *Southwest American*," appeared in the newspaper on April 19, 1922, and explained in detail the existence, abilities, and limitations of the human soul. Doyle's popularity and influence on believers in the supernatural continued until his death from heart disease in 1930, after which his wife asserted he continued his work in the next world.

Articles in the local press proved that locations, as well as people, can experience hauntings. One of Fort Smith's pre-Civil War residents, Frank Parke, explained how The Haunted Mountain in Oklahoma Territory earned its name in a 1903 article in the *Fort Smith Herald*.

The legend tells of a young Choctaw girl who defied her mother and left home to marry a handsome man her family disliked. The couple took refuge on a mountainside the night of their wedding and the new bride waited in camp while her husband hunted for game. The hour grew late, and the young woman nodded off with sleep. The sudden snap of a twig woke her with a start, and she sat up, staring wildly into the darkness. Her husband caught the sudden flash of her eyes as he approached the camp. Thinking she was a panther, he fired a bullet that struck her in the head.

When he entered the camp, the young man realized what he had done. Distraught, he buried his wife beneath a pile of stones. There she remained until years later when treasure hunters seeking gold supposedly hidden after the Mexican War found her resting spot. The men greedily threw her burial stones aside thinking they hid bounty. When the final layer of stones was removed, the misty form a beautiful, young Choctaw lady with flashing eyes lifted above them and floated away with the wind.

Also in 1903, the *Fort Smith News Record* published a report on the ghost of Richard Marquadt, the former owner of a grocery store at the northern end of Wheeler Avenue. Marquadt immigrated from Germany and was a successful businessman in town until suffering a sudden seizure of insanity that caused him to grab a long knife in his store and attack three clerks. Two of the clerks escaped the building, but the third suffered a severe wound. Seeing what he had done, Marquadt fled the store but was quickly subdued and taken to the city jail. Only a few hours after his incarceration, Marquadt regained his senses. Terrified that had killed one of his clerks, he ripped the blanket in his cell to shreds and used the strands to fashion a rope with which he hanged himself.

Shortly after his death, the grocer's ghost began making regular, rowdy visits to a home near his

business. The holiday season was the most tumultuous for the ghost, who made annual Christmas visits that disrupted a family's peace and interrupted their celebrations. A December 27 article in the *Fort Smith News Record* confirmed the third Christmas visit to the terrified family on Wheeler Avenue.

Not far from Marquadt's grocery once stood the impressive Grand Opera House on the corner of Garrison Avenue and South Fifth Street. What had been the renowned jewel of downtown, the Opera House stood empty in 1914 when a frantic call was made to authorities reporting the building was ablaze. When firefighters arrived, they were confronted with what appeared to be flames dancing in every window on the third floor of the structure. Officers rushed inside but declared later they found "only the darkness of the tomb" throughout the Opera House.

A Crawford County man gave proof that spirits can claim a section of real estate as their own when he encountered a specter on a road heading north from Van Buren. The young man traveled at night and dozed off in the saddle trusting his horse to make its way along the familiar route. Suddenly startled awake as his horse reared up on its hind legs, the rider came face-to-face with a ghostly figure in white grabbing for his mount's reins. Horse and rider struggled with the specter until they broke free and ran for home. The rider said he could not control his mind until he suddenly found himself at his own front gate.

The young man rushed inside the house, woke his mother, and told her of his horrible experience. As her son struggled to calm his heart, his mother quietly responded, "Oh, that old ghost? He's been here for years, but he never really harmed nobody."

Belief in supernatural rituals did not stop at the Arkansas state line. Native Americans had a long, intense relationship with spirits and powers outside this world before their forced removal to the Indian Territory.

An 1897 report in the *Fort Smith News Record* tells of a Joplin man's journey along Grand River to its junction with Spring River in the Oklahoma Territory where he encountered a "ghost dance" in progress. A large number of tribal members danced for days to the beats of a deer-skin covered drum in an attempt to keep

the spirit of Jim Buffalo from leaving this world. Buffalo was reported to be at death's door, and tribal members vowed to continue their dance until the patient recovered or gave up his spirit. Years later, in 1902, the *Fort Smith News Record* continued its coverage of Native Americans and the paranormal. In one article, Cherokee residents in the Eucha area in what is now Delaware County reported being terrorized by a ghost with a head two feet long.

A member of the Osage Nation in the Oklahoma Territory known as John Stink fell victim to his kinsmen's beliefs in ghosts. In 1929, John drank so much alcohol he fell into a deep stupor. Tribal elders declared him dead and buried him in a shallow grave. Waking the next morning, John freed himself from his grave and returned to his village, ravenously hungry. The people in the village were terrified at the sight of John and believed he was a ghost. They refused to accept his return to the living and would not acknowledge his presence. The *Southwest Times* article reported John living alone on the outskirts of his village at the time of the story's publication.

Stories of haunted items also worked their way into the local press. It was 1937 when Pinkie Middlebrook of Hartman came to town looking for help with his "ghost clock." Middlebrook complained that, while the clock kept perfect time so long as the lights were turned on his house, it would gain as much as three hours in thirty minutes as soon as he turned off his lamps. One night, the man sat up with the key-wound timepiece and kept his home alight. The clock kept perfect time. However, as soon as he turned down the lights, the clock started gaining time. A local jeweler examined the clock for Middlebrook and declared it to be in perfect working order, offering no explanation for its behavior in the dark.

Back in 1888, Isaac Harrison killed George Hale in Saline County, Arkansas. While murder was certainly front-page news, the nightly antics in Harrison's jail cell drew much attention from the state's press. The prisoner complained of a ghost in his cell terrorizing him with nightly visits in a February 24 edition of the *Fort Smith Elevator*. Harrison eventually named his tormentor as the spirit of his victim, George Hale.

Stories such as the haunting of a murderer held the

True Ghost Stories For Summer Reading on the Porch

**The Gray Phantom! Thrilling Ghost Story in the Life of
Marion Harland, Noted Cooking Expert**

attention of newspaper readers. While it is often the case that the truth is more intriguing than fiction, most newspapers across the nation filled their early pages with serial stories focused on ghosts, witches, and other paranormal subjects. The 1909 publication of "Tragedy of Long Ago and the Story of Its Ghost" in the *Southwest American* told the tale of an actual mining disaster, while the paper's 1915 publication of a summer's worth of ghost stories under the heading, "Ghost Stories for Summer Reading On The Porch" were strictly for entertainment. A front-page ad in the same newspaper announced the start of their "Breeme House," fiction series in 1921, which was built around the ghost of Lady Jane and took the reader to locations in America and across Europe.

Before moving pictures became part of American life, the stages in local theaters presented live ghost-themed programs to the enthralled public. The 1925 presentation of "The Cat and The Canary" at the New Theatre brought rave reviews from a *Southwest American* reporter, although he would not recommend a play featuring such tense moments and starring a ghost for anyone seeking a serene, relaxing evening at the theater. The New Theatre in downtown Fort Smith hosted the 1936 "Ghost Show," which promised to expose fake spiritualism. The program featured Hardeen, the brother of the great Houdini, and Princess Yvonne, the world's greatest psychic, and began at the stroke of midnight.

In 1920, the owner of Joie Theater in downtown Fort Smith offered to pay local ghost hunters to spend the night chained to a tombstone in a graveyard. Reward monies were determined by the sex and race of the participants, ranging from fifty dollars for a white woman to only fifteen dollars for a white man. The ghost hunters would agree to remain captive from 10 p.m. the night of the hunt until 6 a.m. the following morning and the event's organizer, Mr. Hoyt Kirkpatrick, vowed to refute his own disbelief in ghosts if any participant could prove they saw a specter.

Hundreds of people, male and female, made application to Kirkpatrick. When his decision was made to take the first applicants, people petitioned the newspapers directly for a chance to participate. A local firefighter, Earle Riggs, and a young woman named Belle Clowers were the chosen pair. The chains and handcuffs to be used to secure the volunteers to tombstones in separate cemeteries were on display at the Joie Theater the day of the event. Numerous disappointed applicants milled about hoping for a chance to fill in for one of the chosen.

Both Mr. Riggs and Miss Clowers arrived at their

**Tonight at 11:30 at the
NEW THEATRE**

GHOST SHOW

**Exposing Fake Spiritualism
Showing You All the Tricks Used
by Fakirs to Fool People!**

HARDEEN Brother and Successor
to the Great Houdini

—and—

PRINCESS YVONNE
World's Greatest Psychic Marvel

**See This Great Midnight
Seance and Expose!
Tonight at the New at 11:30**

assigned burial grounds at the appointed time on Saturday, the fifth day of April. Riggs was chained to a grave in an old cemetery at the eastern end of Kinkead Avenue, while Clowers was left to wait for ghosts secured to a tombstone in a neglected burial ground south of the Smelter in South Fort Smith. When they were released the next morning, both denied encountering any astral beings, saying they slept simply fine and disappointing those wishing for a livelier event. The pair left their cemeteries steadfast in their denial of ghosts, although a bit wealthier.

Up until recently, the only indication of the presence of an outsider has been confined to the tilting of tables, rapping on walls, and facing at unearthly hours the weird drone of an unknown spirit voice.

—"Unknown comes back to Fort Smith Citizen,
and Youth Holds Uncanny Spiritualistic Powers"
Southwest American, June 11, 1922, p. 25

If ghost hunters were not happy slinking around graveyards at midnight, they could try the "Psychic Howler" to help find a spirit. Developed at the American Psychic Institute and Laboratory, the Howler was a contraption marketed as an ululometer using cameras, phonograph records, and sound amplifiers. The howler promised to capture images of ghosts in haunted buildings, as well as the audio of any message the departed wished to share with the living.

True believers in the spirit world thought a box

TONIGHT

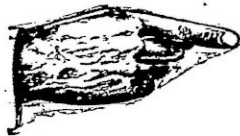
She Sleeps Alone

In the

Graveyard

But her experience will not be half as thrilling as to see

"The Greatest Question"



D. W. Griffiths Powerful Destiny Drama

AT THE

JOIE THEATRE

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY

City Fireman Earl Riggs

and

Miss Belle Clowers

Will tell their graveyard experiences in Tuesday's Southwest American. They will witness the "Greatest Question" at the Joie Monday night and will compare their experiences with the thrilling graveyard scenes on the film.

D.W. Griffith



Plays on the emotions of men and women
like a musical on a harp



"Ghosts! Chillum,—oh Lawdy—oh-oh-oh!"

Uncle Zeke, Nellie and Jimmie are passing the churchyard after the evening shades have fallen do see the ghost that figured in the terrible ghost story the old negro had told them few minutes before. And you will see it, too—but you'll know the truth, which they didn't. People roar with laughter at this scene in Griffith's "The Greatest Question" and then go blocks out of their way home from the theatre to avoid passing a graveyard.

A drama of the way of destiny with "just folks"



MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY

SHOWS START 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30
PRICES CHILDREN 10c ADULTS 30c

containing 3,000 brass coils nicknamed a "howler" used to trick a specter was no way to treat a ghost. Instead of seeking spirits, these people found a way to invite the spirits to visit them.

Seances were popular across the globe at the beginning of the twentieth century. The master of all things spiritual, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, gave a respectability to the practice, and large and small séance rooms opened across America.

In 1904, George Tilles booked a medium into the Grand Opera House on Garrison Avenue. Doctor Joseph Carpenter was scheduled to visit Fort Smith on November 4 and present "a series of manifestations of spirit power in the light" at the Opera House. Doctor Carpenter toured nationally and came to town with

references and recommendation letters from American and European Theosophical Societies. There would be no charge for the program, but Tilles suggested attendees donate to offset the doctor's travel expenses.

The séance, which was to take place on a well-lit stage, never happened. In an article published in the *Southwest American* on the day of the program, it was announced that Mayor Garrett had notified Mr. Tilles no such program would be allowed in Fort Smith, and anyone trying to stage such an event would be prosecuted. George Tilles, owner of the Grand Opera House, yielded. In a statement made to the *Southwest American*, Tilles said, "...I have come to the conclusion not to excite the displeasure of the ministerial fraternity. I think it's a shame, however, that

we should be subjected to such treatment, but we will have to stand for it, and will stand for it, because we cannot help ourselves.”

Complaints were able to prevent early seances inside popular city buildings, but it appeared nothing could stop local mediums from offering their services inside private homes. Perhaps one of the most successful of all local mediums calling forth the dead was a thirteen-year-old boy. The youngster, an orphan, lived with his grandparents in Van Buren. The teen claimed to connect with those beyond the grave with the help of his “control,” who was the spirit of his uncle who had died fourteen years earlier, Mr. Stamps of Fort Smith. The surviving son of Mr. Stamps attended the boy’s first public demonstration of his abilities and described for the press a table being lifted from the floor unaided in broad daylight. When asked about the “control” spirit guiding the teen through the land of the dead, Mr. Stamps said he believed the spirit was, indeed, that of his deceased father.

Mediums operating local seances found many ways to prove the presence of departed spirits. The usual means were levitation of objects, control of electric lights, and spirits of the deceased speaking through the séance host. One Tulsa couple developed a large tin trumpet to allow spirits to amplify their voices, claiming it would allow the deceased to be heard by their still living loved ones.

By the 1920s, mediums were sliding to the shadowy sidelines of the paranormal. Newspapers abounded with articles detailing faked seances, mediums who were fined for fraudulently promising the appearance of beloved souls who did not manifest, and the many tricks used to confuse and convince a séance audience.

In 1929, a Mena woman went to court to ask a judge to reverse a decision she made a year earlier at the urging of a spirit who spoke to her during a séance. A gentleman named Pilley and his wife were owed money from a property agreement with the Henson family, and the debt was still outstanding when Mr. Pilley died. Seeking the comfort of a visit from her husband’s spirit, Pilley’s widow arranged a séance. During the program, Mr. Pilley’s apparition appeared and urged his wife to release the Henson family from the debt they owed her so he could rest in peace. After a year without the funds, the widow felt she had been tricked into excusing the debt by the Hensons and the medium, so she took her complaint to court. The article did not mention the judge’s decision.

As the use of mediums waned, the reports in newspapers took on a more humorous tone. The

NEW Midnight “Chost” Show
Saturday—11:30 p. m.

Can Zandu
Bring Back the
DEAD?

ZANDU
(The Mystic)
Midnite Seance
and Ghost Show

NOT A PICTURE
LECTURE OR PLAY
SEE!

Cold winds from nowhere
Shadows of unreality at your
side
The touch of some one de-
parted.
Voices from eternal silence
Will millions now living never
die? Uncanny, Unearthly, Grue-
some, Weird, Eerie, Fascinating,
Fearsome.

All Seats 25c



By the 1920s, mediums were sliding to the shadowy sidelines of the paranormal. Newspapers abounded with articles detailing faked seances, mediums who were fined for fraudulently promising the appearance of beloved souls who did not manifest, and the many tricks used to confuse and convince a séance audience.



Southwest American carried a short piece about a man from Denver who filed for divorce claiming his relationship with his wife was damaged by her near constant attendance at seances. It was not so much his being called out for almost nightly seances that bothered the man, as it was the identity of the spirit she hoped to contact that caused his distress. The woman was reaching out to her deceased first husband.

Writer Kathleen Norris bemoaned the mundane nature of messages received from behind the veil. Saying one might hope for a “sense of awe and revelation” instead of simple missives intended only to prove a spirit’s existence. While Norris did not doubt the warm joy a mother experienced contacting a

deceased child, she did wonder why the messages from the dead offered so little to widen horizons and ease the fear of death.

Still, not all mediums faded into the ether. Princess Wahlefkka demonstrated her psychic powers to a 1926 audience at Fort Smith's Joie Theater. Billed as the Cherokee Seeress, the Princess pledged to answer all questions from attendees, including queries from women concerned about their husband's faithfulness. Promoters noted that many marriages were saved by women acting upon advice received from the Princess.

The princess was followed to a local stage in 1935 by the renowned mystic, Zandu. Promises of cold winds from nowhere, and the touch of the departed, filled seats quickly for the traveling medium. Declaring the event was not a lecture, nor a play, it was hailed as uncanny, fascinating, and fearsome. "The Midnight Ghost Show" began at 11:30 p.m. and was no doubt worth every penny of its twenty-five-cent admission fee.

It may not happen this year according to her prophecy, and it may miss Fort Smith altogether, but Arkansas, she says, is to have an earthquake.

—"Earthquake Foretold,"
Fort Smith News Record,
February 2, 1898, p. 8

Every student of Fort Smith history knows of the tragic "cyclone" that struck the city on January 11, 1898. The massive tornado destroyed property in the downtown area, including the new high school and the home of recently deceased, legendary Judge Isaac C. Parker. The death toll was fifty-five souls, and the storm staggered the small Victorian city to its limits of perseverance. The history is widely known, but is it also widely known that the whole disastrous event was foretold by a local fortune teller? A reporter for the *Fort Smith News Record* wrote of the fortune teller contacting him with news of the killer storm the day before it hit downtown, demolishing property between Grand Avenue and Garrison Avenue.

The reporter wrote a month after the tornado of his interview with two men who visited the same soothsayer to investigate her apparent ability to predict natural disasters. The businessmen, who had their futures foretold during the meeting, recounted the fortune-teller's prediction of an earthquake to strike Arkansas, which was considered unlikely at the time.

Disaster was often the theme of soothsayers. An article out of New York and published in an October 1896 issue of the *Fort Smith News Record* tells of a

message received by a farmer from a divine power alerting the man to the approaching end of the world. The farmer gathered his family and friends, sold his home, and buried his treasures for use in the next world, which would appear after the "crumbling" of this existence on the first day of October. The article published in Fort Smith on the second day of October without editorial comment or suggestion of how the farmer fared the previous day.

Predictions made by soothsayers are as old as history itself. While not nearly so popular as a good ghost story, fortune tellers had their place in early Fort Smith newspapers. Disaster and loss often brought out the desire for guidance of one who saw the future, as did the simple desire of young women longing to know the identity of a future husband.

Fear was a motivating force for many seeking a peek into the future. Fear for the fate of their son moved a Stamps, Arkansas, couple to reach out to a local soothsayer when they lost contact with their twenty-one-year son. Thinking he was on his way to California in 1935, the couple received devastating news from a traveler that a body matching their son's description was found in Texas. The couple was encouraged by a fortune teller who urged the boy's parents to remain calm. While confirming their son was in Texas, the seeress said he was working there, and would return home within three months. The *Southwest American* offered no follow-up on the young man's fate.

The reputations of fortune tellers fell below those of mediums conducting a séance when it came to matters of trust. Virginia Graham, a seeress with an office on Garrison Avenue, acknowledged that many claiming to share her talents as fortune teller were not worthy of the title, but suggested the same could be said of those professing to be physicians or lawyers. A 1913 article in the *Southwest American* proclaimed Madam Graham, "High Priestess of Occultism," and made it quite clear she was not a typical Gypsy fortune teller. Madam Graham boasted of references from Chicago and other metropolitan locations and offered assistance with all personal matters between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. for a small, fifty-cent stipend during her special introduction to the area.

Fortune tellers were bound by laws governing their business practices, such as an annual fee charged by the state of Arkansas for the privilege of telling futures. Ignoring this provision, and other violations of legal and moral behavior, led to several soothsayers ending up in court, and eventually in local newspapers. One fortune teller, identified as a Gypsy, had only been in

town a few hours before she found herself in a Fort Smith jail awaiting her hearing date. Accused of lifting a dollar bill from the shirt pocket of a gentleman who said he did not ask her to read his palm, the newcomer was soon working off a fifty-dollar fine behind bars. Leaving the court after the hearing, the fortune teller's victim admitted to a *Southwest American* writer he was relieved to have his money returned, saying his wife "would've whipped him" if he lost it.

That same year, a fortune teller named Mable Stanley was charged with "grabbing everything in sight" after being invited into the home of a Fort Smith woman for a private reading. While appearing in court with the opportunity to speak in her own defense, Stanley offered no explanation for her actions, but told the judge, "I would like to tell the fortune of a good-looking judge like you." The fortune teller was fined twenty-five dollars and led off to jail amid laughter from the courtroom.

A 1939 article in the *Southwest American* turned the tables on a fortune teller. The retelling of a decades old legend records a soothsayer and her companion investigating a neglected cemetery near North Sixteenth Street on Grand Avenue in search of a crypt containing a wooden chest holding a cache of gold coins. Finding a suspect crypt and pushing in the corner of the crumbling vault, the fortune teller touched the side of a box and was certain she found treasure. Suddenly, her companion whispered someone was approaching. Afraid of being caught and, even worse, having to give up their bounty, the pair scurried from the burial ground. The fortune teller returned alone the next night to retrieve the treasure only to discover someone had been to the crypt before her and the box was gone. Furious, she was certain her partner made away with the fortune.

In 1929, a pair of undercover Fort Smith police officers did not get the answers they expected when they paid a personal visit to a local fortune teller. The officers had been watching the home of Grant Brooks for several evenings. Brooks was thought to be operating a fortune-telling business in his home and Officer Conner and Officer Willis were monitoring it for any signs of trouble around the house, such as activities police came to expect if a client received unwanted or shocking news when he held out his palms.

Instead, everyone seemed to be leaving the Brooks home in good spirits. Couples were entering together and exiting in moods of laughter and embracing. It looked like only good news was delivered inside the business, so the two officers goaded each other until

The retelling of a decades old legend records a soothsayer and her companion investigating a neglected cemetery near North Sixteenth Street on Grand Avenue in search of a crypt containing a wooden chest holding a cache of gold coins. Finding a suspect crypt and pushing in the corner of the crumbling vault, the fortune teller touched the side of a box and was certain she found treasure.



they, too, went for a palm reading. They were left in a waiting room, sitting at a table with an excited young couple. After a few moments, the young man opposite them called out, "Here she comes," and a woman in waitress attire entered, placing mugs of homebrew before the couple and the police. Since Fort Smith operated under strict liquor laws at the time, the officers showed their badges and made several arrests. Later, they discovered the actual fortune teller's home was a few houses down the road from their stake-out.

One of Fort Smith's most memorable characters, George Tilles, gave readers of the *Southwest American* a first-hand story of a fortune teller in a 1922 article. Tilles recounted an 1881 festival sponsored by the ladies of Saint John Episcopal Church. One of the attractions the ladies offered was a fortune teller tent. A young man at the time, Tilles visited the tent and found he knew the woman presenting herself as a soothsayer to raise funds for the church. Seeing the woman was the busiest stop in the festival, he offered to give her a break from her duties. Securely shrouded from visitors and using a voice none might recognize, Tilles began foretelling remarkable things for local residents.

Tilles was a frequent traveler on the local railroad, making daylong trips to Little Rock. On those trips, he made the acquaintance of a young passenger conductor named Clarence Burelle. Quite handsome and outgoing, Burelle often shared stories of his conquests with lovely ladies in the towns along the rail route with Tilles, who found them entertaining. When Burelle entered the Episcopal Ladies Fortune Telling Tent, a well-disguised Tilles turned those stories against the young rouge, citing for him names, locations, and

details of his many dalliances.

Terrified that a stranger should have such intimate information, Burelle hurried from the tent. Later, he ran into his good friend George Tilles at the festival and eagerly told him of his experience with the fortune teller. “Let’s get out of here and get a drink,” Burelle implored, and Tilles joined him in a local bar where the rattled Casanova bemoaned the release of his many secrets by an unknown soothsayer. For weeks, the young man begged Tilles to help him find the identity of the fortune teller who knew so many details of his personal life. Finally, Tilles told him the truth and, after his anger subsided, Burelle admitted he was victim of his own foolishness for believing in fortune tellers.

...Therefore, they consulted a Seminole witch who, after pronouncing certain incantations over a pan of soapsuds and performing sundry mysterious ceremonies, informed the infected ones they were bewitched.

—*Fort Smith News Record*,
July 10, 1899, p. 2

The witches found in early pages of Fort Smith newspapers did not wear tall, pointy hats and crimson lipstick. Their faces were not green. Early witches looked like the rest of us. Although generally considered to be old women, witches could be men, or even children.

In 1889, the *Fort Smith Elevator* published a story from Centerville about a man named Spencer who needed help working his fields. Spencer and his wife took a ride to a nearby homestead to invite its owner, John Bryan, to hire on for their field crew. Before Spencer could leave his buggy, Bryan came to the cabin door and shot him.

The wound was not serious and, when Spencer cried out in surprise, Bryan ran from his porch to his aid. Explaining his mistake, Bryan said his family had been bewitched and were being tortured by mysterious sounds, sights, and witches taking the form of persons to make their lives unbearable. Spencer did not accept Bryan’s explanation and turned the matter over to local authorities. Investigators later discovered Bryan was so distracted by what he believed to be a spell on his family, he was seen shooting large trees out of fear a witch was hiding behind their wide trunks.

Unlike other newspaper posting regarding paranormal subjects, stories involving witches almost always included violence. For believers, instances of personal loss, sudden illness, bad fortune, or natural

disasters were evidence of witches and excuses to seek out the one responsible. The image of the “old crone” witch was acceptable to early twentieth-century Americans. There was something unnatural, to their thinking, about an elderly woman living alone, and those spinsters were perfect targets for witch hunters.

Articles from around the nation found their way into local newspapers. A New York murder trial received front-page coverage in a 1930 *Southwest American* edition, complete with photos and graphics. It told the story of a young woman named Lila Jimmerson who had a superstitious friend. Jimmerson was able to convince her friend, Nancy Bowen, that an older woman living near them named Clothilde Marchand was a witch and should be killed. Terrified by the thought of what a witch might do, Bowen murdered Marchand, only to find out later the victim was the wife of Jimmerson’s lover.

The ancient Native American fear of witchcraft traveled the Trail of Tears during the torturous removal and found new life in the Indian Territory. Deputy U. S. Marshal Doe Buckner met the superstition head-on in 1889 when two women near Muskogee were arrested for murder. The pair believed they were suffering an unnatural spell of bad luck and sought out a local seeress to find the reason. After being told a neighbor had bewitched them with an evil spell, the two traveled to the accused old woman’s home and, according to the deputy, “literally beat her to death.”

Three young women living near Muskogee believed a reclusive female was behind the bad luck visited on their family. A relative of the three fell suddenly ill and they came to believe an elderly lady named Barnette, a member of the Seminole Nation, had conjured a spell against the ailing woman. Meeting Barnett in a field, the young women fell on her, beating her near to death with hoes and clubs. Once in court, the attorney defending the three assailants argued the blame for the incident should be placed on ancient Seminole superstition, not his young clients. Besides, the lawyer reasoned, Barnett lived a week after the beating, so her wounds could not be the direct cause of her death.

In 1900, the *Fort Smith News Record* published an account of Wallace Jefferson’s death in the Oklahoma Territory. Jefferson, a full blood Choctaw, was a veteran of the Civil War and a well-known and respected member of his Nation. When he called for his friends and said he was bewitched and would soon die, they did not doubt his word. Jefferson said a witch hit him in his side with a “pig bullet” and he could feel the pig in his stomach. Calling for his pipe, he asked

for one last “old time Indian smoke.” After smoking, he took to his bed and died within a few moments.

It is doubtful anyone reading late nineteenth century local newspapers would find any of the articles mentioned so far in this article half as interesting as the stories of the Witch Hunter. Solomon Hotema, a full blood Choctaw and ordained minister, held local headlines with details of his witch-killing until his trial for murder ended. It was suggested Hotema was the victim of a “medicine man’s spell” that sent him out in a frenzy to seek and kill witches. It was certainly a strange fate for a forty-eight-year-old man who was educated at Roanoke College and held several elected positions, including county clerk and judge.

In 1896, Hotema built a church house near Cold Springs in the Indian Territory and petitioned the Presbyterian Church for a school. Hotema was a dedicated minister, but disease plagued his small community, and he was told by a tribal elder his sermons would never achieve their desired effect so long as witches were in his congregation.

Hotema knew of stories about witches around his homestead, and he had had seen for himself strange lights in the night sky. The blame for all the problems surrounding the small outpost and church were, for some reason, placed on the Coleman family. Hotema used a double-barrel shotgun to kill Amos Morris, Lucy Greenwood, and Viney Coleman. Hotema injured a child in the family, but the boy was able to escape the carnage with his life.

The murders and ensuing legal affairs held the attention of local newsreaders. There were articles detailing the illustrious background of Hotema, accounts of the killings, and even reports that a witch took the lives of the killer’s children, prompting his actions. At last, the killer confessed while awaiting trial in federal court.

“I have yesterday killed one man and two women,” was the opening of Hotema’s confession. Admitting there were problems with his ministry, Hotema claimed members of his congregation saw witches “in the fire,” which moved him to sacrifice his life “for the love of the Lord and the love of my people.” Saying he expected to meet a rope on the gallows, Hotema asked readers to care for his wife and two children, whom he promised to meet in Heaven.

Hotema did, as he expected, hear the death sentence read against him as he paid little attention in a federal courtroom. His attorney appealed to the Supreme Court, but it upheld the conviction. In 1902, the president of the United States commuted the sentence of the notorious Witch Killer to life in prison,

Fort Smith was an early supporter of Halloween celebrations staged with the cooperation of local community leaders and businesses. Garrison Avenue was the site of the “long walk” for ghosts and goblins on Halloween night in 1921.



reportedly placing the blame for Hotema’s actions on his fondness for alcohol and the ancient superstitions of his people. Hotema was incarcerated at Atlanta, Georgia, where he lived out his days.

Halloween comes next Monday, if the ghosts of all the hosts of the past should throw their shadows along our modern Garrison Avenue, no dreamer of wild witch tales could picture a stranger scene.

—*Southwest American*,
October 26, 1921, p. 4

Tales of witches and ghost stories stepped aside while local newspapers filled their pages with articles detailing the terrors of the First World War and a killer flu epidemic. Seemingly childish fears of monsters in the closet paled when compared to the real fear of losing a loved one on a battleground, or in a hospital bed.

Still, goblins have been with us forever. We were unable to leave them in the closet, despite the urgings of our most learned minds. When our attention again turned to those things packed away in the shadows, we simply pulled them out into the sunshine.

Fort Smith was an early supporter of Halloween celebrations staged with the cooperation of local community leaders and businesses. Garrison Avenue was the site of the “long walk” for ghosts and goblins on Halloween night in 1921. The event featured booths set up along the avenue by many sponsors offering prizes, candy, and games. Organizers expected hundreds of children to make the long walk down the avenue, showing off homemade costumes and collecting treats as they traveled.

The 1925 organizers of the Halloween festival on Garrison Avenue promised it would be “the most elaborate carnival held in Fort Smith.” The road was closed, allowing for the thousands of expected ghosts, witches, and other scary creatures to stroll the avenue

while collecting treats donated by businesses and organizations. Organizers of the 1934 Halloween festival on the avenue offered cash prizes for the most handsome and the most comical costumes.

The goblin spirit of Halloween spread from Garrison Avenue to all parts of Fort Smith. By the mid-1930s, the newspapers featured regular October articles telling of ghosts and witches prowling local classrooms. Decorations, parties, stories, and plays gave ancient tales a new, gentler life and prompted a third-grade student at Rogers Elementary School to tell a *Southwest American* reporter, "Yes, we believe in spooks...at Halloween."

A 1930 article in a local newspaper boldly proclaimed ghosts had fallen into general disrepute. The writer questioned the wit and sobriety of those professing a belief in the spirit world, declaring all creations with any pride would die properly, and all other ideas were worth a laugh.

Or are they?

There are, at the time of this writing, businesses operating in Fort Smith offering meditative and metaphysical assistance to shoppers concerned with their spirits, as well as their bodies. Television and the internet have replaced newspapers as providers of contemporary news, and those outlets are riddled with ghost stories and tales of the paranormal.

Best news of all, Halloween has returned to Garrison Avenue. Once again, the city of Fort Smith welcomes little ghouls and goblins, inviting them to make the long walk down Garrison in search of treats and treasures. In the modern version of the old event, ghosts and witches are replaced with superheroes and other images spawned by popular cartoons and movies. For adults, well respected organizations host costume parties while business offices around town decorate their workspaces with the ancient image of a jack-o-lantern. A group of nonprofit organizations host annual dinners, complete with ghost tours, and longtime residents of the city take to social media to recount personal spooky stories. Just like they did in newspapers a century earlier.

In February 2023, a local television broadcasting station operated by KHBS, the CW Network, sent a ghost hunting crew to the Clayton House on North Sixth Street in Fort Smith. The home, now a museum, was the residence of legendary prosecutor in Judge Parker's court William H. H. Clayton. It has long been rumored that the Clayton House is haunted. The CW team came to town with the modern version of the "ghost howler" to capture voices or images from spirits lingering in the home. They were not disappointed,



posting the results of their successful venture on the internet for all to enjoy.

Any ghosts presently residing at the Clayton House might well have possessed first-hand knowledge of several events mentioned in this article. There is a possibility they read the stories in their morning newspapers without imagining the reports would eventually be the topic of conversation on a communication device they could not fathom. These same spirits, once living occupants of the historic home, probably never considered themselves to be future prey for some-day ghost hunters.

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Book Reviews

***Butterfield's Overland Mail Co., Stagecoach Trail Across Arkansas, 1851-1861.* By Dr. Bob Crossman, self-published, 266 pages, softcover, many illustrations, maps, endnotes, \$30, available from Crossman, 8 Sternwheel Drive, Conway, AR 72034-9391 or at@arumc.org.**

Fort Smith and Van Buren readers of this journal will be overjoyed to read and digest this research on the Butterfield Overland Stage Co., (the readers will also be happy to learn of the initial phases of work by the Butterfield National Historic Trail Association begun anew in Northwest Arkansas) as the approval of the trail across Arkansas was recognized as a part of the National Parks Service earlier this year.

Bob Crossman of Conway and his exhaustive research on the Butterfield Overland Mail Company, and its subsequent stagecoach trail began, innocently enough, through his stamp collection. At a stamp show he purchased a cover cancellation with a large No. 2 on the outside of the envelope. His research with the national postal authorities began his journey that eventually resulted in this fine book.

Crossman has collected several postmarked letters from along the various routes of the Butterfield Coach company. His book recreates the timetables, the rest stops, the meal and overnight stops along the route. Many stops were located along the Northwest Arkansas and River Valley corridor.

His book also answers questions about the stock, (was its mules or horses?) and how far did the network of drivers pilot these stagecoaches along the way?

Crossman, who is an expert stamp collector, has a fine but separate collection of Butterfield Coach letters originating from as far away as Hawaii traveling eastwards to the eastern United States along this route.

The book is a small 6-by-9-inch format in both

paperback and hardback editions. The book is subdivided into digestible topics with scads of photos, maps, and other artwork to evolve the reader into the stagecoach lines operations.

With the advent of the National Park Service, finally getting federal approval to recognize the Butterfield Coach Trail as one of the twenty-one National Historic Trails, there will be many upcoming meetings all along the 3,292 miles of trails from the seven states, held in securing support, and planning of how this trail could be marked (much like the Trail of Tears) with signage and areas of historic interest. Anyone interested in the Arkansas portion of the trail can contact Marilyn Hefner, at Butterfield National Heritage Trail Association, Western Trails Drive, Springdale, AR72762

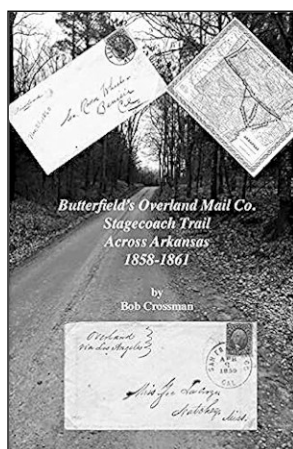
U. S. Senator John Boozman (a native of Fort Smith) was a leader in the early 2009 days of proposing the trail for inclusion within the National Parks Service. This bill, first proposed while Boozman was a member of the U.S. House, has been more than thirteen years in the making to its final approval, late last year and signed into law by President Joe Biden.

Crossman's book is a significant primer to area historians, already armed with local history about the stagecoach line's various stops along the northwest corner of the state. His book will expand that knowledge and history of this entire trail.

—Reviewed by Maylon T. Rice, a Fayetteville writer and former president of the Washington County Historical Society and a Fort Smith Historical Society member.

Editor's note: See Bob Crossman's article on the Butterfield Trail in the Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society, Vol. 45, No. 2 (September 2021).

***Three Roads to the Alamo: The Lives and Fortunes of David Crockett, James Bowie, and William Barret Travis.* By William C. Davis, (New York: Harper Collins, 1998. Pp. 791. Introduction,**



maps, photographs, footnotes, index. \$25.50, paper.)

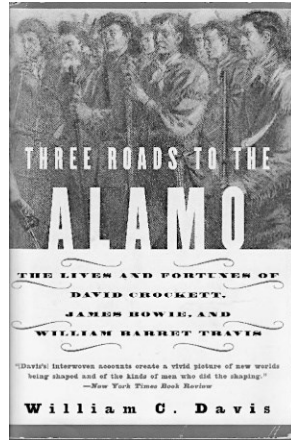
A friend who has written for the *Journal* about the “bent trees” phenomenon in this area mentioned to me one day that he was reading a book on the Alamo. It sounded interesting, so after procuring a copy, can now state, glad I did.

Not at first did I think that. Davis, who has written many books and most of those are Southern history dealing with the Confederacy and Civil War characters and battles, explains in his introduction that most of what the public has known about these men is legend and myth. He gives an example at the first of the book about a well-used story of an 1828 meeting in New Orleans of Crockett, Bowie, and Travis with Andrew Jackson, touring America in that year while campaigning for president and at the site of his glorious victory over Pakenham in December 1814, a capstone to the War of 1812. That is glamorous for sure, only it simply did not happen. Jackson was there, but not the three heroes of Texas. In fact, they were far away and had teenager William Travis, born in 1809, been there, he might have escaped notice at the time.

Thus, with this illustration of what passes for history, Davis lays out the problem: not enough attention has been paid by writers in finding documentation that verifies the lives and times of these three key men to the defense of the Alamo and to the history of Texas independence from the central government of Mexico, headed by Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

My friend had warned me that it is a thick book with many pages. Indeed, it is. And therein lies another problem. Davis, in his magnificent effort to separate fact from fiction in combining three full biographies, has gone overboard. The word “pedantic” came to my mind several times regarding his descriptions of the early years of trial and tribulations, and some triumphs, but far more of the former for all three American heroes.

Crockett, of course, was a Tennessee backwoods man, most comfortable on the edge of frontier advancement which meant frequent moves of home and family. Nevertheless, he was twice elected to the



U.S. Congress as a representative, wrote two books, both respectably published and near best sellers, came to be an anti-Jackson Democrat, considered by the Whig party to be their candidate against Old Hickory in the 1832 presidential election, a natural leader of men, a storyteller in the best of American traditions, a bear hunter, a marksman, and a coiner of phrases like, “make sure you’re right, then go ahead” that are still used. One of them got him killed. After losing a close 1835 election for the Congressional representative seat in his western Tennessee district, Crockett said, “The voters can go to Hell, I’m going to Texas.” Davy (called that by this time) did exactly that, taking with him a hunting party of some twenty-five, a number that increased during his travel time through Arkansas—he made a big hit in Little Rock—and down the Trammel Trace.

James Bowie, born in 1796 Kentucky (the year it became a state), sought his fortune via land speculation in Louisiana and Arkansas, and then later in Mexico and Texas. A gentleman, but never one to settle down, congenial, but rough and ready, he earned a fighter’s reputation. He married an heiress to a land-wealthy Tejano in Bexar district. A battle with a band of 124 Tawakoni warriors in San Saba, Texas, revealed Bowie’s determination and fortitude as he and his ten companions came out on top and that became famous among the Texians as did the large knife weapon that he carried on his belt. Some Arkansas accounts have a Washington, Arkansas, blacksmith as he who hammered out the Bowie Knife for Big Jim.

Travis sought a career in law. Alabama was not good to him in this regard nor was New Orleans. He often ran up debts that he had difficulty in repaying. Texas, however, was a different story. The young lawyer established a sound legal business south of the Rio Grande. Travis learned Spanish. Mexico, going through much political unrest, gave him an opportunity to try politics and with that, Travis achieved a certain affluence. He took part in governmental decisions, which led him to meet Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin. Eventually he made the decision to side with Texians who sought independence.

Davis has woven the lives of the three men in meticulous, we could say definitive style. Each of them experienced poverty, the inability to pay off debts or remain in a home or a homestead indefinitely with the consequence of a failed marriage, doubted and indemnified at times by contemporaries, afflicted with wanderlust and a need to hit the jackpot somewhere, sometime, but though close, failing that. Though they barely knew each other, their carpet to the Alamo had



TEXAS RANGER AT THE ALAMO
(Courtesy of Billy D. Higgins)

these similar and strong threads.

They—Crockett, age forty-nine, Bowie, forty, and Travis, twenty-five—met their fate bravely along the San Antonio River making their stand in a fortified mission known as the Alamo in the February 23-March 6, 1836, siege, a prolonged battle that pitted their 200 or so men against more than 2,000 Mexican soldiers and artillery under Generalissimo Santa Anna. These odds Big Jim Bowie was used to and had prevailed against in the past. But not this time. Their hold, however, gave Sam Houston the time he needed to form up his army and gave the slogan they needed for a crucial morale builder. Texas independence, Davis concluded, owed much to their sacrifice.

On a visit there in 2012, I approached the entrance wearing my visor. A crisply uniformed Texas Ranger approached, looked me in the eye, and said in a low voice, “Your cover, sir. This is a shrine.” I quickly doffed my cover.

—Billy D. Higgins, Associate Professor Emeritus, UAFS.

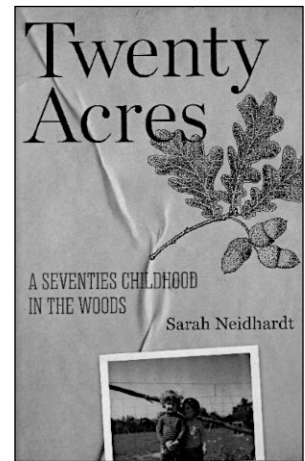


REVIEWER BILLY D. HIGGINS AT THE ALAMO

***Twenty Acres: A Seventies Childhood in the Woods.* By Sarah Neidhardt. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2023. 284 Pp. Illustrations, acknowledgments. index. Paperback, \$19.95.)**

Books have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. At times I hope to see myself in what I am reading while at other times I look for what is unfamiliar. My journey with books expands my known universe into the past, the future and the world of plants, animals, the ocean and even beyond. The memoir *Twenty Acres* by Sarah Neidhardt is about her parents’ move when she was six months old to Stone County, Arkansas, around the time that I moved to nearby Johnson County.

Billy D. Higgins recommended the book to me because it is one of the few that accurately captures a “back to the land” experience in rural Arkansas in the early 1970s. Both Billy and I were part of this now historic movement that rejected consumerist culture, as we looked for a more sustainable way to live.



Twenty Acres is a sensitive, thoughtful, honest book full of details that give this period in the author’s life solidity. She is fortunate to have her mother’s letters, audio recordings that were sent to her grandparents and other primary source materials. Without these the book might have been more speculative than factual. Some of the experiences are painfully detailed such as those dealing with the lack of an outhouse or running water. These are amenities I had early on. With two then three young children and many diapers to change, this is a considerable burden upon Sarah’s mother. I was a mother who also washed cloth diapers though I had a ringer washer outside with cold water only and a trusty clothesline. Compared to Sarah’s mother’s experience, mine was upscale.

Neidhardt discusses who her parents were before making the trip to Arkansas. One sees the lack of planning involved though her father more clearly was seeking to exit mainstream culture and establish a life of independence. Once in Arkansas, he decides to buy land while her mother sits in the car outside the real estate office. Once bought, they map out what’s next.

For her mother this requires amazing resilience in the face of this decision which gave them land but no actual place to live.

They each learned skills along the way. He became a carpenter, learned to dress out the animals they raised while she mastered cooking on a wood cook-stove, gardening and managing the girls far from others. Sarah's parents both invested fully in this imagined future while their days were often exhausting. Because the area was rich in musical traditions and Sarah's father played music, her family engaged with their neighbors and the nearby town in this way. In contrast my own community became a place with a variety of craftsmen. My husband, already an established potter, and I, a weaver, while others in the valley learned carpentry, fine woodworking, stained glass, and the art of rock work. Our homes reflected and included the work of our neighbors.

The role of Sarah's grandparents on both sides who sent money and visited each site where they lived, is crucial. The tiny log cabin took longer than planned, so the family lived in various rental houses. My experience was moving from a tent, into a metal building on the property and finally before winter arrived, to the downstairs of our owner-built two-story house.

That transition seems quite calm compared to the various abandoned places the Neidhardts lived as the log cabin was built. That other family visited, that some moved nearby and that they questioned but did not stop supporting the choice made, is admirable.

The letters from the grandparents provide Sarah and her sister with a vision of the world beyond Arkansas. Throughout her childhood Sarah knew Colorado as a place of comfort, ease, and many amenities. Sarah's family receives magazines, books, clothes (even a bra requested by Sarah's mom) from Colorado. And pearl-wearing "Granminnow," as one grandmother was called, visited them bringing more awareness of that other life.

I shared this book with my daughter, Alice Driver. She is writing a book, *Artists All Around*, to be published by the Princeton Architectural Press, Spring 2025, which covers some of our time in rural Arkansas in the 1970s. Alice reacted strongly to the mother's burden on the twenty acres, but equally to the joy Sarah and her sister experienced in living close to nature.

The Neidhardts moved to rural Arkansas with another couple, sharing common goals and a piece of land but that partnership did not last long. I moved onto eighty acres bought by four brothers (one of whom I subsequently married) and thus we had our own social

group from the start. Others who chose to leave middle-class America were already in our valley. Our support system was broader so that we were not as isolated as Sarah's family. Things did fall apart for our valley, but we and others from the 1970s are still in place with some newer like-minded folks now resident in the area. Our story is not this story.

Many of the books in the log cabin that are mentioned in this account are ones our neighborhood shared. Like Sarah's parents we came from educated backgrounds where reading was highly valued. For example, we also read Adele Davis, Helen and Scott Nearing's *The Good Life*, Rodale books on how to garden, and *Trout Fishing in America* by Richard Brautigan. These books got passed around from one household to another. In this tradition, my husband and two neighbors are currently reading *Twenty Acres*, so the circle continues.

The final chapter of Neidhardt's book is quite moving. She is now a mother and compares her son's experiences with her own. Her book is a gift that shows how her "back to the land" experience unfolded and what was gained or lost as a result. If you are interested in this period and the folks who sought a way of living that was more sustainable (before the term became commonplace), then this is worthwhile. The writing is clear, shorn of clichés and her voice is kind, showing compassion over judgment.

—Reviewed by Louise Halsey, a weaver, honored as an Arkansas Living Treasure in 2017, co-owner of Little Mulberry Gallery with her husband, Stephen Driver, a ceramicist. Both are residents of the Little Mulberry valley, off Hwy 215 near Oark, Arkansas, enjoying life from the porch of their home that Stephen built and is still building.

Editor's note: Louise Halsey reviewed *Shelter from the Machine: Homesteaders in the Age of Capitalism*. By Jason Strange. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2021) in the *Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (April 2021).

***Julia and Maud*, by Joyce Faulkner. (Fort Smith: Red Engine Press, 2023. Pp. 231. Introduction, illustrations, newspaper clippings, epilogue, \$25.)**

My first introduction to historical fiction that changed the way I read it was an introductory literature

course in college. We read the fictionalized account of the Vietnam War in *The Things They Carried*, and I was hooked. O'Brien, in a few short pages, brought the atrocities, camaraderie, and fears of the war to life in a way that no history class was ever able to do.

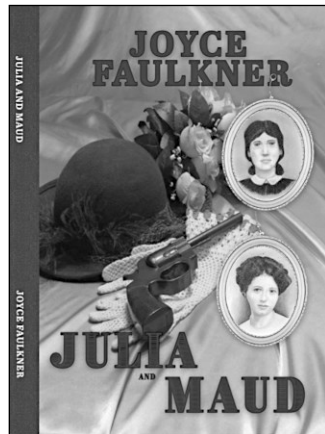
O'Brien says in his novel, "I want you to feel what I felt. I want you to know why story-truth is truer sometimes than happening-truth." Rather than dates and lists, O'Brien's work brings us as close to his truth as possible—all through story.

Story-truth allows readers to connect, resonate, and see themselves or their ancestors in the story. This is the magic of historical fiction. So, when Joyce Faulkner and Tom Wing come together to write *Julia and Maud*, their blend of story-truth with happening-truth is sure to leave the rest of us with a delightful novel rooted in the history of our community. It might look like magic, but for most of us, *Julia and Maud* feels like home. As we meet characters, old and new, we know we're in the hands of storytellers who are working to bridge our past to our future.

Interestingly enough, it is with the new characters where most of this comes to light. Faulkner's decision to center the stories of Maud Allen and Julia Bourland around an orphan boy named Archie was nothing short of thoughtful perspective.

Not only does Archie have the innocent eyes of a young person, (think Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*), he is learning about the history right alongside us. He is impressionable and clever, and has a keen knowledge of humans that most other characters might not have since they've been around these families for generations. Archie as narrator gives us a lens in which we can see characters more objectively, and it feels like a smart move if your objective is to get as much information in as possible in the time span between Julia and Maud's contentious relationship.

The history itself is fascinating and well known for most. In the book launch for *Julia and Maud* held in August 2023, Wing touched on how the pair wrote sections of the book. Wing would send Faulkner the "facts"—a document that might include anecdotes, letters, court documents, whathaveyou. At that point Faulkner would turn these notes into a living and



breathing scene; she tells us the story-truth. We're introduced to Fort Smith giants in this way; Dr. Breedlove and Cal Whitson make their introductions poking fun at young Archie when he's fresh off the train. Did this really happen? No. But are we able to understand their roles in the community and get a glimpse of what they might be like through this interaction? Absolutely. This fact-turned-story process is seamlessly pieced together throughout the novel, giving readers the comfort of old family stories passed down through generations. When you pair this with a deep sense of place that the Fort Smith community has with the history of Julia Bourland and Maud Allen, you get a rollicking good novel that is bound to connect to someone you know. But here's the kicker, even if it doesn't—even if you've never heard of the Breedloves or the Whitsons, the Bourlands or Judge Parker, you still have a great story to curl up with.

Furthermore, Faulkner and Wing aren't simply retelling a story that has been told for years—they are introducing new information, most quite scandalous, that shaped the outcome of the trial. The letters from Maud to Julia uncover a new character motivation that earlier incantations of this story might not have been able to characterize. This brings me to my favorite thing about *Julia and Maud*—which is Julia and Maud. So much of this time period is centered around the "giants" I mentioned earlier, but ultimately, it is the women who helped to shape the communities we love so dearly—good or bad.

Maud Allen was clearly troubled, but you can't help but love the way she refers to herself in the third person, and the Lewis Holder execution scene was laugh-out-loud funny. And Julia Bourland!—we need more Julia Bourland in literature. After the death of Maud Allen, Archie asks, "Are you okay, Miz Julia?," and Julia replies, "I am now." These aren't black and white characters, but they are nuanced and colorful, and you will certainly find yourself sympathetic to their plight.

Faulkner tells us a story—whether it is new to us or something we've grown up hearing—and offers us a new perspective.

Together with Wing, these two storytellers challenge themselves and their readers in an effort to shine a light on the truth and give a voice to women who are typically shadows of their husbands. It is a breath of fresh air, especially when it comes to local history.

—Reviewed by Sara Putman,
Bookish, 70 South Seventh Street, Fort Smith

1923 Newspapers

By Al Whitson

The news, for the second half of 1923 in Fort Smith, began and ended with stories involving shotguns—the first, a fox hunt given by a leading citizen of the city and the last, a terrible tragedy occurring in the nearby community of Catcher that would result in actions still being debated to this day. In the days between those two events, there was a lot going on in our city.

The very first J. C. Penney store to be opened in Arkansas found its home on Garrison Avenue, while a new shale road to Greenwood and Mansfield (which we now know as part of Highway 71) was beginning construction in South Fort Smith. There was a crackdown on “petting” in parked vehicles being undertaken throughout the city, even as a famous revivalist passing through the city drew enormous crowds to his big tent under the stars. And everyone was looking up, as the first skywriter was seen in Fort Smith; but it was another former citizen and world war pilot who made national news when he participated in a historic transcontinental airmail flight. The drowning of a swimmer at the new Joyland Park led to action by the local American Legion post—but the tides were turning for the new park, now being referred to as, “Little Juarez,” by many Fort Smith citizens. And, planning for the first phase of construction of a new convent in the city was well underway while, back on Texas Corner, a new bandstand was being built, just in time for a citywide gathering to be held there, on the night before Christmas, in 1923.

Sunday, July 1, 1923

BIG FOX HUNT IS UNDER WAY

Approximately 150 sport enthusiasts are attending the annual barbecue and fox hunt at Packard’s Point for the weekend. The majority of these left last night, a few will go up this morning.

Packard’s Point, the summer home of Mr. and Mrs. George C. Packard, abounds in young fox, but in the event that they are too canny, Dr. Wood of Huntington

has provided a young wolf so the sport will not be spoiled.

Several local kennels of fox hounds were taken up to the Point yesterday as well as a very fine kennel from Cowlington, Okla.

GORDON QUILTS AND SHAKE-UP AMONG POLICE IS DUE MONDAY

A general shake-up in the police department will take place Monday at the meeting of the city commissioners following the induction into office of the new mayor, David L. Ford.

This is assured as the result of the resignation yesterday of Mike Gordon, chief of police, who has been in connection with the police department very many years. Gordon has accepted a position with the Fort Smith & Western, and starts his new duties there today, for which reason he asked that his resignation as chief take effect last night.

Mayor Ford will take the oath of office Monday forenoon, at 9 o’clock, at a special meeting of the city commission. Because certain annual reports will not be ready at that hour, the commission will adjourn until 2:30 pm., when a lengthy session will be held and the matter of annual reports and appointments to various positions will be taken up.

RAMSEY PURCHASES PARKER HOME HERE—FAMILY TO COME SOON

J. W. Ramsey, new superintendent of city schools, has purchased from George Parker, the home at 2408 Alabama avenue, and will move into it with his family late in July, to make his home here.

Mr. Parker is completing arrangements to return to his former home at Shelbyville, Ind., and expects to leave about July 21.

Mr. Ramsey is a member of the faculty of the summer school at the University of Arkansas, now in session at Fayetteville, and his family is spending the



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THE SHOPPERS' SERVICE STORE SUPERIOR

Men's Shoes of Character

100% Leather for 85% of Men

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THE seen and unseen workmanship in a shoe too frequently has the stress put on the "seen" portion of the shoe. J. C. Penney Co. built shoes are made thoroughly good. The hidden material and workmanship carry the same high standard of values as the exposed portion of the shoe. It is easy to quote our prices, but hard to match our values.

THREE styles of Men's Dress Shoes pictured here will meet the requirements of 85% of men. These are 100% leather and represent the height of good shoemaking. Made of all Mahogany Lotus leather with welt soles and half rubber heels.

THOUSANDS of satisfied customers like our policy in pricing our shoes —no extra profits added in anticipation of a reduction later. Every shoe is so marked that it carries with it a true reflection of real value in the original price. Buying for our hundreds of stores enables us to go direct to the largest manufacturers, and secure values that are only obtainable through volume buying.

summer there. They will remove to Fort Smith late in the month and will be located here permanently thereafter.

Tuesday, July 3, 1923

PENNEY STORES WORK UNDER WAY

A big force of carpenters and other workers is busy remodeling the two stores at 1104-1106 Garrison Avenue, which will be occupied by the J. C. Penney Company, with its big department store.

The two stores are being made into one spacious room and special shelving, counters and showcases conforming to the style standardized by the Penney company in all its stores, are now being manufactured here and some already are being installed.

Wednesday, July 11, 1923

MRS. NANNIE C. RYE PIONEER RESIDENT OF THIS CITY DIES

Death again invaded the ranks of pioneer residents, when last night, Mrs. Nannie C. Rye, widow of the late John T. Rye, answered the summons to the world beyond, at the age of 78.

Surrounded by members of her family circle and in the house which had been her home for 35 years, she slumbered away into that peaceful sleep of the aged, and lives on earth but in tender memory.

Mrs. Rye was born at Mayfield, Kentucky, May 11, 1845, but in her childhood days was brought to Arkansas and, on December 28, 1869, was married to John T. Rye, at Dover, Pope County.

There was born to this union five children, but two of whom survive her, George W. Rye, and Mrs. Millie K. Rogers, both of this city. The last of the three children to die was Clarence, a victim of infantile paralysis, who died a few years ago and to whom Mrs. Rye was a devoted mother and attendant.

Mrs. Rye was for many years a devout member of the First Methodist church, south, having been a pioneer of the congregation when the edifice was occupied at Eleventh and C streets.

RAILROAD MAN IS DROWNED IN ARKANSAS RIVER

Eugene Lewis, 30, La Salle, Indiana, drowned while bathing in the Arkansas River, ten feet from the pier of the Missouri Pacific Bridge, last night at about 6:30 o'clock. His body was recovered about 40 minutes later by Jack Speck, who dived into water estimated to be 25 feet deep and brought it to the bank.

A Putman ambulance responded quickly to the call and a pulmotor was perseveringly used in the attempt to resuscitate the drowned man, but he had been under water too long.

The body was conveyed to the Putman mortuary, where it is being held pending word from the mother of the dead man, who was advised by telegraph of the tragedy.

Alarm of the drowning man was given by two little girls, who were members of a bathing party of about 25 persons, not far distant at the time. Sam Slover and Jack Speck, divers, were on the bank at the edge of the railroad tracks. They dashed down the steep slopes, removed their shoes, rolled up their shirt sleeves and trousers and waded into the water, then swam and dived, Speck finding the body and bringing it up.

Lewis had been in the city only a short time and was employed as a scale fixer by the Missouri Pacific, it is said. He had gone from his work to the river for a bath and swim, when he drowned.

Saturday, July 14, 1923

BREAK DIRT MONDAY ON GREENWOOD ROAD

Actual breaking of ground, as the start for the building of the shale road from Fort Smith through

Greenwood to Mansfield, will start Monday morning by forces of workmen in the employ of Otto V. Martin Construction company contractor.

The work will be started at the Maness store, about three miles out on the Texas road, and the engineering forces under Engineer Ben Shrove, will spend today marking the levels and placing the stakes, that Contractor Martin's forces may start operations Monday.

Members of the commission with Contractor Martin, visited the neighborhood of the Maness store yesterday and the commissioners pointed out certain changes to be made in the route of the road, by substituting easy curves where there are now sharp turns at four places—near the Maness store, where the road enters the Jenny Lind road, where it leaves the Jenny Lind road near the school at South Fort Smith and right at the school. Elimination of these sharp turns will tend to make the road much more safe for the casual driver, it was said.

ED BALLMAN SUCCUMBS TO LONG ILLNESS

The end came to Ed Ballman, one of Fort Smith's most prominent and influential business men, yesterday afternoon at 1:45 o'clock at his home, 423 North Sixteenth Street, after an illness which has extended over many weeks.

Mr. Ballman had been in ill health for several months. He spent the winter in Florida, with Mrs. Ballman and his daughter, Miss Ed Louise, in the hope that the change would be beneficial. Since his return he has steadily lost ground and for several weeks has been in a critical condition, lapsing into unconsciousness for the last week.

Born in Indianapolis, 64 years ago, Mr. Ballman cast his lot in Fort Smith in 1875, coming to this city from Indianapolis, his native city, to enter the factory of the Ott-Meier Furniture factory as a wood turner. At that time his factory was located near the site of the present Iron Mountain freight depot. Remaining in the employ of Ott-Meier Company for a number of years during the early 80's with A. Huff, he purchased a third interest in the Ott-Meier company, at the death of Mr. Ott. The firm name remained unchanged until approximately ten years later, when Mr. Huff was drowned and Mr. Ballman purchased his interest in the business and the name of the firm was changed to E. Ballman and Company.

The factory in the early 80's was located near its present site and devoted its entire production to the manufacture of cheap beds, kitchen safes and kitchen tables, all of which were made of walnut, which was plentiful at that time.

Shortly after this period, Hoffman Brothers who

manufactured parlor frames of walnut lumber in the rough and shipped these frames to Chicago to be finished,

upholstered and distributed, sold out to Cummings Brothers, large lumber manufacturers of the south who established a bedroom suite factory. This was operated for a number of years and in the early 90's consolidated with the E. Ballman Company under the firm name of Ballman-Cummings Company, the name still retained, although the factory which now has an

output of three quarters of a million a year, manufactures only bedroom sets and serial beds.

Mr. Ballman was organizer of practically all the Furniture factories in Fort Smith, outside of the Ward and Garrison interests. He was president of the Metal Product's company, the Fort Smith Folding Bed and Table Company, the Fort Smith Couch and Bedding Company, the Border Queen Kitchen Cabinet Company, as well as the Ballman Cummings factory.

Until just recently, he was president of the Fort Smith Manufacturers Company, a centralization of seven plants.

Aside from these extensive interests in the factory district of Fort Smith, Mr. Ballman was a director in the Merchants National bank and held stock in the Speer Hardware company and a number of other local concerns.

Sunday, July 15, 1923

CORPS SPECIAL OFFICERS ROUNDUP PETTING PARTIES IN TOUR OF CITY STREETS—SUNDAY MORNING RAIDS RESULT IN 5 ARRESTS

With one man charged with possession of liquor, and two men and two women, one of them a mere girl, charged with disorderly conduct, city, county and special officers early Sunday morning made the first of what is



expected to be a series of raids on roadside "petting parties," concerning which frequent complaints have been made to the authorities.

T. A. Neal, Clark Johnson, Amy Johnson and Mary Powell are names given by defendants when they were booked at the county jail. Neal is well known as "Little Berk" Neal, and with the other members of the party is a resident of Van Buren.

Approximately a dozen automobiles participated in scouring of streets of the city and roads of the outlying section, and each car contained one or more regular or special officers. The special officers had been commissioned during the day for the express purpose of assisting in breaking up roadside petting parties, and remained on duty until late Sunday morning.

The quartet placed under arrest about 1:30 am. Sunday, was picked up by one of the "scouring" cars on the Waldron road, which is the dividing line between city and county and were charged on the state docket because of this fact.

Amy Johnson gave her age as 16, but according to officers she is less than that age, appearing hardly more than 14. She did not apparently show much concern while being booked at the county jail.

At 2 o'clock Sunday morning, the prisoners were awaiting arrival of a bondsman, while several scouring cars were still on duty.

Several persons on Waldron road, it is said, escaped capture in hectic and furious races with the special officers. Names of the special officers commissioned for this work could not be ascertained by the *Southwest American* this morning. Neither could it be learned the exact number, however a reporter for the *Southwest American*, in making a tour behind automobiles containing regular and special officers, counted [several] men apparently bent on this errand.

Park Hill, it is understood, was watched but without result. Other favorite haunts of the "Johns" and molls" were also visited, but the quarry had escaped or had failed to appear.

Automobiles running to and fro over [] streets early this Sunday morning caused many a porch light to flash and the curious resident to wonder what it was all about.



But it is said war on petting parties and other naughty conduct has been declared to the bitter end in Fort Smith.

The regular officers, in the meantime, were busy on their usual beats. Early in the night three different women were arrested on charges of violating city ordinances relative to disorderly conduct.

A youth found in company with one of the women was arrested on a charge of associating with an immoral character.

"You've had your day, Chief of Police Oots told one of the women, and now we will have ours.

Tuesday, July 17, 1923

GYPSIES DEPART TO OTHER POINTS AT POLICE ORDER

Gypsies to the number of about a half a hundred, members of two unfriendly tribes, shook the dust of Fort Smith from their feet yesterday, piled into their several and various cars and flivvers and departed hence.

The departure was hastened by formal announcement from Chief of Police M. R. Oots that all gypsies found inside the city after 6 pm. yesterday, would be docketed at the city jail on charges of vagrancy.

With one tribe went Rosie Sterra. With the other, went Tom Costello. Rosie is the girl named as bride-to-be by Tom, when he obtained a marriage license last mid-week. The marriage ceremony was not performed and the county is ahead just that one fee, because Tom was in too big a hurry to leave Fort Smith yesterday, to ask for his money back.

Rosie was the subject of all the debate and the near-fights Saturday on the courthouse lawn, the king of her tribe charging that Costello's tribe had kidnapped her, but before their departure, it was said by one member of Costello's tribe, "they tried to sell her back to us only we wouldn't buy her." Things were quiet last evening on the



courthouse lawn, because, like the Arab of poetic fame, the gypsies gathered their tents around them and silently faded away—that is, if their cars could do any fading silently.

Thursday, July 19, 1923

REVOKE LICENSE FOR OPERATION OF ROOMING HOUSE

License to operate a rooming house at 407½ Garrison Avenue, issued to H. Campbell, was revoked yesterday morning by Dr. R. F. Parks, district health officer, following Campbell's appearance in municipal court on a charge of running a disorderly house, Monday.

An appeal to the city commission was heard Wednesday afternoon, when the action of Dr. Parks was sustained. The order of the health officer was made effective Wednesday afternoon.

Saturday, July 28, 1923

WOMAN IS KILLED ANOTHER FATALLY INJURED WHEN A VAN BUREN CAR STRIKES AUTO TRUCK—BODIES ARE STEWN OVER THE PAVEMENT

One woman killed, another fatally injured, two other women seriously injured, and six more persons more or less bruised or shaken up and in hospitals, resulted when a Van Buren inbound street car struck an automobile truck loaded with eleven passengers, all residents of Jenny Lind, at Grand Avenue and Eleventh street at 10:30 o'clock Friday night.

The truck was en route home from the Gobon

revival grounds. Two babies, each a year old, who were in the truck, were not injured or bruised.

DEAD AND INJURED

❖ Mrs. A. D. Broom, 60, died while en route to the hospital.

❖ Mrs. J. K. Davidson, 50, is fatally injured, according to reports given out shortly after the accident, and is at St. Edward's Infirmary.

❖ Mrs. M. P. Leroy, 25, was rushed to St. Edwards Infirmary and her injuries are reported serious.

❖ Frank Elliott, 28, driver of the truck suffered a cut on the head and bruises.

❖ Mrs. Frank Matzek, 18, suffered internal injuries and bruises about the head. She is in Sparks hospital. Her baby escaped injury.

❖ Fred Swafford, 47, suffered bruises about the back and is possibly internally inured. His wife escaped. Mrs. Matzek is his daughter.

❖ Tom Brown, 38, was cut about the head and chest, but was able to leave Sparks hospital late last night. Brown's wife escaped with severe shaking up and minor bruising. Mrs. Brown's year-old baby escaped without a bruise or scratch.

❖ Mrs. Jack Young, 55, suffered bruises about the arms and body. Her injuries are not considered serious. She is at Sparks hospital.

Sunday, July 29, 1923

WILL CAN FRUITS FOR ORPHANS HOME


As has been the custom in former years, public spirited women of Fort Smith will be given the opportunity to can fruits and vegetables for the young children of the Rosalie Tilles' children home to be used during the coming winter.

Mrs. R. A. Clarkson, president of the home, yesterday issued the following announcement relative to this work.

"Anyone wanting empty jars to put up fruit for the children next winter will call at 615 North Nineteenth Street, or Phone Fort Smith 2760 and they will be

delivered to you. We have the jars, rubbers and lids or tops for the jars. The children will enjoy the fruit, I am sure," said Mrs. Clarkson.

PALACE TODAY AND TOMORROW
VIOLA DANA
 —IN—
 A story of the stage back of the curtain—written by Rita Weiman—there is a devil chorus of red lipped beauties that will take your breath away.
 TOM MOORE is leading man and a devil of a stage John.
"ROUGED LIPS"
 —COMING—
 A Mad Whirlwind of Life, Love and Luxury
"MERRY-GO-ROUND"



Joyland Park
Skating Rink
 OPEN EVERY
 AFTERNOON AND NIGHT
 ALL NEW
 RICHARDSON SKATES
 LADIES SKATES FREE
 GOOD FLOOR

Tuesday, July 31, 1923

**REVIVAL GROUNDS MOST
INSANITARY – MUST BE CLEANED**

Grounds occupied by two revival meetings were cleaned up last night by members of the city's sanitary department, the expense to be charged against the persons or committees in charge of the revival meetings.

The grounds were inspected yesterday morning by City Commissioner M. J. Miller and Dr. R. F. Parks, district health officer, and Mr. Miller reported to the city commission yesterday afternoon that the conditions were almost indescribable.

"There are quite a number of campers here for both revivals," he said, and they have been camping out as if they were in the open woods. The dry closets have not been maintained as instructed by the sanitary department and the kitchen slops and other refuse has just been thrown over the ground where it is rotting. Such conditions cannot be allowed to continue."

On motion of Mr. Miller, the city commission adopted a resolution that the Goben revival management be required to make a \$25 deposit, as a guarantee that sanitary conditions will be maintained and that the grounds will be cleaned after the close of the meetings. If the sanitary requirements are complied with, the deposits will be returned, less such amounts as are necessary to pay the cost of the cleaning up done last night by the scavenger carts and the other city sanitary forces.

Thursday, August 2, 1923

**GOBEN REVIVAL WILL CLOSE SUNDAY—
MANY CLAIM TO BE HEALED BY FAITH—
EVANGELIST SAYS COMMUNITY BLESSED**

Hallelujahs of rejoicing by people who claimed to have been benefited by faith healing at the Goben meeting filled the air last night as they passed from the healing line to the audience. There were fully 50 such with about 400 more cards still out for the holders to take their places in line.

Great blessings have been vouchsafed in this city and a large territory around, Evangelist Goben said, and today all Christians are asked by him to fast two meals if possible and pray for



**EVANGELIST
JOHN GOBEN**

**"Me for those
FREE
TROUSERS**

The extra pants are of the same material as the suit if you wish it.

FOR A FEW DAYS ONLY

Two- \$29.50 Extra
Pants AND Pants
Suits UP Free

LONDON

Next Door To Glick **WOOLEN MILLS** J. P. Mickle Mgr.
721 GAR. AVE.

the cure of many persons who have asked prayers.

Among the most notable claims of faith healing last night were signed cards brought to the press table by the following:

- ❖ John Robert Hesperman, 14 deaf 12 years, hearing much improved as the result of prayers last night.
- ❖ Luna Huggins, Methodist, Ozark, claimed to be healed of deafness and organic disease.
- ❖ W. D. Meadows, Mulberry, deaf 30 years, claimed to be fully healed.
- ❖ Eva Condit, 14, Baptist, 1509 South Fifth, defective hearing and eye sight much relieved, she said.
- ❖ Alma Worram, 19, Waco Baptist, paralyzed, and claimed to have received great benefit.
- ❖ W. Y. Lindsey, Hartford, deaf 32 years, said could hear fairly good since prayers said for him.

One of the most pitiful sights at last night's meeting was that of a man almost totally blind, J. W. Fain, who came in the line for prayers, and said he had walked to this city from Waldron, being out one entire day and night and half of yesterday, in order to come before Evangelist Goben.

Notice was given that this meeting is to close Sunday. Monday, Mr. Goben will hold services for the Negro people especially, no white persons admissible unless armed with large watermelons, he said.

Friday, August 3, 1923

**ANDREW MCBRIDE DROWNS IN RIVER
WITHIN HEARING OF MANY BATHERS**

Andrew McBride, 26 years old, married, was drowned about 8 o'clock last night in the Arkansas river while trying to swim from a point near the Missouri Pacific Bridge to the Joyland bathing beach on a sandbar, some distance from the Oklahoma bank.

The body was not recovered until an early hour this morning, although scores of men, some in boats and others swimming and diving by the light of lanterns and automobile headlights, were conducting a search for it.

Bert Garner, co-worker with McBride, risked his own life to save that of his friend, but was unable to bring McBride from the deep water and the swift current, which engulfed him. Garner spent the night aiding in the search for the body, after notifying McBride's family of the tragedy.

Hundreds of men, women and children were enjoying their swimming on the beach, when they heard calls for help coming out of the darkness. The calls continued and efforts were made to pierce the darkness to locate the endangered men, but without avail. Garner finally swam into the range of the bathing beach, was assisted to shore and told of the drowning of McBride. Dozens of men leaped into the water, drags were hastily sent for, the beach motorboat took up the search and every other means of aiding McBride or finding his body was put into effect.

Garner told a graphic story of the affair. He and McBride had driven across the river in McBride's car. They parked the car some distance above Joyland park, donned their bathing suits, left their clothing in the car, and started to swim the deep channel with its swift current, from the shore to the bathing beach.

About midway of the channel, McBride gave out. Garner tried to help him, and did aid him in making some advance. McBride appeared to collapse completely and Garner sought to drag his companion behind him toward the bathing beach. Garner's strength was fast leaving him because of the task, and finally he was compelled to save himself and to abandon further



efforts to aid McBride. Garner barely reached the beach himself, thoroughly spent by his exertions.

Garner, in McBride's car accompanied by Opal Brown and Leida Lockridge, Earl Duffin, beach lifeguard G. S. Anderson and Motorcycle Policeman B. C. Cosgrove, drove to McBride's home on the Little Rock road in Sunnyside, where they broke the news of the tragedy to Mrs. McBride. The widow and her four children, the youngest about five years old, went to the bathing beach to maintain a heartbreaking vigil and watch the search for the body of the husband and father. Opal Brown and Leida Lockridge were at the beach and served as guides to McBride's home, as no one else knew where McBride lived.

McBride was an automotive mechanic employed at Paul Sheridan's Ford plant, where Garner is also employed. McBride was very widely known, especially among cyclists and automobile drivers and was popular and highly esteemed.

John B. Williams, who aided in the search for the body last night in person and with his drags, offered a reward of \$25 for the recovery of the body if it is found before 4 am.

Saturday, August 4, 1923

**OPENING OF PENNEY STORE MARKS RETAIL
EPOCH HERE—FIRST OF CHAIN IN STATES**

With no really formal opening, the J. C. Penney inc. company will open the doors of its first store in Arkansas this morning at 1104-1106 Garrison Avenue, ready for business. This Fort Smith store is number 415 in a chain of 475 stores which are spread over thirty-three states.

The building, formerly occupied by the Frisco market and the Culp Brothers Piano Company, has been completely remodeled, the two buildings thrown into one large room with modern store front and fine display windows. Extending from Garrison Avenue to Towson, the exterior of the store is rather triangular in shape, affording display windows on both Garrison Avenue and Towson Avenue, with modern equipment.

The J. C. Penney Co. carries a complete line of wearing apparel, men's wear, women's wear, dry goods, shoes and other merchandise for the whole family.

**RIVER PATROL IS IN SERVICE
UNDER LEGION**

The river patrol, which is under the direction of the American Legion, started work Friday evening at the

Joyland park. As yet, no boat has been obtained, although it is practically impossible to do much without a fast motor boat. Dr. C. S. Bungart, post surgeon of the Legion, has been hunting for a boat for some time, but so far his efforts have been unsuccessful.

The manager of the Joyland beach, Mr. Northcutt, loaned the patrol a boat Friday night. The patrol consists of Dr. Bungart, Cecil McNair, life saver and Bessie Lingo, nurse. They will be on hand every night as long as there is anyone in swimming, to guard against possible accidents.

Tuesday, August 7, 1923

CITY IS OWNER OF PAVING BRICK CHANCERY RULING

The city is the owner of brick on a street paved under the improvement district plan; it was ruled yesterday by Judge J. V. Bourland in chancery court, in a decree handed down in the case of Leon A. Williams vs. the commissioners of Paving District No. 16.

It was said yesterday by counsel for petitioner Williams that appeal from the decree will be taken to the Supreme Court.

Petitioner Williams claimed in his petition that the brick removed from Rogers avenue, between Tenth street and Towson avenue, belonged to the owners of abutting property, who had, the petition asserted, paid for same when they were taxed for the cost of the original paving job.

The city held the best of the brick, subject to the court's order, with the plan of using it as material for paving alleys, crossings or making needed repairs, the useless brick being hauled away, much of it aiding in building the new road to the new incinerator plant.

GARBAGE REMOVAL MOST IMPORTANT SAYS MR MILLER

Removal of garbage at the earliest possible moment is particularly necessary during this protracted spell of very warm weather, it was said yesterday by City Commissioner M. J. Miller, who announced that he has made arrangements to give the city the most efficient service possible in this direction.

"Our wagons are covering the city thoroughly, and according to the schedule." Mr. Miller said. "But they miss a few garbage pails and it cannot be helped. However, whenever a garbage pail is missed, I am very anxious for the housewife to notify me, over phone 248, and I will send out after it.

"Even when the garbage pail is filled after the wagon passes, especially with fruit or vegetable waste, we will be glad to haul it off on a special trip, if I am notified. This sort of garbage quickly becomes obnoxious and a danger to public health, and we want to get it away at the earliest possible moment, just telephone 248."

MEMORIAL SERVICES PROGRAM OUTLINED FOR FORT SMITH

Principal speakers for memorial services for late President Warren G. Harding, in Fort Smith, will be Judge Joseph M. Hill and Rev. Norman A. Evans, chosen Monday. Memorial services will be held in the New Theatre Friday afternoon.

The executive committee, Mayor D. L. Ford, C. H. Harding, John P. Woods, George Tilles and Dr. W. R. Brooksher, outlined a program for the services at a meeting held yesterday morning.

Services will be conducted at the same hour funeral services are being held in Marion, Ohio. The New theatre management has donated the theatre and the Darby Printery, the printing.

Opening the service will be the singing of America by a chorus and the audience, with orchestral accompaniment. The Rev. Patrick F. Horan will deliver the invocation.

George Tilles will preside, introduced by Mayor D. L. Ford. W. E. Decker, chairman of the resolutions committee will present the resolutions. Following adoption of the resolutions, there will be a vocal quartet. The two addresses with music by a quartet and the benediction by Rev. Chester A. Grubb will conclude the services.

F. L. Reese will be in charge of the music. Mrs. L. C. Packard of the W. C. T. U. and a committee of women will attend to the decorations.

Sunday, August 12, 1923

PATIENT BREAKS TUBE OF RADIUM VALUED AT \$3,500—NEARLY ALL LOST

Because a patient at St. John's hospital who is taking radium treatments for malignant cancer moved without the instructions of his physicians during the course of his treatment, it will cost the hospital management \$3,500.

A small tube, holding radium valued at that amount used in a treatment, Friday was knocked to the floor by the patient and later was trod upon and destroyed before

hospital attaches could recover it, according to Dr. C. S. Holt, of the hospital.

When the search for the missing tube revealed the broken container on the floor near the bed of the patient, hospital attaches made rapid efforts to recover the valuable element. Only a small portion of the radium was recovered, Dr. Holt said.

Wednesday, August 15, 1923

MONSTER BULL WHEEL SHAFTS ARE NOW MANUFACTURED HERE AND SHIPPED IN QUANTITIES ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES

What are those great oaken cylinders, so beautiful in their size, symmetry and grain and so ponderous in their weight, which are seen on log wagons, coming in from South Fort Smith almost daily?

They are "bull" wheel shafts for standard cable drilling oil well rigs, and are formed from sound oaken logs cut from standing timber near this city.

The bull wheel shafts are another specimen of the versatility of manufacturing operations prevalent in Fort Smith and her environs.

Thursday, August 16, 1923

PLAZA BAND STAND ERECTED BY CIVITANS

The band stand which has been under construction for some time under the direction of the Civitan club is now ready to be given to the public, the committee in charge of the stand announced at the Civitan luncheon meeting Thursday noon. This will be used for public concerts by the Grotto ban.

A special discount on the lumber for the stand was granted by Dyke Brothers Lumber company. Contributions from the club members, merchants adjoining the Plaza and the courtesy of Leigh Kelley and [the] parks and playgrounds committee of the Noon Civics club, made possible the building of the band stand. H. A. Genteman, Walter Thompson, William Smith, Henry Remy and William Franklin did all the carpenter work on the stand without charge.

WANDERING BOY HELD BY CITY POLICE FOR HIS FATHER

Far away from home, Johnnie Woods, 10 years old, was not daunted until by the cold grim bars of the county jail. Then Johnnie acted on the impulse of any

boy his age, he broke down in tears.

Johnnie's home is in Rock Island, Oklahoma. He grew tired of the nomad life of his father, who is a traveling evangelist, and decided that he wanted to see the world.

Johnnie's tour of the world ended when a detective for the Kansas City Southern Railroad Company discovered him sleeping peacefully in an empty box car on the right of way.

The detective took sleeping Johnnie in his arms and carried him to the county jail. Johnnie was turned over to the jail matron and the policemen, who some people say are hard hearted, made up a fund to send Johnnie to his home Thursday.

Wednesday, August 22, 1923

PILOT ON FIRST LEG OF FLIGHT WAS GENE JOHNSON—KNOWN HERE

Eugene Johnson, who completed the first leg of the westbound airmail flight across the continent yesterday, making the trip from New York to Cleveland in five hours and twelve minutes, is well known in Fort Smith and at one time resided here. Johnson was the first aviator who saw service in the world war, to return to Fort Smith and give passenger flights, after the conclusion of the war.



Johnson remained in Fort Smith for about eighteen months after giving various exhibitions in this section and in eastern Oklahoma, went to Memphis where he joined an airplane exhibition company. Two months ago, Johnson joined the government's air-mail service department, and yesterday had the honor of getting away on the first trial trip of delivering mail from New York to San Francisco, within 20 hours.

Johnson is well known throughout Arkansas. It is remembered that he sailed his plane beneath the two bridges spanning the Arkansas River at Little Rock and for various other stunts.

Arthur F. Gadmer, city editor of the *Southwest*

C. EUGENE JOHNSON
(Courtesy of the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution)

American, was initiated into the real thrills of flying by Johnson, as also was A. D. Manning, news editor of the *Southwest American*. Many other Fort Smith citizens first took [to] the air with Johnson as pilot. Johnson had a fondness for pulling stunts to make the timid passengers feel anything but comfortable. He was an adept at scaling tall buildings by just a few feet and circling flag poles on government and city buildings.

Sunday, September 2, 1923

NEW INCINERATOR NEARS COMPLETION

Completion of the new city incinerator is a matter of very few days now, and it is expected fires will be lighted not later than the middle of the new week.

Located near the old river bank beyond the furniture factory district, the incinerator is obscured from the casual view of most residents of Fort Smith, but because of these very conditions, it will be all the more advantageously located for its purpose.

Measuring 25 feet by 65 feet, built of brick, steel and concrete, the incinerating plant is the very latest idea in affairs of its kind. Two ovens are installed in the plant, each having a compartment for burning carcasses of animals and a compartment for burning ordinary garbage. All the necessary equipment is part of the plant, which has a steel smokestack, rising 52 feet above the ground and which is lined with 3,750 fire brick.

Inclined driveways lead to the upper part of the building, whence the garbage is dumped down steel channels into the ovens. Asbestos roofing adds the final touch to allow for the truth of the declaration that, there is not a stick of wood in the entire structure.

North of the plant, stables for city teams and vehicles are to be built, while a small house is to be erected also, for occupancy by the man in charge of the plant. The entire plant will cost something more than \$31,000, and it is figured it will pay for itself within three or four years, under present conditions. The plant is being erected by the Nye Odorless Crematory company.

Wednesday, September 5, 1923

SLAUGHTER PLANT WILL BE ERECTED IF LAW IS PASSED

If the city will pass the proposed ordinance, requiring a central meat slaughtering place, such establishment will be erected without delay, according

to information received yesterday by City Commissioner M. J. Miller from a prominent and widely known cattleman of this city.

An investment of as much as \$75,000 would be made for the erection of the plant, if the tentative plans carry through, but the plans are in an inchoate state, because no definite decision in the matter will be reached until the ordinance has been formally passed into law.

Friday, September 7, 1923

BABY IS FOUND IN OLD SUIT CASE—HUNT FOR PARENTS

Wrapped snugly in blankets and tucked into an old suitcase, a blue eyed, black haired baby girl, said to be about two weeks old was found near the South Fort Smith street car waiting station at Society Curve Thursday morning about 7 o'clock.

Walter Poole, young white youth living near the station told Deputy Sheriff Harry Patterson yesterday that he was attracted early Thursday morning by cries of a young baby, and that upon investigation found the child in the suitcase. He then notified Omar Shaw, janitor, brother of Sheriff Pink Shaw, who called Deputy Sheriff Patterson.

Patterson brought the baby to the Welfare building

You Can't Drink City Water

Take No Chances

Drink-
BUDWEISER
BEVO
GRAPE-BOUQUET
Gingérale

Anheuser
Busch

These drinks bottled in America's most sanitary Beverage Plant. These are pure.

On Sale at Leading Drug and Grocery Stores
Order By the Case

J. FOSTER & CO.

Fort Smith Wholesale Distributors Clarksville
Van Buren

PHONE FORT SMITH 4

Or Hail a Red, White and Blue Wagon

Buy Border City Distilled Water ICE

MELT IT, AND YOU'LL HAVE
Fresh, Pure WATER!

100 lbs. of Distilled water Ice costs 60¢ Delivered Free. Melted this makes 12 gallons of pure water, at a cost of only Five Cents per Gallon. BORDER CITY ICE is ABSOLUTELY PURE. The process of its manufacture insures it.

We Can Furnish Distilled Water
at a cost of 10¢ per gallon, you furnishing the container and cooling for the water at our plant, but our honest suggestion as the most PRACTICAL and ECONOMICAL way to handle the situation is to buy BORDER CITY DISTILLED WATER ICE.

Border City Ice and Cold Storage Company

where an investigation revealed that the baby was apparently well nourished but suffering from a minor skin disease.

Dr. R. F. Parks, district health officer, said the disease was not a serious one. Attaches of the Welfare building said that the baby will be kept there [for] three days before it is offered for adoption.

The suitcase contained clothing and other articles for use in caring for the little girl. Officers said that the suitcase was open when detected by Poole.

Deputy Sheriff Patterson said last night that no trace of the baby's relatives had been found.

Sunday, September 9, 1923

CIRCUS COMES TO CITY TODAY

The Hagenbeck-Wallace circus will arrive today and the young folk of Fort Smith will have all the usual excitement of watching a circus unload, lift the big canvas tops and otherwise build their tented "city of a night." Incidentally, the older people will not miss any of the thrills.

The circus, which played yesterday at Springfield, Mo., is scheduled to arrive about noon or soon thereafter. The show trains will arrive over the Frisco and as customary, unloading will start at once. The show grounds will be at Jenny Lind and South Twenty First Street, and the show's paraphernalia will be unloaded, therefore, on the south side of town again, and hauled over the shortest route to the grounds.

Friday, September 14, 1923

UNLICENSED DOGS ARE CHECKING OUT BY BULLET ROUTE

It's going to be a matter of survival of the fittest among dogs in Fort Smith, according to officers who yesterday declared war on all canines on which no license fees have been paid. Fifteen dogs and one cat were checked off the list in the Coke Hill district yesterday morning.

By proclamation of Mayor D. L. Ford all owners of dogs have been warned to keep the animals tied up and from running at large about the streets of the city as a first step toward checking the threatened hydrophobia epidemic here.

Eleven persons, five of whom are under treatment by the district health board, were said by city officials to be suffering from hydrophobia as a result of bites from dogs suffering from rabies.

Wednesday, September 26, 1923

LAURA SPECK HOUSE IS HARD TO CLOSE

Health officials were attempting to close the house of Laura Speck, of Coke Hill colony, during the past week. A placard announcing that it was closed by the Board of Health was tacked upon the house, which is an ingenuous affair constructed of a wagon and a few extra boards.

Mischievous boys of the Hill took down the sign and put it on with the back side to view, upon which was written in immense letters "Mumps,"

When the health officer visited the colony the next day, signs were fairly plastered all over Laura's wagon-home. "Doc," the signs read "I want you to keep off my premises. I ain't got the mumps, anyway."

Thursday, September 27, 1923

ODOM HELD TO SERVE UNEXPIRED SENTENCE

Murray Odom, said by officers to be an escaped convict, was captured Wednesday morning by John B. Williams and held in the county jail to await the arrival of penitentiary officers.

Odom was sentenced to serve one year upon conviction under charges of grand larceny in June 1921 in the circuit court here. He escaped more than a year ago with less than 31 days of his sentence to serve.

Mr. Williams and another man were in search of a stolen horse when they saw Odom, who ran. He stopped however, after a few shots were fired in the air.

Friday, September 28, 1923

KLAN SPEAKER WILL BE HEARD TONIGHT

Taking as his subject "The Unique Mission of the Klan," Dr. John H. Moore, of Atlanta nationally accredited Ku Klux Klan speaker, will deliver a public address from the steps of the county court house Friday evening at 7:30 o'clock. The meeting will be held under the auspices of Fort Smith Klan No. 15, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

In order more comfortably to accommodate the crowd that is expected, local Klan authorities had planned to have Dr. Moore deliver his address at Andrews Field, but a printed statement issued by Klan members Thursday evening, stated that objection had been made to this arrangement and that their request had been withdrawn immediately after this became known.

FREE!
HIGH-FLY
TOY PISTOLS



Atlantic Spray Crackers For Sale At All Leading Grocery Stores



WORTZ BISCUIT CO.
Atlantic Spray Crackers

Obtained by returning to your Grocer only 4 labels from the package of Crackers illustrated here.

Atlantic Spray Soda Crackers
(Slightly Salted)
'Crisp as the Ocean Breeze' 'The Biscuits That Build'
FORT SMITH BISCUIT COMPANY

POLICE THINK CAR STOLEN—HOLD BOY

Driving a Ford chassis, that gave all the evidence of stolen property, with the numbers sawed off the engine, and keys and bed taken off, a young man who gave his name as Omage Treadway, appeared at John B.

Williams horse and mule market Thursday afternoon and wanted to trade the Ford for a white saddle horse.

Treadway, who is about 22 years old, said he had driven from Pine Bluff Ark., where he bought the car from a Negro in front of a moving picture house. Another boy drove here with him, he said. Mr. Williams called Chief of Police Oots. The boy is being held in the city jail, pending investigation.

Wednesday, October 10, 1923

SCOUTS START INSPECTION OF FIRE HAZARDS—GROUP UNDER SUPERVISION OF BRUN CANVASSES BUSINESS DISTRICT

In official observances of Fire Prevention week, 16 members of the local Boy Scouts organization are inspecting the business district for fire hazards this week.

The work began Tuesday afternoon and will continue throughout the week. The Scouts, under the supervision of the chief of the fire department, Maurice J. Brun, will make a detailed inspection of every place within the district in an endeavor to locate and destroy all fire hazards.

The members of the organization making the tour of inspection are: John Culp, Doine Wilson, Raymond Rhodes, Dudley Culp, Jim Krone, Merle Mitchell, Simpson Richardson, G. C. Trout, Robert Hunt, Frank Hines, Byron Maples, James Lumkin, Charles Haskins, Laws Galloway, Gerald Meek and Jack Billingsley.

Thursday, October 11, 1923

THOUSAND OF FANS GET RESULTS OF SERIES BY WIRE—SPECIAL NEWSPAPER SERVICE IS GIVEN PLAY-BY-PLAY BY THE SOUTHWEST-TIMES RECORD

Over a thousand fans in Fort Smith and the surrounding territory received returns on the World Series game, play by play, Wednesday, from the special service given by the *Times Record* and *Southwest American*, over leased wires.

BASEBALL

ST. LOUIS NATIONAL BASEBALL CLUB VS. PICKED TEAM

Andrews Field, Fort Smith, Arkansas, Friday, Sept. 1, 3 o'clock

Come out and see the great Roger Hornsby also Heinie Mueller, Taylor Douthit, all three who were developed in the Western Association, see Specks Toporcher, the brilliant short stop and the only Major League infielder who wears glasses while playing. Don't forget the date, Friday, September 21, at three o'clock.

Reserved tickets on sale at Wiemans Cigar Stand, Smoke Shop, Hotel Main Cigar Stand, First National Bank Cigar Stand. Phone any of these places and they will reserve tickets.

Returns received over the United Press were megaphoned before a crowd of five hundred, from the front of the news office on Rogers avenue.

Wiemans's Cigar store was packed with base ball enthusiasts, anxious to hear the returns from a special *Times Record* United Press loop wire.

Hundreds of Van Buren fans also heard the loop wire report from the Van Buren Bureau of the *Southwest-Times Record*. The service will be repeated Thursday.

In addition to these, 250 people followed the game at the courthouse at Ozark, by means of returns telephoned by the *Times Record* from United Press bulletins.

The special leased wire report of the World Series will be reported again Thursday and will continue every afternoon throughout the series.

Saturday, October 20, 1923

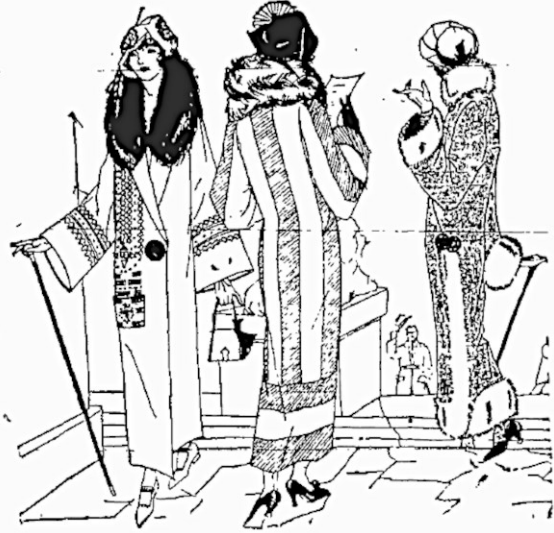
HUNDREDS SEE SKY WRITER IN DEMONSTRATION—NOVEL ADVERTISING FEAT IS WITNESSED BY RESIDENTS OF FORT SMITH

Skywriting, the greatest forward step in advertising was demonstrated for the first time in Fort Smith, Friday. Hundreds of Fort Smith people witnessed the feat, heralded as quite the most spectacular and uncommon enterprise yet enlisted in the commercial field.

Captain C. B. D. Collyer, representative of the American Tobacco Company and former member of the government air service, wrote the message "Lucky Strike," 10,000 feet above the city in letters a mile high and over a mile long. The words were written in smoke and were arranged by the tobacco company as a preliminary to the comprehensive advertising campaign which the company will promote within the next few months.

IT PAYS TO TRADE AT THE

Boston Store The Coats of Autumn Are Unmistakably Smart



Major Jack Savage, formerly of the Royal Air Service is the inventor of the sky writing stunt, which is being demonstrated in over 150 cities in the United States under the direction of the Sky writing corporation of America.

"Well, I never thought we'd come to this," exclaimed an old veteran, who with hundreds of other Fort Smith people enjoyed the thrill of the first sky writing program here.

Sunday, October 21, 1923

OLD WOODEN VIADUCT WILL BE TORN DOWN—GRADE CROSSING WILL BE SUBSTITUTED FOR BRIDGE ACCORDING TO CONTRACTOR ON ROAD

The old wooden viaduct on the old Greenwood road near the Fort Smith brick plant will be torn down beginning Monday and a grade crossing will be substituted over the Suburban railroad, according to Otto V. Martin, contractor on the Greenwood road.

A temporary crossing will be installed before the viaduct is torn down, so traffic will not be barred, he said.

The wooden viaduct has been considered a dangerous place for years, because of its unstable

condition and the turn in it. One automobile plunged off of it several years ago.

Removal of the viaduct is part of a contract for shaling this road from Oak cemetery to the Athletic smelter, connecting there with the new Fort Smith to Mansfield road.



Friday, October 26, 1923

OFFICER SAVES LIFE OF FIVE-YEAR-OLD BOY—COMMISSIONER STROZIER DRIVES CHILD TO LOCAL HOSPITAL EARLY THURSDAY

Saving the life of little five-year-old Billy Smith of Coke Hill is probably due to Commissioner R. P. Strozier, who is acting juvenile officer. The child had been playing with his friends near his home late Tuesday afternoon when he ran into a barbed wire fence, tearing an ugly gash across his throat and cutting it so deep that the windpipe was exposed. The parents of the child administered medical attention, but refused to let the public health nurse serve the child, since they declared their disbelief in any but a divine healing process, according to Commissioner Strozier.

The child suffered painfully for about forty-eight hours, and was in a dangerous condition when Mr. Strozier drove to the home on Coke Hill Thursday morning and removed it to a local hospital, where an operation was performed. Reports from the hospital last night indicated that the boy would recover, but his condition is yet serious.

Saturday, October 27, 1923

NEW TOURIST PARK APPEARS SUDDENLY

A new tourist park, for which neither the city nor any of the civic clubs are providing funds for maintenance, has sprung up within the last week on the broad open space south of the pumping station and between Wheeler avenue and the Frisco right of way.

In proportion, as the Lions club tourist park is

being deserted for the season, this park is gaining in popularity each day. Dwellers here, apparently scorn automobiles and travel in wagons, many of them of fantastic design.

Practically all have the same "motif," no two parts correspond in size or material, all are assembled. Tops are made of as many different colors as Joseph's coat.

The majority of the "tourists" are horse traders and every camp has from two to six nondescript horses tied to wagons or turned out to graze. The horses, like the campers, are travel stained and weary.

Clustered about camp fires are unkempt men, women and children in varying stages of forlornity, clad in hand-me-downs, in keeping with the general atmosphere of the camp. Scraggy, straggling locks of the women are an open plea for bobbed hair. One thing only the camp seems rich in, with much to spare – that is time. Great gobs of time, with nothing to do until tomorrow, but eat and sleep and sit around the camp fires. Not even enough ambition to talk – just sit and sit.

GIRL FACTORY WORKERS WELCOME HOT LUNCHEONS

Luncheons served at the Welfare building to the factory girls, launched for the first time Thursday by the Welfare association, are being very warmly received by the girls. Twelve attended the first day. Hot vegetable soup containing plenty of meat, potatoes, and vegetables, really a complete meal in itself, and served with crackers and a pint of hot cocoa may be purchased for the sum of five cents. The soup is 3 cents the cocoa 2 cents.

At this price, the Welfare association cannot hope to even meet expenses of serving the luncheon, but the new service is a broadening of activities for the association giving the factory girls an opportunity for a good wholesome hot lunch, and a few minutes recreation.

Members of the board and a group of younger girls will assist each day in serving.

Wednesday, October 31, 1923

ROSALIE TILLES HOME TO HAVE HALLOWEEN

Halloween will be Halloween at the Rosalie Tilles Children's Home Wednesday evening when the small inmates will be entertained with their annual Halloween party with John B. Williams as host, assisted by the Harmonizing Quintet composed of Robbie Anderson,

Cecil Magruder, Clare Clarke, Fordyce Fitzsimmons, Carl Long and Robert Todd.

The Festivities will last from 7 until 9 o'clock. If the weather permits, the menagerie from the John B. Williams stable will be taken to the home, the wagon surmounted by a tree holding a real possum, and the children will be given a hunt—around the block, the dogs treeing the possum, in the tree, on top of the wagon.

There will be Halloween decorations, weird Halloween noise contraptions and caps and masks for the small people. The wonder wagon will also carry on it, peanuts and popcorn. Other refreshments will be served also. After the "hunt" there will be music and games indoors, with the Harmony Quintet providing the musical program.

Thursday, November 1, 1923

MUCH DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY DONE IN CELEBRATIONS

"Please send your whole force out here, they're breaking out windows and tearing the whole neighborhood up."

"Officer, there's a bunch of boys throwing stones at street lights and saying such awful words that I can't stand it any longer; please hurry out here and stop em."

"Is that the police station? Well, some boys have just come in my front yard and broken the horns off of two deer statues. I wouldn't care so much if I could only get the horns as I could glue them back, but they've run off with them. Isn't there something you can do?"

Such were the appeals made to the local police station Wednesday night as the result of Halloween activities in Fort Smith.

Officers drove out to seven different vicinities in an effort to apprehend the offenders but, only in one instance, were the boys detected in their mischief. In this instance the crowd, composed of approximately 15 youths were told that it was time for them to be "between the sheets" and they disbanded and went to their respective homes.

Automobiles were

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Parks and Carney Buy Southwest American

J. S. Parks and George D. Carney, publishers of the Times Record announce their purchase outright of the Southwest American, which will be continued as a morning newspaper in Fort Smith.

The Southwest American recently was sold by W. E. Decker, its founder and successful publisher for more than sixteen years, to Richard Lloyd Jones, one of the publishers of the Tulsa, (Okla.) Tribune. The property was acquired last night from Mr. Jones.

shoved across the streets, bricks were scattered and piled at some of the street intersections, while red lanterns that had been placed on piles of dirt where road construction work is under way were placed in odd positions here and there. Boxes, pans and a few carts showed that boys had been "out" by the manner in which they had been placed, offering obstructions to the drivers of motor cars at various points.

A call answered by the fire department at 11 o'clock Wednesday night, showed one of the Avenue refuse containers to be on fire near the alley directly behind the Goldman hotel, but whether this was the result of a Halloween prank or not, could not be established.

Thursday, November 22, 1923

RESORTS IN JUAREZ SHUT BY OFFICERS

The dancing pavilion, the skating rink in Joyland Park, and the building adjoining the skating rink, alleged to have been used as a gambling house or "Little Juarez," across the river in Oklahoma, were closed Wednesday night by Sheriff John E. Johnston and County Attorney Harry D. Pitchford of Sequoyah county.

No liquor was found by the raiding officers and no gambling paraphernalia, but Prosecutor Pitchford said the resorts were to stay closed.

A court fight is said to be contemplated by the leasers of Joyland Park and of the dancing

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pavilion north of the Missouri Pacific tracks. These are, respectively, a man named Northcutt and Louis Amos. Any action they may plan, it is said, must come before Judge J. T. Parks of Tahlequah, who will open district court in Sallisaw, Nov. 26.

"These places will stay closed unless the court orders otherwise." County Attorney Pitchford told the *Southwest American*, Wednesday night. "If any attempt is made to open without a court order, it will be met with vigorous action from Sherriff Johnston and myself.

The invasion of Little Juarez, as the cluster of resorts is known in Fort Smith, was without untoward incident. The sheriff and prosecuting attorney had purchased chains and padlocks in Muldrow before visiting the amusement center, but said that, in response to their order to "close up shop," they were promised that no effort would be made to operate except under court authority and they were content to let the matter drop with a warning.

"We found no evidence of law violation." Mr. Pitchford said. "There was no layout in the alleged gambling casino, but there was a mighty good place for one."

"As a matter of fact, Sheriff Johnston and I have had the raid in contemplation for ten days, but were delaying action to obtain evidence."

He reiterated that the resorts were going to stay closed.

Little Juarez has recently sprung into prominence in Fort Smith because of common talk that a wide open gambling house was being operated there and that liquor was freely sold to all comers. It has also been charged that the resorts clustered there have been [the] rendezvous of women of questionable character.

Located a short distance beyond the Oklahoma end of the Fort Smith free bridge, the resorts are in the eastern extremity of Sequoyah county, the county seat of which is Sallisaw. Mr. Pitchford said that the alleged nature of the amusement center came to his attention only recently.

For the past two weeks, downtown Fort Smith has been gossiping about the places which are collectively known as "Juarez," in imitation of the Mexican town across the Rio Grande from El Paso, noted for gambling, horse racing, and other sports which have been placed under the ban in the United States.

Tuesday, December 11, 1923

CONSTRUCTION OF LOCAL CONVENT TO BE STARTED SOON

Actual work on St. Scholastica's Convent, the new home of the Benedictine Sisters, to be located on a 40 acre tract of land near the intersection of Albert Pike and Free Ferry Road will begin December 15.

The Mother Superior will arrive from the present Mother House at Shoal Creek this afternoon for conference with Robert E. Lee Majors, of the firm of Majors and Scheers, of Sapulpa Okla., architects who will have the construction in charge. Mr. Majors came to Fort Smith Sunday night.

The building for which ground will be broken Saturday is one wing of a structure which will cost approximately \$750,000 when completed. This wing will cost in the neighborhood of \$150,000, and will be three and one-half stories in height, with full basement.

Tuesday, December 25, 1923

MUNICIPAL CHRISTMAS TREE GREAT COMMUNITY GATHERING

Fort Smith stopped its bustle and rush of belated Christmas shopping Monday afternoon, to broadcast through the business district a spirit of Christmas never before equaled at a community Christmas tree.

When the giant tree was lighted with myriads of

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tiny electric lights and reams of twinkling adornments, topped with the symbolic star of the East, a great throng gasped and then, with one mighty cheer, voiced the spirit of the season.

The community tree program started at 5:30 o'clock Monday afternoon, and was attended by thousands who filled the streets near the Plaza to overflowing.

When the 60-piece Grotto band began to play, the crowds gathered, and for half an hour, feet were patting the ground and heads were nodding in time to the music.

"Daddy, Daddy," cried one shabbily dressed child, "look at our tree." There was the pride of ownership in the voice. And all the children appeared to take enormous pride in "their" tree, for which they had received special invitations the preceding day, delivered by the Boy Scouts.

A great chorus of voices took up the refrain of well-known Christmas carols, and under the leadership of Dr. Fred G. White and Carl Wortz, Jr., everyone in the great crowd took part in the singing.

Following the brief ceremonies, over which Mayor D. L. Ford presided, the feature of the evening began. Gifts were distributed to the scores of children in the enclosure, roped off for them. Bags containing nuts, toys, fruits, candy, cakes from Fort Smith Biscuit Company, and a pair of warm stockings, were placed in eager little hands.

Approximately 650 children received these gifts, prepared by an Amrita Grotto committee. The joy expressed in the appreciative faces of the children proved the truth of the biblical phrase "It is more blessed to give than receive."

Saturday, December 29, 1923

**NEGRO HELD FOR SLAYING
WHITE WOMAN—FARM WOMAN
IN CRAWFORD COUNTY DEAD**

Mrs. Bob Latimer of Catcher settlement, 5 miles southeast of Van Buren is dead, following an attack by a Negro, and Will Bettis, a Negro living near the Latimer home is in the Sebastian county jail at Fort Smith charged with the crime, officers having arrested Bettis late Friday afternoon.

Mrs. Latimer, who was about twenty-five years old, was found at her home early Friday afternoon by a neighbor who went to call upon her.

She was badly bruised about the arms and body and had been shot in the back with heavy bird shot from a shotgun.

Several cuts and slashes were found about her head. She was unconscious when found, it was said.

Dr. B. L. Bennett of Kibler was called and administered medical aid, but efforts to save her failed, [with her] death coming shortly before six o'clock. She regained consciousness however, and gave descriptions of the Negro, it was said.

Bettis, who was arrested by Sheriff A. D. Maxey of Van Buren and Deputy Sheriff W. B. Bushmaier of Kibler, denies the charge and claims that he was picking cotton in a field near his home throughout the day.

Mrs. Latimer's husband was away from home, spending a few days in Oklahoma, it was said. The Latimers have no children.

She is a half-sister to Mrs. G. N. Garrett of 1613 North Sixth Street, Fort Smith. Mrs. Garrett has been ill for several days and on hearing of the brutal attack, she fainted and her condition was thought to be serious Friday night.

Bettis was taken to the Sebastian county jail in Fort Smith by Sheriff Maxey early Friday night to offset chances for mob violence, officers announced.



Al Whitson is the editor of the Journal's long-standing feature of reprinted articles, photos, and advertisements from 100 years ago about Fort Smith, a city and a history to which Al is dedicated and serves well.



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- NOTES:** # — Some sort of graphic, other than a portrait, is used.
 * — A portrait of the person(s) named is on the page indicated.
 (—) — For such as title, marital status, degree, etc.
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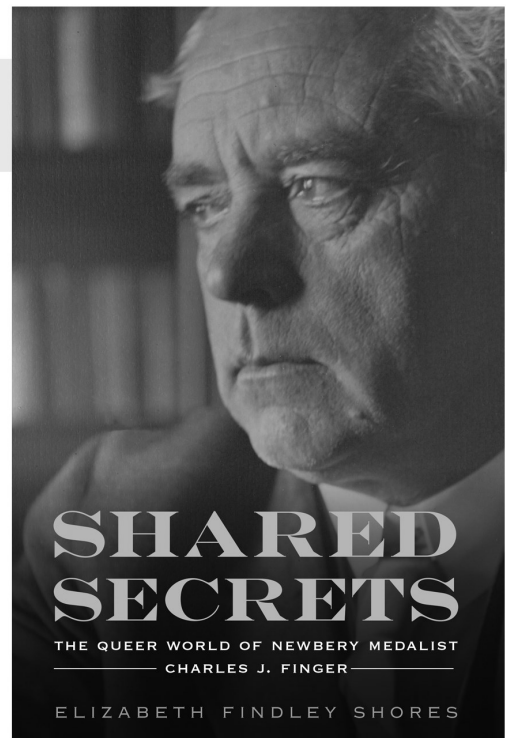
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