



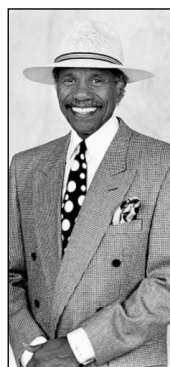
The JOURNAL

Annie Maledon's Murder



—ALSO INSIDE—

- ❖ Honoring Paul Knauls, Jr.
- ❖ Clara Eno, first lady of Arkansas history
- ❖ 1936 Historical Markers
- ❖ Sonny Robison, hands-on history
- ❖ *and more*





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:

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Fort Smith, AR 72913-3676

or contact us online at webmaster@fortsmithhistory.org

Membership in the Fort Smith Historical Society includes a subscription to the *Journal* of the FSHS, which is published semi-annually. Send your membership dues and other business matters to:

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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 billword1947@gmail.com, President of the Society.
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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The JOURNAL

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COVER PHOTOS:

Main: Frank Carver

Lower, from left: Paul Knauls, Jr.; Floyd 'Sonny' Robison, and Clara B. Eno.

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News & Opportunities

Fort Smith Historical Society

2024 Monthly Meetings

are held on the

First Monday, April 1, and June 3

at the Fort Smith Public Library

Main Branch Community Room

6 p.m.

Check FSHS Facebook page for the May 6 monthly meeting site.

Arkansas Historical Association

83rd Annual Meeting 2024

Heber Springs, April 25-27, 2024.

Host, Red Apple Inn

Theme: "Picturing Arkansas: Depictions of its people in art, photography, literature, music, and media"

Register through the Arkansas Historical Association website:

www.arkansashistoricalassociation.org

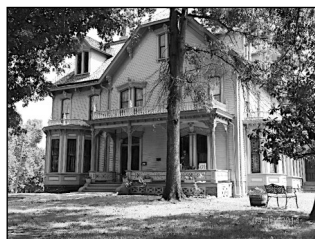
Clayton House

514 North Sixth Street

479-783-3000



THEN



NOW

All events require reservations or pre-ordered tickets. For schedules of tours and events use:

claytonhouse@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

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

Upcoming event at the Museum

Ruck March/Half Marathon dedicated to honoring General William O. Darby and Fort Smith's twin cities, Cisterna, Italy and Nago-Torbole, Italy.

Sunday, April 28, 2024 • 7:00 am


Cisterna Park • Downtown Fort Smith •

Length: 13.1 Half Marathon - Ruck, Run, or Walk

Registration: runsignup.com
darbyhouse.org or fortsmithmuseum.org

Benefiting the Fort Smith Museum of History and The Darby House.

★★★★★




SCAN & REGISTER

FORT SMITH GENERAL DARBY CHALLENGE

FORT SMITH MUSEUM OF HISTORY City of Fort Smith ARKANSAS

CISTERNA, ITALY ★ APRIL 28 • 2024 ★ NAGO-TORBOLE, ITALY

I 1.200 americani in marcia per Darby



Nago-Torbole, Italy, 2023

Yarnell's Ice Cream, made in Arkansas since 1932, is featured in the Fort Smith Museum of History'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

Drennen-Scott Historic Site to reopen for the 2024 season on April 5.

The site will resume operations and will be open Wednesday, Friday and Saturday through November. The Wilhauf House will be open select hours on the same days. Leonard Wilhauf was a German immigrant, ran a bakery on Main Street in Van Buren, and was a veteran of the Mexican War of 1846-48. His home, built in 1851, was donated to UAFS and grants were acquired to restore and interpret the home as a museum.

For more information contact Tom Wing, Director of the Drennen-Scott Historical Site by email at drennen-scott@uafs.edu. 479-262-2750

Facebook: Drennen-Scott Historic Site

John Talkington Chapter of the Sons of Union Veterans

John Talkington Chapter of the Sons of Union Veterans. Anyone with Union Army ancestors from the Civil War period or who have an interest in joining can contact Tom Wing at 479-262-2750 or VanBurenSUV@gmail.com.

The local Chapter is named for John Talkington, an ancestor of Angela Walton Raji, who was a slave of Isaac Talkington in Crawford County. John Talkington fled in 1862, headed to Fort Scott, Kansas, and joined the 2nd Kansas Colored Infantry which engaged Confederate forces at the 1864 Battle of Jenkins Ferry in lower Arkansas (referenced and re-enacted scenes shown in the Academy Award Winning movie, *Lincoln*). Talkington was wounded in the combat. He later died in a Van Buren hospital and is buried in Fairview Cemetery.

Fort Smith Regional Art Museum (RAM)

1601 Rogers Avenue—Fort Smith
479.784.2787
info@fsram.org

Visiting Exhibits

❖ Through April 21: Esmeralda Flores, Lizbeth Guanajuato, Moises Esau Linares Merino, and Mayra Rene, *Empoderado: Hispanic Empowerment through Art*.

❖ Through May 19: Kristen Tordella-Williams, *Precipice*.

❖ Through May 19: *Charcoal Visions*.

Lectures, Workshops, Education Programs, and Events throughout the year. Contact RAM for a full schedule of activities, exhibits, and children-centered art classes.

Fort Smith Little Theatre

401 North Street—Fort Smith

2024 Season

❖ April 5-6, 10-13: “The Lost Boy” by Ronald Gabriel Paolillo. Directed by Joanne Peterson.

❖ April 26-28: “A Grand Night for Singing (Off-Season Production) Directed by Barry Law.

❖ May 31 - June 1, 5-8: “Light Up the Sky” by Moss Hart. Directed by Melissa Vitale.

❖ July 18-20, 24-27, August 1-3: “Hello, Dolly” Music/Lyrics by J. Herman, Book by M. Stewart, Based on Thornton Wildes, “The Matchmaker.” Directed by Shannon Stoddard, Music Director George Mann.

❖ September 12-14 and 18-21: “Murder on the Orient Express” Book by Agatha Christie, adapted by Ken Ludwig. Directed by Duff Taylor.

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

River Valley Film Society, Inc.

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

Catcher: Breaking the Code of Silence

Directed by Grant Thomas and co-produced by Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith, the short documentary *Catcher: Breaking the Code of Silence* follows Dr. Michael Anthony’s dissertation on the subject along with interviews with members of the affected families. According to Dr. Michael Anthony, “Following the brutal murder of a young white woman in late 1923, the rural town of Catcher, Arkansas, divided along

racial lines. Rumors that the woman had been raped and murdered by three Black men angered a portion of the white community who formed a 500-person mob to punish the accused. After an unsuccessful attempt at lynching the men, a small portion of this mob turned its attention to the remaining Black citizens still residing around Catcher. Anonymous notices were posted at several locations throughout the community threatening Black citizens to leave or suffer the consequences. Eleven men armed themselves inside a building, refusing to give in to these warnings. Only after the National Guard was called in did the men finally throw down their guns. When the dust finally settled in Catcher, one Black man was dead, fifteen Black men were in jail, and around three hundred Black citizens had fled the region with nothing but the clothes on their back... allowing white members to seize lucrative land and mineral rights from Black citizens who had legally held claim to the area for decades.”

A preview of the documentary was screened for Black History Month events at the King Opera House (Feb. 10) and the Bakery District (Feb. 15) to help raise money to finish the film. The goal is to premiere the full version of the documentary at the 2024 Fort Smith International Film Festival August 22-24.

Newest Film Market enters the Global Film Scene: MidAmerica Film Market

The MidAmerica Film Market will run alongside the fourth annual Fort Smith International Film Festival, August 22-24, 2024. The festival has garnered submissions from seventy-five countries, nations, and tribes, and according to Meltwater has a global media reach of 1.3 billion. The festival showcases Native American filmmakers and highlight indigenous content from across the United States and around the world. Additionally, the market and festival will fill a gap in the industry, a six-hour radius includes Dallas, Oklahoma City, Kansas City, St. Louis, Memphis, Jackson, and Shreveport providing access to a unique selection of MidAmerican movies and storytellers.

“We finalized a multi-year agreement making Porter + Craig Film and Media the exclusive distributor for the MidAmerica Film Market,” explains executive director Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith. “Through this partnership we will bring in buyers who work with the major theatrical companies and streaming services around the world. Essentially we are bringing Hollywood to the middle of the United States!”

The MidAmerica Film Market might be the new kid on the global film scene, but their team features the

seasoned professionals behind Porter + Craig Film and Media Distribution. Disney Studios Motion Pictures former executive Sgt. Major Keith L. Craig (Ret.) worked on the distribution strategy for the entire Disney portfolio, including Marvel, Lucasfilm, Pixar and Disney Animation Studios. “With countless films being produced each year, it becomes increasingly difficult for individual filmmakers to gain recognition and secure the right licensing deals on their own,” says Co-Founder Sgt. Major Keith L. Craig (Ret.). “That’s why we will make sure that our expertise and industry connections will help them find the right audiences for their films.”

Jeff Porter has found distribution and or financing for over 250-plus films and television shows along with managing numerous production sets, overseeing the logistics of several theatrical releases in addition to cultivating relationships with all the major domestic and international distributors and sales agents. “By collaborating with Porter + Craig Film and Media, filmmakers can focus on what they do best—telling captivating stories—while leaving the intricacies of distribution in our hands,” notes Co-CEO Jeff Porter. “Ultimately, it is this collaboration that ensures that indie films find their rightful place in the global cinematic landscape and reach the masses.”

Porter + Craig Film and Media Distribution is a worldwide film and television sales organization specializing in the financing, production, and distribution of commercial feature films; it also represents worldwide sales for both its own slate of films and third-party content with an annual slate of 50 to 100 films.

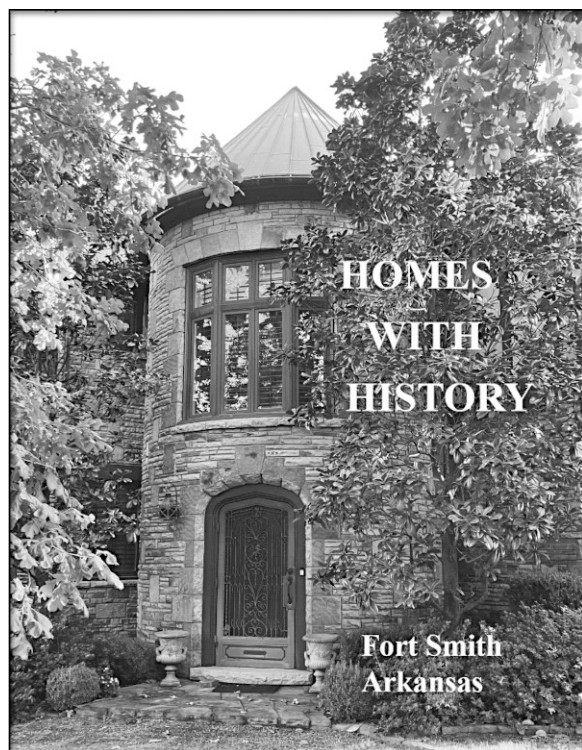
2023 Fort Smith International Film Festival Recap. by Lynn Wasson

The cultures of almost every area of the globe were artistically represented at the third annual Fort Smith International Film Festival held last August. With the ability to digitally transfer feature and documentary works, filmmakers of more than seventy nationalities exhibited films here, starting in 2021.

Three years of international participation have proven the notion of the festival’s founders that geography no longer confines film making or the film business itself to Hollywood. Digital film-making is accessible to students, amateurs and professional worldwide. Directors’ hunger for their films to be seen accounts for the wide-spread entries the festival has received. It has also attracted local and regional films and exciting Native American film-makers, domestically.

Film-lovers who attend the two-day festival at Temple Live choose their own schedule of films and talks being held simultaneously in four different rooms, including Fort Smith's last original movie palace, the Temple Theater. A live-streamed awards ceremony closes the event, followed by many international directors. After the festival, shipping trophies around the globe has been a challenging final task. Sponsors have provided cash and scholarship prizes over the life of the festival.

Homes with History Published



Jim Kreuz and John Lehen's *Homes with History: Fort Smith, Arkansas*, which was published in 2023, becomes third in a photographic series planned by Kruez and his co-authors displaying the architectural and cultural history of the city. Available at Bookish in the Bakery District and at Belle Starr Antique Mall. The authors will redirect profits to the Fort Smith Museum of History.

Fort Smith Public Library

Main Branch, 3200 Rogers Avenue
Community Room, First Floor, for FSHS Monthly Meetings on the First Monday except for May. See

FSHS Facebook page for alternate meeting sites.

County and local journals from other Associations throughout Arkansas are available courtesy of Fort Smith Historical Society's *Journal* exchange partnerships and are accessible on shelves in the FSPL's Genealogy Room on Second Floor, elevators available.



History-rich journals from all over Arkansas
now available at the FSPL

U.S. Marshals Museum



For hours, admission prices, and attractions scheduled at the U.S. Marshals Museum located on the Arkansas River front just north of the Garrison Avenue bridge in downtown Fort Smith, Arkansas, use this link: www.usmmuseum.org/events

Subscribe to the *Journal*,
and never miss an issue.

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.

Reprinted from the 10th year of the *Journal*, 1987. We feel same about our dear members in this, our 47th year.

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

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

You may now pay annual dues online with credit card. For the link to do so, email Billword1947@gmail.com.

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They will love the
Journal — and you.

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479/420-1162
479/226-2026
479/788-7588

Honoring Paul A. Knauls, Sr.

Living Legend and Arkansas native known far and wide as ‘Mr. Mayor’

By Sherry Toliver

When the young people of Portland, Oregon, were engaged in an oral history project that highlighted the impact of older citizens, one name kept coming up over and over. That name was Paul Knauls. He is known all over as the Mayor of Northeast Portland. “This honorary title was given to me years ago. The newspapers got hold of it and it just stuck,” says Paul, with a chuckle. Now, at age ninety-three, he is recognized wherever he goes and is always addressed as Mr. Mayor!

Paul Knauls was born in the coal mining town of Huntington, Arkansas, on January 22, 1931. His father, Governor, worked in the coal mines. There were seven children in the family. Paul was the only boy. He had three older sisters and three younger sisters.

Like many African American families in the 1930s and 1940s, Governor and Gladys Knauls moved from the small town of Huntington, population 600, to make sure the children received a proper education. They relocated and settled in the town of Fort Smith.

In Fort Smith, Arkansas, there were several schools for Black children. Paul attended St. John Elementary and Lincoln High School. Paul’s favorite teacher at Lincoln was Mrs. Dora Sullivan. He recalls doing yard work for the Sullivans when he was a youngster. One day, he finished cutting the grass and was asked inside to be paid. He was shocked to see Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan eating beans and cornbread for dinner just like regular folks. He said, “I thought they were rich.”

Paul’s mother, Gladys, was born in 1904, one year after the Wright brothers flew the first airplane. “I only got one whipping from my mother. I was a basketball player on the Lincoln Pirates High School team. I was told not to go to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to play in a basketball game. The highways were covered with black ice. I went anyway. Returning home I walked into the house. mother used a broom to whip me. The broom broke and she continued to whip me with the broom handle. I didn’t do dat no mo.”

Paul graduated from Lincoln High School in the class of 1949. He keeps in touch with the few remaining classmates from that year. Many of his family members still live in Fort Smith, including historian Todd Perry



PAUL KNAULS JR.

and cousin Cynthia Rainey. He loves to come home for family reunions and the Lincoln alumni reunions where he can visit with friends and family.

After high school, Paul joined the Air Force and was stationed in Spokane, Washington. He became the first Black man to integrate the Fairchild Air Force Base. He was eager to leave the South and experience life in other places. After

getting an honorable discharge, he stayed in the Northwest and immediately got two jobs. He worked for Royal Typewriter Company doing repairs and the Davenport Hotel as a dishwasher.

In 1963, Paul moved to Portland, Oregon, and settled in the Albina neighborhood. This was the industrial region along the east banks of the Willamette River. The area became home to many of Portland’s African-American families. According to Paul, racist public policies and banking practices, which included “redlining,” confined most Black people to the Albina neighborhood and created economic and racial segregation.

Despite these challenges, Albina grew to become a thriving community with world class education programs, civic participation, and Black-owned small businesses. Its jazz scene, with clubs and music venues lining Williams Avenue, cemented the neighborhood as the cultural heart of Portland.

Paul knew he wanted to be a businessman. He had an entrepreneurial spirit and was not afraid of hard work. He had a dream of owning his own night club. Working multiple jobs to save money was the start. He fixed typewriters, shined shoes, and worked as a hotel wine steward. After twelve years, Paul had managed to save \$17,000. He began to look around for property to purchase.

By this time, Paul had many friends who were community leaders, business owners and local

musicians. One friend and mentor, Way Lee, helped him secure a \$50,000 loan to purchase the Cotton Club. At this time, most banks did not provide business loans to Black people, leaving loan sharks with predatory terms as the only option. Thus, when Paul made the final mortgage payment of \$1,488.88, he celebrated with a mortgage burning party at the Cotton Club.

“Paul knew that purchasing property was a pathway to wealth,” says friend and local musician Calvin Walker. “How did he gain wealth as a Black man attempting to get financing in the ’60s in Portland, Oregon? How does an honest person get ahead without selling drugs or other shady endeavors? He was a straight up, honest businessman, starting with nothing and keeping his ear to the ground to accomplish many things.”

It wasn’t long before Paul met his ultimate partner in life, love, and style in Geneva Frazier. Together, they became known as one of Albina’s most beloved power couples.

The two personified elegance, class and true commitment to one another and the broader community. Geneva was a trailblazer in her own right. She was one of the first female barbers in the state of Oregon.

Paul and Geneva built a life together as they raised children, traveled the world, and became business partners. Together, they owned and operated the Cotton Club, Paul’s Cocktails, Geneva’s Lounge, and Geneva’s Shear Perfection Barbershop and Salon. According to Tony and Carla Hopson of Self Enhancement Inc., “Paul and Geneva Knauls were the royalty of our community. They represented success and provided the best example of how we could truly be as successful as our white counterparts.”

Paul’s Cotton Club was part of the Chitlin’ Circuit, a network of venues throughout the country safe for Black entertainers to perform. It was a multicultural, multigenerational, and multiracial space—a modern vaudevillian showcase for African Americans. In addition to musical acts, there were contortionists, comedians, dancers, impersonators, fashion shows, door prizes, and friendly contests alike. Taking its namesake from Harlem’s World-Famous Cotton Club, the venue was known as “the only place on the West Coast with Wall to Wall Soul.”

The Club booked national acts, but also featured local talents. As groups such as the Whispers, Etta James, and Sammy Davis, Jr. came through town, Albina musicians would be waiting in the wings and often found opportunities to accompany their performances. This exposure helped myriad local musicians including Ural Thomas, Mel Brown, and

“Paul knew that purchasing property was a pathway to wealth....He was a straight up, honest businessman, starting with nothing and keeping his ear to the ground to accomplish many things.”

CALVIN WALKER
musician and Paul Knauls’ friend



Sunday’s Child make their way onto the Chitlin Circuit and beyond.

For a period of time, the Cotton Club was a place of racial integration. According to Paul, “I had the best of both worlds. White and Black—all these folks would come down to our spot.” Following Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination, however, Paul was forced to close the club when deep racial divisions disrupted his patronage. “The Whites stopped coming because the Blacks were there, and the Blacks stopped coming because the Whites were there,” says Paul.

The following year, Paul opened Geneva’s Restaurant and Bar on Williams Avenue. The place became popular with Portland’s new professional basketball team, the Trailblazers. In an effort to get Albina’s Black community to join him at Trailblazers games, Paul chartered a bus he called “The Soul Train” that shuttled patrons from Geneva’s to Memorial Coliseum and back. This shuttle service soon gained the endorsement of Trailblazers founder, Harry Glickman, generating increased support for the team in the early years of the organization.

When the Trailblazers won the NBA championship in 1977, Paul blocked off Williams Avenue as the team’s after-party spilled out of Geneva’s and onto the street. Mayor Goldschmidt soon followed Paul’s lead and the city immediately sanctioned the event. National television crews broadcast this iconic moment outside of Geneva’s—the Trailblazers’ first and only NBA championship to date.

Paul’s business acumen and love of adventure extended to the mountains where he broke barriers as an avid skier and one of the first Black ski instructors in the region. Upon recognition that there were no ski classes for young kids, Paul shared the lessons he designed for his five-year-old son, Paul Jr., and other young learners

while their parents hit the slopes. Eventually, these classes became so popular that Paul had to expand his lessons to include parents as well.

“I couldn’t have been blessed with a better man to hit life’s slopes with,” remembers Paul Knauls Jr. “I’ve always remembered to keep my knees bent and lean into the mountains. And I’ll never forget the importance of tempo.”

Even with responsibilities at the club, Paul continued to make time for the mountains, especially for the National Brotherhood of Skiers summit, which brings over 7,000 African American skiers to the mountains annually.

In addition to their entrepreneurial ventures, Paul and Geneva’s philanthropic work is still visible in Albina today. In the 1990s, they led a fundraising crusade that produced *The Dream*, a Martin Luther King Jr. memorial sculpture located in the heart of Albina’s Lloyd District. It stands outside the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, seen by thousands of people every day.

In 2014, Knauls shared with Oregon Public Broadcasting that he considers the project one of his proudest accomplishments. He said the project was a major undertaking and said that “it’s still surprising how many people don’t even know the statue is there.”

Paul’s contributions to the schools and nonprofit organizations have also earned him the title of “Grand Marshal for Good in the Hood,” the Pacific Northwest’s largest multicultural event.

It is with great reverence that community members often refer to Paul Knauls as the “Mayor of Albina.” When asked about his honorary mayoral status Paul often replies with his trademark smile and a chuckle, “Well you never voted me in, so you can’t vote me out!”

Paul’s wife, Geneva, passed away on December 20, 2014. Senate Resolution 2, an expression of sympathy and condolences for Geneva Knauls, was filed in the office of the Secretary of State on April 9, 2015. “Be it Resolved by the Senate of the State of Oregon: That we, the members of the Senate of the Seventy-eighth Legislative Assembly honor and celebrate the life and achievements of Geneva Knauls, entrepreneur and



PAUL AND GENEVA KNAULS raised funds that helped produce *The Dream*, a statue by Michael Florin Dente that depicts Martin Luther King Jr., in Portland, Oregon.



**THE PAUL KNAULS BUILDING
IN PORTLAND, OREGON**

(Courtesy photo)

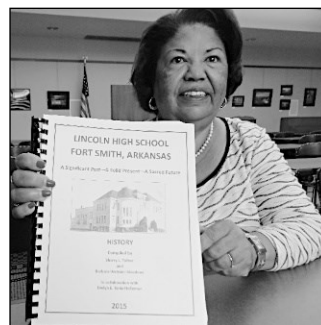
community leader.”

The most recent recognition of his accomplishments was having a building named in his honor. The Paul Knauls Building, 780 North East Alberta Street, is one of the first communities to open under the Alberta Alive vision. The building provides thirty-one apartment homes, including studio and one-bedroom floor plans, for low-income households and prioritizes Veteran/VASH voucher holders. All residents receive supportive services from Self Enhancement, Inc. and Do Good Multnomah.

At age ninety-three, Paul Knauls Sr. is still a sought-after guest speaker at many local events. He attends social gatherings and birthday parties. Using a walker sometimes for balance, he has even been spotted on the dance floor, moving to the beat of a favorite song.

Paul describes himself as being blessed with good health. He was always active. He has been skiing now for forty-six years. He started working out at age forty-two and has been a runner for four decades. He said he never enjoyed drinking and never smoked. These days, Paul enjoys helping his two grandchildren with homework.

He loves to laugh when he tells people, “I was ninety-two with things to do. Now I’m ninety-three, and I have places to be!”



Sherry Toliver is past president of the Fort Smith Historical Society and the author of The History of Lincoln High School, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Celebrating a True ‘Arkansawyer’

Charles Portis Subject of UAFS Symposium in 2023

By Kevin L. Jones

The University of Arkansas-Fort Smith hosted “The Works and Influence of Charles Portis: A Symposium” from November 2-4, 2023. The event, the first of its kind in the country, sought to celebrate and study Charles Portis, an Arkansas author, veteran, journalist, and bureau chief, whose influence included the novels *True Grit*, *Norwood*, *The Dog of the South*, *Masters of Atlantis*, and *Gringos*. Portis’s additional contributions to *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Oxford American* are a testament to his international literary and cultural legacy. Topics presented during the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith symposium focused on criticism and literary interpretations of Portis novels, film adaptations of his work, approaches to historical fiction, frontier studies, and much more. A second UAFS symposium of Charles Portis is planned for fall 2025, following UAFS hosting conferences by the Arkansas Philological Association in fall 2024 and the Arkansas Historical Association in spring 2025.

The April 2023 publication of *The Collected Works of Charles Portis* by the Library of America, edited by Jay Jennings, and the influence Portis has had on many, encouraged UAFS to create a symposium, planned in conjunction with numerous local and regional museums, organizations, scholars, and partners. The UAFS Department of English, Rhetoric & Writing and Media Communication, in cooperation with the UAFS Department of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences, would like to thank the Fort Smith Historical Society for its support of this symposium. We were fortunate to have many members of the FSHS at our sessions, special events, and we appreciate the Society’s financial support and members’ help in numerous ways in making this symposium happen.

The symposium included three days and nights of sessions and special events on the UAFS campus, as well as downtown Fort Smith at the U.S. Marshals Museum. Symposium attendees were also offered special tours of many local museums and historic sites, and we thank them all for their support. The Fort Smith Museum of History, Fort Smith National Historic Site, Miss Laura’s Visitor Center in Fort Smith, the U.S. Marshals Museum, the Clayton House, and the Drennen-

Scott Historic House in Van Buren supported these sessions, and we appreciate their help in opening their doors to our symposium and supporting UAFS.

UAFS has a long history with Portis studies, including the first common-read, UAFS Read This! choice of *True Grit* (2009-10) as Portis’s novel was studied by all UAFS sections of Composition II and included numerous events on and off campus across many disciplines. Local high schools, museums, and organizations also read and hosted events on Portis and the novel throughout the year. Subsequent Read This! programs at UAFS since our first choice of *True Grit* have featured readings and lectures by Temple Grandin, Eva Kor, Ted Kooser, M. Scott Momaday, Amy Tan, and Colson Whitehead, among others. UAFS has a focus on cultural and frontier studies, which made Charles Portis studies a logical step. We are privileged and honored to have hosted the first major symposium on Portis by a university and have many future Portis events and projects scheduled in the future. Many faculty continue to teach Portis content in some shape or form in their classes, and more is yet to come.

In cooperation with UAFS, as part of the *True Grit* common read in 2010, the Fort Smith National Historic Site hosted a first of its kind reenactment and filming of the *True Grit* courtroom scene, “The Wharton Trial,” in the actual Judge Parker courtroom. The Gritty Film Project—adapted, directed and edited by Kevin Jones, and utilizing UAFS faculty and students—sought to bring the novel to students and promote historical and cultural studies in the region. While Part II consisted of the trial and of Mattie meeting Rooster Cogburn, Part I of the film project included UAFS students completing research with archives at the Fort Smith National Historic Site and the Fort Smith Museum of History, and conducting interviews regarding Charles Portis, *True Grit*, the history behind the novel, and the work being done at that time on bringing the U.S. Marshals Museum to Fort Smith.

The student interest and UAFS faculty work at the time with local museum archives led also to the 2014 origin of the Sebastian County/UAFS Archive Annex Project founded by Jerry Allen Wing, Kevin Jones, then-Sheriff William Hollenbeck, Denora Coomer, then-

Circuit Clerk, assisted by Tom Wing, Assistant Professor of History, Director of the Drennen-Scott House and Wilhauf House, Van Buren; and Dr. Steve Kite of the UAFS Department of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences. The Annex Project continues to digitize Sebastian County historic criminal and probate files, coordinated by Jones, UAFS students, and community volunteers. The goal is to provide access to the thousands of files already scanned and archived by students and community volunteers in a secure method. A past grant provided by the UAFS Dean of the College of Arts and Social Sciences supported some costs, while the Sebastian County Circuit Clerk and the Quorum Court also provided funds to digitize this massive archive; the work is ongoing and vital. Funding and staffing resources for the project are always needed and in discussion.

Part II of The Gritty Film Project was the first of three reenactments of the scene in Parker's courtroom, developed and directed by Jones and headed by National Park Services Ranger Jeremy Lynch, included one presented during the Fort Smith National Historic Site anniversary festivities in 2011 and another in July 2013, for a gathering of the U.S. Marshals Service retirees brought in by then-Sebastian County Sheriff William Hollenbeck and retired Sebastian County Circuit Court Judge Jim Spears, who portrayed Rooster Cogburn in that reenactment.

The Works and Influence of Charles Portis: A Symposium featured academics, independent scholars, and professionals to celebrate and explore the influences and works of Portis. A public Q & A session with Jay Jennings and Jonathan Portis, moderated by Dr. Kevin Jones, professor of English (UAFS) and a co-chair of the symposium, began the three days of sessions and special events. Jonathan Portis, the youngest brother of Charles, provided many insightful examples of his brother's life and writing, and other members of the Portis family were on hand for this and other sessions throughout the symposium. UAFS is grateful for the support of the Portis family.

Special guest Jonathan Portis is the youngest of three Portis brothers—Charles, Richard and Jonathan—in that order. Their sister, Aliece Portis Sawyer, the eldest sibling, died at a young age. Their father, Samuel Palmer Portis, was a school superintendent and taught history and English. Their mother, Alice Waddell Portis, was a poet and journalist in her rare spare moments away from her main job of keeping three boys out of trouble. Jonathan grew up in Hamburg, in the southeast corner of Arkansas, and graduated high school there. Charles and Richard worked for several newspapers, and

Richard later became a physician. Jonathan, after graduating college with a B.A. in English, hopped on his brothers' coattails and worked at the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* and the *Arkansas Gazette*. When the *Gazette* was shuttered in 1991, he worked in corporate public relations for twenty years before retiring.

Jay Jennings gave an excellent keynote speech the next night about his own writing, editing, and his friendship with the Portis family. Jennings is a writer and editor whose work has appeared in many national newspapers and magazines, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Lowbrow Reader*, *Garden and Gun*, and *Oxford American*, where he was an editor from 2015 to 2021. Jennings's most recent editing project is *Charles Portis: Collected Works from the Library of America*, (2023), and *Escape Velocity: A Charles Portis Miscellany*, a collection named Book of the Year for 2012 by *Books and Culture*. Jennings has recently completed a screenplay with television writer Graham Gordy (*Rectify*, *Quarry*), adapted from Portis's 1979 novel *The Dog of the South*. Jennings often speaks about *True Grit* and Charles Portis under the National Endowment for the Arts' Big Read program. Jennings's book, *Carry the Rock: Race, Football and the Soul of an American City*, about the Little Rock, Arkansas, Central High School football team fifty years after the 1957 integration crisis, was recently reissued in a revised edition with a new author's preface by the University of Arkansas Press. Jennings has been recognized by The Best American Sports Writing annual and has appeared in the humor anthology *Mirth of a Nation: The Best Contemporary Humor*. A regular contributor to the *New York Times Book Review* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s "Books" section. He is a two-time MacDowell Colony fellow in fiction and a winner of a fiction grant from the Arkansas Arts Council for a novel-in-progress. Jennings currently lives with his wife and daughter in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he was born and raised.

Fort Smith was the perfect location, and UAFS was honored to host this first known symposium of Charles Portis in the country, which featured speakers from a wide range of disciplines, including journalism and film, with Professor Larry Foley of the University of Arkansas, Cody Faber of the Fort Smith National Historic Site, Tom Wing of the Drennen-Scott House and Assistant Professor of History at UAFS, as well as novels, travel, and humor with Scott Hendry, Karen O'Connell, and Misty Hawkins, Dr. Kendrick Prewitt, Dr. Allan Benn, sessions on teaching Portis by Dr. Joseph Farmer, Dr. Janine Chitty and Dr. Benjamin Lawson, character studies, ethics and food in Portis by

Dr. Joe Hardin, cultural studies by David Nickell, and film and music studies by Dr. Alexandra Zacharella, Christopher Jester, and Dr. Ty Hawkins.

Scott Hendry is a doctoral student in the English Department at the University of Arkansas, where his research is focused upon literature and film of the American West and the U.S. South, rhetoric of place and space, and literary geography. Hendry received the Ben Kimpel Award for Exceptional Scholarship in literature at the University of Arkansas in 2022. Hendry's current projects center upon novels of the West and cinematic adaptations of the writings of Annie Proulx, Charles Portis, and Ron Hansen. Hendry presented "Geography as History: Traversed Space and Lived Place in Charles Portis' 'The Forgotten River'" at the symposium.

Karen O'Connell is the coordinator of the Arkansas Center for the Book at the Arkansas State Library. Prior to her current position, Karen worked in both academic and special libraries. O'Connell has extensive training in book history, and her own interests relate to the book arts, especially book illustration and the history of book bindings; her presentation with Misty Hawkins was titled, "The Unintentional Tourist: On the Road with Ray Midge in *The Dog of the South*." Hawkins is the regional director of the Arkansas River Valley Library System. Prior to her current position, she managed the Charleston Public Library for over ten years. Hawkins contributes to numerous committees and boards, forming connections with stakeholders from different backgrounds and encouraging stronger community relationships.

Dr. Kendrick Prewitt, who presented, "The 'tiring stroaks of gnatworms': The Mock Heroics and Mindless Movements of Charles Portis's Central American Fiction," is chair of Languages and Literature and professor of English at the University of West Alabama. Prewitt originally hails from Fort Smith and was on the faculty previously for eleven years at the University of the Ozarks. Dr. Allan Benn, who provided the presentation, "In Defense of *Norwood*: 'The Peckerwood of Peckerwoods'" about Portis's second novel, has taught for thirty-five years at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. An emeritus distinguished professor of English, Benn has taught writing and American literature, served as chair of the ESU English Department for six years, and taught at Ithaca College and Bryn Mawr College. Benn has presented papers on Willa Cather, Kate Chopin, Kathryn Bigelow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Nick Hornsby, and Ted Kooser.

Dr. Joseph A. Farmer is associate professor of English at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, where he teaches American literature surveys

and electives and hails from Hamburg, Arkansas, where Charles Portis grew up. Farmer has published in *Mississippi Quarterly*, *The Tacky South* (from LSU Press) and *The Routledge Companion to Literature of the U.S. South* (2022). He has taught Portis's *True Grit* in his Introduction to Literature course, and *The Dog of the South* in his American Literature II survey. Farmer presented "'Sixty-six Linear Feet of Books': Situating Charles Portis on the American Literature Syllabus" during our symposium.

Dr. Janine Chitty is a professor of English and English with Teacher Licensure and has fifteen years of experience in the secondary education classroom, where she currently teaches literature and undergraduate English education courses at UAFS as well as graduate courses in the UAFS Master of Education program. Chitty's research interests include K-12 literacy with an emphasis in multiliteracies and technology in the classroom and curriculum and instructional design. Chitty and Dr. Benjamin Lawson presented "Teaching Historical Fiction: A Theoretical and Pedagogical Approach" at the symposium. Lawson is an assistant professor of History and History with Teacher Licensure at UAFS. Lawson's publications include a monograph analyzing the settlement of Indian Territory and myriad articles on urban and environmental issues. He has served as project editor for encyclopedias on race and ethnicity and poverty in the United States. Lawson's current book project is a cultural history of waste disposal and park-redevelopment projects, focusing on specific landfills in New York, Toronto, and Tel Aviv. Lawson teaches social studies teacher preparation as well as topical courses in environmental history and the history of technology and science.

David Nickell, who presented "'An Eye for an Eye': The Dichotomy of Religious Faith and the Hunger for Revenge in the 2010 Film Adaptation of Charles Portis' *True Grit*," is the Summer Bridge in English director at UAFS. Nickell was an adjunct instructor in English at both UAFS and NorthWest Arkansas Community College for twelve years and retired from his position as education director at his church where he served for sixteen years. Nickell has also worked as principal and high school English teacher at a private academy and still serves as Campus Administrator for a global ministry training institute.

Dr. Alexandra Zacharella is the director of Bands and professor of Low Brass at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith. Zacharella has presented at the Midwest Clinic twice and has presented more than seventy-five peer-reviewed presentations, papers, performances, recitals, lecture-recitals, and poster

sessions on low brass, conducting, music in women, music education/pedagogy at the International Conference of College Music Society, National, and Regional CMS Conferences, the Music by Women Festival, the International Women's Brass Conference, College Band Directors National Association Southwestern Regional Conference, International Alliance for Women in Music and the National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors. Zacharella is a Bach Artist and a Signature Artist for Warburton Music Products. She presented on "Elmer Bernstein and the music of *True Grit* and the American Western" at the symposium.

Dr. Joe Hardin is former dean of the College of Languages and Communication at UAFS and was Writing Program Administrator at Western Kentucky University and Northwestern State University, a former member of the Executive Board of the Council of Writing Program Administrators (2006-09) and member of the CCCC Committee on Teacher Preparation (2005-08). Hardin presented "'Meat is Meat': Ethics and Food in Charles Portis' *Norwood*" at the symposium. Hardin's books include *Opening Spaces: Critical Pedagogy and Resistance Theory in Composition* (SUNY P) and *Choices: Situations for College Writing* (Fountainhead P). Hardin has published in the areas of writing program administration, composition theory, sound production and composition, and food studies.

Christopher Jester graduated from UAFS in 2023 and is a tutor in the UAFS Upward Bound program. Jester works in audio production at Spirit 106.3 and is seeking graduate school to pursue graduate studies in English or specifically, creative writing; his presentation for our symposium was titled, "*True Grit*: Scripture in the South."

Dr. Ty Hawkins, who presented on "The Anti-Revanchist Influence of *True Grit* on Today's Southern Noir," is director of the School of Language and Literature, and associate professor of English at the University of Central Arkansas. Hawkins' presentation from our symposium is a selection from his current book project, *The New Southern Noir: Surprising Alternatives to Ressentiment and Revanchism*. Hawkins previously published *Just War Theory and Literary Studies: An Invitation to Dialogue* (2021, co-authored with Andrew Kim), *Cormac McCarthy's Philosophy* (2017), and *Reading Vietnam Amid the War on Terror* (2012), along with numerous journal articles and essays in collections.

Cody Faber, a National Park Service Park Ranger and the Volunteer/Living History/Historic Weapons Coordinator at Fort Smith National Historic Site, presented with Tom Wing and Larry Foley on the

history, specifically the weaponry behind Portis's fiction, as well as the film adaptations of Portis and their accuracy. Faber and Wing's presentation included discussion of recent television and film such as *Bass Reeves: Lawman*, and Larry Foley's film, *Indians, Outlaws, Marshals, and the Hangin' Judge* (2020). Faber serves many local and regional organizations and the community at large with his good nature, his expertise of history, weapons, and horsemanship. Faber has also appeared in numerous films as a stuntman, horse wrangler, historic costume and weapons coordinator, historical advisor, actor, and as himself in regional and national documentaries. Faber is also a popular returning favorite as "The Roving Rambling Ranger" in the *Local Color Radio Hour* live shows and podcasts since 2018. Faber is a recipient of the Fort Smith Convention and Visitors Bureau GRIT (Giving Recognition In Tourism) award given to those who "positively impact the area's growing tourism and hospitality industry" and was "Polly Crews Hospitality Person of the Year" in 2019. Faber is responsible for many activities and events on and off site at the FSNHS, as well as working with many living history, education, and civic groups regionally and nationally.

Tom Wing, University of Arkansas Fort Smith Assistant Professor of History, Director, Drennen-Scott and the Wilhauf Historic Site, Van Buren, AR, has served as an educator in both secondary and higher education classrooms, a museum professional with over twenty-five years in resource interpretation, program planning, exhibit design, and visitor services. Wing is a widely published author, nineteenth century scholar who has been interviewed on *Discovery Channel*, *History Channel*, *Smithsonian Channel*, and *PBS*, as well as an award-winning historic preservationist. Wing's resume includes curriculum design, interpretive planning, client and visitor relations, human resources and recruiting, historical research, grant writing, and project management. He has extensive experience with nonprofit boards, such as the Arkansas Historical Association, the International Society for Commemoration, Memorials and other Monuments, Humanities Scholar, Arkansas Humanities Council, and as a board member for Preserve Arkansas, and many others. Adept at facilitating emotional and intellectual connections for visitors at historic sites and museums as well as students in the classroom, Wing is often engaged with businesses, serves on Leadership Crawford County, and Lions Leadership boards, helps local school groups, historical organizations, and is an active participant with historical interpretation and living history at various historic sites in the nation, giving his time and talents to

keep history alive for all.

Professor Larry Foley joined the University of Arkansas faculty in 1993 following seventeen years as a television reporter, producer, and public television executive. Foley served as chair of the School of Journalism and Strategic Media from 2014 to 2023 during a time of record student growth and a multi-million-dollar infusion in new state-of-the-art facilities. Under his leadership, the Journalism Department became the School of Journalism and Strategic Media, twice earning national reaccreditation. Foley has been inducted into the Lemke Journalism Hall of Honor, the Fayetteville Schools Hall of Honor, and the Mid-America Emmy Silver Circle for a distinguished career invested in teaching, reporting, writing, producing, and directing stories, mostly about his beloved home state of Arkansas. Foley was honored because he personifies the spirit of innovation, passion, creativity, and commitment that are hallmarks of excellence in television arts and sciences. Foley's documentary films have earned eight Mid-America Emmys and twenty-four Emmy nominations in writing, journalistic enterprise, history, cultural history, special program and community service. Foley's films have also received four Best of Festival of Media Arts awards from the international Broadcast Education Association and can be found on *Tubi*, *Amazon Prime*, and *Pluto TV*. Foley's recent films include *Indians*, *Outlaws*, *Marshals*, and *the Hangin' Judge* (2020) which was shown at the U.S. Marshals Museum in Fort Smith, coupled with a panel discussion and Q & A featuring Foley, Tom Wing, and Cody Faber, which compared the history to film adaptations, regional studies, and much more as we closed our symposium on the Works and Influence of Charles Portis. Foley's next release, *Cries from the Cotton Field: An Italian American Journey of Faith and Resilience* about Italian Americans in Arkansas, was also discussed.

Special events during the symposium included historical tours by local museums, a reception by the UAFS Foundation, and the recording of two episodes for *The Tales of the True Grit Trail* podcast with a live audience by members of the True Grit Trail and Spinnin' Round Productions. Episodes 5: "The Clayton Family: Four Brothers and Six Degrees of Separation" and Episode 6: "Legal Wrangling in the Territory" were written, recorded, and produced by Dr. Kevin Jones, and featured special guests Jay Jennings, Jonathan Portis, Bob Gray, Tom Shay, and Maggie Jones as historic figures such as William Henry Harrison Clayton, Powell Clayton, John Clayton, Sheriff Tom Watson, and the fictional Mattie Ross as narrator. These and past episodes are available on streaming platforms such as

Apple podcasts and *Spotify*. President and CEO of the U.S. Marshals Museum, Ben Johnson provided his vocal talents as host for these two episodes recorded in front of a live audience during the symposium.

The symposium received support from local authors from Red Engine Press, the UAFS Bookstore, Brent Gunnels and the UAFS Foundation, the Fort Smith Historical Society, and posse members of the True Grit Trail. The UAFS Charles Portis Symposium planning committee included the amazing help from members of the Fort Smith Historical Society and the True Grit Trail, Tom and Marilyn Shay, Bill and Linda Word, Mike Cathey, Cody Faber, Bob Gray, Jonathan Lance, Caroline Speir, and from the U.S. Marshals Museum, Ben Johnson and Satori Evans, and Jonathan Portis and Jay Jennings.

Additional support for the Symposium came from Sodie's Wine and Spirits of Fort Smith, Scott Clark, Fort Smith Blueprint, Arkansas Historical Association, ACTELA (Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts), Arkansas Humanities Council, members of the True Grit Trail Posse, the City of Fort Smith, the Courtyard by Marriott, the UAFS Foundation, UAFS Marketing and Communication, our staff, and administration, specifically faculty of the English, Rhetoric and Writing, and Media Communication department, the History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences department, Sarah Chiles, Jackalynn Self, and those on the UAFS planning committee, including Dr. Lindsay Lawrence, Dr. Ann-Gee Lee, Dr. Kevin Jones, Dr. Cammie Sublette, Dr. Sarah Winterberg, Dr. Dennis Siler, Dr. Janine Chitty, Dr. Erik Carlson, Dr. Joe Hardin, Dr. Steve Kite, Mr. Tom Wing, Dr. Daniel Maher, Mr. Chris Kelly, Mr. Daniel Wiggins, Ms. Rachel Putman, and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Paul Hankins, Mr. Jason Byrd, and Ms. Sierra Laddusaw. Special thanks also to UAFS Chancellor, Dr. Terisa C. Riley, and Provost, Dr. Shadow JQ Robinson. UAFS was glad to have had the promotional help of Karen Pharis, host of the *Arklahoma Today* program on KFPW in Fort Smith, as well as that of Kyle Kellams, *Ozarks at Large* host at KUAF in Fayetteville. They featured interviews with UAFS faculty on their programs to spread the word. We are grateful to these constant supporters of local historic and cultural content.

Submitted presentations from the November 2023 Symposium are under editorial review and will be published soon in a special issue of the *Arkansas English Journal*, a peer-reviewed publication of the Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts.

We welcome all to continue the celebration and study of Charles Portis, as well as to continue historical and cultural studies of all kinds. We are thankful for community partners and others involved with what we do, and we look forward to working with you again as we plan our second Portis Symposium and future events. Please reach out to us for more information regarding future Portis events or any areas of interest; we appreciate the help and know it takes all of us to make it work. We are honored to be a part of the area's conservation, preservation, and sharing of our unique history and cultural offerings. Thank you to the members of the Fort Smith Historical Society and readers of the *Journal* for their continuing efforts to support local history and their work with the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith.



Dr. Kevin L. Jones is Professor of English at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, and a member of Fort Smith Historical Society, Arkansas Historical Association, ACTELA, and co-chair for the Works and Influence of Charles Portis: a Symposium at UAFS.

Jones is a frequent reviewer for the American Historical Association and Oxford University Press and published articles in White River Valley Historical Society Quarterly and Interdisciplinary Literary Studies. Jones is author of two books on Fort Smith, is contributor and producer of Tales of the True Grit Trail podcast and directs Local Color Radio Hour shows and podcasts featuring local history and culture.

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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Sites to aid in your research

Find links at www.fortsmithhistory.org

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 Fort Smith Air Museum
 Historic Fort Smith
 Oak Cemetery

Old State House Museum of
 Arkansas History
 Richard C. Butler Center for
 Arkansas Studies
 South Sebastian County Historical
 Society
 Wikipedia Entry for Fort Smith

“A Moveable Feast”

By Phil Karber

Years before I read *A Moveable Feast* in the early '70s, I was already acquainted with certain male rituals from Ernest Hemingway's bohemian days. The experiences had been adding up. By age fifteen, I knew by heart *Hoyle's Rules of Poker*, had a bookie, played untrained bridge, read the *Daily Racing Form* with my dad, shot craps, could rattle off the special lingo of the devil's bones (eighter from Decatur), and readily quoted lines and recalled shots of the self-assured Minnesota Fats against hotshot “Fast Eddie” Felson in the high-stakes pool shooting drama *The Hustler*. As a cheap imitation, my passions emerged in full form with more envy than the actual success or skills of Fats and Fast Eddie. There were, however, fine days when we all fed at the same trough.

Early on, betting on the come was my idea of strategic financial planning. I never made it to the parimutuel booths at Paris's Longchamp Racecourse as Hemingway often did, and certainly didn't have the amateur handicapper's luck of his first wife Hadley, as he described in a letter to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas: “I get up at dawn and study the dope-sheet, and then after my brain has cracked under the strain, Mrs. Hemingway, with about three cocktails and an indelible pen to aid her, picks winners as easy as cracking peanut shucks. With the aid of her alcoholic clairvoyance and an old friend of mine that I think sleeps with horses, we've had 17 winners out of 21 starts.”

Such a streak on my turf at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs, Arkansas, was unheard of. But I, along with friends Speedy Byrum and Steve Tyler, didn't rule it out. It was no secret that, with the right shake of moxie and gut feeling, luck could be raised to an art form.

A few of our touts hung out on the apron near the sixteenth pole, always a revolving gate of railbirds, some of whom occupied late-night benches at the downtown Greyhound bus station: pickpockets, pimps, dope fiends, hippies, bikers, country jakes, shiftless sportifs, hucksters on the skids, and suspicious out-of-staters. Inclined to half-baked schemes, this motley bunch of misfits bet between races, literally, on which direction a bird on a wire might fly.

Taking in a the not-born-yesterday patois around me, there I was, in demimonde Hot Springs, at age sixteen, on March 11, 1968, in the sixth race, with a

“...With the aid of her alcoholic clairvoyance and an old friend of mine that I think sleeps with horses, we've had 17 winners out of 21 starts.”

Ernest Hemingway

In a letter to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas



third share on a two-dollar T. Town Tony win ticket. At the time, the tote board at Oaklawn Park registered two digits. T. Town Tony, a chestnut three-year old stallion, went off at around 102-1, a sucker bet.

Thing was, that day Speedy had picked up at the “corned beef” condiments stand of the Daily Double Deli what he called “solid intel” from a twenty-something-year-old woman named Christie, whom he nicknamed Shortcakes, which was to say she was petite and cute. Shortcakes supposedly clocked horses in the morning and worked the parimutuel window nearest the paddock in the afternoon. Yet when pressed, Speedy came half-clean: She hadn't actually clocked T. Town Tony that morning or any other morning. Decker out in high, black leather boots, matching hot pants, heavy on the makeup, and hair high—creating the illusion of being taller than five feet—Shortcakes had merely laid a sly wink on Speedy from behind her fake-jewel-rimmed harlequins, while confiding that she knew people who knew people who had clocked T. Town Tony. To the rest of us, it sounded more like flirting than three-times-removed “late mail” intended to bolster confidence in Speedy's otherwise solid early hunch. I'll give it to Speedy, though. Something about Shortcakes and her cat glasses conveyed a tarot card reader's air of authority and intuition, the gift of having answers.

Certainly, our bet didn't look good on paper. Reality was that T. Town Tony was Eastern Oklahoma bred, had been trained on the cheap, and had never won a race. On this day, he had an outside post position against a full field.

Trainer Glenn Gorbet, who had worked the thoroughbred circuit since the late 1920s, from Hot

Springs to Havana, once told me: “Buy the best and hire the best or go broke chasing dreams.” With our wager on T. Town Tony, we were chasing the dream with a ghost of a chance. The odds said as much. Apart from Shortcakes’s shady intel and some back-of-the-envelope math, all we had favoring us, according to the racing form, was the butter-mud slick and sloshy track. Even that advantage faded as the pelting rainfall turned into a lazy mist, and then a weightless spritz.

In anticipation of losing, with our finances running on fumes, we plotted how to scare up beer and gas money to get home. Working options included liberating a case of empty Coke bottles, or whipping out the “Arkansas credit card”—a siphon hose and gas can.

Our plans had showed more foresight on our previous foray to the track. We paid up front for a bungalow at the Cottage Courts on Park Avenue when we hit town. Problem was, at five the next morning, we woke up to a mattress fire with white smoke engulfing the room. The bottom of the only trash can in the room was rusted out, leaving us with no vessel that held water to extinguish the fire. We pooled our marbles and did the only thing our young booze-addled minds could think of at the moment: drag the smoldering mattress out into the courtyard and sound an alarm by gunning Speedy’s souped-up Fairlane out of there, shooting arcs of decorative white pea gravel everywhere, pinging cars and rooftops like hail as we headed for the hills.

Speedy had checked in to the Cottage Courts under a fake name. Small chance the pension-age motel managers would catch up with us, demanding an inflated ransom for the lumpy, stained mattress that was a full-on bonfire by the time we turned up Ouachita Avenue and cleared town that Sunday morning.

Paying for our shenanigans was always a catch-as-catch-can affair, a dissonance between adolescent entitlement and available means. None of our dads made as much as ten thousand bucks a year, and no one’s mom worked a paying job. My family of seven lived on the equivalent of a teacher’s salary. Steve was the prodigal preacher’s son. Speedy’s dad managed a small public golf course, on which gambling skills and the game of patience married up perfectly.

Depending on the day of the week, what Steve, Speedy, and I thought of as cash flow added up to what was given, earned, won, or taken. An empty gas tank and lint-bare pockets gave the voice of the devil’s advocate an extra octave or two. Of course, we knew a win by T. Town Tony would change that sorry, down-and-out thinking.

We watched in agony from the crack of the starter’s pistol to the final turn of the race. It was neck-and-neck,

Our plans had showed more foresight on our previous foray to the track. We paid up front for a bungalow at the Cottage Courts on Park Avenue when we hit town. Problem was, at five the next morning, we woke up to a mattress fire with white smoke engulfing the room.



down-to-the-wire horse racing. At the top of the homestretch T. Town Tony broke from the pack and swung wide. Chic Anderson’s inimitable voice from the announcer’s booth boomed above the cry of the crowd. Stretching his call with pitch-perfect synchronicity to the horse’s homestretch stride, Anderson let rip, “Tee-Tooown-Toonee has taaaken the leeed.” It was life at its fullest, lungs filled, living on a prayer, as T. Town Tony thundered past the woebegones-on-the-rail with a three-length lead. The railbird crowd roared above the pack of pounding hoofs as the long-shot chestnut with the heart of the great Seabiscuit all but leapt across the finish line. The three of us whooped and yelled and charged through the crowd to the closest betting window. We collected \$205.80, the highest two-dollar win ticket payoff in Oaklawn’s history.

Like Hemingway, we became hooked on the celebration. Easy come, easy go. Money is everything when you don’t have it. When you do, it burns a hole in your pocket. Penury to plenty; winner, winner, chicken dinner!

Speedy, two years my senior, played schoolboy golf, sported a hounds-tooth Gatsby cap, had traveled to many a country club tournament, and had seen the inside of more than a few fancy dining joints. The high life of Hot Springs for this country club charm guy was his home course, and the historic Arlington Hotel lobby bar was the nineteenth hole. By coincidence, Steve, who attended the Roman Catholic Cascia Hall Preparatory School in Tulsa, had arranged to meet up with a former classmate from Chicago at the Arlington.

Behind Rocky’s Corner, where Speedy’s Fairlane was parked, we stumbled upon Shortcakes. She was snuggled up to a pony-tailed geezer in a tie-dye tee-shirt, bib overalls, and red-white-and-blue leather boots. It took Shortcakes a minute to register who we were, then she smiled, waved a wadded handful of bills in our

direction, and declared, "It's easy to make money in America." She then turned her back to us, switching gears to pitch a would-be customer.

Working from the tailgate of a '50s-vintage Ford pickup, Shortcakes and the proto-hippie were selling black velvet paintings of Marilyn Monroe and Jesus Christ steering a boat with a backdrop that bore a striking resemblance to the Beacon Manor high-rise apartments and the Highway 70 bridge on Lake Hamilton. Speedy, shrugging off the dissing, grumbled aloud, "Jesus meets Marilyn Monroe behind Rocky's. What's that all about?"

Ten minutes later, Joe Fusco Jr. awaited us on the Central Avenue sidewalk below the twin towers of the century-old, Spanish Revivalist-style Arlington. He and Steve yee-hawed upon seeing each other. Joe came across as what he was, an exuberant big guy with a soft heart and a deft personal manner. Six-foot-three, wide-shouldered, with short-cropped black hair, he was smartly dressed in a starched Oxford shirt, pleated pants, and shiny, pointed black shoes. Of southern Italian heritage, he spoke with precision in a thick Chicago accent, full of nasal timbre.

The manager had watched us from the mezzanine, scurrying down the curved marble stairway to be at the front desk, as we hooted and grab-assed our way in. He saw us as an unruly party of prepped-up, low-bred philistines, fresh out of the hills and hollers, as he conveyed with his watchful eyes and gung-ho body language. Had to know at first glance that we were not of age to drink—and should certainly not to be allowed to do so openly in the airy, grand elegance of the famous lobby bar.

Joe thought differently. He directed us to a gold-leafed four-top. Two Fancy Dans in white shoes and Brooks Brothers blue blazers sat an arm's length away. Never glancing our way, the old sports drank French brandy from crystal decanters, fussily sniffing and shaking their goldfish-bowl glasses from side-to-side between sips.

We faced the bar and a whimsical Edenic mural of tropical pastels, shaded in Granny Smith-apple green. Below the mural, two waiters, liveried in floppy single-breasted black dinner jackets, pressed white shirts, and black bowties, polished fresh glasses. An air of gentle decay fell over the bar's tall arched windows, high curved ceilings, and corn-colored walls, all traced in flourishes of ornate plaster.

Hurrying over to our table, in a froggy voice, the manager commanded one of the liveried waiters not to serve us alcohol. In this starchy residuum of yore, it wasn't a surprise move on his part given that I was, and

very much looked, sixteen years old.

Joe Fusco came to his feet as if resolving conflict was his calling. He extended his hand and eased the manager around between a Christmas-tree-sized candelabra and a table of four manor-born, middle-aged women in festive hats, sipping novel umbrella drinks. In the bar side corner, the piano player spiritedly sang Al Jolson's cover of George Gershwin's first and biggest-selling hit, "Swanee." Joe's confab with the manager was drowned out. We could, however, see that he was doing most of the talking and that he was gesturing the way a mime artist does. The Fancy Dans suddenly dropped the self-regarding brandy ritual and came to their feet, arranging the two spare chairs with a cotillion-trained precision. Angling their way were two Southern belles accoutered like sisters in matching white sleeveless pant suits, bleach-blond hair in a French twist updo, dripping in Cartier gold and crisscrossed with tangerine clutches. They each flirtatiously cut their eyes our way before sliding gracefully into their chairs and turning on their good-girl etiquette for their beaux. Minutes later the manager appeared to enjoy a crystal moment, breaking into a smile and returning to our table. Letting bygones be bygones, he invited us to go downstairs to the English pub in which a table full of beer awaited us. A victory of sorts, so Joe led the way.

The pub was perfect, more our style anyway: A smoke-filled, wood-paneled bar, with padded leather chairs, a level pool table, and the hubbub of salty small talk. Didn't even have to flash our Lowry-Alley-produced fake IDs—Selective Service cards all with the same name, Bernard Oscar Sherman, Birthdate: September 20, 1945. (Definitely tricky when we had to show them all at once.) Money-as-a-measuring-device had rescued us, though. On the turn of a dime that dark-clouded March day, we were big shots squared, like the Chicago fat cats who had long given cachet to hanging out at Oaklawn.

It soon came to light that Joe's dad owned Van Merritt Brewery Co. and several liquor distributorships in Chicago. Turns out he was a former close associate of Al Capone, and in 1931, had been indicted with Capone on 5,000 violations of federal prohibition laws. The Chicago Crime Commission tagged him Public Enemy No. 29. Arrested on several occasions, he was never convicted or served time for his underworld crimes. For the last eleven years, his official residence was a suite in the Chicago Conrad Hilton.

During racing season at Oaklawn Park, beginning in

the 1930s, Joe Fusco Sr. snowbirded south to the “Spa City.” He stayed at the Arlington, bet the ponies, fraternized with fellow big fish mobsters, and strolled beneath the southern magnolias on Central Avenue to “take the waters” on Bathhouse Row. Creed, color, or criminal past mattered not. Hot Springs tradition was to throw down the welcome mat to all comers, especially high rollers.

For centuries, the Valley of the Vapors, the sacred mineral-rich thermal waters of the Caddo Indians, had been drawing those in need of healing rheumatism, cerebral palsy, piles, gout, constipation, diabetes, dropsy, skin woes, stress and whatever else. Following the money of the post-Civil War bathing craze, known as ablutomania, gambling houses and brothels opened. City officials spread their hands. Gun-toting sharpers and shit-kickers arrived from the defeated Confederate army and the lawless underworlds of East Texas, Chicago, Memphis, and New Orleans. It was a prosperous time to be in the outlaw trade. In January 1874, former Confederate “bushwhackers” Jesse and Frank James and the Younger brothers held up a stagecoach outside of Hot Springs. When the outlaws found out passenger G. R. Crump had fought for the Confederacy, they returned his possessions. A harbinger of the new brand of frontier justice taking hold in these parts.

Stephen Crane, noted American novelist and short story writer, who arrived in Hot Springs via the Diamond Joe Express in 1895, described the resinous air of Arkansas’s pine belt and the stream that now runs under Central Avenue as “[looking] like a million glasses of lemon phosphate [brawling] over the rocks.” As Crane’s word spread about the Spa City and horse racing took off in the 1920s, “all men and moods” descended on Hot Springs, including America’s most famous gangster, Al Capone, who once frequented Oaklawn Park, Bath House Row, the Southern Club (casino), hootchy-kootchy joints, auction houses flogging real and fake diamonds, and the Arlington Hotel, a sybarite’s dream of luxury and repose, all situated on Central Avenue. The Arlington and the Majestic were favorite spring training landing places for the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees.

In those days, the city’s open embrace of vice had the feel of nineteenth-century Dawson City on the down

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low in the Ouachita Mountains, smack dab in the buckle of America’s Bible Belt. G-Man Melvin Purvis was nowhere to be found. Boss Gambler Mayor Leo Patrick McLaughlin controlled freewheeling politicians, police, and police fixers. “The mob was making much more in gambling than it ever had in the bootlegging trade,” wrote David Hill in his book *The Vapors*. “For one thing there was no supply to smuggle. There was only probability, odds, chance. They were selling dreams to suckers. And the demand for dreams was insatiable.”

The big shot mobsters arrived with their own bankrolls and bombast. As a rule, they all put up a law-abiding front while in town to avoid making headlines and drawing attention to themselves and the city’s endemic palm-greasing and gangsterism.

Damon Runyon, the famous New York Prohibition-era newspaperman, known for assigning colorful nicknames to gangsters, dubbed Owney Madden, a notorious mob boss, the “Duke of the West Side.” Before taking up residence in the Spa City, Madden killed half a dozen people in New York, served nine years in Sing Sing prison for manslaughter, promoted heavyweight boxing champions, dated Mae West, and ran the famous Cotton Club in Harlem. Ducking the limelight that followed his storied life, he married the local postmaster’s daughter, Agnes Demby, played golf regularly at the Hot Springs Country Club, tended his flower garden at his modest home on West Grand Avenue, became a pigeon fancier, contributed handsomely to the local Boys Club and high school band, and backed off from assassinating his enemies.

With all that cover, when Owney’s mobster friends, such as Lucky Luciano, the most wanted man in America, felt comfortable openly strolling the streets of Hot Springs, things started to get sticky. The press, FBI, rival factions, and Baptist do-gooders gradually threw

the lid open on Owney's not so well-kept secrets: his stake in local gaming clubs and control of a national wire service. From the early '40s on, the affable, short-statured former Duke of the West Side, was aptly re-christened the "Arkansas Godfather."

After World War II, during the city's sordid heyday, my father and mother were married in Hot Springs on Central Avenue at the First Methodist Church. They honeymooned at the Arlington, drank Manhattans and danced at the Belvedere Country Club, picnicked in the infield at the races, took the waters at Quapaw Baths, and years later landed a table at the Vapors the night Tony Bennett first sang "I Left My Heart in San Francisco."

During that honeymoon weekend, downtown streets teemed with veterans, freshly rehabbed from the city's castle-like Army-Navy Hospital. One afternoon, my mom and dad were walking back to the Arlington from Bathhouse Row and watched in disbelief as brassy brothel owner Maxine Gregory drove her new girls like queens perched on the back of her pink convertible Cadillac in a rodeo parade down Central Avenue. Mom was embarrassed that Dad waved, as did several uniformed veterans. All the girls waved back.

The romantic version of snappily dressed mobsters, catch-me-if-you-can wise guys, not the respectable guests of the same era—FDR, Harry Truman, Lefty Grove, Smoky Joe Wood, or Babe Ruth, who in 1919 hit his first 500-foot home run, in Whittington Park—cemented the reputation of Hot Springs and the Arlington as the stuff of legend.

Into the late '60s, for big Joe Fusco and his mob associates—and for me and my new pal, Joe Fusco Jr.—the Valley of the Vapors remained a favorite sin-city getaway. Only months before our big win with T-Town Tony, newly elected governor Winthrop Rockefeller, who initially came to Arkansas on a lark, made good on his campaign promise to clean up Hot Springs once and for all, dispatching state troopers to destroy slot machines and poker, roulette, blackjack, and craps tables.

A villainous attitude, though, isn't so easy to scrub away. Hot Springs' fondness for vice, after a fashion, retreated to the shadows but didn't disappear. Pole dancing joints, back-room brothels, and gambling parlors, horse bookies, and con artists continued to

Before taking up residence in the Spa City, Madden killed half a dozen people in New York, served nine years in Sing Sing prison for manslaughter, promoted heavyweight boxing champions, dated Mae West, and ran the famous Cotton Club in Harlem.



thrive down every alley of the white side of town and Malvern Avenue's Black Broadway. The Spa City absolutely had spots that couldn't be changed.

In the smoky basement bar of the Arlington hotel that afternoon, Speedy and I lured two butch-cut Phillips County planters into a nine-ball game for ten bucks apiece. Speedy, a dark-skinned bird who had the paunchy body type of Minnesota Fats, had adopted the pool shark's bantering style of play. For him, psychology went hand in hand with proper English and good shape in shooting pool. When he caught our challengers concentrating too much, he'd let go a bark of laughter and deadpan for all to hear, something like, "Well, Katy, bar the door. They're too good for us, Phil."

The chatter worked; he'd played them like a bow fiddle. On two occasions the chumps flat out choked, a miscue and a missed straight in, giving me a short run and Speedy an easy out to clear the table. Had their wives not arrived and the bar filled with a more genteel crowd, those burly farm boys might have broken some thumbs. They paid up alright, each throwing a sawbuck on the table as if flinging Cassius Clay jabs in our direction. Speedy shot back, "We're even-Stephen, boys. Let's do it again sometime." The older of the two got really sore, confronting Speedy, "This wasn't your first hustle, was it Jelly-Roll boy?" The taunt was backed up by an under-the-breath threat to go berserk.

Guzzling our ice-cold Buds, we rounded up Steve and Joe and warmly thanked the manager and bartender, both of whom we felt to be like family now. Drinks were on the house! As we toodle-ooed our way up the stairs and out the stately brass front door onto the veranda, we laid plans to see Joe the next weekend. Mood and money

in motion, rolling like the rich swells, was a new kick in my bag of tricks.

Swept up in the moment, on Speedy's timetable and tour, we made our way to Coy's Steak House, situated on a side street off Bathhouse Row. Best in Arkansas, he assured us, as he dropped us like fat cats beneath the restaurant's porte-cocheres that, aesthetically speaking, could have been a gas station roof. A parking attendant greeted us and opened the car doors. As we entered, the maître de and two waitresses welcomed Speedy, asking about his golfing partners, Steve Creekmore, Rick Hundley, and Jerry Donoho. "They couldn't make it," Speedy replied, pooching his belly out and rubbing his Gatsby cap on it like a pregnant lady trying to soothe a kicking baby. "But we'll eat their share."

It was early, so getting a table was no problem. Escorted to a corner booth, no sooner than we sat down, our waitress delivered a tin of saltine crackers with a house-made Thousand Island dipping sauce. After divining what a salad fork was and which bread plate belonged to me, the rest was easy. Speedy showed us the way, somewhat versed in the art of Arkansas fine dining, his mind brimming with the energy of a runaway horse, galloping through spending options and opportunities to make more at a T. Town Tony clip. We shared crab-stuffed mushrooms, which I picked at tentatively, and then ordered a bacon-wrapped filet mignon topped with a dollop of garlic butter and served with all the fixins', salad, baked potato, and biscuits with honey. The wine list was beyond Speedy's gourmand skill set, or anyone else's, so we stuck with what we knew, cold Bud.

Our usual dine-out splurge was truck stop food: a plate of chicken-fried steak and mashed potatoes smothered in a heavily peppered white gravy. But on this late afternoon at Coy's our taste buds were ignited like never before. As Steve remarked, it all "made your tongue slap your brains out." We ate like pigs, scarfing it all up. Only a smear of blood remained on any of our plates. The whole fancy pants feedbag, six bucks as I recall, struck me as a one-off. It was like a prison riot, and we were sated to the gills on the warden's food.

After less than an hour at Coy's, we lit out for Little Rock, the opposite direction of home. Flush as sailors and with Speedy smelling more "action," as if life itself depended on it, our never-say-die Judas leader had hatched a new plan. We swung right off of Central onto Park Avenue, passing beneath the hulking Velda Rose Hotel and by the infamous Vapors nightclub (née casino), where comedian Brother Dave Gardner, known

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for his drawling schtick on stupid Southerners in Hot Springs sellin' healin' water to them brilliant Yankees, was headlining.

We paused briefly at the last spotlight on Park Avenue, before Speedy goosed it through a red, never looking back, bound for the 1968 State Basketball Championship Game at Barton Coliseum in Little Rock. Fort Smith's crosstown rivals, the Northside Grizzly Bears, were going up against the Southside Rebels (some things die hard). Speedy couldn't stand to miss out on a lead-pipe cinch. He hoped to make a killing.

On arrival in Little Rock, we sprung for a white-washed cottage at the Magnolia Inn on Roosevelt Avenue, near the coliseum and state fairgrounds. After filling the bathtub with iced-down Pabst Blue Ribbon and apple-flavored Boone's Farm, we were soon in the cottage's jonquil-filled garden hosting a pregame party of mostly familiar faces in town for the showdown. Giving up six points, Speedy was taking all bets against Northside.

As the pre-game alma maters were wrapping up, we double-timed it into Barton Coliseum, having promised to reconvene the party with three Little Rock chicks after the game. The atmosphere was charged with dueling performances of bands and spirit teams, not unlike a decade before, my only other evening at Barton, when the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus was in town and the entire coliseum floor was taken up with monkeys, elephants, lions, clowns, acrobats, jugglers, fire breathers, and trapeze artists. Shards of that experience and memory and the attendant feelings of exhilaration came together as Speedy, Steve, and I settled into our ring-side seats for the next best thing to the Greatest Show on Earth.

Seconds before tipoff, Speedy booked two more

bets with Rebel fans, Randy Cutting and Wimpy Tays, who sat near us behind the Northside bench. It was not easy for me to pick a side that evening given that I had played with almost everyone on both teams at one time or another and knew most of the cheerleaders. Between expulsions, I'd attended Northside. School spirit, however, had disappeared for me faster than spit on a hot skillet a year or so before when I checked out of sports. Run off, some said, but I was juking the rules, gravitating more towards rebel than role model.

The championship game was nip and tuck. The Bears, who had defeated the Rebels twice in regular season, and held a far superior record, trailed the Rebels most of the night. Bears guard and my childhood friend, Droop Willcoxon, who typically played the role of facilitator, kept the game close by penetrating the Rebel defense, scoring several key baskets from around the elbow. By the fourth quarter, teammate Almer Lee, one of two African-American phenoms who had recently transferred from Lincoln High School to the newly integrated Northside High School, helped even the contest.

In a late-game time-out, as the Southside band struck up "Dixie," the school's fight song, Darrell Cluck, costumed as Johnny-Reb in blue and gray, joined the high-kicking, dancing Dixie Belles to rouse the crowd. Moments later, Northside's band, cheerleaders, pep squad, bear mascot, and fans responded: Fighting for victory / Never give in / Fight till the end, boys / Fight and might will win....The coliseum was on high heat. A real nail-biter, judging from Speedy who was chewing his down to the quick.

With four seconds to go, Jerry Jennings, the other half of the talented duo to transfer to Northside from Lincoln High School, sank a jumper from deep in the corner. The shot cleared my neighbor and friend Robert Stephens's six-foot-five, fingertip reach by a hair's breadth. The win for the Bears was clinched, bedlam broke out, fans stormed the floor. Minutes later, the refs cleared the court, and the clock ran down. Amid the celebratory cries and sobbing, Speedy ducked out. He had gone all in and booked over \$200 in bets, laying off nothing. Odds were high that he would welsh. Final score, Northside 46, Southside 44.

A band of thunderstorms rolled in around midnight. When the chicks split in the wee hours, the lightning and thunderclaps had moved on, and the rain was singing in soothing pitter-pats on the shingled rooftop. I woke up on a jonquil-littered floor around noon on Sunday cradling a bottle of apple-flavored Boone's Farm, whiffing scents of garlic and oregano from a half-eaten plate of Bruno's Little Italy meatballs on a chair next to

It was not easy for me to pick a side that evening given that I had played with almost everyone on both teams at one time or another and knew most of the cheerleaders.



me. The leftover meatballs were candled in lipstick-stained, stubbed out cigarettes. Foggy-headed and grainy-eyed, my mouth was so dry I was spitting cotton. Through a crack in the curtains, a slash of sunlight fell warm on my face. Speedy was snoring like a chainsaw, spread across the bed in his Pepto-Bismol-pink golf shirt and bleeding Indian madras pants. Steve was missing in action. My wheat jeans and white tee-shirt were mottled in mud, the effect suggesting a spotted mutt.

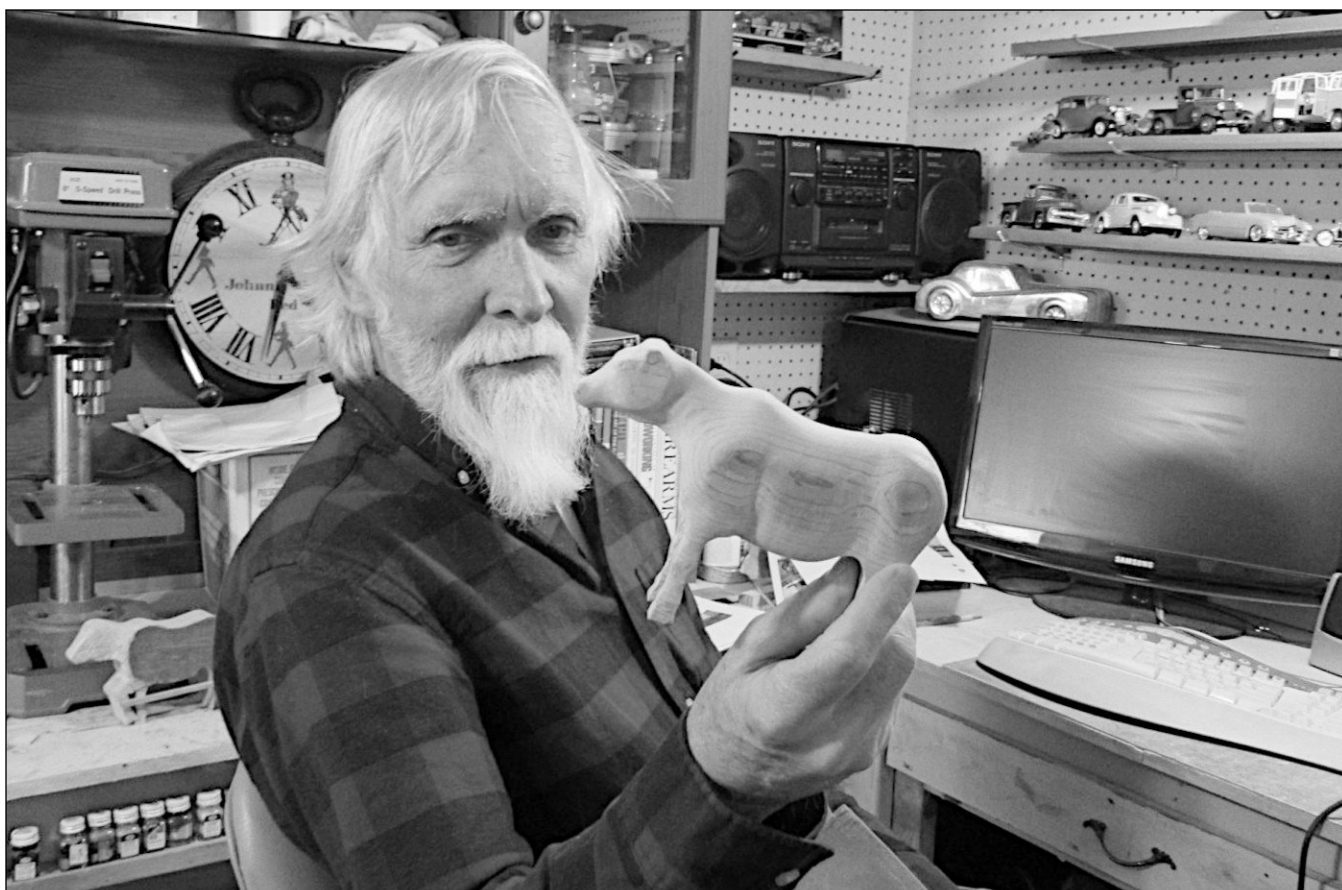
Checked my pockets first thing to dope out the damage. Still had fifty-five bucks of my one-third split of the T. Town Tony win ticket and the sawbuck share of the pool game. An ample stake, if the urge struck me, to light out for California. Outside, the sky was a wash of azure...without limit.

All this remains with you, moving through time. Feasts of memory echoing the way it was. The lament of youthful desire, the smile of lady luck, the glorious salad days, an empty-belly portal to life turning into a roman-candled, sky-is-the-limit evening. That's a *Moveable Feast*.



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Political Traveler; Fear and Faith in Paradise; Exploring Conflict and Religion in the Middle East; The Indochina Chronicles: Travels in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam; and Yak Pizza to Go: Travels in an Age of Vanishing Cultures and Extinctions.



FLOYD "SONNY" ROBISON

(Photo courtesy of the author)

Hands-On History

Floyd "Sonny" Robison Helps Brings the Past to the Present

By Sue Robison

It's not often a writer has the opportunity to tell the story of their spouse, but here I am, recording the growth of my husband's experience with living history. Soon after Sonny and I married, we visited the Fort Smith National Historic Site. It was one of my favorite places, and he hadn't been there in years, so it seemed like a nice weekend outing. By the time we left the park that day, Sonny had joined the Civil War cannon crew and the Rifle Regiment, both under the direction of Park Ranger Jeremy Lynch.

So began more than two decades of discovering and sharing local history.

It wasn't long after joining the cannon crew and rifle regiment that Sonny became a member of the Northwest Arkansas 15th Infantry Civil War reenactment group under the leadership of David Alexander. He learned

Civil War history and collected the uniforms, weapons, and supplies needed to participate in programs in downtown Van Buren and other locations. When setting up camp, Sonny noticed visitors showing real interest in how soldiers put together small living spaces, so he invited them to investigate his supplies, crawl inside his tent, and he allowed youngsters to heft his bedroll. He eventually participated in the infamous Massard Prairie reenactments in Fort Smith while they were held at what remains of the actual battleground in the boiling heat of summer, which gave him reason to rethink his future as a Civil War reenactor.

For a brief time, Sonny joined the Lawbreakers and Peacemakers western reenactment group. While it was a short-lived partnership, it spawned friendships that became intertwined with Sonny's growth as a reenactor,



SONNY ROBISON researches Judge Isaac C. Parker (left). Robison portrays Parker (right) for visitors to the Fort Smith historic district.
(Photos courtesy of the author)

and several future events.

The cannon crew and the rifle regiment remained his main volunteering roles until a former Director of the Fort Smith National Historic Site, Nancy Stimson, approached Sonny one day asking for a favor. A group of visitors was scheduled to tour the Historic Site and, since Sonny bore a resemblance to Judge Parker, Stimson asked if he would be present in the courtroom at the site for photos with their guests. Thinking this would be a simple meet-and-greet, Sonny agreed. Donning a new frock coat and puff tie, and with facial hair shaped into the famous Parker short beard, he waited patiently for guests on the second floor of the Historic Site.

Among those guests was a young lady in her early teens. She had studied the judge for a class project and was taken with the barrister's life. The youngster was excited to meet the man presenting himself as Parker and came armed with questions, some of which Sonny could not answer.

That evening, Sonny declared, "If I'm going to do this, I need to know more about this man."

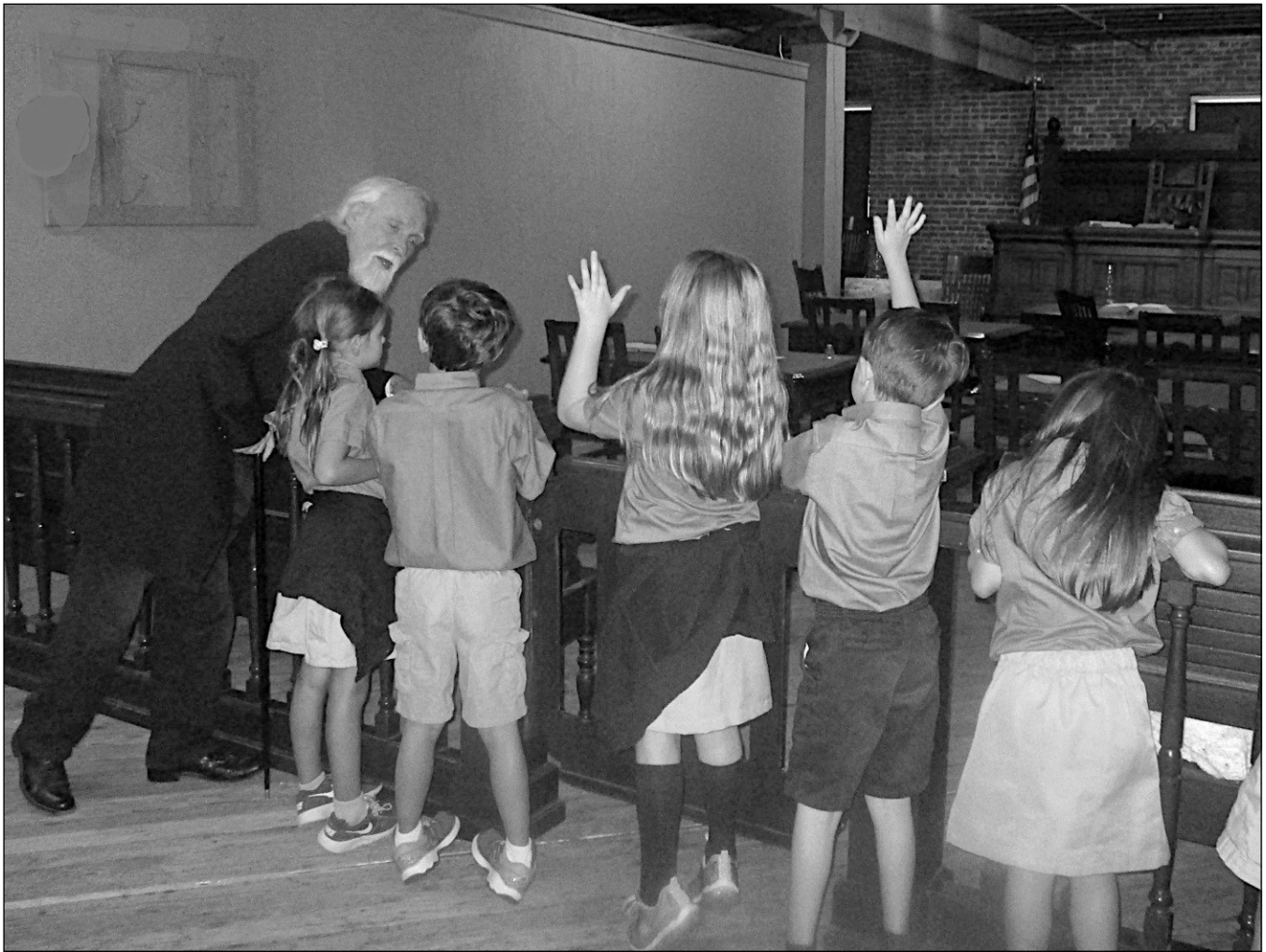
So off we went to Parker's hometown of Barnesville, Ohio, where we were welcomed by Jean Davies, owner of the town's newspaper, the *Enterprise*, and members of the Quaker congregation, who served as our guides. Jean explained that Parker's mother's family, the Shannons, were considered more consequential to the area than the young Isaac who traveled west to practice law. Jean also explained how the Shannon family became instrumental in the judge's future when one of his mother's brothers offered him his first position with a Missouri law firm. Our generous Barnesville hosts treated us to tours of the area where the judge spent his childhood. We saw where he attended college in Franklin, where he taught elementary

school in Barnesville, and we visited the Gibson Chapel Cemetery where members of the Parker family are buried. Gibson Chapel, a Methodist congregation, was the church attended by the Parker family.

The cemetery and church property are located on land owned by a company excavating for coal. A stone marker with the words "Gibson Chapel" rested on the side of a narrow lane into a burial ground sheltering the remains of Judge Parker's parents and his brother, Joseph. Broken tombstones littered the hallowed ground which, according to our guide, was scheduled for excavation after the graves were "moved" to safer ground. The church and cemetery location are not far down a dirt road from a narrow path winding up the side of small knoll to the site where the Parker home once stood.

Sonny presented the history of Judge Parker and his time in Fort Smith to the Barnesville Historical Society, and, in return, society members shared stories the judge's family kept within the community for generations. There were tales of his brothers who resented the studious young Isaac, who neglected his chores in favor of reading, which left more work for them. Stories were retold of how, after Parker's death, his widow boxed up his clothes and sent them to Barnesville to be shared among those same brothers, although most of the clothing was too large for men who still worked as farmers, and the stiff white collars of a jurist had little purpose in a small community like Barnesville.

More importantly, he met the people. While Parker was raised in the Methodist Church, it was easy to make connections between his writings to the words and mannerisms of our Quaker hosts. Sonny left Ohio feeling he knew a young man named Isaac.



SONNY ROBISON, portraying Judge Isaac C. Parker, talks with children in the court room about Fort Smith history.

(Photo courtesy of the author)

There was a follow-up trip to Saint Joseph, Missouri, where Parker's fame lags behind that of the Pony Express and Jesse James. Following in Parker's footsteps as he took his first position as an attorney, we found the home where Isaac and Mary O'Toole married and the location of his second law office. All we discovered of the man himself was an unlikely painted image of a slender gentleman with reddish hair wearing a Stetson hat identified as Parker in a local museum.

After a visit to the impressive Saint Joseph library, we managed to find a basement room in an old office building where the city's historical society kept its headquarters. They had not collected much about Parker and his time in Saint Joseph, but they did have a newspaper notice of his death posted by a local Catholic church. Mary O'Toole, Parker's wife, was devoutly Catholic, and Parker converted to the faith on his death bed, so the gentleman in Saint Joseph reasoned the church felt it important to note the passing of one of their own, which they did with a certain grace when

describing his career.

Years later, and thanks to the kindness of Father Gregory Luyet at Immaculate Conception Church in Fort Smith, Sonny was able to see the actual notation made by Father Smyth the night Isaac Parker joined the Catholic Church from his death bed. By then Sonny knew the stories of how Mary begged Parker to take up her faith before he died, but it remained a humbling experience to actually see the event noted in Father Smyth's own hand.

Armed with these memories and all the knowledge he could glean from reading Parker's instructions to juries, and printed material and documentaries, Sonny was able to distinguish what was truth from what was legend, and sometimes just mean-spirited writings, about the judge. He felt ready to take on the role of Isaac Parker. Along with greeting guests at the Historic Site and other locations, he accepted the duty of appearing as the judge in Night Courts for three years at the Fort Smith National Historic Site.

Then he branched out. The Fort Smith Museum of History was always a welcoming location, and Sonny wanted to be part of their service to the community. When Leisa Gramlich, former executive director of the museum, asked if Sonny would host a Parker birthday party for children, he quickly agreed. The event, which was designed to bring children to the museum, began with buggy rides and Old West reenactors from the Lawbreakers and Peacemakers. The first Parker Birthday at the Fort Smith Museum of History featured a group of young ladies from Girls, Inc. singing “Happy Birthday” to the legendary judge.

More than a decade later, Judge Parker’s birthday parties for children continue at the Fort Smith Museum of History. They have, over the years, evolved into a Kids Court event where children take on the roles of judge, attorneys, and jury as some of the best-known characters from children’s stories are put on trial for their storybook misdeeds. The Big Bad Wolf was once found innocent of charges of destroying the homes of three pigs, while Goldy Locks was recently convicted of trespassing in a Judge Parker birthday Kids Court.

This early involvement with children became a continuing program with local students. Each school year, Sonny and other volunteers present brief history lessons to visiting youngsters. On average, a minimum of a thousand students a year visit the Fort Smith Museum of History from across Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Stating it is not his goal to teach a complete history lesson to the youngsters, Sonny creates his programs to best suit the age of his guests. Lower elementary school classes hear stories about a trolley pulled by mules, a wooden boardwalk down Garrison Avenue, and they learn why the real Judge Parker disliked being called the “Hangin’ Judge,” preferring the title of “Candy Man” given to him by local children.

“I’m trying to catch their interest,” he explained. “If you can get them to relate to history, it will stay with them the rest of their lives.”

Even wardrobe selections are made with an eye to starting conversations. On the lapel of his Judge Parker suit is a lizard pin similar to the one the real judge received from his wife on their wedding day. If asked about the pin, Sonny takes the chance to open a conversation about Parker’s home life. On his vest is an antique Odd Fellows pin from the 1890s. Should anyone inquire about the meaning of the pin, they’ll quickly be learning about Judge Parker’s involvement in local charity organizations and civic activities.

As part of his wardrobe, Sonny always carries a wooden cane. He makes the canes by hand in his



PORTRAYING JUDGE ISAAC C. PARKER, Sonny Robison
speaks with children about Fort Smith history.
(Photo courtesy of the author)

backyard shop and finds they catch the eye of many adults. They are also easy to offer youngsters who like to hold the judge’s cane for photos. It would be impossible to guess the number of children who have photos of themselves holding Judge Parker’s cane or wearing his bowler hat.

In 2009, Sonny was invited to join a group of local residents traveling to Tampa Bay, Florida, to represent Fort Smith in the National Civic League’s All America City competition. With only a few minutes on stage to make the city’s case, Sonny took on the role of Judge Parker, becoming a member of a group rhyming and rapping a recitation of our city’s merits. While the volunteers did not take home the grand prize, they did manage to place Fort Smith in the upper third of contestants gathered from across America to promote their city as the best place to live in our great nation.

During the celebration of Fort Smith’s bicentennial in 2018, Sonny took the lead in two major projects. As president of Friends of the Fort, a support group for the Fort Smith National Historic Site, and working with Fort Smith’s Mayor Sandy Sanders, he was in charge of the bicentennial kick-off, a Christmas Day 2017 program starting the yearlong celebration. Staged on the Arkansas River at Belle Point, volunteers recreated the Christmas Day landing of a keel boat bringing U. S. Army soldiers to a location they would name Fort Smith.

The reenactment of the first keel boat landing at Fort Smith demanded the efforts of multiple volunteers working with Sonny and Mayor Sanders. The boat crew came from eastern Arkansas and, not wanting to leave their boat unattended in Fort Smith Park, crew members spent Christmas Eve in Fort Smith Park on Riverfront Drive, where Sonny brought them dinner.

It was a bitterly cold Christmas, and everyone

involved with the project believed most people would choose to remain home and warm. As the time approached for the landing, hundreds of adults and children suddenly topped the hill at the Fort Smith National Historic Site and arrived at the riverbank, proving families would come out on Christmas afternoon to celebrate Fort Smith's founding, and create a historic event of their own. The landing was followed by a short program, then it was off to the Fort Smith Museum of History for birthday cake, hot chocolate, music, and sighs of relief.

The month of June during the yearlong bicentennial celebration was also Sonny's project. For this, he created a team of volunteer readers to present weekly reading programs in conjunction with the Fort Smith Library system. He also presented a night court and a tour of the infamous Coke Hill property at the Fort Smith National Historic Site, and a living history for adults and a scavenger hunt for children at the Fort Smith Museum of History. With the involvement of resolute and talented volunteers, each bicentennial program proved a success.

It was during the city's bicentennial that Lisa Gramlich of the Museum of History approached Sonny about a special project. She wanted to develop interactive displays at the museum to allow children a hands-on way to experience their history.

With the Christmas landing still on his mind, Sonny thought first of a keel boat, but immediately dismissed the idea. He settled, instead, on a skiff, an elongated flat boat with a single sail that was part of the water force brought by the Army to Belle Point. His design gives youngsters the ability to work the oars, raise the lower the sail, direct the boat with its rudder, and investigate the bedroll and supplies stashed in the small craft. The skiff was constructed at the Fort Smith Museum of History, allowing guests to follow the work's progress. Using material donated by Lowe's in Van Buren, and getting advice from canoe builder, Maxie Dart, the skiff went from sketched plans to a living history display within three months.

Not one to give up an idea, Sonny returned to his plans for a keel boat. The finished keel boat is a miniature version complete with reworked plastic Civil War soldiers taking the roles of civilian boat crew. The small keel boat, along with the history of the original craft, is displayed next to the skiff on the museum's first floor.

Sonny's project made effective use of the education he received as a draftsman after returning from active duty as member of a light-attack helicopter squad during the Vietnam War. His college instructors encouraged him to leave the state to secure a position teaching



FLOYD "SONNY" ROBISON watches as children play on the skiff at the Museum of Fort Smith History.

(Photo courtesy of the author)

drafting, but he chose to remain close to family and accepted a job offer from the headquarters of Arkansas Best Freight, where he remained for thirty-six years.

His training was essential to designing his many projects illustrating Fort Smith's history. When he was asked to add a public use segment to the "On The Air" exhibit highlighting local media history, Sonny and the museum's director hit on an idea for a television news broadcasting desk. He constructed a small, brightly colored desk displaying the logos of both local television stations on the air at the time. The exhibit's major designer, Carl Riggins, put a camera and boom mike in place for would-be news anchors.

The news desk traveled upstairs later as part of the permanent "On The Air" media exhibit on the museum's second floor. Using donations from local media outlets, Carl Riggins made it possible for guests at the desk to watch themselves through a camera's viewfinder and see themselves on a small control room screen when they took a seat at the news desk. It remains one of the most popular displays for school groups visiting the museum.

A second suggestion from Leisa Gramlich led to a Victorian-style classroom situated near the skiff on the first floor of the Fort Smith Museum of History. Sonny laid out the design for the classroom and, with the help of Marcus Woodward, put the boards in place that became the room's permanent foundation. Sonny later

built benches for the rear and the front of the antique desk section, providing additional seating for museum guests.

Volunteer Nancy Ahlert took over the position of presenting a living history teacher in the classroom. A retired public-school instructor herself, Nancy brought props, including antique books, to the classroom area. Soon she needed a bookcase to hold the items and to make them visible to guests at the museum when the classroom was not in use, so Sonny built a four-shelf bookcase for the task.

Nancy also wanted children visiting the classroom to experience writing with chalk on slates, which were commonly used by Victorian era students due to the high price of paper. Instead of purchasing slates for the project, Sonny built a dozen two-sided slates for the desks. These small slates were built to match the design and dimensions of actual Victorian slates and are a favorite interactive stop for children visiting the museum. They are often found decorated with artwork, messages to friends and, sometimes, even mathematic equations.

Caroline Speir, current executive director of the museum, held the first two of her newly developed summer activity programs for children in the Victorian classroom. The 2021 June event featured a reading program built around families traveling by wagon to the west. To help children visualize how a wagon looked and how it was loaded for travel Sonny hand-carved small oxen to pull a wagon he built surrounded by crates, bags of flour, kitchen utensils, and other necessary items that were also created in his shop.

The 2022 reading portion of the children's activities focused on stagecoaches. Beginning with a kit to help make a professional period-correct version of a stagecoach, he created a display and loaded the luggage area with hand-made trunks and baggage, and even created a fiddle to keep passengers entertained as they traveled. Both the ox-drawn wagon and the stagecoach are on display on the second floor of the Fort Smith Museum of History.

The first living history project Sonny and I took on at the Fort Smith Museum of History was hosting the Murder and Mayhem Trolley tours during the Halloween season. When we first began working on the project, the trolley made three trips an evening for five days through the haunted and darkly mysterious portions of town. These short trips evolved into longer excursions involving refreshments before departing the museum and interaction with trolley robbers. Over the years, we were joined by Marcus Woodward in the role of a U.S. Deputy Marshal, Debbie Carney as the murderous wife

of a former Fort Smith mayor, and members of the Indian Territory Pistoliers, who made regular robbery runs on trolley guests. After almost a decade of Murder and Mayhem, and nearly 100 public and private tours, Sonny and I stepped off what was affectionately known as the Haunted Trolley.

Activities such as the Murder and Mayhem trolley made the Fort Smith Museum of History popular. When *Entertainment Fort Smith* magazine held its annual "Readers Favorites" contest in 2014, the Fort Smith Museum of History was voted the favorite museum of everyone living in the area. As part of the award, the museum was invited to provide a person or item for a professional photo shoot to represent itself in an upcoming magazine issue.

Executive director at the time, Leisa Gramlich, decided to highlight the museum's early 1900s soda fountain and its volunteers for the photo. Gramlich wanted three volunteers to be holding ice cream floats from the soda fountain for the photo shoot. This raised the question of how to transport ice cream floats the several blocks from the museum to the photo shoot location and how to keep them from melting into ice cream streams under a photographer's bright lights.

Sonny had an idea. He took three tall ice cream glasses and painted their interiors white. Then he dribbled brown paint down the inside edges and throughout the glass interior to simulate chocolate syrup. Styrofoam balls filled the inside of the glasses and provided a rounded top. Caulking swirls made a delicious, whipped cream flourish atop the Styrofoam, and plastic cherries culled from a package of artificial fruit crowned the creations. Soda fountain straws slid down the side of the glasses and when Judge Parker, Mary Parker, and a representative of the museum's board of directors, Phil White, posed at the photo shoot, not a single drop of fake ice cream was lost to the heat of the lights.

The ice cream floats looked so authentic that when the *Entertainment Fort Smith* staff decided which of the many photos of winners should grace the magazine's February 2015 cover, the Fort Smith Museum of History won the vote. A copy of the magazine, along with the fake ice cream floats, is displayed in the soda fountain area at the museum.

Magazine and newspaper exposure led to Sonny receiving invitations to host, greet, or speak at local events as Judge Isaac Parker. One of his earliest invitations came from former Fort Smith Mayor, Ray Baker, who called upon Judge Parker to introduce him to a group of cattlemen meeting at the city's Convention Center. Sonny and the mayor got through the

introduction part of the program just fine, but they forgot to turn off their microphones after leaving the stage, allowing their conversations with guests throughout the hall to be heard until being chastised from the stage.

Beginner's mistakes faded quickly as Sonny took on important roles like hosting a Frisbee golf tournament, posing for sketches at a local Drink 'N Draw, and being the official judge of a tug-o-war on the banks of the Arkansas River. Sonny's personal rule was to never turn down an invitation if at all possible, and he abides by the same guideline today.

Sonny took his Judge Parker persona inside local classrooms in Alma, Fort Smith, and Barling as part of reading programs and Partner In Education projects, and he stood at the head of several luncheon and dinner gatherings to tell the story of the learned judge. Sonny crossed the Arkansas River to visit students in Muldrow, Oklahoma, and to make presentations for the History Explorers at the Three Rivers Museum in Muskogee. He even spoke at a meeting of the local Rose Society as it returned from a covid-induced hiatus, and a convention of the Daughters of the Confederacy is on his 2024 calendar.

Living history presentations proved to be an educational and fun way to reach both adults and children. Sonny appeared twice in the Tales of the Crypt programs at the Oak Cemetery in Fort Smith; once as former juvenile officer Wiley Early, and another as Henry Seratt, nineteenth century officer in both Fort Smith police and fire departments. He also led the living history troupe on Garrison Avenue for three presentations during the Heritage Festival programs designed as fundraisers for the local Meals For Kids program.

These ventures were followed by several living history walks created for and presented at the Fort Smith Museum of History. The walks are short strolls where guests have the opportunity to hear programs from first-person presenters telling local history, and always prove popular. Sonny has both appeared as a presenter, and as a tour guide for the walking tours. The latest walking tour, presented on October 7, 2023, at the Fort Smith Museum of History, had the unique task of sharing ghost stories associated with locations near the downtown area.

Two of the most popular characters on the historic walking tours are Bonnie and Clyde, originally presented by Rodney and Ruby Dean and more recently by Raygon and Ryan Goodwin. These high profile, high fashion outlaws were famous for the weapons cache they flaunted during their crime spree. It did not seem feasible to request anyone to purchase a machine gun, a



SONNY ROBISON created a wooden replica of the pistol Belle Starr was known to carry.

(Photo courtesy of the author)

shotgun, and a pistol to take on the roles, so Sonny came up with a plan. After carefully researching the required weapons, he created wooden replicas. Armed with their carefully carved and painted firearms, the reenactors presented impressive and formidable couples on the streets of Fort Smith.

Cindy Clark later added the character of Belle Starr to the troop of living history presentations. Again, there was a need for a period-correct weapon and, once again, Sonny took to his shop to design and create a wooden replica of the pistol known to be carried by the "bandit queen."

Sonny finds the living history he helped create under the direction of Claud Legris and Tom Wing for retired U.S. Deputy Marshals at the Oak Cemetery in 2019 to be one of his most memorable events. Armed with a list of deceased marshals, outlaws, and court officials, he worked out a walking tour through the cemetery that offered an entertaining event without asking guests to make more than the necessary steps. With plans in place, he brought Judge Parker to the cemetery to greet the guests and serve as tour guide for the historic event.

While living history is familiar ground for Sonny, he was always willing to take a chance on the big screen. His first venture before a movie camera came when he portrayed an opera guest in the Mad Possum production of Step Into the King Opera House. This adventure was followed by a Royal Wade Kimes music video in which he took the familiar role of Judge Parker. He later took on the persona of infamous hangman George Maledon for Larry Foley's production of Indians, Outlaws, and the Hangin' Judge. Both Step Into the King Opera and Indians, Outlaws and the Hangin' Judge won several awards for their craftsmanship.

The most demanding acting role Sonny accepted



FLOYD “SONNY” AND SUE ROBISON win second place in 2018 for the HENRY Award at the Arkansas Governor’s Conference on Tourism.

(Photos courtesy of the author)

was that of a kidnapper in a documentary recreating the abduction of a young Crawford County girl. The program, which aired on a streaming television network, weighed on him with the horrible truth of the actual event.

While Sonny was proud of the awards won by the video productions, he is not without his own accolades to savor. In 2013, we were as a couple, runners-up in the Fort Smith Advertising and Promotion Polly Crews Hospitality Award. We followed up that almost-won honor by taking home the title in 2014. Also, as a couple, we were named Volunteers of the Year in 2017 by the Fort Smith Jaycees, and we took second place at the statewide Governor’s Conference on Tourism in 2018 for the prestigious HENRY award.

Never wandering far from his fundamental desire to inspire an interest in history in local children, Sonny donned his Judge Parker suit several times to read to youngsters at the Fort Smith Trolley Museum’s Polar Express event. He teamed with local educator, Rick Foti, for the first season’s readings, and most recently with fellow reader, Tom Iverson.

One of Sonny’s most ambitious projects was a one-twelfth scale recreation of the electric trolley number 227, which was built from photos and measurements he personally made. The month’s long project produced a likeness of the trolley running on electric connections that was added to a Christmas display made public at the Trolley Museum in 2021. As



SONNY ROBISON builds a replica of an electric trolley at a one-twelfth scale for the Fort Smith Trolley Museum.

part of a display created by Lynn Wasson featuring a family heirloom dollhouse and other buildings, the trolley helped create a Victorian neighborhood scene that was a popular treat for the public Christmas program at the Fort Smith Trolley Museum.

Dollhouses were an early project in Sonny’s backyard shop. One of his first constructions was a log cabin made of dowl rods which was donated to the Community Services Clearinghouse to be auctioned off during their first Heritage Festival to purchase weekend food for school children. A later, Victorian styled dollhouse was donated to the Fort Smith Museum of History and raffled as a fundraiser.

The electric saws in Sonny’s shop took a break while he constructed a brick road beneath the antique electric automobile on display at the museum. Using bricks found on site, supplemented by a donation from Marcus Woodward, Sonny carefully culled the finest bricks for the project. His greatest concern during the road’s construction was raising and lowering the antique automobile to put bricks in place beneath its tires. This was a delicate operation, requiring detailed planning and precise movements to prevent shifting the automobile.

As with the skiff, working on the brick road was a project completed at the museum. Several guests



SONNY ROBISON BUILDS A BRICK ROAD BENEATH the antique electric automobile on display at the Fort Smith Museum of History in July 2022..

(Photo courtesy of the author)

stopped by the work site to add suggestions and best wishes, and one young man helped put a put a few of the precious bricks in place.

Not all his work at the Fort Smith Museum of History involved creating new projects and displays. There are times Sonny uses his talents to repair an existing display, such as the lathe wheel in the second-floor tool exhibit.

Sadly, not every museum guest honors the placards requesting they not touch items on display. The lathe wheel was injured by visitors who attempted to turn the giant wheel against the warnings of museum staff. With spokes out of place, the wheel was in disarray until Sonny, along with Marcus Woodward, found a way to make repairs without disturbing the appearance of the antique. They also anchored the wheel so future guests, no matter how persistent, could not turn it a second time.

When an antique brass teller's window from First National Bank was donated to the museum, it arrived in pieces. Very heavy pieces. Sonny brought the puzzle home to his shop, studied its construction, cleaned every

piece, and reconstructed the window. He then built a decorative base for the window, which was returned to the museum in time for the 2022 First National Bank display opening.

Perhaps the most delicate repair Sonny was called upon to make for the museum was completed to hold a concrete artifact steady enough for display. Around the opening of the twentieth century, a young man named Vick Ellig carved his name into a newly poured sidewalk in front of his home. Years later, the boy became the first soldier from Fort Smith to be killed in action during the first World War. The sidewalk slab was saved and put on display at the museum for years until its fragile frame began to give way beneath the cement's weight. Sonny created a new oak frame to cradle the slab and disburse the weight and placed the sidewalk piece in its new resting place, where it remains on the first floor of the museum.

When asked how it felt to work on something as precious as the autographed slab, Sonny said, "It was humbling to work with all that is left of a soldier."

Many of the projects Sonny completes for the museum are intended to stand up to rough treatment. Two small items in the Tool Room display were created to be used by guests. A set of carpenter joints demonstrates the way antique furniture was joined. Guests are invited to separate and reassemble the joints to experience how they worked, and to demonstrate the strength of the old process.

A set of building blocks suitable for small hands shares the table with the carpenter joints. A favorite of youngsters who use the pieces to construct simple square spaces, the blocks often become the tools of artisans who leave behind impressive free-standing towers to delight the next visitors to the table. Sonny enjoys visiting the table to see how the blocks are displayed.

When covid took hold, the entire world slowed to a crawl. People stayed home as much as possible, businesses and museums closed or reduced their hours, and Sonny found himself with free time and an empty shop.

The Fort Smith Museum of History, as well as other non-profit groups, took a financial blow from covid. Fewer visitors meant less income, which became a nationwide problem. As a way to add a few dollars to the museum's coffers, Sonny helped develop "In Parker's Court," a series of trial recreations using actual

transcripts to retell true Fort Smith crime and justice stories.

The first trial presented at the museum was the case of Maud Allen, accused of sending pornography through the public mail. The evening event was a success, both in terms of presentation and donations.

Only the courtroom set prevented it from being a perfect experience.

So, Sonny used the covid downtime to create a courtroom set for the "In Parker's Court" presentations. His original thought was to recreate Parker's own desk, which is on display at the Fort Smith Museum of History, but the intricacy of the desk's construction provided a daunting challenge. Instead, he decided to downsize the desk to something with mobility that gave the impression of Parker's desk but in a lighter wood to contrast better against the brick wall of the museum's event room.

Through the coldest part of the winter and the darkest days of covid, Sonny spent his time inside his backyard shop constructing Parker's desk and chair. By the following spring, they were ready to be transported to the museum.

With Parker's desk and chair completed, Sonny turned his attention to furnishing the courtroom. Two tables, covered in green felt, were provided for the



A MOCK TRIAL OF MAUD ALLEN is conducted in 2023 on the courtroom set Sonny Robison built at the Fort Smith Museum of History.

(Photo courtesy of the author)

defense attorney's use. A matching table was built for the prosecutor. The court reporter's desk is the smallest of the courtroom tables and features a lipped writing surface.

Sonny then built a four-shelf bookcase and, since appropriate books are not easy to find, even made a few wooden facade books for effect. Using the top of a small grandfather clock donated by Marcus Woodward, Sonny created an impressive mantle clock to sit atop the bookcase.

While not in use, most of the courtroom furniture is stored on the museum's upper floors. Judge Parker's desk and chair from the recreation courtroom remain on the second floor, where they sit facing the display of Parker's actual desk. Tourists are encouraged to take a seat at the recreation desk, call the court to order with a gavel and sounding board Sonny made for that purpose, and have their photos taken. The museum even provides a black robe for visitors who want the full experience of being an Old West judge in Fort Smith's famous courtroom.

In early 2023, Sonny was approached by Dawn Reyes-Mier, the supervisor at the Arkansas Tourism visitor's center outside Van Buren. The supervisor asked if Sonny could create a display to represent the history of the River Valley for travelers visiting our area. After a discussion, it was decided Sonny would build small gallows like the one at the National Historic Site to sit atop a display case, and later provide a larger model of Judge Parker's original court to be exhibited near the front entrance to the center.

One scorching summer Sunday, Sonny and I found ourselves inside the fence surrounding the gallows at the Fort Smith National Historic Site. Armed with a camera, pencil, art pad, Stanley power-lock tape measure, and bottled water, we set out to measure and record every accessible inch of the gallows. We became an accidental attraction for visitors making a Sunday stop in Fort Smith, but their questions brought out a wealth of information freely shared by Sonny-turned builder-turned judge. Plus, we had the added joy of saying, "Welcome to Fort Smith."

By late June, the gallows were complete and delivered to the information center. It proudly sits atop the display case containing exhibits featuring Bass Reeves and Judge Parker. The courtroom model is still in the drawing stages, but it's coming.

Once the small gallows were delivered, Sonny decided to create a one-twelfth scale version for the Fort Smith Museum of History. The museum's staff used a smaller gallows as a teaching tool, but age took a toll on the display, and it was ready to be replaced. Sonny was

Sonny is always finding new ways to share the history of his hometown by building memories for museums.



able, after many stops and swapping out of hinges, to create a working trap door to allow for the full effect of a hanging. These gallows were placed in the museum in July 2023 near the courtroom display.

Photos of the gallows construction caught the attention of the editor of *Do South* magazine and resulted in an article on Sonny's work at the museum being published in its October 2023 issue. This follows an article titled "Sonny Made It" in the March 2021 issue of *Entertainment Fort Smith* magazine featuring some of his work with miniatures and the Christmas display still under construction at the time for the Fort Smith Trolley Museum.

When asked if there was a Museum of History project Sonny considered his favorite, he quickly recalled the simple shelves in the General Bonneville display near the front desk. "When I see those shelves," he said, "sometimes I can't believe one of them is holding up Bonneville's pistol. I never thought I would do anything like that."

He never thought he would design a book cover, either, but he did. When local historical-fiction author Joyce Faulker finished her manuscript about the tumultuous relationship between a married woman and her husband's mistress, she asked for ideas for a cover. Sonny had a few suggestions and, with Joyce's guidance, was soon holding a book displaying a cover he designed for *Julia and Maud*.

Sonny is always finding new ways to share the history of his hometown by building memories for museums. He takes extraordinary pride in the repair work he has done to preserve existing artifacts for generations of future visitors.

He continues to enjoy offering the story of Judge Parker to the public, but sometimes Sonny wonders how much longer he can continue bringing the barrister to life. Sonny is, after all, already fifteen years older than the famous judge was the day he died. But every time Sonny hears a child cry out, "There's Judge Parker!" from the side of Garrison Avenue during a parade, or he is approached by a student with a question about the reality of legends built around the judge, his energy renews, and his excitement rekindles.

Tracking Historical Markers

Noon Civics Club Sponsored Nine in 1936

By Charles H. Paris, MD

Over the past several years, after becoming a member of the Noon Civics Club, I had the opportunity to hear Joe Irwin, a longstanding member, discuss various topics related to the Club. One of those topics was the fact that the Club had, in 1936, sponsored the establishment of nine historical markers in various locations in the city. Although he mentioned them on several occasions, he never actually identified their locations. Joe developed COVID-19 during the pandemic and unfortunately, the virus took his life in 2021.

When his family members were removing items from his home office, they found a folder labeled “Noon Civics.” They were nice enough to see that the folder got returned to the club. In the folder was some vague information regarding those nine historical markers. Although the information was non-specific, it did whet my interest, so I decided to see if I could locate the markers, assuming they were still standing.

My first problem was to find someone who might have more knowledge about those markers. Initially, I visited with Caroline Speir, executive director of the Fort Smith Museum of History. Although she had heard of the markers, she had very little additional information. She suggested I contact someone at the Fort Smith Historic Site. This led me to a very nice gentleman named Loren McLane, one of the National Park Rangers at the site. He suggested I send him what information I did have, and he would see how he might be able to help. About a week later, I received from him a Google map marked with the expected location of each marker, assuming they were still standing.

The other question in my mind was why the Club decided to do this in 1936. The Noon Civics Club was formed and had their initial meeting on May 5, 1911. We know that the city of Fort Smith was incorporated as a city in 1842. We know also that the Club was composed of those men in the city who had a strong interest in seeing the city advance in both civic pride as well as civic enterprises. Very few ideas or proposals were presented to the city for consideration that were not first reviewed and possibly recommended by the Club. A recommendation by the Noon Civics Club carried great weight in the city.

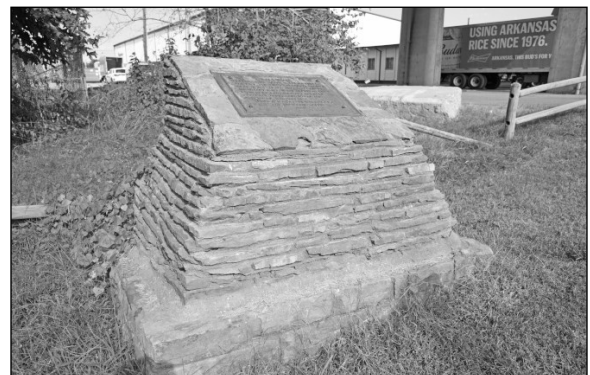
My search to determine why the Club decided to be

a part of this project did not reveal the answer to that question. I have not been able to ascertain whether the idea for these markers was original to the club or whether the city or another group asked the club to be a part of the project. Nevertheless, the club obviously felt that this was a worthy endeavor and decided to take on the project. As it turns out, the club was responsible for the construction of the plaques. The actual building of the base for each marker and the installation of the markers in their locations were performed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

So, with my information and my map, I struck out to see if I could find the nine historical markers, and wouldn't you know, I found all nine. They are all still in their original locations and are standing proud. Each of them will be described below.

The markers are all constructed of bronze material. Each marker is approximately 12 inches by 24 inches in size. One marker is smaller and is triangular, which will be described in due course. There is no question but that time has taken its toll on some of the markers, making them difficult to read and especially to photograph. The markers are described by name, location, photographs and what is inscribed on each.

I know that at least for me, standing in front of each marker gave me a much better understanding of the early days of what would eventually become Fort Smith, Arkansas.

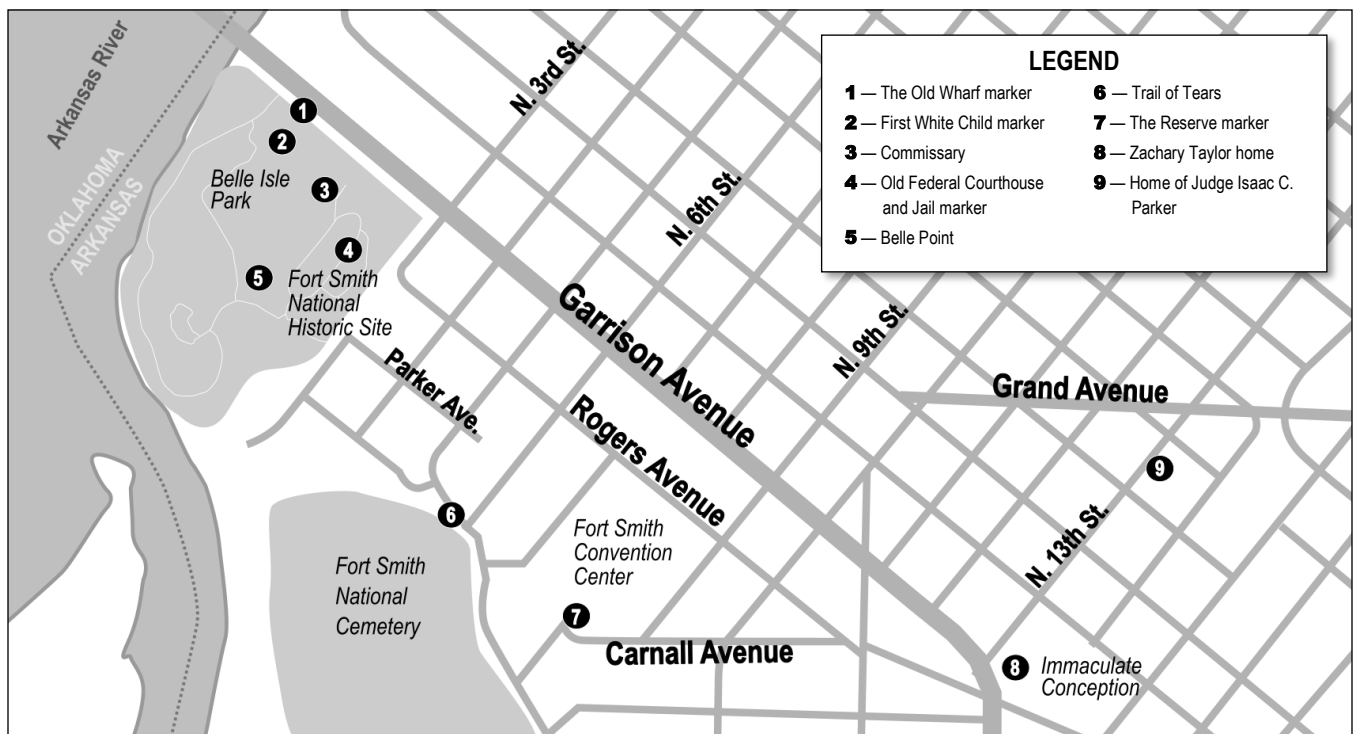


The Old Wharf

Location: Latitude: 35.390664.

Longitude: -94.430486.

Directions: The best way to find this marker is to take A Street all the way down to Riverfront Drive, turn



left onto Riverfront Drive, and then again onto B Street. Just after crossing the railroad tracks, turn right onto Belle Point Place. Follow Belle Point until you are under the Garrison Avenue Bridge. Turn right onto an unpaved, minimally graveled road and follow to its end. Look to the left and the marker will be seen.

Inscription: "Here, a stone wharf is buried under the fill. The first steamboat arrived here in 1822-after that it became an important port on the Arkansas River. From here, many military and more peaceful operations began the winning of this country."



The First White Child

Location: Latitude: 35.39019.
Longitude: -94.430840.

Directions: This marker is very easy to find if you have found the one listed directly above. If you are

facing the above marker, you merely need to turn around and you will see a large field that sits just behind the Belle Point Beverage building. The marker is sitting in plain sight in that field.

Inscription: "Here was born Sarah Ann Tichnell in 1826. The first white child born in Fort Smith."

Note: Such inscriptions were not uncommon during this period of time. A similar marker in Washington County, Tennessee, reads: "Russell Bean-first white child born on Tennessee soil-born here."



Old Commissary Building

Location: Latitude: 35.389417.
Longitude: -94.430133.

Directions: This marker is also best found by starting from Belle Point Place. Turn to the left after crossing the Garrison Avenue Bridge and come up the

road by the old train station. Toward the top of that road but before you enter Garrison Avenue, there is a small parking lot off to the right. By parking there, you are quite close to the old Commissary building. Simply walk to the back of the building and you will see the large marker sitting just behind that building.

Inscription: “This building on the northwest section of the wall, was the commissary of the fort built in 1839, used until 1871, when the fort was abandoned as a military post. From 1861-1865, it served as a hospital, guard house, and refuge. It is now a museum.”



Old Federal Court and Jail

Location: Latitude: 35.388617.

Longitude: -94.429733.

Directions: This marker is also easily found. If you are standing in front of the previous marker—the Old Commissary—you merely need to look toward the back side of the old federal building. It is readily seen.

Inscription: “The old part of this building was the barracks of the fort, 1840-1871; Federal court and jail, 1872-1887; presided over by Judge Isaac. C. Parker, 1875-1887”



Belle Point

Location: Latitude: 35.388217

Longitude: -94.431250

Directions: If your car is still in the lot over near

the Commissary, then leave that parking lot and turn right onto Garrison Avenue. Go to South Third Street and turn right, and follow this street as it turns and becomes Rogers Avenue. Turn right on South Fourth Street and follow this to Parker Street. Turn right onto Parker and then left onto South Third Street. Follow this to the large parking lot on this end of the Fort Smith Historic Site. You will see several walking trails leading out of the parking lot. Follow the one to the left that crosses the railroad tracks. Immediately after crossing the first set of tracks, look to the right and you will see the marker sitting up on a berm of land.

If you are coming in the other direction from the east going west, it is best to come down Rogers Avenue until you get to South Fourth Street and then turn left onto Fourth and follow the above directions from there to the parking lot.

Inscription: “in 1817, the first Fort Smith was built at Belle Point at the junction of the Poteau and Arkansas Rivers by Major William Bradford, for mutual protection of the pioneers and Indians.”



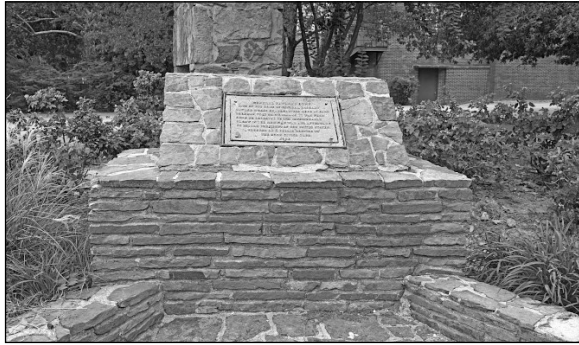
The Reserve

Location: Latitude: 35.383395

Longitude: -94.425939

Directions: This marker is probably the easiest one to find. Simply come on Wheeler Avenue to Carnall Avenue and turn onto Carnall. Carnall is the street off Wheeler Avenue that leads to the drop off point for the Arkansas Best Performing Arts Center. The marker is on the right side. I don't know how many times I have used that street and never noticed the marker sitting in plain sight!!

Inscription: “In 1884, by an act of Congress secured by Congressman John H. Rogers, later United States Judge of the Western District of Arkansas, more than 200 acres of the Government Reserve was donated to the Fort Smith School District”



Home of Zachary Taylor (1841-1845)

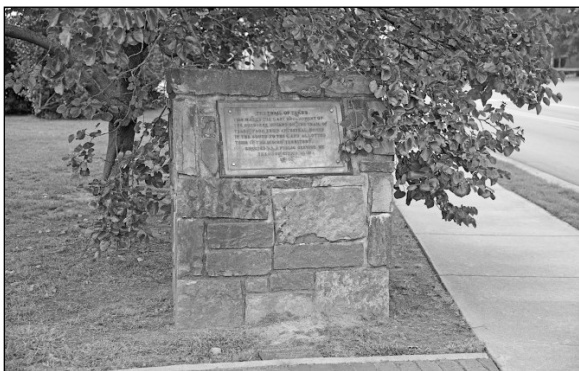
Location: Latitude: 35.38287

Longitude: -94.41838

Directions: To find this marker, turn onto North Thirteenth Street from Garrison Avenue. This should put you directly in front of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. Go just a few yards and turn right in the Church parking lot. Towards the back of the lot and on the right side of the lot, the marker will be seen in plain sight.

Inscription: "Site of the home of General Zachary Taylor, whose headquarters were at Camp Belknap, Fort Smith, 1841-1845. It was from here he departed to win imperishable glory in the Mexican war and afterward to become President of the United States"

Note: There is some speculation that the true location of Zachary Taylor's home may not be at the location of the marker, but perhaps further west down Garrison Avenue. There does not appear to be any solid evidence as to the exact location. Clearly, in 1936, the marker was located at the point where it was felt the home was located.



The Trail of Tears

Location: Latitude: 35.384967

Longitude: -94.427950

Directions: This marker can be found just along Garland Avenue. As you turn into the U.S. National

Cemetery, if you look to the right, you will see the marker about fifty feet down the street. It sits just under a fairly large tree. If you are exiting the National Cemetery, look to your left.

Inscription: "This marks the last encampment of the Cherokee Indians on the Trail of Tears from their ancestral homes in the south to the land allotted to them in the Indian Territory."



Home of Judge Isaac C. Parker

Location: Latitude: 35.38567

Longitude: -94.41607

Directions: This marker is located at the corner of North Thirteenth Street and North D Street. It sits just in front of the old Carnegie Library Building, most recently the KFSM television studios. This marker is the smaller triangular marker mentioned above. It is thought that the occupants of the building in 1936 did not want the larger sized marker in their front yard. The marker is embedded in a fairly large rock located just off the sidewalk on North Thirteenth Street.

Inscription: "Site of the home of Isaac C. Parker, United States District Judge of the Western District of Arkansas from 1875-1896. He gave distinguished service in the development of Fort Smith and in establishing order in the Indian Territory west of Arkansas"

So, there you have the locations, images, directions and inscriptions of the nine historical markers commissioned by the Noon Civics Club and erected and installed by the WPA. Based on the bases of these markers as built by the WPA, I think they will be their present locations for a very long time.

It is my hope that at least some of you who read this article will want to actually see one or more of

these markers. They do supply significant information that is an important part of the history of Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Acknowledgements

I would like to once again thank National Park Ranger Loren McLane and his staff for the work they did to help in locating each of the markers. Without their help in locating the markers on a map, this



**DR. CHARLES H.
PARIS, MD**

project would have been much more difficult.

I would also like to thank Dr. Taylor Prewitt for his advice and suggestions in the organization of this article. It is so nice to have one of your best friends be an expert in the writing of journal articles, much less the author of several books.

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When making a gift to honor someone important to you, please remember the Fort Smith Historical Society. Gifts may be made in memory of a loved one, or in honor of a birthday, graduation, anniversary or other event. If you particularly enjoyed a feature in the *Journal*, show your appreciation for a subject you found interesting by making a contribution in honor of the writer.

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Clara B. Eno Leaves Her Mark

Van Buren native called 'first lady of Arkansas history'

By Tom Wing

Historians love books. We love to read history, and either in book form or essays, we love to write about it. Many, like me also use them to teach. I have a prized book in my collection, given to me by John Mott, who was recently recognized for Lifetime Achievement by Preserve Arkansas for his own work across the state to preserve our architectural history. At the time of the gift, in 2005, John and I had just begun work through grants from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council to preserve the Drennen-Scott House in Van Buren for the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith. The book, *History of Crawford County*, has enjoyed a special place on my desk for eighteen years, and scarcely a week goes by that I don't use it as a reference. Published a year before her death, she did not copyright the book, but in her words, left "it's contents for the good of all people who love America, and free use of all material, with proper credit, is granted by author and publisher." Clara Bertha Eno laid a firm foundation for those of us who study or are interested in Arkansas history. From her humble beginnings in Van Buren, Crawford County, Arkansas, she made a name for herself as a tireless advocate for education and the preservation of Arkansas's culture and heritage. Her passion and dedication to the state's history earned her the unofficial title of the "first lady of Arkansas history." She was a true leader, inspiring generations of Arkansawyers to learn more about their heritage and to preserve the state's history. Through her work, she helped shape the narrative of Arkansas's past and left an indelible mark on the state's culture and history.

Clara Eno was born February 14, 1854, in Van Buren, Arkansas. Her father, Jonathan Adams Eno, was a druggist and postmaster in Van Buren. He was also mayor of Greenwood in Sebastian County for a time. Clara was a teacher by trade and a passionate advocate for education and the preservation of Arkansas's culture and heritage. Eno was active in several women's organizations including the Daughters of the American Revolution, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs. She was a driving force behind the establishment of the Arkansas History Commission (now called the Arkansas



CLARA B. ENO

(Image courtesy of the Arkansas State Archives)

State Archives) and the Arkansas Historical Association. In 1905 She became a vice president of the Arkansas Historical Association. Through her work, she helped to document the state's history and to make it accessible to the public. She was also a prolific writer, penning numerous articles for newspapers and magazines about Arkansas's history. She published three books, *History of the Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs 1897-1934* (1935), with Frances Marion (Mrs. Frederick) Hanger, *Historic Places in Arkansas* (1940), and *History of Crawford County, Arkansas* (1950). Her manuscript, *Information of Fifty-Five Revolutionary [War] Soldiers buried in Arkansas*, is a valuable resource still used today.

Eno was also involved in the preservation of historic sites throughout the state. She was instrumental in the restoration of the Arkansas State Capitol. She was also involved in the preservation of the Old State House, the Old State Bank, and the Old State Penitentiary. Through her efforts, she helped to ensure

that these important sites were preserved for future generations of Arkansawyers.

An outspoken advocate for the rights of women, she was concerned with not only the past, but also the present and future. She was a founding member of the Arkansas Woman Suffrage Association and was involved in the fight for the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Her work helped to ensure that Arkansas women had the same rights as men.

Although she died in Van Buren on August 2, 1951, at the age of ninety-seven and is buried in Van Buren's Fairview Cemetery, her legacy lives on through the many organizations, monuments, books, and articles that she wrote or inspired. Questers International has a chapter in Van Buren named in her honor. She has a monument to her life and work on the Crawford County courthouse lawn. Her writings are likely the greatest testament to her work. Her articles have been published *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* and in numerous newspapers and magazines. Recently, Randy Smith, benefactor of Fairview Cemetery has used her work to obtain preservation and restoration grants.

For anyone wanting to learn more about Clara Eno's legacy, there are several resources available. The Special Collections at the University of Arkansas is a great place to start. The library houses a collection of

Eno's writings, as well as books and other materials about Arkansas's history. UALR has a collection of photographs and other materials she accumulated. The Old State House is also a great way to learn more about her legacy and to experience her passion for the preservation of Arkansas's heritage. Additionally, her book *History of Crawford County* is available for free, online, as she intended. It can be accessed here: https://www.argenweb.net/crawford/history-of-crawford-county-ar_clara-b-eno.htm.

Clara Eno was a true pioneer in Arkansas history, one who I receive daily inspiration from. Through her tireless advocacy for education and the preservation of Arkansas's history, culture, and heritage, she is the undisputed "first lady of Arkansas history." All Arkansawyers have benefitted greatly from her work. She has left us a legacy which will continue to live on for generations to come.



A current member of the Fort Smith Historical Society, Tom Wing is Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Drennen-Scott Historic Site for the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith. He previously worked as a park ranger and historian for the National Park Service at Fort Smith

Suggestions for Submission of Articles

We welcome the submission of articles, previously unpublished, covering significant historical events and persons in Fort Smith and the surrounding area. Manuscripts, including quotations and footnotes, must be double-spaced, using *The Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press). Footnotes should be numbered consecutively in the text, assembled at the end of the article, along with a list of additional sources.

The author's name, address, and phone number and email address should appear only on the title page. Manuscripts may be submitted on CD disks, using word-processing programs supported by Windows. Photographs should be submitted in digital format.

All correspondence and manuscripts should be submitted to:

Managing editors
The Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society
PO Box 3676
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3676

The Slow Death of the Hangman's Daughter

The Murder of Annie Maledon

By Sue Robison

A reporter for the *Muskogee Phoenix* newspaper published in the Indian Territory described Frank Carver as a “tin-horn gambler” suspected of being a spy for the Cook criminal gang. Annie Maledon was dubbed by the *Fort Smith News Record* newspaper as the “wayward daughter of George Maledon,” the legendary hangman in the federal court under Judge Isaac Parker.

In January 1892 Frank was in Fort Smith at the Federal Court responding to an alleged involvement with the theft of four horses in the Creek Nation. John Doyle was a co-responder in the case. Doyle had family members living in the Fitzgerald district in the town and one of the Doyle men was married to Annie Maledon's sister. Annie, along with the daughter she bore out of wedlock, were often present in the Doyle home. Before Frank and his friend headed back to Muskogee, they made a call on John's relative, which gave Carver his first meeting with Annie Maledon.

Annie was still in her late teens. Recorded simply as “attractive” in the local press, she spent most of her time with her sister after delivering an illegitimate daughter. Unmarried mothers were a scandal at the time, and the Maledon family would doubtless be upset with the blotch on their good name. Her father and his brothers established good reputations in Fort Smith, and her uncle John held a post as director for the local Knights of Columbus. George Maledon raised his children in a house across the road from Judge Isaac Parker's home. The Maledon family attended the Catholic church just a few blocks from where they lived, along with the Judge Parker's wife and sons.

The Ohio Prison System would later describe Frank Carver as being five feet, five inches tall with medium chestnut hair and turquoise blue eyes. He was just past his twentieth birthday when he met Annie and already a married man with two small children. His brother, Flave,



ANNIE MALEDON'S GRAVE MARKER
AT CALVARY CEMETERY

had a tremendous influence on the young Frank, who joined his sibling in petty crimes around the Muskogee area.

The boys married sisters from the Murray family in Muskogee, with Frank taking his wedding vows while still in his late teens. Frank would later testify in court he had not lived with his wife for six or seven months when he made that fateful trip to Fort Smith, having put behind him the woman who bore the first of their two children at the age of fifteen.

Frank Carver said it was “love at first sight” the day he met Annie Maledon. He recalled later in court testimony how her sister described Annie to him saying she was “a good girl, but not well liked by the people in this town.” The young couple seemed to share a common discontent, and quickly formed a relationship.

The pair left their hometowns to begin a life together, first in Muskogee in the Indian Territory, then faraway Colorado. It was late 1892 when Frank found a job on what he described as a “hay ranch,” and Annie took charge of cooking and cleaning for the cowboys working the fields.

People who knew them in Colorado would testify the couple lived as man and wife, although there is no mention of Annie's daughter traveling with them. Frank made good money and, after almost a year in La Junta and Denver, Colorado, the couple accumulated

more than a thousand dollars. When asked in court to describe how he made the money, Frank admitted the majority of the cash was won at card tables.

The pair returned to the home of Annie's sister in Fort Smith. They were together in the Doyle house for only three days, during which time Frank said he was received warmly into the family. After his short visit, he moved on alone to Kansas City before traveling south to Paris, Texas, and eventually to his aunt's home in Denison, Texas.

Annie joined Frank in Denison, but it was a short visit. After about a week, she returned to her sister's home in Fort Smith and Frank headed to Muskogee. It is unclear what plans the couple had for their futures at this time, but it was only a matter of weeks before Frank turned up again at the Doyle home. After spending a few days with Annie, he gave her twenty-five dollars and headed back to the Indian Territory.

Two days after Frank's departure, Annie Maledon was on a train to Muskogee.

When they first reached Muskogee together, the couple stayed with a Creek Indian lady who owned a sporting house. Annie was unhappy with the accommodations and found a room for herself in the home of Mike and Lizzie Flynn. Frank did not care for the Flynns and was reluctant to visit her in their home, although he continued to pay her room and board. Annie and Frank had to meet outside the Flynn home and, should they have a conversation inside the home, it was common for Mrs. Flynn to join them. Lizzie Flynn ran a tight boarding home, which made Frank uncomfortable.

Frank was staying with a cousin and friends while Annie was with the Flynns. His time at the card tables and indulgence in alcohol increased. He developed a taste for a drink called Jamaica ginger, which would figure prominently in future court appearances.

There is no record of Frank Carver visiting his wife, Nannie, or his children, although he would repeat several times that his wife refused to give him a divorce for fear he would marry Annie Maledon. Frank would not ask for a divorce himself, saying he wanted his wife to make the application.

Possibly Frank feared allegations from his wife that he gambled away her eight-hundred-dollar allotment from the Cherokee Nation would be made public in open court if he applied for divorce. Whatever his reasoning, Frank would testify to his certainty that his wife wanted him gone, but he could not seem to convince her to file for a divorce.

Frank explained in court while testifying in his own defense how he and Annie would try to convince



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people they were no longer a loving couple, going as far as to have fake arguments in public to "throw people off." He claimed this was common behavior for them around the Flynns, for Frank was certain Mike and Lizzie Flynn carried news of his relationship with Annie to his wife and her family.

In August 1894, Frank and Annie moved to McAlester in the Indian Territory. They were only in town two weeks before heading back to Frank's aunt in Denison, Texas. After a short visit in Denison, Frank borrowed enough money from his aunt to send Annie back to Muskogee, while he moved on to Sherman, Texas. Annie returned to the Flynn home in the Indian Territory, and Frank began gambling with the miners in Texas.

While she was a child in Fort Smith, Annie met an African American lady named Julia Hershey, who worked in a Maledon family home. Julia later married and moved with her husband to Muskogee, following his job with the railroad.

The women reunited in the small Indian Territory

town, and Annie began spending time at Julia's house.

Julia would later tell a federal court jury how Annie made several trips to Fort Smith during this time to visit family, often returning with her daughter. While her daughter was in Muskogee, Annie sometimes called upon Julia to care for the child. It was also Julia's house that became the meeting place for Frank and Annie after he returned from Texas in the winter of 1894.

Shortly after his return to Muskogee, Frank paid a visit to his old friend, Wilson Rider. While in the Rider home, Frank saw a pistol in a holster, which he picked up and strapped to his waist. Saying no one tried to stop him, Frank wore the gun out of the Rider home, keeping it as his own.

Annie was boarding with the Flynns again when Frank returned from Texas. He fell into a routine of gambling and drinking all day and sneaking out somewhere to see Annie at night. The couple continued their weak charade of meeting only after dark at clandestine, pre-arranged destinations, careful not to be seen alone together.

Mrs. Flynn testified in Frank's trial for murder that Annie grew to fear Carver after his final Texas trip. Flynn said the girl would stay in her room a week at a time attempting to avoid Carver while she and her husband, Mike, passed messages between the two.

It was in the Flynns' house that the relationship between the young couple frayed. Frank had scheduled a meeting with Annie one winter evening, but she did not appear at the appointed time. He was furious with her, showing up at the Flynn house the next night and demanding to know how she dared miss their appointment and saying he was going to kill her.

As usual, Frank was staggering drunk, so Annie took advantage of his condition by swearing she had appeared at the appointed place at the correct time, but it was Frank himself who did not show for the meeting. This confused the young man until Mike Flynn nodded in agreement, supporting Annie's false claim that she made the meeting. Frank seemed appeased, although he continued saying he should kill Annie for lying to him.

When confronted with this event in open court while facing murder charges, Frank vehemently denied calling Annie a liar and insisted he was only joking when he said he should kill her. It was all part of their continuing effort to keep people confused about their relationship, he insisted. All part of a plan to convince his wife to give him a divorce.

Annie was shot on a Monday in March 1895. Carver admitted he had been drinking steadily from the prior Saturday. He remembered seeing Annie the first

When confronted with this event in open court while facing murder charges, Frank vehemently denied calling Annie a liar and insisted he was only joking when he said he should kill her. It was all part of their continuing effort to keep people confused about their relationship, he insisted. All part of a plan to convince his wife to give him a divorce.



time that Monday at the home of John Wilkey, where he was helping the man with his garden.

Frank testified he remembered giving Annie money and sending her across the railroad tracks to purchase four bottles of a liquor called Jamaica ginger, tobacco, and cigarette papers. It was still daylight when she returned to Wilkey's with the items, so she decided to go back to the Flynn boarding house and meet with Frank later.

Frank testified in court that, after Annie left, he and a friend drank all four bottles of the Jamaica ginger, with Carver downing most of the liquor. Carver said that, at some point after drinking the ginger, everything around him "turned blue" and he had no accurate memory of what happened, or of his actions, beyond that point. He said he believed Annie returned and went inside the Wilkey house to talk to the old man, but he passed out about then and really couldn't say if she was there, or not.

"I don't remember, Sir," Carver would later say in Judge Parker's court, "nothing about it."

When he woke, Frank said he believed he was either in Mike Flynn's house, or in a room at Julia Hershey's, the lady Annie called Aunt Julia. He did not know he was in jail. He heard a woman talking and assumed it was Annie. Instead, it was a female prisoner telling him Annie was dead.

The female prisoner in the Muskogee jail was wrong. Annie Maledon was not dead, but she was gravely wounded by a .44 caliber ball lodged in what remained of her spine. Shot in the back and left on the ground where she had been walking with Frank Carver and his friend, Andy Crittenden, Annie was lucid when townspeople carried her into the Flynn house the evening of March 25, 1895.

Lizzie Flynn undressed the woman, keeping the soiled girdle and cape, both of which would be used as evidence in future court trials. She helped settle Annie into a small bed and waited for help.

Local physician, F. B. Fite, was called to Annie's bedside. He found the entry wound some inch-and-a-half from the right side of her spine just about on level with her right elbow. Everything below the small entry site was paralyzed. The doctor decided against attempting to remove the ball and would later tell a jury he did not want her to die on his hands.

Dr. Fite, after consideration of the seriousness of the wound, made his prognosis known to the young patient. She could not survive. He told Annie she might not die quickly, but he saw no way she could live with such a grievous wound.

Annie asked Mike Flynn who, like herself, was raised in the Roman Catholic faith, to call on Father Ketchum of the local parish to see if he would attend her. Father Ketchum responded, heard the young woman's confession, and gave her what are called Last Rites, a solemn blessing offered to Catholics facing imminent death.

The receiving of these rites was important during testimony in Carver's trial in federal court. Judge Isaac C. Parker seemed intent on confirming Annie's receiving the Rites. Having known the woman and her family, the judge displayed a concern for how she was treated at the end of her life, but also stressed during the proceedings that receiving Last Rites confirmed Annie's understanding that her condition was fatal. She would not survive.

Lizzie Flynn testified about conversations she had with the injured Annie at her home. She told of how Annie often recounted how intoxicated Frank became, how jealous he was of a man named F. E. Walker from Dennison, and how he waved a six-shooter toward Annie's head saying he would soon shoot her. Annie recalled brushing the gun away with her hand, then stepping toward Andy Crittenden, who was with them that night. It was just as she made her step away from Frank that he shot her in the back.

F. T. McClure was another visitor to the Flynn home. A former Fort Smith resident, McClure knew Annie and her family before he moved to Muskogee and took a position as clerk in the Marshals office. McClure came to Annie in his official authority for the purpose of taking her statement about the events of the evening she was shot.

The text of Annie Maledon's statement follows:

My name is Annie Maledon. Frank Carver was

over here Monday afternoon and told me to meet him over by the mill that night, and if I didn't meet them that I would know that he was gone to Colorado. I went over and met him about half past eight and he said, "Well, Honey, you are in for it tonight," and said he was going to kill me before daylight, and also F.E. Walker. There was a man came up the track then and he threw his pistol down in his face and told him to leave there "damned quick." The fellow went on and he turned around and shot among a whole lot of cattle laying there. Then we both went up to Jim Dodson's and he asked if he was there and Mrs. Dodson told him, "No." We left then and came on down towards Bill Looney's then. He took his pistol out two or three times and put it in my face and said he was going to kill me before morning. We went from there on down to old man Wilkins and then we met Andy Crittenden. Andy wanted him to go with him to some girl and I didn't want to go and I asked him to bring me home and he and Andy could go. And he said, "I can take you home if you are that damned anxious to get there. I guess you want to lay up with Walker anyhow tonight, the son of a bitch." I told him, "No, I wasn't, either." But he says, "You son of a bitch don't you tell me that. I'll blow your brains out." He says, "Now you tell me that you laid up with Walker and he sent you a pass to come down here, or I'll just kill you and be done with it." That's where he shot me. He shot me in the back as I went to step across to Andy. I looked up and it seems to me that I saw him take the pistol out of Frank's hand. I don't remember whether I did or not. Then Frank asked me if I was shot and I said, "I guess I am. It seems kind of that way." Then he says, "Annie, you won't prosecute me, will you?" I told him "I guess I would. I didn't know anybody else to prosecute." He then told Andy to take me home, that he was going to leave. Then Andy said I would have to wait till he could go get a hack and tell somebody I as there. That he couldn't carry me. That was the last I saw of Andy. They arrested Frank and brought him back while I was there. When the crowd came down he asked me several times if Andy didn't shoot me. This was done by the mill. I guess by what Dr. Fite says, I can't get well and this statement is intended for my dying declaration.

This statement was subscribed before F. T. McClure on March 27, 1895. It bore the seal of a Notary Public and was read by Mr. McClure in the federal court case against Frank Carver for the murder of Annie Maledon in Fort Smith, Arkansas. It was filed in that same court in open session on May 21, 1896.

Annie Maledon remained in the Flynn house for almost two weeks under the care of Doctor Fite and various neighbors. She was also tended to by F. E. Walker, who made the trip to Muskogee from Denison, Texas, at her request to be at her bedside.

For reasons not fully recorded, a group of women who attended the Catholic Church moved Annie to a house nearer a convent after about two weeks at the Flynn home. At this time, F.E. Walker returned to Texas and was replaced at Annie's bedside by Julia Hershey, the woman Annie called her Aunt Julia.

Although she retained the use of her arms and was fully conscious and coherent, the metal ball shattering Annie's spine continued to drain the life from her young body. The decision was made to move Annie to Saint John's Hospital in her hometown, Fort Smith, Arkansas. Julia Hershey put her on the train.

Annie was admitted to Saint John's Hospital on April 14, 1895. She was placed under the care of Doctor W.W. Bailey.

Stephen Wheeler, U.S. Commissioner for the Federal Court, visited Annie Maledon while she was a patient at Saint John's Hospital. He swore under oath the pair discussed the dying declaration she made in Muskogee, and the woman confirmed every particular of her statement as the truth.

Doctor Bailey later testified he spoke with Annie daily about her condition. He said she remained lucid to the end and understood her situation. Doctor Bailey was with Annie Maledon when she died at 1 p.m. on Sunday, May 19, 1895.

A post-mortem was performed on Annie's body the day following her death. Doctor Bailey removed a .44 caliber ball from what remained of the woman's spine. With the help of a second surgeon, he removed several sections of the woman's spine. These were later displayed as evidence for the prosecution to demonstrate to a jury how the shot from a .44 caliber pistol destroyed the woman's spine, and life.

Annie's remains were claimed by an uncle and one of her brothers. She was buried in Calvary Cemetery, the Catholic burial ground in Fort Smith, near her Aunt Elizabeth. The small marker that once identified her plot has been lost or decayed with the years. Her grave is now unmarked.

Frank Carver, who was already in jail on charges of assault since the night of the shooting, was arrested and charged with the murder of Annie Maledon a few days after her death. He enlisted the services of flamboyant Fort Smith attorney, J. Warren Reed, known widely for helping men facing murder charges in Judge Isaac C. Parker's court escape the gallows.



FRANK CARVER

A series of legal proceedings began with the first trial of Frank Carver for the murder of Annie Maledon in the May 1895 term of the Circuit Court of the United States, within and for the Western District of Arkansas. Case number 126 was the United States versus Frank Carver indicted for murder. Judge Isaac C. Parker was on the bench and Assistant District Attorney J. B. McDonough led the prosecution for the government. The first day of court was June 26, 1895.

Many witnesses called by the prosecution were familiar to Carver. He knew them from his days in Muskogee and often counted on them for assistance in his many minor scrapes with the law, or troubles with his wife or Annie.

Mike Flynn, owner of the boarding home where Annie was living when she was shot, made a colorful visit to court. Living up to the rough-and-tumble reputation he had in his younger years in Muskogee, Flynn spent the days in Fort Smith awaiting his call to the witness stand in local bars, resulting in an arrest for public drunkenness and a night in jail. McDonough, who called Flynn as a prosecution witness, brought attention to the incident by asking the man if he was sober enough to testify before beginning his questioning.

While Flynn fondly recalled a younger Frank Carver who worked as a delivery driver for Turner's store in Muskogee, he did not hesitate to retell events of the night he lied to the man to save Annie from trouble. Flynn told the jury how he stood with Annie when she said she had been to a scheduled meeting, but Frank did not show up for their rendezvous, and told how he removed his pistol from the wall and hid it when he saw Carver approaching his house because he did not want trouble.

Flynn retold details of the couple's argument, recalling Frank's anger and how he often told Annie, "I 'low to stomp you in the ground." As Annie's fear of Frank increased, she asked Mike not to let him "do

anything to her,” and Flynn confirmed the woman went to Muskogee Constable Jim Pettigrew to file a complaint and have Frank arrested on charges of abuse.

Defense attorney J. Warren Reed appeared to believe he could turn Flynn’s testifying into support for his client’s claim he was simply too intoxicated to realize he shot someone. Reed queried Flynn about a conversation they had earlier in which Flynn said he had been drinking Jamacia ginger alcohol for hours with Carver the day of the shooting. Flynn changed his story, saying he had not had a drink of anything with Carver the day Annie was shot. He wasn’t under oath when he told that story, Flynn reminded the barrister, and he didn’t think it was any of Reed’s business what he was doing that day, so he made up the whole thing. Reed lost his patience with the witness and demanded, “You lied to me?” “I sure did,” Flynn admitted.

J. W. Hayes was an unfamiliar face to Carver when he took the witness stand in June 1895. Hayes said he was closing the front gate to his home just about dusk the night Annie was shot and saw a man and woman walking on the railroad tracks with the stockyards to their south, and the mill on the north. He heard them arguing and could tell the woman was trying to break free of the man holding her by the arm.

Suddenly, three shots rang out in his direction. Hayes was afraid he was the stranger’s target, so he went inside to gather his gun. When he returned, the couple had disappeared, and he saw nothing again until he heard a final shot and a woman scream. He ran in the direction of the cry and found Annie on the ground. Alone. She asked him to carry her back to the Flynn house, but he was afraid to move her. Instead, he removed the stiff, wide band of cloth around her waist commonly called a girdle and stayed with her until Mr. Brame brought a staggering, resisting Frank Carver to their location.

Mr. Reed, in defense of his client, questioned the witness’ ability to identify Frank Carver in open court, having admitted he did not know him before the night of the shooting. Reed wondered how Hayes could be certain it was Annie and Frank he heard arguing since he never saw the couple close enough to recognize them until Frank was dragged to where the woman lay wounded on the ground.

It was J. Warren Reed’s intention to leave the jury with the notion Frank Carver was far too impaired with alcohol to intentionally shoot anyone on March 25, 1895. The only purpose of his first witness, John Wilkey, who was followed to the stand by his wife, Matilda, was to reiterate the amount of alcohol consumed by the young Frank before he left the

It was J. Warren Reed’s intention to leave the jury with the notion Frank Carver was far too impaired with alcohol to intentionally shoot anyone on March 25, 1895.



Wilkey home around 5 p.m. to meet Annie at the Flynn boarding house.

John Wilkey said Frank was “crazy drunk,” while Matilda Wilkey testified Frank reeled as he walked. John Wilkey also reported Frank began his day by drinking with Mike Flynn, a story Flynn called a fabrication he himself told Reed before the start of official proceedings.

Reed called women with connections to the young Carver’s past to the stand. The first, Katie Belstead, was a sixteen-year-old who was staying with Frank’s legal wife, Nannie, the night of the shooting. Belstead claimed she never heard any shots, but she did hear a woman calling out, and joined Frank’s sister-in-law, Mary Murray, to seek out the source of the trouble.

Before the young women reached the site of the shooting, they grew apprehensive due to voices in the darkness, and stopped. They never saw Annie, or the people surrounding her, but both testified they heard Frank utter the words, “Oh, Annie. Who shot you?” Belstead and Murray told the jury Frank wept as he called out to the injured woman.

Reed hoped to bolster his claim that Carver had no knowledge of the shooting by putting young Miss Belstead’s mother, Katie, on the stand. While she admitted no former relationship with the victim, Mrs. Belstead went to the Flynn’s house the morning following the incident to inquire after Annie’s condition. She testified she heard Annie say, in an excusing manner, “Oh, well. Frank was drunk.” At a later point in the conversation, the injured woman told the assemblage Frank had run to her side when brought back to the scene of the shooting and cried, “Baby, who done this to you?” Annie’s reported reply was, “I’ll tell you some other time.”

Women continued to take the stand to assist young Carver in his distress. His brother Flave’s wife, Lizzy Carver, testified she saw Frank the day of the shooting and he was so drunk he was reeling. He took a step toward her, stumbled, and she had to catch him to

prevent him from falling. Matilda Wilkey, along with asserting Frank's drunken state, also claimed to hear the injured Annie say Frank did not shoot her "a purpose." Mrs. Wilkey said several people heard Annie make the same statement, although she could not recall any names while she was on the witness stand.

Frank's parade of female defenders ended with Annie's beloved Aunt Julia, Mrs. Julia Hershey. She testified how happy Annie was to see her when she moved with her husband to Muskogee, and how the woman brought her young daughter from Fort Smith to be cared for in the Hershey home.

Julia testified that her home was a frequent meeting place for the couple, and they kept a room of their own in her house. Before putting Annie on a train for Fort Smith after she was shot, Julia cared for her at the home provided by the Catholic church. Julia told the court Annie repeated many times that Frank did not intend to shoot her, insisting the two cared too much for each other for him to such a thing.

Andy Crittenden earned himself a conviction for perjury with his testimony on behalf of his friend, Frank Carver. In sworn statements made in pre-trial proceedings, Crittenden told three officials he was with Frank and Annie the night of the shooting. He recounted how a drunken Frank threatened Annie, and how she asked Crittenden to take her home. After Carver carelessly fired his pistol several times, Crittenden became worried because Frank "seemed to be mad, and he was drunk, and I did not know which one of he was going to kill, her or me."

Andy described to Indian Territory officials how Frank demanded to know if Annie received a telegram from F.E. Walker, which she admitted was delivered to her. Irrate and almost too drunk to stand, Carver waved the gun in Annie's face before she walked away. At that point, Carver fired, shooting the woman in the back. Crittenden said he took the gun away from Frank, who ran from the scene, then went to find his brother to ask him to help move Annie.

Perhaps the most poignant part of any testimony came from Crittenden in Judge Parker's court when he recalled the injured Annie on the ground. After Carver ran from the area, Crittenden went to her side, and she begged him to fetch her daughter. Instead, he went to his brother's house to find a wagon and never returned.

When Crittenden reached federal court, he changed several facts in retelling of the shooting. His story before a jury was that Frank was so drunk he could not be trusted with a gun, so Crittenden went to take it away from him as they walked near the mill. The two wrestled for the weapon, which accidentally discharged,

Reg. No.	1025	Color	White	Age	
Name	Frank Carver				
Crime	Murder				
Sentence	Life				
Commenced	Dec. 16, 1897				
Full term expires					
Short term expires					
Fine and Costs					
Not to be held for fine and costs					
Convicted at	Fort Smith, Ark.				
Residence	Muscogee, I. T.				
Occupation	Cowboy				
Received	March 25, 1905				

striking Annie in the back. This change in Andy Crittenden's retelling of incidents the night of the shooting resulted in his receiving a five-year prison sentence for lying under oath.

Defense attorney, J. Warren Reed, took the opportunity near the end of the trial to impugn Annie's relationship with her own family. He recalled the director of Saint John's Hospital to the stand to swear no member of the Maledon family visited Annie while she was a patient under her care. Former Fort Smith resident, F. T. McClure, who recorded Annie's dying declaration, was recalled to tell the jury he saw none of Annie's relatives attend any court session. The defendant, Frank Carver, swore that Annie's sister, Mrs. Doyle, visited him more than once during his incarceration in the Fort Smith federal jail.

The jury in the first trial of Frank Carver for the murder of Annie Maledon returned a verdict of guilty. The defendant was brought into the courtroom on June 29, 1895, where Judge Parker read his death warrant, setting the date of execution for October 1, 1895.

Carver's attorney, J. Warren Reed, went immediately to work filing an appeal with the United States Supreme Court, his only legal recourse. With

complaints about the transcription of Annie Maledon's dying declaration, and even concerns about its validity because she lived some eight weeks after making the statement, Reed was granted a new trial for Frank Carver.

A second jury was convened. Witnesses were recalled and the charges from prosecutor and defense statements repeated. When closing arguments were made, the jury went into deliberation and returned a second guilty verdict against Frank Carver for the murder of Annie Maledon.

Once again, Carver was brought before Judge Isaac C. Parker to hear a death warrant read against him. On May 12, 1896, Parker declared in open court that Frank Carver should hang by the neck for the crime of murder on July 30, 1896.

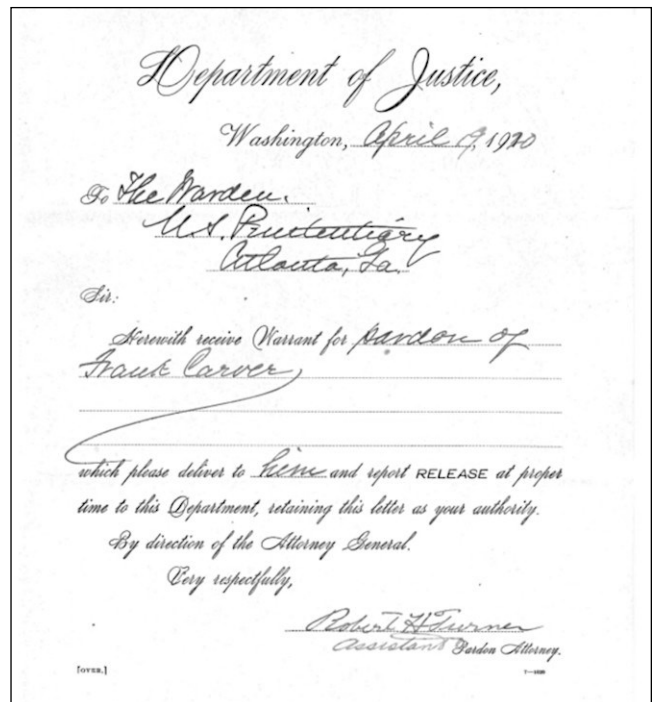
For a second time, J. Warren Reed turned to the Supreme Court. This appeal was based on the content of Judge Parker's instructions to the jury regarding the responsibility of individuals during the use of weapons and other matters. Once again, the Court sided with Reed and Frank Carver's conviction was overturned and a new trial ordered.

On November 17, 1896, Judge Isaac C. Parker passed away at his home in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Judge John Henry Rogers followed Parker to the federal bench and presided over Frank Carver's third trial for the murder of Annie Maledon.

Before a jury of his peers, Carver was again declared guilty of murder. Instead of receiving the death sentence, Judge Rogers charged Carver to spend the remainder of his life in prison. The sentence was reported in Carver's hometown newspaper, the *Muskogee Phoenix*, on December 25, 1897. Frank Carver was transported by train, along with Henry Starr and Mollie King to the federal penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio, on January 26, 1898.

Quoted in a congratulatory article in the *Fort Smith News Record* newspaper in November 1898, J. Warren Reed responded to queries about his lack of payment for work done in the Carver case. Reed told the reporter, "I regard the saving of Carver's life sufficient reward for my hard work."

In 1905, Frank Carver was transferred to the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, under the designation Prisoner 1025. He was in continual contact with family in Muskogee and Texas throughout his incarceration, including communications with his wife, Nannie. Prison records show requests to send letters to his wife, cousins in Texas, and a bank in Muskogee managing his wife's sale of property the couple owned on Kalamazoo Street in that town. One of his cousins



from Texas signed off their letters to Frank encouraging him to "be a good boy."

Although Carver's successful attorney who represented him through three murder trials, J. Warren Reed, had established a practice in Muskogee, Frank hired a new lawyer to oversee his request for parole. William Mellette of Muskogee was contracted to assist Carver with his filings for parole and, eventually, a pardon on the murder of Annie Maledon.

Frank Carver received a parole from Atlanta Penitentiary in 1913 and returned to his wife's home in the Midland Addition of Muskogee, Oklahoma. Family members secured him a position working at Monarch laundry. In an interview published in the local Muskogee newspaper and held by the National Archives in Carver's Atlanta Federal Prison files, the newly returned man said, "We are all together now and happy. It is the greatest thing in life to be with one's wife and children." When asked about the shooting of Annie Maledon, he maintained alcohol prevented him from having any memory of the incident, saying Annie was "not the best kind of woman."

Carver continued to seek a pardon for the crime of murder. Before a pardon could be considered, he was required to prove five years of successfully living in society without conflict while providing for his own welfare, income, and good standing in the community. Presidential pardons were required for a federal murder charge, and these were rare.

Carver was reaching out since his days in Atlanta attempting to lay the groundwork for a pardon. With the help of William Mellette, Carver was informed he had received a pardon from the president of the United States for the crime of murdering Annie Maledon and was freed from the constraints of parole on April 21, 1920.

On September 8, 1922, the *Muskogee Phoenix* newspaper reported the death of Frank Carver. He passed away peacefully at his home on Frankfort Street in his hometown of Muskogee at fifty-one years of age, leaving behind a widow and two adult children.

The Three Rivers Museum in Muskogee, Oklahoma, was a generous source of information for this article. Among the photos and news items they shared from their collection was a copy of *True Frontier* magazine, which appears to have been published in the early 1960s. The publication contained an article about Frank Carver and Annie Maledon titled, "The Hangman's Daughter." In the article, the author tells how a blonde, chiseled Frank found a seductive, raven-haired Annie in a dance hall/bordello in Fort Smith and brought her to Muskogee, where she jilted him for a sidewinder named Walker. It is an exciting version of the saga of Frank and Annie.

It is nearer the truth to understand that Annie lived in a time when women required the protection of a father or husband to be accepted in society. After the birth of a child out of wedlock, Annie would have neither. Frank Carver hoped to better his lot in life at high stakes gambling tables. Instead, he became a small-time hustler who shot his girlfriend in a drunken fit of jealousy, ending Annie Maledon's life and ruining his own.



A student of Journalism and Media at Westark Community College and later the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, Sue Robison retired after thirty years of working in television, newspaper, and public relations. After retirement, she began writing for the Fort Smith Historical Society

Journal, for which she is a frequent contributor.

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Reviews

STAGE

Shen Yun

After a couple months of driving by a billboard on Towson Avenue advertising *Shen Yun*, an artistic dance event coming in early February to the Fort Smith Convention Center—ArcBest Corporation Performing Arts Center, my wife, Peggy, and I were persuaded to attend. The tickets were available online. Since we had delayed our purchase until the last minute, the seat choices were limited to the upper back of the auditorium. Convinced that the auditorium had no bad seats, I sprang for two \$80 tickets. Earlier, patrons had depleted the choice \$150, as well as the mid-range \$120, and \$100 seats. Must be good, I thought to myself.

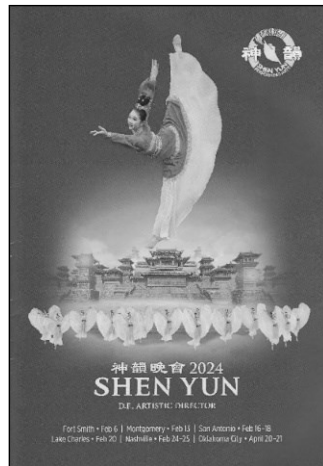
On February 6, 2024, we arrived soon enough to secure handy parking. In the foyer as we walked in, people assembled awaiting entrance. Signs warned, our show starts ON TIME.

The eTicket system allowed self-printing or QR code scanning. We chose the former, but most held up their devices at the gate to enter.

Inside, we found our seats, upper left, seats 5 and 6. We sat. We could see the curtain and the musicians in the orchestra pit without obstruction. Truly no bad seats there.

At precisely 7:39, to a full house, the conductor tapped his baton and the orchestra with western and Chinese instruments begin to play classical music as the curtains opened revealing a dance performance on the stage in front of a gigantic screen showing imperial Chinese pagodas in the foreground with blue skies and beautiful mountains in the background.

As the dancers skittered into the wings, the curtains closed and the spotlight focused on the left side of the



stage where a man and woman stood, she in a traditional and exquisite Chinese floor length, high collar silk dress, and he in black suit, white shirt, with a Clark Gable hair style. He, Leeshai Lemish, speaking English, she, Vivian Li, speaking Chinese alternated between the two most spoken languages in welcoming the audience and explaining the dance scenes to follow.

What followed was a "Magic Lantern" set up with flying figures on the big screen that literally zoomed onto the Performing Arts stage, an awesome and

beautifully coordinated effect. The dancers performed their stylized routines with grace and precision. They were consummate professionals, albeit youthful. Their athleticism and agility were on display throughout with poses, acrobatic leaps, spins, twists, and somersaults. Forty dancers in the company seemed to be all of one height and one weight, and their rapid, short-stepped foot movement made them seem to glide about the stage.

Twelve chapters in the first half of the show displayed Classic Chinese dance, Folk dance, Ethnic dance, Chinese story dance. Katherine Wang with grand piano wheeled onto the stage accompanied Bin Dai, basso, in an anthem titled "The Purpose of Rebirth." While action photography, colorful background murals, live dances, and exquisite costumes supported all the chapters, some of which were peaceful village interchanges, several others reflected conflict and battle pitting moral and ethical good against their counterparts. The bass solo ensured that the theater goers heard and presumably understood the religious mission of *Shen Yun*.

An intermission divided the show into two one-hour segments. In the second half, nine dance stories and two soloists filled the bill. Female and male dancers brought artistic and muscular coordination to several conflict scenes that proceeded historically from the time of Imperial China to the Chinese Communist Revolution.

A soloist, Ming Yue, played the erhu, a two-string traditional Chinese musical instrument, with verve and amazing skill creating a full sound equivalent, perhaps, to a violin concerto.

The soprano, Rachel Yu Ming Bastick, sang "Dafa leads back to Heaven," a description of mankind's origin and the two evil doctrines that hinder a return to the creator.

In all, the audience, including this reviewer and his wife, applauded wildly. The performance did what it intended to do, educated westerners to the classic stories, musical instruments, choreography, art, voices, musical instruments, and dance of imperial and to a point, modern China. And did so with uncanny beauty in all respects.

I salute D. F., founder of *Shen Yun* and its Artistic and Creative Director since the company's inception in 2006. I was quite happy with the ArcBest Performing Arts Center.

It held D.F.'s game, which was indeed a mega production. I felt that we, the 1,331 people in the audience, had experienced a fantastic evening.

—Reviewed by Billy D. Higgins

BOOKS

***Before It Got Complicated: Medicine in Fort Smith and the Arkansas River Valley, 1817-1975*, By Dr. Taylor Prewitt, M.D., (Red Engine Press, Fort Smith, 2023, 184-page, softcover, numerous illustrations, notes by chapters, \$28 softcover, \$35 hardcover.)**

Medical histories of individuals and communities are often written in either a 30,000 feet aerial view of the past or alternately medical terminology as a text, a rummaging narrative of ancient letters or journals, with a series of stoic tintype photos showing well-dressed men with heavy medical bag in hand, standing stiffly next to a horse-drawn buggy headed out to home visits.

Dr. Taylor Prewitt's book, however, is a gem of a concise, entertaining read via an expert historical examination of the medical community of Fort Smith and the Arkansas River Valley.

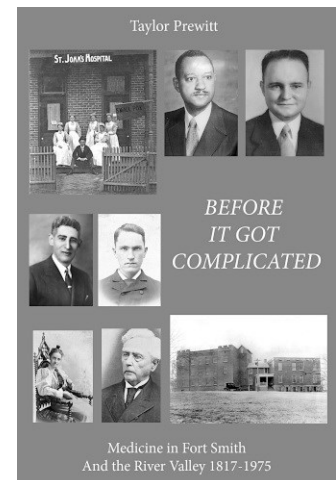
Written lovingly and expertly narrated for the layman is this volume published by the locally based Red Engine Press. Its prose is from the authoritative pen of retired Fort Smith cardiologist and historian Taylor Prewitt, M.D.,

Fort Smith natives and patrons of the city's history will quickly see this book as a sparkling diamond, shining brightly; expertly researched and succinctly written of the medical advancements in this municipality and region.

Frequent readers of past issues of the *Journal* of the Fort Smith Historical Society will recognize some chapters as recent submissions from Dr. Prewitt. The book is displayed in an easy-to-read large page format, chock full of historical photos of people and buildings.

As a medical practitioner, Dr. Prewitt, draws the reader into this fine history with an easy "bedside manner" reciting vignettes of personal lives of medical men and women who shaped and nurtured this regional nucleolus of health care.

Dr. Prewitt leads the reader through the "golden age of patient care," to a more modern age of clinical



approaches and hospitals, often now called medical centers.

His expert research reaches the stated pinnacle, around 1975, as a new era of medicine began and as the book title so vividly suggests was “before it got complicated.”

Today’s medical practices are replete with such innovations as insurance reimbursements, co-pays, HMOs, in-and-out of pocket reimbursements, tele-a-medicine, and a voluminous plethora of new medical terminology that Americans today know so well.

Dr. Prewitt emerges as an outstanding narrator of these personal lives of these men and women, most who as strangers came to Fort Smith, establishing themselves as ground-breaking medical caregivers and health care community builders, as well as civic and political leaders.

He writes of the earliest Fort Smith physicians, often bravely performing “kitchen operations” in the patients’ own homes prior to the advent of adequate hospital facilities. He assesses that the earliest hospital’s existence in the city was a direct causation of the military presence. Added into that mix was the city’s growing population amidst a flux of religious institutions, often with a pilgrimage mission to provide care for humankind’s suffering.

From a deeper, more personal level, Dr. Prewitt writes of hardships of providing such personal care. Such examples are described with the second generation of the legendary family of Smith physicians, i.e., Dr. John Smith, 1901-1960 “...customarily left home each day at 4 a.m. ...sometimes he would go to the local movie theater for a nap, leaving a young friend to come get him if there should be a call.” On another occasion, Dr. John Smith, described as “wound tight” as an individual and professional man, but not, on occasion, bereft of possessing the unorthodox “...once arm wrestled a heart patient to persuade him to take digitalis.”

The lives of these medical professionals often equated into leadership positions in the city of Fort Smith. For example, Dr. Nicholas Spring, in 1850, was elected mayor of Fort Smith.

Another legendary hero of lasting civic action was Dr. J. G. Eberle, appointed by the city council to develop a plan to improve the city streets—especially a muddy quagmire of what was then Garrison Avenue. Dr. Eberle did so, in addition to running his own medical practice. Today, a wide, paved signature boulevard graces Fort Smith’s central business district.

Dr. Prewitt pays homage to the legendary Dr. Roger Bost, who first ran for the Fort Smith school

Dr. Prewitt emerges as an outstanding narrator of these personal lives of these men and women, most who as strangers came to Fort Smith, establishing themselves as ground-breaking medical caregivers and health care community builders, as well as civic and political leaders.



board to correct an “inequity in care” for those with disabilities. He went on to a lengthy public service with the state of Arkansas caring for the elderly and disabled citizens while overseeing the state’s Medicaid program which grew tenfold, from \$10 million to over \$126 million, under his directorship.

Dr. Prewitt takes great care to describe these individuals with their own legacy of accomplishments, and if need be, their faults and failures, as well.

One particularly interesting chapter, “The Doctor and the Mastodon,” provides readers a peek into the eccentric life of Dr. Addison M. Bourland that is informative and entertaining.

A touchstone of this book, and of the medical history of Fort Smith and the Arkansas River Valley, was the founding of clinics. Dr. Prewitt presents a definitive look inside these collectives of physicians, who collaborated to form these clinics.

These landmark clinics were not only functioning centers of healing and surgical marvels but are regarded as miracle institutions by a legacy of personal testimonials. An often heard and reassuring phrase from appreciative and grateful family members was simply: “You know we took him/her to the Holt-Krock Clinic, or the similarly respected Cooper Clinic.” Results seemed always the best of possible outcomes.

These local clinics, however, with the aging of its founders and the move to a more corporate genre of today’s medicine, have been conjoined or annexed into larger medical systems, and have disappeared from today’s regional medical jargon and consciousness of place.

Closing the book are touching final pages, as Dr. Prewitt pens “A Personal Memoir of the Early 1970s.”

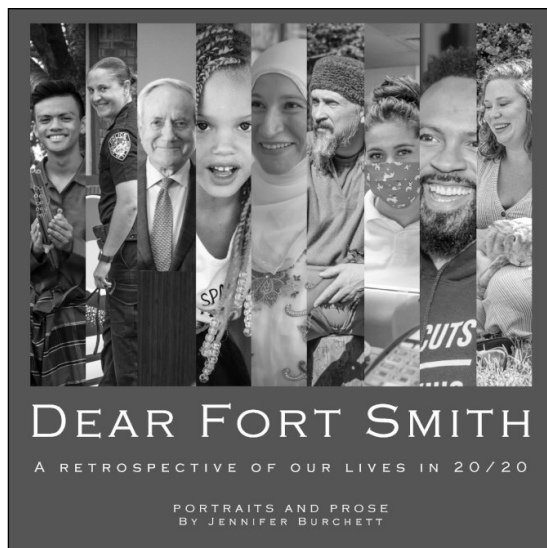
In this chapter, given the title of this book, “Just Before It Got Complicated,” he contrasts the old way

private practices, clinics, and hospitals with the newer, behemoth medical complexes that today dot Fort Smith and the surrounding landscape.

Readers of this book, fans of history of the Fort Smith and Arkansas River Valley, and those interested in medical care of the past, will no doubt find Dr. Prewitt's examination of the history of this medical community as close to a heart-felt memory as their own past experiences with the valued doctors and nurses found in hospitals and clinics across in the region.

—Reviewed by Maylon T. Rice

***Dear Fort Smith: A Retrospective of Our Lives in 20/20.* By Jennifer Burchett. (Daisy House Publishing, LLC, Fort Smith, 2021, 112 pp., illustrations.)**



If books have purpose, *Dear Fort Smith: A Retrospective of Our Lives in 20/20* fulfilled it beautifully. Told through narrative photography, Jennifer Burchett's storytelling highlights the diversity of our town, the hardships we endured, and in vibrant color images it encompasses exactly what makes Fort Smith so great—the people who live here.

Before it was a book, *Dear Fort Smith* was a Facebook page. During the first months of the pandemic, Burchett would take photographs of her neighbors on their front porch or in the open air. Subjects were sometimes masked, but often they are not, which highlights the amount of time we spent outdoors during that time. The fresh air felt safer, somehow. You can see that in the smiles of children and parents as they're captured through Burchett's lens. Even if you don't read a word in the book, the

Even if you don't read a word in the book, the photographs are telling. They are full color, beautifully printed, and full of your friends and neighbors.



photographs are telling. They are full color, beautifully printed, and full of your friends and neighbors.

As the pandemic continued, her subjects went beyond her neighborhood and throughout the community. Burchett does highlight people with titles: Police Chief Danny Baker, State Representative Cindy Crawford, and City Councilman Andre Good, but the magic happens when she focuses on community members that they serve: Keith Elmore, Jennifer Grayston, Mariedeis Medina, and so many more. The book wraps with Chris Joannides, the Director of Hope Campus, whose picture is one of my personal favorites. You cannot help being moved when the folks Joannides serves are photographed with him and his corresponding quote, "I love these guys to death. And by the grace of God, there I go."

Despite the passage of time, the tumultuous year of 2020 remains palpable within these pages. From the anxieties of the pandemic to the societal upheavals following George Floyd's tragic murder, the reader is confronted with a visceral reminder of the challenges endured. Yet, amidst the chaos, Burchett's lens also captures moments of profound beauty and resilience—smiles shared on porches, the determination of community leaders, and the unwavering spirit of individuals like Chris Chaney, Catherine Foreman Gray and Muhammad Ahzam.

Although 2020 is a period many of us would rather not revisit, I urge you to pick up this book. Within its pages, you will be reminded of the challenges we faced and the obstacles we surmounted. Yet, beyond that, you will discover a city filled with remarkable individuals characterized by their faith, familial love, and unwavering dedication to our community. As mentioned by the author/photographer herself, there was no shortage of stories in 2020. I'm grateful to Burchett for capturing our stories, the stories that "existed on the outskirts of the noise." It's clear that Burchett's interest was in offering up as many perspectives as possible. After all, how do we learn and grow if our perspective is the only one we see?

—Reviewed by Sara Putman

1924 Newspapers

By Al Whitson

Fort Smith news for the first half of 1924, brought mirth, joy, tragedy and wonder to its readers. We were reminded of the constant dangers facing our children in the modern age. Aeronauts continued to fascinate us with their skills, and with their daring aerobatic acts. The animus from the previous December's murder in *Catcher* continued to resolve itself in the courts, and on the streets of that neighboring community. Repeated pleas for good homes for local orphan children were anxiously broadcast and a stalwart champion of those same children's protection passed the baton, after more than a quarter century of dedicated service. A man named Sousa came to town and shared his musical genius with a standing room only crowd. The single most devastating storm in Fort Smith history was remembered with sadness, even while another kind of storm was brewing among the city's youth, as dozens of eager boys campaigned for the right to occupy city offices.

Dogs too had their day, proving that man's best friend is often a boy's first love. We also found out that kissing is not only fun, but is sometimes illegal; and so is ice cream, when the circumstances are right. And history was made, as the women of Sebastian County became eligible to serve as jurors for the very first time. Yes sir, there was a lot going on in Fort Smith, in early 1924, a lot going on indeed.

Friday, January 11, 1924

LITERATURE AND BOOZE QUESTION SOLVED BY EPPS

Literature is one thing and liquor is another.

Misinterpretation of literature is a common fault of mankind, but to mistake two magazines carried snugly in one's hip pocket for a bottle of hooch is just too much, according to Emmett Frizzell, who perhaps holds the record of being the only man ever placed under arrest for the innocent possession of an *American Boy* and a *Literary Digest*.

Frizzell, well known Fort Smith citizen and holder

To Better Accommodate Our Patrons!
The New Millinery Company
Moves Into the Heart of
the Shopping District
616 GARRISON AVE.



We Cordially Invite You to Inspect Our New Store
Saturday, January the 26th.

It has always been the purpose of this store to furnish the women of Fort Smith the best in ultra-fashionable millinery, at the lowest possible prices, and we shall further these ideals in our new location. More convenient to you, shopping here will be a distinct pleasure, for many new spring modes have already arrived and will be on display tomorrow.

NEW MILLINERY CO.

Wholesalers "The Home of the Ethyl Hat" Retailers Importers Manufacturers
NEW LOCATION: 616 GARRISON AVENUE

of valuable Garrison avenue property, was arrested by J. L. Epps, special prohibition officer Thursday morning at the Union station, on his objection to being searched for liquor. Frizzell was taken to the county jail by Epps, where he was searched and the projecting hip pocket was found to contain two perfectly harmless and widely circulated magazines.

Epps became all excited when Frizzell entered the depot with his coat flapping over the pouching hip pocket and approached him a few minutes after his arrival at the station and demanded that he be permitted to get a squint at the contents, according to witnesses Thursday. Protestation of Frizzell and his subsequent march to the county jail, a half block north of the depot ensued, witnesses said.

Saturday, January 12, 1924

JANUARY 11 ANNIVERSARY OF CYCLONE THAT SWEEPED AWAY PARTS OF FORT SMITH

Fort Smith, Friday, passed safely through the 26th anniversary of the worst storm in its history—the



tornado of January 11, 1898, which left death and devastation in its wake.

Almost in the twinkling of an eye 51 persons were either killed or fatally injured and property exceeding a million dollars in value was destroyed. Hospitals were crowded with the injured who numbered more than 100.

The storm struck at 11:35 o'clock at night or, it is generally believed, there would have been more fatalities.

Apparently the storm struck what is known as Jack's Island on the Poteau River, in the rear of the National cemetery, first. The lodge of the National cemetery was demolished, but no one was injured. An infant on Jack's Island was the only casualty there.

Sweeping a path through the city about two blocks wide, the storm demolished the old homestead of Major E. R. Rector on the site of the present C. A. Lick home, northeast of the city, then rose and did not touch the ground again until 15 miles farther east and north in Crawford County, when three were killed.

Upper Garrison Avenue was swept by the storm, on North Thirteenth Street and in the neighborhood of the high school; much of the serious damage to property was done. The high school which had been completed only a few months previously, was badly damaged, the Central Methodist Episcopal church South [and] the First Baptist church were both destroyed and the Church of the Immaculate

John B. Williams

CANDIDATE FOR

SHERIFF

Subject to Action of Democratic Primary

August 12th

Conception was made unsafe for use. Catholic Hall was scattered in every direction.

The present site of the Carnegie library, then the home of Judge I. C. Parker, was also in the path of the storm, and only a pile of bricks remained after the storm had passed. The house at that time was occupied by S. F. Stahl. A photograph carried out of the building by the wind is said to have been found 100 miles northeast of Fort Smith in the mountains.

Greatest fatalities in the storm were reported from a two story building [at] 1005-7 Garrison Avenue, the upper stories of which were used as apartments. Several men who had taken refuge on the stairways were killed. Another building at the corner of Towson Avenue and Rogers was a scene of several fatalities. Fire added to the horror of the storm at 1005 Garrison Avenue, burning a number of the bodies of those who had perished in the storm.

Many queer freaks of the storm are recorded. One of the most remarkable was that of the John Delvin home on North Twelfth Street. The entire house was swept away leaving only the floor and the piano standing in a corner of what had been the parlor, the cover still on the piano without even a wrinkle. A young man was killed by a splinter which was driven into the base of his brain. A Negro is said to have been killed by a flying brick more than a block from any houses.

PARKER SCHOOL FLAG-RAISING CEREMONY HELD

Flinging forth a handsome new silk flag, from the tallest flag pole of the city schools, the Parker school held its flag-raising Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock with [a] ceremony fitting the occasion.

The flag pole, which is 55 feet high, was the gift of the Fort Smith Light and Traction Company. The flag was made by Mrs. John Whitaker, president of the Parent Teacher association of the Parker school, assisted by Mrs. John Paxson, from material purchased by the pennies of the pupils of the school.

As the flag was swiftly raised to the top of the pole and fluttered forth in the breeze, all pupils of the school stood smartly at attention and gave the salute to the flag. Then burst forth from hundreds of young throats the national air, "The Star Spangled Banner."

Thursday, January 17, 1924

LEGION POST WILL PRESENT MAT BOUT

As an added attraction to initiation services to be conducted by the American legion at its home Thursday night, a wrestling match between Kid Miller, 128 pounder from Kansas City, and Cyclone Steele, a Fort Smith battler, has been arranged. The bout will be handled by E. E. Hornady, representatives of the legion post stated. Other attractions will also be on the program for that night.

VAUDEVILLE BILL HAS NEW FEATURES

The Vaudeville opening at the Joie Theater Thursday is said by the management of that theatre to be one of the premiere offerings of the season boasting five acts of varied amusement headed by two internationally known attractions.

Harry-Hines is a comedian of musical comedy fame and is said to hold the record for musical comedy laughs on Broadway.

Joseph E. Bernard and company, presenting "Who Is She," a one-act play let by Willard Mack, who wrote "Tiger Rose," "Kick In," and many other stage successes.

The Neopolitan Duo, singers, extraordinary of Italian Opera and Popular



Songs, are known in these parts, and their reputation is sufficient to warrant a good reception.

Claude Anderson and Leona Yvel call their act "Trying to Please," everywhere [they have been] they have little trouble in carrying out their aims.

Hugh Johnson is Comedy Conjurer of rare abilities who relies on his ability to mystify for his principal offering.

Saturday, January 19, 1924

COOPER CLINIC IS MOVING TO BUILDING

The Cooper Clinic began the work of moving into their new quarters at Little Rock and A streets Friday. The clinic's \$50,000 structure was recently completed. It is two-story brick building, built and equipped especially for clinical work.

Additions will probably be made to the staff before long, Dr. St. Cloud Cooper, head of the clinic announced. Several days will be required to complete the removal of office equipment from the clinic's former quarters in the First National bank.

Drs. D. D. Dorente, J. A. Foltz and Walter Eberle will occupy the rooms vacated by the Cooper clinic staff.

YOUTH FINED \$25 FOR STEALING KISS

Alleged demonstration of affection cost Horace Yates, young white man, \$25 following a trial before Municipal Judge L. F. Fishback Friday.

Yates was charged with assault, the charges growing out of his alleged attention to a young woman. According to the complaint, the defendant was "smitten" with a violent desire to kiss the young woman and, doing so against her will, was arrested.

Tuesday, January 22, 1924

YOUTH KILLED WHEN HE PICKS UP LIVE WIRE

Clarence Petty, 18-year-old boy, was killed instantly when he came in contact with a live wire late Monday afternoon, near his home on Petty hill, a few miles out on the Jenny Lind road.

A telephone wire on the street line had been broken in some manner, and when Petty started to pull the wire out of the road, he received the shock. A Fentress pullmotor was called, but efforts to resuscitate the victim

SEE—

Sunday Southwest-Times Record
For Announcement of

FEBRUARY BED ROOM
SUIT SALE



*Episcopal Ladies will hold a
Home-Cooked Food Sale at our store
Saturday, Feb. 2*

FURNITURE
Buck
COMPANY

1112-1114 Garrison Avenue

were fruitless.

The deceased was the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Petty, and a member of one of the older families of the state. He leaves behind his parents, a brother, Raymond Petty and a sister, Brittie Louise Petty.

Funeral arrangements have not been announced.

Wednesday, January 23, 1924

**ONE BOY KILLED
IN JENNY LIND MINE EXPLOSION**

John Shilling, 13 years old, is dead and Clyde, his brother, 9 years old, is lying at the point of death in a Fort Smith hospital as the result of an explosion in a deserted mine shaft at Jenny Lind at 8 o'clock Tuesday night.

Panic stricken parents at the hospital by the bedside of Clyde learned that the two boys went into the shaft with their father's torch to "play miner." A barrel in a crevice aroused childish curiosity.

Gun powder filled the old keg half to the top.

Physicians at Jenny Lind loaded the two children

into an automobile and a frantic race to Fort Smith ensued. The older child died on the way.

Clyde, horribly burned about the face and upper body, is not expected to live. His life, hospital officials said, is a matter of hours.

Mrs. Shilling was taken from the bedside of her dying child late Tuesday night in a nervous condition bordering on hysterics. The father refused to leave the room.

Tuesday, January 29, 1924

TREES PLANTED AT WELFARE BUILDING

During the last week or so, more than 40 trees have been planted on the grounds of the Welfare building by various civic organizations and women's clubs, as part of the [citywide] program for civic improvement. All are trees of several years growth which will soon afford shade. They have been carefully planted, mulched and braced to insure sturdy growth.

Wednesday, January 30, 1924

TWO ORPHAN BOYS WANT HOMES HERE

Two boys, aged 13 and 14 years, the former an orphan, want homes with Christian parents in Fort Smith, according to Commissioner R. P. Strozier, who is in custody of the children. Both boys are sturdy and industrious, Mr. Strozier said.

"The boys are ambitious and are desirous of completing their education in good schools. The fourteen year old boy is capable and I believe will be a good worker in any home. The younger boy is also a worker and has been practically making his own way since his parents death," said Commissioner Strozier.

Friday, February 1, 1924

**WARD PURCHASES WATSON
AND AVEN ICE CREAM PLANT**

The Watson-Aven Ice Cream Company and its property here was purchased Thursday by Joe N. Ward, owner and manager of Ward Ice Company, according to announcement. The change in management becomes effective Friday, February 1, Mr. Ward said. The consideration was not divulged.

The entire plant will be overhauled and enlarged within the next few weeks and manufacturing of Ice cream and other products at the plant will be done on a much larger scale than formerly, Mr. Ward declared Thursday.

The Watson-Aven company's headquarters are maintained at Little Rock, and branch houses are operated in several cities in the southwest. The plant which is now occupied here is comparatively new, the Watson-Aven company moving from a plant on Rogers avenue to its present quarters on North Eighth Street less than two years ago. A. E. Drew is present manager.

Saturday, February 2, 1924

POLICE SEEKING MAN SELLING HAM IN CITY

Hams believed to be unfit for consumption are being sold by an old man whose name is unknown to the police but who drives about the city in a topless buggy to which is hitched a small black horse, according to Chief of Police M. R. Oots Friday.

Reports that such hams were being distributed in the city reached police headquarters Friday and efforts to check the sale of the meat were started by police, Chief Oots said.

"Any person who apprehends a man selling such hams in the residential or business districts should notify police headquarters immediately," said Chief Oots.

WELFARE ASSOCIATION WANTS PLACE FOR GIRL

The Fort Smith Federated Welfare association is interested in placing a young girl of 14 years of age who is in the second year of high school, in a home where she may assist night and morning with household duties in return for her board and room and part of her clothing.

The girl is intelligent, industrious and willing to work. Those who are interested may telephone Fort Smith 73 and confer with Mrs. Herrod, matron at the Welfare building.

Wednesday, February 6, 1924

AMERICAN LEGION IS SPONSORING SERVICES FOR WOODROW WILSON

Memorial services for the late Woodrow Wilson

will be held at the New Theatre next Sunday afternoon at 8 o'clock under the auspices of [the] Victor Ellig post at the American Legion. The public is very cordially invited to attend.

Vincent M. Miles and Judge Joseph M. Hill will speak on the life and accomplishments of the late President and appropriate musical numbers will complete the program, according to announcement.

Thursday, February 7, 1924

SOUSA'S BAND IS WELL RECEIVED AT NEW THEATRE

Fort Smith welcomed Lieutenant Commander John Philip Sousa and his famous band with open arms Wednesday night for his only appearance in Fort Smith, at the New Theatre, on his thirty-first annual tour. Every seat was taken, the house completely sold out and many standing. But standing or sitting the audience quite forgot everything except the music which rolled and swelled from the nearly 100 instruments which composed the band.

Sousa himself has changed but little with the years. He is a trifle grayer, a little more bald, [and] slightly heavier, but the baton continues to go through the same unhurried, unflurried movements which have symbolized Sousa's directing throughout the years.

Soloists with the band are Miss Rachel Senior, violinist; Miss Nora Fauchild, soprano; George Corey, xylophone, and John Dolan, coronet.

Saturday, February 9, 1924

AVIATOR WILL SKIM HOUSE TOPS IN CITY

Rather unique is the advertising scheme to be used by B. C. Ames, distributor of Polar Bear Flour. Ames has arranged with Beeler Blevins, commercial aviator to fly very low over the city Saturday noon, carrying Ames as a passenger and a veritable shower of Polar Bear samples will be dropped from the plane.

The fact that Beeler will hover over the very edge of the housetops will attract considerable attention.

LOCAL WOMEN IN STREET FIGHT ON GARRISON AVENUE – SPECTACULAR BATTLE STAGED FRIDAY: WITNESSES HEARD IN MUNICIPAL COURT

"So far as I could see there was no fight to it. Mrs.

McCarty had Mrs. Stewart by the neck and was givin' her some might snappy blows in the left jaw," testified one witness in municipal court Friday afternoon, when Mrs. Steve McCarty drew a fine of \$25 and costs, while Mrs. Stewart was discharged.

The altercation was staged on Garrison Avenue about noon. Witnesses testified that Mrs. McCarty saw Mrs. Stewart in her husband's car, which was parked there, and crossed the street with the intention of "getting her right then."

Further testimony showed that Mrs. McCarty attacked the Stewart woman, pulled her hair and was "cleaning up on her" when a passerby stopped the trouble and notified police. Mrs. Stewart later fainted, she testified.

Mrs. McCarty did not take the stand, but witnesses declared that she had previously warned Mrs. Stewart to stay away from her husband. Both Stewart and his wife declared that McCarty was only a good friend of the family.

Both McCarty and Stewart are employed at fire station No. 1 and Mrs. Stewart said that she was employed in a downtown doctor's office and had just left the office for lunch when the trouble occurred.

Wednesday, February 13, 1924

TWO GIRLS BEING HELD BY OFFICERS FOR CAR ROBBERY

The strong arm of the law extended in the grim shadows of railroad yards Tuesday night, trying to find thieves who looted a caboose of cushions. That same stern arm found the thieves, but in the finding was so surprised that it almost lost its victim.

Officers crept beside a box car; voices were heard whispering.

"Here they are," said the law.

"Alright, go around the door," said a superior.

The quarry had evidently heard noises, for when an officer peeped within the old car, he was face to face with a bobbed haired Amazon, who un-Amazon like, giggled at him.

More giggles came from within.

Calmly smoking cigarettes two hours later, Ruby Little, 16 and Lena Johnson, 17, girl hoboos, believed to be from Muskogee, told their story.

"We took the cushions to sleep on," said Lena.

"Think we're gonna sleep on a hard floor? Said Ruby.

Their faces were covered with coal dust, and their

MATNEY FOR MAYOR



Willie Matney, Boy Scout Candidate for Mayor, is an Eagle Scout, Senior Patrol Leader of Troop 2. He solicits your vote.

CAPTION READS, "Willie Matney, Boy Scout Candidate for Mayor, is an Eagle Scout, Senior Patrol Leader of Troop 2. He solicits your vote.

shapely arms were blackened in spots high above the elbow. Confinement in [a] jail cell was just another experience in a silly world.

"What difference does it make?" said Lena.

"Yeah. We ain't got nothing else to do," said Ruby.

They are held without charges, but it is expected charges will be based on the examination of the city physician Tuesday night.

Saturday, February 16, 1924

GOLD TICKETS TO BE PRINTED HERE

Gold-plated theatre tickets are being made by Weldon, Williams and Lick, for the opening night of a Las Angeles theatre.

The tickets are designed to be used as souvenirs,

and are engraved with the customary ticket lettering. They are of slight weight.

According to officials of the printing house, the gold ticket is somewhat unusual, and has probably never been used as a souvenir before in this country.

Thursday, February 21, 1924

SKY ADVERTISING

Beeler Blevins, aviator, split the air last night carrying underneath the wings of his plane the word "Zerogas" spelled in electric lights. Zerogas is the name of the product of the Gibson Oil company.

Tuesday, February 26, 1924

AIRPLANE FAILS TO AGREE WITH RUMORS OF FALL – GOSSIP HAD AVIATOR KILLED, BUT ROOF OF HOUSE WAS ONLY DAMAGED CHECK-UP SHOWS

Downtown Fort Smith pricked up its ears early Monday evening to the wild reports of a burning airplane circling to the ground out on North O street, near Tankersley dairy farm, and when the sounds across town of a siren of the type used on ambulances shrieked its way in the general direction of North O street, the matter was settled.

Automobiles started on a pilgrimage to the vicinity, and wild rumors of a daring aviator's horrible death flew like wildfire from mouth to mouth.

Here's the inside.

Beeler Blevins, aeronaut, flying the colors of Gibson Oil company's "Zero gas" had made a trip to Poteau in the early evening to flash the brilliance of his product in electrics fastened beneath his plane.

The citizens, presumably sufficiently dazzled for one evening, were left behind about 7:00 o'clock, and Blevins started back toward Fort Smith. He arrived shortly before 7:30, switched off his sign and prepared to land near the Tankersley dairy at the end of North O Street. As the aviator neared the ground, he suddenly switched on his lights, because the reflection materially aids a smooth landing at night.

The sudden burst of electricity, together with a fire alarm, gave rise to a terrible rumor which triggered telephones in all the cigar stores and the Southwest American office until early hours Tuesday morning.

The rumor of the dead aviator was all too false, but

Jim Burke, Negro, 2205 North O street, can testify there was something rotten in Denmark regardless of the airplane.

It was the roof of his house the fire department was called to save. And which, by the way, it didn't save. Jim is "out" about \$100.

Wednesday, February 27, 1924

SOCIETY CURVE NOT AGAIN IN OPERATION

"Society Curve," one-time notorious dancing pavilion on Texas road three miles south of Fort Smith is not revived. Such is the report of Sheriff Pink Shaw Tuesday night after he investigated a dance at Mill Creek, near the scene of the hilarious affairs of a few years ago, which were criticized from the pulpit and which are restrained from operating by a chancery court injunction.

Reports of armed youths, and "sassy" lasses at the Mill Creek Hall were proved without foundation by the sheriff when he surprised a group of happy young people early in the evening Tuesday.

Sheriff Shaw searched the crowd of men and the premises without finding any weapons or trace of liquor. The dance, he said, was "normal" in every respect.

Thursday, February 28, 1924

HIGHWAY SOUTH TO BE COMPLETED IN ONE MONTH

The last gap in the shale surface on the Fort Smith-Greenwood road, between Fort Smith and the prairie north of Jenny Lind, was almost closed Wednesday afternoon and will be finished early Thursday, if weather is favorable.

But for a break-down in the steam shovel which loads the shale into trucks at Mine 17 at Jenny Lind, the gap at the Athletic smelter would have been closed Wednesday. About 40 trucks, hauling from one and a half to three cubic yards at a load, were moving shale Wednesday. About 20 men are working at the shale pile at the mine, loading trucks with slips, when the steam shovel is down.

As soon as the gap near the Athletic smelter is finished, the shale surface will be applied on the road from the end of the new shale, on the prairie, into Jenny Lind. Shaling of the section from Jenny Lind to

BIG AUCTION SALE OF BUILDING LOTS BONNEVILLE SECOND ADDITION

To the City of Fort Smith

**Located near Trusty School on Spradling
Avenue**

TUESDAY, MARCH 25th

You will probably never have the opportunity of buying city building lots at your own price again.

Every Lot Will Be Sold

Regardless of the price you bid we are going to sell each and every lot in the Beautiful Gen. Benj. Bonneville Second addition over the auction block Tuesday, March 25th.

This is a bonafide Auction

No Reservations—No By Bids.

Every lot will go to the highest bidder.

Don't forget the big free Barbecue at the noon hour.

Hayes Realty and Auction Co.

of Springfield, Tenn.

Greenwood will be started as soon as the dump is dry enough, and with good weather can be finished in about 30 days.

Tuesday, March 4, 1924

LICENSE TO RUN ROOMING HOUSE ORDERED REVOKED

A license to operate a rooming house on North First Street, granted by Dr. R. F. Parks, district health office to Ella Scott, was revoked by the city commission Monday morning. No intention of Mrs. Scott to carry the decision to a higher court was announced, city officials said.

The rooming house, which was closed originally by city officials, has not been operating since March 31 of

last year, and was closed after a vigorous court fight. Dr. Park, who appeared before the commission, told city officials Monday that he reissued the license since the woman had been out of town for ten months and upon her return produced proof of good character and conduct for that period of time.

"I told her that the license would be in effect so long as she operated a legitimate business and revoked when she did not," said Dr. Parks.

Bertha Dean, whose rooming house was closed with the Scott house, made an application also to Dr. Parks for a new license when the latter was granted a license, but the district health officer testified that he refused to issue her a license because he had no proof that complaints of character would not ensue, according to city officials.

Wednesday, March 5, 1924

KLAN WOMEN TO GIVE PARTY FOR THE MEN

Announcement has been made that the women of the Ku Klux Klan will entertain the men of that organization at the Klavern, corner [of] Ninth Street and Garrison Avenue, Friday evening. The banquet will be served at 8 o'clock and a national speaker for the women's organization is scheduled to make an address.

Friday, March 7, 1924

NEW SUIT FILED AGAINST DR. LAWS BY A. L. CARPENTER

A new suit charging alienation of the affections of Mrs. A. L. Carpenter and seeking \$20,000 damages as a result was filed in circuit court Thursday by A. L. Carpenter against Dr. C. E. Laws of Fort Smith. Non-suit was taken by the plaintiff when a similar suit was called for trial in the October term of Circuit Court.

Carpenter, in his original complaint and in the suit filed Thursday, charges that Dr. Laws alienated the affections of his wife when she was placed under his care for medical treatment in 1918.

Carpenter further alleges that the physician continued to be attentive to his wife for several years and that at one time Dr. Laws offered him \$500 "to keep quiet." Carpenter alleges that he refused to accept the money.

The petitioner declares that he has been damaged in

the amount of \$20,000 as a result of the physician's attentions to his wife, which he charges resulted in their separation early last year. The petition states that Carpenter and his wife were married March 27, 1904, and that they have two young children.

Tuesday, March 11, 1924

NEGRO IS SOUGHT BY OFFICERS IN MOFFET SLAYING

Following a quarrel which is alleged to have grown out of a carousal, Calvin Banes, negro barber of Moffett, Okla., was shot and instantly killed by another negro in the Banes barber shop Sunday night about 11 o'clock. The slayer is believed to have been "Booster" Jamerson, for whom Sequoyah county officers are searching.

Other members of the party are said to have left when Jamerson brought a gun into play, leaving no actual witness to the shooting. Deputy Sheriffs Fred Bradley and Roy Cheek, who are searching for Jamerson, expressed the opinion that he left the state on a freight train shortly after the killing.

Negro witnesses who appeared before Justice A. B. Ferguson in Moffet Monday said that the members of the party had been shooting dice and that following a quarrel between Banes and Jamerson the latter went to his home to get a gun. Witnesses said that upon his return Banes fired into the ground, but that Jamerson returned the fire, the shots entered Banes wrist and back, inflicting wounds which resulted in almost instant death.

Banes was 40 years old and is survived by his wife and eight children. The body was brought to Rowe Undertaking parlors in Fort Smith Monday morning.

Saturday, March 15, 1924

DEFENSE OF DOG RESULTS IN BOY BEING INJURED

A real boy can stand considerable bumping around himself, will fight and be fought, whip and be whipped, cuss and be cussed under some conditions, but he draws the line at an attempt to wound or impose upon his dog, either by look or act. A pedigreed or unclassified canine is welcomed on equal footing. His dog is his best friend and pal and a boy will let all the countryside know that's just how he feels about the matter.

Because George White, 10, felt just that way about his dog, Luther Lamb, 11, a playmate is in a local

Is A Boy Worth A Dime?

Fort Smith Boys
Need Your Help



KICK IN
FOR THE
KIDS

This Is What 10c Per Week Means to
the Boys of Fort Smith

A chance for every youngster, regardless of his position in
life, to make good while at play, at work and at home.

Wanted

Every man and woman in Fort Smith who is regularly and gainfully employed, to contribute 10c per week, to promote the boys' work for the newsies, the under-privileged boy, the boy out of school and the Boy Scouts.

"Kick in for the Kids"

Ask Your
Employer
How You
May Help



hospital suffering from scalp wounds inflicted from a heavy piece of steel thrown by White, who is first said to have showered sling shots in profusion on Lamb, and finding this punishment inadequate, pursued a more telling course.

According to witnesses the boy's parents are camped near the Fort Smith Wagon factory. White is the owner of a dog, which friends declare, in the master's estimation, puts other dogs to shade. Employees of the wagon factory said that Lamb had hitched Whites dog to a small wagon and was driving him around when the owner detected his pet. Reluctance on the part of Lamb in releasing the dog is said to have caused immediate trouble.

White peppered the elder boy with sling shots and when this failed to produce the desired effect, struck Lamb in the temple with a heavy piece of steel, according to witnesses. The boy was knocked unconscious. Wagon factory employees summoned the Fentress ambulance and the injured boy was removed to sparks hospital, according to witnesses. Reports from the hospital indicated Friday night that Lamb had regained consciousness and was resting comfortably.

Friday, March 21, 1924

FORT SMITH WOMAN GIVEN COMMISSION

Mrs. Birdie Herrod, matron of the Fort Smith Welfare building is Fort Smith's first police matron. Her commission was issued and ordered into effect Thursday by Chief of Police M. R. Oots.

Although Mrs. Herrod is the first woman to receive an initial commission under Chief Oots, he reissued commissions for matrons on duty at each of the city depots when he took office, he announced. These commissions in effect are the same as that issued to Mrs. Herrod, but her powers [are] slightly broader, according to Chief Oots.

Thursday, March 27, 1924

**FIRST STRAW HAT SEEN
WITH DEBUT OF SPRING**

One swallow doesn't make a summer; neither does one straw make a spring.

Inasmuch as these things are true, certain it is that spring has arrived in Van Buren. Forgetting all hokum concerning the "last straw" permit announcement, that the first "straw" used in sense of "hat" of the season was seen Wednesday afternoon, the owner strolled complacently down the main thoroughfare and loitered around the passenger stations.

This harbinger of early summer should be commended, first upon his bravery and second upon his desire for comfort, for with the sunshine of mid-day, the old faithful "katy" probably felt better than a heavier felt, passersby opined.

**BENEFIT GAMES FOR HOSPITAL
BUILDS BOOKED**

The first exhibition game for the Twins will be staged Sunday across the river when the Regulars will meet the Yannigans in the first of three special benefit games [which] Blake Harper will give for the three hospital guilds of Fort Smith.

All gate receipts, concession money and other collections that naturally go with a ball game, will be given to charity, the club even furnishing ammunition for the occasions in way of baseballs.

The three hospital guilds operate wards for unfortunate persons who take ill and possess not the means for medical attention and President Harper figures such benefit games will be doing a good service to humanity.

Piggly Wiggly

915 Garrison Avenue



LISTEN FOLKS

Our Saturday Bargain Counter is groaning under the weight of the many bargains we have for you. Be sure to come on Saturday.

100 Armours' Star Hams 20c
8 to 12 pounds. Special for Saturday only, lb.

**REMEMBER THE PLACE
915 GARRISON AVE.**

Admission for these three games will be 50 cents.
Two other games are to be played later.

Tuesday, April 1, 1924

**CONVENT CORNERSTONE
IS LAID ON SUNDAY**

The cornerstone of the new Scholastic convent of the Benedictine Sisters was laid Sunday afternoon at 3:20 o'clock. Ceremonies were directed by Father Basil Egoff, pastor of St. Boniface church, authorized by the Right Reverend John B. Morris, bishop of Arkansas diocese, many persons were present from Fort Smith and several surrounding towns.

Convent school will open in the structure in September and one wing of the building will be completed by the end of summer, as specified by terms of the contract.

Tuesday, April 15, 1924

**FORT SMITH DOGS
WILL BE GIVEN THEIR DAY**

Every dog has its day, and Fort Smith canines will have their day May 16, when grey hounds, coon hounds, Airedales, bull dogs, poodles, mongrels, and curs will be

paraded through the streets; their fur washed and ribbons tied smartly around their necks in observance of "Dog Day."

Dr. Cons Wilson, John H. Rebsamen and Henry Williams, who met in the office of Blake Harper Monday night, made tentative plans for the festival, which is celebrated in a number of cities in the country and is sponsored by dog lovers.

Cash prizes, as yet not determined, will be offered to dogs surpassing others in the diversified virtues of dogdom. It is planned to bring in dogs from several states.

Whether the dog by high or low caste, pet of a rich family, or the despised and much-kicked member of a poor group, he is eligible for the contest, and will be given an opportunity to excel others in his particular class. Class distinctions will be observed—bull dogs will compete against bull dogs and curs against curs.

Wednesday, April 16, 1924

BOYS POLITICAL WAR IS BECOMING ONE WARM AFFAIR

Political warfare among Fort Smith boys is developing into one warm contest similar to the national presidential campaign; observers have been heard to say during the last few days. Three candidates for mayor and three for each of the two places on the city commission were nominated by a regular convention and two independent candidates were put in the field by the Boy Scouts and Boy Rangers. These political aspirants, with their supporters, are canvassing the city for votes.

The election will be held April 26, in which every resident over 12 years old will be permitted to vote.

On May 1, the crowning event of Boy's Week, to be observed April 27 to May 3 under the auspices of the Rotary club, will be a parade of the boys. The parade will be led by the boy officials of the city, who will have charge of the municipal government on that date.

Boy's Week is a national celebration, instituted four years ago by William Butcher of New York, an ardent worker against bolshevism. Rotarians have taken over the project and more than 600 cities in the United States will observe it.

LEGION HALL SELECTED AS GUARD UNIT ARMORY

Headquarters and the armory of the new Fort Smith national guard unit, Battery G, 206th Coast Artillery

Anti-Aircraft, will be maintained at the American Legion hall, 510 North B Street, it was announced Tuesday. J. J. Creighton, first sergeant, will be in charge.

Recruiting for the unit will begin next week, it was decided Tuesday, Captain Otto Kayer will have charge of the recruiting and will be assisted by Sergeant Creighton.

Sixty-five men are needed to round out the battery. This is normal peace time strength, although a minimum of 62 is permissible. The unit also is permitted to recruit to 80 enlisted men and non-commissioned officers during peace time, although this is normal wartime strength of the National Guard units.

Thursday, April 17, 1924

FOUR DEFENDANTS GIVEN SENTENCES FOR NIGHT RIDING

Paris Ark., April 15—The four negroes from Catcher settlement, Crawford County, who were sentenced to prison terms in Logan circuit court Wednesday on charges of night riding, will be taken to the Arkansas state penitentiary Thursday.

Gus Richardson, alleged leader of the gang, was found guilty by a jury Wednesday and sentenced to a year. The other three, Charley Posey, Tandy Ferguson, and George Rucks, were given four months each after entering pleas of guilty. Posey entered his plea when the jury which heard his case failed to agree after 24 hours of deliberation.

Night riding charges against the other seven Negroes arrested at the same time were *nolle prossed*. These defendants had been in jail continuously since their arrest in December. All are young boys. In passing sentence on the defendants, Judge Cochran advised the

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Negroes not to return to the Catcher settlement.

PLANE IS DAMAGED WHEN LANDING MADE

The plane belonging to Aviators Echols and Johnson, who arrived in Fort Smith Sunday from Hot Springs, was badly damaged Tuesday night when it crashed into a wire fence at the Tankersley landing field, Booneville Heights. Neither of the men, who were in the machine at the time, were injured. One wing of the plane was demolished and Echols went to Hot Springs Wednesday to get repairs.

This is the second plane accident in Fort Smith in the last two weeks. The machine owned by the Blevins brothers was destroyed by fire ten days ago when it was caught in a grass fire at South Fort Smith.

Friday, May 2, 1924

WOMEN JURY FOR SPECIAL CASES WILL BE CALLED

Women will be summoned for jury service for the first time in the history of the Sebastian county circuit court, when the June term opens in Fort Smith, Circuit Judge John E. Tatum declared Thursday, when he instructed jury commissioners to name a special panel of forty women for service during the term.

Friday, May 16, 1924

STROZIER WANTS HOME FOR TWO LITTLE CHILDREN

Homes for two children, a dark-eyed baby girl eight months old and a bright healthy eight-year-old boy, are needed according to Commissioner R. P. Strozier Thursday.

Both children are very attractive and will make their foster parents happy.

The baby girl is a beautiful child with dark hair and eyes and is healthy and happy. The boy is a manly little fellow and is energetic and strong. "I would like to place him on a farm where he could have school advantages yet would be able to help make his way in the world," said Commissioner Strozier.

The baby girl has a temporary home, but Commissioner Strozier said Thursday that he is anxious to have the child permanently located with a reliable Christian family. The boy has been taken to the Children's home, where he may be seen by any

TONIGHT
MAY 15 AT 7:30 TO 10 P. M.
FORMAL OPENING
Fort Smith Drug Company's
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New Soda Fountain
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OPEN HOUSE DURING THESE HOURS

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7:30 TO 10 P. M.

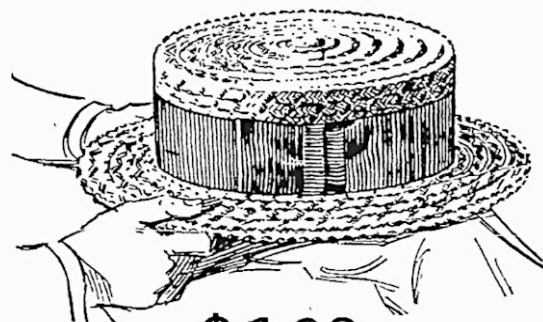
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prospective mother or father, according to the county commissioner.

Tuesday, May 20, 1924

**SIXTEEN MEN TO CANVASS CITY
FOR FUNDS FOR DRIVE**

Eight teams of two men each will canvass the Fort Smith business district personally Tuesday morning for contributions to be used in improving the beautiful Skyline drive on Mount Vista, over the bluffs west of Van Buren. The movement is sponsored by the Noon Civics club and is in [the] charge of George T. Carnall.

The drive is one of the most beautiful in northwest Arkansas, but is badly in need of improvements as a result of heavy wash outs and constant usage since its construction a few seasons ago. Visitors to Fort Smith and Van Buren who have driven on the Skyline drive declare the view and scenic beauty unequalled in the section, according to members in charge of the drive.

Tuesday, May 27, 1924

EXPLOSION AT BRICK PLANT LATE TUESDAY

Shooting of 163,000 cubic yards of shale, sufficient to operate the plant of the Acme Brick Company for one year, was postponed from Monday afternoon to Tuesday afternoon at 6 o'clock, officers of the company announced Monday. Delay was necessary because of the condition of the formation caused by recent heavy rains.

Six or seven thousand tons of high explosives will be used in loosening the shale, and the public is very cordially invited to witness the demonstration.

Tuesday, June 10, 1924

YOUTH INJURED AT SMELTER IS BETTER

J. T. Williams, south Fort Smith youth who was burned Sunday morning when he fell backward in a wheelbarrow of hot metal at the Fort Smith Spelter company, was reported to be resting nicely at the Sparks Memorial hospital Monday afternoon.

The youth was rushed to the hospital where doctors reported that his condition was not serious.



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Wednesday, June 18, 1924

**COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE
WORK ON GOLF COURSE**

Definite shaping of the work of the Fort Smith Parks and Playgrounds association toward the building of a municipal golf course was furthered at a meeting of the committee Tuesday night.

Although the attendance at the meeting was less than at the previous meeting, active discussion of various sites around the city was taken up.

Due to the high sale value of a part of the ground first thought to be available near the Park Hill addition, between Twenty-Third Street and Greenwood Avenue, it was found that no lease could be obtained for five years from the owners.

A part of the property which is not active on the market was offered by Leigh Kelley, but it was not thought to be sufficient for the course.

**MAYOR ORDERS ICE CREAM
WAGONS OFF STREET ON SUNDAY**

Ice cream peddlers must cease selling their wares on the streets of Fort Smith on Sunday, according to an order issued by Mayor D. L. Ford to Chief of Police M. R. Oots Tuesday.

The mayor alleges that the "continued driving up and down the streets ringing of bells and yelling is a flagrant violation of the Sunday laws."

The chief of police has been directed to instruct the officers to arrest any man canvassing and selling ice cream or any other wagons or merchandise from wagons on the Sabbath day.

Friday, June 20, 1924

**BOARD PRESIDENT OF TILLES HOME
RESIGNS IN FALL**

Retirement of Mrs. R. A. Clarkson, president of the board of the Rosalie Tilles Orphans' home, was announced Thursday, effective October 28.

The life of Mrs. Clarkson and the history of the success of the home for the last 25 years are interwoven, marking each event closely from the very foundation of the home.

Foster mother of more than 5,000 children who have been under the care of the home and who have left to make their own place in the world, the loss of Mrs. Clarkson on October 28, closing a quarter of a century of the home's activity, will be keenly felt.

During the recent years, Mrs. Clarkson's health has been failing, but she has borne up under her duties at the home.

Recently however, she has become convinced that she must give up her active life at the home.

Her record at the home for successful management of the institution, as well as the success of the children after leaving the home, will stand unequalled for time.

The children protected from disease and privation, have grown into young womanhood and manhood healthy; only six deaths having occurred during the history of the home.

Mrs. Clarkson's husband was one of the original founders of the home, which was at first known as the Fort Smith Children's home. Mrs. Clarkson was elected president of the board [on] October 24, 1894, and has served since that time.

Friday, June 28, 1924

**RUCK AND BETTIS ELECTROCUTED
BY STATE AT PRISON**

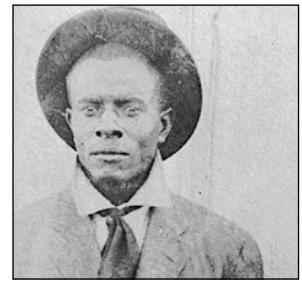
Little Rock, Ark., June 27—Following denial of executive clemency and failure to secure an injunction

in federal court, Spurgeon Ruck and Will Bettis, Crawford county negroes who were convicted last December 28, of first degree murder and criminal assault, in connection with the slaying of Mrs. Effie Latimer, white woman, at her home near Catcher, Crawford county, were electrocuted at the state penitentiary here early Friday morning.

Besides the guards and assistants, only twelve persons witnessed the executions. Warden Evans said that he had requests from more than 300 people of Crawford county and other sections of the state to be present at the time of execution.

The Negroes were convicted at separate trials. Each trial lasted one day. No violence developed during the trials, though there was much demonstration previous.

The chief witness for the state was Johnnie Clay, 13 years old Negro boy who stated that he was present at the time the woman was killed.



**CHARLES SPURGEON
RUCK**



WILL "SON" BETTIS



MRS. EFFIE LATIMER



Fort Smith native Al Whitson researches and selects articles to be used in the Journal's 100 Years Ago Newspaper column. His goal is to provide readers with insight and interest into the goings-on in our community a century past.

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 * — A portrait of the person(s) named is on the page indicated.
 (—) — For such as title, marital status, degree, etc.
 “_” — For nickname or special emphasis
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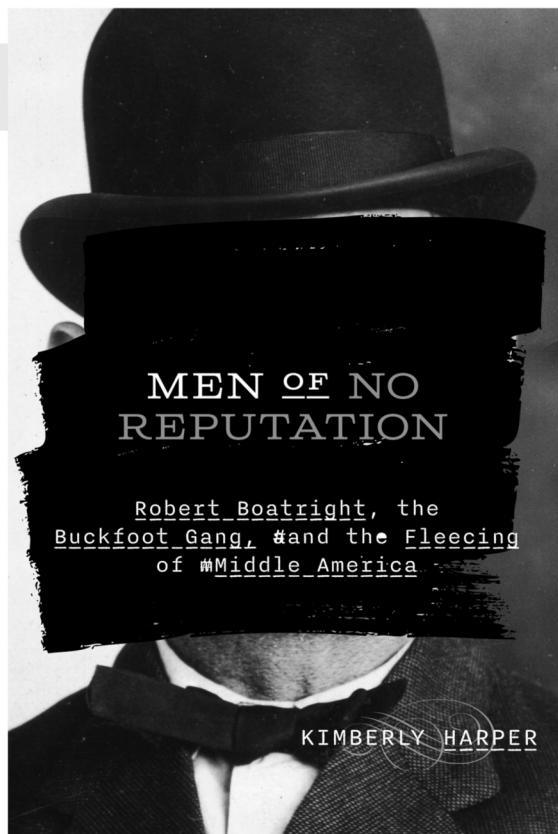


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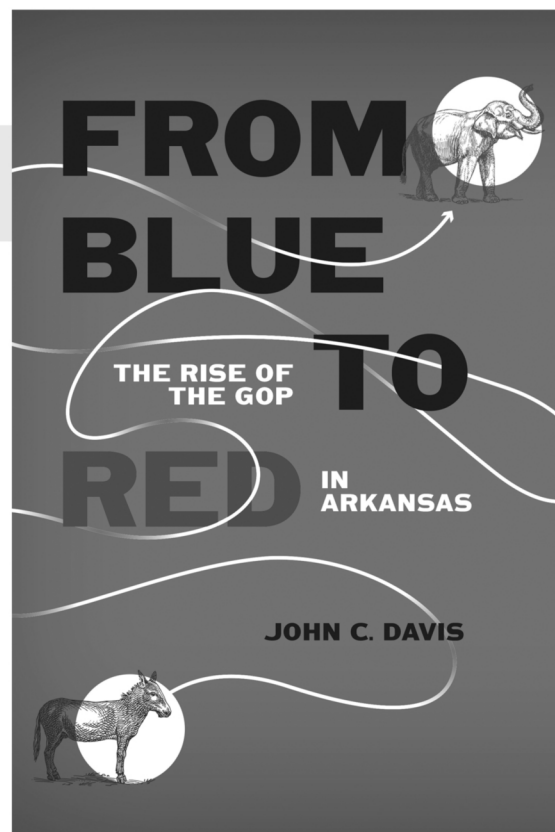
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