

# The JOURNAL



## Sister Cities Celebrate 40 Years



50 Years After the Fall of Saigon

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- ❖ *From St. Anne's to NASA: The Fitts Brothers*
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**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.

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Contact us online at [fortsmithhistory@gmail.com](mailto:fortsmithhistory@gmail.com). For your reference, you may visit our website, [www.fortsmithhistory.org](http://www.fortsmithhistory.org), where tables of contents for each issue can be found.

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

A submitted article is peer-reviewed by members of the *Journal's* editorial board and approved before publication. The due dates for manuscript 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 attributed, 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](mailto: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 New 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 the 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 the 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.

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Journal Editor &amp; Co-Founder, 1977-2004

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**COVER PHOTOS:**

(TOP) Signs in Fort Smith (left) and Cisterna, Italy (right) announce the "sister city" partnership between the two municipalities.

(BOTTOM) Indochinese refugees at Fort Chaffee.

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# News & Opportunities

## Fort Smith Historical Society

The Fort Smith Historical Society guest speaker for the last meeting of 2024 was Thomas Jacques of The King Biscuit Time Radio Hour and The Delta Cultural Center in Helena, Arkansas. He presented on the “Rock ’n’ Roll Highway” in Arkansas. Special guests Buddy Shute and Mark McGee played music before and after the presentation.

Visit the Fort Smith Historical Society at the new website: [fortsmithhistory.com](https://fortsmithhistory.com)! Browse The Journal archives, explore area resources, update contact information, and renew membership, or join the organization, all on the new site!

The Fort Smith Historical Society  
meets every third Tuesday  
at the Fort Smith Public Library main branch  
at 3201 Rogers Ave.



## Historical Society Named Grant Recipient

Representatives from small museums and heritage organizations across Arkansas gathered at the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism on September 20, 2024, for an award ceremony of the Arkansas Heritage Foundation. Fort Smith Historical Society president Bill Word and Linda Word, center in photo, holding award certificate for the FSHS entry written by Sue Robison. The \$2,500 grant was used to design our website and add stories, table of contents for each past issue, and links accessible at this address: <https://fortsmithhistory.com/>.

This year’s recipients include:

❖ Altus Historical Society, Altus Heritage House Museum Operations, \$2,500

❖ Calico Rock Community Foundation, Inc., Calico Rock Museum Operating Grant, 2,500

❖ Cleburne County Historical Society, Printing and Mailing Quarterly Journal, \$2,500

❖ Cross County Historical Society, Replacement of Awning, \$2,500

❖ Hardy History Association, Utilities, \$2,500

❖ Fort Smith Historical Society, Fort Smith Historical Society Website, \$2,500

❖ Hardy History Association, Utilities, \$2,500

❖ Henry Clay Yerger High School Museum, Utilities, \$2,500

❖ Little Rock Air Force Base Historical Foundation, Museum Uniform Display Cases, \$2,500

❖ Mississippi County Historical and Genealogical Society, \$2,500

❖ Pope County Historical Foundation, Modern Display of First Ladies’ Dress Replicas, \$2,500

❖ Saunders Memorial Museum, Utilities, \$2,500

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## Digitized Issues

The Boreham Library of the University of Fort Smith has digitized each *Journal* issue since Vol. 1, No. 1 in 1977 and the site includes a name index. Use this link:

[https://uafslibrary.com/fshsj\\_index2.php](https://uafslibrary.com/fshsj_index2.php)

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## Arkansas Historical Association

84th Annual Meeting 2025

Theme: “Law and Justice in Arkansas”

Fort Smith, April 10-12, 2025

Co-Host, Fort Smith Historical Society

Register through the Arkansas Historical Association website: [www.arkansashistoricalassociation.org](http://www.arkansashistoricalassociation.org)

\*\*\*

## Clayton House

514 North Sixth Street

Fort Smith

479-783-3000

[claytonhouse@claytonhouse.org](mailto:claytonhouse@claytonhouse.org)

All events require reservations or pre-ordered tickets. Visit [claytonhouse.org](http://claytonhouse.org) or our Facebook page or give us a call at 479-783-3000!

\*\*\*

## Fort Smith Museum of History

320 Rogers Avenue  
Fort Smith, AR 72901

Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday  
479-783-7841

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

### Upcoming Events at the Museum

- ❖ Fort Smith General Darby Challenge Sunday, April 27, 2025
- ❖ Opening of John Bell Jr. Works of Art, traveling exhibition from the Fort Smith Regional Art Museum, May 2025
- ❖ Program with author Michael Wallis and Opening of Belle Starr Exhibition, Saturday June 7, 2025. Wallis is launching his new book on Belle Starr.
- ❖ Children's Summer Reading Program, each Thursday in June, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Free.
- ❖ Christmas In July, July 11-12 at The Bricks at Brunswick Place.
- ❖ Yarnell's Ice Cream, made in Arkansas since 1932, is featured in the museum's old-fashioned soda fountain. Come in and treat yourself.

❖ In September 2024, a delegation from Cisterna, Italy celebrated the fortieth anniversary of Cisterna, Italy, and Fort Smith becoming "Sister Cities." Cisterna Vice Mayor Dr. Maria Innamorato and other dignitaries were present, as well as Fort Smith leaders and museum staff. The exhibit, running through Spring of 2025, "Celebrating 40 Years of 'Gemellaggio!'" focuses on the journey the two cities took to become "Sister Cities."

Visit [www.fortsmithmuseum.org](http://www.fortsmithmuseum.org) for more information



*Courtesy of Caroline Speir,  
Executive Director, FSMH*

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## Chaffee Museum Complex

The Chaffee Barbershop Museum and Military Museum reopened in January 2025 after display remodels. The museum is opened Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., except on national holidays. 7313 Terry Street, Fort Smith, 72916.

\*\*\*

## Drennen-Scott Historical Site

Visitor Center—221 North Third Street  
Van Buren, Arkansas  
479-262-2750

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

### Drennen Scott House and Willhaf House

For more information contact Tom Wing, Director of the Drennen-Scott and Willhaf Historical Sites by email at [drennen-scott@uafs.edu](mailto:drennen-scott@uafs.edu).

Facebook: Drennen-Scott Historic Site

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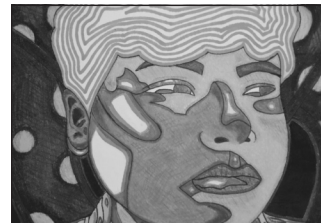
## Fort Smith Regional Art Museum

1601 Rogers Avenue—Fort Smith  
479.784.2787—[fsram.org](http://fsram.org)

### Exhibits

#### ❖ Through May 25:

*The North Side*, art by Northside High School students. Northside art students are proud to present a collection of artworks displaying their



unique personalities and talents.

#### ❖ Through June 1:

*Jeffry Cantu: Sublime Abstractions*, a multi-disciplinary exhibit by Fort Smith native Jeffry Cantu. Cantu studied art at UAFS and his work draws influences from his Mexican culture and from his period stationed in Japan as a member of the U.S. Navy. Cantu creates layered and textured artworks that explore the multifaceted aspects of personal experiences, relationships, and cultural



**CANTU, at opening reception**  
(Courtesy Elizabeth Hazel Moreton)



influences that shape one's identity.

❖ **Permanent Collection:** Dr. William E. Knight  
Porcelain Gallery

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401 North Sixth Street—Fort Smith  
**2025 Season**

❖ *Girls' Weekend*, May 29-June 7

❖ *Oklahoma!* July 17-August 2

❖ *Wait Until Dark*, September 25-October 4

For seating and start time information, contact  
information is online at <https://fslt.org/2025-season>

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### 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.

The above is reprinted from the tenth year of the *Journal*, 1987.

We feel the same about our dear members in this, our forty-ninth year.

Our Fort Smith Historical Society membership runs from January 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026.

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



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INDOCHINESE REFUGEES AT FORT CHAFFEE, ARKANSAS

(Courtesy UAfS Pebley Center)

# 50 Years After the Fall of Saigon

*A Review of the U.S. Army After Action Report on the resettlement program for Indochinese refugees, including actions at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas*

**By Sue Robison**

In March 1965, President Lyndon Johnson authorized the deployment of U.S. Marine forces to an airbase in Da Nang, South Vietnam. This action is considered the first of what became the Vietnam War. More than 50,000 American military deaths later, U.S. forces officially pulled out of Vietnam on March 29, 1973.

During the time the United States forces spent in Vietnam, the country itself was divided between citizens displaying loyalty to the Americans in the south and those living under the Communist control of the Khmer Rouge in North Vietnam. United States officials realized that in the wake of our departure, thousands of non-combatants would face retribution at the hands of the approaching North

Vietnam military, and those with direct links to Americans stationed in the south could suffer grievously for their loyalty. The havoc wreaked on the small nation of Vietnam by more than a decade of war was almost unmeasurable, but the American people and the American government would not turn their backs or deny responsibility for the plight of Indochinese citizens caught up in the fall of their own government.

The evacuation of Saigon on April 30, 1975, is the date most Americans recognize as the end of the Vietnam War. Visions of distraught parents holding children up to American servicemen in departing helicopters, hoping their youngsters might be rescued from the vengeful northern forces marching into their city, are burned into America's collective consciousness. As these images flooded their

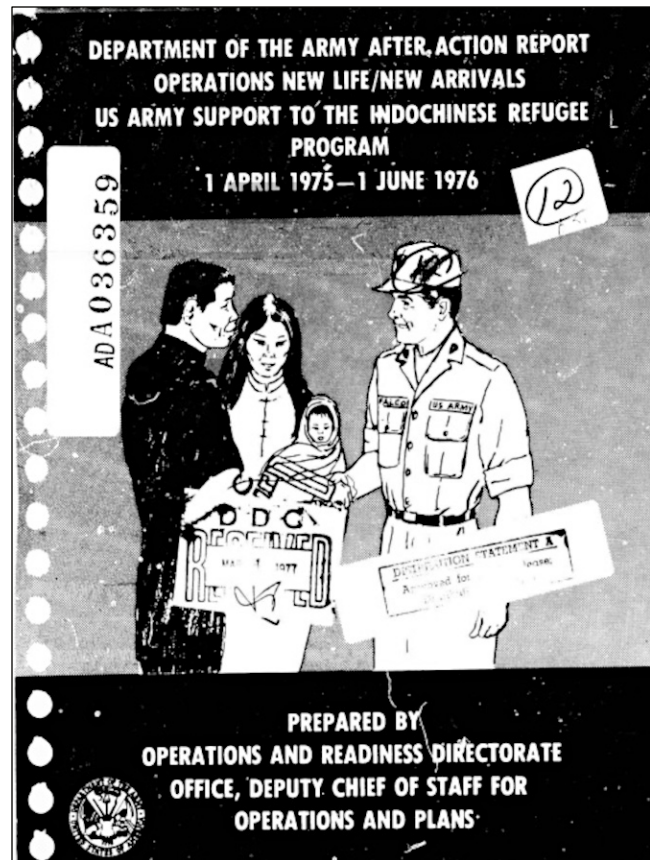
television sets on evening newscasts, most Americans were not aware of efforts already underway to save Indochinese children.

Weeks before the fall of Saigon, the U.S. government was planning the rescue and resettlement of not only children, but Indochinese adults with reason and desire to flee their homelands. When President Gerald Ford called for the implementation of Operation Baby Lift on April 4, 1975, he set into motion a series of carefully planned and executed efforts to rescue, remove, and resettle Indochinese citizens escaping a former war zone. The orphans evacuated during Operation Baby Lift were only the first of thousands to seek and receive protection within the United States.

As the end approached for American involvement in Vietnam, government offices in Washington, D.C., directed appropriate agencies to prepare for refugees. The largest responsibilities of these actions fell to the U.S. military, which moved with near amazing speed to prepare for the arrival of thousands of individuals. At the end of the crisis associated with the arrival of refugees and after the final Indochinese family was processed into American citizenry, reports were filed detailing the operation. The recounting of the U.S. Army activities during the removal and resettlement of Indochinese refugees offers great insight into events at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, located just outside Fort Smith. The report, titled, "Department of the Army After Action Report/ Operations New Life/ New Arrivals/ US Army Support to the Indochinese Refugee Program/ April 1, 1975-June 1, 1976" is in the possession of the Pebley Center at the University of Arkansas, Fort Smith. What follows in this article is a summary of the report, with special attention given to the action at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.

The 294-page publication begins with a brief recap of Operation Baby Lift, which removed and relocated orphaned children from South Vietnam during the time period between April 1 and April 28, 1975. Baby Lift was an international effort eventually resettling 2,700 children, with 1,800 of the youngsters finding new homes within the United States. Operation Baby Lift brought with it the first evacuation of adult refugees and included more than 130,000 men, women, and children. With the formation of the president's Interagency Task Force for Indochina on April 18, 1975, the Department of Defense began making plans for handling as many as 200,000 refugees.

Following the brief recap of Operation Baby Lift, the report is divided into five distinct parts: (1) the U.S. Army role in Operation New Life/New Arrival, (2) the Army's participation in programs operating with the refugees, (3) areas of concern, (4) lessons learned during the operation, and (5) an appendix of declassified memos, photos, and charts. The report explains how the refugee program initiated by President Ford was administered by the



**AFTER ACTION REPORT COVER**



### **THE FALL OF SAIGON**

*(Courtesy of UAfS Pebley Center)*

Interagency Task Force for Indochina and allowed refugees to be admitted into the United States under the parole authority of the attorney general.

The Department of Defense was called upon to nominate military facilities to serve as host locations for refugees arriving from South Asia. The deciding factors in the final selection included location, geographical



distribution of refugee sites across the country, environmental impact on the selected location, and other political and practical concerns. Fort Chaffee near Fort Smith, Arkansas, was the first Army base selected as a refugee processing location with Fort Sill, Oklahoma, named Chaffee's support base. At the time of its selection, Fort Chaffee was a semi-active installation regularly hosting as many as sixty-two military and civilian personnel and a rotation of more than 1,000 troops. To get the fort "out of mothballs," medics, cooks, clerks, and other specialists were required, a command structure needed to be instituted, and service facilities activated. The congressional representatives of each nominated state were consulted and at 4:24 p.m. on April 29, 1975, an oral order was given to execute plan New Arrivals for Fort Chaffee that included directions to be prepared to receive refugees by 9 a.m. on the second day of May.

The Department of Defense was called upon to provide transportation and to create refugee centers in the Pacific. The major intake sites in the Pacific were the islands of Guam and Wake, which quickly reached their population limit. Fort Chaffee was, at that time, one of three mainland military installations accepting refugees processed through Guam, but an approaching typhoon season motivated the government to open a fourth location. The opening of U. S. Army site Fort Indiantown Gap completed the group of U.S. military installations accepting and processing Indochinese refugees: Camp Pendleton, a Marine base in California, Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania, and Fort Chaffee U.S. Army installation in Arkansas. These military bases were charged with housing, feeding, providing medical care for refugees, and maintaining security on their property. It was charged to the civilian operated non-profits to process and handle the resettlement of the refugee families entering the United States.

The Executive Summary near the beginning of the report speaks to the volume of refugees handled at the U.S. Army bases during the resettlement program. It is reported that Fort Chaffee received and processed more than 50,000 refugees between May 2 and December 20, 1975. The second U.S. Army installation involved, Fort Indiantown Gap, processed 22,000 refugees between May 28 and December 15, 1975. These numbers, combined with the number of Indochinese processed at Point Orote on Guam, showed the U.S. Army handling and processing fifty-five percent of the total number of refugees received into the United States. The author of the summary referred to the efforts as, "...a highly challenging chapter in U.S. Army history."

Part One of the report details the U.S. Army role in Operation New Life/New Arrivals and begins with a

synopsis of political and military situations within the Republic of Vietnam and the Khmer Republic during early 1975 that were considered points of concern for the United States government. The Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, General Fred Weyand, was sent to Vietnam to evaluate the situation. Upon his return, he reported to the president and both houses of Congress that events quickly unfolding could call for a complete reversal in the relationship between the United States, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Weyand recommended support be shifted from military to humanitarian efforts, with the probability of planning for the evacuation of a considerable number of civilians. Within a few weeks of the general's return, the likely consequences of a military defeat solidified, and the United States felt a strong obligation to rescue Vietnamese and Cambodians affiliated with our efforts in Indochina.

On April 15, 1975, President Gerald Ford appointed Ambassador L. Dean Brown as special representative for the Indochinese and director of the Interagency Task Force for Indochina to coordinate evacuations from Asia. Members of this agency were said to work twenty-four hours a day and to be in near constant consultations with countless government agencies to meet their charge of processing an expected 150,000 refugees by December of the same year.

On April 28, 29, and 30, of 1975, Operation Frequent Wind evacuated U.S. mission personnel from Saigon. This operation officially terminated the presence of the United States of America inside the Republic of Vietnam.

The Department of Defense called for military services to nominate facilities as potential refugee location centers. The report names the chosen centers and explains the reasoning behind their selection. Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, was one of the original three U.S. Army selections, which included Fort Pickett, Virginia, and Camp Roberts, California. Fort Chaffee was eventually the U.S. Army base selected, chosen for its immediate availability to the project, resources accessible through nearby population areas, and its location in relation to the two other original choices: the U.S. Marine base of Camp Pendleton in California and the Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. The report notes that Fort Chaffee was considered part of, "a practical and politically acceptable geographical distribution of sites across the country and divided the housekeeping chores of refugee operations among the three services."

Donald G. McDonald arrived at Fort Chaffee on April 30, 1975, to serve as senior civil coordinator of the reception center. His instructions were to be ready to receive the site's first refugees on May 2, and to expect Fort Chaffee to handle and process up to 20,000 refugees on a regular basis. The number of Indochinese actually handled

at Fort Chaffee would surpass 50,000 by the end of the program. The Army 96th Civilian Affairs Battalion, the PSYCP Battalion, and the 720th MP Battalion arrived at Fort Chaffee on May 1 in preparation for the first refugee airlift arrival at the Fort Smith airport the following day. The airplane's touchdown on May 2, 1975, was the official beginning of Operation New Life at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.

Later that May, Julia Taft, deputy assistant secretary of Health, Education and Welfare was appointed acting director of the Interagency Task Force for Indochina. Following the appointment, the Joint Refugee Information Clearing Office, staffed by Reserve personnel, was activated to assist resettlement centers by improving sponsorship efforts and offering support to Army members stationed at Fort Chaffee, as well as Marine and Air Force locations. With the rapid influx of refugees, the decision was made on June 14 to increase Fort Chaffee's maximum number of refugees from 20,000 to 25,000 individuals. It only took ten days for Fort Chaffee to reach its new maximum of 25,000 Indochinese adults and children within its confines at any given time.

The government expected refugees to move through the reception and resettlement process much faster and with fewer problems than were actually encountered. The beginning of the program was met with a series of administrative problems, and with delays created while attempting to transfer refugees from American centers who asked to be resettled in France.

In May 1975, the Army base at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, was officially declared the fourth and final processing center for Indochinese refugees. Brigadier General Cannon, commander of task force New Arrivals at Fort Chaffee, was chosen to take command of the task force at Indiantown Gap. The experience Cannon brought with him from the operation already in place in Arkansas proved to make for a quicker and more efficient program in Pennsylvania. Accompanying Cannon on his move were the Commander of the 46th Support Group and selected members of the task force New Arrivals from Fort Chaffee.

In early June, a group of refugees held on Guam began staging protests and asking to be repatriated to Vietnam. The U.S. government's proposal to move these refugees to Wake Island sparked more protests, and a growing sense of unease and desire to return to Vietnam spread through all location centers, including Fort Chaffee, where refugees staged demonstrations to show their own desire to return to their homeland. On June 24, a small group of refugees wishing to return to Vietnam was removed from Fort Chaffee and sent to Camp Pendleton, California, in an effort to consolidate all protesting repatriates. From there, the group was moved to Guam where a violent

demonstration in August resulted in the injury of four Deputy U.S. Marshals. The refugees rejected the more volatile of their leadership following the August incident, offering in their place reasonable negotiators who worked with the military to develop a plan of action to return them to Vietnam. Eventually, repatriates were allowed the use of a Vietnamese vessel, the *Thoung Tin 1*, for the voyage. Manned by Vietnamese with military or naval training, the boat set off from Guam for Vietnam on October 16, 1975, with 1,546 repatriates aboard, including those removed from Fort Chaffee.

As the resettlement program at Fort Chaffee moved into the autumn months of 1975, problems developed between the Army operation and the city of Fort Smith. The Arkansas-Oklahoma Gas Corporation informed the U.S. Army on September 17 it could not fulfill natural gas contract requirements to the fort during peak demand periods without reducing or curtailing deliveries to local industrial customers. It seemed that, in the time the Army fort stood unused, the city of Fort Smith grew, expanding its borders close to the base and increasing the demand for gas, which could not be met with existing lines. Although the U.S. Army entered into a long series of debates and negotiations, there was no settlement reached that was satisfactory to both parties. Natural gas was a limited resource to Fort Chaffee through the fall and early winter of 1975, with space heaters for heating and propane for cooking used to supplement operations in the fort's living quarters and kitchens.

Since its selection as a refugee resettlement location, Fort Chaffee faced urgent physical needs to bring the property to a state of readiness. Not the least of these projects was the antiquated Fort Chaffee sewage system, which the Army feared would overflow into nearby streams since it operated with a system of small lagoons and was designed and constructed to serve a maximum of 8,000 soldiers. Suddenly the sewer system had to be capable of serving at least 28,000 people, and there were only a few days available to make the system operational before the arrival of the first refugees. The construction of two larger sewer lagoons covering more than fifty-six acres and the addition of aeration equipment constructed by military personnel with assistance from the Corps of Engineers at a cost of \$250,000 brought the system to a satisfactory working condition before the arrival of the first Indochinese refugees.

Near the end of September 1975, the city of Fort Smith dealt a blow to the refugee program at Fort Chaffee by threatening to cut off its water supply unless the U.S. Army agreed to pay increased water rates, and a group of water bills the city claimed were due from the Army. The local press presented the situation to the public in a manner

unflattering to the U.S. Army position and the refugee program. Another series of negotiations resulted in the U.S. Army agreeing to pay the invoiced bills under protest, while at the same time forwarding the case to Washington for appeal. While hardly an amicable settlement, it did allow for water to continue to flow uninterrupted to the fort.

Working in less than perfect conditions, the U.S. Army managed to operate thirty dining facilities at Fort Chaffee, providing food to 25,000 refugees daily. Originally, the messes were operated by 300 Army personnel, but those were eventually replaced with contractual workers to ease the burden on the military.

The Military Management Traffic Command supported the Installation Traffic Officers by preparing for refugees at airports of debarkation, and by working with commercial airline transportation. Fourteen of the flights the operation oversaw moved refugees from Eglin Air Force Base to Fort Chaffee. The costs for transportation involving commercial airlines were absorbed by the Interagency Task Force for Indochina.

The Department of the Army was tasked at the onset of the refugee operation by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to estimate the cost of the refugee program for initial planning. The original cost estimate fell between \$60 million and \$65 million. When final tallies were made and paperwork submitted for reimbursement, the cost of Operation New Life/New Arrivals recorded the expense of operation at Fort Chaffee alone to be \$36 million, by far the highest cost of any installation, with Fort Indiantown Gap presenting the second highest price tag at \$17.5 million. The cost of personnel compensation at Fort Chaffee reached almost \$8 million, while transportation expenses were listed as \$4 million, and the price tag for food at the fort approached \$15 million. The largest single charge on the Fort Chaffee final cost report was noted simply as "supplies," and showed an expense of slightly more than \$31 million.

One of the less noticeable programs underway during Operation New Arrival/New Life was the U.S. Army's Intelligence Agency's counterintelligence support at Fort Chaffee and Fort Indiantown Gap. Temporary resident offices were established at both locations to serve as liaisons between the military and civilian organizations to develop information regarding any threat to Army personnel, facilities, or equipment. The office also arranged interviews with refugees of interest, provided physical and document security, and served as a point of contact for civilian investigative offices. The six-man Intelligence office operated at Fort Chaffee from May 20 through December 15, 1975, and was actively involved in assisting the Secret Service during President Gerald Ford's visit to Fort Chaffee.



**PRESIDENT GERALD FORD ARRIVES AT FORT CHAFFEE**

*(Courtesy Ford Presidential Library)*

While the U.S. government and military operations performed a laudable service to Indochinese refugees by quickly providing supplies to meet their basic needs, there remained a few items of convenience not provided by Fort Chaffee and Fort Indiantown Gap. Fort Chaffee was serviced through the U.S. Army Oklahoma Area Exchange, which activated six retail sites, eight food dispensaries, one gas service station, eight concessions, and sixty-three vending facilities to serve personnel and refugees at Fort Chaffee. These same outlets were made available to troops attending regular annual training at Fort Chaffee and retired military personnel making use of Fort exchanges. Refugees housed at Fort Chaffee and Fort Indiantown Gap were granted access to the standard military exchanges, with any special requests for goods or supplies being met by volunteer organizations working on the bases.

The physical health of refugees recently experiencing tremendous trauma was an issue faced by the Office of the Surgeon General. At both Fort Chaffee and Indiantown Gap, in-patient and out-patient services, preventative care, and veterinary support were provided, while 100 bed field hospitals were constructed for refugee use. After the initial services were established, pediatrics, OB/GYN, a screening team, and a laboratory were added, along with preventative medical specialists, to provide complete care. Dental care was limited to screening and referral to local services. A total of 325 medical personnel were active at Fort Chaffee during the refugee operation, a force second only to the 377-member staff located in the intake facility on the island of Guam. Medical personnel experienced an average seventy-one-day rotation while Fort Chaffee was active during the operation, with backup support available from Fort Sill in Oklahoma.

Agency participation from the Office of the Chief of Chaplains focused on religious activities and the spiritual



needs of Indochinese refugees. The Chaplains were positioned on staffs of Army commanders, serving both refugees and military personnel, and the Chief of Chaplains instituted the Chapel Indochinese Refugee Sponsorship Program, inviting local community members to assist and sponsor refugees. The Office of the Secretary of Defense stood in full support of the Chaplain program, which was instrumental in increasing local involvement in sponsorship.

Chaplains also faced the responsibility of providing Vietnamese, or Vietnamese-speaking, clergy and dealing with both inter-cultural and inter-faith issues. While Protestant and Catholic clergy were easily found among the refugee population or the local citizenry, Buddhist monks of the Vietnamese sect were not readily available in the United States. This led the clergy to seek assistance from four Buddhist monks of different sects, which eased the situation among the refugees.

The Office of the Judge Advocate General was primarily involved in crisis management, including assuring a continued natural gas supply to Fort Chaffee. While this situation concerning the gas supply was not settled to the Army's favor, the Judge Advocate's office continued providing legal advice to Army staff agencies. Military police had the authority to protect U.S. Army property and personnel, and the authority of the commander allowed them to suppress riots and other disturbances.

Refugee eligibility for hire or enlistment in military service were frequent topics of interest. While many refugees expressed a desire to enlist in the U.S. military services, their status as "parolees" and non-resident aliens rendered them ineligible. Other than limited positions as language instructors and intelligence consultants, there were no paid positions with the military available to refugees. However, the Indochinese were allowed to compete with American citizens for jobs paid for with non-appropriated funds.

The American economy was weak when the Indochinese arrived, with relatively few jobs to offer. The refugees, however, were capable of providing a force of many workers who had previous association with the United States as employees and contract workers seeking similar positions in America. Among the refugees were those who had been members of the Vietnamese armed forces who wanted to serve in the U. S. military, as well as workers who developed specialized skills after years of association with Americans, however they were denied employment in any government office due to their non-resident alien parole status. Finding employment for the refugees was an especially arduous task for volunteer agencies working in Operation New Life at Fort Chaffee.

The legal status of refugees and the amount of

authority the U.S. Army could exercise over them were issues arising early during the resettlement process. Refugees were admitted into this country as parolees and, as such, were both protected by American law and subject to the law. The U.S. Magistrates or the local civilian courts near military facilities such as Fort Chaffee heard cases involving federal or local infractions, although the actual number of such cases were few.

Before the arrival of the Indochinese refugees, the primary purpose of Fort Chaffee was serving as a training area for the Army National Reserve and Guard. There was some concern that troops might be displaced from their scheduled training because of Operation New Arrival/ New Life at Fort Chaffee, but the matter was quickly resolved by the erection of a tent city capable of accommodating five of the six brigades scheduled for 1975 training. The remaining brigade chose to train at a location other than Fort Chaffee.

Planners were originally certain the refugee resettlement/sponsorship program would wind down during the warm months of 1975, but delays extended the progress into the winter. When it became obvious there would be need for cold weather habitats and supplies, recommendations for winterization were made in a memorandum seeking approval to expend funds toward the process. On August 5, the Army was directed to update heating systems, install smoke detectors, and arrange for continued troop support at Fort Chaffee during the cold weather season.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service was charged with meeting cold weather clothing requirements for children and adult refugees at Fort Chaffee and Fort Indiantown Gap, which were the only sites scheduled to remain open into the cold weather seasons. Though the orders were placed in August, the bulk of the items did not arrive until November 1975, by which time the refugee population was significantly reduced due to the improved rapid and efficient sponsorship program operated by volunteer agencies. Finding itself with an unnecessary supply of winter clothing, the military contracted with the Salvation Army to operate a mail-order program for refugees with Fort Chaffee serving as the center retainer and service location for the distributions.

When the final refugee left Fort Chaffee, the U.S. Army turned its attention to scrutinizing its own actions in the face of a such an immediate and immense need. As with most business ventures, there were faults found with bookkeeping by the General Accounting Office, and the writers of the report encouraged anyone interested in viewing complete details of the financial reports stored with the Army to contact their representatives in Washington for details. However, it is recorded that appropriate corrective actions were taken until both the Department of the Army

and the Department of Defense were satisfied with the methods used to support the humanitarian project at Fort Chaffee and Fort Indiantown Gap, and with the results of those actions.

Despite its few bookkeeping blunders, the general opinion of the United States government was that its Army did an exemplary job during Operation New Arrivals/ New Life. One comment among many came from a Congressional representative who wrote, "Special commendation should go to the particular commanders who set up refugee [reception centers] in such a short time for so many people and to the members of our volunteer Armed Forces who toiled so diligently for so many hours to make the [centers] ready to receive these unfortunate Indochinese refugees and to feed and care for them."

The entire third section of the report deals with the financing, distribution of funds and goods, and record keeping during the operation. The writers explain that those handling money and goods during the evacuation and resettlement process expected their actions to be closely scrutinized by Congressional watchdogs and from the beginning were attentive to any expenditures or distributions that might be future areas of concern. Proper auditing from the beginning of the project is credited with the resulting good report received when expenditures were examined after the close of operations.

There was no shortage of investigations into Operation New Life, including those of the Congressional Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees formed by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee. The report notes there were several hearings held before various committees formed in both chambers of Congress, stating their written forms provide historic information on the activities of all armed services during Operation New Arrivals and Operation New Life. A bibliography for those interested in reading transcripts from the congressional hearings is included in the After Action report.

The report also provides a section concentrating on military awards and civilian recognition given after the end of the program. The Department of Defense authorized the award of the Joint Service Commendation Medal to deserving members of the Armed Forces who participated in Operations Baby Lift, New Life, and New Arrival. Some 600 recommendations were submitted by the U.S. Army Major Commands, but only 327 service members received the award. Another round of 600 awards was distributed, included a limited number of the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service, and Army Commendation medals.

Director of the Interagency Task Force, Julia Taft, recommended to the president that awards be distributed to several who worked in the refugee resettlement program.



#### ENGLISH LESSONS AT FORT CHAFFEE

*(Courtesy UAfS Pebley Center)*

Taft's concentration was on volunteers who worked with the operation, as well as outstanding military personnel, and she provided certificates and ribbons of service to approximately 3,500 civilian and military personnel. In January 1977, President Gerald Ford signed an executive order creating the Humanitarian Service Medal in appreciation of the service provided by the U.S. military during the crisis created by the evacuation and resettlement of Indochinese refugees.

The writers of the Army report dedicated a section of their account to lessons learned and recommendations for future, similar situations. This portion of the writing focuses on planning factors in the face of the evacuation, and problems arising from the military response as well as suggestions. It is accepted in the report there might come a future situation where the combined military of the United States would again be called upon to provide support in the form of personnel, materials, and facilities to care for a large number of foreign nationals within our borders.

The first suggestion made for easier operations in a similar emergency is the creation of a national level refugee program to coordinate civilian and military agencies. Considered the second most important suggestion is the creation of a task force to work with local government officials, civic and business leaders, and media outlets. The writers also suggested the refugee program director become a full-time position within the Department of State, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and other federal agencies. While the Army accepted its role in any future refugee emergencies, they requested a better prepared government organization capable of taking immediate control and relieving the military of handling problems better solved by members of the government.

Refugee well-being was not overlooked in the extensive military report. The need for information on the customs of refugees, as well as instruction in the English language and orientation in the American way of life for refugees, were stressed as necessities of any future programs. The Army requested better medical screening of refugees before arrival in the United States, including a system to prioritize the elderly, children, and those with special and critical needs. The necessity for inoculations was stressed in the writing, especially concerning children destined to enter the public school system, and any adult showing signs of recently suffering a contagious disease.

The report asks that the Department of Judge Advocate ascertain the legal status of refugees and disseminate the information as quickly as possible. It was understood that both federal and local jurisdictions of any future refugees should be determined prior to their arrival at any military base.

Those looking back upon the arrival of the Indochinese asked that, for future operations, every effort be made to arrange contract services for mess and refuse collection, in lieu of using military personnel for those functions. The obvious need for qualified linguists was not met by the military, so it was suggested a resource for translators be maintained for future use.

The authors took an in-depth look at the facilities used to house refugees entering the United States during emergency situations. A rapid assessment was suggested for facilities under consideration, with any repairs being made the responsibility of civilian contractors. They also called for a procurement team to be established at all future refugee centers, with the head of the team given complete authority to purchase as needed for their particular site.

The top priority of recommendations was the delineation of military and civilian responsibilities. The report urges the establishment of a joint task force whose responsibility it would be to assign duties between civilian and military agencies, thus allowing the quick institution of programs and simpler integration of refugees into the general population.

Simultaneous arrivals and departures of refugees from centers spread across the country made it difficult to keep an accurate count of the number of Indochinese in the program at any given time. This problem was complicated by constant counts being made by military and civilian organizations, with each presenting their totals as the official number. To remedy this problem, the report suggested a single agency, either military or civilian, be charged with the responsibility of developing a program to accumulate data from all sources and determine a daily, official count of persons in various stages of the resettlement program.

The Army looked at problems arising from the rotation of leadership in civilian organizations throughout the operation. Since many of these organizations were staffed by volunteers, there was a near constant turnover in personnel, with most workers spending no more than thirty days at a time with any group. This presented a problem for the Army when they were called on to replace missing personnel in volunteer organizations, especially if the departing worker was one in a leadership capacity. The Army strongly suggested a means to negotiate with volunteer agencies working in future refugee crisis situations to retain at least their highest placed officials throughout as much of the program as possible.

It was suggested a Congressional liaison be appointed in future emergencies to keep state and federal delegations aware of events unfolding in their areas. This was intended to prevent a repeat of the resistance met from some government officials when they learned their states were being considered for refugee sites, and the misinformation that continued throughout the early days after the sites were opened. It was also hoped that, by keeping in closer contact with federal officials, the Army might be better able to work with local governments and businesses during any actual future emergency. The need for communication and a person in charge of public relations was stressed as a means of maintaining better relationships with governments and communities.

The enforcement of law and maintaining order on refugee bases was described as a problem since there was no clear limitation set on the Military Police. While the U.S. Marshals Service had complete authority over refugees and refugee sites, they could not provide personnel to all locations, nor was it easy to have them reach a location quickly when needed. The Army believed this lack of clear-cut authority, had it been fully understood by a few of the unsettled and violent refugees during protests, would have led to problems, so they requested a contingent of U.S. Marshals be placed at all future refugee centers.

Since only the Indochinese refugees who worked directly with Americans in their native lands before the fall of Saigon had means to accumulate American monies, the transferring of foreign wealth into our economic system was a problem. Gold was the common currency carried by refugees who had no access to American dollars, so the writers of the After Action Report recommended future installation commanders receive guidance on setting up and operating centers dedicated to the transfer of foreign wealth into the American financial system.

The authors also addressed the problem of assigning military personnel to refugee centers and the disruptions those assignments caused to regular duties. Noted in the report were discussions regarding the Army's inability to



activate an entire Reserve unit without a declared national emergency, leaving only those who volunteered for active-duty training to be assigned to both Forts Chaffee and Indiantown Gap. As a solution to the shortage of personnel, the report suggests authorization for the call up of selected Reservists to support humanitarian affairs specialists. It was hoped this action would alleviate any future problems arising from the need for interpreters, such as the ones faced when dealing with the several dialects used by the Indochinese. Since federal law prohibited the Army from hiring the refugees to serve in an official capacity, the process of sponsorship was often stalled for lack of an interpreter. To ease any such problem in future situations, the Army suggested better inventory and more rapid deployment of their own foreign language speakers, as well as the authority to hire foreign nationals from among a refugee population during emergency situations.

While the Army could not hire refugees during Operation New Arrival, they were allowed to use them as volunteers, as were the many civilian agencies operating on refugee bases. Army guidelines stated refugees could be used "in order to ameliorate their situation, maintain conditions essential to their health, safety, and morale, or related tasks considered essential for their well-being." However, concern sometimes arose about the situations and conditions under which refugees worked, about the assignments they received, and the supervision given their activities. To better assure the safety of any volunteer work done by a future refugee, the report suggests the standards set forth by the Department of Labor should be met, and that contractors not be allowed to make unauthorized use of refugees on any Army property.

The problems faced at Fort Chaffee regarding the city water supply and the delivery of natural gas to refugee habitats were no doubt the catalyst for the Army's discussion of utilities and heating at future refugee centers. The report details the problems with the supply of gas to Fort Chaffee, disclosing an existing contract with the supplier that would have been sufficient for the base as it moved into winter months had the company not taken on industrial customers that depleted their supply to Fort Chaffee. What the Army considered a failure of the supplier to meet its obligations led to hardships at the base, especially as the refugee program extended unexpectedly into the colder months. To prevent another such situation developing, the Army suggested a general review of all contracts with civilian utility suppliers, and that judicial injunctions be pursued to prevent disconnection of service during contract negotiations.

While the bulk of the discussions and suggestions near the end of the report deal with problems arising from the resettlement program while it was in progress, there were

troubling situations arising at the end of Operation New Arrivals. Along with personal papers, Army issued bedding and other items apparently disappearing with departing refugees, the resettlement sites also faced conflicting views about the responsibilities of military and civilian agencies. As a result, the Army suggested the federal agency overseeing any refugee program would also be the entity with final say and oversight of termination of the project in order to avoid complication and confusion.

Julia Taft, director of the Interagency Task Force for Indochina, made her own observations and comments regarding Operation New Arrivals, which are included in the Army's final report. She began by declaring any refugee movement containing more than 50,000 people to be considered a large event and made several recommendations on how such a situation might best be handled. Taft's first suggestion was that a governmental task force be established that would include representatives from the Agency for International Development, the U.S. Information Agency, the Department of Defense Joint Chiefs of Staff, a representative from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, someone from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Labor, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Security Council, and the Intelligence community.

Taft suggested the task forces should be temporary in nature but should immediately issue mission orders to expedite response to an emergency situation. She considered the Department of State to be the appropriate agency to hold ultimate control of any future operation, with a task force director taking responsibility at the project headquarters, and all associated bases. A senior White House contact would work with members of the program's board, and all decisions would be made in coordination with the task force director. Taft encouraged regular reporting to Congress by government, military, and civilian organizations working with a refugee resettlement program.

Taft also offered a new proposal that foreign governments representing the homelands of the refugees be approached to aid in resettlement. She felt the Department of State should organize a task force to work with embassies where refugees might be stranded and to stimulate foreign interest in assisting those fleeing to America. The task force would also encourage other countries to accept refugees while proposing training programs for nations working with families fleeing their homelands.

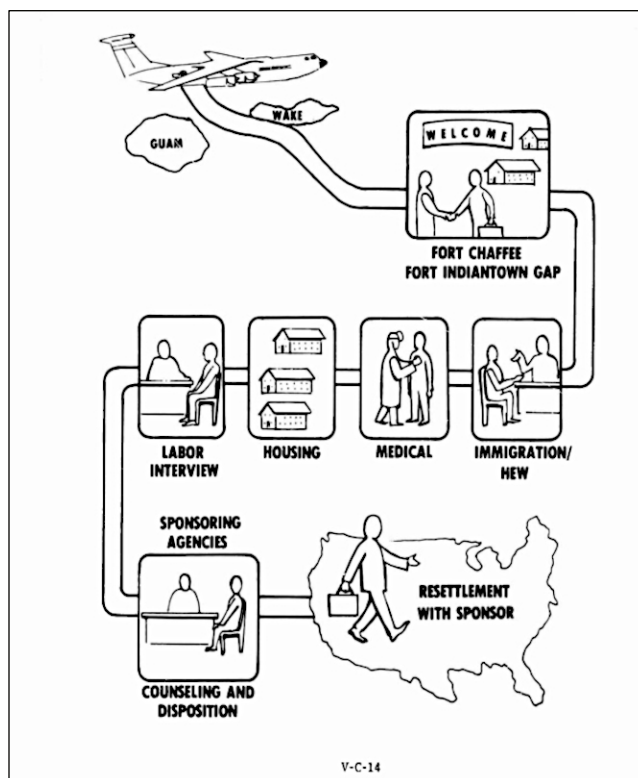
One of the proposals from Taft's notes was the formation of a national media campaign to encourage sponsorship throughout the United States when resettlement programs were in progress. To avoid a majority of refugees

settling near the military bases where they were housed, she hoped to show the program in a positive light and encourage volunteers from a wider swath of the nation. Taft felt that representatives from the fields of labor, education, medicine, and civil rights might draw a clearer picture of a resettlement program, thereby spurring a broader interest and offering more opportunity for sponsorship of refugees.

The Health, Education and Welfare Department, under Taft's plan, would be charged with building a relationship with authorities in the locations of refugee processing centers. Using federal funds, the department would establish a state focal point for information and assistance. There was a suggestion of developing modest grants for states willing to establish their own agency to work with the government for a better, quicker, and more satisfactory reaction to a refugee emergency.

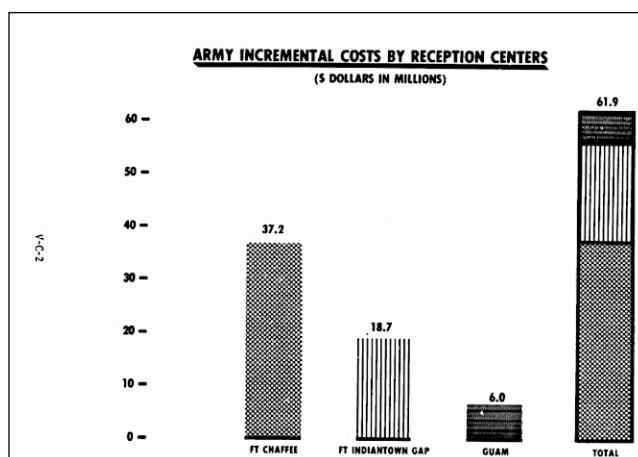
While recognizing the desire for quick resettlements, Taft encouraged the organizations in charge of future sponsorship programs to take a hard look at agencies volunteering to work with refugees. She felt government entities should retain at least limited control of the sponsorship process in their centers by requiring written procedures and reports to be kept on file at the Department of State, the National Archives, and in a few government agency headquarters. Instead of relying on local professionals for counseling services, Taft also suggested refugees with experience in counseling or social work be called into service, thereby relieving local volunteers of the responsibility. Taft's comments sought to assist future site directors in an effort to bring the best qualified volunteer services into their centers, and to make best use of capable refugees in their operations.

The closing section of the Army's *After Action Report* is an appendix consisting of declassified memos, maps, charts, and other tools added to create a timeline of activities from the beginning of Operation Baby Lift to the release of Fort Chaffee's final refugee family. The contents of this section are historically significant and begin with a memo dated April 18, 1975, directed to the Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Health-Education and Welfare, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Transportation, the office of Budget and Management, the Deputy Secretary of State, the administrator of the Agency for International Development, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The text of the memo reports that the President of the United States appointed Ambassador Dean Brown as director of the inter-agency task force to coordinate for the president's office and the U.S. government activities



**CHART A VC14**

*From the After Action Report*



**CHART VC2**

*From the After Action Report*

concerning the evacuation of American citizens, Vietnamese citizens, and third country nationals from Vietnam, and to assist in resettlement problems relating to the Vietnam Conflict. It was expected Ambassador Brown would receive full support from all elements of the United States government. The memo was signed by Henry Kissinger.

The second memo included in the article makes the first reference to what type of refugees the military might receive, their physical and financial conditions, how they

were to be housed, and expectations for their future. The April 1975 missive instructed the Army to begin formulating plans for containing the refugees, to look at existing structures with the ability to hold from 20,000 to 25,000 people, allowing forty square feet per person. Planners were told to assume the refugees would be relatively healthy, primarily from the middle class, and traveling in family units of up to eight members. Preferred areas for billeting the refugees were listed as the west, southwest, and the south, in that order. All manner of requirements for refugee centers were contained in this memo, including instructions to provide housing, food, medical care, translators, volunteer services, healthcare, recreational activities, and means to maintain a positive morale. The need was immediate and the expected response to this formational memo was also immediate.

Two days after the memo stating the imminent need for sites to accept refugees was issued, there came a message stating, "Higher authority has determined shelter for refugees will be provided by military installations in CONUS while volunteer agencies can arrange sponsors and move refugees on." The Army, Air Force, Navy/Marines were to each nominate two centers capable of accepting refugees, one of which was to be a west coast site, on Monday, April 28. The memo was issued April 26, and responses and nominations were expected by the afternoon of Sunday, April 27. The United States Army returned their nominations of Camp Roberts in California and Fort Chaffee in Arkansas.

An April 30 memo from the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed to all governmental and military entities in the task force stated, "Fort Chaffee, Arkansas is designated as a CONUS reception center for processing Indochina immigrants and refugees. Initiate necessary action to receive first refugees not earlier than 0900 Hours 2 May 1975. Expect to care for 15,000 with peak load of 20,000 at any one time. Be prepared to receive 1,000 refugees on the first day and 2,000 each day thereafter. Installation Commander Fort Chaffee will follow guidance contained in reference which outlines specific responsibilities for both military installation commander and civilian coordinator." Thus began Fort Chaffee's experience with Indochinese refugees.

A long series of memos follows in the report's appendix, covering a wide variety of topics as they arose at resettlement centers. Fort Chaffee continued to be prominent in these communications, often appearing as the location of a situation or problem arising for the first time. Inter-agency communications repeatedly focused on activities at Chaffee, such as the May 6, 1975, decree from the Washington task force to the commanders at Fort McPherson and Fort Sam Houston in Texas regarding the

*"Fort Chaffee, Arkansas is designated as a CONUS reception center for processing Indochina immigrants and refugees. ...Expect to care for 15,000 with peak load of 20,000 at any one time."*

*—April 30, 1975, memo  
from the Joint Chiefs of Staff*



use of Vietnamese medical professionals at Fort Chaffee. The memo decreed that the senior medical officer at Fort Chaffee was free to identify Indochinese paramedical professionals and assign them to assist with the treatment of refugees on the base. A follow-up memo included Fort Chaffee as a recipient and gave permission to medical officers to move refugee patients into a military or civilian hospital if necessary to provide treatment not available in a resettlement area.

Several memos in the report deal with changes in personnel and leadership in the various agencies associated with the withdrawal and resettlement programs. There are orders and plans for efforts beginning with Operation Baby Lift and continuing throughout the military and civilian efforts during and after the removal of Indochinese nationals. A May 22, 1975, memo announces the opening of Fort Indiantown Gap as a second Army operated resettlement center and successive messages remove the commander at Fort Chaffee to take control at the new Fort Indian Gap refugee center.

Julia Taft's removal from the Department of Health and her appointment to replace departing Ambassador Brown as Director of the Inter-Agency Task Force controlling the Indochinese refugee and resettlement programs was announced in a May 22, 1975, memo released by the White House. The memo was issued by the office of Henry Kissinger, who stated his expectation for Taft's appointment to be fully accepted by all agencies involved.

A personal memo from task force member Eric Von Marbod directed to General Fred Weyand, Admiral James Halloway, General David Jones, and General Robert Cushman was issued on May 27, 1975, regarding the sponsorship of refugees. It was the memo's intent to encourage military members to sponsor families recently relocated from Vietnam, and the message included a statement that the Navy had already undertaken "a fine program" to find sponsors. The memo speaks to the kinship expressed between U.S. military members and the



Indochinese who fought alongside them in Vietnam. The writer sought to encourage highly ranked officials to make it known that many of those same soldiers were in refugee camps awaiting sponsorships and, while a single soldier might not be in a position to sponsor, military-related organizations could take on the necessary obligations. The memo's author volunteered to be the personal contact for any service group seeking information and the writer closed his memo with, "I hope you see fit to assist this humanitarian effort. Warm regards. Eric."

By August 1975, the memos were directed toward the possibility of refugees remaining in holding areas into the approaching winter. While all four original reception centers were open at the time of the writing, the memo made it clear that Fort Chaffee and Fort Indiantown Gap be winterized "on an austere basis" for continued use. It was ordered that Fort Chaffee be winterized for seventeen thousand refugees by October 1, with a space allocation of fifty-five square feet per individual.

A November 7, 1975, memo from the Deputy Secretary of Defense references a transfer of personnel and changes in authority within the Task Force for Indochinese Refugees. Directed to our nation's highest ranking military offices, the memo names the Secretary of Army as the person in charge of the Task Force. Following that missive came a series of memos addressing the closure of sites, the return of materials, and the movement of personnel away from relocation centers. A January 9, 1976, memo from Washington, D.C., contains the commendation, "With the settlement of the last group of refugees and the closing of Fort Chaffee as a resettlement center, I wish to commend all personnel involved in the planning and execution of New Life, New Arrivals, and Baby Lift for their exemplary performance." It is signed simply with the initials B.T.

A series of charts follows this final memo in the After Action report. Details are recorded showing the flow of personnel into each resettlement location, there is a list of all military locations under consideration before the selection of the group including Fort Chaffee, supply requests discussing everything from gasoline cans to Vietnamese text typewriters, and a table illustrating the command arrangements for Operation New Life. One page displays an almost cartoon-like drawing following a refugee's progress from their initial intake at Guam or Wake Island, an airplane ride to Fort Chaffee, and a simple integration process delivering them to resettlement with a sponsor.

The report concludes with a photo index which includes pictures illustrating every step of the refugee process. The first set of photos offers shots of refugees arriving by boat to Guam and images of a tent city capable of housing 50,000 people. The photographs submitted from



**PRESIDENT FORD AT FORT CHAFFEE IN AUGUST 1975**

*(Courtesy Ford Presidential Library)*

Fort Chaffee include shots of refugees departing an airplane in Fort Smith, the Secretary of the Army speaking at Fort Chaffee, a child being treated by a doctor, and a Vietnamese family being sponsored out of the program and into American life. Prominent among the Fort Chaffee photographs are those taken during the August 10, 1975, visit of President Gerald Ford and Director of the Task Force, Julia Taft, to the base.

The last two pages of the report show images of the refugees seeking repatriation at Asan Camp. Although inferior quality, the photo of a building demolished by rioting refugees demanding to be returned to Vietnam may be one of the final photographs of destruction as it happened resulting from the Vietnam War. This pictorial history records Rear Admiral Kent Carroll addressing the refugees about returning to their homeland and shows them boarding the small *Thuong Tin 1* for the journey back to Vietnam.

With military expediency and clear thought, the authors of the Army After Action Report provided a precise recording of the United States reaction to the fall of Saigon and our departure from Vietnam. The report is worth noting as a recording of the rapid reaction on the part of our country to a humanitarian emergency, and as a true reporting of military ability and resources called into play and put into action within forty-eight short hours.

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# The Darby Family Story

*Percy W. and Nellie Hogan Darby Married in 1904*

**By Billy D. Higgins**

**T**he couple, Percy and Nellie Hogan Darby—he West Virginia-born in 1883, she Illinois in 1885—met and married in 1904 in Fort Smith where they resided. Their first child, Thelma Mae, was born on September 13, 1905. On February 8, 1911, Nellie gave birth to a son, William Orlando Darby. Orlando was the name of Nellie's father, a Union Army veteran, who died in 1913 and is buried in the Fort Smith National Cemetery.<sup>1</sup>

Percy worked in 1904 at a print shop called Thrash-Lick, located at 301 South Twelfth Street near Garrison Avenue. After an apprenticeship with Chauncey Lick, Percy came to own and operate a print shop located at 11 North Ninth Street.

At the time of William Orlando's birth on February 8, 1911, Percy and Nell resided at 411 North Fifth Street. In 1918 when Bill went into first grade at Belle Grove, the couple lived at 311 North Eighth Street, the present location of the Darby Foundation. When Bill entered second grade the Darbys had moved to 300 Greenwood Avenue, and Bill attended Rogers Elementary and later Fort Smith Junior High and Senior High while living there. Percy joined the Masonic Lodge in Fort Smith and became a part of the Amrita Grotto Band. In the 1920s, son Bill joined him in this band.

An untimely death struck the Darby family in 1926. Daughter Thelma Mae died at the age of twenty-one. Fifteen-year-old Bill, his parents, and the Darby extended family were devastated. Thelma had worked at the print shop and had continued to live at home.

A second daughter, Doris Nell, was born in 1928. William Orlando attended Fort Smith High School at that time, working after school as a delivery boy. Bill Darby made friends easily and according to his sister Doris showed his capacity for leadership while in high school and as a Boy Scout. He played clarinet in school bands and is shown in the photo below on the front row wearing a striped tie, fourth from the left.

In 1929, Bill graduated from Fort Smith High School. By then, the Darbys had left the Greenwood Avenue home, moving to 47 Hiland. Percy reported to the Census marshal that the family paid \$4,500 for their new home in the Hillcrest addition. Bill continued to live with his parents until he departed for the Military Academy; sister Doris,



**THE DARBY FAMILY** in about 1915. Percy, Nellie, Thelma Mae, and William O.

*(Courtesy of the Museum of Fort Smith History)*



**WILLIAM O. DARBY** holds a clarinet in the front row (striped tie) as part of the Darby Concert Band on June 1, 1925, during a DeMolay Day celebration.

*(Courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)*



## AMRITA GROTTO BAND

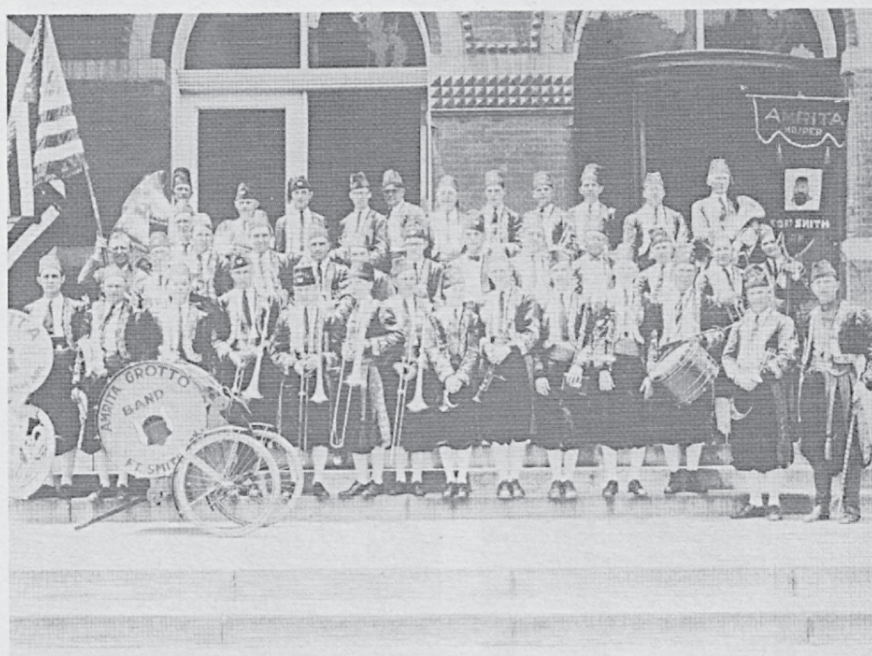
Edgar A. Robinson was one of the finest directors in this, or any other, area. He put together a fine organization, and the accompanying picture showing the group in front of the Kansas City Southern Station in 1926 was probably the time when they were leaving for St. Louis, Missouri. They entered competition there and won a very coveted award, an award earned only one year previously by John Philip Sousa and his band.

There were two father-and-son teams in his band. Robinson's son Fulton T. (Putt) Robinson was in the band. He now resides in Little Rock.

Percy Darby and his son, William O. Darby, were

also in the band. William O. Darby is well known to the area for the acclaim he won during World War II. He lies buried at the National Cemetery and was posthumously promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, a quite rare honor.

The Amrita Grotto Band was always present for the "big" events. And there were many of them during the early 1920's and through the 1930's. The young members of the band received a good education in music and learned the craft which was to stand them in good stead. Many of them stayed in the music field for many years.



AMRITA GROTTO BAND

1926, in front of the Kansas City Southern Railway Station on Rogers Avenue

Top row: First four unidentified, Herbert Turner, ?, Percy Darby (father of Bill), ?, ?, Denver Brashier, Dr. Morehead, Dr. E. Dudley Spurrier.

Second row: Flag bearer, Gene Bly, Arthur R. Hansard, ? Vanarsdale, ?, Fred Bach, Jack Everett, Hunter Wright, Burns Wakefield, Waverly Beltrand, ?, ?, Fulton (Putt) Robinson, ?.

Bottom row: Gene Wheeler, Arlie Holman, Geren Vesey, Marshall Bach, Elzo Elkins, Johnny Jeryo, ?, ?, ? Terry, Carl Long, Bill Darby (Brig. Gen.), Gerald Meed, Gillie Trisch, Edgar A. Robinson, Walter Jackson, Drum Major.

Picture courtesy of Hunter Wright.



(LEFT, TOP) A picture accredited to Hunter Wright of the Amrita Grotto Band with both father and son Percy and Bill Darby appears in the April 1984 issues of the Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society.

*(Pictures and article courtesy of Hunter Wright)*

(LEFT, BOTTOM) The Amrita Grotto Band

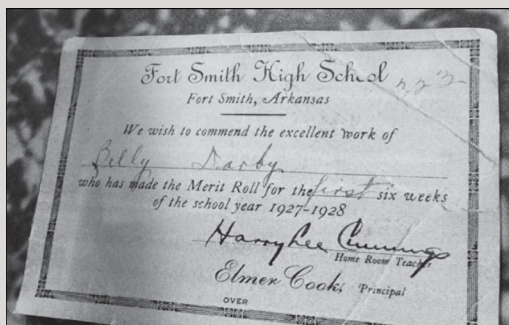
*(Courtesy of Fort Smith Public Library)*

then a toddler, lived there until she went away to college.

Percy did not serve in the military, but son Bill, an avid reader evidently of history books and biographies, and perhaps influenced by stories and memories of his grandfather, Orlando Hogan, determined that he wanted to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the oldest army post in the United States and the training grounds for Army officers. Grant, Lee, Eisenhower, MacArthur, and many other cadets became historic leaders of their nation and the U.S. military.

Darby applied and became an alternate for his congressional representative, Otis Wingo.<sup>2</sup> To the greater good for all, the other two would-be-appointees dropped out of





**MERIT ROLL WHEN BILL DARBY** was an eleventh-grader at Fort Smith High School. The principal who signed the certificate, Elmer Cook, became the first president of Fort Smith Junior College and stayed in that position during its relocation to the present site of the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith.

*(Courtesy of the Museum of Fort Smith History)*



**PERCY AND NELLIE DARBY** lived at 47 Hiland in Fort Smith until Percy's death in 1954. Nellie died in 1965. They are buried in Forest Park Cemetery.

*(Courtesy of the author)*



**WILLIAM O. DARBY**

*(Courtesy Dixie Rhyne and the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History)*



**NATALIE SHAW**, whom Bill Darby married in 1935.

*(Courtesy Emory Dockery, Darby House)*

**(RIGHT)** Nellie Darby and daughter Doris Nell traveled to El Paso for the marriage of her son and Natalie Shaw in 1935.  
*(El Paso Times)*

**Mrs. P. W. Darby And Daughter Arrive**  
Mrs. P. W. Darby and daughter, Doris Nell, arrived last night from Fort Smith, Ark., to be present at the wedding of her son, Lt. William O. Darby and Miss Natalie Shaw, which will take place June 22, at St. Clement's.  
Lt. John Shimberger, Fort McKinley, Me., is flying to El Paso today to be an usher at the wedding of Lt. William Taylor will be one of the ushers, not previously announced.

FORT SMITH CITY DIRECTORY	
MANUFACTURERS OF FORT SMITH	
ACME BRICK COMPANY Brick and tile	DALY MONUMENTAL WORKS Monuments, building stone
ACME SPRING BED & MATTRESS CO. Mattresses	DARBY PRINTERY Printing, etc.
ARKANSAS COFFIN COMPANY Caskets, shrouds	DYKE BROTHERS Mill work
ARKOMA MILLING & STORAGE CO. Meal, mixed feeds	EADS BROS. CHAIR COMPANY Chairs, breakfast room sets
ARMBRUSTER & COMPANY Auto tops, specialties	EDMONDSON BAKERY Bread, cakes
ATHLETIC MINING & SMELTING CO. Zinc spelter	EQUITABLE POWDER MFG. CO. Powder
BALLMAN-CUMMINGS FURNITURE COMPANY Bedroom suites	EUPER SAND COMPANY Sand
B. & D. TATER FLAKE COMPANY Potato chips	FEDERAL BAKERY Bread, cakes, pastry
BEEM, P. W. Potato chips, salted peanuts	FLYER GARMENT COMPANY Flyer overalls
BLY PRINTING COMPANY Printing, embossing, etc.	FORT SMITH BAKERY Bread
BORDER CITY BROOM COMPANY Brooms	FORT SMITH BISCUIT COMPANY Crackers, cakes
BORDER CITY ICE & COLD STORAGE COMPANY Ice	FORT SMITH BODY COMPANY Auto and truck bodies
BORDER QUEEN KITCHEN CABINET COMPANY Kitchen cabinets, cedar chests, Fibre Furniture	FORT SMITH CEREAL COMPANY Pancake flour, breakfast food
BOURLAND ICE & COLD STORAGE COMPANY Ice	FORT SMITH CHAIR COMPANY Chairs
BOURLAND ICE CREAM COMPANY Ice cream	FORT SMITH CHEMICAL COMPANY Salt cakes, floor sweep, chemicals
BRESLIN BOILER & IRON WORKS Boilers, smoke stacks	FORT SMITH CIGAR COMPANY Cigars
BROOKS TOMATO PRODUCTS CO. Canned sweet potatoes	FORT SMITH COFFEE COMPANY Roasted coffee
BRUCE BROTHERS Sheet metal	FORT SMITH COMPRESS COMPANY Compressed cotton
CALVERT-McBRIDE PRINTING CO. Books, Catalogs, printing, etc.	FORT SMITH COTON OIL COMPANY Cotton seed products
CASTLING'S MARKETS Lard, sausage	FORT SMITH COUCH & BEDDING CO. Living room suites
CHEERO COLA BOTTLING COMPANY Soft drinks	FORT SMITH CREAMERY COMPANY Velvet & Fort Smith Maid Butter
CHOCTAW COTTON OIL COMPANY Cotton seed products	FORT SMITH CRUSH ROCK COMPANY Crushed rock, gravel
COCO COLA BOTTLING COMPANY Soft drinks	FORT SMITH ENGRAVING COMPANY Engravings, etchings
COFFEYVILLE BRICK COMPANY Brick and tile	FORT SMITH EXCELSIOR COMPANY Excelsior
CONCRETE PRODUCTS COMPANY Cement blocks	FORT SMITH FOLDING BED & TABLE COMPANY Tables, dining room furniture
CRANE CANDY COMPANY Candy	FORT SMITH HANDLE COMPANY D handles
	FORT SMITH ICE & COLD STORAGE COMPANY Ice

**FROM 1930 TO 1950**, Percy was the proprietor of Darby Printery in downtown Fort Smith.

consideration, and in the fall of 1929, Bill Darby was on his way to join the Black Knights of the Hudson. Four years later, on June 13, 1933, Darby graduated from the academy and was commissioned second lieutenant of artillery in the United States Army.

His first posting was to Fort Bliss, Texas, home to the last remaining horse-drawn artillery unit in the U.S. Army. There he met his wife-to-be, Natalie Shaw. They were married in El Paso on June 22, 1935.

For the next two decades, the Darby family socialized

with their Hillcrest neighbors. Nellie was an active member of the Garden Club. Percy, with Stetson and six-shooter on his hip, acted as sheriff for some Hillcrest barbecues and covered-dish outings. Daughter Doris remembered her home life as full of history and creative arts interest and involvement. The Darbys attended the First Methodist Church.

Percy had an older sister, Mary Grace, who came to live in Fort Smith and worked as a telegraph operator for Western Union until her death in 1934, while her nephew, Bill, was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Percy's younger brother, Edgar Roscoe, and his wife, Lena, had also migrated to Fort Smith from West Virginia and lived nearby. Both were bookkeepers, Lena for Percy's printing company and Edgar for the Western Union Telegraph Company. Aunt and uncle kept close watch not only of the financial picture of these businesses, but also on their nephew and niece. Edgar died in September 1941—before Pearl Harbor but as his nephew Bill Darby was establishing himself as a very reliable and trusted officer in the United States Army. Lena continued to live at 723 North Fourteenth Street to work at the printing office, then later as a cashier at Godt Brothers Drug Store.<sup>3</sup>

After Bill Darby's 1935 marriage to Natalie Shaw, he received assignments of importance and rose in the Army to commander of the First Ranger Battalion, organized on the model of the British Commandos and trained at Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland. Darby's positioning in the Army and the combat actions thereafter are meticulously researched and recorded in Coy Wineland's article in the *Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society*.<sup>4</sup>

The Darbys, with their son becoming deeply involved in European Theater combat, would have been, of course, part of Fort Smith's Home Front, active in paper drives, buying savings bonds, writing letters, saying prayers, sending care packages, and, in the case of teenage Doris, performing her already professional piano skills at the United Service Organizations (USO) to the delight of young soldiers, Camp Chaffee's armored division trainees. As her brother Bill led his crack U.S. Army Rangers into battle against Nazi forces, Doris publicly and proudly performed a work by Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn. "She always considered music as a special language to express love and compassion."<sup>5</sup>

In Europe, Bill Darby played an important role with his Rangers in the conquest of Remmel's Wehrmacht in North Africa and thereafter in the Italian campaign, which came before D-Day (June 6, 1944). With three straight years of hard training and forward area fighting leading a crack and invaluable battalion who were always in front, General George Marshall ordered Colonel Darby home in the summer of 1944 for an extended rest and



**HILLCREST FRIED CHICKEN SUPPER** serving table from left to right are Jay Medlen, Troy McNeill, M.J. Miller, Espy O'Neel, Bill Carter, J.M Crawford, and Percy Darby.

*(Courtesy of George O'Neel)*



**COL. WILLIAM O. DARBY** walks to a reception in Fort Smith with his mother, Nellie, on his arm, followed by Doris and Percy Darby.

*(Courtesy Fort Smith Museum of History)*

relaxation and a duty tour of U.S. Army posts for inspirational purposes to soldiers and gave them addresses such as this one in October 1944 delivered to Ranger officers and men: "Commanding the Rangers was like driving a team of very high-spirited horses. No effort was needed to get them to go forward. The problem was to hold them in check. Rangers, may your futures be crowned with deserving success."<sup>6</sup>

At one point in his travels, he dropped in on Fort Smith to see family and friends, a visit with stops that drew large crowds and was covered by the local newspaper.

Assigned to assist a war planning office in the Pentagon, Colonel Darby found it difficult to sit behind a desk while a war was going on. He insisted upon returning to action in the European Theater and eventually got his overseas orders. Disembarking in France on March 30, 1945, and in command of his own travel orders, he soon found a way to the front in Italy.





## Senior Council

Row 1: Lois Ann Paddock, Jane Johnson, Fritzti Andres, Mary Jean Gattis, Loretta Fowler, Wanda Graves, Jimmie Delle Caldwell.

Row 2: Miss Dowdle, Tommie Magness, Beverly Daves, Edith Sivley, Pat Davis, Marian Mosley, Betty Thompson Pat McDowell.

Row 3: Doris Nell Darby, Nan Hopper, Bettie Beasley, Mary Wood, Robin Freeman, Marguerite Slate.

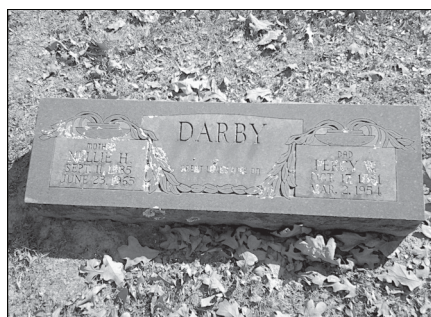
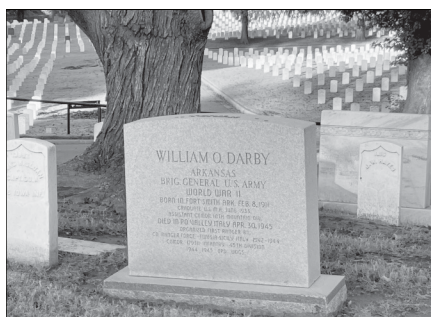
Row 4: Bob Wardlow, Jack Stewart, John Howell, Marvel Rhyne, Tom McClain, Ralph Abbott.

Mary Wood



(LEFT) Doris Nell Darby, left in row 3, appears in the 1944 Fort Smith High School *Bruin* yearbook.

(ABOVE) Doris Nell Darby Watkins  
(Photo courtesy of Mark Potter)



(LEFT) William O. Darby's grave marker at Fort Smith National Cemetery. (CENTER) The gravesite marker for Percy and Nellie Darby at Forest Park Cemetery. (RIGHT) The grave marker for Orlando Hogan, grandfather of William O. Darby, at Fort Smith National Cemetery.

(Courtesy of the author)

On April 30, 1945, Colonel William O. Darby was hit by shrapnel from a German artillery shell. He died that day. A hero to be sure to many, he is honored by U.S. Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia, where the sixty-two-day W. O. Darby course teaches small unit tactics and leadership. In what is called the hardest school in the Army, Ranger candidates learn such skills as squad and recon operations, ambush, and mission planning, all which Darby taught to the initial group of 200 volunteers strong at Achnacarry Castle, Scotland, (Headquarters of the British Commandos) producing the first Ranger Units in the U.S. Army.

His death was especially tragic as it happened just days

before the Nazis surrendered in Italy and Germany. The family, heartbroken as it was, rallied and carried on in their own precious and achieving lives.

In September 1950, in Fort Smith, Doris married Lyndell Presson Watkins of Kensett, Arkansas, a man six years older than her, and like her, a keyboard artist. They enjoyed, as did audiences, playing concerts as a duet. Mr. Watkins served in World War II as an Army Air Corps chaplain's assistance.

Author William H. Baumer, a U.S. Army veteran who knew Col. Bill Darby personally, remarks in his introduction to *Darby's Rangers: We Led the Way* (New York: Random House, 1980) a book that Doris Nell

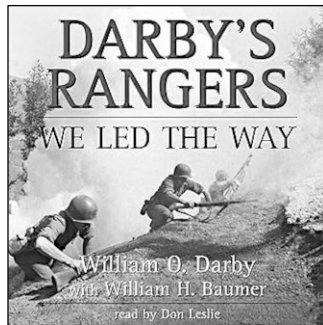


encouraged him repeatedly to write. In this best seller, with help from Don Leslie and based on conversations that he had had with Gen. W. O.

Darby and other research, Baumer describes in detail the U.S. Army Ranger experiences and combat

action of Darby. Bill Darby's grandfather, Orlando Hogan, who served as a private in the 21st Illinois Infantry during the Civil War, must be extremely proud of his namesake.<sup>7</sup> Orlando Hogan is buried near William Orlando Darby's gravesite in the Fort Smith National Cemetery.

Doris had three children, daughter Dr. Sylvia Nell Ryan, son, Lynn Darby Watkins, son Lyndell Presson Watkins, Jr. and four grandsons, William, Michael, Colin, and Zachary. None of them live in Fort Smith. The Darbys, who brought Fort Smith so much fame and are so fondly remembered in memorials and a school name, have none of the family tree presently residing in the city.

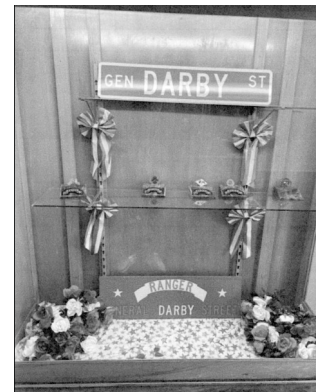
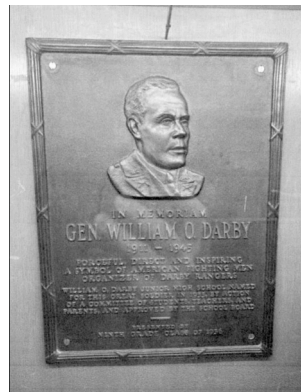


*Billy D. Higgins lives and plays some pickleball in Fort Smith and environs.*

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### End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Orlando Hogan, born in Williamston, Kentucky, in 1841 joined Illinois 21st Infantry Regiment, USA, as a 20 year old in 1861. He died in Fort Smith in 1913 at age seventy-two. His cause of death is listed as stomach cancer.
- <sup>2</sup> Otis Wingo's 4th Congressional District included Sebastian County in 1929. Wingo died in 1930 and was succeeded in the U.S. House of Representatives by his wife, Effie Wingo, one of three women from Arkansas in the U.S. Congress at the time, including Senator Hattie Caraway.
- <sup>3</sup> Calvert's Fort Smith City Directory, R.L. Polk Company, 1945, p. 141.
- <sup>4</sup> Coy Wineland, "The Ranger Who Led the Way," *Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (September 2020), 19-29.
- <sup>5</sup> Obituary article by Mark Potter. "Doris Nell Darby Watkins, devoted wife, mother, friend, teacher and musician, passed away on Wednesday, March 21, 2012, in Norman, Oklahoma. She was 83, born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, on August 4, 1928. After studying dance and piano at an early age, she decided to focus on a career as a keyboardist and teacher. That youthful realization fueled her interest in music throughout her



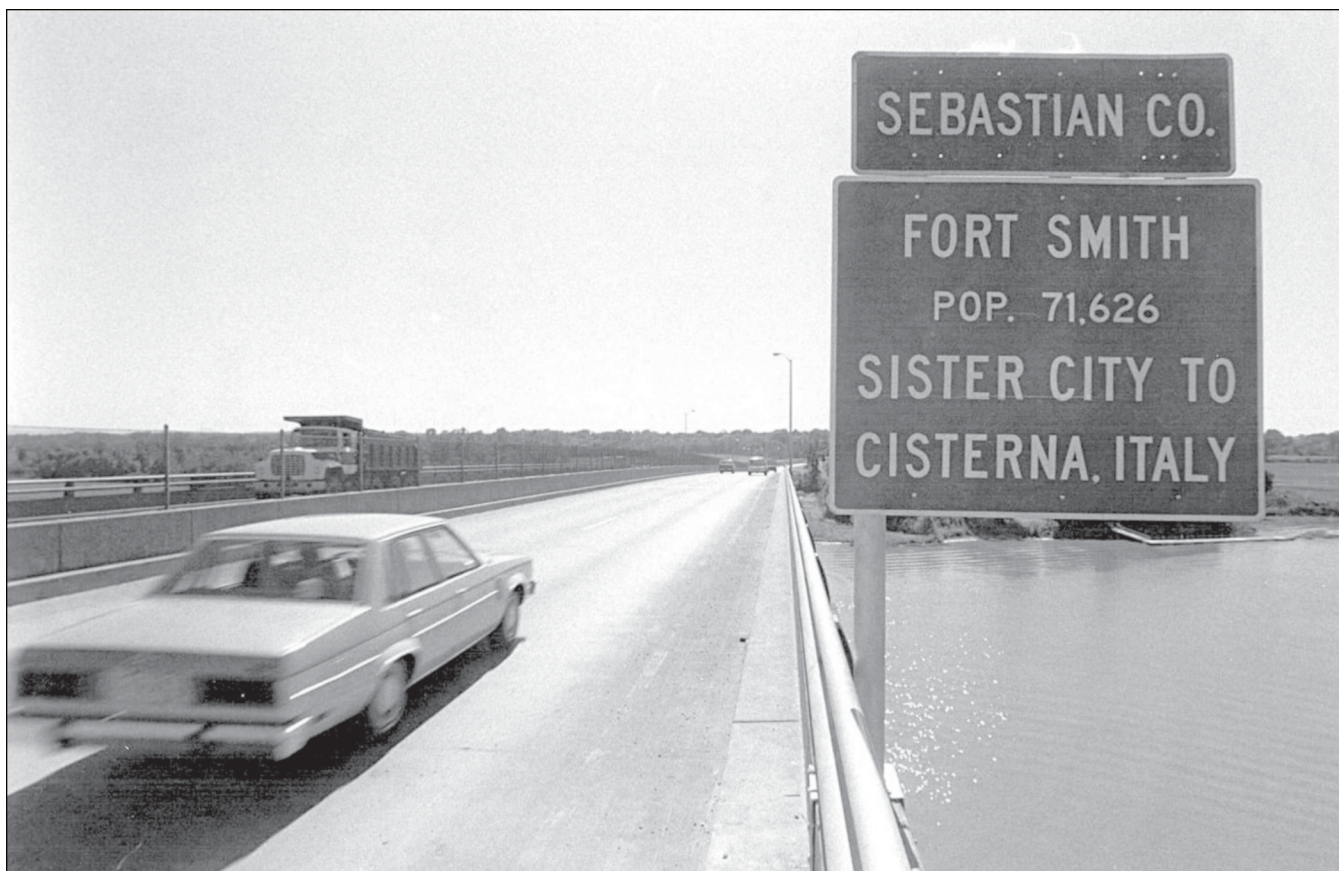
**DARBY JUNIOR HIGH** in Fort Smith features a plaque (left) honoring its namesake, Gen. William O. Darby, and a display with a street sign (right).

*(Courtesy of author)*

teenage years, as she explored an ever-increasing assortment of mature piano repertoire. Doris Nell Darby graduated from Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, followed by graduate studies at the University of Michigan and a Master's Degree from Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi. Through the years, she taught piano and organ at the studio and college levels. She was an instructor at Arkansas College (now Lyon College) in Batesville, Arkansas, and Delta State University where she retired from teaching in 1990. She was affiliated with the Mississippi Music Teachers Association and Music Teachers National Association, receiving state and national certification in both piano and organ. She was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, Mu Phi Epsilon and the American Guild of Organists and was past President of the Cleveland Woman's Club. Her extensive career was paralleled by her religious service. Mrs. Watkins was organist and/or choir director at a number of Arkansas and Mississippi churches, including the First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland where she was a member for almost fifty years. Mrs. Watkins enjoyed a 57-year marriage and professional relationship with the late Lyndell Presson Watkins. They performed together on the organ, piano and harp as recently as December 2006. Doris Nell Darby Watkins was preceded in death by her parents, Nellie Hogan Darby and Percy William Darby; her sister, Thelma Mae Darby; and her brother, General William Orlando Darby. Mrs. Watkins is survived by her daughter, Dr. Sylvia Nell Ryan (Jim); two sons, Lynn Darby Watkins and Lyndell Presson Watkins, Jr. (Lisa) of Semmes, Alabama; four grandsons, William Watkins of New York City, Michael Ryan (Aubrey) of Auburn, Alabama, Colin Ryan of Norman, Oklahoma, and Zachary Watkins of San Jose, California."

<sup>6</sup> William H. Baumer, *Darby's Rangers: We Led the Way*, New York: Random House, 1980, 255.

<sup>7</sup> Baumer, p. 2.



A FORT SMITH SIGN BOASTS of the city's "Sister City" partnership with Cisterna, Italy, in the 1980s.  
(Courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)

# Fort Smith, Cisterna Mark 40 Years

*Excerpts from the Museums Exhibit on the Sister Cities' Anniversary*

**By Caroline Speir**

## What is a "Sister City"?

The mission of a sister city is to promote peace, understanding, and cooperation through cultural, educational, trade, and tourism exchanges between cities and communities.

Sister cities agree to send and receive delegations of various types, including political and business leaders, arts and cultural representatives, educators, and technical experts—these exchanges promote cross-cultural understanding, municipal and technical cooperation, and economic impact.

## Captain Darby and the formation of "Darby's Rangers"

A 1933 West Point graduate, Darby was just ten years into his military career when, in 1942, he was handpicked

as the commanding officer of a newly formed military unit for the U.S. Army. "Darby's Rangers" were formed in Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland—the only unit of the U.S. military to be formed on foreign soil—modeled after the British Commandos. The official activation of the First Ranger Battalion, an elite fighting unit, took place on June 19, 1942, under the command of Captain William O. Darby.

Training for the "Darby's Rangers" took place in Scotland. The rigorous training the U.S. Army Rangers are known for began in 1942 across the pond in the United Kingdom. From Scotland, the Rangers were ordered to Africa where they "spearheaded the Center Taskforce" as part of Operation Torch—an allied invasion of French North Africa with the objective of allowing American armed forces to begin fighting against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy on a limited scale. Darby's Rangers unit were successful in Africa, executing a number of successful night attacks—what became another hallmark of the Rangers'





William O. Darby on a beach



(ABOVE AND AT RIGHT) Clippings about the devastation in Cisterna, Italy, during World War II.

*(Images courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)*

legacy. While in Africa, in Oran, a town in Algeria, Darby served as the military mayor of the city for several months until his unit was ordered to the Tunisian Front.

“Near the close of the Tunisian Campaign, Darby set about training and expanding the rangers into three battalions. On July 10, 1943, the First, Third, and Fourth Ranger battalions spearheaded the invasion of Sicily. The three ranger battalions were the first to land during the invasion of Italy on September 9, 1943. Early in the morning of January 22, 1944, they landed unopposed in the harbor of Anzio. They had control from the moment they landed.”



Between January 30 and February 2, 1944, Allied forces, in coordination with the Ranger units, organized a simultaneous attack on German forces. Explained briefly here, the mission included a night infiltration behind German lines into the town of Cisterna. If successful, the ultimate plan by Allied forces would have the Allies seize





**ANOTHER IMAGE OF THE** devastation in Cisterna, Italy, during World War II. Cisterna was under Nazi control until May 1944.  
(Images courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)

Cisterna from Nazi forces and hold it until full liberation was obtained. Unknown to all involved allied forces, their information was a “misinterpretation of reconnaissance intelligence” leading to severe casualties in the First and Third Ranger Battalions and heavy losses for the Fourth Ranger Battalion. Cisterna remained under Nazi control until May 1944.

Ranger James Alteri describes this event in his book, *The Spearheaders: A Personal History of Darby's Rangers*:

...The operation began at 0100 hours on 30 January 1944. Over 700 men of the 1st and 3rd Ranger Battalions advanced on foot about 7 miles in the dark across the muddy fields, while the 4th Battalion was supposed to simulate an all-out diversionary attack to draw them enemy's attention away from them. The 700 Rangers encountered great difficulties due to the water-logged soil, the icy water in the canals and above all because of the tight German surveillance, and only managed to reach the outskirts of Cisterna at sun-rise. Meanwhile, the 4th Battalion had been held at bay by the unyielding reaction of the German forces. When the men of the 1st and 3rd Battalions tried to emerge into the open to reach the outlying houses of the town, they found themselves in open countryside with no natural cover available to them. All the German firepower and armor was trained on the zone; they had evidently realized what was happening and had kept it under observation to block the infiltrators at the most favorable point...

Depending on the source, and the numbers sometimes



**GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON**, carrying his pearl-handled pistol and Leica camera, congratulates Lieutenant Colonel William O. Darby of the Rangers in front of Ranger headquarters.

vary, but most agree that of approximately 700 Rangers who engaged in fighting in the battle at Cisterna, hundreds were killed or wounded while the remaining soldiers were captured as prisoners of war after German units put Ranger prisoners in front of their tanks and commanded other Rangers to surrender. Staggeringly, only a small band of six men returned to the base in Anzio, Italy, after the Battle of Cisterna.

For the next four months, the citizens of Cisterna retreated to the tunnels under the Palazzo Caetani, where life became a matter of survival. Above the tunnels, ground and air battles between Germany and Allied forces beleaguered their ancient city. In May 1944 Cisterna was liberated from Nazi control. However, the war raged on.

### **Nago-Torbole, Italy, Tenth Mountain Division**

After the devastating Battle of Cisterna, Colonel Darby's war career changed course. He returned home to Fort Smith for a short homecoming before beginning his assignment at the Pentagon. For eleven months, he fulfilled his role as the section chief of the General Staff's War Plans Division. However, he pushed to return to Italy and action.

In early 1945, Darby returned overseas on an inspection tour of the European Theater with General Hap

# Truman Recommends Posthumous Promotion of Colonel Darby to a Brigadier Generalship

Posthumous promotion of Colonel William O. Darby to brigadier general was recommended Thursday by President Truman.

This same day, an Associated Press dispatch from Rome, Italy, said the famed Ranger commander from Fort Smith was killed in action at the Italian front just two days before hostilities ended on that front.

The president's move for the after-death promotion was said to have been made at the suggestion of Secretary of War Stimson.

Colonel Darby's permanent rank was captain, field artillery. Under army regulations, all promotions since the start of the war have been on temporary basis.

The 34-year-old Ranger officer from Fort Smith was reported

★ ★ ★  
killed by the burst of a German 88 mm. artillery shell at a forward American position. He had led an amphibious operation across to the west shore of Lake Garda on April 30 as assistant commander of the Tenth Mountain division. (News from Washington of Colonel Darby's death first identified him as commander of this division).

Colonel Darby helped organize,

then trained and led the first American Ranger force early in the war. His crack command fought through Africa, Sicily and in Italy. Troops of his command, earlier, had shared in the bloody Dieppe operation on the French coast.

His task force captured Benito Mussolini's villa at Gargnano just five days after the former dictator had left there in the vain flight which ended in his death.

It was learned Thursday that Darby was standing with his regimental commander discussing preparation for an attack northward from that point when two 88 millimeter shells landed beside them. Darby was killed and the regimental commander was wounded.

(ABOVE) A newspaper article announces President Harry S Truman's recommendation that Colonel William O. Darby be posthumously promotion to brigadier general after Darby's death on April 30, 1945. The promotion was awarded on May 15, 1945.  
(RIGHT) Colonel Darby on a motorcycle.

(Images courtesy of Fort Smith Museum of History)

Arnold. His duties eventually landed him in Northern Italy fighting in the Po Valley; then he was ordered to Nago-Torbole, Italy. While there, Brigadier General Robinson E. Duff, assistant division commander of the Tenth Mountain Division, was wounded. Darby quickly volunteered to take his command, which was granted.

As the assistant division commander of the Tenth Mountain, he led the Tenth Mountain in the advance on Lake Garda. Colonel Darby had only been in Torbole about ten days. These were the waning days of the war where hope set poised on the horizon that the horrors of World War II would soon end. However, on April 30, 1945, while in the process of outlining plans for the next day, an 88 mm German shell exploded near his location. A piece of shrapnel struck him near his heart, killing him. Two days later, German forces in Italy surrendered.







(ABOVE) A sign in Cisterna, Italy, marks the city's "twinning" with Fort Smith.

(RIGHT TOP) A marker in Cisterna, Italy, stands next to a column riddled with bullet marks to commemorate the Battle of January 30, 1944, in which 755 Rangers lost their lives.

(BELOW) Images from the reinterment of Brigadier General William O. Darby in Fort Smith in 1949. Darby was first buried in Cisterna, Italy; he was reinterred at Fort Smith National Cemetery.

*(Photos courtesy of Fort Smith Museum of History)*



Colonel Darby received a promotion to brigadier general on May 15, 1945, the only soldier to receive such a promotion posthumously. Fort Smith's native-born son, Billy Darby, forever became known as General William O. Darby.

### **Gemellaggio, "Twinning," and Sister Cities**

Although Captain Darby and his Ranger Battalions were not successful in their attempt to liberate Cisterna, their honorable efforts and sacrifices led to the completion of the initial mission. The heavy loss of life and capture of the American soldiers have not been forgotten by the



citizens of Cisterna.

The road to the sister city relationship began developing as early as 1979 when the Anzio-Cassino Committee formed to locate the surviving original Rangers and to plan the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Cisterna. Mr. Ennio Silvestri was successful in finding three of the surviving Rangers. Out of a further connection between the Rangers Veterans Association and Ranger James Alteri, commemorative ceremonies honored the Rangers, and two memorial signposts were erected at the battle sites.

In 1982, then-Mayor of Cisterna Gianni Salis and a



# Army Rangers carry on old tradition

BY DAMON THOMPSON  
Democrat Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — When the Army Airborne Rangers parachuted into Grenada on Oct. 25, they were carrying on a tradition established by Brig. Gen. William O. Darby, a Fort Smith native who led the first battalions of modern-day Rangers in World War II.

"Commanding the Rangers was like driving a team of very high-spirited horses," Darby wrote shortly before he was killed in action in Italy in 1945. "No effort was needed to get them to go forward. The problem was to hold them in check."

Darby, a West Point graduate and former artillery captain, was serving as an aide-de-camp to Gen. Russell Hartle with the 34th Infantry Division in Ireland when he was picked to command the Rangers as the American counterpart to the British Commandos.

The Rangers had their origins in the French and Indian War where "Roger's Rangers" were used by the British and colonial forces to go far behind enemy lines to collect information or destroy enemy bases. Ranger battalions were also employed by American forces during successive military struggles, but there were no Ranger units from the con-

clusion of the Civil War until World War II.

Darby organized the First Ranger Battalion in June 1942, starting with 500 men whom he hand-picked from thousands of applicants, mostly from the 34th Infantry and the First Armored Division. The ranks eventually swelled to 2,000.

Every Ranger was a volunteer who received no additional pay for the increased dangers they faced. Darby's Rangers received the most extensive and versatile training of any American troops and usually were given the most dangerous missions. About 9 out of 10 of the first regiment lost their lives opening up enemy defenses before invasions.

Darby himself was wounded three times and he refused a promotion three times because it would have meant leaving the Rangers. According to one Army historian, "Darby was continually at the fore of his men, leading them with dynamic vigor and keen foresight."

He was also known for his humor in times of danger. Once, when the Rangers were facing armored Nazi columns while rear-guarding American troops evacuating from Feriana, Darby delivered a short

address to his troops in which he said: "Onward we stagger; and if the tanks come, may God help the tanks!"

Darby received 10 high military decorations, with some awarded by France, Great Britain and Russia as well as the United States. *Future* magazine named him as one of the 10 outstanding young men in America in 1943.

Members of the First Battalion accompanied British Commando troops in a raid on the northern coast of France. Then Darby led the First Battalion in the initial North Africa landing of allied troops at Arzew, Algeria, and in fierce battles in Tunisia.

The First Battalion won a Presidential Citation for distinguished action in its battles in North Africa, and near the close of the Tunisian campaign Darby organized and trained two more battalions, the Third and Fourth. These were merged with the First Battalion to become known as the "Ranger Force."

This force spearheaded the landing of the Seventh Army at Gela and Licata during the invasion of Sicily. They took part in the campaign that ended in the capture of Messina. They fought for 18 days on the Italian peninsula during the battle of Salerno to hold Chiunzi

Pass against eight German counterattacks. They braved fierce winter and mountain fighting while clearing a narrow pass leading to Cassino. At Anzio, they cleared beach defenses as well as the town and formed a defensive perimeter for other Allied troops.

The Rangers' glory was relatively short-lived, however. They were virtually wiped out in January 1944 when they launched an attack on Cisterna. The surviving Rangers were returned to the U.S. and the three battalions were disbanded in October 1944. Three other Ranger battalions not commanded by Darby continued operations in the European and Pacific theaters.

Darby was given an infantry command post and later assigned to the Army General Staff in Washington. In less than a year he returned to Italy and became assistant commander of the 10th Mountain Division, succeeding a general who had been wounded.

Eight days after assuming that post, Darby was killed by German artillery fire as he led his troops in the final mop-up of enemy forces in the Po River Valley. Only two days later, all enemy forces in Italy surrendered.

AN ARTICLE IN THE ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT (circa 1983) celebrates the tradition of the Army Ranger units that began with Brigadier General William O. Darby, who was killed in action on April 30, 1945.

(Courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)

delegation of U.S. Army Rangers visiting Cisterna marked the sacrifices of "Darby's Rangers" and the Fourth Battalion on the road where the fiercest fighting took place during the attempted liberation. Renamed "Via Rangers," there stands a column on the road, still pockmarked by shrapnel from the battle, near Fosso Femminamorta, and beside the two signposts erected in 1979, written in Italian, English, and German:

On the site thousands of men fought and died  
Battle of Cisterna—Anzio—Aprilia 1944-1979

In 1984, Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Cisterna di Latina became "sister cities," and for forty years, the signs declaring this relationship have greeted locals and visitors alike to both cities. Cisterna di Latina is situated about an hour south of Rome in central Italy, inland from the Tyrrhenian Sea with a current population of just under 40,000 residents. Their city signs proudly proclaim the

same as the signs of Fort Smith—"Cisterna di Latina; Gemellato con Fort Smith Arkansas USA." They call it "twinning"; we call it a "sister city."

Out of that poignant event came the proposal by Mayor Gianni Salis to "twin" with Fort Smith. Carried forward by Ranger James Alteri, on behalf of Mayor Salis, the invitation was taken to then-Mayor of Fort Smith, Mr. Bill Vines. In 1983, Vines extended a formal letter agreeing to the important sister-city relationship, and the new mayor of Cisterna, Sig. Eugenio Comandini, was able to solidify the official twin city relationship.

The cities wasted little time in turning paperwork into real-life relationships. In October 1984 a large delegation arrived in Fort Smith to exchange warm greetings with their new sister city. Cisterna Mayor Ezio Comparini headed a delegation of dozens from Italy to tour the region and dedicate The Darby House—the boyhood home of General Darby. The two cities became fast friends and a new tradition began.



City of Fort Smith staff and officials in the 1980s.



The sign reads "Rangers' Way (Heroic American Soldiers) in memory of the battle of January 30, 1944.  
(Photos courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)

### Over the decades

The year 1984 was only the beginning of what is now forty years of friendship. The mission of a sister city is to promote peace, understanding, and cooperation through cultural, educational, and trade exchanges between cities and communities. Fort Smith and Cisterna have actively worked toward an exchange of history and culture, as well as bringing awareness to the purpose of sister-city relationships. A second official trip in 1987 strengthened the ties that bind. Student delegations from both cities soon

began to take advantage of these exchanges. Over the decades, it is estimated that 350 people from Fort Smith have traveled to Cisterna, and in return, about 400 people from Cisterna have traveled to Fort Smith as part of the sister city program.

From the early 1990s until the early 2010s, the push behind sustaining the sister city relationships found its base in Mr. Emory Dockery and the foundation board of The Darby House. For nearly twenty years, Dockery, along with General Victor Carey, Chad Colley, Rex Sharp, B.J.





**(LEFT)** The Darby family, standing from left, Colonel William O. Darby, his father, Percy Darby, and sister Doris Nell, and, seated, Nellie Darby.

**(ABOVE)** Darby Home.

*(Photos courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)*

Caperton, and Pat Porter carried the relationship of these two cities high on their shoulders. The late Emory Dockery of The Darby House in Fort Smith organized small group trips back and forth to Italy. In one of his last interviews, Dockery remarked that he had made “about twenty trips to Italy and Ireland for Darby tours over the years with groups of fifteen to twenty people.” In 2018 during his trip to “Carrickfergus, Ireland, about ten miles north of Belfast, where Darby’s Rangers were originally formed,” he met Prince Phillip and one trip to the national cemetery at Cisterna coincided with a visit with then-President Bill Clinton. Although there were fun glimpses of famous visitors, the real purpose of these trips kept the sister-city relationships relevant and meaningful.

In early 2010s, Leisa Gramlich, then executive director of the Fort Smith Museum of History, began instituting annual programming honoring General Darby and his contributions to World War II. The Fort Smith Museum of History holds a large archival collection of General Darby’s uniforms, medals, images, documents, and family memorabilia, donated by his sister, Doris Nell Darby. Annual programming included Veterans Day programs, school tours, accessibility of research and images for authors and other military or historical institutions, and education of the public—which continues to this day.

Retired U.S. Army Ranger Joe Armstrong and wife Liz created the Darby Legacy Project, a committee of dedicated individuals who raised funds for a new, bronze statue of General Darby, created by artist and sculptor Kevin Kresse. On April 30, 2016, a group of 100 motorcyclists and Army

Rangers traveled to Norman, Oklahoma, for a “Bringing General Darby Home” ride to pick up the statue and deliver it to Fort Smith. Flanked by motorcycles and Rangers, the Darby statue made for an emotional and impressive site as the sculpture crested the top of the J. Fred Patton Bridge, made its way down Garrison Avenue to applause and cheers and reached its final placement in Cisterna Park. Five hundred bricks make up the statue’s base—500 for the original number of Darby’s Rangers. The Darby statue was dedicated on the seventy-first anniversary of the Ranger leader’s death.

Not long after World War II, Fort Smith High School, where a young Billy Darby walked the halls and left his mark as editor of the yearbook, a musician, and a thespian, the school changed its name to William O. Darby Junior High in honor of Fort Smith’s native son. Years later the mascot became a Ranger complete with the motto, “Rangers Lead the Way.”

Decades of work by citizens and institutions in Fort Smith have upheld the legacy of Gen. William O. Darby’s impact during World War II. They have carried forward the mission of being a “sister-city” to Cisterna with a shared purpose of remembering the man himself but keeping the sacrifices of the First, Third, and Fourth Ranger Battalions close to the heart of the relationship.

In 2019, the city of Fort Smith stepped back into the picture when former Mayor Sandy Sanders reached out to former Cisterna Mayor Gianni Salis in hopes of reigniting the city’s involvement. Sanders met Salis in Cisterna and made plans for an official delegation from Fort Smith to



once again cross the Atlantic in honor of our cities “twinning” relationship. The trip, planned for the spring of 2020, was squashed as the world stopped during a global pandemic.

In 2021, a new film festival was taking shape in Fort Smith. Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith connected with the Cisterna Film Festival. As travel became an option again, Goldsmith, executive director with the Fort Smith International Film Festival, filmmaker Clay Pruitt, and Fort Smith Museum of History Executive Director Caroline Speir made an unofficial trip during a lull in COVID in July 2021. It was a trip of discovery. Cisterna and Fort Smith honor one another in a similar fashion. Cisterna has a high school named after William O. Darby; Fort Smith has a middle school of the same name. Largo Fort Smith is a city park in Cisterna; Cisterna Park is a city park in downtown Fort Smith. Battlefields mark the spot of the Rangers’ sacrifice; museums and cemeteries recognize and honor the Rangers’ legacy and the sacrifices of the dead. In both cities, streets recall Darby’s name or that of the Rangers. The history of the Battle of Cisterna and the war years are spoken about with heavy emotion, a gratefulness of the Rangers sacrifice, and a remembrance to never repeat a world event such as World War II.

Since 2021, Caroline Speir has been working as an ambassador on behalf of the city of Fort Smith and in her role as FSMH executive director to further the twin city relationships. Deep connections with this relationship led to Speir leading the effort on behalf of the city to establish a second twin city with Nago-Torbole, Italy, the site of Colonel Darby’s death on April 30, 1945.

Friendships that developed with the people of Cisterna and Nago-Torbole have made these projects a special and meaningful part of her work at the Fort Smith Museum of History. Speir has continued to work to develop strong representative ties between the three cities. In 2023, she headed a committee to develop the inaugural 2023 Fort Smith General Darby Challenge, a direct sister-event to the

## Italians to Arrive For Ceremonies

*Gazette State News*

Twenty-five Italians will arrive in Northwest Arkansas Monday for a week's visit that includes the dedication of the boyhood home of Colonel William O. Darby of Fort Smith, who organized the United States' first commando unit.

The group, from Cisterna, Italy, will also participate in a ceremony October 26 naming Fort Smith as Cisterna's "sister city." Cisterna was the site of a major battle between Darby's Rangers and German troops in 1942.

The group will be in Siloam Springs Monday for a tour of John Brown University and later in Rogers, Tontitown, Springdale and Fayetteville. The group will also tour the University of Arkansas and Eureka Springs. In Fort Smith, the group will visit Darby's grave in the National Cemetery, tour the Old Fort Museum and participate in a parade. Darby's home will be dedicated at 11:30 a.m. Friday.



**WAR HEROES** comic, issue No. 3, published in 1943, features Colonel William O. Darby (lower right).

*(Image courtesy of Fort Smith Museum of History)*

forty-mile Colonel Darby Ranger Challenge, held each spring in Nago-Torbole. In 2025, both events will honor the eightieth anniversary of the death of General Darby and the armistice of World War II. In 2025, on behalf of the twin-city projects, Speir is continuing collaborative work with film producers Ben Appleby and Antonella Previdi in Nago-Torbole to assist them with historical documentation from the museum collections to develop a documentary on General William O. Darby.

In 2023, a delegation consisting of then-Fort Smith City Administrator Carl Geffken, Fort Smith Vice Mayor Jarred Rego, Fort Smith Chief of Police Danny Baker, Clayton House Executive Director Mila Masur, Fort Smith Museum of History Board of Trustees Gary Hunt and Darlin Kightlinger, with Adam Kightlinger, and Speir, officially “twinning” Fort Smith and Nago-Torbole, Italy.

In 2024, Speir and Masur organized the fortieth anniversary celebrations of the twinning of Fort Smith and Cisterna, Italy, heading up the visits for the city exchanges.

These projects have also become a labor of love for many. Since 2021, carried forward with the spirit of the



(ABOVE) Reenactment of the Battle of January 30, 1944, in Cisterna, Italy.

*(Photos courtesy of the Fort Smith Museum of History)*

sister-city mission and to rightfully honor the sacrifices of General Darby and the men of Darby's Rangers, a host of people have invested their time and heart to make a difference for Fort Smith, Cisterna, and Nago-Torbole.

These dedicated citizens have worked on behalf of the city, on committees, and on behalf of the Fort Smith Museum of History to carry forward decades of work established before them.

They have represented the city of Fort Smith and its symbolic relationship with Cisterna and Nago-Torbole beautifully. Mila Masur; Darlin and Adam Kightlinger; Gary Hunt; Lana Hunt; Jarred Rego; Danny Baker; Carl Geffken; Fort Smith Mayor George McGill; The Darby House Director and Retired Army Ranger Ashley Moss; Retired Army Ranger Joe Armstrong; FSMH Board of Trustees members Scott Stubblefield and Ed Devero; Melissa Vitale; Josh Mickle; Retired Marine Dan Masur; Jo Carson; FSMH graphic art and exhibitions designer Garry Williamson; Tim Williamson; FSMH Curations Assistant Grace Devero; filmmaker Grant Thomas; Erin Thomas; Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith; and former Fort Smith Mayor Sandy Sanders.

Ongoing projects and initiatives are in development by these dedicated citizens to ensure the "gemellaggio" relationship continues far beyond 2025.

Italian students composed sweet postcards and letters to their new sister city back in 1984. In 2021, a random encounter in the Rome airport proved a serendipitous moment. A Fort Smith woman checked her passport after leaving Cisterna. As she and the clerk exchanged conversation, they discovered the clerk had been to Fort Smith on a student-exchange years prior!

Over the years, a boy and girl fell in love, one from



Cisterna, one from Fort Smith. Who knew that "twinning" cities would unite two people in love and marriage?

The sister-city bond between Fort Smith and Cisterna di Latina is more than a document proclaiming the official existence of a sisterhood or "gemellaggio." Rather, it is a living exchange of friendship that carries forward the history of a man, the values that formed his foundation, shaped in a small town in Arkansas to a world stage where he steadfastly commanded battalions of soldiers, some paying the ultimate price, to save a city during a devastating world war.

The legacy remains and sustains.



*Caroline Speir is executive director of the Fort Smith Museum of History. She is the recipient of the Walter L. Brown Award for Best Community History for her article, "From Cuba to Chaffee: The Impact of of Refugee Laws, Life in Detainment, and the Lingering Perception of 'Marielitos,'" which appeared in the September 2020 edition of the Journal.*



# From St. Anne's to NASA

*Space exploration inspires career path for brothers Rick and David Fitts*

By Joyce Faulkner

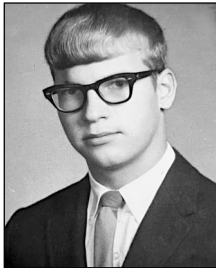
Multitalented Rick Fitts emerged as a serious and dedicated scholar at St. Anne's Academy. He participated in the Drum and Bugle Corps, the school newspaper, the science club, and Mu Alpha Theta.

Historically, Fort Smith birthed, educated, and celebrated many extraordinary people who went out into the world and did amazing things. However, the story of how St. Anne's Academy graduates and brothers, Rick and David Fitts, came to work at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is joyfully unique.

In October 1957, Fort Smithians of an age might remember standing in our yards staring into the night sky as a glowing white Russian dot named "Sputnik" flew over. While many veterans of the two World Wars of the twentieth century were alarmed that the "Russkis" had "beat us to it," they—and most everyone else—marveled at the achievement. United States scientists and engineers vindicated themselves a few months later when NASA launched the Explorer 1 satellite on January 31, 1958. Americans began thinking about how we might take part in this great new "space" adventure. Those of us still in grade school started by simply watching TV, reading newspapers and magazines and, yes, even comic books, about what came to be known as the "Space Program."

The younger of the Fitts brothers, David, said, "Both Rick and I were avid comic book fans, so those and sci-fi reading fed the adventure side of it." That fascination followed them to St. Anne's, where they chose classes that enhanced their understanding of what was happening.

After graduating from St. Anne's in 1966, Rick went to the University of Arkansas, where he earned a bachelor's degree in physics and a master's in electrical engineering. "Like many people growing up in the '60s, I was following the space program," he said. "So, when I heard that NASA was hiring, I put my application in immediately. My



**RICK FITTS,**  
St. Anne's Academy,  
class of 1966



**RICK FITTS,**  
in retirement



**RICK FITTS** at St. Anne's Academy



**RICK FITTS** at the console at the control room in Texas for the flight of Apollo 15.

*(Photos courtesy of Rick Fitts)*

background in physics and electrical was what they were looking for, so they extended an offer, and I accepted. I started working in the control room on Apollo 15 and 16. I then moved to the Skylab program as a GNS (guidance navigation system) officer. Once Skylab ended, I trained as the first Shuttle GNC (guidance, navigation and control) officer for the critical ascent flight phase. I served in that



capacity for the first four shuttle flights. then cross-trained as a propulsion officer for STS-7.

When asked about his propulsion controller role, Rick explained that he was “responsible for the small attitude control thrusters (RCS—reaction control system) and the larger engine used to raise and lower the orbit and to de-orbit the spacecraft (OMS—orbital maneuvering system). We looked for jet failures (either electrical or plumbing). We were also tasked with monitoring for leaks and for estimating the fuel remaining.”

Rick was more into space than flight. “I was happy to be controlling the spacecraft from the ground. I never had an interest in becoming an astronaut and never applied.”

Rick worked for NASA for thirty-three years plus an additional seven years as a NASA contractor.

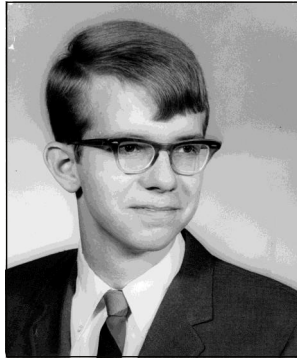
When it was younger brother David Fitts’ turn, he said, “Let me just say now, I owe getting on board with NASA to Rick. When I applied, encouraged by Rick, he had made the Fitts name a known quantity, so I was interviewed.”

“I was fascinated by space since my fourth birthday and the airing of Disneyland TV’s *Man in Space*. Then I took a deep dive into science-fiction in the fourth grade. One of the St. Boniface nuns, Sister Dismus, and I read scores of books together, maybe hundreds. By the time of John Glenn’s flight in 1962, I was a full-on space nerd. I was the one (with my supportive mom) who dragged the black and white ‘portable’ TV to school so our entire class could watch.”

\*\*\*

David’s experience was different from Rick’s. “I spent my whole twenty-seven-year NASA career, plus two years as a contractor, in an entirely different part of a space program’s lifecycle—i.e. development, ten or more years before a vehicle/mission went operational.

“I did many things, but my favorite title was Chief, Habitability and Human Factors,” he said, “I led a group of



DAVID FITTS, 1969



DAVID FITTS, Chief,  
Habitability and Human  
Factors

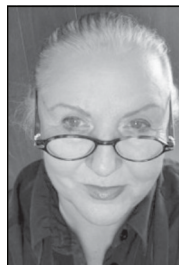
people focused on keeping ‘human’ in human space flight design. My easy description (of a complex job) was that space missions are only going to get longer and more remote. If you are going to be in a can for three years, our team focused on designs promoting livability, sociability, and sanity.

“I was most fortunate to have worked at the heart of the three major programs of my era: Space Shuttle; International Space Station; and Constellation.”

Asked which role he enjoyed most, David said, “Both. Technologies evolve and develop over/across programs. But what fundamentally changes are the mission goals. Going to the moon or mars is a very different mission (and life) than the International Space Station.”

When questioned about whether he was involved in designing a living environment for these missions, David responded, “Part of my team was. Either via requirements or by direct participation in design. But our group did many things, eg, provided all the astronauts’ food, measured for space suits and debriefed crews on habitability concerns.”

When asked if he ever wanted to be an astronaut himself, David said, “I suppose wanting that seemed like ‘the thing to do,’ but as I came to learn more, I totally lost interest. I was the kid who had to take Dramamine on car trips and still do on boats.” But the program itself? “I loved it! I liked going to work! which is not something the twenty-one-year-old me thought I’d ever say.”



*Joyce Faulkner was born in Fort Smith and graduated from St. Anne’s Academy. She holds a Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master’s in Business Administration from Cleveland State. She is an acclaimed author and an editor of The Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society. She and husband John are the Red Engine Press owner/publishers.*



Give local history fans you know the gift of membership. They will love the *Journal*—and you.





**MEMBERS OF STUTTGART HIGH SCHOOL'S SUCCESSFUL 1929 FOOTBALL TEAM.** The Stuttgart Ricebirds were considered a football powerhouse in those days. From left to right are (first row) Charlie Hagaman, Louis Reinhart, Howard Hagaman, Mark Townsend, Wilmer Loveless, Delphied Brown, and George Reigler; (second row) Billy Roy, Cullen McVey, Bill Burnett, Allen Keith, Bud Nichols, and Frank Brummitt; (third row) Milton Gingerich, Porter John, Sidney Brain, Kermit Kersieck, Arthur Bruce, Kenneth Oaksmith, and \_\_\_\_ Foley; (fourth row) coach Buck Wells, Risdon Wood, and Leland Morgans.

*(Courtesy of Stuttgart Library)*

# The Legacy of Arlys E. ‘Buck’ Wells

*Fort Smith’s Longtime Coach and Educator*

**By Glenn Mosenthin**

**A**rlys E. (Buck) Wells, longtime physical education director at Fort Smith’s William O. Darby Junior High School, provided the city’s education system with an impressive chapter in the history of Arkansas sports. From 1934 to 1966, he trained a great many student athletes to go on to personal growth in and out of the realm of sports, many of whom went on to be successful coaches. Coach Wells developed various youth sports programs and summer camps over his long career, including local participation in a physical fitness initiative created by an American president.<sup>1</sup>

Arlys Earl Wells was born December 11, 1902, on a farm near the rural community of Brashear, Adair County, Missouri, in the northeast corner of the state. He was the

son of Robert Benjamin Wells (1867-1951), a blacksmith and dairy farmer born at Morgan, Kentucky; and Rosetta May Silvers (1873-1958), born at Sullivan, Illinois. The Wells family were of mostly English descent by way of Virginia, while the Silvers family were mostly of German extraction, having emigrated to Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup> Arlys Wells was the fifth of eight children, seven of whom lived to adulthood: Zelma Mae Sumpter (1895-1959), Marguerite Caroline Hardister (1897-1969), Harold Benjamin (1899-1974), Ila Garnette Glenn (1901-1974, grandmother of the author), Halley (1905-1905, a daughter), Leota Eva Elliott (1906-1987), and Russell Trigg (1913-1976). The family moved into nearby Kirksville around 1912 and lived on the east edge of town where Ben Wells continued operating a dairy farm.<sup>3</sup>

A few blocks from the Wells’ home at 911 Normal Street was Kirksville State Teachers College (now Truman



OFFICIAL SCORE CARD,---STUTTGART vs. FORDYCE			
Fordyce High School		Stuttgart High School	
REDBUGS		RICE BIRDS	
State Champions of 1929			
No. Name	Position	Weight	
25 Nutt	End	150	
30 Martin	Fullback	176	
32 C. Jordan	Quarterback	170	
33 G. Jordan	Halfback	162	
37 Benton	Tackle	185	
40 Bryant	Tackle	185	
43 Chandler	End	166	
27 Lucewell	Halfback	145	
45 Chambers	Fullback	160	
46 Vinson	Guard	163	
47 Gresham	Halfback	151	
48 Murry	Center	170	
49 Byars	Guard	162	
50 A. Mosley	Guard	180	
51 N. Moseley	Guard	159	
52 Hardman	End	160	
26 Darling	Quarterback	130	
44 Elledge	End	141	
28 S. Harrell	Tackle	150	
29 Gray	Halfback	131	
31 Witherington	Halfback	150	
34 F. Mosley	Halfback	144	
36 Steelman	End	144	
39 Beachboard	Halfback	142	
42 Boyd	Center	159	
Woodell		130	
Hodgesberger		118	
Hanks		122	
F. Harrell		166	
Harling		160	
Chraway		123	
Average Weight for Team		168	Sub-Captain Albert Mosley
Average Weight Backfield		164	Cheer Leaders Mary
Average Weight Line		171	Elizabeth Hall and Z. T. Brandon
Coach		Robert A. Cowan	Colors Red and Black
		Captain Harry Nutt	
No. Name	Position	Weight	
6 D. Brown	Center	150	
7 Morgan	Quarterback	130	
12 Oaksmith	Halfback	160	
14 C. Hagaman	Halfback	155	
15 Nicholas (C)	Fullback	180	
15 Rinehart	Tackle	160	
16 J. Brown	Halfback	155	
17 H. Hagaman	Quarterback	150	
18 Reiger	Halfback	165	
20 Chambers	End	160	
36 Clawitter	Guard	165	
39 Keith	Guard	170	
43 McVay	Tackle	160	
44 Knoll	Guard	165	
47 F. Brummitt	Tackle	185	
2 C. Brummitt	Tackle	140	
3 Loveless	Quarterback	140	
4 Hafer	Guard	140	
5 S. Brown	End	135	
8 Getchell	Halfback	165	
10 Fowler	Guard	160	
12 Robnett	Tackle	150	
14 Denslon	End	145	
15 Beard	Halfback	150	
17 Rhodes	Guard	165	
22 Woods	End	145	
23 Finch	Center	145	
31 Thorell	Tackle	165	
32 Flowers	Tackle	160	
34 Mitchner	Halfback	145	
35 Hill	End	155	
52 Kerkisleck	End	155	
53 Harlan	End	160	
54 Foley	Center	160	
55 Brain	End	155	
Average Weight for Team		165	Coach A. E. Wells
Average Weight Backfield		164	Captain Nicholas
Average Weight Line		166	Yell Leader Robert Thomas
		Colors	Red and White

(ABOVE) 1930 football program. Note Paul (Bear) Bryant on Fordyce team.  
(Courtesy of Paul W. Bryant Museum, University of Alabama.)

(RIGHT) Coach Arlys E. (Buck) Wells and nine members of the 1933 Stuttgart team (left). Front row from left—Scott McCuskey, Walter Loveless, Everett Burch, Roland Getchel, Gene (Jack) Perry; back row—Jimmy Rich, Ralph Graves, Coach Wells, Donald Reichenderfer, and Bob Horst. McCuskey was the recipient of two Navy Crosses for heroism as a pilot in the Battles of Coral Sea and Midway in World War II.  
(Stuttgart, Ark., *Daily Leader*, November 29, 1969)



State University). All the children except Russell, who partnered with his father in the farming operation, attended the college. Arlys was a standout athlete in football, basketball, and other sports. He likely gained his nickname of “Buck” around this time, or perhaps at Kirksville High School. He graduated from Kirksville Teachers College in 1929. His sister Garnette had married Harold Glenn, a graduate of the American School of Osteopathy (now A. T.

Still University) in Kirksville. The couple had relocated to Dr. Glenn’s hometown of Stuttgart, Arkansas, by 1929, and influenced Wells to apply for an open position as athletic director at the local high school.<sup>4</sup> It proved to be a good match, because the 1931 Stuttgart football team went undefeated. According to an article from 1932:

The 1932 football schedule for the Rice Birds, just



announced by Coach “Buck” Wells, is without doubt one of the “toughest” the locals have ever been asked to play. For the past few years, Stuttgart has had a wonderful team, finishing last year without losing a game. The fans were so elated over the victories that they wanted to put our team up against the best in the state. Coach Wells, to satisfy the public, booked both North Little Rock and Pine Bluff. The schedule calls for ten games of which five are to be played at home.<sup>5</sup>

#### The 1932 schedule:

Sept. 16—Holly Grove, here;  
 Sept. 23—North Little Rock, there, night game;  
 Sept. 30—Carlisle, here;  
 Oct. 7—Helena, here;  
 Oct. 14—Clarendon, there;  
 Oct. 28—Lonoke, there;  
 Nov. 4—Pine Bluff, there, night game;  
 Nov. 11—Augusta, here;  
 Nov. 18—Brinkley, here;  
 Nov. 24—open.

Coach Wells’ successful five years at Stuttgart paved the way for a long career in the Fort Smith school system. He was hired as physical education director and swimming instructor at Fort Smith (later Darby) Junior High in September 1934.<sup>6</sup> On Christmas Day of that year, Wells was married to Eleanor Ann Selig in her hometown of Stuttgart. Born August 8, 1911, she was the daughter of



**COACH “BUCK” WELLS**

*(Courtesy of the author)*

from Darby Junior High School. They had three children: Robert Joseph (1936-2021), James Earl (1943-2022), and Kathryn Louise (1953- ).

The Fort Smith career of Coach Wells got off to a strong start. During his second school term at his new position, a Stuttgart newspaper reported:

Coach A. E. Wells, formerly head of the athletic department at Stuttgart High School, turned out winning football and basketball teams at Fort Smith Junior High School this term. . . . “The close of the basketball season has ended with Junior High certainly having something to

Iowa native Roman J. Selig Sr. (1885-1948) and Louise A. Kiniry (1886-1959), a native of Kansas. She had one brother, Roman Jr. (1915-2002).

Eleanor’s paternal grandfather was instrumental in the early growth of the Stuttgart area of the Arkansas Grand Prairie, through his work as a real estate agent with Iowa connections.<sup>7</sup>

The couple lived at 410 North Fifteenth Street, Fort Smith, a short walk



**ATHLETIC STAFF OF FORT SMITH SCHOOLS**—The men who direct the athletic destinies of Fort Smith athletes are shown here. They are, left to right, Ben I. Mayo, athletic director for the entire school system; Frank Jones, assistant football coach; John R. Thompson, senior high school intramural director, basketball and track coach; A. E. (Buck) Wells, junior high school intramural director and basketball coach; and Les Nations, head football coach and assistant track coach. T. E. Fullerton, new football coach at the junior high school, was not signed at the time this picture was made.

*(Phelps photo)*



**Arllys Earl (Buck) and Eleanor Ann Selig Wells**

brag about in regard to the successful basketball team. Wells, after a year's experience here, has developed two winning teams. His football team ended with a .500 average and the basketball squad set a .750 mark. Congratulations, Coach!" Coach Wells' basketball team won nine and lost four.<sup>8</sup>

The postwar years saw an increase in emphasis on physical fitness programs in Fort Smith schools. Buck Wells would play a major part in this effort. A local newspaper described the effort as follows:

Aimed at developing good athletes every year, the Fort Smith school system will greatly expand its intramural and varsity athletic programs during the 1946-1947 school year, Athletic Director Ben I. Mayo has announced. The intramural program will be given greater emphasis this year than ever before—with a sport offered for every student. Much game equipment has been purchased from Camp Chaffee and the USO. Tennis, horseshoes, indoor hockey, archery, touch football, softball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, basketball, track and other sports activities will be offered to the student body. Coach John R. Thompson will direct the senior high intramural program, and Coach A. E. (Buck) Wells will oversee the junior high inter-class activities. Mayo will supervise the grade school program, but an intramural director will be designated for each school. Indoor games such as hand wrestling, tug-of-war and games of skill will be stressed during the winter in grade schools. The inauguration of intramural basketball in the senior high will carry on a program successfully completed in junior high last year. Boxing, wrestling, swimming, and gymnastics were featured in Coach Wells' 1945-1946 program. "This year will be a year of building



**THE TRACK STADIUM** at Ramsey Junior High was named in honor of Coach "Buck" Wells in 1969.



**TROPHY CASE** at Fort Smith's Darby Middle School memorializes former teacher and coach, Arlys "Buck" Wells.

*(Photos courtesy of the author)*

as far as varsity competition in the high school is concerned," Mayo said.<sup>9</sup>

In 1960, President John F. Kennedy initiated the President's Council on Physical Fitness, his continuation of an Eisenhower program designed to promote a healthier lifestyle to create a more fit and active country. Coach Buck Wells was heavily involved in conducting this program in the Fort Smith school system. The Fort Smith Parent-Teacher Association awarded him in 1962 with a lifetime membership for twenty-eight years of service, marking the first time a male teacher or physical education staff member achieved this honor.<sup>10</sup> Coach Wells conducted the Stay-at-Home Camp for youth, which increased in popularity each summer. Arlys Earl Wells passed away on March 31, 1966, at the age of sixty-three. An American flag that had flown



over the U.S. Capitol was presented to Darby Junior High School in his honor. Wells was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery following a funeral mass at Immaculate Conception Church. His obituary in a local newspaper stated that “in recent years Coach Wells had developed a unique program of youth development at the school, and it has drawn major interest from other schools around the state and nation.”<sup>11</sup>

The school system in Fort Smith honored Coach A. E. (Bucks) Wells a final time in 1969, when they named the track stadium at Ramsey Junior High School for him. The facility was developed to serve all city schools. It was built with eight 36-inch lanes, a 180-yard straightaway, curbs and drains, at a cost of around \$25,000.<sup>12</sup> Eleanor Ann Selig Wells passed away on December 25, 2003, in Fort Smith at the age of ninety-two. She had served as a secretary for twenty-seven years with the Fort Smith School District in addition to a host of other civic volunteer efforts.<sup>13</sup>

For nearly four decades, the Stuttgart and Fort Smith School Districts achieved success and experienced growth under the leadership of A. E. (Buck) Wells. His dedication to physical fitness served a great many youths under his tutelage and shaped them for personal growth in their chosen fields of endeavor.<sup>14</sup>



*Glenn Mosenthin, nephew of the subject, is a graduate of Stuttgart High School and the University of Tulsa. He worked for American Airlines as an airport operations agent. An independent researcher, he is editor of the Grand Prairie Historical Bulletin*

*and serves on the boards of the Grand Prairie Historical Society (Arkansas County) and the Arkansas Historical Association.*

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> “A. E. (Buck) Wells, Darby PE Coach, Is Dead at 63,” *Fort Smith Times-Record*, April 1, 1966. p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup> Genealogical records in the author’s collection, derived from pertinent vital records and family sources.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*; 1910 Census, Brashear Village, Salt River Township, Adair County, Missouri, sheet 5A, household 121.
- <sup>4</sup> “Buck Wells Funeral at Fort Smith,” *Kirkville (Mo.) Daily Express*, April 4, 1966, p. 1.
- <sup>5</sup> “Rice Birds Will Face Hard Foes,” *Grand Prairie Leader* (Stuttgart, Ark.), March 3, 1932, p. 1.
- <sup>6</sup> “Wells Gets Job at Fort Smith School,” *Daily Arkansaswyer* (Stuttgart), September 8, 1934. p. 1.
- <sup>7</sup> “Selig-Wells,” *Grand Prairie Leader* (Stuttgart, Ark.), December 27, 1934, p. 1; Genealogical records in the author’s collection; 1930 Census, Stuttgart, Gum Pond Township, Arkansas



**A TROPHY CASE** at Darby Junior High was dedicated in honor of A.E. “Buck” Wells. Shown inspecting the case shortly after its dedication in this photo from the *Southwestern* newspaper are, from left to right, Ricky Cogburn, Darby student body president; Eleanor Ann Selig Wells, Wells’ widow; Earl Farnsworth, Northside High principal; and Jim Wells, son of the late coach.

County, Arkansas, sheet 9A, household 176; Burkett, Bennie Frownfelter, Stuttgart, Arkansas: *One Hundred Years on the Grand Prairie* (Stuttgart: Standard Printing, 1980), n.p.

- <sup>8</sup> “Former Stuttgart Coach Doing Well at Fort Smith,” *Daily Arkansaswyer* (Stuttgart), February 24, 1936, p. 1.
- <sup>9</sup> *Southwest Times-Record* (Fort Smith), August 25, 1946, p. A-13.
- <sup>10</sup> “Leftovers,” *Stuttgart (Ark.) Daily Leader*, unknown date, 1962, clipping in author’s collection.
- <sup>11</sup> “A. E. (Buck) Wells, Darby PE Coach, Is Dead at 63”; “Darby PE Director Dies at 63,” *Southwest American* (Fort Smith), April 1, 1966, p. 1; “Buck Wells Funeral at Fort Smith,” *Kirkville (Mo.) Daily Express*, April 4, 1966, p. 1.
- <sup>12</sup> “Leftovers,” *Stuttgart (Ark.) Daily Leader*, February 14, 1969, p. 1.
- <sup>13</sup> “Eleanor Ann Wells,” *Southwest Times-Record* (Fort Smith), December 29, 2003, p. 2.
- <sup>14</sup> Arlys (Buck) Wells was a brother of the author’s maternal grandmother, Garnette Wells Glenn.

# Ruth Ward: The Joy of Service

*'Tales of the Crypt' Attendance Sparks Years of Volunteerism*

**By Sue Robison**

The "Tales of the Crypt" presentation at the Oak Cemetery may be one of the most popular living history events ever presented in Fort Smith. Along with offering an innovative way of sharing local history, "Tales of the Crypt" brought together a wide mixture of people from around the area as creators, volunteers, and guests sharing a curiosity about prior residents of our historic hometown.

Ruth Ward was one of the guests more than twenty years ago at a "Tales of the Crypt." Ruth, who has family buried in Oak Cemetery, was interested in the event and wanted to understand what organizers had in mind when staging the afternoon presentation. Ruth was quite impressed with the tour—so impressed she sought out a member of the Parks Department at the end of the day and volunteered to be part of the following year's event. Ruth was presented with her first volunteer agreement papers to sign that day, and, when the gates at the Oak Cemetery opened on the next "Tales of the Crypt," she was waiting inside as a tour guide.

"The Tales of the Crypt" was Ruth's primary volunteer involvement for the following five years as she continued to work in the health care field. The groups of visitors she led on walking tours during the annual event were generally made up of fifteen to twenty guests, and she was always happy to meet so many people who shared her enthusiasm for local history. She was especially pleased when her groups included guests who traveled for the event and remembers meeting people from Texas and Missouri who were drawn to Fort Smith to take part in the "Tales of the Crypt" tour at the Oak Cemetery.

After her service as a tour guide, Ruth was stationed by the event's organizers as a volunteer inside the pavilion during the cemetery tours. Her duties for two years with "Tales of the Crypt" were in this position and included answering questions, serving as a one-woman welcoming committee, and helping raise funds for future tours by accepting donations. She was so good in her new assignment she was able to collect more than \$1,000 from visitors in a single afternoon.

Ruth's favorite memories of the tours remain those of



**RUTH WARD** as a tour guide for the 2017 "Tales of the Crypt" event at Oak Cemetery in Fort Smith.

*(Courtesy of Ruth Ward)*

the visitors she led through the cemetery. She always enjoyed meeting new people, and one of the people she met was instrumental in directing her to her next step as a volunteer. Barbara Coleman was a member of the Parks Commission while Ruth served as a tour guide for "Tales of the Crypt." As a long-standing member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Barbara introduced Ruth to the organization. Through discussions of family stories, the two discovered they shared a common history of ancestors serving in the Civil War. Barbara brought Ruth into the United Daughters of the Confederacy, where she would



donate fourteen years of volunteer service.

During her tenure with the organization, Ruth served as her chapter's recording secretary for ten years. She was also selected to be secretary for the local state division of the organization for two terms, serving two years each term. Ruth received the honor of serving as vice-president of the group for two years and was nominated for president, which she considers the highlight of her tenure with the organization.

While secretary, one of Ruth's duties was to create and maintain a yearbook for her chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. There were annual reviews of all Arkansas yearbooks, with prizes awarded to the chapter with the best presentation. The yearbooks Ruth prepared often won awards, which was an achievement not easily duplicated.

Once again, while working with the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Ruth showed her special ability to raise funds for an organization. While attending one of the group's regional functions, it became her responsibility to sell small commemorative pins created to honor the event. With her welcoming smile and gentle personality, Ruth managed to set a record for most pins sold by putting more than \$1,000 worth of keepsakes in the hands of visitors.

Ruth accumulated a great deal of history involving local Confederate veterans through her work with the United Daughters of the Confederacy. While she enjoyed the travel to conventions and events and making new friends with members of the organization, she felt the history they gathered to be the greatest service the group offered their community. Indeed, it was her knowledge of local burial sites for Confederate veterans that brought this writer together with Ruth several years ago.

After leaving the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Ruth found her way to the historic Clayton House on North Sixth Street in downtown Fort Smith. This grand residence-turned-museum needed volunteers; Ruth, being recently retired, was willing to offer any service they needed.

While she enjoyed every duty she took on at the Clayton House, she remembers most fondly the relationships she developed with its director at the time, Julie Moncrief, and the staff at the museum. Ruth feels that, when an organization deeply appreciates its workers and volunteers, there is a sense of belonging and ownership within its walls that can only lead to growth and success.

Ruth's duties at the Clayton House included everything from washing dishes to planting flowers along the front lawn's walkway. She even helped out during the popular "ghost hunts" hosted in the long-rumored haunted house. Ruth accepted each responsibility as it was offered to her, accumulating a variety of memories and photographs through her years of service. She was honored when the



**RUTH WARD** works in the front lawn flower beds at the Clayton House on North Sixth Street in Fort Smith.

*(Courtesy of Ruth Ward)*

director offered her the opportunity to become a tour guide for scheduled groups and worked hard learning the history of the house and the Clayton family to provide accurate information in an entertaining manner.

Many of her most vivid memories of the four years spent as a Clayton House volunteer were created during the organization's fundraising activities. She was especially fond of the Christmas open houses and the dinner hosted over the holiday season. Ruth remembers the beautiful decorations and how the house took on a feeling of warmth that made it one of the area's favorite holiday destinations.

The Clayton House summer fundraiser had a lively tone, featuring local whiskeys and a silent auction filled with some of the most unique items imaginable. "Sippin' on Sixth Street" gave Ruth the opportunity to mingle with visitors who spent a "spirited" evening at the Clayton House while helping raise funds necessary to keep its doors open for another year.

A more refined image of the house was presented in 2016 when Ruth took part in a living history recreation of an 1890-era meeting of the Fortnightly Club at the Clayton House. Florence Clayton, wife of then Prosecuting Attorney William Henry Harrison Clayton, and her good friend, Mary Parker, were founding members of a ladies' reading group they dubbed the Fortnightly Club. Mrs. Parker, wife of Judge Isaac C. Parker, scheduled several meetings of the group in the Clayton home, knowing her friend, Florence, had many children to care for and would rather host a meeting than leave her youngsters to attend a meeting outside her home.

*...It was a lovely day, and the children began playing and making happy noises that spread across the street to Mr. McGill's office. ... Mr. McGill spent some time with the students discussing Fort Smith and Arkansas history, as well as telling stories of his duties in Little Rock.*



One such gathering was recreated in the parlor of the Clayton House with near perfect accuracy, which was a goal of the presentation offered to guests. Clayton House events organizer at the time, Stephen Christian, even provided copies of a manuscript that had been once the actual focus of a Fortnightly meeting for the actors to read and discuss. The four ladies involved in the long-ago meeting engaged in a lively discussion of a writing from a German philosopher, who did not win their favor. It was living history at its best, and a program well received by its audience.

The Fortnightly Club reenactment was part of a Sunday speakers series offered at the Clayton House. Ruth always enjoyed working on the speaker series as a server and greeter, and she was deeply impressed with the wide variety of people who came to speak, and the people who came to hear the presentations.

Perhaps Ruth's favorite memory of her years at the Clayton House involves a group of elementary students and a soon-to-be mayor of Fort Smith. Across North Sixth Street from the Clayton House is another historic Fort Smith home which, at the time of this event, was the office of Arkansas State Representative George McGill. The day Ruth recalls involved an elementary school class who came to tour the Clayton House and then eat lunch on its grounds. It was a lovely day, and the children began playing and making happy noises that spread across the street to Mr. McGill's office. Since he was working in town that day, Mr. McGill joined the group, bringing with him an Arkansas flag he presented to the teacher for display in her classroom. After the presentation, Mr. McGill spent some time with the students discussing Fort Smith and Arkansas history, as well as telling stories of his duties in Little Rock. Ruth got two photos of the event; one shows George McGill with the students and their new Arkansas flag, and the other shows Ruth herself smiling beside the future mayor of Fort Smith.



**GEORGE MCGILL**, who was an Arkansas state representative and is now mayor of Fort Smith, poses with Ruth Ward in front of the Clayton House on North Sixth Street in Fort Smith.

*(Courtesy of Ruth Ward)*

Family responsibilities called Ruth away from the Clayton House for a short hiatus from volunteering. With a family large enough to boast four generations of direct relatives living at the same time, Ruth continues to be involved with children or grandchildren. In fact, her family is still growing. She will have the honor of welcoming the fifth-generation female to her family in the spring of this year.

After about three years without involvement in her beloved service groups, Ruth was lured to the Fort Smith Museum of History. Her first involvement with the museum entailed building a file of United Daughters of Confederacy paperwork and memorabilia into the museum's computer archives for safe keeping. It was a three-year process that called for deep concentration and attention to every piece of paper she handled.

Once again, Ruth found herself in the company of a friendly and accepting staff and fellow volunteers. She enjoys her time working at the Fort Smith Museum of History, is comfortable in her position and considers herself fortunate when she has the opportunity to speak to a guest or meet a visitor. Ruth takes her duties seriously, stating she, "just wants to do what I can to help."

When she was finished with the United Daughters of the Confederacy papers, the museum's Executive Director, Caroline Speir, invited Ruth to continue her efforts and help with the preservation and recording of other artifacts. Ruth agreed and was assigned a permanent, weekly schedule, and a workspace within the curation office at the Fort Smith Museum of History. From this area, she has come into contact with some of the most historical items stored in the building.





(LEFT AND ABOVE) Ruth Ward works to curate items at the Fort Smith Museum of History.

Ruth's current duties at the Fort Smith Museum of History include the scanning for safe keeping of funeral and burial records from Rowell-Parish Funeral Home. These historic papers deal with the deaths inside the early Black community in Fort Smith, often including family information that would be lost had the former mortuary owners not offered their earliest records to the museum for safekeeping.

The almost sacred value of these records is important to Ruth, whose love for history makes her perfect for the job of helping with their preservation.

In an ironic twist, the most exciting preservation program Ruth has been involved with at the Fort Smith

Museum of History is one she cannot talk about and one I cannot write about. We will still be bound by a vow of silence when this article is published, so readers will just have to trust us. It is big and, when it is presented to the public, Ruth will be more than happy to tell you all about the subject and her part in the preservation of fascinating artifacts.

Ruth is now in her fifth year as a volunteer for the Fort Smith Museum of History and hopes to spend many more years in the curation office. After all, the museum is filled with wonders for volunteers like Ruth Ward who express a natural curiosity, a love of history, and a true desire to be of service.

## 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

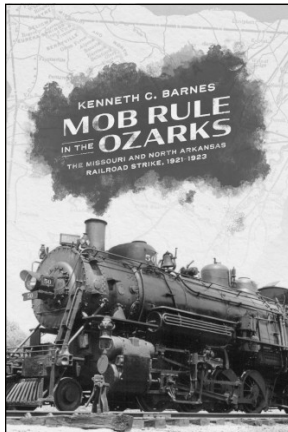
# Book Reviews

***Mob Rule In The Ozarks: The Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad Strike, 1921-1923*, by Kenneth C. Barnes, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2024, 304-pages, photographs, notes by chapter, bibliography, and index. \$24.95 for paper, \$39.95 cloth).**

While this railroad strike occurred in Harrison, Leslie, Marshall, and other sites in North Arkansas served by the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad, the federal court in Fort Smith played a role in trying to mediate this deadliest and most divisive labor conflict in Arkansas history.

This well written and meticulously researched volume by Kenneth Barnes, distinguished professor emeritus of history at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, is indeed a fine addition to the Arkansas History Series of the University of Arkansas Press in Fayetteville and indeed a significant addition to historical scholarship of the nation. The series is edited by Jeannie Whayne of the UA and Kelly Houston-Jones of Arkansas Tech University. Photographs, cartoons, and other illustrations support Barnes' excellent text in helping readers to understand pro and con feelings, particularly how frustrations could give rise to kangaroo courts and extreme violence in small Ozark towns of that period. Of value for those who would teach the subject is the 1920s railroad map of north Arkansas on page 13 that was furnished to Barnes by Steven C. Hawkins.

On January 15, 1923, a crowd of more than a thousand angry men assembled in Harrison, Arkansas, near the headquarters of the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad, protesting the ongoing labor strike against the railroad. The citizen mob was a mix of farmers, stockmen, business owners and even local elected officials, from across the region. The strikers were mostly residents of towns along the line and members of one of several Railroad Brotherhood Unions. Heated arguments were between those who were fellow taxpaying citizens, neighbors, merchants, and town leaders.



The outcome of this mob gathering and a two-week period of unthinkable violence, threats, and terror was to end an almost two-year labor dispute between the railroad management and its railroad laborers. This mob uprising brought about violence and tragedies: several cases of men being stripped and beaten at the hands of others, homes invaded, horse whippings of strikers or strike sympathizers, and a lynching of a railroad employee.

Both men and women were threatened and often roughed up at the hands of these vigilantes as they sought information on strikers' whereabouts or motives.

Andrew J. Russell, a deputy U.S. Marshal from Fort Smith, arrived in Harrison on January 16, a day after the mob had assembled. Russell was there with directions from U.S. Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty to investigate the conditions on the M&NA line. He was to investigate alleged sabotage that disrupted the delivery of mail and other essential government services.

Russell's report to Daugherty triggered federal judge Frank A. Youmans in Fort Smith to issue an injunction against interference with the railroad. Other federal court officials came to Harrison and met with state and local officials, but after three days, came back to Fort Smith.

The strike had nearly bankrupted the railroad, already in trouble because of several natural and geographic disasters that led many to call the MN&A line "May Never Arrive" for its erratic schedule.

Violence was rampant in confrontations between anti-strikers and strikers. The actual lynching of Ed Gregor, who like many of the strikers was a Harrison homeowner, shows a chilling contempt of taking a life without any semblance of a trial.

Eyewitnesses, quoted in the book, said several of the mob later wore snippets of a rope or string on their lapels in the days after the hanging, threatening strikers that their fate could be at the end of a rope.

Gregor was hanged over a railroad bridge on Crooked Creek on the south side of Harrison. Testimony after the lynching was a feeble attempt to say it was "just to scare him to talk," but the tragic truth was that the eight men involved allowed Gregor to hang by his neck too long and he died. Ed Gregor, who had worked for the railroad for years and through World War I when it freighted vital food and other supplies out of the Ozarks in the wartime effort, left a wife and six daughters.



Intimidation was rampant at all hours of the day and night across North Arkansas, as described by Barnes from his careful and thorough research. An armed mob, numbering some 100 men, congregated outside the Harrison home of George O'Neal at 6:45 a.m. on the day following the lynching of Gregor.

The mob knocked on the door and pushed their way inside the home. His wife, Eva, who was making biscuits as men invaded her home, threw dough in the faces of those intruders. She was restrained as men dragged O'Neal in his nightclothes into the street. Several held him while others hit him with leather straps. The beating continued until blood ran from O'Neal's back. The mob eventually released O'Neal and gave him instructions to appear before a citizens court tribunal at Rotary Hall in Harrison that same morning.

This entire affair saw the Ku Klux Klan in the area (and in the state legislature) in the 1920s, emerge from a silent secret society of power into a more visible political force in many Arkansas towns and cities.

Barnes described the prevalence of the Klan thusly: "In all these towns along the MN&A, there was probably considerable overlap between the citizens committees, the chambers of commerce, the men's clubs and the Ku Klux Klan."

He ends with this concluding statement: "...is that government at all levels appeared to be more concerned about fostering commerce than enforcing the law protecting constitutional rights for ordinary citizens."

—Reviewed by Maylon T. Rice

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***Stalking The Great Killer: Arkansas's Long War on Tuberculosis.* By Larry G. Floyd and Dr. Joseph H. Bates, MD. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 2024) 268 pages, full index, Preface, Prologue, Notes, and Bibliography, 19 black and white illustrations. \$34.95 Hardback, \$24.95 paperback.**

The influences of Fort Smith's medical, banking, and political community wove a mighty swath into this concise and well-written history of the nearby Arkansas Tuberculosis Sanatorium and the deadly killer known as the "Great White Killer."

Tuberculosis was once a deadly killer that took lives at a rate equal to or even greater than Covid-19 did in recent memory of 2021 and 2022. Unlike Covid-19, however, tuberculosis is better known throughout history as "consumption."

It was an insidious terror, almost anyone could have "consumption" as that disease stalked Arkansas's

landscape, infecting and killing more citizens, of all ages, per capita, than the recent pandemic of Covid-19.

"The recently published book from a tandem, Larry G. Floyd, a history professor at Oklahoma State University in Oklahoma City's Metro Campus, and Dr. Joseph H. Bates, who was an associate dean and professor of Epidemiology at the College of Public Health at the

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, is a well-documented, easy to understand read for the non-medical novices, on the utter devastation this terrible disease was in Arkansas, prior to the various campaigns that led to the building of one of the nation's largest state-run tubercular facilities in the nation.

Fort Smith area citizens, physicians, and politicians played pivotal roles in securing the Booneville site, enhancing the campus over the years and even in the ultimate closure of the facility some sixty years after it was built, as newer medical procedures and better, safer medications, no longer necessitated the sanatorium experience for many Arkansans.

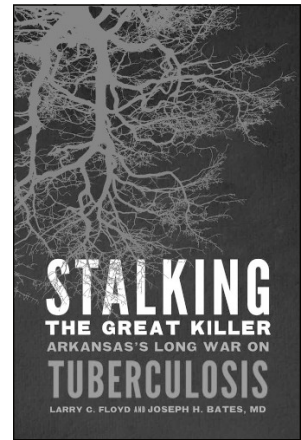
Once admitted, patients could have an extended stay of rest, good nutrition and medical care for up to three years before being discharged home. The death rate in the early days was very high for those stricken with tuberculosis.

With a very lengthy, but well-written examination of the disease from both scientific and history, the book eases the reader into the tiny steps taken in Arkansas to both educate and health the population.

One of the earliest regional mentions of Fort Smith was in 1895, when Dr. E. G. Epler, pleaded for improved sanitation to prevent the spread of the disease, at the twentieth meeting of the Arkansas Medical Society.

As in any state, many times the strongest advocates for seeking a cure came from those in political circles, affected with the disease. Credit for early championing the cause and securing funds for even planning a state sanatorium came from a trio of Arkansas Jurist Joseph M. Hill, Governor George Donaghey, and state Senator Hezekiah "Kie" Oldham of Pulaski County. All three suffered from and would die from the ravages of tuberculosis.

In 1909, the American Red Cross's first supply of Red Cross Christmas stamps, a stamp to symbolically be placed on wrapped yule gifts as a fundraising measure for dollars toward the Arkansas Tuberculosis Association's efforts, arrived in Arkansas. For the price of a penny, these stamps,



to be on local gifts, often at the retail store level, raised funds distributed locally in the crusade against the disease.

Arkansas was in a race as were other states to fund, build and staff a sanatorium, thought, at the time, as one way to abate this deadly disease.

Fort Smith physician Dr. J. D. Southard would be named as one of the six members of the first board of trustees to organize, cite, and help build a sanatorium facility in Arkansas. After a tour across the state, often to sites only by horseback, the committee with the Booneville delegation held in Little Rock over sites such as Womble, later renamed Norman, (west of Hot Springs) and other locations.

Opening in 1910 to seventy-six patients, once completed, Arkansas would be one of the first states in the south to establish a sanatorium.

Fort Smith physician, Dr. Charles W. Garrison, stepped in, helping the new institution find its footing in 1911 and 1912, while also serving as the director of the hookworm campaign, another curable scourge, afflicting the poorest of the state's poor. Garrison's work within the state medical board, from 1913 to 1933, helped in the public education of tuberculosis.

Future developments of the state's sanatorium would be from such Fort Smith philanthropists as Mrs. W. J. Echols funded a twenty-four bed Echols Hall, in honor of her late husband.

Judge Joseph Hill instigated much of the aid stemming from the Fort Smith area, Northwest Arkansas and the Arkansas River Valley. The first addition to the new sanatorium was an eight-bed Cottage named "Sebastian Cottage," primarily from a thousand-dollar gift from the Sebastian County Court.

Other buildings such as McGehee Hall, a frame building, a gift from a Fort Smith couple, was for religious, educational, and recreational purposes. Another building, an occupational shop, was the Kelley Building, courtesy of

a Fort Smith resident, the authors point out.

The growing community even had its own post office with an official designation of State Sanatorium and employed more than 500, many who lived on site.

Once the sanatorium was built, it was the largest Public Works Administration Project in the state during the New Deal, helping Arkansas out of the Great Depression.

Arkansas's governors from Harvey Parnell to Dale Bumpers, scarcely a chief executive, was immune from dealing with funding and medical innovations to help cure the state's population infected with tuberculosis.

In the final days of the institution medical advances in both treatment and medicine seemed to be moving in a pattern of regulating those ill to local hospitals for the same care.

Brief attempts to repurpose the facility into a home for aging residents of the Arkansas Children's Colonies (for mentally impaired persons) and even as a nursing home for other medical disabilities, all finally failed. Leading some of these innovations were Fort Smith state Senators W. E. Rainwater and Milt Earnhart. A final attempt to fully fund the sanatorium against declining patient populations in the early 1970s was made by Fort Smith state Representative Bernice Kizer, but a \$5.2 million appropriation was reduced to \$3.4 million, and the end was imminent.

Late in 1971, the final twenty-one patients were sent to local hospitals or sent to their own homes for new treatment protocols in place by the state Health Department and local medical professionals.

In short, over 70,000 Arkansans were treated at the Booneville and Alexander facilities, almost 1,700 annually since the program began.

The book does mention the facility is on the National and State Register of Historic Places, largely for its role in the medical prevention of the disease and some architectural features.

—Reviewed by Maylon T. Rice

## 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:

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



# 1925 Newspapers

Fort Smith celebrated the beginning of 1925 at its favorite hotel with both splendor and tradition, as fond acquaintance gathered for music, and mirth, and food. Alcohol was still strictly off the menu, but Possum and Hard Tack were making a comeback, in some circles at least. Baseball was on everyone's mind as the city bided its time until the season began. We experienced a serious fire that threatened to spread out of control, and but for the help of our neighbors in Van Buren, it might have done just that. One of our young ladies drew national attention from the war department, for a surprising reason. Another prominent family celebrated their daughter's nuptials. Musicals, movies and burlesque were all the rage in our fair city, and, while one local theater changed its name, another changed its owner. Not to be outdone, the city also changed its mayor and, true to form, the KKK wanted a say in that process. A local municipal judge began to lose patience with immorality and vowed to wage his own war on our nearest neighbor to the west. The Woolworth expanded. The Boston Store automated. The namesake of a prominent street passed, even as a future highway's namesake made his pitch for a new downtown street. Saint Scholastica had its first ever graduate, and, while the whole country weighed in on the teaching of evolution in the schools of Tennessee, our local school board chose the future home of a new "junior" high school. And, in spite of it all, life was good in our little city, during the first half, of 1925.

\*\*\*

## Thursday, January 1, 1925

### NEW YEAR USHERED IN WITH SPLENDOR AT GOLDMAN HOTEL

The New Year was ushered in with proper ceremony at midnight Thursday night, by more than 350 guests attending the annual dinner dance at the Goldman hotel, the largest social affair of New Year's Eve, marking the passing of 1924. Decorations were in the holiday colors, transforming the lobby and dining room. The railing of the mezzanine floor was hidden in southern smilax, through which flashed gaily colored electric lights. Arches around the lobby were festooned in ropes of red and green, on which were silhouetted birds and stars.

In the Main dining room, the same arrangement of red

**Reddy Eddie Says**  
*I wish you a Happy New Year—and know you will have it if you resolve to use India Tires.*

**Tire Economy Is Assured If You Ride on**

**INDIA BALLOON TIRES**

**Resolve this Year to invite us to your Blowouts**

**466 MOTOR SUPPLY CO.**

Invite Us To Your Next Blowout



—and 466 Service adds to the joy of motoring the pleasure of freedom from worry.

and green ropes festooned from the ceiling and along the upper walls: Tables were ornamented in roses and other blossoms in varying shades of pink and red interspersed with green, except at the long table reserved for Mr. and Mrs. James A. Ward, Jr.'s party in honor of Miss Mary Reynolds of Winston Salem, N. C., guest of Miss Mary Frances Berry. This was centered by a forest miniature spruce and evergreen trees less than 15 inches in height with red roses, red carnations and poinsettias, giving a contrasting note of bright color.

The Blue room and the Colonial dining room, similarly ornamented, were reserved for two large dinner parties. The Kappa Sigma fraternity occupied the Colonial dining room and Mr. Frank Benson's party the Blue room.

A complete orchestra—Kemps—provided music, which began at 8 o'clock. Dinner was served at 10.

During the evening, on the east wall of the lobby, a small electrically lighted "1924" flickered and faded away, as the lights dimmed, and immediately below it blazed

forth, "1925." This was a signal for blowing of horns and general welcome of the New Year.

The lobby, with the hundreds of guests dancing, presented a gay sight. Favors of hats in many hues added to the effect, with serpentine, confetti and carnival features. Practically all sets were represented.

The New Year's Eve dinner dance was the farewell to the holiday season, bringing it to a brilliant finale.

\*\*\*

## **Friday, January 2, 1925**

### **LACK OF HOG JOWL WORRIES ALABAMAN WHO VISITS HERE**

An Alabama woman thinks the present year may prove a "Jonah" for her. Many housewives in Alabama cook black-eyed peas and hogs' jowls, together on New Year's Day, in order that good luck may follow them throughout the coming 364 days.

This year the Alabaman was visiting relatives in Fort Smith and so the annual mixture was not prepared. There were black-eyed peas in plenty, but efforts to secure jowls of hogs were unsuccessful.

\*\*\*

## **Thursday, January 8, 1925**

### **OLD TIME FRIENDS HAVE GENUINE POSSUM SUPPER**

Ten old time friends of Dr. O. M. Bourland, many of whom he grew up with from boyhood, were his guests Tuesday night at a "possum supper" served at the Bourland home on Drennen Street. Plenty of "possum and sweeten taters," mixed with good fellowship, made the supper an enjoyable occasion. The supper has become an annual affair.

Guests were Dr. R. W. Quarles, W. A. Pernot, Lewis Bryan, Dr. M. A. Dibrell, Dr. G. L. Kelton, C. A., Pape, Dan H. Miller, John O'Kane, John B. Brown, Everett Cooper and Dr. Bourland's son, Qualle Bourland.

\*\*\*

## **Wednesday, January 14, 1925**

### **POPULAR LOCAL GIRL IS MARRIED TUESDAY AT HOME OF PARENTS**

The marriage of Miss Marjorie Elizabeth Williams, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John B. Williams, 1611 Grand Avenue, to Alfred Jackson Crabaugh of Siloam Springs was solemnized Tuesday morning at 11 o'clock at the home of

the bride's parents, with impressive simplicity. Only relatives were present for the ceremony, which was performed by the Rev. Father Patrick F. Horan, rector of the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

The bride made a charmingly girlish figure in an ensemble costume of canary yellow and white. The frock was of yellow crepe with a white cashmere coat and touches of hand painting in yellow. A small close fitting hat of gold and white, along with gold and black satin slippers completed a very smart toilette. Here flowers were a shower of lilies-of-the-valley and roses.

Mrs. J. E. Selover of Wichita Kan., aunt of the bride was matron of honor. She wore a handsome frock of black cut velvet trimmed with gray fur, completed by a black hat. Her flowers were Aaron Ward roses. Ray Williams, of Fayetteville, acted as best man.

Little Betty Jean Williams, small sister of the bride, was also a member of the wedding party.

A wedding breakfast was served at high noon. This continued the yellow and white note of the wedding. Mr. and Mrs. Crabaugh left later to motor to Siloam Springs, where they will be a home. Mr. Crabaugh is the son of Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Crabaugh of Bentonville and is a professor of John Browne College.

Owing to the popularity of the bride and bridegroom the wedding is one of the most interesting of the season in university circles.

\*\*\*

## **Friday, January 16, 1925**

### **OLD ESTABLISHED BOOK STORE HAS BEEN SOLD**

O. O. Hall has purchased the Pape book store at 805 Garrison Avenue, and will operate the establishment as a book, stationary, and variety store, according to the announcement of the sale made Thursday.

W. B. Pape, former proprietor of the store, has been in the book business here since 1882.

\*\*\*

## **Saturday, January 17, 1925**

### **ORPHANS HOME MUST PAY SEWER AND WATER TAXES**

A petition from the board of managers of the Rosalie Tilles Children's home, asking that sewer and water taxes and water rentals at the children's home, not be collected against the orphanage property, was denied by the city commission Friday afternoon.



City officials said the action of the board in asking that the money not be collected was based probably on the city's action in not collecting taxes against the Carnegie library property. They pointed out [that] the latter property is exempt because it is owned by the city.

\*\*\*

## Thursday, January 29, 1925

### CITY ABATTOIR READY FOR USE BY FEBRUARY 2

The city's first centralized killing station will be opened for use Monday, February 2. But the formal opening to which the public is invited will not be held until the week of February 9, according to plans adopted by the butchers of the city, in conference with Commissioner M. J. Miller, Wednesday afternoon.

The slaughtering house will be opened for use by butchers next Monday to avoid any shortage in the meat supply, which might result when [the] new meat ordinance

goes into effect, also [on] February 9.

The ordinance will positively require an ante and post mortem inspection of all

**IF YOU FAIL TO  
TALK with TILLES  
ABOUT  
LIFE INSURANCE  
*Three of Us Lose***

**NEW** ONE NIGHT ONLY **SAT., JAN. 31**  
NICOLAI-WELCH-DE MILT, inc.

Bring you  
The Greatest Musical Comedy Success  
This Country has ever known

**ZIEGFELD'S  
"SALLY"**

Staged by EDWARD REICE

ENTIRE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION  
THAT PLAYED FOR TWO YEARS  
IN NEW YORK AT THE NEW  
AMSTERDAM THEATRE.

Book by GUY BOLTON Music by JEROME KERN  
Lyrics by CLIFFORD GREY Ballet Music by VICTOR HERBERT

*A Thing of Charm, Beauty  
and Delicacy—Befemmed  
with Beautiful Young Women.*

**75 PEOPLE—SPECIAL ORCHESTRA**  
SEATS THURSDAY—DON'T DELAY  
SECURING SEATS AS THE DEMAND IS  
ENORMOUS EVERYWHERE

Prices \$3.00 \$2.50 \$2.00 \$1.50 75c plus tax  
Sole Sale Opens Thursday January 29  
at 8 a. m. at East Bros. Drug Co. Fort Smith and Palace Drug Store  
Van Hornes. Children in arms not admitted, and those old enough to attend  
must have ticket. Not more than six seats to any one person in line.

meats sold in Fort Smith on and after February 9. Butchers will have an opportunity to purchase properly inspected meats one week before the ordinance becomes effective however, following the action taken Wednesday afternoon.

No fees will be charged for the first week, but inspection fees will be charged after February 9, according to Miller. He said the first week of the plant would be operated entirely for the accommodation of local butchers.

Special preparations for the entertainment of visitors to the killing station during the week of February 9 are under way. Addresses on the ante and post mortem inspections, and the object and result of such inspections, will be made during the week by Dr. X. G. May and Dr. Fred C. Driver. Other details will be worked out later.

Construction of a stock pin for loading and unloading cattle at the plant will be started shortly by the Kansas City Southern Railway company, according to Commissioner Miller. The date has not been definitely set for starting work, it was said.

\*\*\*

## Tuesday, February 3, 1925

### CHIEF OF POLICE POURS OUT 50 GALLONS OF CANADIAN CLUB AND SCOTCH AS PARCHED ONLOOKERS WATCH

Solemnity reigned! A dignity, a hushed silence, fell over police headquarters Monday afternoon. Without even a hint of warning, sorrow cast its spell over the city's chief police executive and spectators who were in his office at the time.

Death, with its sting, would have been less ravishing.

Chief of Police M. R. Oots moved quickly, quietly, resolutely—bravely carrying on in the face of [the] odds which were his. That his crown was out of sympathy was a fact plainly evident.

The police chief hurried [in] and out of the vault at [police] headquarters. Each time he returned, he clasped another, closer, and closer in his arms. He would march calmly to the door of his office; deposit his holdings only to return to the treasured vault again. As he returned each time, brave men who stood by whispered:

"Ah! O-h-h!"

And then they would wet their parched lips! Their eyes were already damp. There could be no mistake that the scene was gripping them, testing the best in them.

Ajax, famed for his defiance of lightning, could have shown no more resistance. Theirs was a metal test contact. But, undaunted, eager spectators gazed on!

The first gallon clutched in the arms of Chief Oots attracted interest but, when he made his final trip, after

having taken 50 gallons of real Canadian club and scotch whiskey from the vault and poured the contents of the bottles in the city's sewage system—it was too much!

The five legal witnesses—if such they might be called, since the police chief said it was necessary to have at least that number—withdrew their handkerchiefs. Other spectators followed suit and left police headquarters—all the worse for wear.

"I never saw a crowd feel sadder because the law was being enforced," said Chief Oots, after the onlookers had cleared.

For the first time that whiskey at police headquarters has been destroyed by officers, there were no women in attendance. The whiskey had been seized by officers during the Christmas holiday season and labeled "Bottled in Bond," in addition to "Canadian Club" and "King George IV."

\*\*\*

## Thursday, February 5, 1925

### BASEBALL BEEF VALUED AT \$30,500 HAS A HABIT OF SPENDING ITS OFF-SEASON IN THE CITY OF FORT SMITH

The baseball register for the city of Fort Smith contains at the present writing, baseball players valued at approximately \$30,500. Or, looking at it through those queer instruments scientists used in shooting pictures of the recent eclipse, the six players who make Fort Smith their winter home are worth an average of \$5,000 each.

Aaron Ward, Yankee second baseman, naturally tops the list in value. Ward rates at about \$20,000 on the hoof; experienced second sackers being exceptionally difficult to locate in this day and age.

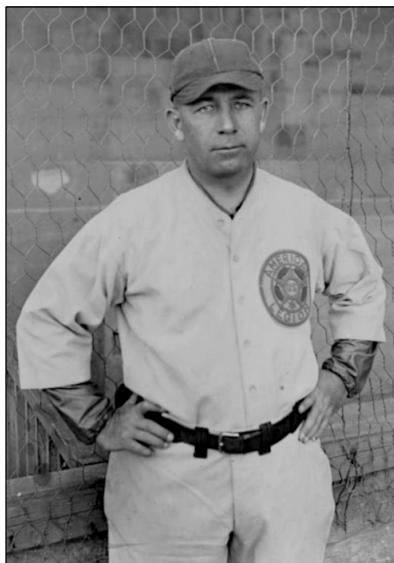
In that Aaron weighs about 165 pounds, one of those mathematical problems, worked out backwards will display the startling fact that he is worth about \$121.99 a pound, making him a very valuable young man indeed, as far as ordinary human tonnage is concerned.

Next to Ward, we class Possum Moore, Fort Worth Panther backstop. Moore, twice as heavy as Ward, doesn't quite compare with Aaron in weight value, \$5,000 being about what he might bring if offered for sale, giving his valuation the benefit of a few extra cents.

Runt Marr has refused to sell himself for \$2,000 this winter, so we take it he is valued at about \$2,500 in a baseball uniform.



Possum Moore



(Left) Runt Marr

(Above) Mutt Williams

Mutt Williams and Roy Boyd, a pair of pitchers ringing in the tall and short of it, rate at about \$1,000 each. Mutt making a long ton maybe could be stretched to \$1,250, but Boyd on the short ton basis, couldn't very well be shoved over that mark.

Millard Martin, an outfielder, is classed in the market as a \$500 chunk of property. And so there you have it in full—the combined weight of those eight players totals 1,010 pounds.

Their value at \$30,500 makes them worth \$208.50 a pound, the butcher's thumb included. If they were scrambled up and put upon the hamburger market.

Expensive beef, eh, wot?

\*\*\*

## Thursday, February 6, 1925

### QUEER DOINGS

On one of our principal streets, a young white woman was recently seen smoking a cigarette in broad daylight and the newspapers never mentioned it.

Now, this goes to prove Fort Smith is a sure enough city, way ahead of little burgs like Pine Bluff.

Why, do you know what that town did not long ago? You don't hey? Well, I can tell you it was something [that] a big city, such as we, would never be guilty of.

When a lady visitor at one of her hotels indulged in a smoke in the public dining room following a meal, both the papers printed the fact in glaring headlines the very next morning.

Horribly primitive that. But then, what can one expect from these little towns?

\*\*\*



**Tuesday, February 10, 1925**

**LITTLE GIRL DROWNED  
IN CONCRETE TROUGH**

The two year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Fox, living east of Cross Lanes in the river bottom section, 12 miles southeast of Van Buren, was drowned late Saturday, when she fell into a concrete horse trough in the cattle lot near the farm house.

She was playing alone in the yard and climbed to the edge of the basin and fell in, losing her balance. Efforts of a physician to revive the child failed.

**SAFETY SLOGANS ARE POSTED UP BY LEGION**

Pertinent signs, suggesting safety, are being distributed throughout the city by a committee of the American Legion. Twelve of the signs have already been placed at several of the most dangerous corners; others will be stationed as soon as completed. Dr. C. S. Bungart, chairman of the committee stated.

"Drive slow and save a child" and "Look First and Save a Life" are among the slogans used on the signs.

\*\*\*

**Friday, February 13, 1925**

**STREET OPENING PLAN SUGGESTED  
BY HARRY KELLEY**

The opening of one new street between Sixth and Ninth streets, from Garrison Avenue to Rogers Avenue, was urged by Harry E. Kelley [on] Thursday, as a satisfactory solution of the street problem in the heart of the business center.

Mr. Kelley suggested that one street be opened midway between Sixth and Seventh, or approximately so, pointing out that the cost of such a project would be only half of the cost of extending North Seventh and North Eighth streets through to Rogers. Seventh Street extended through to Rogers would cut through the present quarters of Wolf-Pollack Dry Goods Company. Eighth Street extended would cut through the Princess theatre and the Paris Hat shop, immediately east of the Boston store.

\*\*\*

**Tuesday, February 17, 1925**

**FORT SMITHS NEWEST THEATRE IS OPENED**

Fort Smith's latest addition to the play houses of the city made its initial bow to the theatre public Monday in the opening of "Hoyt's," North Seventh and A street under the



management of Hoyt Kirkpatrick, veteran theatre manager.

"Hoyt's," which has been completely remodeled and re-decorated since its former days as the Victory, is one of the brightest, most attractive little play houses in the city. The interior is a combination of soft tans and ivory, relieved by outlining of blues and old rose. Electric candles shaded in blue form a row of lights down either side of the theatre. A canopied entrance and a recessed box office make a very attractive lobby, all brilliantly lighted.

Capacity audiences filled the house for the opening performances. The matinee was cancelled, owing to last

minute touches on the interior, which had not been completed.

Jimmie Allard, with his U. S. A. girl, opens the theatre in a tabloid musical comedy, presenting a medley of singing, dancing, and comedy, with enough plot to hang a tale. The chorus is an unusually presentable one, for the type of company, and hard working, appearing in a variety of most abbreviated costumes. It boasts a clever pianist. The comedian is the star of the company. Some of the jokes were decidedly risqué—unpardonably so—to be expected to some extent in a burlesque show, but the actions of the audience, at least that part of the audience which filled the front part of the house, composed mainly of Fort Smith's choice assortment of "jelly beans," reflected no credit on their town, nor home training, in the guffaws and rank exuberance which greeted each change of abbreviated costume.

So brazen were the actions of [one] group down in the very front of the theatre, in making personal remarks concerning the players, it called forth the anger of the comedian who suggested that if he were not on stage, he "would burn them up." The look of scorn the girl gave one "jelly bean" responsible for the outburst, was sufficient to calm him down for the remainder of the performance.

A comedy picture preceded the tabloid.

**A New Straw for  
Tuesday—of Course!**

To well groomed men it also  
means a Knox or Brigham  
Hopkins Straw. We have them  
at—

**\$2.50 to \$8.00**



*Nathan*

WE ALWAYS SELL THE LATEST

### MUSIC HAS CHARMS TO MAKE CITY JAIL A POPULAR HANGOUT

If you weren't in jail Monday night, don't congratulate yourself too quickly. It was about the best place in town to be about midnight.

Doyle Wilson and Oscar Lewis, the latter being a fly cop, who catches speeders during daylight hours, were broadcasting a little close double guitar harmony, with all the trimmings of the best Hawaiian steel technique. After playing a few typically Hawaiian melodies, they clipped off a few modern dance selections and it made a real program.

The audience included Carl Ellig, night captain; W. M. Choate, night jailer, Officers Willis and Gentry, who had just come in after [the] chase of a ham and cheese shoplifter, Harry Price, colored officer, the night reporter of the *Southwest American*, and 12 prisoners, the latter occupying the gallery seats.

### PENSIONS FOR OLD MARSHALS DEFEATED

Washington, Feb. 16—The bill introduced some time ago, by Congressman J. N. Tillman, of the third Arkansas district, providing for paying of pensions to old deputy United States marshals of the Western District of Arkansas, who guarded the people of the old Indian Territory in the lawless days before statehood, was defeated by the house Monday, despite the efforts on its behalf made by Judge Tillman. It was up for consideration on the unanimous consent calendar and was beaten through the objection of Representative Coulton of Utah.

He explained that he had no objection to the bill, but thought it should go to the committee on pensions. Tillman explained that [the] committee had jurisdiction in pensions for army or navy men, and that while these men had virtually performed military duty, they were really civilians.

Their duties were similar to those performed by persons who are given pensions and he believed they should have them. But Coulton refused to withdraw his

objections and the bill was killed so far as this congress is concerned.

\*\*\*

## Wednesday, February 18, 1925

### VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Through the "Voice of the People" I wish to raise my voice in complaint. I live in a residential section of homeowners who endeavor to keep their own premises in condition to reflect credit to the neighborhood and to the city's civic pride. My complaint is against the garbage wagons, which are driven through the streets uncovered and so heavily loaded that cans and other trash which have been collected in alleys is jostled off into the street, and often onto the grounds of residences. Within the last week, I have had twice to have debris taken off my lawn after the garbage wagon passed. My neighbors are equally unfortunate. My residence is on corner lots and when the driver of the garbage wagon turns sharply with a high piled load of papers, cans, bottles, tree limbs and the like, we are almost invariably left with a souvenir of the evil smelling load, which has been jostled off the wagon, and which sometimes takes its lodging in our hedge.

**MRS. ALLEN HENDERSON**

Greenwood and Rogers, Fort Smith, Ark.

\*\*\*

## Thursday, February 19, 1925

### EXPERT BILLIARDIST TO GIVE EXHIBITIONS

R. C. Downs of Detroit, the Joe Kirkwood of billiards, Thursday night will give two exhibitions for the benefit of local billiard followers.

His first entertainment is to be presented at the Hotel Main billiard parlor at 8 o'clock, following which he will give another demonstration of his masterful cue ability at the Elks club at 9 o'clock.

Included in the repertoire of amazing shots Downs is capable of executing are a series of fancy shots with cue and fingers. He comes here from Little Rock, where he gave his exhibitions before large crowds of billiard enthusiasts.

At present Downs is on an international tour of the United States and Mexico and will cover approximately 31,000 miles before his trip is finished. He rates with Bennie Allen and Thomas Hueston in his particular line of entertainment and billiard play.

Muskogee, Okmulgee, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City are his next stops on the present tour of the middle west,



following which he will bring his trip to a close at Chicago, January 1, 1926, after touring the far west.

No admission will be charged at his exhibitions here, he stated.

**Editors' Note:** Joe Kirkwood Sr. was a world renowned golfer born in Australia and during the period of this article, he was also touring the United States with Walter Hagen performing exhibitions and trick golf shots. Interestingly Joe's son, Joe Kirkwood Jr., later became famous himself in the 1940s for his cinema portrayal of fictional boxer "Joe Palooka," a popular comic book character from the period.

#### NEW CIVIC CLUB WILL GET CHARTER MARCH 1

The National Exchange club will receive its charter on the evening of March 4; it was announced at the meeting of the club held Wednesday. At this time, presidents of other civic clubs will be guests and the charter will be presented by a representative of the National organization.

Members of the board of control elected Wednesday are: Hurd J. Miller, president; Dr. Andre B. Carney, vice president; Jim Hopkins, secretary; R. S. Patterson, treasurer; and W. H. Simpson, W. J. Dearen, and Ed Ryan, directors.

**Editors' Note:** The Fort Smith Noon Exchange club remains in operation and is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The club's current president is Julie Moncrief.



\*\*\*

#### Thursday, February 26, 1925

##### WAR VETERANS FEAST ON WAR TIME RATIONS

Members of the Victor Ellig post, American Legion and veterans of the Spanish American war, met in joint entertainment Wednesday evening at the American Legion hall. A unique luncheon, consisting of baked beans; hard-tack and black coffee was served to those present. A smoker and round-table discussion followed the luncheon.

Plans to hold similar meetings in the future were well received and invitations to veterans of the Civil War will add to the preparations for future banquets, committeemen said Wednesday night.

\*\*\*

#### Friday, February 27, 1925

##### PULLMAN CITY WILL BE USED AT MEETING

"Pullman City" is the name of a new section of Fort Smith, which will be established when the fifteenth district Rotary convention convenes, April 21 and 22.

Pullman City will be established at the Frisco station at the foot of Garrison Avenue. It will have accommodations for at least 35 Pullman cars, and will be the temporary home of 300 to 400 delegates to the convention.

Every effort will be made by the entertainment committee to provide home comforts for the visitors. One of the features will be the free shower baths with hot and cold water at all times. These will be installed and operated under the direction of Sam T. Cantrell, division

**\$4.55**

**FORT SMITH TO  
ROGERS  
AND RETURN**

VIA

**FRISCO  
LINES**

ACCOUNT

**APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8**

**Special train leaves Fort Smith  
7:45 a. m.**

Reservations May Be Made Now  
Tickets on Sale April 8th

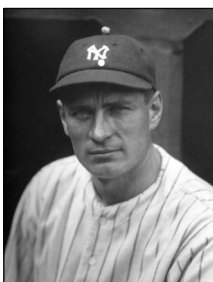
For additional information ask the Frisco Ticket Agent  
J. N. Cornatzer  
Passenger Traffic Manager

superintendent of the Frisco. In addition, the Rotary club will furnish attendants and tipping will be absolutely prohibited. Free shoe shining stands will be erected and no effort will be spared to give regular Rotary service.

Delegates desiring to use a telephone will find one handy, as booths will be established at Pullman City and local service will be free.

#### YANKEE BALL PLAYERS WILL DEPART SATURDAY

Aaron Ward and Bob Meusel, New York Yankee ball players, have arranged to leave here Saturday for St. Petersburg, Fla., where Miller Huggins is limbering up rookie hurlers for excessive service in the batting cages when the regulars arrive for the annual conditioning ceremonies.



**Bob Meusel**

Bob Meusel, accompanied by Mrs. Meusel and Bob Jr., came here Tuesday for a few days visit with Aaron. The pair has been golfing daily at the Country club. Both are hopeful of another World Series melon to slice next fall and are anxious for the season to open.

\*\*\*

#### Saturday, February 28, 1925

##### QUEER DOINGS

The day following the arrival of Anne's visitor, we started out to show her the sights. Naturally we carried her to Van Buren first and as we came opposite the court house, the lady leaned suddenly forward and gasped.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Anne.

"That statue," exclaimed the friend, pointing an agitated finger at the confederate soldier, which stands in the court house yard.

"Well," said Anne, "what of it?"

"Why—why, don't you see? He's saluting with his left hand?"

"Oh, that's all right," soothed Anne. "He'd probably have used the other if he hadn't had his gun in it."

\*\*\*

#### Thursday, March 5, 1925

##### BUSBY'S MINSTRELS AGAIN PACK THEATRE

Busby's Negro minstrels, which had the first change of program at Hoyt's Wednesday, continues to pack the house.

Different costumes and different songs and dances, marked the offering Wednesday, while conforming to the same minstrel form.

An added feature of Thursday evening's performance will be a real colored wedding at the first performance, between two members of the cast.

In order to permit the colored people of the city to see artists of their own race, and being unable to accommodate them at Hoyt's, the minstrel company will give a special performance at Trent's hall, Friday evening, immediately following the second show of the evening.

\*\*\*

#### Monday, March 9, 1925

*Jonesboro Daily Tribune*

##### FORT SMITH SUFFERS BIG FIRE DAMAGE

FORT SMITH, Ark., March 8—A fire which raged all last night in the plant of the Fort Smith Cotton Oil Company here, resulting in its complete destruction, was followed today by several more disastrous blazes which brought the total loss in 24 hours to over half a million dollars. Besides two large manufacturing plants, the flames devoured several apartment houses and three fine residences, all of which were total losses. The Cotton Oil Company's loss is placed at \$250,000.

The fire began at 10:30 Saturday night and was only brought under control early Sunday morning. Early Sunday afternoon a fire alarm was given from the Zenor Bottle Manufacturing Company, and this was burning so fiercely

## ASBESTOS

### Shingles and Roofings

Will Protect Your Home

Carey ASBESTOS slate shingles and roofing are approved by Underwriters Laboratories and carry the class "B" underwriters label, thus meeting the requirements of strict building codes.

<b>Phone</b> No. 112	<b>DYKE BROS.</b> Established 1870	So. 9th and D Sts.
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FREE ROOF APPRAISAL SERVICE

## DOBBINS & WALKER

### FIRE AND TORNADO INSURANCE

25 South 6th	Phones 71--601
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when the firemen reached the scene that they were unable to save the plant. The fire at the bottle works, threatened for a time, to spread throughout the city. The sparks covered the entire city of Fort Smith and lighted on the roofs of houses in all directions. This was responsible for fire in two other districts far removed from the bottle works.

When it was discovered that four apartment houses on D. Street, owned by John D. Hutchins, had caught [fire] from sparks, an appeal for help was sent to the fire department at Van Buren, who responded with three trucks and several thousand feet of hose. They immediately turned several streams on the apartment houses [however], they being frame structures were total losses, but the surrounding buildings were saved. The loss on these buildings was \$50,000.

\*\*\*



*They All Burned  
From the Roof Down.*

Every residence that was reduced to smoldering ruins yesterday would be standing this morning IF they had all been covered with Johns-Mansville asbestos roofing

**A Spark---a Wind---  
An Obsolete Roof!**

An awful example which brings home the warning that is continually voiced by Johns Mansville. These homes are gone—nothing can be done to save them now—but yours still stands.

Is it not criminal to disregard the warning it cost half a million to give?

**Human Effort Couldn't Save Them.  
Asbestos Shingles Would Have.**

**Mansfield Lumber Co.**  
Yards—Wheeler Avenue

**Friday, March 13, 1925**

### STRICT SURVEY WILL BE MADE BY POLICE

Strict orders to investigate all rooming houses in Fort Smith, suspected of being houses of immoral character, have been issued by Dr. J. E. Johnson, district health officer. Under the health officer's orders, all members of the police department are ordered to place under arrest any person suspected of being of immoral character or of violating the interstate quarantine law regarding social diseases.

"At the present time, there is less social disease in Fort Smith than there has been in a number of years and we are going to put forth every effort to keep up this record. I have instructed members of the police department to immediately arrest any man or woman, whom they suspect of being undesirables or violators of the interstate quarantine law, and bring them before the health board for an examination. In this manner we can combat the spreading of contagious diseases here," the health officer stated.

The license for operating a rooming house of D. J. Hancock, proprietor of the Indiana Rooms, a rooming house located at 106 North Ninth street, was revoked by Dr. Johnson, for the alleged violation of city ordinance number

# Notice!

## To Customers of this Store who suffered loss in Sunday's Terrible Fire

### A CLEAR RECEIPT—

will be given to all those who lost furniture from Eads Bros., upon which payments are still due. Call at the store and talk to the management. You will be given a clear receipt for the balance due, whatever it may be.

### SPECIAL TERMS—

will be made to those who lost furniture and desire to replace it. These terms will be made to suit the convenience of the customer. It is our earnest desire to be of the utmost service to those who suffered loss and we'll appreciate the opportunity of lending such assistance as is possible.

**EADS BROS.**  
**Furniture Co.**  
410-42-44-46 GARRISON AVE.

1301, section 7, Thursday, the doctor stated and any other place that may be guilty of violations of city [ordinances] will fall heir to the same punitive treatment.

\*\*\*

## Friday, March 20, 1925

### QUEER PARADE WINDS ALONG SEVENTH WITH WRECKER AS LEADER

An unofficial parade, composed of an unusual assortment of vehicles, rolled southward on Seventh street Thursday afternoon.

A puttering wrecker led the procession with rapid gait. It yanked a luxurious, yet unsteady sedan over its path by the persuasion of a wrecker crane and connecting chain.

Onto the sedan, held a bicycled youth.

Still another member of the parading party spurted into view. A smaller boy aboard a coaster, clutched desperately at the framework of the bicycle. His expression revealed unaccustomed thrills.

A half-block behind the chain of promenaders, sped the youngest of the participants. He stroked a pair of skates feverishly over the pavement. Apparently he had lost out in the race, but he was [still] fighting for ground when the leader turned out of sight.

\*\*\*

## Saturday, March 21, 1925

### SCOUT IS REWARDED FOR ACT OF BRAVERY

Richard DeLong, member of Troop 8, Presbyterian Boy Scouts, who were guests of honor Thursday night at the First Presbyterian church in Van Buren, was presented with a handsome gold watch in recognition of the bravery he showed recently in saving the life of little Phillip Moore, when the child was a mass of flames. Presentation made by R. L. Hardgrave was the feature of the annual Fathers and Sons Banquet meeting of the Men's club of the church.

\*\*\*

## Friday, March 27, 1925

### CATCHER CLUB COMPLETES REHEARSALS FOR COMEDY

Members of the dramatic club of Catcher will present their three act southern comedy drama, "Mammy's Lil' Wild Rose," Friday night at 7:30 o'clock in the auditorium of the Rena high school, three miles northwest of Van Buren.

Misses Ardia Hays and Sue Hays, members of the

**NOTICE**  
**Klanswomen and Klansmen**  
Important Joint Meeting  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 20TH, 7:30 P. M.**  
At the Klavern  
**Knights of the Ku Klux Klan**  
Fort Smith Klan No. 15

faculty of Catcher school, who reside in Rena community, have the principal parts. Miss Ardia taking the part of "Mammy Celie, a black treasure," and Miss Sue Hays having the part of "Rose O May, Mammy's Lil' Wild Rose."

*Editors' Note: "Mammy's Lil' Wild Rose" was a 1924 play which included black face characters, it was written by Lillian Mortimer.*

\*\*\*

## Saturday, March 28, 1925

### HUSBAND COMES HOME— WIFE DRINKS POISON

Apparently enraged because her husband found her in their home with another man, Juanita Loum, pretty young wife of Glen Loum, 512 South Sixth Street, [on] Friday night is believed to have attempted suicide by swallowing a small portion of poisonous acid in the presence of the two men, according to her husband.

Marion Bain, "the other man," was arrested and jailed following the affair. He was docketed under a charge of, investigation.

"You know how these things are," Bain said to newspaper representatives Friday night, "I was in the same room with her when Glen came home, but we were sitting several feet apart," he added. "After we had talked for awhile," Bain went on, "she grabbed up the bottle of poison and threw it to her lips. I slapped it from her mouth though, and then she ran out the back door."

The husband searched for her for an hour after she had fled into the darkness. He notified police who scoured the entire neighborhood and later found her groaning in a bedroom of the home.

Police expressed the belief that only a very small amount of the drug was swallowed. She apparently was ill, but no trace of burns from the poison could be found, only a slight blister on the chin.

An empty bottle, said by the husband to have been the container of the poison, was taken to the city jail. The odor resembled carbolic acid, officers agreed.

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**Tuesday, March 31, 1925**

**NEGRO WOMAN STABBED TO DEATH  
AND BEN MORGAN WHO FORMERLY LIVED  
WITH HER BEING SOUGHT**

Myrtle Kursh, Negro, about 34 years old, is dead and her alleged murderer, Bob Morgan, also a Negro, is still at large, having escaped following the killing according to reports at police headquarters Monday afternoon.

The Negro woman died at 1:15 o'clock Monday morning at Sparks Memorial hospital, where she had been taken in an ambulance following the attack on her by the Negro assailant. Police said that the woman had been cut and stabbed 32 times with a long keen-bladed pocketknife. The blood stained knife was found near the scene of the attack by Officer Blaine Cosgrove and is now at police headquarters.

It is alleged that the woman was stabbed at her home, 2220 North K Street, upon her return home from a friend's [house] about 11:10 o'clock Sunday night.

Alton Kursh, son of the murdered woman, told officers that his mother was stabbed as she entered the backyard of their home. Kursh further said his only theory of the motive [for] the crime was that Morgan, who had been living with the Kursh woman for about a year, lately would not work and help support the family and was told to leave the place.

This he did, but came back and is alleged to have stolen a revolver that belonged to Alton Kursh. The boy caused a warrant to be issued upon a grand larceny charge, but Morgan ran away and was not seen until a day or so ago, when he returned the pistol and the charge against him was dropped by the boy.

While the murdered woman was visiting at her friends in a small house in the alley off of K Street, the two women saw the figure of a man crouched against the fence, according to Kursh. The friend asked the Kursh woman to stay all night with her as she feared the man would harm them, but she said she had to cook breakfast for her two boys, Alton and Rufus Kursh, 20 and 18 years old.

She went down the alley and had reached the back yard of her home before the attack was made. Her screams of "Help, he's killing me," caused Alton to obtain a 38 caliber revolver and rush to the back of the house from where the screams were coming, according to his story.

As he came out of the house, his mother broke loose from Morgan, ran and fell in a lettuce bed of their garden, fatally wounded.

Morgan then rushed toward the boy, who fired one shot, the shot went wild. Still the Negro man came toward him and the boy, taking aim, fired again. Alton said, the man halted for an instant as if hit, and then clinched. The revolver was pressed against the assailant and snapped, but

the gun failed to fire, the man overpowered the boy and gained possession of the pistol and ran toward North K Street. Rufus, the young[er] son, rushed after him and they met at the corner of the house. Morgan knocked the boy down and continued up the street, running in a jumping staggering manner, as if he were wounded, according to the Negro boys. Officers failed to find any trace of blood along the route said to have been taken by the Negro in his escape.

Police spread a dragnet over the city in an effort to capture the man, but no trace of him had been found late Monday afternoon.

**STRANGE COLLECTION OF ARTICLES  
IS FOUND ON MAN HELD IN JAIL**

A strange collection of articles was found upon the person of a man when he was taken to the county jail upon an insanity charge, according to Omer Shaw, county jailer, Monday afternoon.

He first was arrested upon a charge of breach of the peace, but later was held for observation.

Some of the articles taken from the man were: A toy pistol, a lip stick, mirror, eye brow pencil, compact, a 38

# THINK

The election two years ago divided the people of Fort Smith.

Parker and his followers have tried from the first to inject factionalism into this race. WHY?

Parker joined the Ku Klux Klan here on January 26, 1923. Parker and one of his managers actively and bitterly fought Mike Smith and Fagan Bourland in March and June of 1923. Parker was turned down by the Klan when he sought their endorsement for Mayor to succeed Bourland. Parker quit the Klan and has fought it since.

If you elect Booker, who has the Klan's endorsement, or Parker, who is appealing to the Anti-Klan faction; you will continue the strife and prejudice started two years ago.

Let's elect Carnall who has avoided all factionalism and CO-OPERATE to build a bigger and better Fort Smith.

## VOTE FOR CARNALL FOR MAYOR

Political Advertisement

caliber bullet, a love letter, two bars of soap, talcum powder, and a pipe and tobacco. The pipe and tobacco were returned to him, but the other articles were kept by the jailer, awaiting a mental examination of the man by the district health officer, it was said.

#### **UNIDENTIFIED DRIVER RUNS DOWN SHEFFIELD**

Robert Sheffield, 16 years old, who was run down by two automobiles Sunday night in the 1800 block on Towson, returned Monday to his home at 2100 South Eleventh street, from Sparks Memorial hospital.

Sheffield, with Miss Faye Wallace, were en route from church according to the story told by Miss Wallace to officers, [when] an old battered automobile with dim lights struck Sheffield to the ground. He was unconscious she said. Before she could summon help, another car approached and ran over his feet. Neither driver stopped.

Examination at Sparks Memorial hospital, where he was taken following the accident, revealed a slight cut on the head and his feet were badly bruised.

#### **WORTHAM SHOWS—ALL NEW— START SIX DAY STAY**

Promptly at 12 noon Monday, a uniformed band started a concert on a downtown street and the 1925 tour of the Wortham Shows was on. This tour starting in Paris, Texas, the home of the shows, last week, will take the aggregation to the Canadian border, and perhaps to the Pacific coast, during the year.

The Wortham show train arrived in Fort Smith Sunday night about nine o'clock, and unloading started immediately. Before dawn Monday, the massive equipment was on the lot at the corner of Ninth and Carnall streets.

Fort Smith has been exceptionally fortunate in securing carnivals at the beginning of the season, when everything is new and in excellent condition and the Wortham Shows is no exception to this rule. The present Wortham Shows was organized some five years ago, with but a handful of equipment and in that brief period has grown until it is today recognized as among the "big shows" of America.

At dusk Monday, thousands of electric lights flashed on, the giant rides began to turn, the pop-pop of the motorcycles was heard, and the talkers in front of the various attractions heralded to the world that spring is here.

The Wortham midway is made up of a very wide assortment of attractions and the downtown lot is scarcely able to handle the shows and leave room for people, however, by a feat born of experience, manager Eddie Brown succeeded in placing the aggregation, and the lot was crowded all through the evening.

Quite a number of new shows never seen before are on the Wortham Show. There are new rides also.

Only one accident in the loading and unloading of the heavy equipment was experienced, despite the fact that this is the first week of the aggregation on the road. While unloading one of the heaviest wagons on the train Sunday night, the wagon toppled over and crashed to the rails below. The damage to the wagon is probably \$250, while the loss of contents, dishes and glassware belonging to the show's restaurant, will probably be more. No one was injured in the accident.

The Wortham Shows are carrying this year, 25 cars and some 100 people, many of whom have been in Fort Smith before and many acquaintances were renewed here Monday.

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### **Thursday, April 2, 1925**

#### **MAN IS THROWN FROM WAGON IN RUN-AWAY**

Memories of the last decade flashed into view Wednesday, when a horse pulling a city garbage wagon and driven by J. N. Prewett, driver for the City Health department, became frightened at a street car and ran away on North Eleventh street.

After strewing garbage along the avenue for several blocks, the frightened animal attempted to turn at Eleventh and N streets, overturning the wagon and hurling the driver several feet. Prewett struck the pavement and sustained a broken ankle. He was hurried to Sparks Memorial hospital by an ambulance, where his condition was reported not serious. The horse broke through the harness when the wagon overturned and refused to slacken his speed for several blocks, before he turned out of sight, still gaining in momentum.

#### **NEGRO SLAYER HANGS SELF IN MISSOURI JAIL**

Bob Morgan, Negro wanted in Fort Smith since Sunday in connection with the fatal stabbing of Myrtle Kursh, a Negro woman, inflicted the death penalty on himself by committing suicide in his cell in the Neosho, Mo., county jail Wednesday afternoon at 5:30 o'clock.

Morgan's body was found by the Missouri county jailor, suspending from the door of his cell, just a few minutes before B. C. Cosgrove of the Fort Smith police department planned to return the man to Fort Smith for trial. An old piece of wire removed from a stove in the cell and a blanket from the bunk were used by the Negro to tie his body to the last bar of the cell door.

According to the report of Morgan's death by Officer Cosgrove in conversation with the *Southwest American* late Wednesday, the Negro [had] apparently been dead but a few minutes when found by officers.

The prisoner tied a wire around his neck and then tied



himself to the cell door, using a blanket as a rope. The door was about seven feet high and the Negro was six feet tall, Cosgrove said.

Officers said the Negro's death was a surprise to them. He did not apparently seem concerned over the arrest earlier in the day.

Morgan, who is known in Fort Smith as Robert McLain, was first arrested in Watts, Okla., by officers, but escaped from the county jail there a short time after his arrest.

The first attempt of the Negro to drive his way through the door of the cell after an axe had been given to him, was frustrated when county officers at the Watts jail apprehended him, according to Cosgrove, Wednesday night.

Watts officers were of the opinion, according to Cosgrove, that the Negro had been aided by an outside party in his escape from the Oklahoma jail. He was arrested Tuesday in Neosho, Mo., Cosgrove said.

Missouri officers wired the Fort Smith police department upon the arrest of the Negro Tuesday, and Officer Cosgrove was sent to accompany him to Fort Smith at the instructions of Chief Oots.

Cosgrove said Wednesday night he was awaiting orders of Chief Oots [regarding] whether or not to return the body to Fort Smith for burial. He said the body was being held in a Neosho undertaking establishment.

Morgan is said to have denied charges that he was living with the Kursh woman, but is said to have told officers that he and the woman were married in Fort Smith, by a justice of the peace, in October 1922.

\*\*\*

## Saturday, April 4, 1925

### FORT SMITH GIRL AS ARMY OFFICER STIRS WASHINGTON COMMENT

Washington, April 3—Publication in a Washington Sunday paper of an attractive picture of Miss Elizabeth Morgan of Fort Smith, Ark., attired in the uniform of an officer and indicating that she has the rank of lieutenant colonel and is the commanding officer of the university of Arkansas reserve officers training camp, caused considerable comment in the capital.

Here at the seat of government and the headquarters of the war department, it has not been known that a woman holds the rank of lieutenant colonel in any branch of the United States army, but the portrait of the young lady in uniform caused some investigation.

No woman holds a commission either as lieutenant colonel or with any other rank in any branch of the army. But in a reserve officers training camp, for which

government appropriations are not made and which is not directly under the supervision of the secretary of war, such a thing may occur. The selection of officers in these training camps is left to the members themselves and does not require approval of the war department.

While it is entirely within the power of those attending one of these training schools to select a woman officer if they choose, she does not receive any official recognition as such from the United States war department.

Officers here, however, showed great interest in the picture of the pretty Fort Smith lieutenant colonel, natively attired in the uniform of an officer of high rank. Some of them even went so far as to say that it might have a good effect upon the morale of the training camps to have this woman officer and in that way it might be a good thing, even though not recognized by the department.

### TRICK RIDER IS INJURED IN FALL ON CARNIVAL LOT

While speeding on the wall of a motordrome at the rate of 50 miles an hour, "Cap" Ratcliff, trick motorcycle rider with the Wortham shows, located on South Ninth Street, lost his balance and, with his machine, crashed to the bottom of the racing pit 10 feet below. He was lifted from beneath his damaged motorcycle in an unconscious condition and hurried to the first aid wagon of the show while hundreds of spectators waited eagerly for word of his condition.

Examination revealed a badly sprained left ankle, face lacerations and head wounds. He regained consciousness while his injuries were being dressed. Attending physicians pronounced his condition not serious.

Ratcliff fell during the most hazardous set of his performance, managers said. His hands were free from the bars and the machine was speeding around the vertical wall in a zig-zag fashion.

He was four feet from the top of the bowl when the rear wheel of the motorcycle is said to have skidded on a spot of grease and [he] was hurled to the floor.

\*\*\*



**Wednesday, April 8, 1925**

**PARKER, MILLER AND GALLAHER ELECTED—  
RECORD VOTE CHOOSES NEW CITY REGIME—  
TWO KLAN MEN BEATEN**

Two of the defeated candidates, Booker for mayor and Freeze for commissioner No. 1, were endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan. Parker ran for mayor on an anti-klan platform. Miller sought re-election on his past record, his slogan being "the best criterion of what a public official will do when in office, is what he has already done."

Gallaher, the new municipal judge, was a klan endorsed candidate, Judge Fishback did not conduct an aggressive campaign.



**J. B. Parker**

\*\*\*

**Friday, April 10, 1925**

**KID BALL CLUB ANXIOUS  
TO MEET NINES OF CITY**

The Fort Smith Buccaneers, admittedly consisting of one of the hardest hitting and fastest fielding aggregations for its age in the city, is issuing a general challenge to all teams interested. The Buccaneers include boys of from 12 to 14 years of age, and they want to meet other teams of the same age.

The team is managed by Floyd Barham and includes the following in its regular lineup; J. B. Reeves, Farrell Thomas, Hal Boggs, Bill Haliburton, Bob Haliburton, Floyd Barham, Earle Moriss, Sonny Jenkins and Howard Sengle.

A game has already been scheduled with Wyatt Wilkerson's Sixth street Crackers, Barham says.

\*\*\*

**Tuesday, April 14, 1925**

**FORMER SLAVE DIES AT HOME  
IN ALMA WAS STATE PIONEER**

One of the oldest settlers of western Arkansas, "Aunt

Mary" Garner, 85 years old, a former slave, died at Alma, March 29.

"Aunt Mary" was born in Virginia in 1840. With her master, J. D. Owen, she came to Arkansas, 60 years ago, passing through Fort Smith when all the buildings of the town were located on First Street. They located in Johnson County, and later moved to Crawford County, where she spent the rest of her life.

She was a mother of 13 children, six of whom are still living, 38 grandchildren, 80 great grandchildren and nine great-great grandchildren, all living at the time of her death.

\*\*\*

**Saturday, April 18, 1925**

**KNOT-HOLE GANG WILL BE GIVEN  
2,000 PASSES MONDAY AFTERNOON**

Monday will be "Knot Hole Gang day" in Fort Smith, and while the youthful, but avid followers of the fortunes of the Twins may not get to see the opening round of the season here, there will be 2,000 of them who will be given "Knot-Hole" passes for the season.

The passes, which will be honored at all week-day games except holidays, will be distributed by the *Southwest Times Record* Monday evening at 4 o'clock and after, at South Sixth Street and Rogers Avenue. A total of 2,000 passes will be given in return for signed pledges of the boys making applications.

Fifteen years is the age limit in the Twins Knot Hole

## We Want 2000 Good Boys

We believe that every red blooded American boy has it in him to be square and "straight-shooting" if given the proper chance and encouragement. We believe much of this encouragement can come in the form of clean athletics and the development of a "gang spirit" that can operate for good and is far better than individual independence that leads to improper conduct. We want 2000 boys—NEXT MONDAY—who love base ball and who would rather see a game legitimately than by crooked and dangerous means, to apply for a season's membership in the

### Twins' "Knot Hole" Gang

This is concrete evidence of a desire to promote clean sport and better manhood among the boys of Fort Smith. This pass will be issued to every boy who calls at South Sixth and Rogers at 4 p. m. Monday, April 20th with his application properly signed and endorsed. This card entitles him to admission to Andrews Field each day of the season except Saturdays and Holidays.

Agreement of Membership in the  
**TWINS KNOT HOLE GANG**

In becoming a member of the Twins Knot Hole Gang, and in agreeing to abide by the rules of the Gang, I agree that

- 1—I will not at any time skip school to attend a game
- 2—I will attend no game against the wishes of my parents or employer
- 3—I will uphold the principles of clean speech, clean sports and clean habits, and will stand with the rest of the Gang when clean, courteous and polite language on the field
- 4—I am not over fifteen years old
- 5—I will not engage in unruly conduct either at games or any other time
- 6—I understand that a breaking of this agreement may cost me my membership in the Twins Knot Hole Gang

MYN FINGER - .....

### Conditions

This application must be understood and signed by the boy himself. It must be endorsed by a parent or guardian and one interested friend OUTSIDE THE FAMILY who will be responsible for this boy's conduct while he is our guest at this season's ball games. WE ARE WORKING FOR CLEAN SPORT AND CLEAN LIVING FOR FORT SMITH BOYS. WILL YOU CO-OPERATE?

The  
**Times Record  
Company**



**A Band—Parade—  
'Neverything  
Let's Go!**



**TODAY!**

**Is Twin Boosters' Dollar Day**

**5000 Fans Will Be There!**

**Twins vs. Ardmore**

**Game Called 4:10**

Gang. In making his application the boy must agree not to skip school at any time to attend a game, not go to a game against the wishes of parents or employer, promise to uphold the principles of clean speech, clean sports and clean habits, standing with the rest of the gang against cigarettes and profane language at games and finally must promise not to engage in unruly conduct at the games or elsewhere. Breaking these promises will mean the revoking of the pass.

The applications [in order] to be honored must bear the endorsement of the parent or guardian, and one other responsible and interested friend outside the family.

The passes are allowed by the Fort Smith-Van Buren baseball association in its usual spirit to give the best in the town to the boys. The *Times Record* Company, in taking charge of the distribution of the passes is working for clean sport and a chance to give the boys their opportunity to "shoot square" and see all the games legitimately.

\*\*\*

**Thursday, May 7, 1925**

**NEW WOOLWORTH STORE  
TO BE OPENED FRIDAY**

Formal opening of the new F. W. Woolworth establishment at 816-818 Garrison Avenue, will take place Friday afternoon. Visitors will be conducted over the store

**F. W. Woolworth Co.**  
**CLOSED**  
**All Day Thursday, May 7th**  
**To Prepare for the**  
**GRAND RE-OPENING**  
**SALE**  
**On Saturday, May 9th at 8:30 A. M.**

There will be no goods sold Friday, as we wish to acquaint the public with one of the newest, most modern and finest equipped 5-10-15c Stores in our entire chain of 1500 stores.

**WATCH OUR DISPLAY  
WINDOWS**

On account of the steady growth of our business in this city, we have had to take in additional space. We will carry a bigger variety of merchandise to sell at our prices—5-10 and 15c. We will be in a position to offer you exceptional values at all times on account of our ever-increasing buying power. Visit us on Friday and see the wonderful values that will be on sale Saturday.

**Come Friday and Get Acquainted---Make  
Woolworth's Your Headquarters**

**Nothing in The Store Over 15c Cents**

We Extend to You A Cordial Invitation to  
Inspect Our New Store

**F. W. Woolworth Co.**  
**New 5-10 and 15c Store**  
**816-18 Garrison Avenue. Fort Smith, Ark.**

**FRIDAY  
MUSIC**  
from  
2 to 8 p. m.  
and  
7 to 8 p. m.  
Mr. Goodie  
Sings on Friday

**FRIDAY  
MUSIC**  
from  
2 to 8 p. m.  
and  
7 to 8 p. m.  
Mr. Goodie  
Sings on Friday

which has been doubled by the addition of the building adjoining [which was] formerly occupied by the M. H. Marks store.

From 2 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon and from 7 until 9 Friday evening, business will be suspended and the company [will] receive guests.

\*\*\*

**Saturday, May 9, 1925**

**NEW THEATRE IS TAKEN OVER BY JOIE OWNER**

Management of the New Theatre has been taken over by Southern Enterprise Films Company incorporated, which controls the Joie Theatre here, according to announcement of C. A. Lick, who will retire from active association with the New Theatre.

The deal was consummated late Friday between Lick and G. A. McDermit, district manager of Famous Players Lasky, of which the Southern Enterprise association is a subsidiary. The consideration was not made known.

J. P. Read, manager of the Joie Theatre, becomes manager of the New Theatre as well. With this exception, personnel of the theatre staff of employees will not be

changed upon the retirement of Lick and his son Captilles Lick. Independent films with First National pictures predominating have been shown at the New Theatre. Famous Players Lasky films will be shown in the future.

Lick, who is manager of the firm of Weldon, Williams and Lick Printers, said that duties of the printing establishment had become so pressing that he considered it necessary to retire from the motion picture business.

\*\*\*

## Thursday, May 21, 1925

### BOSTON STORE ADDS NEW CREDIT DEVICE

Sixteen new mechanical employees, in charge of a small portable switchboard which does everything but think, have been hired by the Boston Store. The Boston Store has installed beside cash registers throughout the store a new device by means of which necessary reference of accounts to the department can be greatly expedited.

When the salesman or saleswoman inserts the regular sales ticket in this device, an electrical contact is made which signals the credit department. When the department is ready, a private telephone system is used to convey the few words of explanation necessary and when the reference is found satisfactory, the sales ticket is stamped electrically from the office.

G. E. Berson, manager of the store said that the system was intended to release the sales force from the considerable time now required to check up credits, as the device makes all waiting unnecessary.

\*\*\*

Free RADIO Concert at Our Store Every Evening This Week, Beginning at 7:30 P. M.

OUR GREATER BUYING CONNECTION WITH THE FIRM OF STINBAKER & FULLER MEANS WORTHWHILE SAVINGS TO YOU!

"Always the Best for Ladies," at the

# Boston Store

Serving Fort Smith Since 1878!

DO YOUR SHOPPING THRU' THE MAIL—OUR PERSONAL SHOPPING SERVICE ELIMINATES DISTANCE BETWEEN US!

Our Buyer, Now in New York, Sent Us This Outstanding Purchase of—

## NEW Spring Frocks

...which we are going to feature in a one-price sale for Wednesday at—

\$16

THE MATERIALS:

THE COLORS:

BLOND, LIGHT AND DARK SHADES OF GREEN, POWDER BLUE, TAN, RUST, COCOA, ROSE, PANGREINE, BROWN, NAVY, BLACK, AND MANY COMBINATIONS OF COLORS.

FIGURED CREPPES, FANCY PRINTED CREPPES AND FLAT CREPPES

SEE THESE DRESSES IN OUR WINDOW—THEY REPRESENT THE UNUSUAL IN VALUES—TO SEE THEM IS TO BE ABLE TO FULLY APPRECIATE THE EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER OF THIS FEATURE OFFERING!

## Saturday, May 23, 1925

### STREET FLIRTING MUST BE STOPPED, JURIST DECLARES

"Mashers, regardless of sex, must go," Judge James A. Gallaher declared in municipal court Friday morning in passing a fine of \$100 and 60 days in the city jail on Burl Carter, charged with disturbing the peace.

Carter was arrested by a patrolman after a young woman had reported that he asked her to accompany him in an automobile as she was walking along Garrison Avenue Thursday evening. Carter denied his guilt, but another witness, said to be a sister of the young woman, and the principal witness for the city, both said they could positively identify the man. The defendant gave notice of appeal to circuit court on the ruling of the court.

Carter is the first defendant to appear in municipal court on such a charge. Reports that automobile drivers were asking strange girls to accompany them on drives, have reached the municipal court Judge and he declared Friday morning [that] he is going to do all in his power to check such practice.

Fines not only will be imposed on the men, but also on girls who encourage driving invitations, according to the judge. He said penalties will be assessed equally regardless of sex, where convictions are obtained.

\*\*\*

## Tuesday, May 26, 1925

### MUNICIPAL JUDGE GALLAHER MAKES PERSONAL INVESTIGATIONS ACROSS RIVER AND REPORTS FROM BENCH

"I charge that Moffett, Okla., is the worst place in this section of the country," declared Judge James A. Gallaher in municipal court Monday, when a young woman witness in the case of Frank Chatwell, told of having recently spent a night in the Oklahoma town.

Chatwell, who was charged with failure to contribute to the support of a minor, was discharged, but only after Judge Gallaher had denounced the Oklahoma hamlet in heated fashion. Charges that every night between 10 and 25 girls and women go from Fort Smith to Moffett to spend the night, after having been transported to that place in automobiles; that the Oklahoma town is probably the only center in this section of the southwest, where liquor traffic is done on a wholesale scale and that this transporting of the liquor between Moffett and Fort Smith is largely done by girls and women, were made by Judge Gallaher.

Every assertion which he made, he charged had been based upon a recent investigation which he [personally]



made of conditions which exist on the opposite side of the Arkansas River.

"One night last week I made one of the investigation visits. That night I saw eight girls who were brought to house in Moffett from Fort Smith. Each girl was taken to one of the places, which is generally known to be a liquor distributing center," Judge Gallaher said.

"Twenty men were seen by the court himself going into those places in Moffett [on] Sunday, when another investigation was held. I tell the public that place is running wide open and unless the Oklahoma authorities get busy we on this side of the river are powerless," the municipal judge continued. "In the opinion of the court, there should be [a] united effort on the part of citizens to check lawless activities in that section," Judge Gallaher said Monday.

Two hours after the court made charges openly that lawless conditions are flourishing in Moffett, Paul Selig of Fort Smith was tried in municipal court on a charge of drunkenness. When Selig explained he had obtained the liquor in Moffett, a reply which is given by more than one-half [of] the defendants charged with drunkenness in municipal court, according to officers, Judge Gallaher said: "Yes, there is Moffett again. It'll cost you \$50 and [court] costs."

\*\*\*

## Friday, June 12, 1925

### ST. SCHOLASTICA'S ACADEMY CONDUCTS FIRST GRADUATION

The first annual commencement exercises of St. Scholastic's convent, Benedictine Heights, were held Thursday night at 8 o'clock in the convent.

Miss Irene Tancred was the only senior graduate from the high school. Junior high school graduates were Virginia Henderson, Lillian Harlan, Millicent Jackson, Helen Heitman of Little Rock, and Judith Hughson.

The program opened with a processional by the entire school. The salutatory address for the junior high school was given by Miss Millicent Jackson.

\*\*\*

## Tuesday, June 16, 1925

### EVOLUTION THEORY IS ATTACKED BY FORT SMITH PASTOR IN TALK BEFORE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

Stressing the absolute need of religion and morality, and denouncing the theory of evolution now about to go on trial at Dayton, Tenn., Dr. Patrick F. Horan, pastor of the



church of the Immaculate Conception of Fort Smith, addressed the seniors of the University of Arkansas in the annual baccalaureate sermon Sunday.

"The theory of evolution is preposterous," Dr. Horan said. "This watch," he continued, "made itself you say? It just happened. Oh, I see. Then did the world just make itself? Is there no God?"

### SPORTSMEN RALLY TO SUPPORT NEW CLUB HOUSE PLAN

More than one-half of the new country club stock, capitalized at \$100,000, has been subscribed, according to an announcement made Monday at the meeting of the country club members at the Goldman hotel.

Two hundred members are expected to have been enrolled within the immediate future, Thomas L. Daily, member of the committee of plans stated. The membership fee is \$200. A report on several plans was postponed until a later date, due to lacking of information.

The new country club will be located [on the] Sunny Side farm property, southeast of Fort Smith on Cliff drive, overlooking Massard prairie. Included in the project will be a new club house, swimming pool, tennis courts, dance pavilion and an 18-hole golf course. It is said the new club will be among the most beautiful of the southwest.

It has not been determined as to what disposition will be made of the old club on Van Buren road. Members of the organization may be willing to donate their stock to the city, for the establishment of a municipal golf course, it was said.

The committee that will plan the building and grounds include Thomas L. Daily, Henry Fitzhugh, Harry Fink,

Nathaniel Dyke and William J. Echols.

\*\*\*

## Saturday, June 20, 1925

### CYCLIST MANS WHEEL OF WALTZING MACHINE AFTER BEING SPILLED

W. B. Penny of the Standard Cycle Shop here Thursday afternoon, chugged up to his repair shop astride a motorcycle, dragging another of the same species on the extreme end of a tow line. His progress was blocked by an eccentric individual in a Dodge coupe who was making uncertain attempts to get the machine in gear.

Just which gear the gentleman sought, was problematical, probably low, but unfortunately for Penny, he chose reverse. The result was instantaneous: Penny was thrown into a sitting posture upon his overturned machine; the automobile, with the eccentric individual manfully swinging to the steering wheel, [then] described fantastic curves about the alarmed cyclist.

Then he stopped, and thrusting his head out of the window inquired calmly, "Can you drive a Dodge car?" Penny nodded. "Then for Pete's sake, put this one in low for me!" he begged.

\*\*\*

## Tuesday, June 23, 1925

### COST TO SLAP WIFE IS SET BY GALLAHER

The market value of slapping your wife was set at \$10 a slap, according to a decision of Judge James A. Gallaher in municipal court. James Emmanuel, in his testimony before the court, told the judge that he and his wife had a little family fuss, starting from what [the] mother-in-law had said about the husband. During the course of the spat, Emmanuel said he slapped his wife. Neighbors heard the commotion and called police, the evidence showed.

"Well, you folks had a family fuss out there and you slapped your wife, which is a grave offense. It costs \$10 a slap for a man to slap his wife; you only slapped her once, therefore you are fined \$10—please pay the court clerk, next case," Judge Gallaher said.

\*\*\*

## Wednesday, June 24, 1925

### J. A. MUSSETT FUNERAL SERVICE IS ANNOUNCED

Funeral services for Jackson (Jack) C. Mussett, 78

years old, widely known truck gardener of Sebastian county, who died Tuesday morning at his home on Mussett road, will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, from the family residence. Dr. Samuel G. Buckner, pastor of the First Christian church, will officiate. Burial will be at Forest Park cemetery

Mr. Mussett had been in ill health for about one year. He was born in Benton County, Arkansas, and came to Fort Smith to make his home sixty-one years ago.

He had been residing at his present address for forty-six years.

It was largely through Mr. Mussett's efforts that the present Mussett road was built several years ago. The road was named for the family.

\*\*\*

## Thursday, June 25, 1925

### SCHOOL BOARD SECURES LAND FOR EXPANSION

The Fort Smith school board is preparing for its future educational needs.

The board has made a contract to buy four acres of land between North Twenty third and North Twenty fourth streets and B and C streets, upon which the junior high school building will probably be erected within the next two years.

The deal involves \$14,725.

By sale of property on Grand Avenue for use as the Lewis Tilles park, the school board obtained \$12,600, and this has been reinvested in the land just purchased, known as the I. B. Barry property. The board is unable to build at the present time.

G. C. Hardin, president of the school board, said that the tract is, in the board's opinion, the only suitable and available site for such a school.

"It is accessible to two street car lines and is practically in the center of the city," he said. "While the board is not now able to build a junior high school, it is expected that this can be done within the next two years and it was felt that the school system should immediately re-invest the proceeds from [the] sale of its real estate to prepare for its future needs."



*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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NOTES: # —Some sort of graphic, other than a portrait, is used.  
 \* —A portrait of the person(s) named is on page indicated.  
 (---) —For such as title, marital status, degree, etc.  
 “- - -” —For nickname or special emphasis.  
 (-) —Dash between page numbers indicates the name of the person, place, etc., is carried throughout the story.  
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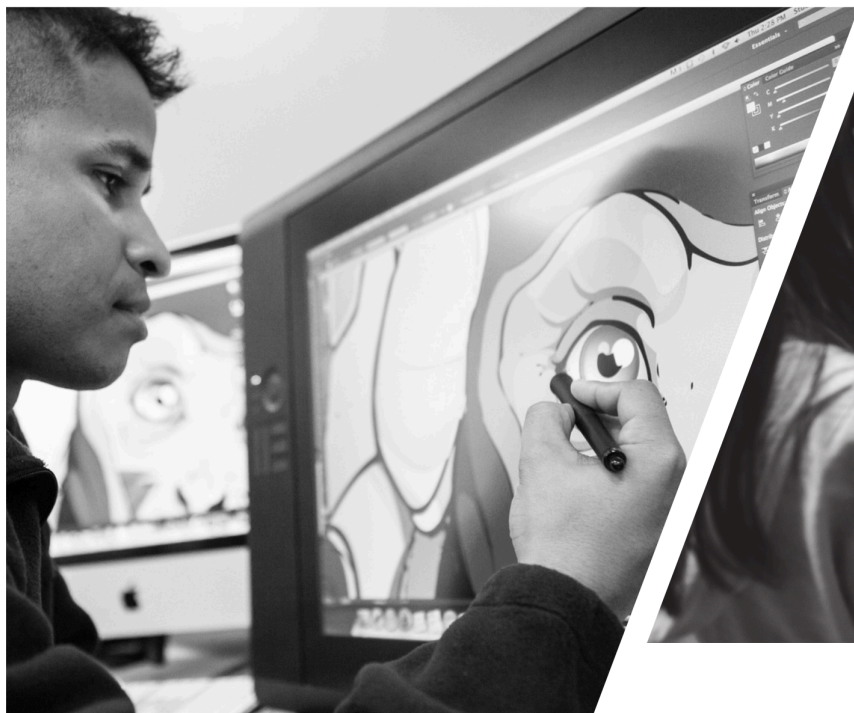


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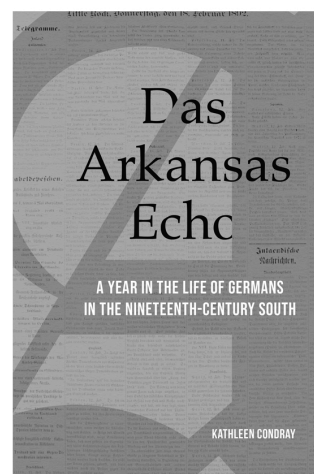
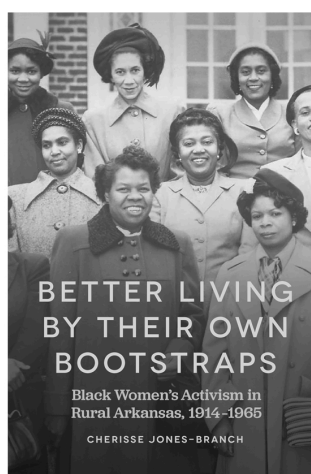
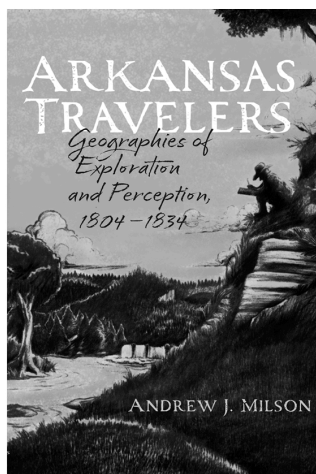
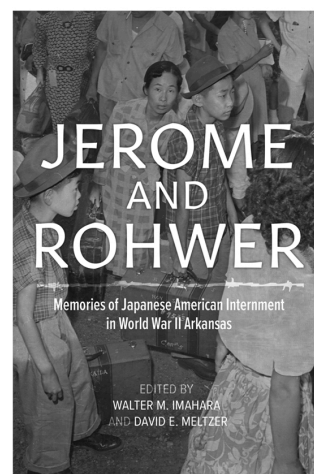
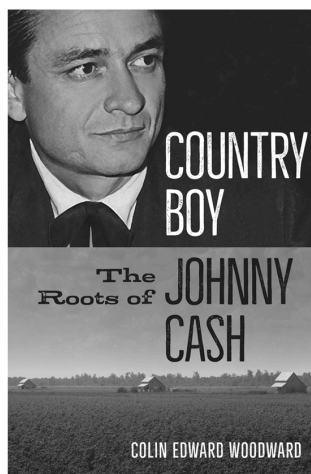
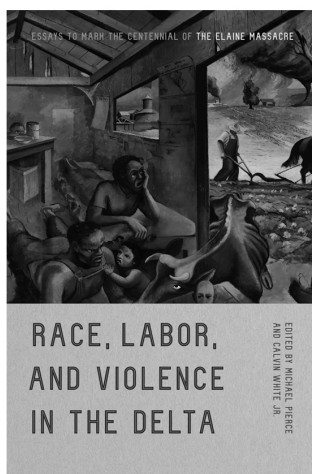
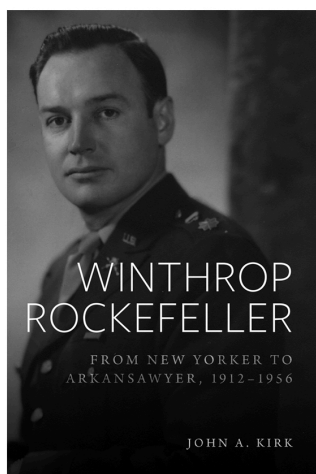
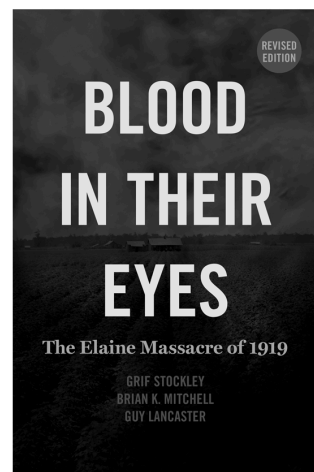
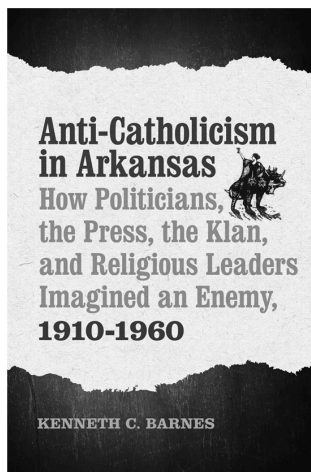
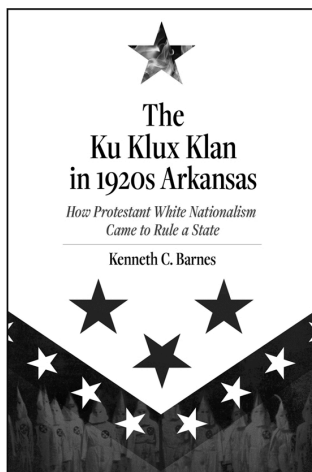
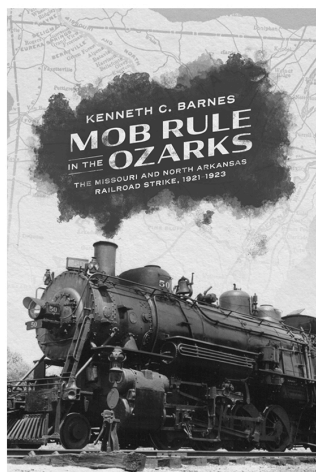
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