

PHILLIPS COUNTY
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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MY STEAMBOAT DAYS - CIRCA 1909

As Told By Everett C. Ewart To Alma E. Faust

I was seventeen years old and a dropout from Jefferson High School. I had been out of school several weeks because of illness, and when I returned I was hopelessly behind in the Latin class, and Mr. Spragins was so insistent that this had to be made up immediately that I took the easy way out and went job hunting. My father was operating the Helena Broom Factory and a grocery store, at the corner where Perry Street branches into Stringtown Road and Sulphur Springs Road. He sent me to Mr. Frank Horn, who owned a retail and wholesale grocery on the southeast corner of Cherry and Rightor Streets, and I started working as a clerk in his store. Mr. Horn's building had a front facing on Rightor Street, with a solid brick wall on the Cherry Street side. This is the location now occupied by Sherwin-Williams Paint Company. Across the street to the north was a similar building, also facing Rightor Street with a brick wall on the Cherry Street side, occupied by Grant Drug Company, now the location of Phillips National Bank. Also working for Mr. Horn at that time was John Hall, who later purchased the store and operated it for many years.

After about a year with Mr. Horn I was approached by Mr. Leon Berton, owner of Helena Ice Company, and Helena agent for the Lee Line Boats and the Kate Adams out of Memphis, and offered a job as shipping and receiving clerk at the "elevator." I felt I was ready for a change in jobs and was glad to accept Mr. Berton's offer. In those days the "elevator" was an important part of the industrial life of Helena. It was Helena's seaport, located on the river front at the foot of Arkansas Street, where the River Terminal is now,

a two-story open pier, with enclosed office on the upper level. Helena at that time had a clear water front - no island built up in the harbor as now, and boats came directly in for loading and unloading freight, and discharging and taking on passengers. The lower level floor of this structure was of dirt, and in low water was used for loading and unloading freight. During high water, when this lower level would be under water, the upper floored deck was used for this purpose.

(Note: The June, 1968, Quarterly carried an extract from the Helena World dated April 6, 1898, quoting "...while driving Uncle Sam's mail wagon down Cherry Street to meet the steamer Kate Adams at the elevator," etc.)

At that time the main source of transportation of freight from Memphis to Helena was by boat, and regular schedules were maintained, bringing groceries, hardware, farming supplies, etc., and in the spring vast amounts of cottonseed. In the fall the boats coming upstream to Helena were loaded with cotton being brought to the compress at Helena. The Kate Adams had a schedule from Memphis to Arkansas City, and the James Lee from Memphis to Friars Point. The boats also provided passenger service, and a large part of traveling between Helena and Memphis was done by boat. I immediately liked the new job, having an opportunity to know the merchants and planters of the surrounding area, the crews of the various boats, and most of the work was outdoors, which suited me better than being confined inside.

All was going well, when one morning the James Lee came into port, and while being unloaded the Captain came in to chat with me, and remarked about what a time he was having with one of his clerks because he was drunk so much. I casually remarked "why don't you hire a clerk who doesn't drink?" He looked squarely at me and asked if I

would take the job. The boat was headed for Friars Point, and while it made that trip and returned to Helena I telephoned Mr. Berton and asked if my brother Harry could take my job at the elevator, and securing his permission found Harry and made arrangements for him to take over, rode my horse to our home on Stringtown Road, and giving my mother no time to protest, packed some clothes, and was back in time to board the James Lee on its return to Memphis.

The Lee Line Boats were operated out of Memphis, being owned by the Lee family. The restoration of the old Lee mansion on Adams Street in Memphis during the past few years has recalled many old river stories, including the home's third story "watch" where the family could see the boats coming and going on the river. The Lee Line fleet at that time included four boats - the Reese Lee, the Stacker Lee, the Georgia Lee, and the Fred Herold - operating on scheduled runs from Memphis to St. Louis. These were all stern wheel boats. The Georgia Lee was known for its palatial appointments. Two smaller boats were the Harry Lee and the Sadie Lee, operating from Memphis to Ashport, Tennessee. The James Lee was the only Lee boat on the Helena run. It left Memphis at 5 P. M. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and arrived Helena at 7 A. M. the next morning. "The Jim," as it was affectionately called, differed from the other Lee boats in that it was a side wheel packet, and carried two gangplanks. It had been built in 1897 for the Lee Line of Memphis. It was launched one year before the famous Kate Adams, was ten feet shorter than the Kate, but the equal in all other respects, and built at an estimated cost of \$27,000, as compared with the Kate's cost of \$58,000. The difference - the Kate had a hull of steel, and the Jim had a wooden hull.

The James Lee lived up to the description often applied to Mississippi River packets of that

day - "Floating palace tradition, the elegance which bordered on magnificence, cabin of impressive size - a resplendent tunnel separating staterooms and serving as the social hall and dining room for passengers. Imported chandeliers, paintings, rich draperies, plush covered furniture, a grand piano, and towering gleaming mirrors." The passenger staterooms were compact but comfortable, and the meals were excellent. Lady passengers were always invited to sit at the Captain's table. In fact, his table was known as the Ladies Table. Thinking back now, I seem to remember that the Captain's favorite lady passengers were the Sisters of Sacred Heart Academy. They used the Jim exclusively for their traveling to and from Helena, and through their many trips had become close friends of Captain Bender. After evening dinner, tables were moved back, the string band took over, and dancing was enjoyed by the passengers. The Jim made all landings between Memphis and Helena, and provided passenger service from many points not available on the Kate Adams. An especially popular landing for passengers was O K Landing (Tunica) opposite mouth of St. Francis River.

During my service on the James Lee, its Captain was Captain J. C. Bender. Under him was a Steward, whose name I do not recall. Joe Barton and Gus Phillips were Pilots, Eugene Hampton Sub-Pilot, Head Clerk Jimmy Clark, Second Clerk Vernon Kemper, Mail Clerk Douglas Elliott, and an Engine Room Oiler whose name I do not recall. I served as Third Clerk. The loading crew, the "roustabouts" were recruited in Memphis prior to each trip. They did all the loading and unloading on the trip except when in Memphis, when the Memphis dock crews did that work. As no permanent crew of roustabouts was maintained, prior to each departure from Memphis it was necessary to hire a crew for that trip, and many a time departure time was delayed while details as to pay, duties, time, and such were harrangued over. Perhaps that was the beginning of the labor unions.

I had my 21st birthday while working on the Jim. It was July 31, 1909, and I secured permission for my sister Ivy (now Mrs. G. E. Buchanan) to make the trip to Memphis with me. Ship rules did not permit a relative of a crew member to be a passenger, but this exception was made for me.

The passengers were always pleased to be invited to visit the pilothouse, to have an exalted view of the river, and perhaps be given briefly the privilege of "taking the wheel." This pleasure never grew old to me, and when off-duty hours permitted I never missed an opportunity to go and "sit at the feet" of the pilot, and marvel at his dexterity in handling the big boat as easily as I had guided my saddle horse around mudholes and to safer ground on icy roads. He knew the changes brought by low water and high water and read the weather signs with an uncanny eye, and used these changes to best advantage. During times of high water, if there was no freight to be unloaded at Trotters Landing (across from Helena) on the upstream trip, the pilot would take the boat through the short cut up the "chute" by Buck Island, saving some fifteen miles of travel. And perhaps there was still enough of the boy left in me to furnish him inspiration to recall many stories of his river days, and I was always an eager listener.

Asked to recall some interesting incidents, there comes to mind one that might be classed in the amusing category. It was a time of high water and a sand bar had built up at O K Landing (Tunica). The trip down had been made all right, but on the return trip the boat hit the bar and broke a steam pipe under the cabin, releasing steam. The passengers became frightened, and one man jumped overboard and started swimming to shore. He soon felt his feet touching ground, so he turned and sheepishly walked back to the boat.

The most frightening experience occurred on the night of March 8, 1909. We were about twenty

miles south of Memphis, headed to Memphis, and due there by 9 or 10 P. M. That was the night of the tornado that practically destroyed Brinkley, Arkansas, and we were caught in the cyclonic winds, with terribly rough river, and it seemed the boat would be unable to withstand it. Everyone on board was begging the captain to pull to shore and tie up, but he refused. The roustabouts' contract would expire at midnight, and if the boat reached Memphis after midnight they would all have to be paid for an extra day's time. The pilot stayed with it and we arrived safely in Memphis shortly before midnight.

Many, many times I have looked back and regretted my decision to quit the river. For the river, like the sea, once it gets into your blood, is there forever. The decision came reluctantly for me, and I was torn between urging by the Captain to stay with them and promised promotions just ahead, and the urging by my parents to end this "adventure" as they considered it, and come home and get into some permanent work. Added to their urging was the insistence of Mr. G. H. (Mr. Hodge) Vineyard, to come work for the Vineyard Transfer Company. I gave in and put my feet back on solid ground - but not without some looking back.

My last visit on the James Lee was following my marriage to Mildred Pegues at Pontotoc, Mississippi on April 15, 1915. We had engaged passage from Memphis to Helena on "The Jim" and upon boarding were escorted to the bridal chamber, and treated as guests of honor on the trip down.

The James Lee soon thereafter became an excursion boat and was renamed the DeSoto. The final chapter was written when the boat was lost in the ice in 1918 and not recovered. A similar fate overtook the gorgeous Georgia Lee, caught in the ice at the head of President's Island, broke loose and sank.

Many years after my steamboat days I was

sitting in Russwood Park in Memphis watching a ball game. I found myself studying a man sitting next to me, then decided he was also doing some looking at me. Suddenly there came mutual recognition - it was my old friend Eugene Hampton, Sub-Pilot on the Jim. He had later become Captain on the towboat Sprague, and then after retirement, served as Pilot on the Delta Queen.

The river steamboats gave way to the railroads. The railroads have given way to the super-highways. We call it progress, and we must progress. But I am thankful I got in a little bit of living before all this progressing began.

Crew of James Lee in following picture:

Seated, left to right:

Vernon Kemper
J. C. Bender

Jimmy Clark

Second Clerk
Captain
Steward
Head Clerk

Standing, left to right:

Douglas Elliott
Eugene Hampton
Joe Barton
Gus Phillips
Everett C. Ewart

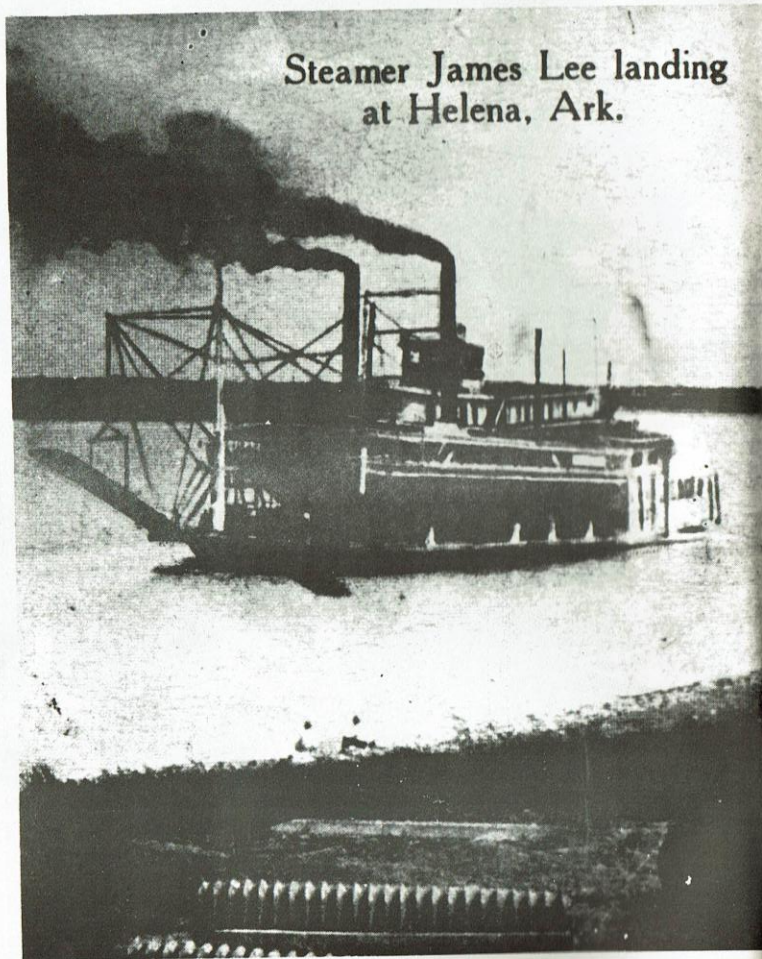
Mail Clerk
Sub-Pilot
Pilot
Pilot
Third Clerk
Engine Room Oiler

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Officers of The Steamer James Lee -- Memphis, Tenn.,
March 19, 1909.

**Steamer James Lee landing
at Helena, Ark.**



SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF REMINISCENCES BY MY FATHER

by

Joseph Mosby Hornor

Introductory Note By Dr. Albert A. Hornor

Joseph Mosby Hornor (1881-1964) who is responsible for the following stories was the eldest of the seven children of Sidney Henry and Betty Mosby Hornor. He lived in Helena, Arkansas, from his birth in 1881 until 1930, though his widowed mother and all his brothers and sisters left Helena because of their mother's health in 1911.

Between 1911 and 1921 he lived with his aunt Mrs. Mary Hornor Thweatt, who in her lonely old age liked to talk about her youthful experiences. In his own old age he loved to tell the stories he had heard, and finally after repeated requests by his sister Elisabeth, he put some of them on paper in 1955.

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John S. Hornor opposed Secession and firmly believed the federal government could be induced to buy on equitable terms the slaves and set them free. He had long dealt with business men in St. Louis, Philadelphia and New York City, and he knew well the general attitude of the conservative element in the North. His was a detached view from that of the planter of the South because he was firstly a merchant-lawyer and secondly, a planter.

It is remarkable that this man lost but one of his fairly numerous slaves by desertion. Singularly, this deserter was the only one who bore the name of his owner. His name was "Abe Hornor." For years after the War, he lived and farmed in Cross County, Arkansas.

Upon the outbreak of the War, Albert Aurelius and John Joseph Hornor, immediately, and Hamilton

Seymour Hornor, soon thereafter, volunteered for service in the Confederate Army. Sidney Henry Hornor remained at home. He did not volunteer until near the end of the War, when, fearing conscription, he went to a friend of his father who was in charge of a depot of the Quartermaster Corps somewhere in Southwest Arkansas. Here he enlisted and remained about six months, or until the surrender, immediately after which he hurried back to his duties under his father in Texas.

After the Battle of Helena, John S. Hornor, his wife, Elizabeth Johnson Hornor, daughter Mary, son Sidney Henry, daughter-in-law Betty Tully Hornor (wife of John Joseph) and her three children, Virginia, Betty and Edward Chaffin lived on that part of the Hornor plantation known as the "Middle Hornor Place." All of his slaves were on the plantation.

Different loyal Confederates of property, of course, faced different, and usually, difficult situations. The situation confronting John S. Hornor was as follows: The slaves had become restless after the Battle of Helena. The Union soldiers took from him freely, but the Confederate soldiers did likewise. The man was caught between two fires and was threatened with eventual despoliation.

This situation caused the decision to leave. The first requirement was an understanding with the slaves. They were given to understand that if they wished to leave then, they could do so. If not, they would be taken where the master decided to go. This was conditioned by a promise that regardless of the outcome of the War, all slaves who remained loyal would be returned to Helena. The slaves accepted these terms.

A serious difficulty was the poor health of John Sidney Hornor. Always a frail man, although he lived to the age of 84, his splendid executive and other abilities were well employed on this

momentous occasion. He turned over to his son, Sidney, the wagon train and all of the slaves, except possibly a very few who were to serve the family enroute. Sidney conducted these throughout both the journey out and the return. I do not know the number of slaves, but there were enough for the control and movement of them to be a serious matter.

The first locality selected for choosing a new home was Ouachita County, Arkansas.

Reference has been made to Judge Hornor's opinion on Secession, etc. On another matter, he was in a minority. The order from Richmond that all holders of gold should surrender it for Confederate paper money had found him wholly unresponsive. Indeed, at least as it affected him, he was adamant against complying. He kept his gold.

As would have been expected, some of the gold was carried by the three women. It is remembered that Betty Tully Hornor wore a belt of gold and that Mary wore one. Much sentiment develops from this fact, for one of these belts was employed in a critical situation. It will be mentioned later.

The arrangement, after the silverware, etc., of the household that had been buried was mistakenly believed to be safe from thieves, was that John S., Elizabeth J. Hornor, Betty T. Hornor and the three children were to ride in a conveyance. This they did. Mary rode a horse throughout the entire journey to and from Texas. Betty T. Hornor, it should be explained, at the time was not well. The wagon train, in Sidney's charge, followed. When favored by good luck, the travel time of this was about one day behind that of the family.

Prior to the War, the Hornor plantation had been managed by the son, Albert Aurelius Hornor, or "Re" who had as his overseer a Negro named Ben Ellison, a man of many fine qualities. Well-known was he as a teamster and for his compassion, on occasions, for his draught animals. Sidney relied

upon Ben to whom he delegated full authority and his word was law unto the other slaves under him. Ben, in turn, looked upon this youth of sixteen years with care and tender affection, watching out for him and shielding him many times and managing the Negroes on more than one trying occasion. Often, during trying days in Texas, the two executed difficult missions which carried them far from home in a strange country of little law and order.

Re was an officer in the Medical Corps in the branch of the Army under General Joe Johnston. He was absent from home through the entire four years of the War. Hamilton was in the Quartermaster Corps on the west side of the river, but being without rank, he was not free to assist in any way after the Battle of Helena. Parenthetically, it should be mentioned that this young man early in the War was found unfit for combat duty because of trouble with his eyes, a disorder that caused him to come home to recuperate at least once during the first two years.

Fortunate indeed was the fact that John Joseph or "Joe," a Major in the Army, was under General Holmes whose command was on the west side of the Mississippi River. "Joe" was a popular officer of rather extensive acquaintance. He was so situated that he could and did take several brief leaves of absence for joining his family and advising and checking them at a few critical times. The intimacy in later life of the brothers Joe and Sidney, Joe being thirteen years the latter's senior, is well known. Unquestionably, the foundation for this relationship was the cooperation of these two brothers from the time of John Sidney's moving the family to the country. The only "man" of the family frequently, because of compelling absences of John Sidney, was Sidney Henry, or "Sidney." Joe looked in now and then on all of them at the Hornor plantation, to Sidney's great advantage.

Illustrative of things which knitted the

strong bond of the two brothers was the following incident: Sidney was accustomed to stopping by the roadside to rest himself and his mare. After a rest, he overtook the train which had proceeded ahead. One afternoon, having rested, he had not quite reached the wagons when Ben Ellison, much excited, met him. Ben reported that shortly before two white men in a buggy had been offended by a teamster when, somehow, the wagon and the buggy had run together (incidentally doing no damage to anyone). Thereupon, the two men had beaten the driver, thus causing considerable commotion among the slaves. Sidney, after composing his charges, rode rapidly until he overtook the two men. He drew his pistol on both and compelled them to proceed with him until the family was overtaken where they were encamped.

It was about dusk when they arrived. Sidney, somehow, managing these two men, worried over what on earth to do with them. He knew his father would censure them severely, but obviously, the old gentleman would be able to do no more than let them go. Imagine the young man's joy upon being greeted by "Brother Joe." He turned the men over to him, of course. These men were officers in the Army whom Joe knew and the matter was settled for the time being. The men went on their way. In a little while "Brother Joe" and Sidney tried out the pistol. To their amazement, it would not discharge. The young man's weapons had been this pistol and a big knife. The men had not gotten off as lightly as they thought, for when Major Hornor returned to active service, he told of a boy's handling of them with a harmless pistol. The result was that the "brave" persecutors of a defenseless Negro man were laughed out of the Army.

The first stop of special importance was on the outskirts of Little Rock. This lasted several days, pending certain developments arising from the successes of the invading Army. Little Rock,

itself, was occupied by federal troops. An additional cause of delay was a turn for the worse in Betty Tully Hornor's health. The occasion must have been most trying. The slaves were in danger of exposure to enemy influences. John Sidney's qualities of diplomacy and determination were employed successfully to get opportunities for entering Little Rock to negotiate certain matters with federal officers. Otherwise the trip might have been endangered seriously.

Betty Tully Hornor died during this stay. In the words of Sidney, when relating this incident, "Betty's belt of gold paid for a Christian burial within the enemy's line in a cemetery in Little Rock." John Sidney could not have arranged this without the use of some of his precious treasure.

Journey's end proved to be Douglasville, Davis County, Texas, where a home was established.

I do not know the amount of gold in Betty Hornor's or of that in Mary's belt; also the sum of gold employed in purchasing the Texas home is unknown to me, as is the disposition of Mary's gold. On the family's return to Helena, she did bring some gold.

John Sidney managed well during the greater part of the two years of refugeeing. In Texas he had little hope of assistance from his son Joe, an active soldier north of the Arkansas line, except for a short time when he saw duty in Texas, near geographically, but apparently, not so in other respects.

The farm was worked by the slaves but exchange of produce for other necessities was difficult. Money was not to be had. The medium called "money" was steadily deteriorating because it was the Confederacy's promise to pay money. Much of Sidney's time was spent in trading for things needed. This involved taking from the farm produce to exchange for necessities. An illustration: More than one

trip was made to the Jordan Saline Works. A commodity was taken by Sidney and helper, in a wagon, to the Works where it was traded for salt, then was bartered at some other point for one or more commodities which were taken home.

An exciting and disastrous adventure with money, one time, may be told here. Sidney's father sent him with money with which to purchase cattle which he would bring to the farm for fattening and later trading. Sidney bought the cattle and left with them. Before he had proceeded far, but without warning, the men who had sold the cattle and who, concealed from the young man's view, had followed, caused a stampede. The result may be imagined. Sidney, on his faithful mare, barely cleared a rail fence in time to escape with his life, for there was no resisting of this frightened, onrushing herd of cattle. A dejected young man went home with his pockets empty.

When news came of the "Surrender," Sidney, now released from the Army, rushed back to Texas. John Sidney set about liquidating his Texas holdings. Somehow, the head of the family, after carrying them all through, had retained a small portion of the precious gold he had refused to surrender for the now worthless medium of exchange. Mary, for example, enjoyed saying, at least once, in her declining years that she brought home one hundred dollars in gold.

John Sidney, with Elizabeth Johnson Hornor, the three grandchildren and Mary returned sufficiently in advance of the slow caravan conducted by Sidney to reach Helena many weeks before it did.

Elizabeth Johnson Hornor was a woman of ability, courage and initiative. The self-imposed exile could not have succeeded without her. There are indications from things known of her character that her initiative had something to do with the undertaking.

Betty Tully Hornor was loved by all, especially, Mary. Mary's was a dreary life in Texas. She contributed actively her assistance, but it is not strange that she would not talk of her sojourn in Texas. Her principal supports were happy memories of her home before the War, her visits as a young lady to Virginia and (one) to Washington, D. C. to the home of her grandfather, Joseph Johnson, then a congressman from his district in Virginia. Usually, when, in her latter years, she talked a very little of the Texas experience she concluded with mention of arrival home and a royal reception of the family by Mr. Henry P. Coolidge, to whose home they went first.

Sidney's trip home was more difficult than had been the trip out. The slaves were more restless by far than before. His first act was to initiate a stern discipline, in which faithful, resourceful Ben was of great assistance. He left with scant provisions and poor equipment. His draught animals instead of being all mules as when leaving home, were mules and oxen. He arrived at Helena with teams composed of mules, oxen AND milk cows. The capital, besides the provisions, provided by John Sidney for his son had been one twenty dollar gold piece. It is remembered with great pride that Sidney told when greeted on arrival home by the family, he turned the Negroes over to "Brother Re" and that gold piece (\$20.00) over to his father. The young man's resourcefulness was proven.

The rehabilitation of his fortunes by John Sidney promptly got under way. This could not have been so successful as it was without the hearty cooperation of his sons with him and with each other. It should be observed that this sixty year old man in the beginning, derived his greatest aid from John Joseph. The latter had the initiative of a young man which was coupled with ability and a notable capacity for maintaining himself in the ranks of the leaders about him.

Camp near Tulip Arks
May 1st 1864

Dear Mary

I have passed safely through another terrible battle. We fought the enemy yesterday near Jenkins Ferry on Saline river, and after a very severe battle of seven hours routed them completely & drove them from the field. Our Brigade went in first and opened the fight. We fought for one hour without any assistance and our loss is very excessive. Our Brigade fired the first and almost the last gun. We were in the last charge. The loss in our Brigade is One Hundred & Eight about one third of the men we went into battle with. We had marched 36 hours with only four hours rest. It rained from 12 o'clock at night until the close of the battle incessantly.

The Federals destroyed their train, pontoon bridge and every thing they had. A ball passed across my back grazing my coat. I never felt so thankful for my safety as I did when this battle was over. Our Brigade has been complimented on all hands for its gallantry. I will write you more particularly some future time. We are now resting.

I met Dr. Means a few days ago. I am very anxious about Pa & Helena. I hope all will be well. I will come to see you as soon as this campaign is over. I know not when that will be. These victories have given character to our army. They are now equal to the Arks veterans East of the river. No troops have ever displayed more endurance and valor than they have. Write me often. Give my love to all & tell Ned I am fighting the Yankees now. Genl Tappan is safe. Genl Scurry was killed & Genls Randle & Wall wounded all from Texas. Col Grinstead of our Brigade was killed. His Regt lost one half in killed & wounded.

Yr brother Jo

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The following letter was from Mary Hornor to her cousin, Josephine English. The Charley Bailey

mentioned in the letter was the son or brother of Henry Bailey of Helena, from whom Sidney Henry received his middle name. Henry Bailey was a business partner of John Sidney Hornor.

*

Douglassville Davis County Texas
July 10th 1864

My dear Cousin

Your letter of April 28th also your Ma's were received by the last mail & indeed we were rejoiced to hear from you all once more.

We are glad to know Grand-pa is alive and with you. We left Home last July immediately after the fight at our Town, through the assistance of our Soldiers Pa brought out what negroes were with him at that time. More than thirty had previously gone to the Feds. We are liveing in Eastern Texas. Pa has rented a place & is farming. This was formerly a portion of Cass Co. Sister Betty died in Little Rock Arks the 4th of last Sept. We were closely persued by the Feds until after crossing Arks River & we think it was the fatigue of traveling which caused her death. She left three interesting children, who are with us. Brother Joe was over here in May. Hamilton spent a day with us a week ago, he is stationed in an Arks Commissary Dept. He had been over to Arks on business & was returning. Dallas is 150 miles West of this. Brother Rea was in Georgia when we last heard from him, but we have not had any direct intelligence from him since last July.

Our County has been desolated as much an any portion of the Confederacy, but we hope the War will soon end & that we can go back Home. Pa often tells me I have no Home there, it is true our houses had been very much injured before we left & now may be entirely gone. Many of our old friends in Helena have died. Mrs. Sebastian has lost two daughters and her Mother. I was with her when the eldest daughter died, she was a very accomplished young

lady, last week we heard that a second one had died.

We had a friend who went to Canada after the Feds came. She corresponded with Aunt Selina, and through her we heard from Va. Grand-pa probably remembers Mr. Henry Bailey, he is in Canada with his family and it is his wife who wrote to Aunt Selina. Charley Bailey is Aid de Camp to Genl Cleburne. We heard from Aunt Selina that Uncle George was at Home and had joined the Baptist Church. When he left us I did hope he would join the Army again. We have not heard from Uncle Anders or Emily since the War commenced. I received a letter from Harlow in Sept 1862 he belonged to the 46th Ohio Regmt & was in Memphis. I answered his letter but he did not write again. I was very glad for I did not intend to write him another letter. I no longer think of him as a relation. If you have an opportunity give my love to Dick Johnson & tell him that I am glad to hear that I have one cousin in Va who is willing to fight by the side of my Brothers. Aunt Selina wrote to me he was in the Army. I have heard that Tom Johnson is stationed at Waxahachie Texas, that is between 2 & 300 miles West of here, he belongs to the Army.

Ma is busy attending to her Wheels and Looms. She has given Brother Jo and Hammy a suit of clothes. I never saw a Loom or Homespun dress until the second year of the War, the people about here make beautiful cloth, they are compelled to do it for there is none to buy.

We live half a mile from a little village and have some kind Neighbors. Sidney has been going to School since we came here until the last week, it is now in vacation.

My time is occupied with the children, makeing their clothes etc. I wish you could see them, they often talk about you. Lena says she has been to Va. All of the war news is cheering & I cant help hoping it will close this year. All of Ma's & Sister Betty's house servants went to the Yanks. Our house was pillaged. Ma buried her silver and my jewelry,

or rather Pa did it for us, we lost it all. I hope you and your Ma will write again. Tell Aunt Etta she must claim a portion of this letter as an answer to hers. We would be glad once more to see something from Grand-pa's pen. I send this by a young gentleman who is going from this Neighborhood to join the Va Army. I would have great objections to liveing in Texas if the war was ended. The family joins in much love to you all.

Hopeing we may meet when the War is over I remain

Your affct Cousin

Mary

It will be best for you to direct our letters to Brother Jo.

(The foregoing is a copy of a letter from Auntie-- Mary Hornor Thweatt--found among her personal things in an envelope marked "Oscar may find pleasure in reading these letters." The envelope contained a portion of the envelope in which this letter was sent to Mrs. John A. English, Churchville, Augusta County, Virginia. The cousin was Cousin Josie English (Eyster), daughter of Aunt Etta--- Henrietta Johnson who married John A. English. Josephine Eyster Hornor was named for this beloved cousin of Papa's. The "Grand-pa" referred to was Grand-pa Johnson whose daughter Elizabeth Johnson married John Sidney Hornor.)

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Camp Yell near Camden Arks
Aug 11th 1864

Dear Pa

Yours of 26th ult was received a few days ago. I was very glad to hear that you were all well. We have not moved and there is now no prospect of our moving soon. Every thing is bustle and activity here and something will soon be done. Many rumors are afloat, but I presume you will hear all about it

before this reaches you. We have many rumors about affairs in Va and Ga, but nothing very positive. All the news is favourable, and while we are certainly hard pressed we have no real cause of alarm. I feel confident we will be able to repulse the invaders, and recover all the territory we have lost. Every mile that Sherman moves weakens his force, and more certainly ensures his ultimate overthrow. Our forces are again in Pa and the enemy are unable to determine what movements are intended. Lincoln feels that it is imperative upon the Federal army to accomplish something before the Democratic convention meets which will be on the 29th inst. If we hold out at Richmond and Atlanta the fate of the Administration is sealed.

In regard to your arrangements for another year. I have thought much. The place you are on is too poor, and if you would hire most of the negroes to the Govt it would be much better for you. I think you should by all means cultivate as much ground as will produce your grain and enable you to raise meat. If the war should cease next spring, of which there is certainly some probability, the negroes would be out of employment and the money would purchase nothing.

I hope you may yet be able to find a suitable place. I do not think it absolutely necessary that the land should be at the place you live. If you could get a comfortable house and land within two miles you could get along.

I sent you a paper a few weeks ago and I will send several to day which I hope will reach you. I saw that Judge Sebastian & family had arrived in Memphis on the 29th his house and furniture having been destroyed by the negro soldiers after Dobbins whipped them. Genl Buford had to guard them to the boat to prevent violence being offered to his person. These papers although old will interest you. I hope your health may continue good and that you may be able to find a suitable place before long for the family. Give my love to all. We will remain

here I think for some weeks at any rate. Many changes are taking place here, but I cannot write them to you at present. A blow will soon be struck which will produce good results. Write often.

Yr affectionate son
Jo.

*

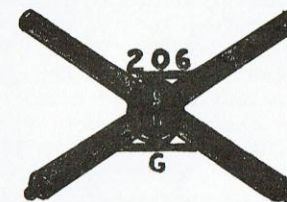
The two letters of Major John J. Hornor included here were not a part of Mr. Hornor's article. They belong to Mrs. T. E. Wooten of Helena (a daughter of one of the "three interesting children" left by Betty T. Hornor), and they were inserted in the article as being very relevant to it.

Helena Weekly World, May 11, 1898. ALMOST SERIOUS.

Yesterday afternoon, as Mrs. Sliger was driving to Mrs. Frierson Moore's to attend an entertainment, she met with what was almost a serious accident. Mrs. Rice Fitzpatrick and Miss Vienna Fitzpatrick were with her in her surrey, when at the top of the long hill near the Moore residence the horse attached to the surrey choked down and after backing the surrey until it turned over, fell down itself. Mrs. Sliger and Mrs. Fitzpatrick succeeded in extricating themselves before the surrey turned over, but Miss Vienna Fitzpatrick was not so fortunate, and was badly shocked and considerably bruised but not seriously hurt. The horse made no attempt to struggle or kick, else the occupants might not have fared so well. The surrey was slightly damaged, but beyond the injuries to Miss Vienna, who was caught under the surrey, the ladies escaped.

*

FACTUAL HISTORY



BATTERY

HELENA, ARKANSAS

by

Major James M. Massey USAR (Ret.)

Battery "G", 206th Coast Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) was formerly located at Fort Smith, Arkansas. In 1936, the Fort Smith battery was reorganized and assigned as part of the 142nd Field Artillery.

After considerable effort on the part of the citizens of Helena, Battery "G", 206th C. A. (AA) was awarded to Helena. Captain Austin M. Coates, a veteran of World War I, became commander. Under his command and leadership the new battery was formed comprising 58 enlisted men and 3 officers. A few that joined the unit were World War I veterans. Captain Coates and Staff Sergeant Joseph C. Thornton are the only surviving World War I veterans, who were members of the unit. Sergeant Thornton also served in the unit during World War II.

The Executive Officer of the battery was 1st Lieutenant Robert T. Austin, a science teacher and football coach at Barton High School. The 2nd Lieutenant was Zach D. Jennings. The battery was organized in February, 1936, and federally recognized, April 25, 1936. The unit was armed with four .30 cal., water cooled, machine guns on

anti-aircraft mounts.

The unit was first housed in the old Tappan Motor Company building, located on the northeast corner of Perry and Walnut Streets. The unit later moved to 622 Walnut Street. It occupied this building for three months, and then moved on Ohio Street. Construction of a new armory soon started at 511 Miller Street. Governor Carl E. Bailey made a dedication speech at the completion of the armory in October, 1938. A celebration followed with a reception at the Country Club and a luncheon at Habib's Restaurant.

The battery conducted summer field training at Camp Hulen, Texas in 1936, Fort Barrancas, Florida in 1937 and 1939, Camp Robinson, Arkansas in 1938, and Camp Ripley, Minnesota in 1940. The unit was called for several months of emergency service during the 1937 flood. It was highly commended for extensive work in setting up a tent city at Barton for flood victims.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order, pulling the 206th into federal service on January 6, 1941. Enlistment was increased and the unit departed Helena for Fort Bliss, Texas with 120 enlisted men and 4 officers. Captain Coates and Lieutenant Austin were lost to the unit shortly after mobilization. The command of the unit passed to Lieutenant Jennings. Three officers were commissioned from the battery's ranks as 2nd Lieutenants. These were Sergeants John B. Grogan, Charles A. Wooten, and Robert H. Porter. Two other officers attached to the battery were 1st Lieutenant James T. Hornor and 2nd Lieutenant Jesse E. Porter. Shortly after arriving at Fort Bliss, most officers were rotated to other units. Through the next four years, Battery "G" had five commanders. Captain John J. Burk of Marianna commanded the unit longer than any other officer during active service. After several months of training, the unit was equipped with 37 MM automatic guns and 50 cal. machine guns.

While stationed at Fort Bliss, the 206th Regiment shared its area at Logan Heights with the 200th C. A. (AA) from New Mexico and the 202nd C. A. (AA) from Missouri. The 206th and the 200th had excellent rating. In July of 1941, the commanders of these two regiments, in presence of the commanding general of Fort Bliss, tossed a coin to determine which would be ordered to the Philippine Islands, the loser ordered to the Aleutian Islands. The men and officers of the 206th were disappointed when their commander lost the toss, but later realized how fortunate they were. The 200th suffered almost complete annihilation at the hands of the Japanese. Only a few members of that regiment survived World War II.

Battery "G" departed from Fort Bliss in August, 1941, for Camp Murray, Washington, where it remained until after the December 7th bombing of Pearl Harbor. The battery was quickly dispersed around the Boeing Aircraft plant at Seattle. On February 26, 1942, the battery loaded on the ship Northcoast for Dutch Harbor, Alaska. It was here on June 3rd and 4th that the unit received its baptism of fire. Shortly after the attack on Dutch Harbor the battery was equipped with 40 MM automatic guns. The battle scarred guidon, which was made by Mrs. Coates when the battery was organized at Helena, was sent to Captain Coates. The guidon is now framed and on display in Mr. Coates's office. The battery remained in the Aleutians for two years, returning to Fort Lewis, Washington, March 8, 1944. After a short stay here, it was sent back to Fort Bliss, Texas. It was at this station in April of 1944 that the 206th Regiment was phased out. Personnel of Battery "G" were transferred and scattered to other units.

The 206th C. A. (AA) was never reactivated; however, during a reorganization of the National Guard in 1961, a newly organized artillery unit was designated 206th. Battery "A" of this unit, armed with Honest John Missile, was located at Helena.

The National Guard was again reorganized in 1967. The 206th was then relocated, with batteries at Marianna, Forrest City, Wynne, Harrisburg, and West Memphis. This unit adopted the original 206th C. A. (AA) Regimental Crest, which carries the slogan, "Never Give Up."

The old Battery "G" can proudly boast its accomplishments. The battery received very high ratings on all inspections by representatives of the War Department. It also produced quality leadership in non-commissioned and commissioned officers, who served in nearly every branch of service during and after World War II.

Many of the unit's original members still reside in Phillips County. Mr. Coates is still referred to as their captain and he refers to them as his boys.

PRESTON GREEN

by

Watt McKinney

Preston Green walked with a slight limp, one of his legs being a trifle shorter than the other. Some said that this physical infirmity had been caused by a fracture of the hip, suffered when he was a mere child and that this permanent lameness resulted from lack of competent care and attention during the period in which the injured bone was healing. However, this was all a matter of guess and supposition on the part of his friends and acquaintances for, in reality, as little was known about the cause of Preston Green's lameness as was known about his past, which was nothing at all. He himself was never known to mention anything touching on his past life prior to that Spring day when he walked down the stage-plank of the Steamer Chickasaw as the old-time river steamboat shoved into the landing at Indian Bay, Arkansas. So far as Preston Green appeared concerned and for as much as any person at Indian Bay or in Monroe County knew of the man's history until after his death fifty years later, it might be said that his life began on this day.

He was a man, perhaps twenty-five years of age, at the time of his arrival at Indian Bay. He was possessed of a very pleasing personality, well educated, an interesting talker and quick to make friends, forming friendships that endured until his death, though it might be said that he was by nature a person somewhat strange and eccentric. At any rate, this was the opinion of many of his friends and acquaintances as there appeared to be some mystery connected with his past life, as likewise he was destined to be the central figure of a mystery of the future.

Like most of the men of his day, Preston Green enjoyed his liquor, though he was never known to take too much, and he also obtained considerable pleasure at the poker games in which he engaged that were held nightly in a room above Tim Callahan's saloon and from which he is said also to have derived a very considerable profit. His success at the poker tables at Indian Bay and on the different steamboats that operated out of Memphis up the White River during that period is thought to have contributed a major part of the fortune he was known to have accumulated. On the other hand, however, many were of the opinion that the great, heavy chest that Preston Green brought with him when first he set foot on Indian Bay, contained at the time a large quantity of gold. Still this was a matter only of conjecture on their part, though no doubt based on the fact that Green did have within his room, securely locked, a massive brass-bound oaken chest, the inside of which no one save himself was ever permitted to see, giving rise to the belief that the old chest did conceal a hidden treasure.

Now in the several years subsequent to the time that Preston Green established residence at Indian Bay, this place was indeed a prosperous and thriving village, a very important steamboat port of call, and for many miles adjoining it there lay broad, well-improved and fertile areas where were produced each year many thousands of bales of long staple cotton. But after the construction of a line of levees along the east side of the Mississippi River, floods visited the Indian Bay section with such frequent regularity and increasing destruction, as to practically bankrupt the merchants and planters. Preston Green, witnessing the decline of the community and the financial ruin of its citizens, moved away and purchased a plantation near Turner, Arkansas, where he lived alone with the exception of two Negro servants until his death.

During the latter years of his life, Preston

Green appeared to receive most of his pleasure in frequent visits to the bayous, lakes and forests of the lower White River, where he was accustomed to spend a part of his time in hunting and fishing. Usually he went on these visits alone, taking with him only his gun, his dog and a small camping equipment. It is on one of these trips that Green is believed to have taken with him a treasure in gold coins of large denominations which he placed within some quiet recess of that dense and shaded forest that lies along the eastern shore of Indian Bay a short distance above its junction with the White River. Such beliefs have been further influenced by the assertions of his friends who declare that in the last hours of his life and during periods of only partial consciousness, Preston Green tried desperately to convey to those around his bedside some thought that seemed disturbing him, or to speak some information that was perhaps a burden on his mind. But death chose too soon to seal his lips and those words he wished to speak remained unspoken.

After the death of Preston Green, friends discovered among his private papers a will that had been executed some years before, and in which an executor had been named and directions given for the disposal of his estate. Acting in accordance with these instructions, the executor opened the old, brass-bound oaken chest which was found to contain numerous papers, letters and photographs. Among the papers found in the old chest was a heavy, brown envelope, sealed with red wax on which Preston Green in his own hand and under his own signature had written certain instructions together with the name of the person to whom it was to be delivered. On delivery of the envelope to this person it was opened and found to contain a very intricate diagram prepared for establishing the location of a hidden treasure. The position and kind of certain designated trees and distances were represented by characters on this diagram. The key to the interpretation of the characters, it was stated, would be found deeply inscribed

on the back side of a heavy, bronze plate that was securely fastened by heavy, wrought-iron nails to the body of a huge cypress tree. Detailed instructions were given for finding the location of the tree. However, after numerous and exhaustive efforts the tree's location was not and has never yet been determined, and the bronze plate holding the key that would perhaps unlock a fortune is lost, no doubt, forever.

In concluding this story, it is interesting to mention that only a few years ago, the timber was cut from several hundred acres of forest lying between Indian Bay and Big Creek, sold and manufactured into lumber. One day during the process of sawing one of the giant cypress logs from the lot, a brilliant shower of sparks was seen to fly from the teeth of the sharp band-saw. The mill's machinery was stopped while an investigation was made, and deep within the body of the huge log a heavy bronze plate was found, which on being removed and closely examined, showed by the few words and characters discernable, evidence of some inscription on its side. However, the metal had been so badly damaged by corrosion and torn and mutilated by the sharp teeth of the saw, that it was impossible to obtain from it any knowledge or information it doubtless was intended to convey.

Now whether or not this torn and twisted piece of bronze metal that was taken from a cypress log that day in the mill was the plate that Preston Green nailed to a tree near Indian Bay, one guess is as good as another. But those persons who are most interested are convinced that it was, and so practically all hope of eventually finding the treasure that was so safely and securely placed within the shaded stillness of a great forest has been abandoned, since the day mentioned when the teeth of a swiftly moving band-saw ripped through the heart of a cypress log. ***** (This is the third story by the late Mr. McKinney of Marvell which has appeared in the Quarterly. It was written about 1938.)

*

OLD TOWN LANDING

Some extracts are printed here from a History of the 33rd Regiment of Illinois Veteran Volunteer Infantry, whose members were stationed below Helena for a short time immediately following the occupation of Helena in the summer of 1862. The troops had marched from Missouri into Arkansas with the purpose of joining up with the army of General Curtis somewhere in Arkansas. On arrival at Clarendon, it was found that the expected supply boats were not there, and the Regiment had to proceed on to Helena, sixty miles distant. The march was taken up again, and of the third day, the narrator gave this account.

*** By making a march of twenty-five miles on Sunday, July 13th, Helena was reached, and a most forlorn procession we made. In some companies there were not men enough present to make a gun stack. Three-fourths of the command were lying sick and exhausted along the roadside for thirty miles in the rear. It required days for them all to come up, many having to be brought in wagons sent for them.

At last we were out of the swamps and cane-brakes, where for many weeks we had been lost sight of, and, as it seemed to us then, almost in sight of home. No event of the Civil War has been more celebrated in song and story than Sherman's march from "Atlanta to the Sea." The march of the Army of the Southwest from Batesville to Helena does not compare with it in the distance travelled and results obtained, but for difficult marches, and downright hardships, Sherman's march was a mere play day and picnic as compared with it. ***

*** After we had been at Helena two weeks we were moved on July 26th twenty miles below, and camped at "Old Town Landing," on the west bank of the river,

the most pestilential camp we ever occupied, and where the men of the regiment sickened and died by the score. There was no reason that we should be sent to that deadly place, except that we would be somewhat nearer the cotton area. How much of this "cotton collecting" was done for the government and how much for private interests, I do not know, but from the fact that serious trouble on account of it came to a number of officers in high command, justifies the opinion that we were not doing very much at that time toward saving the country in this hard and dangerous service, and I know that I but reflect the feeling of every comrade when I say that every life that was lost in those expeditions was a useless and wanton sacrifice.

On Sunday, July 27th, we were in camp at Old Town, a "town" without a building of any kind or character. It was simply a situation between the river and a fever-breeding swamp. I have always thought of this place as being very like the Eden of "Martin Chuzzlewit." ***

*** This ended our "cotton campaign." A great many of the 33rd had died at Old Town camp, a large number had been sent to Northern hospitals, and the regiment was well nigh worn out with its hard and continuous service in those scorching August and September days. From the time we left Batesville, June 22nd, to October 1st, with the exception of about ten days at Helena, the regiment, or portions of it, were almost constantly marching, scouting and skirmishing in the canebrakes and reeking swamps of Arkansas and Mississippi, and it was with a delight that had no bounds that we received the order to board the transport Des Moines, October 5th, to be taken North. ***

*** From Notes of Company "A". We were soon at Old Town Landing, below Helena, and from there were sent on several expeditions into Mississippi or down the river on steamboats gathering cotton, in some cases for the government, or skirmishing with

guerrillas; and all the time imbibing the deadly malaria of the low lands of the Mississippi. It was here that the seeds of disease were planted in many of our constitutions, and quite a number of deaths occurred from this kind of exposure. ***

*** But the swamp water and malaria of the district, where not even the negroes could live through the summer and where it was customary for all the white people to remove to the bluffs or highlands, caused nearly the entire regiment to be on the sick list. It is an actual fact that the regiment was officially declared by the Medical Department of the Army to be in need of a change of climate, and it was ordered North for its health. October 5th it started for Sulphur Spring, Missouri, a few miles below St. Louis. But few other instances were known during the war where ill health was the only cause of such a change of location; in fact, it is the only case which ever came to my knowledge. ***

*** From Note of Company "E". After filling ourselves and our canteens with water from White river—we had no food—we marched for Helena, on the Mississippi river, seventy miles across the country. For intense suffering from heat, hunger and thirst, that march was the worst Company E ever experienced, and doubtless many would have perished had it not been for a shower of rain. Before it could soak away the soldiers would lie down on their faces and drink out of the ruts and tracks made by the wagons and the cavalry ahead of us. Those who were able to hold out made that march in less than three days—but it is safe to say that seventy-five per cent. of Company E were lying along the road.

After staying at Helena a short time, Col. Hovey's brigade was sent to Old Town Landing, about twenty miles below. The adjective "Old" was properly applied, for it had decayed ages ago and there was nothing left to tell the story. Our first camp was located between the river and the levee; it was where the Father of Waters made a sharp bend, and

we were on his elbow. The old gentleman changed his course frequently and had an unpleasant way of undermining his bank every little while and letting it down into the water where it could liquidate. He took a notion to do this while we were occupying it, and we had to move out in a hurry. About the only sign of civilization near our camp was a field of sweet potatoes, and Company E located near it. We were acmped here about three months, and our time was occupied in stealing cotton and other things. There is no failure to realize that this last statement embodies a serious charge; the only excuse for making it is that it is true. ***

*** Old Town Landing proved a veritable graveyard for our soldiers, who were kept constantly tramping through the swamps looking for cotton. The intense heat, bushwhackers, and deadly swamp fever played havoc with our forces. I have never been able to dispel one shadow that came across my life at that time. While in the quartermaster's department Myron Hicks of Company H was my bunk mate, and a splendid young soldier he was. On one of those foraging expeditions a country store was looted, and Hicks took what he supposed to be a bottle of quinine. After reaching camp he decided to take a dose of it just before going to bed. He measured out what would be about five or six grains of quinine, asked me if it was about right, and receiving an affirmative answer, swallowed it. About two o'clock his heavy breathing woke me. I tried to rouse him, but could not. The surgeon was called, and upon examination of the contents of the bottle found it to be morphine. All efforts to save Hicks proved to be unavailing, and he died about eleven o'clock that forenoon.

About the first of October we were taken on board a large steamboat and sent north to Sulphur Springs, Mo., a short distance below St. Louis. Our rejoicing that we were to escape from those pestilential swamps knew no bounds. ***

*** From Notes of Company "K". July 11th, 1862, Company K, with the regiment, marched out from Clarendon, having as their objective Helena, on the Mississippi river, distant 65 miles. The troops marched on one road and the trains, with a large escort, on another road. This was a hard march; the actual marching time was 34 hours, and when the head of the column reached Helena, on the banks of the Father of Waters, the larger part of the army was straggling on in the rear, many having become utterly exhausted. Company K had only 13 men in ranks when it reached the town, many of the boys having scarcely tasted food on the march from Clarendon. Here the company rested until the 26th of July, and then went by boat down the river to Old Town Landing. The camp was a low, swampy place, reeking with miasma, and death lurked on every hand. Here Company K lost the noble Hendricks and Hart; and with muffled drums and reversed arms the company followed their remains to their lowly resting place....While their graves are unmarked and unknown, so that no loving hands can strew flowers over their resting place, they are not forgotten. Before the close of the war the mighty river claimed their resting place as part of its channel. Nearly all of the company were sick during the stay here of over two months, and many were sent home on sick furlough. ***

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS FOR 1971-1972

Mrs. H. R. Hendrie	Desert Hot Springs, Ca.
W. E. McEntire	Helena
Dr. Waddy W. Moore	Conway, Arkansas
Mrs. Jerome B. Pillow	Helena

*

We had a good program at the September meeting. John Lueken talked on Indians and collecting Indian artifacts, and he displayed some of his findings, leaving a beautiful case of arrowheads at the Museum for visitors to see. Mrs. John T. Caldwell, Jr. of Jackson, Mississippi, a longtime member of the Historical Society, read from some letters and papers of early members of the Rightor family. She has done a lot of research on this family, and is a Rightor descendent.

From the Helena Weekly World, April 27, 1898

THE JAMES LEE

The elegant new Lee Line steamer, James Lee, taking the place of the Rowena Lee in the Memphis and Friars Point trade, made its initial trip down from Memphis today, arriving at Helena at seven o'clock. The steamer's arrival was announced in a very distinct manner; whistles from all the steamers, tugs, factories, mills and railway locomotives in the city, lost no time in welcoming this pretty new steamer to Helena, and long before she effected a landing the river front was lined with crowds of people anxious to get a glimpse of her as she sped down the river towards the elevator. She presented a beautiful sight, and as she rounded gracefully in, an elegant band of music was sending out the familiar strain, "There will be a hot time in the old town tonight."

A crowd of some of the best people of Memphis were on the steamer making the round trip, a number from Helena also boarding it on its return to Memphis. Compliments have been lavishly paid the Lee Line on putting such a neat and pretty steamer on the waters of the Mississippi, and Helena is especially pleased, considering she will be in the Memphis and Friars Point trade.

Helena Weekly World, April 27, 1898. DISASTROUS FIRE. W. D. Reeves' Big Plant Goes Up In Flames.

The worst fire in the history of Helena occurred Sunday morning at 3:15 o'clock, when the magnificent plant of Mr. W. D. Reeves was destroyed by fire, together with all the manufactured stock on his yards. The total loss will foot up between \$90,000 and \$100,000. The Reeves mill was built originally by the Moline Lumber Co., of Moline, Ill., was rebuilt later by Mr. Chas. Schutte, of Little Rock, who sold it to the Kaiser Lumber Co., of St. Louis, who added a veneering plant at a cost of about \$30,000. Mr. Reeves bought the plant a few months ago, and after adding his planing mill at great cost, and rebuilding the saw mill, and constructing a complete kiln-drying establishment, had one of the largest and completest plants in the entire South. For the past six weeks the mill had been running day and night, shutting down only on Sundays, and turning out an average of seventy-five thousand feet of lumber per day. Mr. Reeves enjoyed a large trade, shipping in to all the states of the northwest to Chicago, and all the leading cities. He traveled two men, and employed in his logging camps and in his plant here an average of 200 people. His pay-roll averaged \$1,000 per week, or about \$50,000 annually. Mr. Reeves' loss is all the more hard on him because he carried no insurance, his total insurance on mill and stock being \$2,500. The plant was easily worth \$30,000 or \$40,000, while the stock on hand was worth \$50,000 or

\$60,000 more. Mr. Reeves is a public spirited citizen, and his voice and his purse have always been used in behalf of Helena's enterprises and charities. The whole community sympathizes with him in his loss, and stands ready to aid him in any possible way now that he has been so badly crippled. Mr. Reeves owns another mill, three miles northwest of Helena, and has a large body of fine poplar timber land, and it is safe to say he will be at work again in a few days.

There is no clue to the origin of the fire. The mill shut down at 12 o'clock Saturday night, and at about 3 o'clock a steamboat gave the alarm. The watchmen, of whom there were three, must have been asleep or absent, as the mill was on fire from one end to the other before the alarm was given. The St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern railroad lost 8 freight cars, which were loaded and being loaded on the yards with planing mill stock.

The Helena Box Co., had nearly a million feet of cottonwood lumber on Mr. Reeves' yard, about half of which was burned. The Helena Box Co., was pretty well insured, and will suffer no serious loss.

The fire department did some elegant work, and Mayor Fritzson especially was active in saving the City Oil Works and the Planter's Compress, adjoining. The flames leaped over the roadway between the mill yard and the City Oil Works, and the latter was in danger more than once.

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Neither the Editors nor the Phillips County Historical Society assumes any responsibility for statements made by contributors.

Dues are payable to Miss Bessie McRee, Membership Chairman, P. O. Box 629, Helena, Arkansas, 72342. Meetings are held in September, January, and May, on the fourth Sunday in the month, at 3:00 P. M., at the Phillips County Museum.