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"THIS OLD BOOK"

The Civil War Diary Of  
Mrs. Mary Sale Edmondson  
Of Phillips County, Arkansas

Edited By

R. P. Baker, Archivist  
Arkansas History Commission  
1972

PART III

PREFACE

The vast majority of Civil War diaries which have come down to this present time are those of the soldier himself. They give a thrilling account of the battlefield, the campfire and the march, but usually little else. This diary is different. It is an account of a different kind of battlefield, the home front in the South. But it is no less a story of privation, destruction and bravery.

This is the diary of a very literate southern gentlewoman. It reflects her interests in the welfare of her home, her husband and children, and her Negro slaves. In it is captured the essence of a way of life rapidly being destroyed forever by Yankee Soldiers. Gone were the gracious ways, the leisurely civilization and finally, life itself.

INTRODUCTION

MARY FRANCES SALE EDMONDSON was born November 16, 1816, in Amherst County, Virginia, the eldest of the eight children born to the Reverend Alexander F. and Sarah Crenshaw Sale. In 1821, the family emigrated with a large group of their fellow Virginians to Lawrence County, Alabama, and settled

near the county seat of Moulton. Here they made their home for a number of years.

In 1848, Mary's brother, John B., a lawyer by profession and the fifth County Court Judge of Lawrence County, "was seized by a desire to try a new Country" and removed to Aberdeen, Mississippi. It was no doubt through her brother's new friends and acquaintances that Mary met a widower from Pontotoc County, Mississippi, Dr. Albert G. Edmondson. Dr. Edmondson's first wife was Caroline Pinson and they were the parents of three children: William, Mary E., and Caroline L. The first Mrs. Edmondson died about 1848 or 1849.

Dr. Edmondson and Miss Sale were married in Mississippi on May 23, 1854. Their first child, Alexander, was born April 20, 1855, but died eight days later. Their second child, John Albert, was born on May 23, 1856.

In 1857, Dr. Edmondson, his father-in-law, Alexander Sale, and two of his brothers-in-law, William and Melville Sale, joined the great American move westward. Choosing Phillips County, Arkansas as their new home, they settled northeast of Walnut Corner. Here they bought over one thousand acres of land in the Blackfoot or Central neighborhood, along Spring Creek Road. William named his plantation Granmedi, and the home shared by Dr. Edmondson and the rest of the Sale family was called Holly Grove. Some of the other families which made up this neighborhood were those of: Judge John T. Jones, George R. Johnson, Richard Ford, Thomas and John Gist, Joseph Green, Arthur Robinson, Richard Anselm Blount, Amos Jarman, James Cook, Alexander Graves, Warren and Jack Smizer, Dr. T. R. Welch, F. H. Dade and David Threlkeld.

On September 20, 1858, Mrs. Edmondson's third child, Sarah Susannah, or Sallie, was born - only to die on June 24, 1860, ironically the same day as the birth of her fourth and last child, Louise

Titus, or Lou. Mrs. Edmondson died on February 7, 1865, after several months of illness. Dr. Edmondson died in Phillips County in 1885.

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#### DIARY

SEPTEMBER 20, 1863, Sunday. This Sabbath morn Carrie (Caroline) and I have cleaned the house up and put everything in order, and find much comfort in being our own maids of all work--although of course, some fatigue also. We do that well which it took several servants to do with much vexation to all concerned. I have never in all my life been obliged to wait on myself before, and I am now forty-five years of age.<sup>1</sup>

After ten weeks trial I find myself able to do that and much more, although it has cost me 2 attacks of illness, a thing that has not happened to me before more than three times in my life, that I remember. Carrie has suffered also in becoming accustomed to such unusual work--but she is young, 14 years of age, and bears it well. Dr.'s health seems failing rapidly; he was quite sick last night but has gone today to see those who are still sicker than he is. The whole country is prostrated with sickness, and there is a great scarcity of medicine. Now I must try and have some Sabbath exercises with my children for there is no public worship of God in the Country--the Yankees have rendered that impossible even if they had not stript and desecrated the Churches. God forgive them on repentence and restitution for all the sins they have committed against those who never injured them.

OCTOBER 21, 1863, Wednesday. It has been more than a month since I had the heart to write any in my Journal--this day one month ago we received the sad (Ah! that is a feeble word) intelligence that our honored and beloved Father, our

lovely and well beloved Mollie (Mary E.) and our dear old Diddy (a slave) even all dead. I cannot well describe what a month this has been to us all especially to me--I do not like to write of it yet--I can make no one understand how great my loss has been--Dr. does not seem to recover the elasticity of mind and strength of body he had before learning (of) our bereavement. I have had quite a sharp little attack of illness since, so has Carolina.

The funeral procession of Miss Betty Wilburn<sup>2</sup> has just past our house. I rode over at 12 the night before last to help shroud her and sat with the corpse the rest of the night. Jenny Graves,<sup>3</sup> a sister, was the only member, except little Henry Robinson, at home. Two negro women and one old (Negro man) were all the help she had at home--Miss (Betty) Lane and myself did the last offices for the departed--The Tuesday night that Miss Betty died and Jenny sent for me, it was dark and not having been out (on horseback) for more than seven years, and being a timid horsewoman, our faithful Davy led the old mare, who was unwilling to go, for three quarters of a mile and offered to walk and lead her all the way--but at sundown we had, as we thought, reliable information that a Yankee scout was out--so as I was more afraid for Davy than myself I would not suffer him to go, but followed the strange old negro man, Jeff, on the little foot path through weeds higher than my head over a large field until we reached the open field between the two plantations when we got on very well--I saw Capt. (George W.) Slaughter and Maj. (David Threlkeld)<sup>4</sup> today for the first time since our country has been held by Abolitionists--Capt. Slaughter dined with us after the burial, Albert waiting on the table Carrie had set.

In the evening Dr. and I walked over to see the Blounts who were trying to move a house on wheels to where their dwelling had been burned by the Yankees, just a year ago; they had been living in their out houses since. Davy, with our two

steers (oxen) was helping them--I hope they will get comfortable fixed for the winter.

OCTOBER 22, 1863, Thursday. Davy went over to Blounts today to help move up their carriage houses for a kitchen. They were not so successful with that and will have to rebuild it I fear. I have neglected to record, in the proper place, that our servant (slave), Dick Bankhead, left the Yankees and returned home to us on the 9<sup>th</sup> (of October). The day was made memorable also by our have seen Capt. (Charles L.) Moore and Lieut. (J. D.) Price<sup>5</sup> (I believe it is) from Bragg's army bringing us news from brother John from whom we had not heard in many months, and from Paul, his son, whom we were not aware had escaped alive from Vicksburg, also from our Son, William from whom we had not heard since January, and of whose fate, through all the fightings in and on the Mississippi, we were ignorant, and from Melville, whom we had not heard from since he left for Bragg's army--six weeks before. They were all well.

This is our dear Mollie's (Mary Elizabeth) birthday, and would have made her seventeen years (old, today). She was alike lovely and beloved. She died in Louisiana, Caddo Parish near Greenwood, in the home of my only living sister, Mrs. Vinkley Jones, where she was tenderly nursed during her short illness of five days from the time she reached there in the latter part of July. My dear father (the Reverend Alexander F. Sale) died on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July and our sweet daughter on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July asking to be buried "near Grandpa for he had helped her to know and love God." She died in full assurance of a blessed immortality. This has been and is a grievous dispensation of Providence to us, but I will write of this and of my dear father's death more fully else where, that you my children may be informed on the subject, if I and your father should be called to leave you alone in this world, which seems not impossible. Dr. was sent for this morning at sunrise to see Davy who is said to be

very sick at the Greens. He found him indeed suffering greatly and spent the day with him, but did not succeed in relieving him.

OCTOBER 23, 1863, Friday. Doctor went twice to see Davy today--no improvement. This I think is my dear brother Thomas' birthday.<sup>6</sup> He has been dead ten years; he died the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, 1853. Dr. came from the Greens this morning to get the buggy to bring Davy home, as he insists on coming that Dr. may be with him all the time. He is no better--at least he suffers extreme pain--I have been trying to have his bed fixed comfortably for him, and shall have to continue another for Dick, who bids fair to be very sick also. They reached home late this afternoon--Poor Davy looks very badly. What will become of us if he dies? And what will become of him--for though an excellent servant and an honest man he is no Christian. Davy not yet relieved.

OCTOBER 24, 1863, Saturday. This is my husband's 58<sup>th</sup> birthday. Oh, with what a gloomy cloud is our Country and our own present and future enveloped!

We are seriously uneasy about Davy. I ventured to ask him about the state of his mind today with regards to the future, found he was penitent and prayerful. His wife (Emily) came today to see him.

OCTOBER 25, 1863, Sunday. Dr. blistered<sup>7</sup> Davy today--hope it will relieve him--we sent for his wife, as I promised if he got no better. This bright October Sabbath is the anniversary of my dear brother Thomas' death ten years ago. Oh, how afflicted we were then, but that was a summer cloud to the wintry gloom that palls us now. We sent for Dr. Hughes and Mr. Beckham today to see if they either one could help our poor Davy, in their respective callings. Mr. Beckham has talked and prayed with him. Dr. Hughes (has) made some suggestions that I hope may help him.

OCTOBER 26, 1863, Monday. Today we have felt smart hope that Davy's disease was taking a turn for the better--but he thinks he will die--spoke very touchingly to his wife and all of us--sent money to his beloved old mistress (Mrs. Edmondson's mother)--Dr. Hughes thinks he may hold out till morning.

OCTOBER 27, 1863, Tuesday. Our poor Davy breathed his last today at 1 o'clock, I pity his poor, lonely wife for all her kin have gone to the Yankees--and nearly all her fellow servants. Her husband's influence alone has kept her from that sink of pollution, the Yankees Camp. God pity her and give her courage and strength still to do right.

OCTOBER 28, 1863, Wednesday. Today we laid our faithful, beloved Davy in the ground--the youngest of his parents children and the last of the family of a faithful, upright servant--whose ancestors have belonged to my ancestors for almost a hundred years. His sister, beloved and revered Aunt Chin,<sup>8</sup> died last July a few days before my (Father). She was a girl of fourteen when my mother married,<sup>9</sup> and has been her trusted confidential servant for nearly fifty years. (She) helped our mother to raise us all, we eight children, (though she had) none of her own, (and) though the faithful wife of an unworthy, invalid man, (she had) nursed father and mother through many severe illnesses and (had) been nursed herself through many severe attacks by them and myself. She and Davy, her niece Martha,<sup>10</sup> and Jno Warner's son (Dick)<sup>11</sup> are the only ones of all my father's well cared for, well taught servants who have withstood the temptation constantly employed by Yankee Abolitionists, for more than a year, to leave him and us. Our Mahala<sup>12</sup> thus far has been faithful. \*

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>In reality Mrs. Edmondson was forty-six years old at this time.

<sup>2</sup>The sister of William Wilburn, Jenny Graves and Mrs. Robinson.

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps the wife of Nathaniel Graves.

<sup>4</sup>George W. Slaughter was in Co. B, Dobbins' 1st Arkansas Cavalry.

David H. Threlkeld	Aged 60	Born Ky.
Opha E. Threlkeld	30	Ky.

...

Household # 292, 1860 U. S. Census, Spring Creek Township, Phillips County, Arkansas.

<sup>5</sup>Captain Charles L. Moore was an original member of the Yell Rifles. He was appointed Quarter Master on May 24, 1862; he was on a recruiting expedition in Phillips County in September and October, 1863. Lieutenant J. D. Price was also a member of the Yell Rifles. Muster Rolls, Josey's 15<sup>th</sup> Arkansas Infantry.

<sup>6</sup>Alexander Thomas Coke Sale (1823-1853), born Lawrence Co., Alabama, October 1, 1823, D. A. R. Records, Volume V. Evidently Mrs. Edmondson was mistaken in thinking that Thomas' birthday was on the 23rd of October.

<sup>7</sup>A medical practice involving the raising of blisters by chemical means to draw out bodily poisons.

<sup>8</sup>Perhaps this is the elderly slave known as Diddy who died in Louisiana.

<sup>9</sup>The Reverend and Mrs. Alexander F. Sale were married on February 10, 1814.

<sup>10</sup>This is perhaps a reference to the younger Mahala.

<sup>11</sup>Perhaps Dick Bankhead.

<sup>12</sup>Seems to have been Mrs. Edmondson's personal body servant, not to be confused with "Old Mahala."

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## SWISS SETTLERS AT HICKS AND BARTON

by

Laura H. Von Kanel

Swiss immigration to the United States began much earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> century; this is only the time when the greatest influx occurred. The immigration reached its highest points in the last twenty years of the century with 81,988 coming during the decade of 1880-1890, the time of the establishment of Bernstadt, Kentucky. The settling of these immigrants among their own countrymen sometimes took the form of a colony of a considerable number of people. In this way he did not feel out of place since he could share his language and customs with others of his background.

The settlers emigrated from Switzerland because they could not own enough soil to live reasonably well. Most of the Swiss who came to the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were farmers. These people were seeking land to further their agricultural pursuits. Bringing his land thrift from a country where every square foot of tilled land was priceless, he showed how low quality land could grow better crops than before. He showed the value of fertilization and the proper care of animals. He set a standard for the local Americans that helped banish the wasteful robber practices usual in early farming. They were fifty years ahead in their advanced farming methods.

Although each man was a farmer first, he was a tradesman second. There were doctors, veterinarians, florists, glassworkers, surveyors, teachers, carpenters, blacksmiths, wagonmakers, saddle and harness makers, watchmakers, tailors, cobblers, tinsmiths, bakers, wooden shoemakers, woodcarvers,

butchers, winemakers, cheesemakers, brick makers, silk lace weavers, mechanics and millers. When not farming, some worked in coal mines and on the construction of the railroad through eastern Kentucky and down into Tennessee.

In 1886, the land at Bernstadt was being bought for "\$4 per acre of which at least \$2 per acre is paid in hand." The remainder was to be paid within five years, bearing the usual annual interest rate of 6%. Land in Switzerland at this time was selling for the price of \$200 to \$400 per acre.

Several factors caused a move from Bernstadt, Kentucky to other parts of the United States, one being the great amount of work necessary for clearing land. This held the cultivated area on an average farm to a few acres, then even these few acres were of a poor quality. Another factor was the poor and expensive transportation for cash crops which made it impossible to compete in distant areas.

The experience of Bernstadt showed that hard work, energy, intelligence and original thinking could not be substituted for capital in the establishment of enterprises. The inability to offer little more than an uncertain agriculture was a detriment to the cohesion of the colony.

Although most of the migration from the colony was by single families, there was one large movement to Arkansas, to the Barton and Hicks areas.

In 1897, word was received that the Arkansas Midland Railroad (now part of the Missouri Pacific Railroad) was offering good farm land at low prices in Phillips County. William Welte was sent to scout this area for land. He lived in Helena for a year checking on land and met two men who owned property in the county. He was able to make a deal with Mr. Hornor and Mr. Updegraff for the people to

purchase the land at a price of \$20 per acre.

Later that summer Rudolph Inebnit and his son Fred, Anton and Ernest Schaffhauser came by covered wagon. They began building a log house on the farm Rudolph Inebnit bought. When the families who came in November arrived, the north side of the roof had been completed. The newcomers spread their bedding along the north wall and during the night a severe rainstorm soaked their feet along the whole row of beds. (Mrs. Marie Inebnit Allen of Hicks recalls this incident.) The families arriving on this trip by railroad were the rest of the Inebnits and Schaffhausers, plus Albert Schaffhauser, Heinrich Dubach, Herman Heidelberger and families. Boxes of dried meat as well as dried apples, peaches and beans were shipped ahead to Hicks so that there would be food available on arrival.

Robert Heidelberger was the first baby born to Swiss parents in this county. Robert was born on Christmas Day, 1897. He now lives in Trenton near the site of the Trenton Academy.

In 1903, the family of David Petersen and the Tschabold family joined the group, and in 1908, the Germans from Transylvania (then east Hungary) came. I do not have years for the arrival of the following to Hicks: Alfred Kummer, Gottfried Friedli, Heinrich Welte, Albert Wetter, Francis Sabatier, Simon Schell, Simon Plattner, Matthew Plattner, John Gschwend, and August Ebert.

The first years income came from the sale of cordwood to the railroad, also by making crossties and heading bolts. They raised cotton, dairy cattle, chickens, grapes for wine for home use and vegetables.

Starting a new life had many difficulties and one of these was no school for the children. They walked two miles to attend school in Postelle for the first two years, then a school was established in a house on what became the Tschabold

farm. They could only attend school on rainy days or in bad winter weather, for all available manpower was needed to help clear the land, plant and harvest the crops. The children also worked in cotton fields of nearby plantations to earn ready cash. Some of the children took the shortest route to school along the railroad tracks to sell eggs and produce in Marvell.

When choosing a name for their new colony, the Swiss decided on the name "Waldheim." This name had to be changed for they later learned of another Waldheim in Arkansas. As Colonel Bob Hicks had a stave and heading mill  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile west of the present rail stop called Hicks Stop, they chose the name "Hicksville." This was later shortened to Hicks by the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

In 1903, Emil Bloesch and Ernest Hauselman met with Ham and Ned Hornor to purchase land in the Barton area for other settlers at the same price of \$20 an acre. This land was somewhat swampy and other farmers were having difficulty, but these Swiss farmers drained the land and were able to grow cotton, wheat for flour and vegetables. They also raised livestock for food. These settlers arrived at the area by covered wagons and train.

The Swiss families coming to Barton were those of Sam Von Kanel, Chris Von Kanel, a bachelor, who lived behind the present Robert Lederman home, Gilbert Von Kanel, cousin to Sam and Chris, Jacob Leifer, Frederick Leifer, John Lederman, G. Lederman, Gottfried Schmied, John Raeber, wife Margaret sister of Gilbert Von Kanel, Jacob Farnar, Charles Schubach, Ernest Schubach, Ernest Hauselman, Emil Bloesch, Albert Bloesch, Peter Bartchi, George Ermer and Ernest Ruegsegger.

Frederick Kummer was a baker who came to the Bernstadt, Kentucky colony from Bern in 1883, after a fire had destroyed his bakery. At this time his

family consisted of his wife, Elisa, and three small children, Fred, Rudolph and Emma. Seven other children were later born to them. Elisa died in Kentucky in 1901, and on February 17, 1903, Frederick and the children moved to Barton, Arkansas. Not finding the climate suitable for his health, Frederick returned to Kentucky and settled in Louisville. Two of his sons, Alfred and Ernest, decided to remain at Barton and farm.

Albert Bloesch had built a hotel in Bernstadt when he arrived from Bern in 1882. He had inherited a considerable amount of money in Switzerland and was possibly the man of greatest means. The building was of typical Swiss chalet architecture, three stories high with a four-sided sloping roof. It also contained public rooms which served as gathering places for festive occasions. He also opened the Laurel Lumber Mill.

Specific talents of some of these settlers might be of interest. Rudolph Inebnit was a shoemaker, Albert Wetter, a tanner, Arnold Schubach, a saddle and harness maker, David Petersen, a bricklayer, Francis Sabatier, a painter, Fritz Meyer, a silk lace weaver and John Gschwend, a baker. William Welte, a cabinetmaker, often made a casket at no charge for the bereaved in the colony. Mrs. John Lederman was a midwife to the women at Barton. Heinrich Dubach, always musically inclined, organized a small band which was the source of much pleasure to the little group. Singing was also practiced under his direction.

Still remembered are the famous Fourth of July picnics, only discontinued in recent years. This holiday was an easy substitution for the Independence celebration held by the Swiss in August. Games from home were played and everyone reverted to his native tongue.

In 1905, the Reverend G. Gekeler, a traveling

minister, stopped at Hicks and Barton to minister to the settlers and remained for a few months. He was followed by the Reverend J. Kaeppli who organized a church at Barton in 1907 and one at Hicks in 1908. They were called Reformed Churches.

The Reverend Rudolph Steiner began his ministry to the two churches in November, 1911. It is interesting to note that he always preached in German. The salary he received was \$5 per year for an adult and \$1 for a child who had been confirmed. It was by his efforts that both congregations became actively affiliated with the Reformed Church, United States, Barton in 1912 and Hicks in 1914. Until this time most were of the Reformed Church of Switzerland, others Catholic and a few Lutherans.

In 1935, the name of the church was changed to "The Evangelical and Reformed Church," when a union was achieved with the Evangelical Synod of North America. A union with the Congregational Christian Churches resulted in "The United Church of Christ" for a new name in 1957. This is the present official name for the united denominations.

The Reverend Rudolph served the two churches until his death in October, 1928. His son, the Reverend Traugott Steiner, is the present minister. For many years services were held at both communities, but at the present time they are only being held at Hicks. The churchwomen also tend a country cemetery where many of the early settlers lie buried.

The Swiss at Barton, like those at Hicks, found the land to their liking. Most of the early settlers remained there the rest of their lives and many of their descendants are found in the area today. Many of these descendants are very typical of their ancestors. They are a jovial bunch who still enjoy working hard and practice togetherness.

When not farming, they find many things to

do. Some build homes and furniture, some make wine with home grown grapes, and some are mechanics. Many of the women make delicious homebaked bread. These are things no longer done of necessity but for pure enjoyment, things to keep one young and happy. It has made me very nostalgic and, I must admit, ashamed of myself as I have written this article. It makes one see that the happiest people are the busiest people.

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#### ADDITIONAL MEMBERS...

Central Jr. High School	West Helena
Mrs. Bernard Cunningham	Helena
Seymour Heller*	Helena
Henry H. Ketcher, Sr.	Little Rock, Ark.
Miller Jr. High School	West Helena
Dr. Waddy W. Moore	Conway, Ark.
Henry H. Rightor	Alexandria, Va.
Andy Smith	Irving, Texas
State College of Ark.	Conway, Ark.
Mrs. Allen H. Toney	Helena
Sustaining Member*	

\*

## DISAPPEARED IN ARKANSAS IN 1872

by

Louise M. Griffin

A hundred years ago Maud Ellen Duff Burnett, a widow, with several of her children, among them a married son whose wife was formerly Miss Diane Wallace, left Giles County, Tennessee in a covered wagon headed for Arkansas. Where they crossed the Mississippi River is unknown, but that they did make it to Arkansas is a known fact.

Mrs. Burnett wrote a letter to her daughter, Katie, who had been left with a friend, that the party had arrived at Marvell Station in Phillips County, Arkansas. The letter was dated January 18, 1872. It was the last ever heard from any member of the family. Besides the married son, Narvern, and two sisters, Sis and Frances Burnett, there were two or three small boys in the party whose names have faded from memory down the years.

Katie Burnett grew to be a young lady and married David Crockett Neal. She lived on a farm seven miles south of Pulaski, Tennessee. During the years that Katie Burnett Neal was a busy farm mother, she always grieved about what could have happened to her family. She had wondered about the whereabouts of her mother and brothers and sisters even as a little girl, while she stayed in the home of Bob Barber with whom her mother had left her.

She voiced this anxiety to her children as they grew to adults, and now her great granddaughter, Annie Neal Wilkinson, is trying to locate descendants of this Burnett family. The thrill of a lifetime would come to Neal Wilkinson if someone in Arkansas who is a Burnett or knows of this family of Burnetts would write to her. Miss Annie Neal Wilkinson, 125 E. Green Acre Rd., Hobbs, N. M.

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## A DIARY ACQUAINTANCE

by

Carolyn R. Cunningham

A young neighbor mentioned often in both Sue Cook's Diary (Series of Dec. 1965, March 1966, Dec. 1966, March 1967, Dec. 1967, March 1968) and that of Mrs. Edmondson (continuing Series of June, Sept., Dec. 1972) is Sue Johnson. I read where she sat up with the sick, came to spend the day, was baptized, opened a school for neighborhood children during the Civil War when it was impossible to get tutors or teachers. As I read of that young girl I became curious to know more about her. In delving into her story I found that she has a daughter-in-law living in Helena and two grandchildren in West Helena. Her lace jacket is in the Helena Museum.

I have read her diary, letters written home to her family in Phillips County during the 1850s and 1860s, and among her papers I came upon a tiny note. On the envelope were the dimly written words, "Miss Sue Johnson. At Home." Inside on a small white card was written, "Trusting your pleasure, I will call tomorrow evening after tea. John W. Keesee." The card is not dated but Sue Johnson married John W. Keesee in 1866.

She was born Susan Reynolds Johnson on June 21, 1844, in Lawrence County, Alabama. She was the daughter of George Reynolds Johnson and his wife, Martha Ann Ernul Johnson. Other children of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were Ann E., born 1846 in Lawrence County, George G., born in 1848, and Morris, born in 1850. The youngest two were born in Carroll County, Mississippi, where the family lived briefly in the move from Alabama to Arkansas. In Lawrence County neighbors and kin of the Johnsons were the

Jarman and Hughes families who were neighbors later in Phillips County.

The exact date of arrival of the Johnsons in the North Creek neighborhood is not known, but they were here before 1860. George Johnson had acquired land and built a home known as "Beechland." It was located about a mile north of Walnut Corner, west of the highway. Mr. Johnson's first wife probably died in Carroll County. His second wife was Eliza Jarman Hughes, widow of John Hughes. They had one child, Mary E., born in 1858 in Mississippi.

The 1860 U. S. Census of Spring Creek Township, North Creek Post Office, lists George R. Johnson, his wife, Eliza, his four children by his first wife, his two year old daughter by his second wife, and her three sons by her former marriage, John Hughes, aged 22, George W., 20, and Reece, 18. Mary E. died before school age, and George R. Johnson died January 9, 1862.

Among Sue's letters is one she wrote to her father on September 15, 1861, from Mary Sharp College in Winchester, Tennessee, where she and her sister Ann were students. Evidently her father had taken the girls to Tennessee and returned home a short time before. She wrote, "This house is a very nice fine one and we are very well accommodated." And she added, "You and Ma mustn't forget to send us a box Christmas. I don't know how I could get along without it. When you write give us some of the news and write often to your affectionate daughter."

She often hinted at coming home while it was still safe. Schools all about them were closing. She quoted others as saying students should go home because "the tracks will be torn up, bridges burnt down, and cities fortified and barricaded so as to admit of no ingress or egress, but that is their thoughts not mine expressed."

Sue spoke lovingly of her stepmother, calling her Ma; but she had a very close relationship with her father, and they communicated often. From North Creek, Arkansas, on December 21, 1860, he wrote telling her of her Christmas box which was on the way. No doubt it was because of this that she wrote him the next year, reminding him to send another. His letter read:

I write to let you know your box will start tomorrow and be sent by Adams Express. It will contain potatoes, hickory nuts, Hazel nuts, oranges, apples, candy, pound cakes, crackers, Beef-tongues, sausages, jelly cake, stockings and music. I shall be satisfied if none of you are made sick by it. This leaves us all tolerably well. We have been engaged lately in laying out our yard and are in daily expectation of our shrubbery. The yard fence, Garden, Cistern Houses, and smoke house (brick) are all done and look very well. You must comply with my injunction about writing. All send love to you all. Hoping you may have a happy Christmas.

A year and two weeks later he was dead. Whether Susan had come home because of the war or when her father died is not known, but from the Cook and Edmondson diaries we know that she was at home and active in her community.

Her brother, George, married a sister of Mattie Thweatt Dube, the artist. They were daughters of William Archibald Thweatt and his wife, Mary Catherine Jarman Thweatt, whose brother, Amos Jarman, a neighbor from Alabama and Mississippi, was living on the plantation just south of the Johnson family.

Ann, or "Sister Annie," married a neighbor, Captain John Swon, on August 13, 1863. She and Sue

were living at Beechland when, one day during the Civil War, the Federal troops came to burn their property. The two young ladies were standing on the front porch facing the soldiers when the commanding officer suddenly asked them if they had anything for a headache. They said they had and he asked if he might come inside. When they went in he told Mrs. Swon that the little gold star pin she was wearing pinned to her blouse had saved their home. He went back outside and ordered his soldiers to leave and not to harm anything belonging to this family. Many years later, in recalling this incident, Sue said she knew nothing of the pin or its origin except that it was a gift from Captain Swon to his wife.

Mrs. Lewis Cherry of Little Rock, granddaughter of Sue, said that she has sought information on the pin for many years, but has about given up ever finding out anything. She has sent pictures of it to the Library of Congress, to the Smithsonian Institution, to the Greensboro Masonic Museum in North Carolina, and to the Royal Arch Magazine in Trenton, Missouri. No one has been able to help her, so the mystery lingers on--why this pin of unknown origin caused a northern officer to save the home of a southern family from destruction. The pin, now in the possession of Mrs. Cherry, great-niece of the original owner, measures one inch from point to opposite point.

Captain and Mrs. Swon had one child who died in infancy, and Captain Swon was to die before many years had passed. On January 23, 1866, another captain came into the family when Sue married Captain John William Keesee from a neighboring plantation, "Cypress Plains."

Captain Keesee was born August 8, 1838, in Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee, son of Thomas Woodfin Keesee and Maria Louisa Bolling Cross Keesee. He was married first to Louisa Drane in

1859, in Tennessee. She was a daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Will H. Drane of Clarksville, Tennessee. They had two children, Thomas Woodfin Keesee, born in 1861, and Eliza Jane Keesee.

Louisa Keesee died at the Keesee plantation in Phillips County on September 5, 1862, and was returned to Tennessee for burial. She was 28 years old. Her children were both under the age of 2 and since they were so young, when their father returned to his home in Arkansas, they stayed behind with their maternal grandparents. Although they came here for many visits and their Arkansas family often visited them, they never came to live with their father again.

Three years later when Captain Keesee married the 24 year old Sue Johnson of "Beechland," she wrote to his parents in Tennessee:

His little children I think beautiful, and imagine them to be very lovable little ones, so much so, that I desire very much to have the care of them. Mrs. Drane thinks that I am too young, but I don't think so. The children are now very young, also, and it is easier to win the love of a young child, than when it is somewhat advanced and perhaps somewhat prejudiced. But Mr. Keesee tells me that such will not be the case in this instance. He made a special request relative to it. He says he could not withstand the entreaties of their grandmother to have them with her the rest of her life.

Sue also wrote to her future parents-in-law:

I am an orphan, my ties of kindred are few and very precious to me.

The son, Woodie, on one of his many visits to Phillips County, fell in love with a local belle,

Susan Huntington Polk, and married her in 1887. Their two sons, Woodfin and Allen, live in Helena. Five years earlier, in 1882, Eliza Keesee had married Walter Woldridge. Their daughter, Louise, married Walter Capers. Their daughter, Charlotte Capers, lives in Jackson, Mississippi.

Following their marriage, Sue and John Keesee lived at his plantation, Cypress Plains. Three years later, as a New Year's gift from her husband, she received from him a small blue diary with gold trim. On her first entry on January 5, 1869, she wrote:

This is my New Year's gift, I've had another, a muff, from Sister Annie, but most I prize this, and I dedicate it to the beloved donor, my husband. We will live another year at Cypress Plains—please God our lives are spared. There will probably be quite a change in our household. Sister Annie will go to Bro. George's to keep house for him. Bro. M. (Morris) has recovered health and is seeking employment.

By 1873, they were living at Beechland, Sue's former home. The reason for moving back there was not made clear in any of Sue's papers. I know nothing of the house at Cypress Plains, but Beechland was a beautiful white two-story frame house facing north along the present North Creek Road.

Since the two plantations were adjoining, it would indicate that the move occurred because the Johnson home was more commodious. And it was here that Susan raised her three children. John William Keesee, Jr., or, Jackie, as he was called, was born August 3, 1868. He married Hattie Scaife, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ferdinand Scaife. They were the parents of Mrs. Martha Sylar and Ferd Keesee of West Helena, Dr. John Keesee of Fayetteville, and Mrs. Susan McCartney of Paragould, namesake of the

subject of this sketch.

In 1887, when Jackie was in Southwestern Presbyterian College at Clarksville, Tennessee, Dr. Drane wrote to his former son-in-law:

Jack is keeping up very well. He has a chill occasionally but don't seem to mind it much. He joins in the sport on the pond with the boys and girls and they have a lively time every evening.

He mentioned the 12° weather, and that he had filled his ice house with clear sparkling ice.

The Keesees' second child was a daughter, Annie Sue, born on Christmas Day, 1875. In 1894, she married Dr. W. M. Richardson at the home of her parents. They had two children, John W. Richardson, now deceased, and Ann, Mrs. Lewis Cherry of Little Rock.

Mrs. Cherry has many happy memories of her early childhood weekends spent with her grandparents nearby. She fondly recalls that she was rewarded each afternoon after her nap with a small saucer of either peach or pear preserves with thick cream and a piece of delicious cake. Her parents always came over for Sunday dinner and took her home with them. They lived only a short distance east in the fine home they built shortly following their marriage. It also housed Dr. Richardson's office. This is presently the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Turner.

In 1884, Morris Johnson Keesee, the third child, was born. He married Miss Marguerite McKenzie of Lula, Mississippi. They had three children, Morris J. Keesee, Jr., Thomas McKenzie Keesee, and Lillian, now Mrs. Ed Fant of Coahoma, Mississippi.

Captain Keesee served four years in the Confederate Army. He was with General Forrest's command in Tennessee and Mississippi. He was transferred to the West Mississippi Division and was adjutant of General Dobbins' Brigade, following which

he was made staff officer of General Hindman's staff and served as such with the rank of captain until the end of the war.

In 1889, Captain Keesee served on the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas. In 1896, he was elected to the 31st General Assembly of Arkansas and was reelected in 1898. He received his education at Jackson College in Columbia, Tennessee.

Mrs. Cherry came from Little Rock in 1969 to present several items to the Helena Museum. Among them was a black lace jacket which had belonged to Susan Johnson.

Gracing the Cherry home in Little Rock and lending an aura of a proud heritage, are the exquisite old carved rosewood sofas and chairs which belonged to Susan's parents. They were brought downriver from Cincinnati for the Johnson family. One of the chairs is the gentleman's chair and one is the lady's chair. They are upholstered in rosewood brocatelle.

Many of us remember the house known as Beechland as the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Weedman. About fifteen years ago Mrs. Weedman sold the place and moved to West Helena. Soon after, the once fine home met its demise, being torn down because it was not worthy of renovation. It was just about the last of the plantation homes to be found in that community. The Jarman home outlasted it by about five years, and then it, too, met the same end. The Richardson house is certainly reminiscent of another day, but it is of much later vintage than the antebellum homes.

Susan Reynolds Johnson, friend and neighbor, and young lady in the North Creek Community during the cruel and bitter struggle between the North and South, is buried in the small family cemetery just east of the homesite of Beechland, where she grew to adulthood and lived many years of her life. Her

later years were spent in the home of her daughter, Mrs. Richardson, 928 Columbia Street, in Helena. But she was carried back to lie beside her husband and other family members, not far from other similar plots where her friends and neighbors were buried.

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MRS. SWON'S PIN



## BARTON

by

Gene Bradford

This article is a composite of the cherished memories of earlier residents of Barton. I feel especially indebted to Mr. E. G. (Ned) Green, Mrs. W. R. Bloesch, and Mrs. Livia Melio for their reminiscences. No history could be adequate without including the churches and school. Their history will be recorded in a later issue of the Quarterly.

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Barton first received its name in 1872, but long before this there was a group of houses forming a community in a half mile radius of its present site. When the railroad from Helena to Clarendon was opened, a depot was built on land donated by Bart W. Green, Sr., and named Barton. None of the family records indicate that Mr. Green's name was Barton rather than Bart, but county records of the period when he was sheriff show his name to have been Barton. The first post office was established in 1873, with Nathaniel A. Longley as postmaster. Reese F. Hughes is also listed as postmaster in 1873.

In 1847, Bart W. Green, Sr. first came to the area that was to be known as Barton. He had come earlier to Phillips County to work with an uncle, John Ford, who had a grocery store in Helena. Mr. Green was sheriff of Phillips County during the Civil War, and he lived at Barton at this time. The Green home, a one story frame building, stood about a quarter mile south of the present site of Barton. The house faced south, and the slave quarters were to the west in a small valley. At some

time Mr. Green built a cotton gin, but it is thought he ginned only his own cotton. The north-south road (now Highway 85) and two east-west roads (one the old Little Rock Road) junctioned at the Green homesite and their big woodland pasture just to the south of the house was a popular campground for families traveling to Helena. The junction was known as Green Corner. The family cemetery where Mr. and Mrs. Green were later to be buried was just east of the house. It can still be found in an overgrown clump of trees. There are several graves other than those of the Green family. One is that of Dr. Amos Hughes, mentioned in the Edmondson Diary.

Alexander Graves came to Phillips County in 1840 and died in 1863. His daughter, Sue, married Bart Green, Sr. His son, Nathaniel Lee Graves, took over the family plantation, which consisted of 2560 acres, 50 black families, and 8 white families of laborers. Mr. Graves also operated a gin. The Graves home was just north of Barton on the hill across from the present Barton School. Nat Graves' son, Lex, and Bart Green, Jr. married sisters, Julia and Annie Williams. Lex built a large two story house on what is now known as the Little Rock Road.

James A. Bush came to Phillips County before the Civil War. During the war his property was burned or otherwise destroyed. After the war he became a farmer and was soon quite wealthy. Wheatley Cook lives where the Bush home stood. At that time Mr. Bush was always known as being from Latour.

The James and Frances Brooks Cook family came to this area in 1856. Their plantation extended east and north from the present site of Walnut Corner. The home was a two story frame house located on the north side of the road where the Ernest Kummer home now stands. The Kummer house is the bottom floor of the Cook home. Sometime in the early

1900s after the Cook family sold the place, the house was remodeled and the top floor removed. The early road to Helena ran near the center of what is now Sunset Cemetery and back of the Raymond Kummer home. About a half mile east of here it turned north, going by the Bush home, then continued east toward Helena. In front of the Cook home, as mentioned by Sue Cook in her diary, there was a large wooded pasture.

Amos Green Jarman came to the area in 1859. He first purchased 320 acres of land but soon added to this. His farm was just north of Walnut Corner on the west side of the road. An old time resident of the community says that his home had one of the most beautiful circular staircases she has ever seen.

Columbus Shackelford Belsha came to eastern Arkansas in 1866. He lived at North Creek and Latour before coming to Barton. He is listed as Barton postmaster in 1876. His grandson, James V. Belsha of Phoenix, Arizona, has an old bill head made to Coleman Johnson, showing that in 1878 C. S. Belsha and A. G. Jarman, Sr. were partners in the ownership of a local store. Mr. Belsha had two children, Benjamin L. and Ruth Dora. In 1897, Dora married John W. Terry.

Joining the Jarman plantation on the north was the place of George Reynolds Johnson. Mr. Johnson came to Phillips County before 1860 and built a home known as Beechland. His daughter, Susan Reynolds Johnson, married John W. Keesee who had the plantation just to the west. Mr. Keesee had also come to Phillips County about 1860. Around 1870, John and Sue Keesee moved to the Johnson home, Beechland. This soon became known as the Keesee home.

In 1881, Colonel R. B. Richardson came to Phillips County with his two sons, W. M. and Bryant, and settled about two miles north of Barton

across the road from the Keesee home. In 1894, W. M. Richardson, a doctor, married Annie Sue Keesee, daughter of Susan and John Keesee. Colonel Richardson died in 1897 at the home of Dr. Richardson. His son, Bryant, had died several years earlier. Both Dr. Richardson and Mr. Keesee considered Latour as their home address.

In 1895, Mrs. Rosie Ermer became Dr. Richardson's housekeeper. She and her husband, Henry, and new baby, Josie, lived in a small house on the plantation. Somehow the Ermer baby fell or was dropped on a rock floor, and for three months had to be carried on a pillow to protect her crushed skull. The Ermers soon left, and after living in several other communities, moved in 1905 into the Lex Graves house on the old Little Rock Road. Here Josie started to school. She rode to school with her teacher, Miss Asama Bautts, who lived several miles farther down the road and drove a horse and buggy to Barton. Josie felt she was the most fortunate child in school. She not only came with her teacher, but also shared her teacher's secret. No one else knew that while one horse pulled the buggy, they "were really driving a pair." Josie moved before the mare foaled and never saw the colt.

In 1919, Josie married Alex Clements who became one of the most influential, respected, and loved men in the Barton community. Josephine Turner, their oldest child, and her husband, Roy, now own and live in the Richardson home, the home where, as a baby, her mother nearly lost her life.

Mr. Win Cook remembers that in the early 1880s Mr. Barrington had a long store and lived in the back of it with his wife, son Percy, two daughters, Patty and Annie May, and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Britton. The three children and Mr. Cook attended school at Barton at the same time. In the 1890s, Mr. Barrington closed the store and moved to Poplar Grove. Patty married Bob Brickel. The store was

torn down and a nice cottage built for Brother T. F. Patterson, who was newly married. He preached at Barton on the first Sundays of each month.

Joe Graves married a Mrs. Renfro who had two children, Sam and Fanny. They also went to school with Mr. Cook. About 1896, Sam, now married, tore down the lovely old log house of the Graves family and built a beautiful white cottage. He also tore down the big barn.

A little creek ran through the Cook pasture (now Leifer's pasture and Sunset Cemetery), and after a large rain would be about 100 feet wide. One of its bends was the first swimming hole for James and Winbourne Cook, and a cousin, Henry Winbourne, who lived with them.

In the early 1870s, Bart Green gave land for the Barton School. This school was a one room building on the south side of the railroad tracks, on a hill just east of the present highway. Bart Green's son, Bart Green, Jr., married Miss Annie Williams. The Williams home was some five miles to the west. The Greens had two children, Nat and E. G. (Ned) Green. Ned Green was a civil engineer here for many years, and now serves as a consultant. He lives in West Helena.

Bart Green, Jr. died when Ned was very young. Mrs. Green later married Roland Cook, son of James and Frances Cook, and they lived in the Cook home for a short time. Mrs. Cook, the former Mrs. Green, died in childbirth in 1901. The child, Annie, survived (now Mrs. Frank McGinnis of West Helena). In 1906, Roland Cook married Miss Lizzie Warfield, and with his children (he had eight children by his first marriage to Lucy Frances Winbourne, five living to adulthood) moved to the Williford home near North Creek.

Ned was about nine at the time he lived in the Cook home. Going to school with him then and

earlier were the children of George W. (Bud) Waters, and George and Louise Patterson. Miss Carrie Murphy was one of his teachers. She and her brother, George, lived down the road to the west of the Green home. Miss Murphy later went to teach in a private school in Hot Springs. George Murphy was in the area as late as the Depression days. Another teacher was Miss Frances Cook, daughter of Roland Cook and step sister of Ned Green. (Her brother, Winbourne Cook, has written several articles for the Quarterly.) Miss Cook died in 1964, aged 97, and was the last person to be buried in the Cook family cemetery.

In 1890, Barton had a population of fifty, a saw mill and two or three stores. There was a Baptist Church but no Sunday School. Families remembered by Ned Green as living in the area in the late 1890s are several.

The Reverend Thomas Frazier Patterson lived in Barton in the first house as one leaves the highway to enter the community. This house was later occupied for many years by first the Joe Eddins family, and then the Carr Turner family. James S. Belsha had a store near the depot with living quarters in the rear. This store burned in 1958. The Tom Wallace family lived near where the Barton School now stands. Mr. Wallace donated to the community the land for their church. The Wallace and Belsha families were related. The Nat Graves home was just across the road from the Wallaces, near where the Gibson home now stands. This house was occupied by Dr. I. N. Johnson.

Dr. Johnson, a tall, handsome bachelor, came to Barton sometime shortly before 1895. He came from Mississippi where, at the death of his parents, he sold the family store to finance his medical education. In 1903, he received his Arkansas license. Signing it were Doctors Shinault, President, Jones, Lockwood, Ramsey, and Guthery. Then, as now, there was a great need for doctors in the rural areas.

Two miles to the north, Dr. Richardson was still practicing. On the very night that Dr. Richardson's daughter was born, one of his patients, Mrs. Katie Porter of North Creek, recently widowed, also gave birth to a daughter. As it was impossible for Dr. Richardson to be in attendance, he sent Dr. Russwurm of Latour. Dr. Russwurm delivered the child, and then turned Mrs. Porter and child over to the care of young Dr. Johnson. The baby, Johnnie, was constantly sick and had every childhood disease known. Dr. Johnson always said Mrs. Porter could never have raised Johnnie without him to keep her going. In June, 1897, he married Mrs. Porter and they lived at Barton some eight or ten more years, before moving to Helena. Johnnie is now Mrs. Johnnie Schatz of Helena.

Mr. Green has a 1901 land ownership map which shows the following families to have been land owners near Barton at that time. To the east were Bud Waters and H. L. Nelson; to the north were W. M. Richardson and J. W. Keesee. Latour was to the northeast and North Creek was to the northwest, but to the south and west there was no center, and these families were considered as part of Barton. They included Sam Jarman, H. B. Stirling, N. T. Clements, John Bautts, Charles Williams, Leonard Schwantz, C. W. Waters, and Peter Mengoz. The Cooks, Greens, Jarmans, Bushes, and Johnsons had holdings in the immediate area.

Shortly after 1901, John J. Hornor bought large holdings from the Cooks and Jarmans and perhaps others, thinking this would one day be the center of activity in Phillips County. He had previously bought 80 acres from the Green family just south of the Barton Depot, and here he began construction of the Premier Cotton Mill. R. C. Burke, onetime sheriff of Phillips County, represented the company during the construction of the mill.

Bricks for the building were made there on

the yard. Ned Green, just a child, drove the mule at the pit as it went round and round to mix the ingredients. The bricks were hand molded, put in the kiln, and fired, all at the construction site. At this same time, Mr. Hornor had about thirty houses built on the north side of the railroad. There were three parallel streets of dwellings. On the first street were six-room houses, on the second street were four-room houses and one three-room house, and on the back or west street three and four-room houses alternated. After the mill opened, housing was very scarce, and two, three, and even four families often lived in one house.

Operation began in 1902. Albert Bloesch came then as bookkeeper. He and his family lived in the Cook home. His son, W. R. Bloesch, now lived in West Acres, West Helena. J. B. West was the mill superintendent. He lived in a large two-story house on the mill plot of ground. He later bought a house on the north side of Barton. Fletcher Cox was mill supervisor. He and his family lived in Barton.

Local labor did not prove satisfactory and, in 1903, the Swiss came to work in the mill. An independent type people, they wanted to own land, and did not like indoor work. In 1905, Mr. Hornor sold land to them in 40 acre plots. Among those buying land were Fred Leifer, Sam Von Kanel, Fred Kummer, Gilbert Von Kanel, and Oscar Hazelman. (See accompanying article entitled "Swiss Settlers at Hicks and Barton" in this Quarterly.)

In the summer of 1905, fifty Italians arrived at Barton to work in the Premier Cotton Mill. After three months on the ocean, they had landed in New York, then to Memphis, down the Mississippi side on the Illinois Central, and across the river at Helena on the ferry. Their train pulled into Helena at 9 A. M. and at 3 P. M. they left for Barton. At Barton they were met by Louis Berard who acted as

interpreter, as not one of the Italians spoke English. Mr. Berard, who was also postmaster, spoke only French, but they could communicate in a small way. Italy was an old country, long farmed, and all the woodlands around Barton seemed strange, even sinister, to the new citizens. But the most frightening thing was the black people. At sundown, everyone went inside and locked the doors, and no one ventured out until morning.

As they arrived with few belongings, Major Horner stood for what furniture they purchased. Staples were bought at the local store operated by William Gibson. (Mr. Gibson had served as postmaster in 1903, followed by Ernest Reece, 1904, and Louis E. Berard, 1904.) Mr. Gibson's store was across the road from the depot.

Of the original fifty and others who followed, only Mrs. Livia Manoi Melio still lives in Phillips County. She came as a girl of 17 with her 24 year old brother. They were chaperoned by the mother of a family of nine. They all lived together and as many as were old enough worked in the mill. At this time, they were making twine, and Livia guided the many smaller strings that were twisted into the heavy twine.

On weekends everyone went into the surrounding woods to bring in fuel. Since no one had a mule or wagon, wood was strapped into bundles and carried in on the shoulder just as in the old country. In the center of Barton was a pitcher pump. Here all families came for water. They also brought their laundry, and washing was done around the pump.

One experience Mrs. Melio will always remember happened during her first year at Barton. She and her sister, who had just joined the group, were sent to one of the Swiss homes to procure eggs. All the way they repeated the word 'eggs,' 'eggs.' When they arrived at the house, some men were playing cards in front of the house under a tree. She

feels the men said, "What do you want?" or, "How are you?", or some similar greeting, but it caused both to forget the word 'eggs.' They stood there openmouthed a short while, but could never recall the word 'eggs.'

The cotton mill closed in 1909, and the building stood empty until it was dismantled in the 'teens. The mill machinery was sent north and later the bricks were used to build a building in West Helena, now known as Bobbie Brooks. Only the water tank remains to remind Barton of its industrial past. During the time the building stood idle, the upper floor was used for dances. People from miles around attended, with attendance estimated at several hundred. Bands were imported from Memphis for these events, which were a highlight as well as a rare treat for this small community.

In 1912, George R. Mills, timberman, came to Barton. (His daughter is the present Mrs. W. R. Bloesch of West Helena.) He had a large barn just north of the tracks and across the street from the old Belsha Store. For six years he kept his stock and stored his feed in the barn. The store across the street was now operated by D. T. Gwin and W. T. (Bill) Gwin.

The Arkansas Midland (known as the Middling) Depot was across the street just south of the store. The Midland track crossed the Memphis, Helena, and Louisiana (M H & L) tracks about a quarter mile east of Barton. The section foreman was Columbus Mahan, but he was soon replaced by W. S. Anderson (father of Sam, Joe Lee, Mrs. Harvey Gray, and the late Mrs. John Franklin). At the Barton crossing was a large water tank where all trains stopped to take on water. Bill Southard was the pumper. He later moved to Lexa, but rode a hand pump car down the tracks to Barton. Mr. Southard, known as Uncle Bill, felt very possessive of the tracks and saw they were kept in excellent condition. Many times Lexa boys were chased away from

playing on the tracks.

Though Dr. Johnson and Dr. Richardson both had moved to Helena by this time, Barton still had a doctor. Dr. Nat Evans lived in a small house on the east side of the present highway. He received his education at Tulane and was a classmate of Dr. Campbell of North Creek. None of his five children lives in the county. After several years of poor health, Dr. Evans died in 1912.

Beside Dr. Evans' house was a blacksmith shop and a store. The store was operated by J. B. Weedman and brother-in-law, Bill Wallace. Mr. Weedman lived in the Keesee home. The blacksmith shop was operated by Jess Evans and Fred Gammel.

In the meantime, Henry Williamson bought the D. T. Gwin store and moved his family to Barton. With the help of the community he remodeled the mill's barn into a community house, which was used for club meetings, parties, weddings, and for nine months served the Barton Church while their building was being remodeled. The building was torn down in 1970, but had not been used regularly for many years.

Mr. Williamson soon sold to Watt Moore who moved his family to Barton. About this time George Huggins came as depot agent and served until passenger service was discontinued. (The football field at Barton is named Huggins Field.) Will Gwin of Lexa bought the depot building and moved it to Lexa Junction.

In earlier days the arrival of the evening train was the social event of the day. If at all possible, one met the train to see who had been to town, who had sent for supplies, etc. If there was ice for a family, one could be certain there was an illness in that family. And very important to all, the mail came on the evening train. In the early 1900s Barton depended on the train to bring

supplies, news, and to provide transportation. There were few cars in the area and the train crews were kept busy bringing and taking to Helena. Citizens still gathered to visit as they waited for the evening train. Another social center was the community well. Here families still gathered to exchange news as they drew water for their everyday needs.

In 1912, Will H. Gibson returned to Barton and bought the little store across the highway. For a year he lived at Latour and rode a horse to Barton each day. In 1913, he bought the J. B. West home and moved to Barton. He married Miss Etta Van Hoosen who lived on the Jarman place with her uncle, Judge Larkin. They bought and moved into the Dr. Johnson home, and they lived here until 1935 when Mr. Gibson built just a few hundred yards to the north one of the finest brick homes in the county. He bought Dr. Evans' home, remodeled, and moved his mother and sister, Miss Minnie, to Barton. Later his other two sisters, Mrs. Essie Hawkins and Mrs. Belle Barbee, came to live with Miss Minnie. Mr. Gibson also bought other large tracts of land around Barton.

Mr. Gibson's first clerk was Jack Potter. He lived in the old Jarman home north of Walnut Corner. Fred (Frenchie) Morrell, who lived in the Green home, operated Mr. Gibson's grist mill. Mr. Gibson also owned a saw mill and steam cotton gin. Later he and I. B. Wolfe converted the gin to electricity. The Post Office was located in Mr. Gibson's store, and he served as postmaster for almost thirty years. In the mid-1920s, he gave ten acres to the Barton-Lexa School District, the present location of the Barton School.

The rerouted Helena road crossed the north-south road about a quarter mile north of Barton. Mr. Gibson (some say Mr. Potter) named this junction Walnut Corner because of an unusually large

tree in the grove of walnut trees which stood there. Here Mr. Gibson built a store and a swimming pool and ferris wheel. The pool, called, Joyland, was the first in Phillips County. Mr. Gibson envisioned a growing community here with paved streets and neat homes. He built five houses here and four more behind the school.

Mr. Gibson died in 1941 before he could complete his plans. His son, Billy, operates the Green Oil Station at Walnut Corner. He had two other children, Claude and Willie Mae, both deceased.

In 1917, Mr. Hornor sold his holdings at Barton to David McDonald and his son-in-law, Joe Eddins. Mr. Eddins looked after the farm and rented the houses. He and his wife, Mary, lived in the Patterson home. The farm is still referred to as the Eddins' place.

J. W. Mitchell moved his family to Barton in 1922. Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Nat Evans (wife of the community doctor) were sisters. Mr. Mitchell managed the Gibson store until the death of Mr. Gibson. Mr. Mitchell then opened his own store in the old store down near the depot. He was appointed postmaster and the Post Office was moved to his store. The store burned about 1958 while being operated by Mrs. L. S. Smith, who also served as postmaster. The Post Office was then moved to Walnut Corner and Mrs. Annie Schaffhauser was appointed postmaster. When she retired, Mrs. Fred Leifer, the present postmaster, was appointed.

Other businesses figured in the history of Barton. A creamery was built about 1920 to buy dairy products from the Swiss dairies. While all the community purchased milk and cream here, there were still immense quantities to be delivered to Helena by truck. There were a shipping shed and potato house built by the farmers in 1935, just west of the depot, of which George Huggins was manager. There was a cannery on the railroad just south of

Mr. Gibson's store. This was owned by Stormy Wilson who bought vegetables from farmers in all the surrounding areas. Farmers were encouraged to cease depending wholly on cotton and to raise spinach, beans, peas, etc. The cannery employed about twenty-five people. It and the Gibson store and gin burned in 1946.

Barton was never incorporated and there are no records to establish its beginning. So without fanfare or celebration she slipped past her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1872. All the lovely old plantation homes are gone, but descendants of the earliest families of Barton are still to be found in Phillips County.

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FROM THE HELENA WORLD, January 2, 1895. As we go to press we learn, with keen regret, of the death of Bart W. Green of Barton, which occurred at his home this noon. Mr. Green was taken sick on Sunday with a chill followed by congestion of the brain. He was desperately sick from the very first, his malady defying the skill of medical experts. Mr. Green was one of the best farmers in Phillips County and one of the best men to be found anywhere. He was popular with all classes of people and his death brings a sense of personal loss to many hearts. He leaves a wife and several children to mourn his untimely taking off. The funeral will take place tomorrow afternoon from the family residence near Barton and all that is mortal of our late friend will be laid to rest beside his father and mother in the family burying ground.

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FROM THE HELENA WORLD, January 16, 1895. At his home near Barton, this morning at 6 o'clock, Col. Amos G. Jarman succumbed to an acute attack of pneumonia. Col. Jarman was one of the best known men in Eastern Arkansas and his death even at his

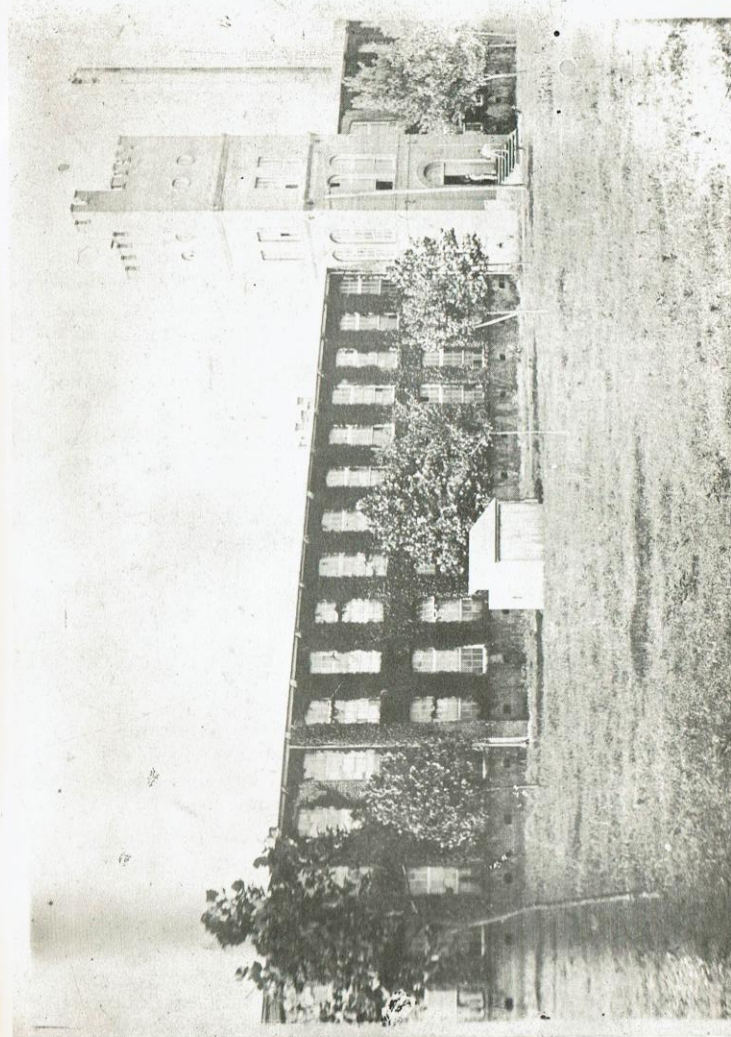
advanced age, will be a severe loss to the community in which he lived and sincerely regretted wherever it is known. Only last week he wrote to the World saying he would gladly contribute 25 bushels of corn to the Nebraska sufferers and urge those of his neighbors, whom he might see to do the same thing, adding that he was sick and not able to get out and canvass the matter in the neighborhood. He went to bed that day and grew steadily worse until this morning he died. Col. Jarman was one of the most successful farmers in this state, was a consistent member of the Baptist Church, a Royal Arch Mason, a good neighbor, husband, father and friend. He will be brought to Helena for interment, his funeral being fixed for 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon from the Baptist Church.

(Note: Others leaving corn at the Barton Depot to be delivered to the Nebraska sufferers were James A. Bush, Claiborne Green, and Frank Figures.)

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FROM THE HELENA WORLD, June 16, 1897. The Williford residence at North Creek was aglow at 8:30 o'clock on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. and the sweet strains of the piano had just died away when our esteemed fellow citizen, Dr. I. N. Johnson, and Mrs. Katie Porter, the lovely daughter of Mr. Williford, came quietly into the parlor and were united in marriage by Elder Patterson. It was an ideal affair.

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THREAD MILL AT BARTON

...W. R. Bloesch

## THE PAT CLEBURNE

Contributed by

T. E. Tappan, Jr.

From the Evening Appeal, May 12, 1927. By J. H. Curtis. Way back in the early seventies, the steamer Pat Cleburne was the queen of the Arkansas River. She was a side-wheel boat with a delightfully furnished cabin. She was operated several years between Memphis, Pine Bluff and Little Rock. Many of the older generations recall this packet as probably the finest that ever ran the Arkansas.

The Cleburne was built at Cincinnati in 1870 and for a time ran the White River. She had four boilers, each 24 feet in length by 27 inches in diameter. Her high pressure engine had 20-inch cylinders that gave her a 7-foot stroke. She was fast and named for General Pat Cleburne of the Confederate Army, who was killed at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, and whose body is buried at Helena, which town was his home.

After the famous steamer ran the Arkansas and White Rivers she was sold to the Evansville & Paducah Packet Company and operated between Paducah, Kentucky and Evansville, Indiana, making three trips weekly.

Fate decreed a tragic end for this boat. On the night of May 12, 1876, she was being landed at Shawneetown, Illinois, when two of her boilers exploded with terrific force, setting fire to her.

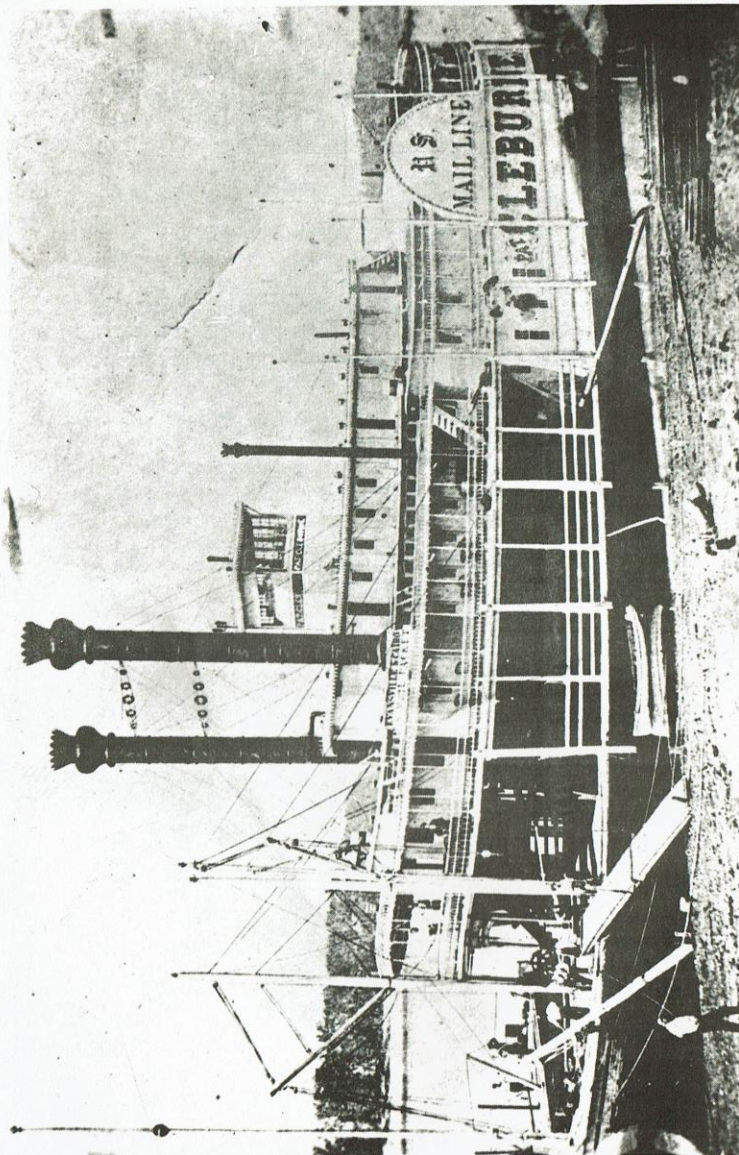
Captain D. G. Fowler, in command; First Engineer Walter McElhinney, Second Mate Charles Cotton and Stoker Frank Redden were members of the crew who lost their lives saving passengers.

While 16 of the passengers perished, many more would have met death had not the steamer Arkansas Belle gone to the rescue. This packet was at the bank near Shawneetown when the Cleburne's boilers exploded. Her crew set her machinery in motion and soon many men and women were taken on board.

There was a great reception accorded the Cleburne when she arrived at Memphis from the marine ways at Cincinnati, where she was built. In those days packets on the river front at Memphis were so thick they landed head on into the wharf, freight being unloaded from one boat across several others before it finally reached the shore.

When the Cleburne put her nose around the old bend in the Mississippi that ran by Mound City, Arkansas, whistles were blown from 30 steamers in port and the noisy welcome continued until the new packet came into her wharf. She was immediately loaded for the White River, leaving next day, and was given a greeting at all landings and towns on the river as far as Newport, Arkansas.

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