

PHILLIPS COUNTY  
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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#### CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

Following are letters and documents collected by Jan Sarna of North Little Rock, a member of the Phillips County Historical Society. At the end are extracts from two letters that he wrote to Tom Tappan, commenting on these items. The letters of Joseph R. Edwards, 12th Michigan Infantry Regiment, are used here by permission of his niece, Mrs. Guy Thomas, Sr. of Dowagiac, Michigan.

Camp 12th Mich Infantry  
Three miles below Helena, Arkansas July 31st 1863

Dear Sister Mary

Sitting at the desk under a little Shelter Tent on the Banks of the Mississippi, I sit down to night to write a few lines home. I suppose you are always willing to hear from the absent, especially those engaged in the performance of the soldiers duty. It seems quite like old times to get back with the boys, and resume the duties of the Soldier--and so far I have enjoyed very good health & have performed considerable labor. Our orderly Robert S. M. Fox--has gone home on Furlough & I have to act Orderly of the company during his absence.

Since I left home I have written two letters to Sallie. You have received them no doubt ere this. I was at Snider Bluffs Miss. then--12 miles from Vicksburg. On last Tuesday the 28th ult we got marching orders--we packed up--struck tents &c and in company of the Eleventh Ohio Battery loaded on the large & beautiful Steam Boat "Luminary," & at 2 o'clock left the landing on the Yazoo at Snider Bluffs & came down the Yazoo & up the Mississippi and landed at this place on Thursday morning.

We unloaded from the Boat & marched down to this place--and according to the Bible we are likened unto foolish men who built his house upon the sand, and the rains fell & the floods came & swept that

house away--and great was the fall of it: whether the literal signification of this Parable of Christ's will be our fate or not remains to be seen by a sudden rise of the Miss. But one thing certain the elements will have to do it if its done, for Gen. Sterling Price can never accomplish it.

We are encamped between the river & the first Levee, right on a bed of sand, thickly covered with kind of a bur weed. The sand is very deep & has all been deposited by the freshets in the river. When the river is flooded the ground we are encamped on is covered with several feet of water, but the River is very low at present. The climate is a great deal cooler here than down on the Yazoo & God knows its hot enough here.

I am very glad we left Mississippi for its very unhealthy there, and our Boys began to be taken sick quite fast. But as a general thing the Reg is very healthy--only four or five in our company are sick. William Lingrell is very sick--but if they take good care of him he will recover. John Russey has been quite sick & is getting better fast. Wilson Clyborne & the two Soubs boys are well. I see a great change in the Reg since I left last Oct--everything moves off smoothly & the Reg is under the best of discipline. The medical and Quartermaster departments are well managed. The sick are well cared for, & the boys get their full amount of rations & get it regularly. Lt Col Dwight May is a real Gentleman. I liked the man first rate when I first seen him, and I find he is liked first rate by all in the Reg. Col Graves is acting Brigadier General, has command of our Brigade--he is well liked by all--the boys have full confidence in his ability, & they say he is the man to lead them in battle.

After we marched up here I & two other boys impressed a little "contraband" with his ox team--went two miles to the woods--got stakes, crotches, & brush to put up our tents, & make us a bunk to sleep on. And you would have laughed to have seen the whole performance--& especially to have seen the sweat roll



off me. On our way back one of the boys found two mellons in the weeds, that had volunteered there to grow, but we was not long mustering them out of the service, for we was extremely thirsty. After I got back to camp, Lt Abbott & I put up our Tent-made a bed of Pole & brush-got our little grub, and then came orders to make out the Pay Rolls & have them signed by the boys.

So we were up a good share of the night writing, and today the Boys drew two months Pay. They are now paid off up to the 1st of July. I did not get any pay for I got mine in Detroit. Uncle Sam is paying his boys off well. Very few of the boys have much back Pay. So copperheads need not lie about the troops never getting Pay. I have been writing all day & been up town & back tonight so I feel very tired. At the close of each month we have all our monthly returns & reports &c to make out & it makes good deal labor, but we will have a resting spell now.

The Rheumatism plagues me, considerable my shoulders. Hip & feet pain me considerable at night, but I think this warm climate will agree with me very well. There is about 20,000 troops here now-our whole Division is here. We dont expect to remain here but a few days. I think we will go to Tennessee.

I saw Gen Prentiss up town today had quite a little chat with him. Most of town is situated between the Levee & bluffs & is about the size of Dowagiac. It only has a few good buildings. Its full of little shanties, and filled with army store keepers & sutlers. The citizens come in & trade when the lines are open. There are some very good stores & well filled with goods.

Its kind a pleasant here on the Banks of the River. Boats are passing up & down the river occasionally every day. The strip of land between the River & Levee is about 20 rods wide, & is covered with tents all the way down to Helena, and walking down along the Levee it presents a fine appearance. The country is flat & level for fifty miles back from

the River & if it was not for the Levee the whole county would be over flooded, when it comes a freshet.

But I must hasten. I suppos the World moves along the same as usual in old Michigan, that is surely God's country. After we travel through the South that has been occuppied by the army, a person can appreciate the Happy & quiet north. How does the people generally feel about the war? Dont they think the Rebellion is getting pretty well played out. By the Papers I see that Old Morgan has at last got caught, with nearly his whole force. But I have not had a paper for nearly a week & I feel kind a lost without the news. When we are not moving, we get papers very regular.

It does a person good to hear the Soldiers talk-there is no discount on them. I have not heard a copperhead Hiss since I left Mich. It would not be healthy for one in the army. The soldiers lay Politics aside, & devote their attention to saving the Government. They would all willingly lay down their arms & return home. But they all say they are willing to serve the Government as long as there is a "Gray Back" to fight. You often hear it expressed in the north "We cant never whip the South." Such men are laughed & sneered at in the army.

The idea of a Ragged confederate mob conquering the Grand Federal army, with all our extensive resources-why its preposterous. A person that will talk so must be either a Knave or a fool-the army cant see it. When I was down town yesterday I seen some Paroled & wounded Rebel Soldiers from Port Hudson-they looked very hard-dirty & ragged. I ask them their opinion of the war. "They said youens are after us pretty right, but weens will come out all right in the end." Their knowledge of our operations must have been very limited or else they would have sung a different tune. They lived out in Arkansas.

But I guess I have written about enough. Do you ever hear from Ike? I have not heard from him for over a month-have written to him. I think its most time I had received a letter. Have not had one



since I left home. Mary you must write immediately on the receipt of this. Has Sallie answered them other letters. If she has not wo unto her? Give my respects to all inquiring friends & my love to all the folks. Has Sallie got her school yet. Hoping to hear from you soon I will close. From your affectionate Brother.

Joseph R. Edwards  
Co. "A" 12th Reg. Mich. Vol. Inftry

To Miss Mary R. Edwards  
Sumnerville Cass Co. Mich.

P. S. Direct to Co "A" 12th Reg. Mich. Inftry  
1st Brigade. 3rd Division. 16th Army Corps.  
Army of West Tenn. Helena Ark.

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In Eno Hospital, Helena  
Arkansas. August 20th /63

Dear Sister Mary

Your letter of August 9th came duly to hand yesterday and its needless to tell you that the contents were eagerly ravished. It was very acceptable indeed for I was lying on my straw-cot-bed passing the time away by thinking, & my own thoughts seemed to be the only companion I had. When all at once Lieut John Crowfoot who has charge of the convalescents here of our Regt. stepped in & gave three or four letters. They entirely broke the sameness & monotony of Eno Hospital and it serves to relieve our mind very very much to get letters, and it does my heart good to see the boys rush for a letter when the mail comes in.

You will no doubt get Sallie's letter before this reaches you, & so you will know I have been sick-I have had the intermitent Fever, but my fever is broke & I am getting along finely. Our Hospital is a fine dwelling house. Its built in real Southren Style & is large & commodious for the number in it. The cool breezes pass through the wide hall & airs all the

rooms. Our food is very good. Small quantity of Fresh Beef-& Soup. Potatoes Beans Rice. Tea & coffee, & Bread. Have plenty care & good Physician, and the boys are getting along finely, although some are very sick yet.

We have lost Three men this week in our Hospital here Two of them belonging to our Regiment-& one to the 61st Ill. When our Division left here last week great many of the men were sick. It took three days to move them down to Helena, & every building & available place was filled with sick. For two or three days they got but little care or medical treatment. But the Surgeons have got them all arranged so they can be cared for. Got a convalescent camp established & those not seriously ill are sent there. 70 of our Reg are in the convalescent camp, & the sick ones in the Hospitals. Good many of the convalescents are getting about well, but the Doctors wont let any of them leave until they get stout & entirely well.

The only way we can join our Reg is to go by Boat up White River to "Des-Arc" where our Reg will remain a short time. Little Rock is on the Arkansas, & its reported that General Price is fortifying between the White River & Little Rock, but his force is badly demoralised. They are poorly clad, short of food, & our troops dont anticipate very much opposition in reaching their destination.

The country is low & flat all through the White River region-some very rich country abounding in large plantations & a great many swamps & cane brakes. All along the Miss you can see large villages of Negro huts arranged nicely in rows, the chimneys built outside, & the house white washed. Some are log, and some are very nice frame buildings. I have counted as high as 60 on one plantation and in a great many instances the buildings are burned-nothing remaining but the chimneys-lasting monuments of treason. Nearly all the large & rich plantations along the Miss are vacated, some few being occupied by Negroes. This Miss really is a very rich productive soil, & before the war this region produce a great deal of



cotton. There is a large cotton field just at the outskirts of the city of about 500 acres. It belongs to Uncle Sam- & is tended by contrabands.

But I must hasten. Well Mary I am feeling quite well. Have quit taking medicine, & as soon as I gain a little more strength I will be fit for duty. Last night our Doctor was out to the Picket lines, & was riding along when a body of guerrillas fired on him- but he escaped & got in unharmed. They numbered about 1300 & drove in our Pickets. They are prowling through the country all the time.

Tomorrow I suppose camp meeting commences. I would like to be home for just one week. But when I come home again I want to come to stay & be free from all obligations to the Government. I am glad Ike has been promoted. I hope to hear from him again. That was a sad affair of Mrs. Lyons but its too late to be helped now. When Sallie comes home have her to write immediately. Did she hear from her school. How does Father get along? Give my love to all the Family, & my Respects to all my friends. Write soon & oblige your affectionate Brother.

Joseph R. Edwards

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Doc. 40 in RECORD OF THE REBELLION, Vol. 8, by Frank Moore, Pp. 324-326.

#### RESTORATION OF ARKANSAS

Proceedings of a Public Meeting in Helena, January 2, 1864.

In pursuance of public notice, a large and enthusiastic meeting of the citizens of Phillips County was held at the Episcopal church, in the city of Helena, on the second instant, for the purpose of electing delegates to a convention to be held at Little Rock on the eighth instant, and also to take such steps as might be deemed advisable to restore the

State of Arkansas to its former peace and prosperity in the Federal Union.

Brigadier-General Buford, having been invited to attend and preside over its deliberations, appeared at twelve M., and called the meeting to order. General Buford, in stating the object of the assembly, spoke as follows:

#### GENERAL BUFORD'S SPEECH (in part)

My Fellow-Citizens of the State of Arkansas:

I have learned from your own words that the majority of your legal voters never authorized the act of secession, which has destroyed your civil rights and overwhelmed you with the horrors of civil war. The unholy act having been perpetrated by ambitious and bad men, who usurped the authority of the State and made war against the United States, has placed you in an unnatural and an unfortunate position. From the enjoyment of a free government, you were forced to live under the iron rule of a satrap of unlawful and usurped power. Instead of the mild dominion of just laws, you have felt the iron heel, and been subject to the ungoverned passions of a General Hindman!

I am here with you to devise measures for the restoration of the Union, I am here to help to pour oil upon the troubled waters. I am here to maintain discipline among troops, to protect your rights, and to govern and conduct according to the immutable laws of justice and truth.

I am here to represent a magnanimous Government-not a party. The door is wide open for the restoration of your civil rights. No man who has not committed an overt act of hostility has claimed the protection of the Government in vain.

The Constitution as it was has been violated, and the country disrupted, by treasonable hands. We have met together today to pick up its broken fragments, and happy shall we be if we are again capable of cementing together its most valuable parts.



Happy, if under its reconstruction we can establish freedom, truth, and justice. Happy, if we can restore peace and concord.

An assembly of delegates from all portions of the State has been called to meet at Little Rock on the eight day of January. It is proposed that this community be represented at that meeting, and you have been called together to deliberate and to elect delegates.

The eighth day of January awakens recollections that are dear to every American heart. May it again be made illustrious by the triumphs of war.

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The meeting was organized by the election of H. P. Coolidge and Lieutenant S. Baird, Secretaries.

On motion of Colonel Moore, it was ordered that a committee of five be appointed to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of the meeting. And on the nomination of J. M. Hanks, Esq., Colonel W. F. Moore, Judge Sebastian, Major Jackson, J. C. O. Smith, and Arthur Thompson were elected such committee.

At his own request, Judge Sebastian was excused from serving on the committee, and W. L. Otey was elected to fill his place.

While the Committee were in consultation, the Chair invited a free and open expression of opinion from the citizens present, whereupon R. P. Sutton, Esq., H. P. Coolidge, J. F. Moore, and Colonel Noble were severally called upon, and entertained the audience with brief and pertinent remarks.

Mr. Hanks, from the Committee, reported a series of resolutions, as did also Major Jackson.

On motion of J. A. Butler, it was ordered that a committee of three be appointed to consider and harmonize the resolutions, so that only one set might be presented for the consideration of the meeting. The chair appointed as such committee Messrs.

Butler, Hanks, and Jackson. After a brief consultation the Committee reported the following resolutions:

Whereas, The present condition of our once prosperous and happy State is such as requires the united efforts of all her citizens to effect its amelioration; and

Whereas, An opportunity is now presented to restore her to her former position in our glorious Union, and to put in full and successful operation the civil authority of our State; and

Whereas, A meeting of delegates from all parts of the State has been called to meet at Little Rock on the eight instant, for the purpose of adopting the most proper and suitable measures for effecting the above-named objects; therefore,

Resolved, That we have learned with satisfaction that an opportunity is now presented of regaining our former position in the Union.

Resolved, That four delegates be appointed by this meeting, who shall attend the meeting of delegates to be held at Little Rock on the eighth instant, instructed to confer with their fellow-citizens, who shall then be present, as to the best means necessary to be adopted for putting in full and successful operation the civil machinery of our State, and securing our restoration to all our former rights and position in the Union.

Resolved, that we earnestly desire and request the Hon. W. K. Sebastian to take his seat in the United States Senate as one of the Senators from the State of Arkansas.

Resolved, That the State of Arkansas now is, and was in May, 1861, when the ordinance of secession was passed, a member of the United States of America.

Resolved, That we recognize as valid no power or authority which attempts to sever the political



connection existing between any State and the United States.

The question being upon the adoption of the resolutions, the Rev. J. A. Butler was called out and advocated their adoption in a speech of an hour's duration, replete with patriotic sentiments, humor, sarcasm, and sound and convincing logic. After which the resolutions were adopted unanimously.

On motion of Mr. Morse, Mr. Butler was requested to furnish a copy of his speech for publication, which he kindly consented to do.

Upon the nomination of Colonel Moore, Rev. J.A. Butler, J. M. Hanks, Esq., J. B. Miles, and Hon. Josiah McKiel were elected delegates to the Convention to be held at Little Rock on the eight instant, with power to fill vacancies.

Upon its being suggested that Judge McKiel was in feeble health, and might not be able to attend the Convention, the Chair remarked that he should place a steamboat at the service of the delegates, as he considered the object of the mission of sufficient importance to warrant him in so doing.

A motion was then made and carried that the proceedings of this meeting be published in the Memphis, St. Louis, and Washington papers.

Major Jackson then moved that the thanks of the meeting be tendered to the chairman for the courtesies and impartial manner with which he had presided over its deliberations, and for his kindness and liberality in providing the delegates with the means of transportation to the Convention.

The meeting was eminently patriotic and harmonious, and upon the suggestion of the Chair adjourned with three hearty cheers for the American Union.

N. B. Buford

Brigadier-General Commanding, Chairman

H. P. Coolidge / Secretaries  
Lieutenant S. Baird /

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF FREEDMEN, Henry Sweeney, Capt. 60th U. S. Colored Infantry & Superintendent of Freedmen District of Eastern Arkansas. (From the Department of Arkansas Papers, Miscellaneous Letters and Telegrams Received, 1865-67, National Archives, Washington, D. C.)

Quarterly Report of White Refugees, June 30th, 1865. 3 adult males, 7 adult females, 4 boys over 14 years, 21 boys under 14 years, 5 girls over 14 years, 13 girls under 14 years, Total-10 adults, 43 children.

None of the above number can be classified as they are all sickly and do not come under the head of Nos. 1, 2, or 3 hands. Of the men one is 62 years of age, one is 55 and a cripple: and one 35 years old; they are all sickly, and scarcely able to do any thing. Of the women their ages range from 22 to 65 years, their average age is 40 nearly. All are sickly and scarcely able to do any thing for themselves, one of the women is blind, one an idiot. Three (3) of the women are widows of Rebel soldiers, the others are wives and widows of citizens of the south, one family is from Texas, and one family from Miss. Of the children fifteen (15) of them are Orphans, the eldest of whom is a girl 15 years of age, the ages of the other 14 (14) range from 13 years down to one year, about ten (10) of them are mere infants, boys and girls.

The condition of the Refugees now here is such as renders them almost totally unfit for labor. The efforts that have been made to relieve the Government of their support, has been but slight. The lady (Mrs. Coombs) who has attended to their wants, secured a small tract of land, from Gen'l A. McD. McCook, about three (3) miles from town, which she has been making an effort to cultivate with Refugee labor, but has not succeeded very well, from the fact of there being so much sickness among them. There has never been any Teacher, or regularly organized school, for Refugees. All the teaching has been done by Mrs. Coombs.



In this report, relating to the condition of the white Refugees, I must state that I am indebted to Mrs. Sarah Coombs for all my information. She is a lady who has devoted her whole time and attention to the White Refugees who have sought shelter and protection inside our military lines, at Helena, during our late troubles, and when charitable donations were expended, many a family, poor and famishing, and sickly, may thank Mrs. Coombs for food and Clothing, furnished by her private means. She deserves the everlasting gratitude of hundreds whom she has rescued from suffering and death.

The number of White Refugees, on June 30th, 1865, is the same as on the 1st of June.

Report of Freedmen, Classified: Males, Class 1, 813; Class 2, 264; Class 3, 234; Class 4, 288. Total 1599. Females, Class 1, 1449; Class 2, 273; Class 3, 336, Class 4, 768. Total 1826. Grand total, 3425.

In addition to the above, there are a large number of Freedpeople on plantations, from ten to twenty-five miles in the interior, who were formerly owned by men in the rebel service, and who have never left the plantations. The number given, are those employed on plantations in the vicinity and in Helena.

The majority of the Freedmen, in this District, are well fitted for labor; and the general complaint among northern men growing cotton, in this vicinity, is the scarcity of hands.

The few freedmen who have been able to obtain land, in small quantities, are working with far more satisfaction for wages, or shares. There are numbers who have hired out, that were compelled to do so on account of their not being able to obtain land for themselves, and who were both anxious and able, to cultivate small tracts, of from twenty (20) to fifty (50) acres, if they could have had the land.

The efforts made to find employment for the Freedmen, in this District, has not been an arduous

task, from the fact that labor was scarce. All those who were thrown on the hands of the Sept., temporarily, were employed in cutting wood, which was sold to Steamboats: from the profits arising from such sales the current expenses of the Office were paid, and assistance rendered to those unable to work from age or sickness.

There are three wood yards in operation, at the present time, where all can find a temporary home and employment that enables them to be self supporting, and not a burthen on the Government. Planters can always obtain hands from these wood yards, when they require them, and every facility given for that object.

The demand for labor, in the vicinity, is about equal to the supply, at the present time. The wages of a 1st Class hand (male) is about twenty dollars per month and board; for females, fifteen dollars per month and board. The wages for all other classes is guided by circumstances, as no fixed rate could be adopted, as no person will pay a woman, with six (6) children, as much as one with but one (1) or two (2), although both women would be good 2d Class hands. The rates paid during the past month, for temporary labor, is one dollar per day and board, and I know of one dollar and twenty five cents per day, with board, having been paid. Those rates will stand good for July and August, and probably September. The people get such good wages for daily labor it is difficult to get any of them to make monthly contracts, or a contract for a specific time.

The number that came under Govt. support in June, of Freedpeople, was 390, of whom 34 were in Hosps, 85 Orphans in Asylum, leaving 279 that came under the head of destitute. On the 30th day of June only 23 of the above mentioned 279 remained and for those I purchased rations.

The number of Refugees that came under Govt. support, during the same period, was fifty-four (54)- of this number fifty-four (54) remained on June 30th.



# General Remarks

The condition of the Freedmen, in this District, at the present time, will compare favorably with those in any other section of the country, in every particular, with probably, one exception, and that is morally. The need of a minister of religion is sorely felt, a good earnest man, that will preach sound practical truths, and not spend all his time teaching the people that they should of right, own every foot of the soil, but one who will explain, in plain language, that they can understand, who God is, and the enormity of sin; one who will go among them and teach them to be honest, truthful and industrious; in one word, a practical preacher, and not a theoretical one. With such a man much good can be done, and for the want of one, numbers of them do not know there is such a being as God.

## Statistics of Colored Schools.

### No. of Pupils Enrolled

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	72	70	142
2	57	95	152
3	43	45	88
4	20	39	59
5	36	43	79
Total	228	292	520

### Amt. tuition collected

Sch. #-Dols-Cnts			
1	22	. 65	
2	28	. 95	
3	00	00	
4	24	. 55	
5	16	. 80	
Total	92	. 95	

### Pupils under 6 years

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	6	6	12

### Average daily attendance

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	37	56	93
2	36	61	97
3	43	45	88
4	15	29	44
5	28	31	59
Total	159	222	371

### Pupils over 18 years

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	1	8	9
2	0	8	8
3	1	0	1
4	1	9	10
5	0	3	3
Total	3	28	31

### No. paying full tuition

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	3	7	10

# Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.

2	2	4	6
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	2	1	3
Total	10	11	21

## No. paying fract'l fees

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	21	19	40
2	14	27	41
3	00	00	00
4	4	19	23
5	11	18	29
Total	50	83	133

## No. Alphabet Scholars

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	15	18	33
2	6	8	14
3	9	17	26
4	0	00	00
5	10	11	21
Total	40	54	94

## No. in Geography

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	00	00	00
2	57	95	152
3	2	1	3
4	20	29	49
5	00	00	00
	79	125	204

Names of Teachers who taught during the month of June, 1865, and monthly compensation of each, with name of Society that sent them.

## Names Comp. From what Society Accredited.

Mr. L. Johnson	25.00	NW Freedmen Aid Comm-Chicago
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# Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.

2	4	9	13
3	0	0	00
4	6	7	13
5	2	3	5
Total	15	26	41

## No. admitted free

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	48	44	92
2	39	59	98
3	43	45	88
4	11	13	24
5	23	22	45
	164	183	347

## No. in Arithmetic

Sch. #-Boys-Girls-Tot.			
1	00	00	00
2	57	95	152
3	1	00	1
4	20	29	49
5	36	43	79
	114	167	281



Miss M. A. Carter	25.00	West. Freedmen Aid-Cincinnati.
Miss H. Baldwin	25.00	West. Freedmen Aid-Cincinnati.
Miss L. B. Jenkins	30.00	Ind. Yrly. Meeting Friends
Mrs. M. A. Thomas	30.00	Ind. Yrly. Meeting Friends
Miss M. A. Macy	30.00	Ind. Yrly. Meeting Friends

In addition to the above monthly compensation, all necessary traveling expenses are paid by the Societies.

When I took charge of the Freedmen's affairs in this District, January 24th, 1865, there were but two (2) Schools in operation, numbering 227 pupils, the average daily attendance being 168. The Superintendent of schools left Helena about that time, and I put Mr. L. Johnson in charge of that Dept. Mr. Johnson was sent here by the North Western Freedmen Aid Commission, Chicago, Ills. On my recommendation Col. Eaton appointed him Supt. of Schools for this District, at a salary of \$75.00 per month, to be paid out of the Freedmen's funds coming into my hands.

Since January last the schools have steadily increased, the statistics showing, at the end of- (line missing). The teachers in these schools are deserving of all praise, and the progress made by the scholars, surprising. It is extraordinary to see with what avidity the little ones pursue knowledge, and how rapidly they learn.

The education of these children is decidedly of the first importance to the Government and the Country, and through education we have the only sure means of raising these people above being a burthen on the Government.

The mass of the colored people look with suspicion on every one who can read and write, and fully appreciate their own ignorance in that respect, this alone gives rise to a very great distrust, as they know that in all written documents (such as contracts to labor &c.) they are liable to be swindled, by unprincipled white men.

On the whole their educational interests are in a very satisfactory stage throughout this supervision, but can be increased to double what it is at present.

The schools were closed on June 30th, in consequence of the extremely warm weather, but will be resumed about the 1st of August.

In conclusion, I would respectfully recommend to the consideration of the Bureau, the present Corps (line missing).

Estimate of Rations required for Refugees and Freedmen Dept., for the Month of July, 1865.

Helena, Ark., No. of Rations required, White Refugees--1,500; Freedmen Dept.--3,000. Total--4,500.

The estimate of rations required for Freedmen is for the Orphan Asylum, Freedmen's Hospital, and employees of Dept.

Respectfully Submitted,

Henry Sweeney  
Capt. 60th U. S. C. Inf. &  
Supt. Freedmen, D. E. A.

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LETTERS TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNOR

Helena July 18th 1865

A. Johnson President

Honored Sir-

The importance of the issue involved is my only apology for addressing you this letter.

We have in Arkansas a class of men professing loyalty whose past history proves the contrary-their actions now afford no proof of the sincerity of their present professions. They are finding fault with all that Union men did while they were openly or secretly working for the success of the Southern



Confederacy. They wish to repudiate the present state organization. The true source I believe of their objections is their secret hatred to loyal men, and to all that is truly loyal to the United States government.

They make a lever in their war upon the state government of Section 6th (of the election law of the state a copy of which I send you herewith enclosed). Their argument is that the whole organization is a nullity because Congress has not recognized it; and that the present President yourself has not formally signified his intention to recognize it.

Would you be so kind as to furnish me in answer to this, in a few words your opinions of, and your intentions towards the existing state government in Arkansas. A direct word from you will be more telling than an elaborate circuitous argument made by me.

Hoping you will be able to devote a few minutes of your time to the consideration of, and in answer to this inquiry, most important to loyal Arkansians I subscribe myself

Most respectfully yours

T. M. JACKS

P. S. It is perhaps proper that I should say to you that I was a member elect to the thirty-eighth Congress from the first district of Arkansas.

I believe the present organization, admitting its faults, to be better than any thing that could be gotten up in the state under the present excitement. It is loyal. It is the work of loyal men. I may have too much feeling in the matter. I am not willing to be dictated to--to be ruled by these who strove to rule me as with a rod of iron under Confederate authority. I know them too well.

\*

Helena, Arkansas November 26th 1866  
His Excellency Andrew Johnson  
President of the United States

Thomas C. Hindman, late a Major General in the service of the Confederate States, now an exile, and a wanderer in Mexico, who with his family have undergone great sufferings and privations; now desires to return to the United States, there to pursue the quiet and peaceful avocation of the private citizen. Solely with this desire, he now appeals to the magnanimity and the clemency of the Government, to permit his return, asking only that he be admitted to the terms of the paroled officers of Gen. Lee's army, granted to them by Gen. Grant. He makes the application through a friend of many years standing, likewise an officer of the Confederate Army, whose conduct and behavior, since the surrender, he trusts, will be a guaranty for Gen. Hindman.

Respectfully  
John C. Palmer,  
pr Thomas C. Hindman

\*

Helena, Arkansas, Nov. 26th 1866

Hon. Isaac Murphy

Dear Sir,

The wife and children of Maj. Gen. T. C. Hindman have just returned here, and bring with them a letter to me from Gen. H., that he wishes to return to the United States, and will do so as soon as he can learn that he will not be disturbed by the U. S. Authorities. I pledge myself that he return with good intentions, faithfully to discharge his duties towards the Government. He has suffered terribly during his exile, and has found out that there is no better place than the United States. Will you be kind enough to use your influence in his behalf? I ask it as a personal favor to myself. I do not know if I pursue the proper place; and I have drawn up an application which I enclose to you to forward with your approval, if you will kindly do so. I request you to make the application in such form as to you seems best.



I write by this mail to Judge Watkins, requesting him to confer with you upon the subject.

For the past 16 (or 10?) years Gen. Hindman & myself have been as intimate as brothers, and I feel great solicitude for him. You could confer no greater favor upon me than by interesting yourself in his behalf.

Respectfully  
Your friend  
John C. Palmer

\*

These three letters are from the Andrew Johnson Papers in the Library of Congress.

By Jan Sarna

Helena was one of the early places occupied by the Federals during the Civil War, for several reasons. Its location on the Mississippi, in close proximity to Memphis, St. Louis, and Napoleon, made the town an ideal supply base and regrouping area for troops sent down the river to Vicksburg. Helena also proved an excellent vantage point to guard the Arkansas River mouth, and to provide speedy communication with the North in case the Confederates launched an attack from Arkansas Post. Politically, Helena's role as the Federal state capital lasted for one year, from July, 1862, to July, 1863. General Samuel Curtis had received the state's job as military governor, but that hinged on his arrival in Little Rock. However, cut off in the state, and, unlike Sherman, without a sufficient force to repel a sizeable Confederate attack, chose instead to hurry for Helena and receive reinforcements for a Little Rock expedition.

In the meantime, political pressures on Lincoln forced him to rescind Curtis' commission, giving the job as military governor to former Congressman, General John S. Phelps. From the first, however, he and Curtis quarrelled over many issues,

beginning with the sale of confiscated cotton. Curtis, too, had incurred official ire at freeing slaves soon after his Helena arrival, providing additional political ammunition for Phelps. Finally, in the autumn of 1862, Curtis asked for and received a leave of absence, which later proved to be a transfer, leaving Frederick Steele in command at Helena for a few months.

Phelps' record as military governor, though, was not good. He spent a great deal of time in Missouri, mostly from repeated bouts of illness, leaving his secretary, Amos F. Eno, to do the majority of the paperwork and observation. Phelps did help commission some new regiments at Helena, but his commission as military governor was revoked five days after the battle there, due to Radical pressure in the U. S. Senate. However, as the main Federal base, Helena became the organizational point for pro-Northern refugees and freedmen. The above is only a thumbnail sketch, for there are many letters from Phelps to Lincoln and other officials in the National Archives.

\*

Each document, I think, makes a valuable contribution to eastern Arkansas history, but taken as a whole the papers represent Reconstruction's progress in various fields in that area. Edwards had pointed out that loyalism was in evidence, and Buford's speech was an effort to place this pro-Union feeling into a more constructive system, in sending Phillips County men to the Constitutional Convention in Little Rock. The other letters show the adjustment the blacks were making just after the war ended and the efforts that white political leaders and interested observers made to try and recover as much pre-war power as possible, while realizing that their powers could not be regained in the truest physical sense. Arkansas had changed with the Civil War, and it was only after the fighting had ended for several months and Federal authority asserted that many people realized that fact.



The letters also hold an interesting contrast, for the first ones came from people living outside Arkansas, the latter ones from native Arkansans. Both groups assumed Reconstruction was either a success or almost had reached that goal, but the outside observers saw this trend, or at least thought they saw it, before the majority of Arkansans realized it for themselves.

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The May meeting of the Historical Society was held on the 28th at the Museum. Ben H. Davison was elected President for 1978-1979, and Mrs. Thomas E. Faust was elected Vice-President, other officers remaining the same. Finishing their terms as Directors are Mrs. Katherine S. Hill and Mrs. Austin M. Coates. Steven W. Jones was added to the Board as a new Director.

R. D. Keever of North Little Rock presented an interesting program on the "Uniforms, Accoutrements, and the Life of the Common Soldier of the Confederacy," and two of his companions appeared at the Museum completely fitted out in Confederate uniforms, including weapons and beards. It was rather startling to see them walk in the door while Mr. Keever was lecturing! Mr. Keever has a BSE degree with a double major in Industrial Engineering and History. He is presently teaching in the Jacksonville (Ark.) High School. He is immediate past president of the Civil War Round Table and the Current Commander of the Robert C. Newton Camp, Sons of the Confederacy.

\*

# A LISTING OF THE TOMBSTONES IN THE REHOBOTH CEMETERY Phillips County, Arkansas

by

Alan T. Belsches  
Chapel Hill, N. C.

A sad but common sight along the back roads of rural Arkansas is the abandoned frame church now surrounded by vine-covered, broken tombstones. Often built amid cotton fields on a donated one-acre site, the flaking white structure with its gaping windows and vacant doorway appears like a skull discarded among the weeds. Who were the worshipers and where have they gone? The answers can only be found in the names and dates carved on the scattered, crumbling markers.

In January 2, 1978, I visited one of these abandoned structures in eastern Arkansas, the Rehoboth Baptist Church, with the purpose of exploring the decaying building and compiling a list of the inscriptions on the existing tombstones in the cemetery surrounding the church. Accompanying me on this visit were my wife, Jane, her sister, Kate Faust, and her mother, Mrs. Betty M. Faust. Janie Cook Vineyard, the half-sister and foster mother of Mrs. Faust's mother, Annie Cook McGinnis, is buried in the Rehoboth Cemetery.

To reach the old church grounds located one mile south of the Phillips and Lee County line in Phillips County, Arkansas, one travels west from Helena on US Highway 49 to its intersection with Arkansas Highway 316. Where the Exxon station marks the crossroads, one turns right and proceeds north for three miles. When a gravel road enters from the left, turn westward and continue approximately four more miles. The bleached-out church and its surrounding cemetery soon loom on the right encircled



by a rusting five-foot high iron fence still rising firmly from its concrete base.

In a previous article in the PHILLIPS COUNTY HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, Mrs. Zora Langston Atkinson (see footnote) describes the history of Rehoboth Church. It was first organized in 1882, and construction of the church building was completed in the summer of 1886. This structure was used until its destruction by fire in 1922. The present building was erected soon afterwards on the same site.

The church building and grounds have now fallen into great decay. Scattered paper and broken glass littered the inside of the deserted sanctuary. Only a few of its long pews now remained, scattered at odd angles in the center of the bare room. Great holes gaped in the walls and ceiling where the plaster had fallen from the persistent attack of water and mice. From the dates on a calendar tacked to a wall in the pulpit area and from collection envelopes piled in the corner of one of the small rooms off of the front of the sanctuary, the last services appear to have been held some time in 1975.

In our examination of the tombstones that surround the church, we found inscriptions for thirty-one persons. The earliest death date discovered on any of the markers was August 25, 1895. This date appeared on the tombstone of Effie Hopkins, born on October 10, 1871, and wife of W. O. Hopkins. The most recent death date was found on the marker of Janie Cook Vineyard, born January 28, 1876, and died February 3, 1963. She was the wife of E. D. "Ras" Vineyard who is buried beside her.

Located at the back of the fenced-in lot, directly behind the church, is the most imposing structure in the cemetery, the mausoleum of Captain Francis Hawkins and his wife Bettie. (See photograph at end of article.) Designed to resemble a miniature Greek temple, the structure is built of grey granite blocks and is fronted with two columns and a copper-

plated door. At the base of each column are carved the birth and death dates for Captain and Mrs. Hawkins.

The following is a list of the inscriptions copied from the tombstones:

	<u>BORN</u>	<u>DIED</u>
BINKLEY, John Milton	3-17-1897	5-13-1901
"Son of J. W. & M. B. Binkley"		
"A precious one among us has gone A voice we loved is stilled A place is vacant in our hearts Which never can be filled."		
BINKLEY, Mattie Lou	11-12-1903	6-1-1905
"Daughter of J. W. & M. B. Binkley"		
BLACK, Anna Rebekah	5-20-1901	7-15-1914
BURNS, Lucy	1894	1947
CAMPBELL, Mattie A.	2-13-1899	10-20-1912
"Daughter of R. A. & G. V. Campbell"		
CREAMER, Birdie	9-5-1870	11-13-1948
DICE, T. J.	1862	1930
On mausoleum		
HAWKINS, Bettie	8-7-1831	1-1-1911
HAWKINS, Capt. Francis M.	12-20-1836	12-11-1914
Two inscriptions on one stone		
Side One		
HOPKINS, A. M.	4-5-1845	10-5-1895
Side Two		
HOPKINS, Effie	10-10-1871	8-25-1895
"Wife of W. O. Hopkins-Age 23 years, 10 months"		
HOPKINS, Laura G.	10-3-1861	8-9-1899
"Wife of F. H. Hopkins"		
HOPKINS, W. Bond	7-31-1894	9-22-1899
This inscription on same stone with Isie W. Prince		

	<u>BORN</u>	<u>DIED</u>
LANGSTON, C. L.	1851	1931
"Gone but not forgotten"		
LAW, William D.	7-2-1883	11-12-1921
"Our loved one"		
Two inside iron fence at rear of cemetery and church		
LOWE, Clinton	12-29-1864	7-29-1909
LOWE, J. B.	11-14-1858	1-23-1933
Inside iron fence on east side, these three graves		
KING, Carey	7-30-1875	3-21-1897
KING, Maj. S. H.	11-8-1838	11-23-1901
"He was a useful citizen, a devoted husband and father An active Christian ever with _ his God, and has now entered into that rest that remaineth for the people of God"		
KING, Sallie P. Cook	3-30-1842	6-14-1917
"Our mother-wife of S. H. King-Loves last tribute"		
(Major S. H. King and his wife were the paternal great grandparents of John Clancy King, Jr. of Helena.)		
MANNING, Wm. Edward	11-3-1883	12-6-1918
"Our loved one"		
MCGREW, Mary	1-30-1848	11-10-1914
"Wife of W. H. McGrew"		
MCGREW, Susie E.	7-18-1865	7-22-1936
MCGREW, William Alexander	11-24-1857	8-8-1933
"An honest man, the noblest work of art"		
MCGREW, William H.	3-7-1838	4-14-1927
PRINCE, Isie Wade	12-14-1893	11-13-1901
VINEYARD, E. D. Ras	11-16-1869	4-13-1952
"Husband of Janie Cook Vineyard"		
VINEYARD, Janie Cook	1-28-1876	2-3-1963
VINEYARD, Mary Moore	4-19-1897	9-17-1916
"Dau. of E. D. & J. C. Vineyard"		

	<u>BORN</u>	<u>DIED</u>
WOOD, M.	5-10-1848	2-1-1903
WOOTEN, William B.	1856	1936
"My love goes with you and my soul wails to join you"		

In December, 1977, Mrs. Spencer Ivy loaned to Mrs. Faust three record books of Rehoboth Church with the earliest beginning in 1897. These are now being put on microfilm at the Arkansas History Commission's office in Little Rock.

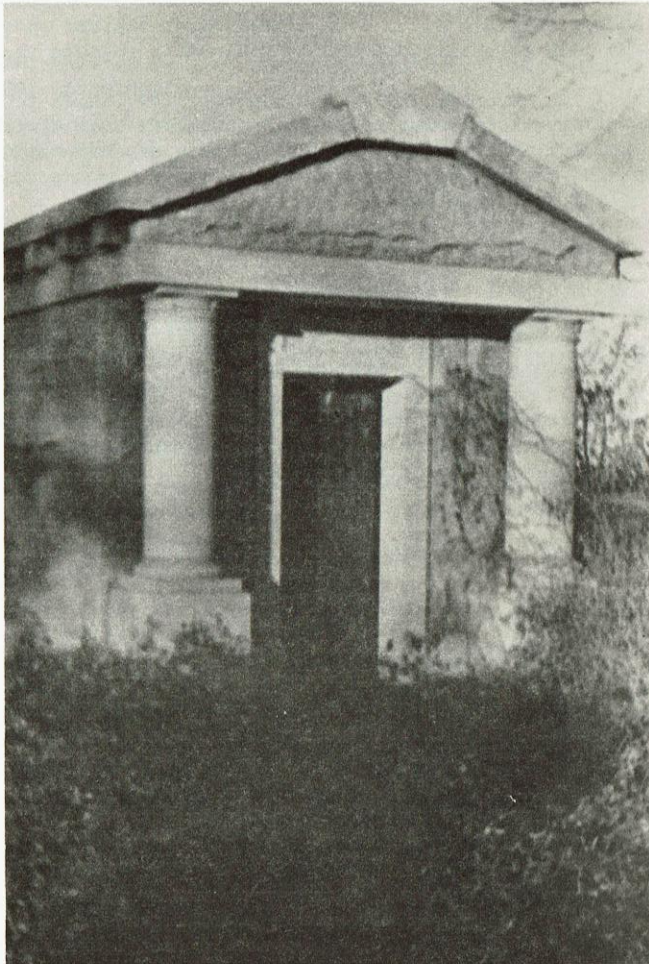
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#### FOOTNOTE

1. For more information on the history of Rehoboth Baptist Church, see Zora Langston Atkinson's article "Rehoboth Church" in the December, 1965, issue of the PHILLIPS COUNTY HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, Vol. 4, No. 2. According to Mrs. Atkinson, all of the burial markers have been removed from graves located within thirty feet of each side of the church.

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FROM THE HELENA WORLD  
August 27, 1930

#### School History Of Helena Is Given By Two Girl Students

During the past school year the eleventh grade American history classes of Helena High School were given the project of writing the history of the schools of Helena. They were told that very little, if any, information could be found in books or newspapers, and that they must seek the information from the old residents themselves.

After long investigation they each wrote a paper.

The following history was taken from two papers, the ones turned in by Miss Julia Luers and Miss Sarah Luke. The two young students listed their sources of information as follows:

HISTORY OF CATHOLICITY, from Sacred Heart Academy.

The Helena Public Schools, from R. E. Davis.

"What I Know About Helena Public Schools," by Jacob Fink.

Hillside School by Tap Hornor.

Helena Female Seminary, by Welford White, Mrs. M. M. Brown, Miss Jessie Thompson, Mrs. O. V. Luke, Mrs. J. R. Dalzell and other long residents.

#### Private Schools

A long time ago private school teachers made a house to house canvass searching for pupils. When they found a sufficient number in any town, they located there. Often there were only a few pupils and they paid their fees by allowing the teacher free board or by giving them corn or some other article of barter.

Ordinarily the primary branches were taught for \$6.00, grammar grades for \$8.00, and high school grades \$10.00 a quarter.



In 1878 the Helena Female Seminary was established with Mr. White as president and Mrs. White vice-president. Mr. White taught the high school and Mrs. Graham taught the grammar grades. Mrs. White and Mrs. Mosby taught music. Both boys and girls were admitted. In its first year the school was not opened until Nov. 1st on account of a yellow fever epidemic. The rates were \$3.00 for regular work and \$5.00 for extras. After Mr. White's death Mrs. Graham carried the school on for quite a while.

In 1879 the Sanders School was organized. It was on College St. where Dr. Nicholls' home now is. Both boys and girls attended.

In 1880 Miss Susie Hindman established a school for boys and girls on Franklin St. between Perry and Porter Sts. It was a small frame building and only primary grades were taught.

In 1883 Mrs. Preston started a school for girls. It was held first on the corner of Beech and Porter, but the building was condemned and they were forced to move to the old Coolidge Hall on Perry. The school lasted until 1884.

It is not known just exactly when the Hillside School was started. It was started by the Hornors for their children. Mr. Child was the first teacher. He was followed by Mr. Harper and later by Mr. Weems. The boys were so bad that Mr. Weems left within the year, and the next thing heard of him was that he had become a foreign missionary. The last two teachers were James Epes and Lewis Epes.

At the request of her friends Miss Jessie Thompson started a private school in 1907. The first year she had only two pupils, Fanny Harrington and Josephine Hornor. After a while the number of pupils increased to eight a year and in the last few years of her teaching there were fifteen pupils. Miss Jessie discontinued her school in 1928 when she began work as Study Hall teacher at the High School.

Some other important private schools were: Miss Wendland's Kindergarten for boys and girls on Perry St. where the Benton home now stands; Mrs. Joe Hart's school on Porter St. between Beech and Poplar; Miss Lizzie Cage's, Mrs. Minor's Blue Bird Kindergarten; Mrs. Belcha's, and Mrs. Hodge's.

#### Sacred Heart Academy

On August 22, 1879, a valiant band of six Sisters of Charity of Nazareth arrived at Helena to replace the Sisters of Mercy who had settled here in 1851, but who had been driven away during the Civil War. In September, 1879, a school was opened under the name and patronage of Sacred Heart. The school was housed in an eight room building, once the home of a well-to-do southern family. Both Catholic and non-Catholic attended this school. The average enrollment of the early days was fifty day scholars and twenty boarders.

During the succeeding years many improvements in the school plant were made, including two large rooms for classes, two dormitories for boarders, and colonnades joining the various outlying buildings with the main one.

In 1916 the commercial course was added to the curriculum. There were eighty pupils the first year.

In 1917 the present Sacred Heart Academy was formally opened, and in January, 1919, a kindergarten department was added at the request of many townsmen. At present they have about twenty-five children a year.

At the present time Sacred Heart Academy offers educational facilities from the kindergarten through the high school and a special commercial course in addition.

#### The Public Schools

On March 18, 1867, the General Assembly of Arkansas passed a law "for the purpose of establishing a system of common school education in this



state, a tax is hereby levied of twenty cents on every hundred dollars worth of taxable property in this state, and shall be collected and paid into the state treasury annually in the same manner as now provided by law for other state taxes." There was also to be a superintendent of public instruction, and J. R. Earle, president of Cane Hill College, was elected in 1868 to fill this office. He was, however, soon dismissed by a military order of Gen. E. O. C. Ord, who said that his services were not needed. This law marked the beginning of the creation of the Arkansas Public School system.

After a proclamation issued in July, 1869, by the mayor of Helena, H. P. Coolidge, the present Helena School District No. 1 was organized. Then an election was held. The results were: J. E. Bennett, J. T. White, Nicholas Straub, Austin Barrow, and J. Q. Taylor, school directors, with Judge Bennett serving as chairman and Mr. Taylor as secretary of the board. Judge Bennett served as president of the board until his resignation in July, 1883. There have been nine presidents of the board: J. E. Bennett, Greenfield Quarles, Henry Fink, F. B. Sliger, J. B. Butts, Sr., G. L. Davidson, M. K. Upshaw, Lawson Moore, Jr., and R. T. Doughtie. There have been five secretaries: J. Q. Taylor, Greenfield Quarles, Aaron Meyers, Jacob Fink, and Gilbert Yaeger.

In 1869 there was no school building. On the site of the present Jefferson School was the home of Mr. Russell, who was the first principal of the school. His property was used by the school board until 1872 when they purchased it for \$6,580.00. The building was frame and rested on huge cypress pilings, or posts, eight to ten feet high. There were four rooms, but only three of them were used. The attendance was so small at first that the school grounds were enclosed on the north and east sides by high board fences. The girls' and boys' grounds were separated by a high fence. The grounds were terrible and part of them just a swamp. After a big rain the

children could amuse themselves by sitting on the board walks and fishing in the eight or ten feet of water beneath them. There was a belfry and every morning it was the duty of the janitor to ring the large bell contained therein. Sometimes by special permission a boy was permitted to ring the bell.

At first the school opened at 9:15 and closed at 4:30. There was a fifteen minutes recess in the afternoon for the larger children and an hour recess for the smaller ones. The teaching corps consisted of Mr. Russell as principal, Miss Georgia Slater, and Miss Lucy Deputy. The school term varied from seven and one-half months to ten months.

In 1877 another room was added to the west side of the old building and a high school department added. However after a few years this work had to be discontinued.

The directors soon realized that the old building was very inadequate and they began to look about for plans for a new one. The plans of the school building at St. Joseph, Mo. were chosen. Because of the poor financial conditions at the time, a lot of people did not want so much money to be spent on a new and well-equipped school building. Then they went ahead with their plans, and in 1886 the present Jefferson School was completed at a cost of \$24,000. This was just in time to house the school since the old frame building had been burned by some stroke of good fortune, Jan. 23, 1885, and the classes had been held on the upper floors of three store buildings on Cherry and Ohio Sts. The school was named after Jefferson because he prized above all things the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the founding of the University of Virginia, and the patronizing of public schools.

The schools began to outgrow their housing facilities along in 1910-12 so the board planned and built the present high school building on South Biscoe St., at an estimated cost of \$110,000.00. The



curriculum was enlarged by adding home economics, physical education, music, and commercial courses. The building occupies the site of the old Hindman house, has four floors and all modern conveniences.

The Helena schools rank with the best in the state. The elementary schools are rated Class "A" by the State department of Education, while the high school is rated Class "A" by the State Department and holds membership in the North Central Association of Secondary Schools. A graduate of a school holding membership in the N. C. A. is entitled to enter any college or university registered with the Association or with similar associations without taking entrance examinations. All that is required is a statement from the school authorities giving the pupils' credits and recommending them as fit material for college work. Since all the leading colleges and universities are members of such associations the Helena graduates can enter practically any school in the United States without entrance exams.

The white schools are now crowded and the Board is working on plans for an additional building to house the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. The new building will be located on the block now occupied by the old Legion Auditorium and three Negro houses. It is expected that the new building will be ready for occupancy by September, 1931.

Mr. Savage was the first superintendent of Helena schools. In those days the school was called the Savage School. The succession of superintendents follows: Mr. Savage, Mr. Price, Mr. Christie in 1885, Mr. Hindman, Mr. Davidson, Mr. Rivers, Mr. Spraggins 1901-14, Mr. Sheep 1914-16, Mr. Tucker 1916-22, Mr. Ramsey 1922-24, Mr. Davis 1924-26, Mr. Cromwell 1926-28, and Mr. Wahl 1928-.

#### The Negro Schools

There have been several private schools for Negroes in Helena. One of the first was on McDonough St. where Mrs. Kirkman now lives. The school was

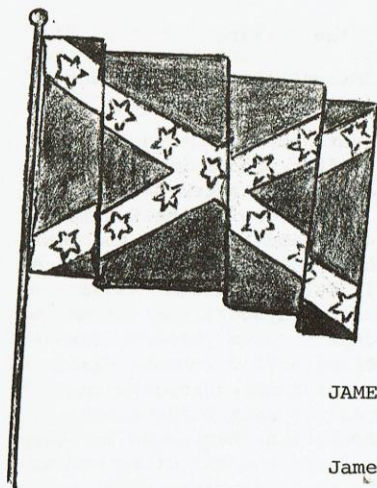
founded and maintained by the Quakers.

Stevens and Walnut Grove was once a private school for Negroes, but no longer exists.

The two schools now are the North End and the Eliza Miller. The Eliza Miller School was formerly known as the Peabody School, named after George Peabody, a great benefactor of schools in the South. It was on the corner of Columbia and York Sts. and consisted of one large frame building. This burned and was replaced with several small buildings. Soon these rooms were overcrowded and additional rooms rented in the Negro churches. So in 1926 the School Board built the present Eliza Miller School, named after the greatest benefactress of Negroes in the county. The high school is put in the "B" Class by the State Department of Education, but needs but very few improvements to raise it to the "A" Class and to membership in the North Central Association.

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SO  
GALLANTLY  
IT  
STREAMED

JAMES W. CLOPTON  
by  
James M. Massey

A faded red book with ornate silver trim is in the possession of James Clopton McRee. It belonged to his great grandfather, James W. Clopton of Helena, and contains his diary from Sunday, March 3, 1895 through May 13, 1895. It breaks off in the middle of the book and one wonders why he quit writing, perhaps his health was the cause as he died only three months later, although his diary gave no indication of sickness.

Like many diaries of that period, there is a consistent reference to the weather. On April 15, 1895, he writes, "Cloudy, hazy, windy, dusty and threatening rain (none fell)." That is certainly an ample description.

The most interesting entry was made April 6, 1895, Saturday. "Anniversary of Battle Shiloh. Big reunion of both Yankees & Rebs going on at old battle fields. In this days fight I was wounded in left hand and right wrist. I have the Confederate Flag, 16 feet long, hoisted over my big building and fluttering

in a stiff breeze, it shows up beautifully."

April 7, 1895, Sunday-"This anniversary, the "Yanks" at Shiloh, were reinforced by Buell's army pushing south & crossing the Tennessee River night of April 6 and they drove us back & retook the battle-fields."

Mr. Clopton always flew his Confederate flag on the anniversary of the Battle of Shiloh. His granddaughter, Helen Clopton Mosby, says that he bore the results of the injury he received there for the rest of his life--a crippled hand. At the time he was wounded, he was 21 years old.

Goodspeed's BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL MEMOIRS OF EASTERN ARKANSAS, PHILLIPS COUNTY, published 1890, includes a sketch of James W. Clopton:

"This most enterprising and successful business man is the son of John H and Matilda (Drake) Clopton, both of whom were born near Nashville, Tenn. James W. was born in Marshall County, Miss., on March 16, 1841, and was ten years of age when he came to this county with his parents. He was educated principally in Helena, was reared partly on the farm, and at an early age began clerking, which enterprise he continued until the Civil War. He then enlisted in the Yell Rifles of which Maj. Gen. Cleburne was captain, and served until the close of the war. He received a gunshot wound in the right hand and left wrist at the battle of Shiloh, came home on a furlough, and while here he was captured and taken to Alton, Ill. After being retained for about four months, he was exchanged, and fortunately fell in with the first lot of prisoners that got through. He joined his regiment at Murfreesboro, and was second sergeant. He was in all principal engagements, and served his cause faithfully and well. Returning home he farmed for two years and then embarked in mercantile pursuits which he has since carried on. He was married, in 1869, to Miss Bettie Rainey, a native of Macon, Miss., by whom he had five children: Mary, Edna, Alice,

James W. and Bess." Mr. Clopton died August 15, 1895, and was buried at Maple Hill Cemetery.

The beautiful and revered flag referred to in the diary belongs to James C. McRee, who recently put it on loan to the Phillips County Museum, where it may be seen. The exact location of the building over which its owner flew the flag during those years following the war is not known, but it was in the downtown Helena area, probably on Ohio St.

The following poem, by Father Abram J. Ryan, depicts a sad ending of what was once a proud symbol that so gallantly streamed in the wind over this Mississippi River city.

#### THE CONQUERED BANNER

Furl that Banner for 'tis weary;  
Round its staff 'tis drooping dreary;  
Furl it, fold it, it is best;  
For there's not a man to wave it,  
And there's not a man to save it,  
And there's not one left to love it  
In the blood which heroes gave it;  
And its foes now scorn and brave it;  
Furl it, hide it - let it rest!

-From FATHER RYAN'S POEMS, 18th Ed.

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#### HELENA BOARD OF TRADE'S Daily Bulletin

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#### INDIAN BAY SPECIAL. Sep. 6th, 1910.

To properly describe the trip of the Helena Auto Club yesterday and its entertainment after its arrival at Indian Bay would require a more accomplished writer than yours truly, but having been a guest on the trip, I am going to attempt it, with due apologies to all concerned.

At four o'clock yesterday morning, the pilot car in charge of Mr. F. H. Woodin, pulled out, followed at intervals of 30 minutes to an hour by no less than 21 cars. The day being cloudy with a nice breeze blowing was ideal, the roads were exceptionably good, permitting in many places a speed of from 30 to 40 miles per hour.

Practically every car was loaded to its capacity carrying in all between 90 and 100 persons. Various records were made on the trip. While no one was out for a record, practically all kept track of time and the trip was made in from 1 hour and 40 minutes (by Mr. Chew in his Olds Limited) to 3 hours by the less venturesome. This of course does not take into account the two or three cars which had slight or serious trouble and delay. Lester Allin followed the procession in the repair car and brought cheer to several weary souls who had gone out of commission.

To depict the many funny situations on the trip, needs a humorist. To have seen the people unloading



from buggies and wagons pell mell when a car would heave into sight would have tickled the sides of the proverbial cigar store Indian, the children hanging over the fences waving and yelling was a sight never to be forgotten and the capers cut by mules and horses were ludicrous to the extreme. But best of all were the scenes of thrift and good crops one saw over the entire route.

The scene as viewed by the writer, from the car of "Wild Bill" Dunlap, was Kalaidiskopic. Imagine one cigarette lasting you from Poplar Grove to Indian Bay and you have an idea of the speed made, we have no record as the speedometer realizing its inadequacy, went on a strike, the whistle took fright and disembarked between Poplar Grove, hats and caps joined the bird gang and alighted in the fields and woods. We heard reports along the road that fifteen automobiles and an aeroplane had gone on ahead of us. We learned later that the aeroplane was "Barney Oldfield" Harrington in his Buick. The Club in informal session passed resolution requesting Mr. Harrington to stay on the ground, and "Wild Bill", in the road and out of the fields.

Arrived at the Bay, the machines were met by Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Woodin, host and hostess, and we found a completeness of arrangement for the entertainment that could not be surpassed. Mr. Woodin had builded a stove and frying kettle, all his own invention...page torn...the Club house site and the Bay, would require the eye of an artist and the words of--well--Marie Corelli.

The club house is situated upon the high eastern bank of the bay surrounded by many hundreds of spreading water oaks, under which the tables were laid, and the spread was enough to make a man fight his pap. Fish of every kind, fried to a nice turn, Bermuda onions, pone cornbread, butter, pickles, light bread and "Java" of just the right brew. If you don't believe it, ask Chief Clancy and Mayor

Martin. For once in his life, to the sorrow of the party? Mayor Martin was too full for utterance. Mr. Joe Pillow, to prove his erstwhile prowess went out with hook and line, only to snag a blue cat and to save himself from the penalty, had to swipe a trout from a fish box. And Jesse Fowler, having failed in every other way to win Lady Fair, resorted to heroics, took a young lady out in a dug out, but his nerve failed him and he sunk the boat where the Lady could walk ashore.

About 2:30 pm the crowd began to make its getaway after expressing to Mr. and Mrs. Woodin their thanks and appreciation for the greatest days recreation they had ever had. The way the affair was managed did them great credit and will long be remembered. Coming home with the 21 cars strung out a few hundred yards apart, made the Glidden tour look like a dirty deuce in a new deck. Snap shots were taken of the picnic party, which if prove good will be furnished the MOTOR AGE and other outdoor newspapers. Mayor Martin was the only man to show cold feet, he having deserted his ship at Marvell, where he took train for home.

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The photograph on the next page was copied from one owned by the late J. B. Lambert. It was taken before 1913 in front of the Cleburne Hotel, and some of the car's occupants were officers of the Bank of Helena. They have been identified as follows: driver, Bill Dunlap; front right, E. C. Hornor; in the back seat, Judge John I. Moore and Bascom Dunlap.

