

PHILLIPS COUNTY
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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The picture on the front cover shows a levee
break near Helena during the 1897 flood.

LETTERS

George P. Kelley of Dermott, Arkansas has been an interested member of the Phillips County Historical Society for several years, and an article of his, entitled JOHN J. BOWIE, was printed in the September, 1974, issue of the QUARTERLY. He is an active member of the Desha County Historical Society, and in 1977 spoke to that Society about steamboats and the KATE ADAMS. The talk was used as an article in the MCGEHEE TIMES, and it included two references to trips made to Helena on the KATE ADAMS. When questioned about these trips, Mr. Kelley responded with this letter.

April 18, 1977

Editors:

In answer to your request for more specifics regarding my two trips to Helena on the Kate Adams I will have to state that when I made that first trip to Helena, I was only ten or eleven years old and naturally, many details of that visit are rather fuzzy in my mind.

The couple that we were visiting was Mr. and Mrs. W. E. McFarland. They had no children. Mr. McFarland was the mill foreman for the Davis & Reeves Lumber Co., a large sawmill that had operated at Halley until the mill closed down in the year 1911 and they had been our next door neighbors here at Halley. My father had been a hardwood lumber inspector working for the same company.

When the mill at Halley closed down, Mr. McFarland obtained a similar position at one of the numerous sawmills that were at Helena at that time. I do not remember which mill. I do remember the house that they lived in although I do not know the location of it. The front entrance was at street level but was built on a rather steep slope. There was a long flight of stairs that went down from the

back door to the back yard.

During our visit there, we went up on the hills where the battle of Helena was fought. The old trenches were very plain and to the best of my recollection, the grass was mowed and the site had the appearance of a park. I searched around on the grounds and found an insignia from a military uniform, the head off of a broken drumstick and numerous spent bullets or "minie balls."

We also went to another place that was on the edge of some steep hills. I think that this was in the South part of Helena although I cannot be sure of the location. At any rate, there were numerous iron coffins washing out of the hillside.

Another trip was to the home of General Hindman which at that time was completely abandoned and falling apart. To the best of my memory, this was a three story house, (again I am not sure) but the floors and stairways were so rotten that we were afraid to go upstairs. I do remember that in the wall between the kitchen and the dining room there was built a revolving platform, somewhat similar to a "lazy susan" on which food could be placed in the kitchen, then turned to be taken off in the dining room. We were told before going there that at the time of General Hindman's assassination, he had staggered from the room in which he was shot into an adjoining room and that the imprint of his bloody hand was still plainly visible on the door facing. Whether this was true or not, we did not find out but at the exact spot where we were told it was to be found, someone had sawed out a section of the door facing, about ten or twelve inches long.

Mr. McFarland owned an automobile of a make now scarcely remembered by anyone. The name consisted of merely three initials, E. M. F. He drove us over to West Helena one day. Of course, there were nothing but dirt roads at that time and we developed a flat tire while we were in one of the deep cuts where the road passed thru the hills. I can remember standing in the road while Mr. McFarland

repaired the tire and gazing up at the top of the cut and it seemed as if I might have been standing at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

My second trip to Helena on the Kate Adams was really to visit friends in Wabash instead of Helena. Huron Oliver, who lived at Wabash, and I had been roommates at the old State Agricultural School at Monticello, Ark. (now the University of Ark. at Monticello) where we had both been members of a male quartet that had won the state high school championship the previous year. The Oliver family had invited the other three members of the quartet to come and spend a week with them in Wabash. The people of Wabash treated us like visiting royalty. The Howe Lumber Company let us have one of their motor cars to ride around over their logging tramways which were rather extensive at that time. The Company commissary lent us brand new shotguns out of stock to go squirrel hunting and one day when there was a baseball game in Helena, Mr. "Deck" Howe insisted on our taking his personal automobile and driving to Helena to attend that game. We sang at church services as well as at parties to which we were invited, seemingly every night while we were there.

The McFarlands moved away from Helena at a later date and now, I can't remember where they went.

Huron Oliver is now retired and living at 1766 East Bryn Mawr Circle, Germantown, Tenn.

This is really not a lot about Helena but for an old man with a weak mind, it is about all I can come up with.

Yours,
George Kelley

Following are extracts from a letter written to Betty Faust of Helena, by her aunt, Mrs. Jennie

Cook Thomson of San Mateo, California.

August 24, 1978

Dear Betty,

.....

Last Friday Winnie and Bill were with us and we were all thrilled with the pictures of the houses of different architecture and the articles in the Historical Quarterly. Bill liked especially General Buford's speech on Page 8. I appreciate Alan's about the tombstones in the Rehoboth Cemetery.

"Indian Bay Special" filled me with nostalgia, for I remember so many of the men and their cars. In fact I recall the event. Foster Woodin gave us our first auto ride--from our house to the Christian Church.

Did you notice the car on the last page has the steering wheel on the right side? Cousin Mae urged Cousin John Ike (Moore) to buy a car, thinking it would be good for him to get away from his office. However, she said it almost caused a divorce in their family. He really was afraid of the car and didn't enjoy driving it. He liked his cigar but wouldn't smoke in the car. He would stop along the road and smoke walking around. We could either sit or walk also. He was afraid a spark might get into the gas tank and blow up the car. After his son was old enough to drive he never drove again.

.....

Love,
Aunt Jennie

A third letter is from Mrs. Shell of Little Rock.

February 16, 1979

Editors:

We have just received the Quarterly and again found pleasure in reading it.

Mr. Shell has asked me to write you that Dick Kitchens was his first cousin. His mother, Fannie Scaife Kitchens, was the youngest sister of Anna Scaife Shell. Their parents--Col. and Mrs. J. W. Scaife of Trenton, Arkansas. As Dick was dying he asked which way Arkansas was and to have his face turned in that direction. His mother had died very young and he had spent much time with the Shells. Mrs. Shell always grieved for him.

In a recent Quarterly there was an interesting account of an automobile tour made in 1910. Mr. Shell joined other children to watch and saw people in the first two cars toss out scraps of paper to mark the route for the main group to follow!

He will be 79 this month, the Quarterlies bring to his mind many people and events. It is of no special importance now, but his brother N. M. Shell was a member of Company H, First Arkansas Volunteers, enlisting from Marvell, but residing in Monroe County at the time.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Louis E. Shell

VICTOR HERBERT AT HELENA

by

Doris C. Infield

The year was 1940. The movie playing at the Paramount Theater was THE GREAT VICTOR HERBERT. To a couple of old timers this brought to mind the time when Victor Herbert himself brought his band to Helena. And reading their memories of the occasion whetted my curiosity. This is the story.

It was during his 1895 tour of the Southland that Helena became caught up in the mood of the Gay Nineties and the music of Victor Herbert. However, Helena's mood of gaiety was somewhat contrary to the gaiety experienced elsewhere in the United States.

The band concert was scheduled for April 7 and had been duly advertised. Excursion rates by rail or river were offered to the people around Helena. But April 7 was a Sunday, and on the preceding Thursday the ministers of Helena asked the Council to prevent this desecration of the Sabbath. The officials promised action if, when the band arrived, they engaged in receiving money for opera house seats. Accepting money for a concert on Sunday was a violation of the laws of the State of Arkansas.

The managers of the Opera House became worried. On Saturday they wired the band in Vicksburg that trouble was brewing and asked for a cancellation. The manager, unfamiliar with the Sunday law, refused. He would have been money ahead had he given the release.

On Sunday Helena was full. People from all around came, eager to see the famous band, hungry for music, or curious to see what would happen.

The band was greeted at the Opera House by Sheriff Burke with a summons for Herbert's arrest. To avoid any further confusion, the band decided to stage a free concert. Even if Herbert hadn't cunningly focused the program on sacred numbers, his musicianship would have appeased the animosity of the most resentful citizens.

About midway through the program Herbert addressed the audience, saying that a free will offering would be collected. Helena's generosity soon filled the money sacks. The band members also rendered a liberal amount and presented the donations to Chief of Police Clancy. Herbert directed Clancy to use the money for Helena's poor and needy. This put Herbert in good standing with the people that afternoon. It also leaves one to wonder if his Helena adventures could partly account for his later composition, AH, SWEET MYSTERY OF LIFE.

From the February 20, 1940 issue of the HELENA WORLD is the article that prompted the research.

FEW REMEMBER WHEN GREAT VICTOR HERBERT WAS HERE

Great Composer Came Near Being Chased Out of Opera House in Helena

There are only a few Helena people left who, seeing the picture THE GREAT VICTOR HERBERT currently showing at the Paramount Theater, will remember the time the great composer appeared here at the old Opera House as the leader of a band.

It was an occasion long to be remembered, according to those few who do still remember. Not only from the fact that Victor Herbert became so prominent in the musical world during later years but from other angles of the occasion.

In fact the man who later was to have the world of music lovers at his feet came near being run out of the city with an enraged part of the citizenry at his heels.

According to Whit Jarman and A. Newman, both of whom agree on the main facts, it was substantially as follows:

It happened somewhere along in the Gay Nineties. Neither Mr. Jarman or Mr. Newman remember the exact date.

Mr. Herbert had lately taken over Gilmore's Band, one of the outstanding attractions which in those days was accustomed to play the Opera House. He and his band came to Helena in a special car.

The performance was scheduled for a Sunday afternoon. And that caused all the trouble.

A large number of righteous citizens rose up in arms at the very thought of presenting a band concert on the Sabbath Day. They informed officers that such a performance just couldn't be allowed and one over enthusiastic man was said to have gone so far as to bring his shotgun saying that if officers couldn't stop that performance, he could.

It looked like if Herbert and his musicians didn't yield there would certainly be a riot.

So it was announced that the doors to the Opera House would be thrown open and a free concert of sacred music given by the band. This seemed to appease the wrath of the indignant citizens and the Opera House, which at that time was managed by Mr. Newman's brother Eli Newman and by Ed Ehrman and which seated 600 people, soon filled up.

The concert proceeded and when the program was about half finished Herbert made a little speech saying that a number of citizens would pass through the audience and take up a free will offering. This was done and the money poured into a large sack. "It was full," Mr. Jarman says.

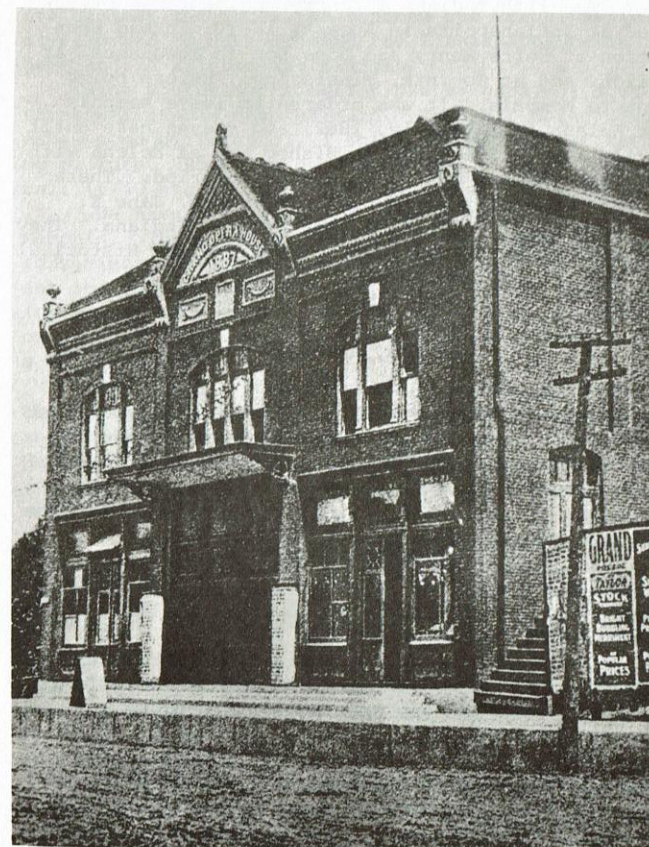
Then the band leader called Chief of Police F. D. Clancy on the stage and handed the money over to him, including, Mr. Newman says, a \$100 donation from himself. "Give the entire proceeds to your worthy charities," he directed, stipulating only that the Catholic Sisters of Charity be given a

share.

That fixed Victor Herbert with everyone in Helena and he has been remembered kindly down through the years.

Mr. Newman says that at that time Herbert was probably 40 years of age.

On the next page is a picture of Helena's opera house.



INDIANA TROOPS AT HELENA: Part III

The 11th Indiana Infantry Regiment was organized at Indianapolis in August, 1861. It had seen action at Forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee, at Shiloh, and at Corinth, Mississippi, before being sent to Memphis. It was ordered to leave Memphis for Helena in late July, 1862, and stayed here until April, 1863. Sylvester C. Bishop was at Helena with the 11th Indiana during that entire period. These letters were written to his mother, Mrs. Jane E. Montgomery, at Putnamville and Brazil, Indiana. They are used here by permission of the Indiana Historical Society Library at Indianapolis.

*

Helena, Arkansas. July 26, 1862.

Dear Mother,

I received your letter likeness and paper last Wednesday. We were then on the boat and I had no way of writing till now. We got on the boat last Tuesday but did not leave the wharf till Thursday morning. We reached Helena in the evening. We were all yesterday fixing things.

Helena is about as miserable a looking place as I ever saw. What has been the best part of town is completely destroyed, whether by the rebels or through an accident I don't know.

The remaining houses are all deserted by their owners and are now occupied by soldiers for different purposes. The sutlers and speculators are also filling them up.

I don't believe there's enough goods in town to make one respectable store house. The finest house in town is the property of the rebel General Hindman. It is now the headquarters of Gen. Curtis. A large plantation three miles below here belongs to Gen. Pillow.

Why we are here is yet a mystery. I don't

think we will stay long. I hope not. At least Gen. Curtis has a considerable army here and it may be that his and Wallace's division combined are to operate against the forces of Hindman and Price. Price is reported to have crossed the Mississippi below here and is reinforcing Hindman.

The pictures I consider pretty good. I don't think Willie has changed much. The hair being black makes some difference. I think you had better keep my picture. Ed Clark owed me 40 or 50 cts. Just call it 40 cts.

We have not as nice a camping place here as at Memphis. There we had nice shade and every thing convenient for eating and sleeping. Here we have to eat in the sand, sleep in the sand and I am now writing in the sand with an old broom to rest my paper on, though if we stay here we will have things fixed a little better.

There are a good many Indiana Regts here and the boys are having fine times greeting old acquaintances. I got to see Jim Painter. He's in the 43rd. He looks as healthy as ever. Charley was discharged.

Write soon. Direct to Memphis for we may not stay here two days longer.

Your Son S. C. Bishop

Helena, Arkansas. Aug 18th. 1862

Dear Mother,

Two weeks yesterday morning I received your last. I could not answer it then for we were just ready to march. I had to read your letter while going.

My health is still good, though our march was a long wearisome one. I felt better when I reached camp yesterday than I did the morning I left.

I was surprised to see in the first paper I picked up, and you no doubt have read it before this that we had an engagement with the enemy and captured seven hundred prisoners.

How such lies get into the papers I cant imagine. We had no fight and saw no enemy except a few Guerillas.

Though we had no fight we never made a more disastrous march. There was hardly a Reg. which had not more or less killed and wounded by the prowling citizens who inhabit this country.

Our Regt lost one of their best men John Winchall Orderly Seargeant of company B. We have two others wounded a private in company H. and company I drummer a mere boy.

I never want to march through this country again, if two of the richest and most enlightened counties of Arkansas carry out the orders of Genl Hindman to such perfection what may we expect from the others. More stringent measures must be adopted. Such proceedings must stop as every house in Arkansas should be laid in ashes.

Mother I send you twenty dollars. We received two months pay the night we left here. Our clothing account over ten months was taken out. Mine was five dollars. This was done so as to have the new year to commence the first of June. The clothing money due us for last year will be added to the clothing money of this.

I wish you would if convenient send me four woolen shirts two for myself and two for Kelly. The Government shirts are getting so worthless I dont intend to take any more of them.

If you send the shirts just put them in a package and express them to this place--Yes put in a pair of suspenders if you can get good ones. If this is not asking too much please send them.

My love to you
and Willie, Sis S. C. Bishop

Helena Ark. Aug 24, 1862

Dear Mother,

Your letter of the 11th inst is at hand and I

hasten to answer it. As I wrote you immediately after getting back from White River you have been relieved of any anxiety concerning me.

As I told you in my last our expedition was a fruitless one yet I still see it paraded in the papers that we had a fight and captured seven hundred prisoners. Our second day out from H. we scouted through the woods all day after a supposed enemy but we saw nothing but a few Guerrilla pickets. Our battery threw a few shells at them and they skedaddled.

The second day after reaching Clarendon our company with some others were thrown across White river as pickets. We lay in the canebreak four days watching for the appearance of an enemy. The place was a most wild one and I did not know some times what to be most on the lookout for, snakes, Bears, or some lurking secesh. The place was a fit habitation for any of them.

To make our line safe we sent out skirmishers each day to reconnoiter. We frequently found in the canebreak what had been the hiding-place of some lurking secesh. We were too vigilant for them and they did not come near our lines.

Genl Hovey heretofore has not been very popular but the boys will now have to speak this much in his favor, that he handled us with more consideration to our comfort and gave us more privileges than any other General ever did before. Peaches and green corn which were in abundance, we had the privilege of getting whenever needed and no ? between prices was allowed to be paid for poultry.

Fruits of all kinds are plenty in Tennessee and Ark. Black berries were at their prime while we were at Memphis, so their was not much to getting them. I got a pint one day when on picket by carrying my gun in one hand and picking berries with the other.

While at Memphis the Secesh made their braggs that this month and next would be their best Generals, though tis' useless (?) to talk about the sunny

South than to experience the rays of his sun, yet we have proved so far that we can stand the heat and with no more injury to us as can our southern brethren. The 1st Ark a Union Regt raised in this state were with us on our last march, and they did not stand it half as well as we.

What Regts are Bill and Jim Moore in. I send my love to you all and to Sis and the children.

Write soon

S. C. Bishop

Helena, Ark. Aug 29, 1862

Dear Mother,

Your letter came to hand last night and finds me well, though our present camping place is not as healthy a situation as M. yet it has not affected my health. Kelly and Kidwell have the chills and my turn may come next.

Present appearances indicate that we shall stay here a good while. I dont think we will leave till our reuniting officers who leave in a few days get back. We are fixing up our camp and making things comfortable as possible.

I saw the list of killed and wounded in Co I a few days ago. I had heard that the 27th were engaged and was very anxious to hear the result. It was sad news. I did not expect to see so many familiar names though I know they have fallen. It seems more like a dream than a reality.

I see from the papers that Indiana is fast filling up her quota and sending them to the seat of war. This is as it should be for every thing depends upon immediate action. The rebels are fast organizing and threatening us in the rear. If the papers say that Clarksville has surrendered and Donelson eradicated ?

The Clarksville affair is a very disgraceville one. Colonel Mason should have been cashiered at Shilo for his Regt say he was the first man to run.

Their is nothing of interest transpiring here. Everything seems dead. Our bands have all gone home and we have no music to enliven dull hours as we used to. If you get the money I sent you, let me know as soon as you can.

Write Soon

From your Son

S. C. Bishop

Helena, Ark. Sept. 9th, 1862

Dear Mother,

I received your letter this morning and was glad to hear that you were still well. As I have the blues most wretchedly this morning you need not expect much good news from me. True my health was never better. Kelly just remarked this morning that he never saw me look better.

Did the affairs of our Country ever look more gloomy every paper ? with disaster from the Battle of Richmond till now. Weve been continually losing ground. Instead of thundering at the walls of Richmond we are trembling behind our works at Washington.

The papers this morning say that Newport and Covington are taken and that Cincinnati has surrendered without firing a gun. I dont believe this is true yet it shows that these places are in danger.

I hope our division may be ordered to Ky and tis likely we will be. We have been under marching orders some time.

We are having a fine time here no picket or guard duty and but very little fatigue work. You ought to be here to help us eat fish yesterday. Fish are getting as plenty as "sow belly." We have all the green corn we want. We get it from Genl Pillows plantation two miles below Helena. The plantations through here are all in corn. This is considered the wealthiest part of Ark and contained the hottest Secesh. A company from this county marched to Little Rock and demanded a surrender of

the Arsenal while in our possession.

Our expedition from this place went to Clarendon a little town on White River 68 miles from here. The country was rich as any I've seen South and well cultivated. We were at C. five days and lived on half rations. Coming back we didn't want for anything. Fruit and everything was plenty.

You need not be in any hurry with the shirts. It makes no difference about them so they are not white. This is the reason I sent for shirts. The ones we draw are white. They get dirty so quick and are so hard to keep clean. Kelly's hands be some smaller than mine. If you get them made do not send them till I write again.

Our officers are making preparations for winter suits (?) as we do not draw army regulations clothes. They are made by private contract. We are allowed forty two dollars per year for clothing. This is independent of wages. The clothing amount is settled at the end of each year. If the amount has been over that much will be taken from the wages. If the amount has not been used the surplus is credited for the next year.

Our clothing was settled up so as to make the new year to commence the first of June when otherwise it would not have commenced till the 1st of Sept.

S. C. Bishop

Helena, Ark. Sept 20th, 1862

Dear Mother,

I again have the privilege of addressing you a few lines. Your last was received three or four days ago but I have been so busy I had not time to write. Our cook left us two or three weeks since. Kidwell and I have been doing the cooking for the mess and as he took the chills I had nearly all the work to do. I baked light bread everyday.

"Always a calm after a storm." When I last wrote every thing here was excitement. The rebels

the sheet and yet write nothing very interesting. My love to you and Willie and I will bid you goodbye for this time. Write soon.

Sylvester C. Bishop

Helena. Oct. 18th/62

Dear Mother,

I again have time to address you a few lines. Since the two divisions left here I have been continually on duty, one day on picket, the next shovel and pick in hand working on the Fort.

All possibilities of us leaving here this winter are at an end, and as our tents are old and leaky we are busily engaged what time we can get building log shanties. There is a continual click of saws and axes from morning till night, as the Government furnishes us no material. We have to pick it up where we can find it.

My health is still good. There is not as much sickness as heretofore. Jim Painter was quite sick a week or two. He is now near well. We have not got Kelly's body home yet, the undertaker for some reason does not attend to it.

A batch of the Corinth prisoners passed here a few days since. They were the dirtiest set of men I ever saw, with no uniformity of dress. They looked more like a set of beggars than soldiers.

Lieutenant Baker of our Company resigned and gone home. Lieutenant Hanna has had poor health ever since we left Memphis. He talks of getting a furlough home. I am afraid he will never come back again if he does. Colonel McGinnis commands a brigade now and Lieut Col. McCauley commands the Regt.

I got a letter from Belle a few days ago. She was getting along very well. She had 42 Scholars attending School. The days are quite warm down here yet though the nights are getting quite chilly.

You will find my miniature in this letter if it every reaches you. I don't think it is a very good

picture. Write soon.

From Your Son
S. C. Bishop

-To be continued-

*

The Historical Society was pleased to have Dr. Bobby Roberts, a native of Helena, as guest speaker at the January meeting. He is curator of rare books and archives at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, a new position. He had been assistant curator of rare books at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. He has a Ph. D. in history from the University of Arkansas, and a Master of Library Science from the University of Oklahoma.

Bobby told about his work with archival materials at UALR, and in connection with this, encouraged historical societies to collect documentary papers, primary materials, and early photographs of their locales before any more of them are lost.

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From the ARKANSAS LEGIONNAIRE
January 31, 1925

Cotton in Helena. Old Ways and New.

Helena, Ark.--The history of Helena and the history of cotton are inextricably interwoven, and any mention of the history of the white staple which has for three generations been the main source of the wealth of Helena and of the South induces on the part of the writer who is at all prone to indulge in reminiscences an impulse to recite, for purposes of contrast with present-day methods, some of the conditions, customs and practices in vogue a half century or more ago.

In the late 60s and early 70s the industry was under the sway of the old horse gin, which, while it did separate the lint from the seed as effectually as does the modern gin with its blower, beaters and conveyors, failed to take out the dust and sand. Distinct from causes connected with mules and mechanism, a certain human element underlay the reason why the cotton of those days was never ginned with the smooth uniformity which characterizes the product from the modern machines; the boys who drove the mules would speed up on cold days, but when the weather was balmy the pace was more leisurely. On actually hot days, it was generally considered correct to take a nap on the beam-pole, leaving to the discretion of the mules the choice of gait.

As late as the year 1885 Helena had only one railroad (a very large point of interrogation should be placed after the word "railroad"), the Arkansas Midland, which never ran five hundred yards without turning over. This road was built by Stephen A. Dorsey, United States senator of Star Route fame, who sought and obtained federal, state, county and municipal aid in the form of bond issues to dig a canal for the drainage of the fertile fields lying between the White and the Mississippi rivers. His "canal"

proved to be two small ditches running parallel to each other, with dirt thrown up between them, which formed a roadbed for his "railroad." After pulling all the legs in Arkansas, he went North in search of a fresh and more lucrative field. He succeeded in landing the late Albert H. Johnson, a most excellent gentleman, and upon him unloaded his streak of rust for a fat round sum.

I digress; I remind myself of something the HEL-ENA WORLD says about "Daddy" Hall--that though he may take a verse from the Bible for his text, after you have listened to him you arrive at the conclusion that any other verse would have been just as appropriate.

Back to my subject!

Prior to the building of the Arkansas Midland railroad all of the cotton from as far as fifty miles west of Helena was hauled thither there by wagon over the roads which would today be regarded as impassable, and thence shipped by boat to New Orleans commission merchants. Though freight rates were not so high then as now, because of the fact that there were no compresses, it required five times the space for a given number of bales.

The improvements of today--improvements well within the range of vision of a man not yet old--who has been all his life interested in cotton, both in transportation (railroads, steamships and hard-surface roads), and in machinery (improved gins and compresses) are wonderful. It is good to have lived to see it all. But since the mind of man runneth not back to the contrary, one feature of the cotton game has remained steadfastly fixed in status quo; in spite of all human ingenuity, and notwithstanding the expenditure of vast sums in experimenting, no one has ever made a machine with any semblance of success to pick cotton.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
ARKANSAS LEGIONNAIRE, January 31, 1925

Helena, Ark.--Rotary was born in Chicago in 1905. At that time it consisted of one club with five members. Today, less than twenty years from the date of its beginning, Rotary International is composed of eighteen hundred clubs, with a membership of more than one hundred thousand, representing twenty-seven countries besides the United States of America. This rapid growth is the more wonderful when you know that it has been made without the help of a single paid organizer.

The Rotary Club at Helena, Ark., is a part of this great organization. In 1916 it received its charter from Rotary headquarters in Chicago, and from that moment has endeavored to live up to the motto, "Service, Not Self." Under its first president, Dr. Aris Cox, the club prospered and grew in numbers so that when the great war came on it was ready to do its part. George Nicholls was at the head of the club the first year of the war and Hamilton McRae during the second. During this period the Helena Rotary Club answered all calls made on it for service in the many different war time activities. Its members were active on all the different drives, such as those for funds for the Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus. They also took an active part in the sale of Liberty Bonds, doing a great deal to help Helena and Phillips county "over the top" in every drive.

Besides the war work there were the home fires to keep burning. When the Community Welfare Board was organized to take care of all the Helena charities in one big drive the Rotary Club to a man joined in with the work and each year has aided in this civic task.

The year after the Armistice found Roby Harrington as president. He was followed by Bass Straub. It was during this period that the club fostered the boys' work movement and obtained for

Helena its first full-time worker with boys.

E. M. Allen, Henry Anderson and Tappan Hornor followed in succession as presidents of the Helena Club. Under their leadership the club joined in with all community work. Among other things fostered by it has been the annual community Christmas tree. Each year, with the assistance of the other clubs and civic organizations of the city, the club has striven to see to it that no home in Helena or this vicinity should go without some Christmas cheer. This past Christmas in conjunction with the Civitan Club and the United Charities the Rotary Club aided in the organization of a "Goodfellows Club," patterned after that of Memphis.

Under the leadership of the present president, Robert Foster, Jr., the club organized the Crowley's Ridge Council, Boy Scouts of America, composed of the following counties: Crittenden, Lee, Phillips, Monroe, Woodruff, Cross and St. Francis. This work, the club thinks, will be of great benefit to the many boys of this Council.

GEORGE de MAN'S BOOK

The Historical Society is sponsor, sales agent, and sales beneficiary for George de Man's book, *HELENA THE RIDGE THE RIVER THE ROMANCE*. The past few months have been quite an experience for the six or eight people concerned with sales, promotion, publicity, mailings, and keeping records, and it has been an experience not soon forgotten.

Sales started last November with 750 paperback copies of the book on hand, selling at \$6.00 each. We then had 250 hardcover copies added to the 750 at \$10.00 each, but only 100 of these were available at Christmas time, and there were more than 100 advance orders waiting to be satisfied. There were a few hard feelings on the part of those who wanted to use the hardcovers as Christmas gifts, but, hopefully, these were forgotten when the remaining books arrived from Little Rock in early January.

There was also the problem of a confused mailing list just before the Library closed for Christmas, resulting in four delayed copies, but this was eventually straightened out. Two or three copies found their ways back when labels and stamps came off, but magic tape solved this problem in future mailings.

The Helena and West Helena Libraries have been the main sales spots, but many were sold at the Helena Bookstore, some at the Almer Store and St. John's Bookstore, and some at Marvell. People long away from here got word of the book--one wonders how in many cases--and called long distance to the Library to hold a copy until the check arrived. No copies were sent without advance payment, except to about a dozen libraries, and their ordering methods often require book before payment. Some of the far away purchasers ordered a second book as a gift, and told in their second orders which articles they had

liked the most and made other observations.

There are a few copies of this original printing left, at \$10.00 for a hardcover and \$6.00 for a paperback, plus an additional \$1.00 for each book mailed out. The book will be reprinted, but the number of copies will have to be decided on, a place of storage will have to be found, and a few other questions answered. Perhaps some decisions can be made at the April or June meetings.

*

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER: 1978-1979

Harry B. Abernathy	Clarksdale, Miss.
Polk W. Agee*	Memphis, Tenn.
Milton Alexander	Helena
Mrs. Ada W. Allen	Sardis, Miss.
Mrs. Tom Allen	Brinkley, Ark.
American Antiquarian Soc.	Worcester, Mass.
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Ariz. Br. Genealogical Lib.	Mesa, Ariz.
Arkansas State University	State Univ., Ark
Univ. of Central Ark.	Conway, Ark.
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James P. Baker, Jr.	West Helena
Mrs. Max L. Baker	Sherwood, Ark.
Dr. L. J. Patrick Bell	Helena
James V. Belsha*	Phoenix, Ariz,
Dr. Bill Biggs*	Helena
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Mrs. Henry Bollman	Lockney, Texas
Asa W. Bonner*	Farmington, Mich.
Mrs. Gill Bonner	Marianna, Ark.
Mrs. Ellamai P. Boyte	West Helena
Mrs. Gene Bradford	West Helena
Joe Bragdon	West Helena
Mrs. Herbert R. Brantley	West Helena
Mrs. Bill Brothers*	Helena
Mrs. Stella Brown	West Helena
Dr. Glen E. Bryant*	Helena
Mrs. Louis P. Buese*	Honolulu, Hawaii
J. Frank Burke*	Merritt Island, Fla.
Mrs. Jerry L. Burns	Columbia, Tenn.
Mrs. John T. Caldwell, Jr.*	Jackson, Miss.
Mrs. Bernard Capes	West Helena
Gere Carnathan	Helena
Mrs. Opal Carr	West Helena
Mrs. Rufus Carruth	West Helena
Mrs. E. B. Carvill	Helena
H. C. Carvill	Little Rock, Ark.
Central High School Library	West Helena
Paul Chambers*	Houston, Texas

Mrs. Ann R. Cherry*	Little Rock, Ark.
Mrs. Thomas H. Choate, Jr.	Helena
Mrs. Ivon Clay	Marianna, Ark.
Mrs. A. M. Coates	Helena
Miss Bessie Cohen	Helena
Miss Martha L. Conditt	Nashville, Tenn.
Mrs. Vivian R. Cone	Memphis, Tenn.
Mrs. Fred Connaway	Helena
Fred J. Cooper*	N. Sacramento, Calif.
George W. Cooper*	N. Sacramento, Calif.
Dr. Aris Cox	New Orleans, La.
Mrs. Alfred Crisp	Marvell
Mrs. Chesterfield Crisp	Marvell
Mrs. James Harold Crisp	Marvell
Mrs. John C. Crisp	Marvell
Mrs. Marion M. Crisp	Elaine
Mrs. Warren Crisp	Marvell
Mrs. Frances E. Crouch	Lexa
Mrs. Fred Crum	West Memphis, Ark.
Fred S. Crum	Houston, Texas
Mrs. Dick Cunningham	West Helena
Ernest Cunningham	Helena
Mrs. Gordon Cunningham*	West Helena
Mrs. Floyd E. Curtis	Helena
The Rev. Bob Dailey	West Helena
Leonard C. Davis	Trenton, Mo.
Ben H. Davison	Marvell
Mrs. James L. de Pauli	Coulterville, Calif.
Jess Dew*	Oklmulgee, Okla.
Dr. Ralph Douglas*	Pine Bluff, Ark.
Robert A. Duncan III	Williamsburg, Va.
Elaine High School Library	Elaine
Elaine Public Library	Elaine
Mrs. William A. Ellis	Helena
Mrs. S. W. Epes	Helena
F. Lee Evans*	Atlanta, Ga.
E. C. Ewart	West Helena
Mrs. Fred Faust	West Helena
Mrs. Thomas E. Faust	Helena
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Mrs. Winston Foster	Marvell

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Mrs. Ray Fuller	Marvell
Mrs. Grady Garmes	Little Rock, Ark.
Col. Frank R. Garner III*	Helena
Mrs. Paul Garner	Marvell
George Gibson	Helena
Mrs. Wilma Gibson	Poplar Grove
Gist Music Co.*	Helena
Mrs. Thomas H. Gist, Sr.	Marianna, Ark.
Mrs. Michael Gradus	Helena
Ray H. Graves	Poplar Grove
Mrs. E. G. Green	West Helena
Mrs. Mary Gschwend	Marvell
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Mrs. Sheila Harris	Pine Bluff, Ark.
Mrs. Lillian L. Hatfield	Helena
J. N. Heiskell Library	Little Rock, Ark.
Norbert E. Henkel	Helena
Mrs. E. B. Hicks	West Memphis, Ark.
Mrs. H. D. Higby	Helena
W. E. Higginbotham*	Helena
Mrs. Katherine S. Hill	Helena
Max Hirsch*	Marvell
Aubrey Holtzclaw	Durant, Okla.
Miss Florence Holtzclaw	Little Rock, Ark.
Dr. Albert A. Hornor	Chestnut Hill, Mass.
Mrs. E. T. Hornor, Jr.	Helena
E. T. Hornor, Sr.	West Helena
Mrs. J. A. Hornor	Denton, Texas
Lawson D. Hornor*	West Helena
Mrs. Robert M. Hornor, Jr.	Helena
Tap Hornor	Little Rock, Ark.
Tully Hornor III	Helena
Mrs. N. R. Hosey	Marvell
N. R. Hosey	Marvell
J. M. Howe*	Wabash
Mrs. Otis W. Howe	Helena
Otis W. Howe, Jr.*	Helena
Otis Howe III	Fayetteville, Ark.
Mrs. Harry L. Hudson	Memphis, Tenn.
N. V. Hyde, Jr.	Jacksonville, Fla.

Lee H. Jacks*	Little Rock, Ark.
Miss Dorothy James	Helena
Mrs. Joseph W. Johnson	Berkeley, Calif.
Maurice E. Johnson*	Elaine
Benjie Johnston	West Helena
James B. Jolley	Daleville, Ala.
Mrs. Basil Jones	Elaine
Mrs. B. L. Jones	Midland, Texas
Steven W. Jones	West Helena
Mrs. Mary L. Kahn	Helena
Mrs. Jim Keasler	Marianna, Ark.
Allen R. Keesee*	Helena
T. W. Keesee, Jr.	Mt. Kisco, N. Y.
George P. Kelley	Dermott, Ark.
Clancy King	Helena
Mrs. Ellis King	Holly Grove, Ark.
James S. King dec'd.	Helena
John C. King, Jr.	Helena
Mrs. C. M. T. Kirkman	Helena
Dr. C. M. T. Kirkman	Helena
Miss Dale Kirkman	Little Rock, Ark.
Miss Helen Kloene	Memphis, Tenn.
Mrs. M. H. Klutts	Clarksdale, Miss.
James G. Knight III	Memphis, Tenn.
Mrs. Elmer Kummer	Fort Worth, Texas
Mrs. Ralph Kyte	Elaine
Mrs. Lee Lawrence	Helena
Mrs. Charles Lederman, Jr.	West Helena
Charles Lederman, Jr.	West Helena
Mrs. Fred Lee*	West Helena
Mrs. Fred Leifer	Barton
Mrs. George LeMaistre	Washington, D. C.
Barney Lewis*	Helena
Ben H. Lucy, Jr.	Hendersonville, Tenn.
Mrs. B. H. Lucy*	Elaine
John J. Lueken, Jr.*	Helena
Alto McCarty	Helena
Gordon E. McCarty	Helena
Mrs. Bill McDonald	Marvell
Mrs. Wanda L. McKinney	San Pedro, Calif.
Mrs. J. B. Maguire	Shreveport, La.

J. M. Massey	West Helena
Mrs. James I. Mayer	Helena
Mrs. Van G. Meek, Sr.	Marvell
Memphis State University	Memphis, Tenn.
Miss Sandra R. Miller	Louisville, Ky.
Mrs. T. G. Miller	West Helena
Mrs. T. M. Mills	Elaine
Durwood Montgomery	Helena
C. L. Moore	Helena
Mrs. John T. Moore	Elaine
Mrs. Leonora H. Morris	West Helena
Walter L. Morris*	West Helena
H. W. Mosby*	Helena
Louis S. Mosby	Arlington, Texas
Ira F. Mundt	West Helena
New York Public Library	New York, N. Y.
Mrs. Cornelia B. Nicholls	Moraga, Calif.
Richard D. Noble*	Los Alamitos, Calif.
Mrs. Eugene Orr	Jacksonville, Fla.
W. F. Pannell	Elaine
Miss Dorothy Papa	Helena
Mrs. Richard A. Park	Poplar Grove
The Rev. Richard A. Park	Poplar Grove
Mrs. Frances Patridge	Barbourville, Ky.
Miss Lily Peter*	Marvell
Phillips Co. Chamber of Com.	Helena
Phillips Co. Community Col.	Helena
Capt. Stanley H. Pierce*	Memphis, Tenn.
Mrs. James H. Pillow	Helena
Pine Bluff Public Library	Pine Bluff, Ark.
John M. Pittman	West Helena
Joseph M. Pollard*	Arcadia, Calif.
Mrs. R. H. Porter	West Helena
Ray Pounds*	Helena
Mrs. Lewis Powell	Helena
C. W. Rabb*	Memphis, Tenn.
Mrs. Terry Reece	N. Little Rock, Ark.
H. A. Reynolds	Cypress, Calif.
Mrs. Shelby Richardson	Clifton, Texas
The Rev. H. H. Rightor	Alexandria, Va.
Mrs. Paul Roberson	Helena

Mrs. Bobby Roberts	Little Rock, Ark.
Carl M. Robins	Helena
Mrs. Guy Robinson*	Marvell
Mrs. W. D. Robinson	West Helena
Mrs. Burke B. Roche	Park Ridge, Ill.
W. A. Rogers	West Helena
Mrs. Neil Rothschild	Helena
Mrs. Floyd O. Rutherford	Helena
Jan C. Sarna	N. Little Rock, Ark.
Mrs. Mary Sayle	Helena
Derryl Schaffhauser	West Helena
Mrs. F. W. Schatz*	Helena
A. G. Seaton	West Helena
Mrs. J. W. Shackelford	Helena
J. W. Shackelford	Helena
Mrs. Louis E. Shell	Little Rock, Ark.
Rudy Shultz, Jr.	Helena
Miss F. Juanita Smith	West Memphis, Ark.
Paul C. Smith	Helena
Mrs. Robert A. Smith*	Marietta, Ga.
Mrs. Ross Smith	West Helena
David Solomon*	Helena
Donald N. Speck	Chattanooga, Tenn.
Miss Ruth Speck	Lexa
Harry G. Stephens*	West Helena
Bentley E. Story	Forrest City, Ark.
Mrs. David R. Straub	Helena
Van Strawn	Helena
Mrs. Dorothy G. Suddath	Marvell
Mrs. Aubrey Sylar	West Helena
James A. Tappan	Helena
Mrs. Thomas E. Tappan*	Helena
Thomas E. Tappan*	Helena
W. T. Tappan*	Corrales, N. M.
Mrs. Wesley Taylor	Memphis, Tenn.
A. B. Thompson, Jr.	Marvell
Francis L. Thompson*	Helena
Mrs. H. L. Thomson	San Mateo, Calif.
Everett Tucker, Jr.*	Little Rock, Ark.
Mrs. James E. Tucker	Elaine
Mrs. Gibson Turley*	Helena

Gibson Turley*	Helena
Berry E. Turner	Poplar Grove
Mrs. John T. Turner	Clarendon Hills, Ill.
Robert W. Turner	Colt, Ark.
Thomas B. Turner	Marvell
William L. Turner	Marvell
Mrs. Catherine M. Vineyard	Dallas, Texas
Dr. J. P. Vineyard, Jr.*	Austin, Texas
Mrs. W. D. Vining	Helena
Miss Frances Wahl	Helena
Mrs. J. F. Wahl	Helena
Miss Dorothy Walker	Helena
Charles C. Warfield, Jr.*	Baton Rouge, La.
Mrs. Roy B. Warren	Helena
Capt. Frederick Way, Jr.	Sewickley, Pa.
Mrs. Harry J. Webb	Helena
Miss Nora Webb	West Helena
Mrs. Rose White	Marvell
Mrs. T. H. White, Jr.	Marvell
Walter A. White	West Helena
Mrs. G. C. Whiting	Glyndon, Md.
Kimbrough Willey	Memphis, Tenn.
Mrs. Elmer Lee Williams*	West Helena
State Historical Soc. of Wis.*	Madison, Wis.
Mrs. Donald Wood	Helena
W. H. Woodin	Helena
Mrs. T. E. Wooten*	Helena
Robert L. Wright, Jr.	Helena
Kenneth Yancey	West Helena
C. M. Young	Helena
Porter C. Young	Helena
Mrs. R. J. Young	Poplar Grove

*Sustaining member

Dues for the membership year, 1979-1980, are payable to the Treasurer, as of May 1, 1979. They are \$5.00 for a regular membership, or \$10.00 for a sustaining membership.

*

WORLD WAR I

Editors of the Quarterly:

Enclosed you will find a picture of my father, Whit Brown, and a picture of his service medal. I have very little information about his tour of duty, but what little I have is as follows:

Whit Brown--Serial No. 1575080
Private--Company F, 312th Infantry, U. S. Army
Inducted at Helena, Arkansas on July 5, 1918
Sailed from United States on October 6, 1918
Served overseas in France
Arrived back in United States on May 25, 1919
Discharged at Camp Robinson, Little Rock, on
June 4, 1919
His monthly pay was \$33.00
Insurance fee 6.70
Net pay was \$26.30

My mother still has the book in which his pay was recorded. She also has a huge safety pin (probably brass) which they used to pin their duffle bags or backpacks. He sailed back to the United States on the ship on which so many men died of the flu and were buried at sea, but I have searched and searched and cannot find the name of the ship. My father was born and raised at Creigh, Arkansas.

Sincerely,

Helen Vining

A picture of Whit Brown is on the next page, and a picture of his medal for service in France is on the page following that.

*

Gibson Turley*	Helena
Berry E. Turner	Poplar Grove
Mrs. John T. Turner	Clarendon Hills, Ill.
Robert W. Turner	Colt, Ark.
Thomas B. Turner	Marvell
William L. Turner	Marvell
Mrs. Catherine M. Vineyard	Dallas, Texas
Dr. J. P. Vineyard, Jr.*	Austin, Texas
Mrs. W. D. Vining	Helena
Miss Frances Wahl	Helena
Mrs. J. F. Wahl	Helena
Miss Dorothy Walker	Helena
Charles C. Warfield, Jr.*	Baton Rouge, La.
Mrs. Roy B. Warren	Helena
Capt. Frederick Way, Jr.	Sewickley, Pa.
Mrs. Harry J. Webb	Helena
Miss Nora Webb	West Helena
Mrs. Rose White	Marvell
Mrs. T. H. White, Jr.	Marvell
Walter A. White	West Helena
Mrs. G. C. Whiting	Glyndon, Md.
Kimbrough Willey	Memphis, Tenn.
Mrs. Elmer Lee Williams*	West Helena
State Historical Soc. of Wis.*	Madison, Wis.
Mrs. Donald Wood	Helena
W. H. Woodin	Helena
Mrs. T. E. Wooten*	Helena
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Helen Vining

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*

Coming Soon

WITTSBURG, ARKANSAS: CROWLEY'S RIDGE
STEAMBOAT RIVERPORT, 1848-1890

by

Richard L. Hartness, Sr.

Yes! This long awaited, chronological story of Wittsburg, Cross County, Arkansas, is now in the latter pre-publication stage. The book brings together many facts, as well as an occasional tall tale about this steamboat riverport, wholesale trade center, county seat, head of St. Francis River commercial navigation, way station on the way west, and hometown of yesteryear. Publication is tentatively scheduled for fall of 1979. This will be a limited, collector's edition of 1000 copies.

In addition to the easily read text, there will be a footnote section for the researcher, a name index for the genealogist, a general index for the Arkansas history buff, numerous supporting appendices, as well as photographs and maps.

Special features include: 1) the Crowley's Ridge creation theory in simple, everyday language; 2) a story about the Cherokee Village, for which Village Creek State Park was named; 3) a new look at the authenticity of Northeast Arkansas' so-called "Spanish Grants;" 4) a story about the complex character of William Strong, and 5) a model study of a town's dependence upon location and economic factors.

Your help is needed. Publication depends on advanced orders. Pre-publication cost of a book is \$6.95; and after publication they will be sold for \$9.95 each. Postage and handling will be added for those books sent by mail. Reserve the copies you want by ordering from:

Cross County Historical Society, Inc.
c/o Mrs. Jimmie James, Sec.-Treasurer
Box 943 Wynne, Arkansas 72396

THE HIGH WATER OF 1897
From the HELENA WORLD

Compiled by
Gene Bradford

March 17, 1897

River news: River rose 8 inches
Above zero 45 feet six inches
Below high water 2 feet 6 inches

The great rise since yesterday made us think we had read the gauge wrong but second efforts showed the same. The river at this stage in 1893 was only 10 inches and the river did not reach its extreme height for several days. Expect the river to continue to rise until around April 3. J. B. M.

March 24, 1897

A Walk Down the Levee

A reporter for the HELENA WORLD took a walk down along the levee fronting the city this morning. He found it in very good shape all along to a good distance below the Helena Box Factory.

There is a very narrow place which looks somewhat dangerous just below the Box Factory and directly opposite the Straub suburban residence. Some little distance below this place a very hard fight was made last night to keep the water out. This place was looking decidedly better this morning.

Just by the Helena Oar Factory there was discovered a very ugly looking place in the bottom portion of the levee. Mr. Joe Pillow put his gang of men to work on it and covered it over with several layers of sand.

The mills have been made to stop hauling logs as the parties in charge of the levee think it is too

dangerous and risky.

The steamer KATE ADAMS confirmed rumors that the levee broke just below Modoc on the Mississippi side day before yesterday.

Mule Drowned

This morning about half past eight o'clock a poor lonely mule met his death in the city pond situated at the corner of Cherry and Perry Streets. The mule couldn't be blamed poor thing for he had sense enough to know that he was in the city limits and was not expecting to stumble into a trap. And even though it might have been his intention to take a little wade in to rinse off his feet he had no reason to suspect that there was the slightest danger of his being drowned so near the business portion of the city. But in he went nevertheless notwithstanding and it was not long before he had breathed his last. It now devolves upon the city to give this mule a decent burial and a large number have requested that the headstone of his grave will be marked with the following inscription, "Died March 20, 1897, in the city's favorite fishing and swimming pond. May this grave be a gentle reminder of this, the city's own pet pond."

Cut the Levee

This morning at seven o'clock all hopes of saving the North Helena levee were given up owing to the increased rise in the river, and the conclusion was arrived at that it would better advantage North Helena by cutting the levee and letting the water in at a slow rate. This was done up by the end of the levee where it comes out at the Big Springs road. It will not take a great while for North Helena to be under water now but the cutting of the levee gives everybody a chance of making all their preparations.

A lot of men were kept working on the levee last night where the water was found to be washing over the bank and had the river remained at a stand

North Helena might have escaped, but the river, rising as it was, made it an evident fact that the levee could not be held intact.

North Helena Flooded

The water came in on North Helena with a rush last Saturday evening about six o'clock, when not being content with being confined to the small cut in the levee at its northern extremity the mighty Father of Waters began to pour over with a great roar all along the banks. One Negro shanty standing just outside the Fair Grounds on the south side was caught up by the mighty rush of the waters and carried nearly over to the hills being broken in a thousand pieces enroute.

It was about half past nine when the water had risen to the lower stories of the residences of Messrs. H. C. Rightor and R. H. Lloyd, and by noon yesterday the water reached two feet in Mr. Rightor's residence, many inches higher than it had ever before.

The worst part of the story is that the river is still rising.

The work on Walker Street levee was kept up all Saturday night. Great crowds of people, a large number with their kodaks in hand, paraded Walker Street levee all day yesterday taking "overflow snapshots."

Generous Gift

The city of Helena is under obligation to the Iron Mountain Railroad for that road's generous gift. A special train containing twenty carloads of sacks filled with sand was sent down to Helena reaching here at four yesterday afternoon.

Much Higher Than North Helenians Expected

Yesterday was another busy day for North Helena under water over Walker Street Levee. None of the residents expected the water to reach the height it has and only scaffolded their effects to a little above previous overflow marks.

There are only four residences in the overflow district into which water has not gained entrance, those of Messrs. Fripp, Geo. Walker, H. R. Turner and R. C. Reed.

Walker Street Levee All O. K.

The men engaged in stopping the trouble up at the culvert running through Walker Street Levee yesterday put in one of their best day's work they have ever done in their lives, for all realized that it meant a great deal to the entire city. The whole day was occupied in stopping the water from coming through, which was achieved later in the evening. Tis true the water is coming through but very slowly and will not affect the levee.

The Walker Street Culvert

An excerpt from a letter from James B. Miles stating he was a member of the Council when the ordinance was passed for the construction of the levee and culvert but was not a member at the time the culvert was put in. At his insistence the culvert was made "a perfect circle rather than with a flat bottom and is brick laid in cement and about as solid as an iron or stone pipe. In 1882, I think, the water filled along as it has now and the authorities employed Mr. Searcy to dam it. He took heavy timbers and punched the upper head off instead of putting in a wooden door and stopping nearly all the water. They kept fooling with it just as they are now, and finally gave up and let it run as they will have to do now."

The True Conditions

The WORLD'S Staff Correspondent Tells What He Saw

The levee from Helena as far down as Relief, Ark., is found to be in a condition that cannot possibly last under the prevalent condition of the elements.

From Helena as far as Westover there is a

levee which has done service since the days of 1882. The last break occurred in March 1886. From that day until now the Government has expended some \$225,000. That expenditure has been a safeguard to over 1,000,000 acres of the richest land in the world. Leaving Helena at 2:14 p. m. the levees were followed the entire distance to Modoc, which is 36 miles below Helena. Capt. E. D. Pillow, who has been fighting the mighty Father of Waters for the past 25 years, has a force of 300 men working from the box factory to Long Lake. The levee, which has a narrow apex for nearly three miles, has been guarded with a row of sacks filled with sand, which will protect the levee for that distance. Capt. Pillow is assisted by Mr. T. H. Rice, who has for the last fifteen years been a levee builder.

The levee from Helena to Old Town is safe. Between Long Lake and the Fitzhugh place, where the break of 1886 occurred, the levee is patrolled by competent guards. In the "run around" the water is within eighteen inches of the top of the levee. There are laborers enough to keep the levee secure for two feet six inches more of water. No apprehension is felt there. It was at the Fitzhugh place in 1886 that the levee broke, which was all the damage in the White river bottoms. At present there is no danger in this locality. With a force of 300 men Maj. C. H. Purvis, Engineer of Cotton Belt Levee District No.1, from Helena to White river, says he will hold this levee if human force can do it.

It has been raining on the levee for the last 48 hours and the levees are as soft and mushy as they can be. Capt. J. T. Brame, who is one of the most successful planters, is Captain of the levee forces from the Fitzhugh place to the Casteel place. This territory includes about nine miles of levee. He says that if the levee can be held by work and men he will hold it. In front of the old Apperson or Westover place, now owned by S. Rembert, he has a levee that will hold from 1½ to 3½ feet its entire length.

The lowest part of this levee is at the lower end of this place.

The highest point in the levee is from Westover to Old Town. It is low and needs a great deal of work. Capt. J. T. Brame at Westover is working as far south as he possibly can, with the crew that he now has. He has just telephoned Maj. Purvis at Old Town, that he would hold the levee to Old Town. The work on this piece of levee is being very much interfered with and makes work almost impossible, on account of the rain. At Old Town, there is a piece of new levee, which is doing good service in repelling the river. But the river and the levee are fooling the oldest inhabitants, the peculiar action of the river is confusing and puzzling the most expert river men. The river at Helena is 47 feet on the gauge, which is one and one-tenth foot below high water, while the river at Westover is six inches higher than ever known before, and at Old Town, six miles below Westover the river is three inches above the highest water mark, and at Modoc, it is 36 inches higher than ever known before.

At nine o'clock p. m., advices from Modoc are to the effect that it is impossible to hold the levee at that point until morning. The gentlemen who are in charge of that work have given up the task, their work having been in vain, although they have labored valiantly to hold it. The people who are living in that neighborhood have been warned of the impending disaster, and are fleeing for their lives.

March 31, 1897

River news: River rose 2 inches
Above low water 50 feet 7 inches
Above high water 2 feet 7 inches

Mayor Fritzson Issues Following

The gravity of the flood continues aggravated by the stormy weather.....I therefore urgently

request that all business houses be closed immediately and that every able bodied man in the city report at once to the persons in charge of the levee and bring them such tools for handling dirt as they may be able to get. Every person who can command a team should report to the undersigned for service in hauling dirt.

An hour after the proclamation the town was like Sunday except on the levee where great activity reigned.

Letter

Mr. W. M. Neal:

We can certify that Capt. Henry and Duke Wellington cut the levee at Island 65 on the Hunter place a quarter mile above School House Bayou.

George Davidson

Dave Wilson

Additional evidence was hardly necessary that the levee had been cut by the Levee Board but these men volunteered to make the above statement and we published it.

Mr. Gray has just come out of the St. Francis River bottom. He says the situation is simply beyond description. In many places houses are under water up to the eaves.....

It may be interesting to our citizens to know just how deep they would go under should the levee break. Mr. Thomas Jacks took the level of the flood yesterday.

On Main Street, Seelig, Bruen & Co., 1 foot, 6 inches; Leiber Bros., 3 feet; Eagle Block, 1 foot, 6 inches; Horn & Co., 4 feet; H. S. Hornor and all of Hornor Block, 3 feet, 6 inches; J. A. Tappan, Ben Wiley, Isadore Fink and Wooten & Agee, 1 foot, 3 inches. Mr. Jacks thinks the water would not get in to the Library though it would probably reach the pastor's study in the Methodist Church.

April 7, 1897

From the Saturday DAILY

The river continues to rise. A small break developed at Robards place last night but it was closed after the hardest kind of work. A bad place at the Box Factory had to be doctored quickly.

North Helena

Mr. Russ Porter's ceiling is barely out of water.

The Rightor residence is getting deeper and deeper in the relentless flood.

Mr. Dougall who runs a little grocery in North Helena has been compelled to scaffold up twice but all the time carried on business through windows with neighbors who came in boats.

The cottage Mr. Neal built 7 feet off the ground and 3 feet above water mark, he hoped, now has 3 feet in it.

Monday: 16 inch fall and still falling.

Tuesday: The river dropped another 8 inches.

April 14, 1897

Monday DAILY

"Old Betsy" the name which has been given the big centrifugal pump is doing wonders in South Helena. Nearly all the water in the city has been pumped out.

Up in North Helena a few people have begun to scour out their houses and will soon be able to move back home. A number of excursion boats were doing business in North Helena going as far north as the junction of the levee with the hills. The William-son crevasse has widened until skiffs now pass through with complete safety.

Flood Situation Gives Way to Refugee Situation

Capt. Butts of the Relief Committee and some citizens met with Col. Sayer of the U. S. Army. Capt. Butts said the Committee would like to be relieved entirely of the responsibility of providing for the refugees. Mr. Ed. Pillow stated that at the beginning of 1882 he had \$7,000 to make a crop that year, but after the flood and caring for his tenants and a very small crop, had not a cent at Christmas. He felt the government should help in providing for the victims. He said the best hope for the present time, 1897, was that the water would be off by the middle of May and that not much of a crop would be made in the bottoms this year.

Summed up it seems safe to say the distribution of rations will begin through our Relief Committee within about 10 days and continue, if appropriations hold out, until about 10 days before planting time. The estimate is that of 25,341 people in the county, 7,000 live in the city and one-half of the remainder live in territory subject to inundation, or about 9,000. Of these, 2 to 3,000 are now in the city or scattered along the foothills for a distance of 15 miles west, while others are on barges, levees, scattered from Modoc down, with several hundred, perhaps 1,000, on Old Town Ridge.

April 21, 1897

From the Tuesday DAILY

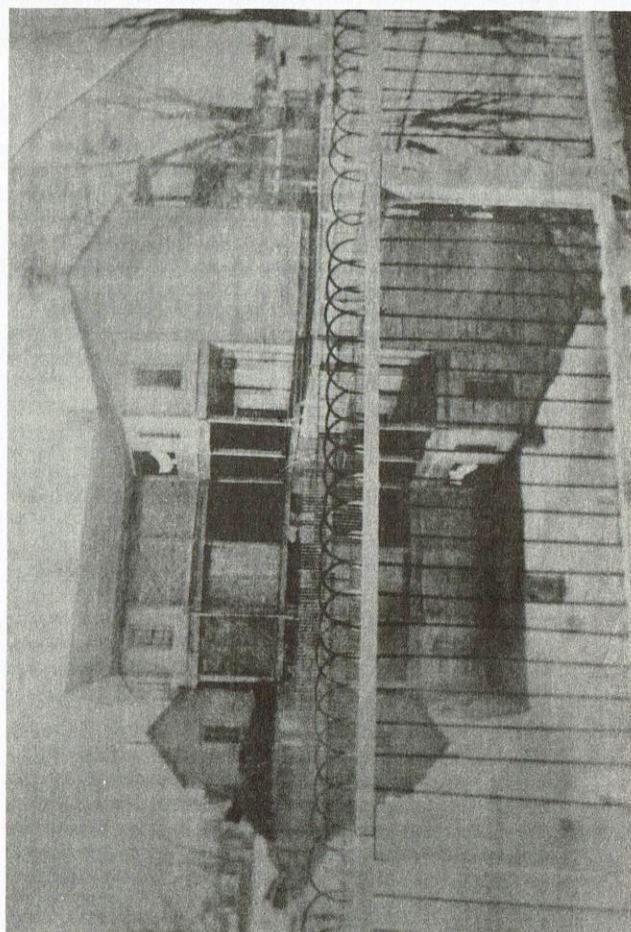
While the Mississippi is slowly receding the people of Helena are rising in fear and wrath. They don't propose to be caught again with their levees down. A committee composed of Judge M. L. Stephenson, Mr. E. C. Hornor and Hon. Greenfield Quarles submitted the following: A special act will be presented to the legislature asking for the creation of an improvement district for the City of Helena south of Walker Street for the purpose of building levees, digging ditches and putting in sewers.

May 5, 1897

Our little town is now high and dry and you can walk down the streets where citizens rowed up and down but a few days ago in bateaux.

On the following pages are some "overflow snapshots" (mentioned on Page 41), taken by an unknown hand. They are all photographs of the 1897 flood from the albums at the Library, and include: the H. C. Rightor home in North Helena, trouble at the levee at the Fair Grounds in North Helena, boys in a skiff going through the Williamson Crevasse 2½ miles south of Helena, a refugee camp, and a boat whose exact purpose is unknown.

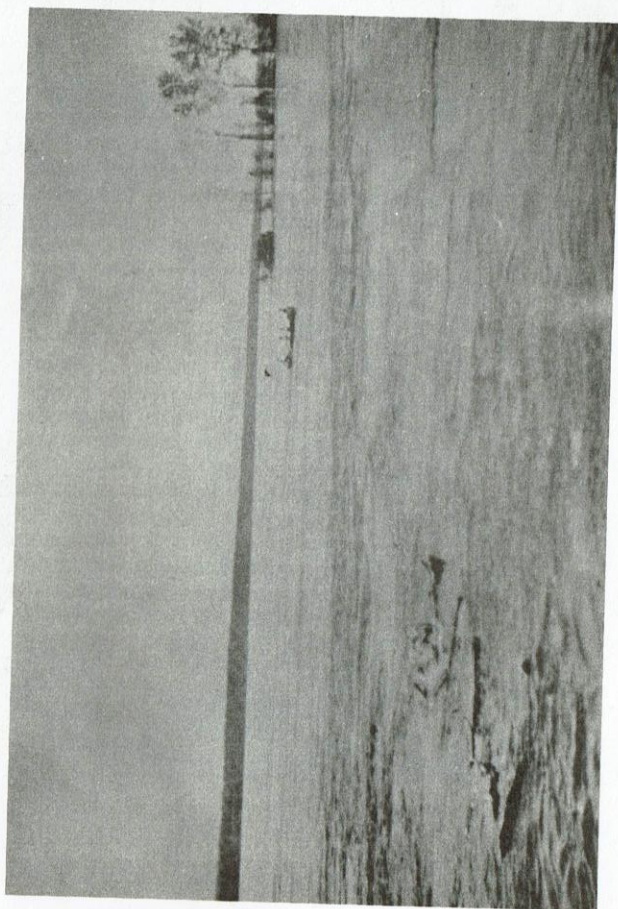
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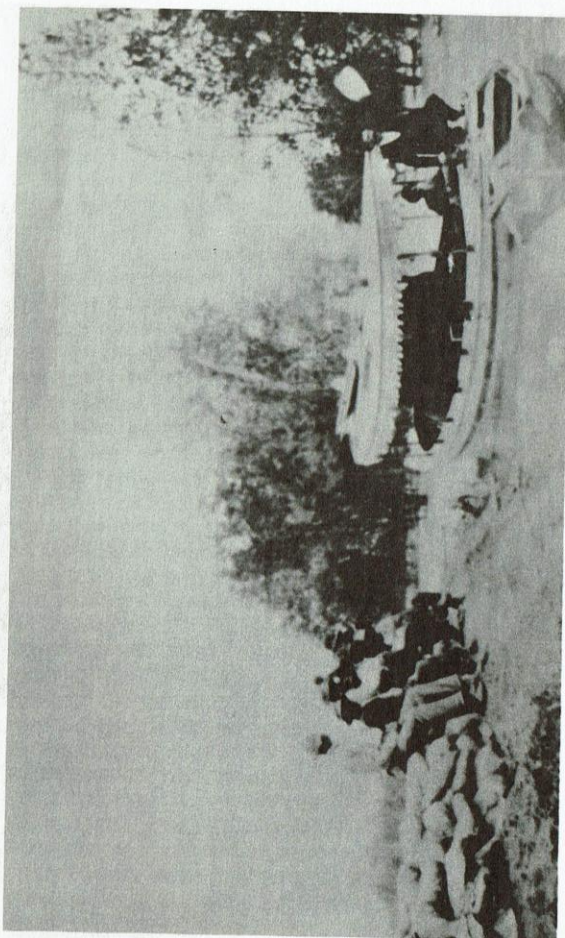
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Meetings are held in September, January, April, and June, on the fourth Sunday in the month, at 3:00 P. M. at the Phillips County Museum.

The Phillips County Historical Society supplies the QUARTERLY to its members. Membership is open to anyone interested in Phillips County history. Annual membership dues are \$5.00 for a regular membership and \$10.00 for a sustaining membership. Single copies of the QUARTERLY are \$1.25. QUARTERLIES are mailed to members. Dues are payable to Mrs. C. M. T. Kirkman, Treasurer, 806 McDonough Street, Helena, Arkansas 72342.

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