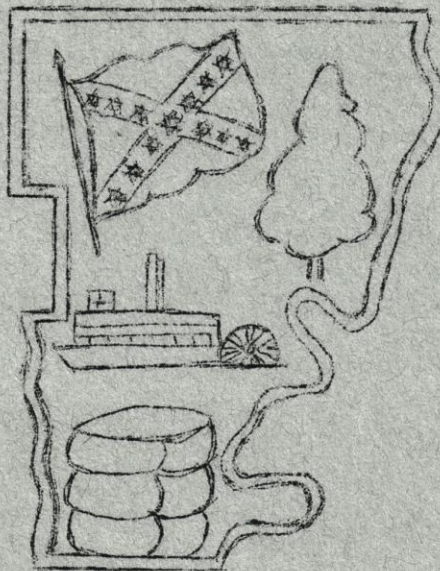


PHILLIPS COUNTY  
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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The foregoing 33 new members raises total membership to 123.

Membership dues will be due after May 1st, 1963, so please renew your membership by mailing or giving your dues to Mrs. Curtis Jeffries, 136 Oakland Avenue, Helena, Arkansas, or at Helena Public Library during working hours.

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#### WHERE DE SOTO CROSSED THE MISSISSIPPI

An address delivered at the dedication of a marker at Helena, Arkansas, on February 21, 1932, before the Helena Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, by Col. John R. Fordyce.

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"DeSoto and his men arrived in the Chickasaw country in December, 1540. There they stayed until April, 1541. The Chickasaw Indians were at first most hostile, but later they seemed to be friends and persuaded the Spanish to help them in a war against a rebellious Chief of Chocchuma, who lived near Grenada, Miss. From descriptions of the country it seems most likely that the small village of the Chickasaw, having twenty houses, where the Spaniards spent the winter, was located not far from the modern city of Aberdeen, Miss. In March of 1541 the Indians attacked the Spaniards and succeeded in burning the village, together with nearly all of their clothes, baggage, and the wooden parts of their weapons and equipment. It took about a month for the Spaniards to retemper their weapons, reconstruct their equipment and make new clothes of skins and grass. When at last they were ready they left the Chickasaw country and marched westward over the same trail which they had followed when they went against the Chocchumas.

"The trails in the Chickasaw country are described in several old French documents and are shown with great accuracy on Lusher's map, which was made when the Chickasaw lands were ceded to the United States. The trail which is the one they most likely used came out of the hill country near the present town of Charleston, and crossed the Tallahatchie River just east of Webb, continued up to Mattson, or Dublin, and then continued to Alligator, or Round Lake. The exact point of crossing of the Mississippi River cannot now be accurately found because of the fact that the river has shifted its course, but it must have been from high banks on the east to a sand bar on the west, because the historians tell us that the Spaniards had difficulty in getting down the steep banks to the water, and that when the boats landed on the western bank, the cavalry got out of the boats "at twice the distance of a stone's cast" and rode out to an open area of hard and even ground. This evidently means a sand bar. The river either near Rena Lara or Round Lake would fit this descrip-



tion. On the western side the Spaniards marched to the main town of Aquixo, which was on a plain near the great river. The men whose duty it was to bring up the boats had to keep near the shore to avoid the swift current. There were many small channels and streams. The description fits the country from Laconia Circle to Mellwood and the many side channels of the Mississippi River, and small bayous which ran out of the river towards the White River. The old French maps of Wm. deIsle show this point of crossing and the early English maps show the trail leading from the Chickasaw country to the Mississippi River and a note is made that the English traders used it. The map of the river made by Lieut. Ross notes this, and tells us that DeSoto crossed here. A soil survey map of Coahoma County shows that this Willow Point country is not in the alluvial soil of the river country but is in a bluish clay. This is the reason that the river is now so nearly in the same place that it was in the early days. While other bends have shifted and cut off and the river has gradually worked its way westward, this Willow Point region has remained in the same position and the great continental trading trails between the east and west crossed near here.

"The Indians whom DeSoto found living near the Great River were called the Quizqui. They were surprised by the Spaniards and their village captured and many of the women and children and the old men were taken prisoners. This indicated that they did not belong to the Chickasaw tribe, for if they had they no doubt would have been warned by their kindred that the Spaniards were approaching.

"Memphis was known in early days as Chickasaw Bluff and was occupied by the Chickasaw Indians. This incident alone seems to eliminate Memphis as the point of crossing. There are other reasons also which will be mentioned later. The village of Quizqui was one league from another village, which in turn was one league from another village, where they first saw the "Great River." The Spaniards reached the first Quizqui village on May 8th, but it was not until May 21st that they established themselves on a plain near the Great River and commenced to build boats in which to cross. The intervening time seems to have been spent in exploring and gathering food from the villages in the neighborhood. During the time in which the Spaniards were building their barges the Indians made



almost daily demonstrations in force. According to Elvas they came from up the river and were the men of Aquixo. This Aquixo navy with its warriors must have been a most imposing sight. There were two hundred canoes filled with armed men. They were painted with ochre and wore great plumes of white and many other colors. The warriors stood erect between the paddle men and protected them with their shields which were decorated with feathers and they held their bows and arrows ready. The head chief and the sub chiefs sat in the stern of the barges under canopies and all of the fleet maneuvers were directed by them - perhaps by drums and shouts. As these great canoes came close to the bank where DeSoto and some of his men were walking at a distance of a stone's throw, they stopped and the Chief addressed DeSoto. He said he had heard that DeSoto was the most powerful lord of the earth and that he had come to serve and obey him. DeSoto was much pleased and asked the chief to land. The chief made no reply but ordered three of his canoes to draw to shore. These were filled with fish and loaves of pressed persimmons. DeSoto thanked them and repeated his invitation to land. The Indians, however, were suspicious and began to backwater and withdraw. The Spaniards paid for the gifts of food by firing their cross bows into them, striking down five or six of them. The Indians were surprised but not confused and each one stood at his post - not one left his paddle even though the man next to him went down. The fleet withdrew in good order. After this they came frequently, but finding the Spaniards on guard they did not attack.

"They were fine looking men - very large and well formed - and the awnings, the plumes, the shields and the pennants, and the great numbers of people in the fleet made it appear like a great armada of galleys."

What a colorful and historical painting this would make and how much more true to history than the painting in the Capitol at Washington, which shows DeSoto and his men dressed in their best silks and velvets and nodding plumes and shining armour, the artillerymen pushing up a field piece. It would have been much more truthful if the artist had drawn the Spaniards in rags or dressed in skins and grass clothes because the Chickasaws had burned all of their clothes and their powder, and the only cannon had been abandoned back in Alabama.



"The crossing of the Great River was made on June 8th, 1541, so this is the day that recorded history begins in Arkansas. Perhaps it would be appropriate if this day was set aside and called "DeSoto day."

"The first village reached in Arkansas was called "Aquiyo" (Ah-kee-so). It was perhaps somewhere between Mellwood and Knowlton in Phillips County, as numerous evidences of an Indian village have been found along here by Mr. Clarence B. Moore of Philadelphia.

"DeSoto and his men stayed only long enough to break up their boats and recover the spikes and then, on June 21, they started to march up the river, towards Pacaha. They built a bridge to cross a small stream, perhaps School House Bayou, and on June 22 they spent the entire day forcing their way through the worst swamp they had seen in all of their marching. In the days before the main levees were built along the Mississippi River the river overflowed its banks when it had reached a certain stage and the waters flooded back toward White River. The country between Mellwood and Old Town Lake answers this description and was, perhaps, then flooded. On the 23rd they passed through much higher ground and passed village after village of the Casqui Indians. On the 24th they came to the principal city of the Casqui Chief. LaVega tells us that this village was seen from the top of a hill. It must, therefore, have been somewhere near the present city of Helena. It had taken the Spaniards about four days to march this distance, which is not much over forty miles. They probably did not make more than five miles when they were building the bridge and struggling through the swamp. This topographical description fixes the point of crossing the Mississippi River below Crowley's Ridge, for there is no other place on the western bank of this river where high ground could have been reached in four days march up the river except in southeastern Missouri.

"The chief of the Casqui was most friendly and invited the Spaniards into his village and gave them food and clothes. The Indian cabins were well made and over the doors there were mounted buffalo heads. The Spaniards here erected on a mound a huge cross made up of two huge pine trees and conducted the first Christian ceremony ever held in Arkansas. The



Indians joined in the singing and brought up their afflicted and showed great faith, says Rangel. The ceremony of erecting the cross gives us additional clues of locality: Biedma says that two large pine trees were used to make the cross. These trees grew around Helena, and not in the low country opposite Memphis. He also says that the cross was erected on a hand-made mound. Rangel says it was placed on a mound. Elvas says on the highest point in town, and LeVega says it was made from a large pine tree and erected on a high mound. There is topographical evidenced that Porter Lake and Bayou may have been a part of the L'Anguille or St. Francis River system. Casqui was on a small stream, but not on the main Mississippi River. It is mentioned that the Indians on both sides of the river joined in the ceremony of the cross.

"On June 26th the Spaniards left Casqui and continued their march towards Pacaha. They spent the first night in an Indian village and came the next day to a swamp over which the Indians were building a bridge. On the 29th they reached the village of Pacaha. They saw this town from a hill but it, however, was located in a plain surrounded by a stockade and a moat which connected with the river.

"The town of Pacaha must have been located near the St. Francis River and above the place where it empties into the Mississippi River, through the swamp or lake which the Indians had bridged. The Mississippi River in times past ran much farther east than it does today and there was more level, or prairie land, between the river and Crowley's Ridge than there is now. Old maps show a large body of water called Lake Michigamia where the St. Francis River is today, and it is this lake that is referred to by the DeSoto historians. Above this lake the Pacaha Indians lived. There were also villages under their control on the eastern or Mississippi side of the river.

"The Tunica Indians lived in this section of the country before the arrival of the French and there is evidence that the Pacaha Indians of DeSoto's time were of the Tunica tribe and not the Arkansas or Quapaws, whom the French found living near Helena 140 years later. These Arkansas Indians were of Siouan stock and still had a tribal migration legend which told that they had moved down from the Ohio



River, which was then called the Arkansas River. They had no temples.

"The Indians of Casqui helped the Spaniards capture the town of Pacaha, but the chief and most of the people escaped from the rear of the town in canoes. Much food and many skins were found in the town. The Casqui Indians looted the temples of the Pacaha, broke up the boxes of bones and scattered them; then took the dried heads of the warriors of their tribe from the poles around the temple and replaced them with the heads of the newly killed people of Pacaha. This accumulation of bones must have represented a long period of occupancy in probably the same place.

"Seeing that Pacaha and his people could not be followed without boats, the Chief of the Casqui sent down the river to his town and returned with many canoes and marched with many of his warriors overland. DeSoto and many of his men accompanied him upstream. The Indians in canoes discovered Pacaha hiding on an island. The Spaniards, entering the canoes with the Casqui Indians, landed on the island and captured many of the Pacaha Indians and much loot. The chief of the Pacaha escaped across the river.

"Many bundles of clothes and loot, fastened to rafts, were found floating in the river. The Casqui Indians loaded the canoes with these and they and their chief went downstream to their country. This desertion in the face of the enemy angered DeSoto and he turned on the Casqui Indians and captured twenty or thirty of them; at the same time he released a Pacaha prisoner and told him to go to his chief and tell him that if he would come in and be friends the Spaniards would join the Pacahas in a war against the Casqui. The Pacaha people then began to come into camp in large numbers. The man who claimed to be the chief was the brother of the chief. DeSoto insisted that the real chief come in. He came the next day with a large number of his people, bearing gifts of food and clothing. The Casqui chief sent a messenger begging DeSoto to forgive him for deserting. DeSoto sent him word that if he did not come he would go after him and punish him as he deserved. He showed up the next day, apologized for deserting them, and for the way his people had behaved, and presented DeSoto with his daughter to be his wife.



"DeSoto made peace between Pacaha and Casqui and invited them to a feast. Trouble broke out again when they disputed as to which chief should sit at DeSoto's right; which proves that the customs of the Indians were similar to our customs of today. Ranjel tells us that DeSoto seated Pacaha on his right because of his higher rank and more ancient lineage. The fact seems to have been conceded by Casqui, an indication that the Pacahas were not newcomers. Hence they could not have been Quapaws or Arkansas.

"While DeSoto and his men rested at Pacaha he sent out an exploring party of thirty horsemen and fifty footmen to the province of Coluca. These, returning after having travelled seven days through a desert, reported the country poor and cold and thinly populated, and the buffalo so plentiful that they prevented the people from raising maize. This was evidently the prairie country around Wheatley and farther north, as it was reported that the plains did not even have trees.

"As was his custom DeSoto inquired in which direction the country was most inhabited. The Indians replied that in a southern direction there was a large province and a country of great abundance called Quiguate.

"From these descriptions it is evident that Pacaha was but a day's journey above Casqui - say about 15 miles - and that there were communicating waterways between the two places and that Pacaha was near the main Mississippi River just as Aquixo was. Casqui was near the southeastern side of Crowley's Ridge. From the evidence of long lakes and Beaver Bayou it is evident that the L'Anguille River must have, at one time, hugged the eastern end of the ridge and have gone through the present town of Helena, and then continued down through Swift Bayou, or Beaver Bayou, and on into White River via Big Creek.

"The Pacaha and Casqui Indians both had temples. There is no account by the French that tells us that the Quapaw Indians did have temples. Another clue which shows that the Pacahas were not Quapaws is that the name of one of the wives of Chief Pacaha, whom he presented to DeSoto, was "Macanoche," which in the Tunica language is the word for "woman," according to Dr. John R. Swanton.



"On the 29th of July the Spaniards left the Pacaha and spent the first night at a village of Casqui and came the next day to the head village, and departed the next day, July 31st, and came to another village, probably near Lakeview on Old Town Lake, and on Monday, August 1st, they came to another village on the banks of the river of Casqui, which is a branch of the Great River. Chief Casqui came here and assisted them in crossing in canoes on August 2nd.

"Biedma, on whom we can nearly always rely for direction, tells us that Casqui was south of Pacaha and that from Casqui they marched southwest to a place where they crossed the River of Casqui. Assuming that near Old Town Lake was a Casqui village, then a southwesterly direction would take them to White River, and the point of crossing was probably St. Charles in Arkansas County. The old land maps show a trail leading off in this direction. There is a bayou leading off from Old Town Lake, which in the early days before levees were built, was probably big enough to float the Casqui canoes into Big Creek and thence into White River. So it seems most likely that St. Charles was the place of crossing the river of Casqui, or the White River of today. Biedma tells us that they continued their march to Quiguate, which was to the southwest, and this would have taken them down the western bank of White River. They reached this town on August 5th. The town of Quiguate was the largest they had seen in all of their travels. It was located near a river which was an arm of the Great River and on a plain or prairie. There were small lakes and streams near. The town was evidently near the Arkansas Post, possibly near Menard's, where there are a large group of mounds.

"This seems to be as far as it is necessary to trail DeSoto on this occasion."

Col. Fordyce prefaced the foregoing with an account of his method of study:

"I began these studies early in this century at the suggestion of Dr. John H. Reynolds of the Arkansas History Commission. The State Legislature had passed an act in 1905 creating this Commission. Since that time I have kept up my studies almost continuously insofar as my business affairs permitted.



"My method of study has been to read and almost memorize the accounts of Biedma, Elvas and Rangel, all eye-witnesses and members of the expedition. Also the accounts of LeVega, an eminent Spanish historian who collected the accounts of the various veterans of the expedition, forty years after their return, and wove them into a history. These were the major known documents. There are several minor documents and the Department of Archives at Seville has preserved a map which seems to have been made by someone on the expedition.

"Another angle of approach has been a study of the ethnological data published by the Bureau of American Ethnology, especially the studies made by Dr. John R. Swanton of that Bureau. In this way the location of the Indians whom De Soto met has been determined as accurately as is possible.

"Still another clue has been obtained by a study of early English and French Colonial maps and records. From these additional evidences of the Indian tribes have been obtained. The tribes met with by our early English and French explorers had traditions of the Spanish which had been passed down to them by their forefathers. In some cases relics of Spanish origin had been preserved in their temples and their graves.

"In addition to this I have made a botanical study of the trees and other plants so that I might identify those which DeSoto found. A biological study of the animals and fish and their probable range has added its clues.

"In addition to all these methods of study I have actually gone over the country where the trail is supposed to be located and compared the topography found with the descriptions given by the DeSoto historians."

On August 20, 1935, Congress created the U. S. DeSoto Expedition Commission, the Chairman being Dr. John R. Swanton, Director of the Smithsonian Institution, the Vice Chairman Col. John R. Fordyce of Hot Springs, Arkansas, with five members from the States of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. After thorough study, this Commission determined that De Soto crossed the Mississippi River somewhere near Sunflower Bend or Landing, south of Helena.



On Sunday afternoon, February 21, 1932, a nine-ton Arkansas granite boulder bearing the official bronze tablet of the Daughters of the American Revolution on which is inscribed a brief sketch of the landing of De Soto, was unveiled in the Y. & M. V. Park on the southern end of Cherry Street in Helena, Arkansas. Because of the great weight of the huge monument it was erected here rather than at the actual point of the crossing.

D. T. Hargraves, mayor of Helena, welcomed the assemblage, and the boys' band, under the direction of George Hodge, played patriotic music. Mrs. S. D. Warfield, chaplain of James Bate Chapter, D. A. R., gave the invocation. Col. John R. Fordyce, of Hot Springs, was the principal speaker on the program.

The tablet was unveiled by two small children dressed as General and Martha Washington. The children were Mary Mays McKnight, great-granddaughter of a former regent of James Bate Chapter, Mrs. John J. Hornor, and John Russwurm Miles, Jr., grandson of another ex-president, Mrs. Andrew P. Coolidge.

A historical pageant illustrating the landing of DeSoto was presented under the direction of the James Bate Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In the pageant were the following characters: De Soto: Louis Mosby; Priest: John Anderson; Uncle Sam: James McRee; White Doe (Indian Princess): Miss Jamie Hudson. Groups, comprising the children and grandchildren of Chapter members, dressed in Colonial costume: Gladys Keese, Roberta Mays, Mary Pillow, Dale Pillow, Betty Ann Young, Mary Jo Young, Mary Ann Eubanks, Otis Howe, Jr., Mary Hornor, Lawson Hornor, Elizabeth Topp, James Robert Topp, Katie Cracraft, George Cracraft, Jr., Peter Young, Sam Menasco, Earl Menasco, Bob Moore, Jack Moore, Jo Ann Hart, Mary Hart, Frances Miles, Jack Allin, Hattie Moore, Grover Knight, Cappi Knight, Blanche Lambert, Marguerite Hornor.

The members of the official committee in charge of arrangements for the celebration were Mrs. John N. Ware, chairman, and Mesdames S. D. Warfield, Morris Henry, J. B. Miles, J. B. Lambert, Allen Cox, Charles M. Young, and M. R. Ready.

The placing of the monument was the result of years of research and reconciliation of conflicting



## HELENA PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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On Saturday afternoon, February 25, 1888, a group of ladies of Helena met and a plan was discussed to organize and maintain a public library and reading room. All of the women of Helena who were interested were then invited to a public meeting to be held February 29th. Forty women were present, and the Women's Library Association of Helena was formed. This year the successor to that Association, the Helena Public Library Association, will celebrate its 75th birthday. Its record from the beginning has been one of library service, ever growing, ever expanding, for Helena and Phillips County. One has only to read the minutes of the early meetings of the Association and the early struggles of that small group to realize the determination and unending drive which has resulted in our fine Library today. It is indeed a tribute to the power of women (with the help, of course, of various members of the stronger sex), as you shall see.

The history of libraries in Helena goes back to 1874, when the Rescue Hook and Ladder Company, a volunteer fire company composed of some of the young men of the town, had a reading and game room in their headquarters, which occupied the same site as the Perry Street Fire Station does now. Major J. T. Watson, a northern man, was the Fire Chief; the Babcock brothers, C. F. and W. E., Ike Mayfield and Jas. T. Wooten were among its charter members; Howard Faulkner and his brother, S. S. Faulkner, then mere youths, were admitted as associate members, as were J. C. Jeffries, M. T. Sanders, L. J. Wilkes, W. M. Neal, H. Lohman, J. B. Ross, E. L. Stephenson, A. Solomon, A. Wooten, J. B. Ramsey, F. M. Robinson, and others. Henry Clemens and John Foster, both under eighteen, were torch bearers. In their reading room in the upstairs front room on the west side of the station were the latest newspapers from Memphis, St. Louis, and Cincinnati, coming down the river by boat, from one day to two weeks old. A few hundred books were acquired and became a circulating library. They had many of the best books then published - books which became classics. They were excellently bound, and there are a few still in use!

As the popularity of the library grew with its use by the public (with permission of the young firemen), the books were moved and the Helena Library Association was formed on December 21, 1878. Articles of Incorporation, recorded in Volume 35, page 626, official records of Phillips County, show the following officers: C. F. Babcock, President; Jno. J. Hornor, Vice President; Sam S. Faulkner, Secretary; Wm. M. Neal, Treasurer; F. M. Robinson, Librarian; C. R. Coolidge,



opinions of historians and others. While Mrs. Ware, as chairman of the marker committee, worked for several years on this project, it was not until four years previous, when Mrs. J. J. Hornor became regent of the James Bate Chapter, that the work became definitely directed to this goal. According to officers of James Bate Chapter the interest and cooperation shown was widespread and very gratifying as signified by gifts from many sources. Mr. Stevenson, representing the M. and N. A. Railroad, donated a boulder of Arkansas granite for the monument, and gifts of money toward the completion of the project were made by various patriotic societies of the state.

-- from accounts in Arkansas Democrat, The Commercial Appeal, and The Helena World.

An article in the Arkansas Gazette of August 7, 1932, by Col. John R. Fordyce, relates that T. E. Bushell of Stuttgart is owner of an ancient halbard which was lifted from the bed of the White River a few miles above St. Charles by a pearl fisherman. "There are many reasons to believe," he writes, "that this old weapon was carried by one of DeSoto's men when they invaded Arkansas almost 400 years ago."

He reported that the steel part of the halbard was rusted and pitted, but was fairly well preserved. The wooden handle was of ash and was almost petrified on the outside. The halbard was used as a weapon in the Middle Ages by foot soldiers to attack armed knights on horseback. The DeSoto expedition included a company of halbardiers who were armed with this weapon. Their duty was to serve as camp guards, to prevent the escape of captured Indians, and to guard the baggage from theft. When the Indians in Mississippi attacked the Spaniards and burned their camp, the wooden part of their weapons was destroyed. They then cut down ash trees growing around the camp and used this wood to replace the burned wood of the weapons.

Col. Fordyce writes: "I have a halbard which was found in Helena during the Civil War by a soldier in a Minnesota regiment. Another was reported to be from Lincoln County and another from Caddo Gap. This White River weapon brings the number that have been found to four. It is most interesting fact that they have all been found along the course of what I believe to have been the route followed by DeSoto and his men through Arkansas."



## HELENA PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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W. E. Babcock, and A. H. Johnson, Executive Committee.

To quote the reminiscences of Mrs. E. S. Ready: "My father and mother and I came here to live and it was not long before I found the little library which had been moved into a two-room framed building on Ohio Street, north of Perry. It was a pleasant place; I can see it now - the front room was the reading room. There was a fire place, maps on the wall, very "library" looking. The rear room also had a fire place, with one of those little iron mantels, then in vogue. The walls were lined with bookcases having glass doors. Mr. W. S. White, father of Mr. Welford White, was the librarian."

This library lasted a few years and then the Association, ambitiously incorporated "to promote literature and encourage art and science with succession for 100 years", went to pieces. The books were scattered and the doors closed. We have a rich heritage in the record of the ideal of those young men, and one might say that it is fulfilled in our present Library, for some of those young men reserved their share of the books and when the Women's Library Association was formed it was given these books (more than 500) and the bookcases as a nucleus for its library.

The plan for a Women's Library Association first took shape immediately following the organization of the Philomathic Club (Pacaha Club's original name) and the need for a library became an important goal to be attained. Mrs. M. L. Stephenson proposed to a few other women that a Ladies Library Association be organized. The first meeting, an informal one, was held at the home of Mrs. J. J. Hornor. Those present were: Mrs. M. T. Sanders, Mrs. B. C. Redford, Mrs. J. B. Pillow, Mrs. C. R. Coolidge, Mrs. S. H. Velie, Mrs. L. J. Wilkes, Mrs. Josephine Hargraves, Mrs. J. A. Tappan, Mrs. Ed Pillow, Mrs. M. L. Stephenson, Mrs. Jacob Trieber, Mrs. S. Seelig, Mrs. Clark Moore, Miss Lizzie Burke, Miss Maud Sanders, Miss Margaret Redford, Mrs. J. J. Hornor, and Mrs. J. I. Moore. A public meeting of all interested women was held, an association was formed, and the temporary officers were made permanent: Mrs. M. T. Sanders, President; Mrs. J. B. Pillow, Vice President; Mrs. J. J. Hornor, Treasurer; Miss M. Redford, Secretary; Mrs. C. R. Coolidge, Mrs. S. H. Velie, Jr., Mrs. L. J. Wilkes, Mrs. Josephine Hargraves, Mrs. Jacob Trieber, Mrs. J. I. Moore, Mrs. S. Seelig, and Mrs. Clark Moore, Directors. The decision was made to use one of the rooms at the Grand Opera House for the library and reading room.

Miss Margaret Redford was elected Librarian, and on April 18, 1888, an informal opening was held. On April 24th, Tuesday afternoon, the first books were circulated. The Library was kept open on Tuesday and Friday afternoons and evenings - later, on Friday afternoons only. Margaret Redford and Maud Sanders



were the first librarians, the former continuing as voluntary librarian for seven years.

For this energetic group of women growth was imperative, and, calling on husbands and friends, the present site of the Helena Library was secured. This lot (No. 273, Old Helena) was given to the Women's Library Association of Helena by fifteen men under the leadership of Judge M. L. Stephenson. They were: C. R. Coolidge, Sr., John J. Hornor, W. M. Neal, H. M. Grant, Greenfield Quarles, D. B. McKenzie, S. S. Faulkner, S. C. Moore, L. Lucy, S. Seelig, M. Newman, S. I. Clark, S. H. Velie, N. Straub, Aaron Meyers, and M. L. Stephenson.

Quoting Mrs. Ready, "We did not build until 1891. The idea of a building was in our minds, and in the mind of Judge Stephenson, from the start. In the first year we purchased building and loan stock on some of which several men paid the dues for a while: Messrs. Jacob Trieber, W. M. Neal, J. J. Hornor, E. C. Hornor, G. H. Friberg, H. H. Cage, S. H. Velie, C. R. Coolidge, Sr., E. D. Pillow, and J. B. Pillow. What enabled us to build was this: the fraternal lodges of the city had to give up their rooms on the second floor of the Jefferson School, so they contracted with the Library Board to rent the second floor of the proposed library building. More building and loan stock was bought, and bonds paying 8% interest were issued and sold. What is now the main library was to be rented for entertainments, and was known as "Library Hall." The Library and Reading Room were installed in the two north rooms of the building, and even one of them was rented as a music studio. The various rents enabled us to pay the interest on the bonds and the dues on the building and loan stock. In due time everything was paid and then we proceeded to borrow more money with which to build a frame annex containing dining room, dressing room, and kitchen for the accommodation of those who rented the Hall. It became famous for the well-conducted dances of the Young Men's Cotillion Club. When the Hall was rented for a dancing party, it was understood and expected that Mrs. J. B. Pillow, President of the Board, went with the Hall as chaperone, also Mrs. Wilkes, Mrs. Josephine Hargraves, Mrs. Robert Gordon, Sr., and maybe others. So we weathered the storm. It was a proud day when we were installed in the new building. Books were first circulated from the new Library on September 11, 1891. The number of books borrowed that day was 50, number of persons who visited the Library 104, number of books in the Library about 1633."

In 1914 "Library Hall" was taken over for library use and the standard method of conducting a library was introduced. from that time forward the Helena Library has moved steadily forward until the entire building has been taken over for library uses. In 1920 the name of the Association was changed to Helena Public Library Association and began to receive



support from the Community Fund. Within three years the City Council of Helena passed an ordinance allotting the Library 1/2 mill of the general tax, and the Library became a public service whose place in the community was vital.

About this time a full time librarian was employed and the hours open increased. The Library was open five days a week in the afternoons, and on Wednesday night and Sunday afternoon from three to five. The salary of the librarian was about \$85 per month - quite a raise from the \$10 or \$15 paid the librarians of a decade before. (Remember the earliest librarians served without any pay.) Board members helped the librarian in accessioning and processing books. One committee, the Mending Committee, gave long and valiant service, and saved the life of many a needed book. Miss Christine Sanders was librarian during this time.

The next big project undertaken was the building of the Phillips County Museum at a cost of approximately \$21,000.00. This was built with gifts of money from present and former citizens of Helena and Phillips County which were matched dollar for dollar by Mrs. E. S. Ready (President of the Board from 1914). Mr. Andrew Coolidge, son of one of the donors of the property, was the architect. The formal opening took place on February 26, 1930.

Through the years, the shelves of the Library were open to people of the County as well as Helena citizens, and under the direction of Miss Lucy Sanders, who became librarian in 1929, library facilities were extended throughout the County with the organization of the Phillips County Library in 1939. This small organization was supported in part by a small appropriation from the Quorum Court of \$50.00 per month. This was later raised to \$100.00 per month and State Aid was also granted. Branches were established in both the Marvell and West Helena Libraries. Service was expanded to such a point that with the cooperation of interested friends a one mill library tax was voted in 1948. From this time on the work of the Library has grown by leaps and bounds. A Negro branch was established in what is now the South Side School. School collections were (and are) taken to practically all schools in the county, both white and colored, a book truck was operated which visited Elaine and Lexa communities, several book stations were established, and the service of the Library grew and flourished like the proverbial green bay tree. In 1961 the Phillips-Lee Regional Library was organized to take advantage of a federal project for Bookmobile service in both counties. This will be continued for another biennium as it has proved its great worth. Quoting from the last annual report (July 1, 1962), we find that the circulation for Helena and Phillips County Library was 91,484, something over two books per person for the County, and that the collection of



book stock is now over 40,000 books.

What if those few determined women had not had the dream of a library for Helena? What if those wonderful men had not helped them to the realization of that dream? What if there were no library and no museum? Fortunately, these are idle questions. Today the Board of the Helena Public Library Association follows in the footsteps of their predecessors and is even now making an addition to the Library to be called the Margaret Ready Addition. This will include a new office, a Bookmobile room, a room for young people, and a listening room. This will provide space in the old Library for an Arkansas and local History room, for an expanded Reference Room, and for a renovated and modern children's department.

How I wish that those devoted women who so staunchly and steadily worked for the realization of their dream could see the result of their efforts and the impetus which their memory provides. Who knows? Perhaps they can.

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#### References:

Official Records of Phillips County: Vol. 35, page 636, Articles of Incorporation of Helena Library Association; Vol. 21, page 35, Articles of Incorporation of Women's Library Association of Helena; Circuit Record Book "U", page 220, Order changing name of Women's Library Association of Helena to Helena Public Library Association.

Library Association Scrapbook in Helena Public Library

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## CARNIVAL OF AUTHORS

And a Tribute to  
Washington Centennial Celebration  
Under the Auspices of the  
Women's Library Association

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On Tuesday evening, April 30th, 1890, at 8 o'clock, at the old Armory Hall (on the west side of Ohio Street between Perry and Market Streets) the Women's Library Association of Helena, in their effort to add to their building fund, presented a "Carnival of Authors", and most of the citizens of Helena seem to have taken part. A number of noted and successful authors also responded to the request of the Association for their autographs, which were exhibited for a small compensation in the American booth under the charge of Mrs. Judge M. L. Stephenson:

"With my best wishes for the success of your enterprise, I am your friend, John G. Whittier."

"Trust in the Lord and do good. From your true friend, H. B. Stowe." "With kind regards, yours, Robert Collyer." "Written 'For the Love of Christ' and 'In His Name' with the best wishes for the carnival, Edward E. Hale." "All success to the Women's Library Association. May you not only have a building for your books, but may you succeed in cultivating a love and a habit of reading good books. Very truly yours, Annie Fields." "With all good wishes, your friend, Frances Hodgson Burnett." "Whoever can trifle with one man's rights can trifle with a million's. G. W. Cable." "With all good wishes for the Women's Library. George William Curtis." "To associate with a good library is about the most profitable thing to do in this world. Yours truly, Chas. Dudley Warner."

"A few can touch the magic string,  
And noisy fame is proud to win them;  
Alas for those who never sing,  
But die with all their music in them.  
Oliver Wendell Holmes."

"I can think of no undertaking with which I have a heartier sympathy than with yours. A good public library is perhaps as good a university as any. J. R. Lowell." "My library was dukedom large enough for me. Lawrence Barrett."

In answer to a request to solve the mystery of the Lady and the Tiger, Frank Stockton writes:

"Not being a woman, it is impossible for me to know which came out. Frank R. Stockton."



The following sent their autographs only: Gen. W. T. Sherman, Joseph E. Johnston, Mark Twain, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, James Parton, Julian Hawthorne, Phillips Brooks, George Kennan and W. D. Howells. George W. Cable sent also with his compliments the first 11 pages of the original manuscript of "The Creoles of Louisiana."

We find the following Program and account (evidently from The Helena World) in the Library Association Scrapbook in the Helena Public Library:

#### GRAND PROCESSION OF THE CHARACTERS

George Washington and Martha Washington (Gordon Jeffries and Lena Summers); King Oberon (Joe Hornor), Titania (Elsie Lucy), Puck (Tom Velie), Pease Blossom (Julia Clark), Fairy Cobweb (Venda Abramson and Maud Pillow), Moth (Tarver Waddell), Bottom (Willie White), Mustard Seed (Tappan Hornor), Hamlet and Ophelia (Prof. J. C. Davidson and Mrs. Joe Lawrence), Polonius (S. S. Faulkner), Ghost (Charlie Sanders), Queen (Miss Maud Sanders), Cleopatra (Miss Zelda Polk), two Dromios (George Watson and Ferd Humphries), Touchstone (Dale Jackson), Spring (Miss Fannie May Moore), Summer (Miss Maud Bush), Autumn (Miss Jessie Thompson), Winter (Miss Fannie L. Moore), Three Little Maids from School (Misses Minnie and Hattie Hornor and Jennie Pillow), Big Tycoon (Sidney Hornor), Little Tycoon (Miss Laura Gordon), Sir Launcelot and Elaine (Zach Agee and Miss Ethel Sanders), Faust and Marguerite (?), Zelica (?) and Mary Stuart (Mrs. Ed Ford), Virginia and Virginius (Mrs. Millette and Mr. Millette), Evangeline and Jno. Alden (Miss Fannie Mitchell and Tarver Waddell), Hiawatha and Minnehaha (Chris Agee and Miss Etta Govan), Ivanhoe (?) and Rowena (Mrs. L. J. Wilkes), Fergus and Flora McIvor (Mr. Scott and Miss Sue Davis), Fitzjames (Fred Graves) and Ellen Douglas (?), Little Nell and her Grandfather (Miss Julia Govan and Dr. Hayes), Dolly Varden (Miss Helen Moore) and Pickwick (?), Barkis and Peggotty (Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Hornor), Fat Boy (Lyford Hornor), Marchioness and Dick Swiveller (Annie Waddell and Emmet Hicks), Little Dorrit (Miss Annie Trask), Jennie Wren (Miss Fannie Barlow), Maud Muller (Josephine Pillow), Little Lord Fauntleroy (G. Nicholls), Little Red Riding Hood (Josie Moore), Boy Blue (Willie Nelson), Little Bopeep (Bessie Tappan), Little Buttercup (Mary Byrd), Tom Sawyer (Dade Moore), Huckleberry Finn (Jerome Pillow). We also find among the cast of characters: May Queen (Miss Maggie Tappan), Isabel (Miss Helen Govan), Miss Hurricane (Mrs. W. M. Neal), and Dolly Dimple (Miss Jennie Lucy).

#### TABLEAUX

##### Midsummer Nights Dream

##### SONG

LOVE COMES LIKE A SUMMER SIGH .....MRS. J.A. TAPPAN

##### RECITATION

SELECTION FROM PICKWICK PAPERS .....HELEN MOORE



OVERTURE  
TANCRED, BY ROSSINI .....MRS. WATSON, SUTHERLAND,  
MISS LUCY

TABLEAUX  
ROWENA CROWNING IVANHOE  
RECITATION  
RECITATION FROM HAMLET .....J. C. DAVIDSON  
SONG  
SONG OF THE BROOK (TENNYSON) .....MRS. E. C. HORNOR  
TABLEAUX  
SPRING, SUMMER, AUTUMN, WINTER  
RECITATION  
DEATH OF LITTLE NELL .....BETTIE C. REMBERT  
DUET  
STARS OF THE SUMMER NIGHT SERENADE (LONGFELLOW)....  
MRS. TAPPAN AND GOVAN

TABLEAUX  
PRISCILLA AND JOHN ALDEN  
RECITATION  
SELECTION FROM SCOTTS LADY OF THE LAKE ...LUCY SANDERS  
TRIO  
FANTASIA - SCOTCH AIRS ...MRS. WATSON, SUTHERLAND, MISS LUCY

TEA SERVED AT JAPANESE BOOTH  
AUTOGRAPHS VIEWED AT AMERICAN BOOTH

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"The long talked of carnival has come and gone, and the scenes that accompanied it have passed away and only linger with us as a pleasant memory...After the overture by the band engaged for the occasion the grand procession of the characters took place which was of itself fully worth the price of admission.....

"While the characters were all well represented there were some that seemed to attract more attention and favorable remarks than others. Two of the best characters last Tuesday night were undoubtedly those of Virginius and Virginia by Mr. and Mrs. Millette. These characters were about as near perfection as such representations can be made. The Little Marchioness and Dick Swiveller by Miss Waddell and Emmet Hicks were exceedingly good and called forth a great deal of favorable comment. The efforts of the little folks deserve special mention. Puck, Pease Blossom, Moth, Fairy, Cobweb and Mustard Seed, (none of whom were much larger than an ear of popcorn) used every endeavor to keep step to the music, and at the same time to bear in mind that they were charged with the success of the whole performance. It was as one lady expressed it, "perfectly killing." At the Japanese booth two almond eyed daughters of Confucious refreshed those who hungered or thirsted, with delicate confections and an



excellent brew of tea and coffee while at the American were shown the autographs and words of God speed from the men and women of our own land who by song and story are doing so much to make American homes happy, refined and cultured. The Princess Rowena and Flora McIvor were much admired, while Mary Stuart and Minnehaha came in for their share of praise.

"The May Queen, Priscilla, Evangeline, Fitzjames, Little Dorrit, the Grandfather, Dollie Varden were all good. Barkis and Peggotty should really have favored the gathering with some courtship scenes, for many left the hall in doubt as to whether "Barkis was willin'" or not. We take it for granted that he was.

"The representation of the Seasons deserves much praise. The characters from "Hamlet" were well portrayed, especially those of Ophelia, Hamlet, and the Queen. We do not remember meeting Mr. Polonius, but he was probably hiding somewhere from Hamlet. The Ghost escaped our vision also, and we supposed he had gone out to a graveyard to play some of his pranks....

"After the procession of the characters the curtain was raised and the tableaux "Mid Summer Night's Dream" was presented. That sweet little song from the "Little Tycoon," "Love Comes Like a Summer Sigh," was sung by Mrs. J. A. Tappan, and it is needless to say that she did it full justice. The scene between Mrs. Bardell and Mr. Pickwick was artistically rendered by Miss Helen Moore, Mesdames Watson and Sutherland and Miss Lucy favored the audience with some music on the piano. The recitation from Hamlet, "The Song of the Brook," and in fact the entire program was presented in a very attractive and entertaining manner. As we remarked before, it is all over now, and the Carnival remains with us only as a pleasant memory..."

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The foregoing was one of many efforts of the Library Association to raise money. A "Womans' Exchange" was also started - that is, the ladies donated their labor and sold their products for the benefit of the Association. The articles of food listed, with prices, are mouthwatering today! Layer cakes were \$1.00 to \$1.25; loaf cakes, 75¢ to \$1.00; small sponge cakes, 25¢ to 50¢; bread tarts, \$1.25 to \$1.50; coffee cake, 40¢ to 50¢; soft ginger bread, 20¢ to 30¢; ice cream (real cream), \$3.00 per gal.; charlotte russe, 65¢ per bowl; ambrosia, 75¢ per bowl; chicken salad, \$1.70 per bowl; potato salad, fish salads, the same; wafers, 50¢ & 40¢ per bl.; Boston brown bread, 20¢ to 25¢; graham, 15¢ to 20¢; white, 10¢ to 15¢; beaten biscuit, 15¢ per dozen; and pop corn balls, 60¢ per dozen. Almost any kind of fancy work could be furnished "at reasonable figures. Kitchen aprons and sun bonnets a specialty."



## THE BULLFIGHT

by

Colonel M. W. Billingsley

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### Preface

Coincidences never cease - and we never cease to marvel at them. In the last issue of the Quarterly in his "Helena and West Helena, a Civil Engineer's Reminiscences" L. R. "Ray" Parmelee included an amusing account of the first and, so far as I know, the only bullfight ever held in the City of West Helena, and also mentioned the Beechcrest Park, once an entertainment center for both Helena and West Helena. Who would ever think that anyone else closely connected with these who does not already live in our community would arrive at this particular time and come to see us! Yet it did happen. Colonel M. W. Billingsley, of Mesa, Arizona, and New York City, on his way to Memphis to give a lecture on the Hopi Indians, decided to make a slight detour to "see if Helena and West Helena were still growing and to see if my friends the Hornors were still here." Colonel Billingsley, when he was just seventeen years of age, came to West Helena, became the manager of Beechcrest Park, and was the "promoter" of the famous bullfight. And- will wonders never cease?- according to his promise we are in receipt of a letter from him giving his account of those events. His own story is so interesting we are including his letter in this issue.

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"It was good to meet you and good to return to Helena after more than 50 years' absence and to find a few of my former acquaintances still among the living. I was extremely disappointed in finding Mr. E. C. and George Hornor had passed into the Beyond. Those two Hornors were my close associates during the summer of 1911. I was quite surprised to be greeted by the daughter of E. C. in quite a grown-up beautiful and charming lady and equally surprised to find Tully Hornor sporting gray hair while he stands straight as an arrow. Good stock, I'll say - including Tully's two stalwart sons.

"As I am the person responsible for the now evidently historic West Helena "Bull-fight in 1911" I shall be most happy to give you the details of how I came to be in West Helena and staging the above event.

"In the year of 1911 I was a member of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, at which time we were giving concerts in the Odeon on Grand and Phinney, St. Louis, under the direction of the fine



music master, Max Zach. During a rehearsal I scanned the pages of The Billboard, a theatrical and musical magazine. My eyes fell upon an advertisement from Beechcrest Park manager Dick Fulton, in Helena, Arkansas. He was asking for a concert band for an immediate engagement for the summer. In 24 hours I had the job and was recruiting 12 musicians.

"Dick Fulton met us at the train and we were soon inspecting the open-air bandstand where our concerts were to be given each day. After 3 days of rehearsals our concerts began on the following Sunday. On that day I was introduced to Mr. E. C. Hornor, Chief Executive. Previous to that introduction I met the street-car conductor, George Hornor, son of the "Chief Executive." I liked the cut of the boy's eye and we became friends from the start. Later I met Tully Hornor. These two Hornor boys were the official crew of one trolley-car operating between Helena and Beechcrest Park. On several rides with them I noticed they switched jobs from front to back and back to front of the trolley. At one stop in town to pick up passengers there was Tully standing on the side runningboard of the open-air trolley, and it struck me as unusual to see him courteously requesting the white passengers to move forward into vacant seats and then inviting the colored folk to come aboard in the same courtly manner. This was something new in streetcar conductors as I had observed them in St. Louis. Gentlemen are born as such.

"Our concerts were running smoothly for a few days when the Park manager, Dick Fulton, informed me our concerts would terminate on the following Sunday, as the Park was closing down for the summer. I asked Dick Fulton what about our contracts for the musicians to give the balance of 8 weeks' concerts. He told me to go to Mr. E. C. Hornor, the Chief Executive, in the Bank in town.

"To town I went and was ushered into the sanctum of Mr. Hornor, who was seated therein with two other gentlemen. After an hour's conference I emerged from the Bank as the Manager of Beechcrest Park and still holding my position as Director of the 12 musicians with authority to continue the daily concerts.

"I had two weeks only to make good as Park manager. In 24 hours I had the Jack Bessey Stock Company of Dramatic Actors on their way from Little Rock, Arkansas. This company would open the following Sunday in the open-air theatre in Beechcrest Park in the great American comedy "Who's Baby?" This stock company changed their plays each night for one week; and they were followed by a new company, the Guy Hickman Stock Company, then by the Grace Baird Stock Company with the Kelley-Schuster Musical Comedy Company. They were followed by a program of vaudeville headliners, which ended the successful season of operations of Beechcrest Park, for the crowds really patronized the Park during the time I was the manager.



"Along in July Mr. E. C. Hornor called me into the Bank. He asked me what I could suggest as a gala attraction for the Park which would draw the people from miles distant from Helena, I replied his guess was as good as mine, but there were always free attractions advertised in The Billboard. Together Mr. Hornor and I looked over the available attractions as advertised. There were high-wire acts, balloon ascensions, and what-not, but the advertisement that caught my eye was one telling of "The Great Mexican Bull Fighter "Rojas", who was at liberty, with his matadors, picadors, etc., and who would put on bullfights anywhere. I pointed out this attraction to Mr. Hornor and told him I was sure a bullfight would pull the crowds to West Helena the like of which the city had never seen. Later, I was proved to be correct in that statement.

"I called the "great Rojas" in Laredo, Texas, and soon we had booked the bullfight. Next I went after the advertising, first contacting the railroad officials, who promised to put on excursions and advertise throughout their domain. I called my reporter friend on The St. Louis Post-Dispatch and asked him to spread the news of the coming Mexican bullfight to be held in Beechcrest Park, West Helena, Arkansas, featuring the "Great Toreador Rojas."

Helena really became interested in the event as advertised. Several preachers brought up the subject before their congregations and requested the stopping of such a flagrant spectacle. Chief of Police Clancy came over to my hotel to see me on the subject. He was disturbed over the reaction of the preachers, as they had called upon him to stop the affair. Chief Clancy gave me a clue and an idea by asking me if we had to kill the bulls. He further stated the killing of the bulls was the bone of contention. While the Chief sat listening, I talked to Rojas in Laredo and asked him if he had to kill the bulls up here in Helena. He replied, "No, senor, we no kill the bull. We have the Great Strong Man of America McCarthy, who will at the finish of the bullfight carry the bull out of the arena on his back." I told this to Chief Clancy, who asked "On who's back? The bulls?" My reply that the bull would be on the back of McCarthy the Strong Man satisfied the Chief as a good idea, and all was well again. I asked Chief Clancy to do along with us and not tell the preachers the change in the program for a few days. As he turned away he said nothing in reply, but I felt also that he would not break a leg getting over to the preachers. We needed publicity, and the preachers were sure helping - I mean helping out.

With this information I rushed to the Bank and gave Mr. Hornor a briefing on how the bullfight would close by the bull being carried out of the arena on the back of a Strong Man. I have seen Mr. E. C. Hornor smile broadly and many times, but right then was the only time I ever saw or heard him roar with laughter until the tears rolled out of his eyes. On our way out of the Bank we ran into Chief Clancy, who had been waiting outside to hear the de-



cision from Mr. Hornor - he smiled broadly in relief.

Shortly before the day scheduled for the bullfight, Senor Rojas called from Laredo with the information the American border authorities would not permit the entry of the fighting bulls into the United States! However, if we managed to get some bulls in Helena, Rojas would be here and put on the fight as scheduled. Later, Mr. Hornor informed me that everything was arranged to have the bulls in the ballpark on time, and these arrangements and the building of the fenced bullring according to the specifications furnished by Senor Rojas were made by him. At first we planned to hold the bullfight in Beechcrest Park, but if the crowds came as we had planned, the Park would be overwhelmed by the multitude. When Mr. Hornor suggested we use the ball park for the affair, I was surprised to learn there was such a place.

Senor Rojas arrived in Helena with only one man. The other members of his troupe were forced to remain behind to care for the bulls on the Mexican side of the border. This I verified by talking to the Border Patrol in Laredo. There was nothing to do but permit Senor Rojas to carry on and stage the performance and hope for the best.

The crowds began arriving early. The first trainload of excursionists unloaded at 8:45 A. M. Everyone seemed to be carrying baskets of food and refreshments and were prepared to make it a grand holiday. Fortunately, we had Beechcrest Park to accommodate the crowds while waiting for the gates to open for the bullfight. For that day the roadbed of the car line should have been double-tracked for its entire length. However, the Hornor boys did a masterful job of coordinating the equipment and tracks, for the sidings were few, and they moved the crowds without a hitch.

Mr. Hornor sent out ticketsellers from the Bank and we had set up small booths from which the tickets were to be sold. By 1:30 P. M. tremendous crowds had arrived within the ballpark. Even the outfield was filled with the colored folk. I glanced inside one of the ticketbooths where the final customers were being supplied with tickets and nearly passed out with apprehension for the ticketseller was Percy Buttericks and he was standing knee-deep in paper money! I ran past the other booths and they also were two-feet deep in long green. I sent George Hornor posthaste to clear the car tracks, for a car from town would be moving in minutes bringing police from Helena. I had Chief Clancy on the phone in nothing flat and explained the situation. He came out on that through streetcar with four of his officers and in minutes the guards were posted. It is my firm belief that those ticket booths would have been held up and cleaned out if Chief Clancy and his officers had not arrived within minutes.

When I saw the money was guarded, I turned my attention to the rumbling of voices coming from the grandstand spectators. I worked around to the rear where Senor Rojas and the bulls were



assembled at the bullring entrance. I was stopped by Rojas telling me the bulls would not fight and for me to get some "high fly" quick. I asked him what "high fly" was and why he wanted it. He was quite agitated, but managed to say "to soup the bulls to make them mad." I asked him where I was to find such stuff and he replied, "in any drugstore." I flew out to the carline where Tully and George had just unloaded a carload of people from town, the late arrivals. I told George we had to break all speed records in getting back to town. He wanted to know if the ticketbooths had been robbed. I said, "No, it's worse than that. The bulls won't fight and I have to get to town and a drugstore to find some "soup" and bring it back to the bullfighter before the crowds get mad and tear the place to pieces." I climbed aboard the car while George ran up front to Tully, the motorman, and Tully made the sparks fly. We only lost a few minutes at one siding in our run into town.

That boy Tully did better than a Casey Jones for speed. If there had been more power in the electric supply lines, more speed would have landed us in the ditch. I rushed into the nearest drugstore and told the clerk I wanted some "high life"; he looked bewildered for a few seconds and wanted to know if it was a drink of some kind. I said, "Damned if I know, but it's supposed to make a bull mad enough to make him fight. The bullfighter out at the Park wants it to put under the bull's tail." The clerk smiled, and soon handed me a bottle, which I grabbed and headed back to the Hornor boys and their speed-car. I've had many wild rides since then, but none so hairraising as the return trip to Beechcrest.

I handed the so-called "soup" to an attendant at the bullring, and in a few minutes I knew the "soup" had been applied to a spot under the bull's tail, for a foul smell drifted over the ballfield and grandstand and out flew a bull dragging his hind-legs - and his bawling could be heard into Helena. When the bull spied the "Toreador" standing in his way, he whirled aside in his wild dash, too miserable to fight, and as he passed the "Toreador" Rojas, the bull waved his tail at the man and let fly with both of his hind-feet, spoiling the splendor of the bullfighter's costume. I stepped into the ring to quiet the crowd by holding up my hand, and when I had their attention, I informed them that the spectacle would end with the Strong Man McCarthy carrying the bull out of the ring on his back - I meant the bull would be on the back of the Strong Man. That announcement got a laugh out of many, but when I told them that after the performance was over every one who had purchased a ticket would, if desired, receive their money back at the ticket-boxes as they went out, that no one would receive a cent if they departed before the show was over, they settled down to watch the show.

By that time everyone was in a jovial mood, and the show went on from there as I had stated. There was no adverse criticism and all declared they had a grand holiday as they departed for their



trains. They had been to the only bullfight ever held in the United States. Later I asked Mr. Hornor how we came out financially after returning the admission money. He then stated that considering the revenue of the traction company we had not lost a cent. On paying off Senor Rojas we had deducted most of the contract price, and he was happy with such an arrangement, for I know he departed with more money in his own pocket than he would have had by bringing his entire troupe of men and bulls.

When the Park closed for the season, my next venture was promoting the right of way for "The Deering and Southeastern Railway of Caruthersville, Missouri," such as signing up the land owners for free lands and cutting and furnishing railroad ties free. That is another epoch, and some day I shall return to Caruthersville to find out if that railroad was ever built.

I am sorry that I could not spend more time in Helena, for there were other people in Helena that I had become acquainted with and had hoped to meet again, for my days at Beechcrest Park were jolly ones, as I used to sing with my band as they played their opening overtures and between the acts of the respective dramatic companies that trod the boards of the Open Air Theatre, Beechcrest Park, West Helena, Arkansas.

It is quite necessary that I make a finale comment, concerning a bit of advice Mr. E. C. Hornor gave me while I was in his employ, and his words were these: "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." That bit of advice I have followed all of my life, and no venture, and there were many, failed. God bless the Hornor tribe and all of Helena-West Helena for my start in the business world."

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M. W. Billingsley has devoted over 40 years of his life to the Hopi Indians of Arizona. From 1908 to 1912 he was a member of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Createore Concert Band, and a soloist with the Iowa State Military Band. Mr. Billingsley organized and was in command of General Stewart's "Runaways" out of the 175th Brigade of the 88th Division in the Meuse-Argonne-Toul Sector, in the First World War in Europe, and received a personal commendation from Marshal Foch, Commander of the French Armies. On his ranch at Mesa, Arizona, Mr. Billingsley has the only genuine Hopi Kiva ever to be constructed by the Hopi Indians off the Reservation in 3000 years, and the only Kiva ever dedicated to a white man. He is the only white Chief and has exhibited the Hopi Indians in ceremonials and demonstrations of their arts and crafts at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., the Field Museum in Chicago, the Royal Ontario Museum of Archeology in Toronto, Canada. He headed and directed an anthropological expedition into Central America, where they were guests of President Obregon and President Calles. In addition to having presented the Hopi to many colleges and universities, he presented the Hopi at the New York World's Fair in 1939 in the Arizona Cliff Dwellers Village. He is President of the Billingsley Artists Management, Inc., New York, N. Y. A long way for the boy who promoted a bullfight in West Helena!



REMINISCENCES OF HELENA

by

Q. K. UNDERWOOD

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from The Helena World of May 9, 1926

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"St. Louis, Mo., undated

"As I begin the short and simple annals of a youthful librarian I have a fairly accurate idea of how Rip Van Winkle felt when he came back from that twenty year sleep he had in the mountains. But it goes double for me. I left Helena some 40 years ago.

"A lot of things can happen in 40 years. Some day I am coming back to Helena, and I hope to look at the new library and the place on Ohio Street where the old one stood. It was in a little two-room cottage a short distance north from Perry Street, which we used to call "the Corduroy Road."

"To the north there was the Armory where we drilled and danced and roller-skated and listened to Fay Templeton and her father, John Templeton, and her mother, Alice Vane, and some other old-timers sing "Pinafore", and heard Paul Boynton tell how he paddled down the Mississippi River in his rubber suit, and witnessed "Marble Heart" and other thrilling plays.

"I think I was pushed on the Library because I knew how to get in a back window. The librarian was Charley Babcock, who held a Federal office, and looked after the Library for his office rent. He gave me a lot of good advice about reading, but he did not approve of my use of that back window. He said it might lead other less scrupulous persons to enter and loot. We compromised on his permitting me to get Nash Fitzpatrick to make me a duplicate key to the back room where the books were.

"I was an incubus of the law office of Tappan and Hornor, the leading attorneys of the town. I ran errands and read Blackstone and the Newgate Calendar, and made myself generally useless. General Tappan told me to go get books from the public library on either his or Major Hornor's account. (Ed. note: These lawyers were Major John J. Hornor and General James C. Tappan) I have forgotten which, but probably it was both. I ravaged that library from A to Izzard. I read everything in it from Darwin to Mrs. E. D. N. Southworth and Mary Jane Holmes. I reveled in Lever and Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins and Holland and Black and Dumas and Miss Muloch and Muhlback and Edward Eggleston, and took a few shots at the poets.



"In the course of time Charley Babcock was transferred to some other place and the Library had no librarian. There was a meeting and it was decided that as they couldn't keep me out they would make me work my passage. I was made an Honorary Member, or something like that, with the understanding that I should keep the place open from 6 to 9 P. M.

"I don't know how long the plan lasted, but eventually it developed that the Night Librarian was not dependable. Some evenings the place was open and some it was not. So after a time it was decided that Professor William S. White, who conducted a private school just across the street in the old Henry P. Coolidge mansion, should be the Night Librarian. And he was a good one. He was there on time and he stayed there over-time reading and smoking and teaching a volunteer class of us more things in and out of books than we ever learned in school. The Professor - God rest his soul! - came of a Virginia family of warriors, preachers and teachers. His sister, Miss Hattie - afterwards Mrs. Graham - taught me, and she surely did have a way with her. She wore a large number of rings, and when she whacked a boy with her dainty little hands he carried scars.

"The Professor was a great fisherman. As soon as school was out, in fishing time, he would dart out of the backyard, carrying a bucket of minnows and a jointed fishing pole, and stride up to the Otter Pond. Also, he caught fish. He caught them when no one else could. I fancied myself in that line, but I always gave the honors to the Professor.

"Among some of the lovable characters who occasionally visited in the Library were Professor Bagwell and Dr. F. N. Burke. The doctor had an office on the corner of Perry and Ohio, and was a man of parts. As I think of him now, he reminds me of characters in Lever's and Lever's works - brilliant, irascible, sympathetic, and always gallant to the ladies.

"Professor Bagwell was not what you would call an indolent person. His principal business was a photograph gallery in a little house just south of Perry Street (Ed. note: southwest corner of Perry and Ohio Streets), but he was also Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, City Recorder, and an expert in ornithology. The last time I saw the Professor he had moved into larger quarters and had quite a collection of birds, some of which he allowed to run at large. (Ed. note: Charlie Purvis recalls a parrot owned by the Professor, and the small boys who plagued the Professor by knocking on his door continuously to hear the parrot say, "Come in, come in.") I asked him how he put in his time, and he said: "In addition to the bird store and the photograph gallery and the Chamber of Commerce and keeping the records of the city, and a little astrological work, I am thinking of starting a blacksmith shop. I always did despise a lazy man."



"Professor Bagwell took his astrology seriously, and had a sincere belief in the occult. Whenever there was a baby born, he would ask for the hour and minute of the birth and cast a horoscope. If it was favorable, he would give it to the parents. If unfavorable, he would file it away and never show it. He was supposed to have a familiar spirit, and several persons have assured me that they saw the misty form of a woman in his reception room for an instant. At any rate he was a kindly gentleman.

"General Tappan and Major Hornor rarely came to the Library, but their purses were always open when funds were needed. The General was the most courteous man I ever knew, was immaculate in his dress, and punctilious in his manner. At the same time he was a warrior. When events reached such a stage that it was proper for a wellborn gentleman to come out and assert what he considered to be right, the General was always in the forefront of the battle.

"Major Hornor was a different type of man, somewhat brusque in manner, but with a heart of gold and the courage of a lion. He loved horses, and could ride or drive them, but he put in most of his time with his professional duties and his home.

"Dr. Aurelius Augustus Hornor had offices adjoining those of Tappan and Hornor, and he visited the Library at intervals, usually with the purpose of telling me that I was frittering my time away, that I should begin with Josephus, then master the Bible, and Shakespeare, and Milton and Bunyan, and Plutarch's Lives, and Blackstone, and then maybe I would have sense enough to digest lighter literature. He was the first man I know to criticise Mark Twain. That was about the time the "Gilded Age" was published. The Doctor said it was "trash", and since then I have come to believe he was almost right. It is heresy to throw bricks at Mark Twain, but when he died in 1910 I was forced to read and review everything he had produced, and I got a dose that lasted me till the present.

"Among the active members of the old Association was Mrs. M. L. Stephenson, a dear sweet woman always working for the public good and never asserting herself.

"Mrs. Jaquess and Mrs. Luther Wilkes and other ladies helped the Library. The Moores - all three families, the John P. Moores, the John Ikes, and the W. E. & C. L. Moore & Brothers - were subscribers and patrons. The Nelsons and the Thompsons, and the Polks and the Hargraves, and all their divers and sundry connections, were interested to some extent. Capt. McKenzie, of McKenzie and Hornor, lived just up the street, and his daughter, Miss Sallie, and his wife, who was Miss Belle Rankin, dropped down frequently. It was a quiet little place, where northern people and southerners met and discussed books, and the turmoil



of political factions and things like that were forgotten.

"The young ladies of the town were particularly fond of rousting me out from my laborious duties in the law office to let them have books. One young lady applied to me privately and asked me could I let out "Camille" to her and not let anybody know. And now some of the colleges for young women have Elinor Glyn's works and Mrs. Asherton's "Black Oxen" on their lists of books to be discussed. Times have changed, but human nature has not. There are just as many nice girls now as there were forty-five years ago. One thing I regret is that the young men of today do not share the reverence to womanhood that they did when the old Library was an infant.

"I cannot close without touching on the character of one man who was closely associated with the literary life of Helena. I refer to General William R. Burke. He was really a general - made one in the Brooks and Baxter War some fifty years ago. (Ed. note: The Brooks-Baxter war over the Governor's office was in April, 1874) The General was owner, publisher, and sometimes editor of the Helena World. He was a man of tempestuous habit, and it was a rare week when he did not engage in personal battle, sometimes with lethal weapons and sometimes with his fists.

"He was a member of the legislature several times, and was a power in politics, but he was personally unpopular. One of his best friends, and a relative by marriage, was Captain Greenfield Quarles. To him the General said, as he was going away from Helena: "I am leaving this town, and there is not a soul in it who is sorry!"

"He went to Los Angeles and became active in politics and business. He was a delegate to several national conventions, and like the little Jackdaw of Reims "finally in the odor of sanctity died." The General was ambitious and wrong. There were several of us who liked him better than he did himself. He and I corresponded intermittently for several years.

"Here I go, remembering old times and old friends in Helena. The first thing I know I will be recalling Major Thweatt, and the late Captain Barlow, and maybe John Krickle and Charley Powell, and Judge Nicholls and Eaton Govan and his wife, who was Miss Lucy Orr, and Hinchey Rice, and Charley Moore, and the Coolidges, Pillows, Mitchells, and a host of others. I haven't forgotten any of them, and I haven't forgotten a lot of things about Helena.

"With best wishes for the prosperity of the Helena Public Library and its supporters, I will close with the words of Tiny Tim, "God bless you one and all."



## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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R. S. BONNER, carpenter, Poplar Grove, Ark. were it necessary for us to include in this sketch of Mr. Bonner's life any items pertaining to his ability and skill as a builder, perhaps the greatest compliment that could be paid him would be to point out those monuments of his handiwork which now grace so many of the homesteads in this portion of the State. He was born in Alabama, in 1844, and is the fifth of ten children, the result of the union of Thomas T. and Elizabeth (Schackelford) Bonner, the father a native of North Carolina and the mother of Alabama. Thomas T. Bonner was a carpenter and ginwright by trade and came to Alabama when a young man. He was there married to Miss Schackelford in 1834, and of the ten children born to this union, five are now living: R. S., J. C., W. H., E. C. and R. K. Mr. Bonner was a member of the I. O. O. F. and was a much respected citizen. He died on December 31, 1849, and the mother died in 1871. The maternal grandfather, John L. Schackelford, was a native of the Old Dominion, and moved to Alabama at an early day. His death occurred in Phillips County (now Lee County) in 1863, at the age of seventy-nine years. He was a soldier in the War of 1812. His wife died in 1874, at the age of eighty-five years.

R. S. Bonner came to Arkansas in 1856, received his education in this State and Alabama, and at the age of sixteen years, or in 1861, enlisted in Company A, Thirteenth Arkansas Infantry, under Capt. Tappan (afterward Gen. Tappan), in what was known as Tappan's Guards. He served in Gen. Bragg's command and was engaged in quite a number of battles, prominent among which were: Belmont, Corinth, Shiloh, Richmond, Perryville, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Murfreesboro and Bell Buckle Station. He was captured close to Atlanta, in 1864, and was confined at Rock Island, Ill., for four months, after which he was exchanged and returned to Arkansas. Later he served in Capt. Weatherly's company. He surrendered in 1865, and afterward engaged in farming on rented land in Phillips County until 1876. He then bought his present place, at that time consisting of forty acres, principally wood land, and to this he added eighty acres, with 100 acres under cultivation. However, he devotes



the greater part of his time to carpenter work and is the only contractor at this place, doing a large amount of building. His marriage occurred in October, 1869, to Miss Jennie Allison, who bore him seven children, two only now living: Hettie R. and Mamie L. Five died while small. Mrs. Bonner died in 1881. She was a worthy member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In October, 1883, Mr. Bonner married Miss Mamie Allison, a sister of his first wife, and they have two children: Olivett and Eveline H.

- from "Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Eastern Arkansas," published in 1890 by The Goodspeed Publishing Co., Chicago, Nashville and St. Louis.



## NEWS, NOTES, & COMMENTS

Your Managing Editor has moved and, consequently, is way behind on all the news. Historically speaking, I've moved to the east half of the site of the old jail in Helena, and have been assured, by friends, that the old gallows were not on my half and no criminal of yester year was hanged on the spot I am now occupying. I can well believe that the horses were watered on this half, as there seems to be a spring in the basement! This is a common problem in Helena, which has always been blessed with an ample supply of springs, and, thank goodness, an automatic pump takes good care of the surplus water. Geographically speaking, I am now at 520 Market Street, on the slope surrounding the former site of Fort Curtis, or the Citadel as it was sometimes called. Perhaps if I listen closely this summer I may hear the ghostly echos of the Battle of Helena fought one hundred years ago on July 4, 1863.

Many plans are being made by the Centennial Commission to commemorate the Battle of Helena, and markers are to be placed on the sites of Fort Curtis, and Forts "A", north of town, "B", Carvill Hill, "C", Reservoir or Graveyard Hill, and "D", Hindman Hill. Hindman Hill is to be cleared and a small park made there. Booklets are to be printed and sold, and more complete details of commemorative events will be fully publicized. So - y'all come. Both Yankees and Rebs will be very welcome. July 4th will be the date.

Our annual meeting and election of new officers will be held on May 26th. A new president, vice-president, secretary, and one director will be elected. Please plan to attend this meeting.

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Mrs. George Bowers, of Camden, Arkansas (her husband is now President of the Ouachita County Historical Society) has graciously forwarded a photostatic copy of a letter written by her grandfather J. W. Paup at Trenton, Phillips County, Arkansas, Headquarters, 2nd Brigade, on June 29, 1863, just prior to the Battle of Helena, which he survived. Thank you, Mrs. Bowers, and we shall look forward to your visit to the scene of Grandfather Paup's fighting. He didn't win, but perhaps it's just as well.

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