

PHILLIPS COUNTY
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The Phillips County Historical Society

MANAGING EDITOR

Mrs. C. M. T. Kirkman

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PHILLIPS COUNTY
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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THE PHILLIPS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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The Phillips County Historical Society is open to anyone interested in Phillips County history. Annual membership dues are \$1.00. Individual copies of the Quarterly are \$2.00. Single copies of the Quarterly are \$1.00.

Neither the Editors nor the Phillips County Historical Society assume any responsibility for statements made by contributors. Correspondence concerning such matters should be addressed to the authors.

Dues are payable to Miss Hester McKinney, Membership Chairman, P. O. Box 629, Helena, Arkansas. Make checks payable to the Phillips County Historical Society, or payment may be made at County Treasurer's Office, Court House, Helena.

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CHILD LIFE IN A SOUTHERN TOWN EIGHTY YEARS AGO

By

Miss Lucy Sanders

Now on College Street, going south from Porter, there are houses on both sides, but then there was only one house--ours--on the west side about half way up the slope. The grounds extended from Porter Street on what is now College to the very top of the hill. It was a wonderful place to live with its practically unlimited playground.

The lower part bordering on Porter Street was the garden. My Mother was an enthusiastic and optimistic gardener and planted everything she heard or read about. She was very successful and her garden furnished vegetables for us and many of the neighbors. I still remember the pretty little red tomatoes and the little yellow pear shaped ones. With some salt on hand one could pluck a nice big red one, casually wiping it on petticoat or sleeve, and have a feast. That was before the day when everything had to be chilled to be palatable. To me the garden seemed a vast expanse, but I know it was not that large as I found as you grew older spaces dwindled.

There was a two story house on the east side facing Porter Street where Fannie Alexander lived. She and her husband had lived on the plantation that was my Mother's girlhood home, and now with her family was close enough to be called upon in emergencies. We often ran in for a drink or to hide when playing right outside her yard.

At that time there was no street but a grassy plain where we had our running games. Sometimes we played croquet when it was not pre-empted by the adults. At times, however, it was taken over by the cows who found it a pleasant place to rest. I was mortally afraid of them, and coming home from school and finding them in possession, I would climb the fence to safety.

Next was a terrace with a row of fruit trees; apple, pear and plum. One was a June apple tree and a special favorite, not because the apples were so good, but because they were the first to ripen.

Then another terrace up to a level place where the house was situated. A pleasant place there to rest and have a cool drink was the cistern house with its seats enough for the crowd of children usually there. Also a favorite in the yard was a magnolia tree with a low limb just made to sit on. All of us loved to sit in trees. It was also the limb on which we learned to skin the cat. This was a "must" for the children who lived there.

It was an unusual house even for those times. I don't know who built it, but I hope the people who lived in it loved it as much as we did. The front door opened on a narrow hall with the conventional parlor on one side. It had a wall to wall carpet, a flowered one of rather delicate shades, and I thought it beautiful. The marble topped table, the cabinet with bric-a-brac, the tapestry covered chairs and the piano filled the room. My Father thought every girl should take music lessons and each one of us started lessons as soon as we were old enough regardless of lack of talent or desire. On the other side of the hall was the guest room but used by the oldest daughter on special occasions. The hall opened on to a court which was the heart of the house. It served the purpose of what is now called the family room. It was a place where we gathered as a family for games or whatever we wanted to do at that time. Part of it was bricked and the other planked. There was a cistern in the bricked part and a swing and trapeze in the other; all the rooms opened on this court. A few shallow steps led up to a nice size square porch out from my Father's study. This was our stage and helped by my Mother we had many performances. She assisted us in the selection of the play, provided the costumes, directed it, and applauded all the actors. I don't think I was ever anything except a fairy who came skipping in very conscious of her importance. The audience sat in the court and was composed of the children of the neighborhood who were not fortunate enough to be in the play.

Back of the study was a storeroom in which, as I remember, was kept a barrel of brown sugar, the nice moist sticky kind; a barrel of apples, and perhaps a bunch of bananas. I expect there were other supplies but these are all I remember.

When it was too cold for the court we sat in front of the fire in our parents' room. It was a huge fireplace and on Christmas Eve a yule log was brought in that burned all that night and the next day. Did you ever eat a sweet potato baked in a fireplace in the hot ashes? Delicious!

By the side of the house at the foot of the hill was a sand bank where we spent many happy hours. When we were quite little we were sure if we dug deep enough a Chinaman would appear as we had been told that we were right on top of China. In addition there was the nicest clay out of which we fashioned dishes, figures, and many other things to be baked in the sun.

Our greatest joy and pastime was wandering over the hills that surrounded the town. We investigated every valley and gully until we had made the circle. Tired, happy, often muddy, we would return laden with ferns, flowering plants, curious rocks and other objects of interest. We knew where to find a grapevine swing, birds nests, trees for climbing, paw paws in season and nuts and berries. The boys would capture a snake with a forked stick to be taken home and kept for a few days in a rat trap. In fact there was never an end to the interesting things to be discovered on those tramps and it was always a joy to be out of doors. This love of nature was encouraged and we had a martin house in the yard. We had to keep a record of when they came in the spring and left in the fall.

There was a school in a frame building and a bell to summon us. All the children in the neighborhood walked and carried their lunches and we did not seem to mind it. School days and Sundays were the only times we left home except for the older ones who took dancing. Sundays there was Sunday school and church and it really was the Sabbath. In the afternoons if we could sit in the court, my Mother would get her guitar and we would all sing. Even though you can't carry a tune there is something about singing that exhilarates.

There is one hymn or song that has stayed with me all these years. Where we learned it I have no idea but this was it:

"Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore
Heed not the stranded wreck but pull for the shore."

Perhaps my Mother would read to us. To have a reading Mother is a wonderful thing. She read with so much expression and in such a lively manner that the characters in the book became real people, as real as our everyday playmates. We would often have heated arguments over our favorites. A lover of poetry, my Mother read many beautiful poems to us, and some of these I memorized later and have found them quite a solace wakeful nights.

One of the pleasures we looked forward to and enjoyed was a candy pull. A big kettle of candy was made so that each one could have some to pull. We waited impatiently for it to cool and then were given as much as he or she was able to pull. I read in the paper the other day that a doctor stated that it was a good thing that taffy or candy pulls were done away with as they were not sanitary. We loved them and it was fun.

In those days a cut or mashed finger or toe, and there must have been many of them, was washed and turpentine and a rag put around it and we went happily off until it happened again.

The only time we all left home was when there was a yellow fever scare and we went to the country or the summers we went to Alabama to visit our grandparents. My Grandfather was a country doctor and lived on a farm. There was a pine grove where we played and a spring where we waded.

Ours was a life of simple pleasures. There was the wonderful world of outdoors and many pleasant hours of games and plays indoors. We had to find our own amusements and, as I remember, it was a busy and happy time.

The kitchen, as was customary in those days, was in a separate building away from the house. I have marvelled at the ingenuity of my Mother and Gracie, the best remembered cook in getting meals still piping hot into the house. Then one March night the kitchen caught on fire and the wind brought the flames straight towards the house. Despite the volunteer firemen, the neighbors, men, women and children, it was doomed. We saw with tears in our eyes a smouldering wreck where once was the home we loved.

Of course we had other homes but it was never quite the same.

FROM THE FILES

The Helena Public Library has a number of old newspapers in its possession, and the excerpts on the next few pages are from that collection.

From the files of the "Commercial Appeal", '100 Years Ago':

"Jan. 18, 1864, Canton, Miss.--Colonel Dobbins, one of the most successful guerrilla commanders in Arkansas whose field of operations has been around Helena, is in Canton. He said the condition of the army is much better than the lachrymose and despondent describe it."

From the "Southern Shield", Helena, Ark., October 27, 1866:

"Advertisement. INFORMATION WANTED OF OUR TWO CHILDREN--SARAH aged 9 years, and SUSAN, aged 5 years--(black)--who were carried off at the time of the raid, on the plantations below Helena, in August, 1864, under Colonel Dobbins. Any information that will lead to the recovery of said children that is lodged at Judge Coolidge's store, in Helena, will be most gratefully received, and paid for, by the distressed parents.

(Signed) ZACHARIAH BROWN,
HASTY BROWN,
colored."

From the "Helena Weekly Clarion", Helena, Ark., April 28, 1869:

"The tide of immigration still continues. Scarcely a boat arrives that is not crowded with emigrants seeking homes within our borders. A large number of Germans, just from the fatherland, passed up the river a few days ago, and they report many more still to come. Should the tide from Germany continue to flow in this direction, it will not be long before all our hill sides will be covered with beautiful vineyards and Arkansas become one of the largest wine producing States in the union. Let them come, there is plenty of room for thousands more."

(NOTE: The migration from Germany to the U. S. was particularly strong from the revolutions of 1848 down to shortly after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.)

From the "Clarion", Oct. 19, 1870:

"New Buildings, Mr. Ed Krickle has put a very neat house on Market street, which, we understand, is for his residence, and that he has already rented his present residence. Mr. W. R. Rightor is putting up a two story house on the opposite side of the street."

"West Helena. This portion of our city is building up rapidly, and the houses are of a far superior order to those in East Helena. There is the Masonic Temple, three stories above basement, and will contain 700,000 brick when completed. The colored Baptist church, now under way, on the hill slope, facing the river, will be far the finest building of its class in Eastern Arkansas. It is to be an immense brick. The corner stone will be laid in a few days, and all who give as much as five dollars will have their names enrolled and deposited therein. Captain Clark is erecting a costly and imposing brick residence on Perry and Lee [sic] streets. Major Thweatt's fine residence, on Porter and Poplar is about finished. Hurrah for West Helena."

(NOTE: It was the wish of several citizens living west of the first ridge -- present-day north Helena -- to have some person living over there who was authorized to make arrests. In December, 1873, M. L. Johnson was appointed policeman for 'West Helena.')

From the "Clarion", Dec. 21, 1870:

"Improvements. We sometime ago stated that Dr. Jacks was about starting a block of brick stores, just south of his drug store. He has erected four one story shantees instead, but proposes to erect brick in a year or two. The fact is in regard to renting that one house rents as well as another, and the cheap house rents for a much greater per cent than a good brick one . . . Mr. James Summers is erecting two small houses to rent for residences, on Beach [sic] street, between Porter and Rightor. We are glad to notice such building, as there is not a house to be had in the city, that we know of, and there are many seeking just such houses as these are to be . . . many persons are prevented coming here by the fact that there are no houses for them to live in."

From the "Clarion", Jan. 18, 1871:

"Immigration. We learn that a large number of immigrants arrived in our city on last Sunday. They are from Georgia and Alabama and have, mostly, come to settle in our county. Our people should endeavor to accommodate them all they can and induce others to come."

From the "Clarion", issues of Feb. 18, Feb. 25 and March 11, 1871:

"At 3:30 A. M., on Feb. 17, a fire broke out in the block of new buildings just being completed by Dr. T. M. Jacks. Both fire engines were brought to the terrific scene. When the flames got to the north end of Knoblauch's building a light wind sprang up. An explosion of powder at Naugle and Company scattered sparks everywhere. Goods and merchandise of every kind were dragged into the muddy streets. Three new buildings were burned belonging to Jacks and Moore, druggists. Firms damaged are Straub and Lohman, grocers; T. B. Faulkner, grocer; G. D. Jaquess and Company, dry goods; A. E. Chester, hard-ware; F. H. Rice and Company, dry goods;

Naugle and Company, grocers; Miss V. Smith, confectioneries; E. Spitzer, dry goods; C. A. Knoblauch, grocer. The whole loss is estimated at from eighty thousand to ninety thousand dollars.

"Much praise is due the flatboatmen who came forward so manfully to the rescue at the late conflagration in this city.

"The north wall of the brick building, on the corner of Main and Rightor streets, fell in directly after the fire subsided. The west side of the Coolidge block is scorched black . . . the large house of Jacks, Moore and Company saved scarcely two wagon loads of goods.

"The Phillips Academy was destroyed by fire (on Feb. 17). The main or central portion of the building had been nearly completed and was being occupied by the school for which it was erected.

"The storm commenced about three o'clock (P. M.) yesterday, (Feb. 17) and was all over in less than half an hour. But in that short half hour an amount of damage was done that it will take thousands of dollars to repair. Our neighbor, Dr. Rice, had his buggy blown from under his buggy house, and then the house itself was blown down.

"The Baptist church was blown completely down, and all the buildings in the immediate vicinity, more or less damaged. The roofing was blown off the Miles' building, which will involve a large cost to replace. The building adjoining the Miles' buildings were also damaged; the unfinished brick had the wall blown down, and the roofs were partially blown off the post-office building and the store of Messrs. F. F. Howerton and Company. The Mammoth Livery Stable of Messrs. Ramsey and West had the entire roof carried off and a portion of the walls blown down. The roof of the new courthouse is badly damaged.

"The town on the back of the hill was not damaged. But starting with the roof of the new courthouse . . . the wind came down and struck the houses two hundred yards from the hills and swept its way almost clear for say one hundred yards wide, and some three hundred yards in length. It can be compared to the swoop of a bird of prey . . . the total damage will aggregate, some \$15,000 to \$20,000. Our city has thus lost some \$100,000 in the past week. There are planks sticking through the side of Mr. McKenzie's house that appear as though they had been shot like arrows from a bow.

"This storm, in connection with the late fire, has about completely ruined the business part of the city. Some of those who were burned out, took refuge in houses that are now either blown to pieces or have had their roof blown off, and the damage from 'water' has now to be superadded to their loss by 'fire'. The little steamer, Mattie Belle, was blown loose, and was carried almost directly across the river, and she is now, at the time of writing, lying at the opposite side of the river, but whether tied to the bank or aground on the bar, we cannot tell. A son of Mr. Stewart, a little fellow of about six years of age, was killed by the falling in of his house.

"Thus has our city been visited with two calamities in quick succession, which have desolated near one-half of our city. The next we suppose will have to be an overflow, which would about finish up the job. But let us live in hopes if we die in despair."

(NOTE: The storm must have had a terrifying effect on the citizens. Far more space was given to the storm in the newspapers than was given to the fire that occurred the same day.)

From the "Clarion", three weeks later:

"Who Lost a Horse? In removing the rubbish from the building of Messrs. Jacks, Moore and Company, the remains of a horse were found, with the saddle and bridle all on. Whose is it? Nothing has been said about a lost horse. There were also several pigs found under the fallen wall. It is supposed the horse took refuge behind the wall on the day of our great hurricane, and the wall was blown down on him and also on the pigs, as it was standing after the fire and fell during the storm. It is supposed that a cow is also covered under the rubbish."

This account of the storm was taken from a letter of Fred Sheldon to his grandfather in England. The diary of Fred Sheldon is owned by the Helena Public Library and the letter is included in the diary:

"February 21, 1871 - -

On Friday afternoon we had a terrible hurricane, which did a great deal of damage to the town. The Wind came from the northwest carrying everything before it. It levelled a large church, right behind our office, with the ground, and that broke the fury of the Wind, or we should never have escaped.

Our offices were on the second floor of a two story building, and we were in the engineers rooms working with our hats and coats off. We rushed out as the building began to totter and swing over on each side, and managed to get out into the street without the house falling, the air was so full of bricks and boards, that we could not tell which way to go. I noticed a low one story office, and as it did not shake, I took shelter there. Our Chief Engineer ran up the street, and was just turning round a corner, when he saw the gable end of a large house coming to him, so he took to his heels and made for the river, never once slackening his speed till he got so near the water, that it was only with great difficulty he kept from falling in.

Colonel James E. Gregg was not in, but the company that is H. F. Hale, manager, and Colonel Rogers, with James----- were, and so the Arkansas Central Railway Company, took to their heels, and rushed off in all directions, looking when they returned the most pitiable objects I ever saw."

OTHER EXCERPTS

From the "Clarion", May 12, 1869:

"The Cemetery. The ground recently selected for this purpose, has been surveyed and found to contain seventy-two acres. The contract for a good fence has been given to Anthony Opp, Esquire, who is now engaged getting out the material, and will soon have a handsome fence around the whole ground, and on the inside of which will be an evergreen fence, which will come on about the time the wood one decays. The services of seven German have been engaged and are now at work, laying off roads, terraces, etc., under the instruction of Leon Archias, Esquire, who is famous for his taste. We may now look for a permanent and beautiful resting place for our dead, the want of which has long been a disgrace to our city."

From the "Clarion", August 31, 1870:

"We learn from the operator here, Mr. Hunt, that he, yesterday, sent the first cable telegram ever sent from Arkansas. The telegram was sent by our enterprising merchant, A. Fink, to Prussia and cost twelve dollars in gold."

From the "Clarion", Sept. 21, 1870:

"Died. In Memphis, on the 12th instant, Mrs. Sallie Hindman, in the 80th year of her age, widow of the late Colonel T. C. Hindman, Sr., and mother of the late General T. C. Hindman, Jr."

From the "Clarion", Oct. 19, 1870:

"The death of General R. E. Lee was reported as having happened. His age was 63 years, 8 months, 23 days."

From the "Clarion", March 22, 1873:

"Marvell Station on the Arkansas Central Railway is a right lively town -- houses and stores spring up like magic. Town lots are selling off rapidly at from one hundred to two hundred dollars apiece. Captain Dan Webster has been appointed railroad agent and has commenced operations in the new depot. Barton is also putting forth claims to be called a town. Colonel Longley is confident that the town will rival Helena in a few years. We think he is too sanguine, however. Barton now contains three stores, one livery stable and seven saloons. A small portion of the town on the outskirts is being laid off as a park, with a very fine drive."

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IS THE HIGHWAY OF HISTORY IN AMERICA

by Porter C. Young

From its discovery in 1541 by DeSoto at Helena, until today, the Mississippi River has continued to play an important part in the growth of our country. The Mississippi was first opened by white men in 1670, by such men as Marquette and Joliet. In 1705 the first commercial freight shipment was made on the river and I'm glad I wasn't around when it passed Helena - - the shipment was 5,000 raw coon, deer and bear hides on a raft.

Soon the flatboats and keelboats appeared drawing thousands of men who were later to become a part of history. Abe Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Zachary Taylor and others were a part of our early development. In 1796 the first horse powered boat appeared on the great river . . a side wheeler whose paddles were turned by 8 horses on a treadmill. The boat made the trip down the river fine, but on the return trip the horses gave out at Natchez and the boat was abandoned.

In 1811 the first steamboat completed a trip down the Mississippi to open a new era. By 1849, 1,000 steamboats were on the river. Between 1811 and 1850 there were 4,000 casualties recorded by explosions. In 1832 a young army lieutenant, Robert E. Lee, was sent to survey the river at Rock Island by the Corps of Engineers who were given the task of harnessing the river.

In 1856 the first bridge was built - - at Rock Island, Illinois. It caused a bitter fight between river men and railroaders and the bridge was knocked out several times. Abe Lincoln was once hired by the Rock Island to defend them in a suit by a steamship company. He pointed out in court that the bridge was built wrong, was a great hazard to navigation and should be rebuilt to conform with the currents, and ended up winning the suit for the railroads by winning the point that if steamboats had the right to go on the water, railroads had the right to go over the water.

In 1878 Congress authorized a four an a half foot channel. The river was lazy, wide and shallow and boats had to be specially designed to make any progress. Now they have authorized a twelve foot channel.

Let's look at the river itself. Why has it played such an important part in the history of America and why is it so important to us even today? The river is 2,552 miles long, more or less. It has 100,000 tributaries and includes over 15,000 miles of inland navigable streams. It drains 40% of the United States plus an additional 13,000 square miles of Canada. It drains the water of 31 states. 785 billion cubic yards of water are carried to the Gulf each year (and there's 431 gallons of water to a cubic yard). The Mississippi River handles 3 times the amount of water as the St. Lawrence River, 25 times the amount of water as the river Rhine and 338 times the amount of the Thames River. 500 million tons of mud wash down the river each year (over 1 cubic mile of dirt). At one time the site of Cairo was on the Gulf of Mexico but Mother Nature and the Mississippi have now extended it 800 miles to the south.

The Indiana called the river 'Misi' (meaning big) 'sipi' (meaning river). The French misinterpreted this to mean 'Father of Waters' and they were right. Early explorers tacked many names on the river. Old maps and drawings show it as 'Conception River', 'Baude River', 'Colbert River', and 'Rio Del Espiritu Santo'.

It is hard to determine which era was the most fascinating - - the flatboat era or the steamboat era. Both left their mark on America. The flatboats opened commerce for America and started our era of exports. There were no sawmills or the like in the fast growing South. Flatboats were made of cut lumber and loaded with everything imaginable. They carried clothing, groceries, blacksmith shops, hardware, etc. Preachers and missionaries got in on the act by building churches on the flatboats and going South. Even floating brothels were common. As many as 3,000 flatboats a year went down the Mississippi and many of the fine homes still standing in New Orleans today were built from the lumber of flatboats.

Keelboats followed the flatboats. The keelboats were pointed at both ends and were made to return upstream. It was during this time that the river towns became so notorious. The boats had to be poled down the river and also upstream. This work developed some powerful muscles and when the men stopped work for the day they played hard to relax. Many a boatman bragged that he could tear the hide off a bull buffalo, and knife wounds just made them feel better. Blood on the sandbars was a nightly occurrence.

Cooking on the flatboats was something. Some had cooks. They tell the story of a flatboat commanded by Whiskey Jack. He asked his cook if he didn't have a cookery book and could make anything besides stew. Big John the cook replied yes, he had one, but couldn't use it because every recipe in it started out with 'take a clean dish'. Some flatboats rotated their cooking chores. One man would cook until someone complained about the food, then the complainer took over. These cooks would resort to such tricks as using a whole box of salt in the meat, soda in the potatoes, etc., but the men 'loved the taste'.

Towns sprang up all along the river during this era. Of them, Napoleon, Arkansas was the most famous. It was the gateway to the west and a stopping off place with ready liquor for the flatboatmen. So many men were killed at Napoleon each night that they were piled outside the saloons like cordwood.

The steamboat era could never be repeated. It was a time of its own. Americans began to travel when steamboating came in. There were no railroads or highways and travelers floated or rode on horses.

History gives credit for the steam engine to James Watt, but in the second century B. C., the Greeks used steam to close large stone temple doors. In the 16th century Spaniards made a steamboat and sailed it in the harbor at Barcelona. In the 17th century the Italians made a steam operated sawmill. Then in the 18th century James Watt added a separate condenser to steam engines and had a practical machine. A blacksmith by the name of John Fitch made a clumsy but workable steamboat which sailed on the Delaware. However, he could get no financing or

encouragement from anyone in America or Europe and ended up committing suicide. But there was a shrewd man by the name of Robert Fulton who made friends with Fitch, pretending to be interested in giving financial assistance. Fulton secured blueprints of the steamboat and after Fitch's death proceeded to build the Clermont and sail it on the Hudson. He was a promoter and publicity made him a hero as the inventor of the steamboat.

In 1811 Fulton and his partner, Livingston, hired Nicholas Roosevelt to build a steamboat that could run on the Mississippi River. Roosevelt made a flatboat trip down the river, charting its course and making conclusions as to the requirements for a steamboat on the Western Waters. The boat was built in Pittsburgh. Floods launched the boat prematurely but without great damage. It drew 12 feet of water, was over 100 feet long. Historians still argue whether it was a sidewheeler or sternwheeler and drawings of the boat show it both ways. This first boat was named 'New Orleans' and left Pittsburg in September, 1811. Aboard with the full crew was Roosevelt and his pregnant wife. Fulton sent out much advance notice of the trip and great banquets were held along the route of the Ohio River for the crew as they arrived. Fortunately Roosevelt's baby was born while the boat was delayed at Louisville by low water.

Just below Louisville were great rapids and the river was too low for the New Orleans to clear the bottom of the treacherous strip. With a rise in the water, the boat made it safely through with just two inches of water to spare. Friends stood by to watch the tragedy which did not occur.

That night the river went wild, running backwards and almost wrecking the New Orleans. It was the great earthquake of 1811, known as the New Madrid quake, that reshaped the Mississippi River for hundreds of miles and which voided all of Roosevelt's charts and notes on the currents, etc. The boat was plagued by warring Indians who thought the smoking contraption caused the earthquake, by fire aboard the boat, by river snags, caving banks, etc. It managed to reach New Orleans on January 12, 1812. Knowing the boat was not powerful enough to make the trip back upstream, the steamboat was put into service between Natchez and New Orleans.

Fulton, being a smart fellow, tried to get exclusive rights from each state for running steamboats on the Mississippi River, but only one state fell for his line. That was Louisiana. For years he operated out of New Orleans on an exclusive contract, so other boats had to stay shy of the Gulf. However, Roosevelt's pilot on the New Orleans not only married Mrs. Roosevelt's maid, but built a steamboat of his own, and it, the 'Washington', was the first steamboat to make a complete return trip up the river. It was also the first steamboat to blow its boilers, leaving 3 dead. By 1849 there were 1,000 steamboats on the Mississippi River, 4,000 deaths recorded as the result of boiler explosions, and this was only the beginning.

Steamboats were built more elaborately than our finest hotels. At first the passenger 'packets' were two decks with the passengers rooms, each decorated differently and named after one of our states, thus the name 'staterooms', that carried over onto ocean liners. Then large halls or dormitories were built on

the third deck and it was called 'Texas Deck'. It was considered elite to make a steamboat trip down the river and gamblers and ladies of ill repute were part of the crews of many boats 'as a service to passengers'. The South's friend, Lafayette, once spent the night on the top deck of a sunken steamboat awaiting rescue. Zachary Taylor was kidnapped by a steamboat crew and delayed in getting from Baton Rouge to Washington for his inauguration. Incidentally, he was rescued just above Helena and put on the right boat for his trip.

In 1865 the Sultana exploded just above Memphis leaving 1,550 dead - - the largest disaster on water to date. Racing became quite popular and boats vying for business became speed conscious. This was one of the reasons for so many boiler explosions. Probably the most famous race was that between the Robert E. Lee and the Natchez. The trip up from New Orleans to St. Louis took three days, 18 hours and 14 minutes, a record held until 1958 when an outboard boat beat the time. During the steamboat era the steamboats handled more river tonnage than the entire British fleet which was recognized as being the shipping magnate of the world. Because of the hazards of the river, steamboats usually lasted from 3 to 5 years, and owners would carry on the names on numerous successions of boats. There have been well over 20 'Natchez' steamboats and towboats to date.

Towns along the river grew as the result of steamboats. Most became notorious because of the attitude of the people. The towns were wild, carefree, with no law and order. History records one incident at Natchez-Under-The-Hill worth repeating. Natchez-Under-The-Hill was reserved for the roughnecks while Natchez-On-The-Hill was reserved for the refined. A preacher-passenger aboard a steamboat wandered into a waterfront saloon-hotel one day while his boat was taking on freight. He was rolled by women. The steamboat captain demanded the preacher's money back and the Madam of the house told him where to go. The captain then tied a long rope around the house and onto the boat. After due notice the boat pulled away from shore, taking the house and its contents with it. There were some wet women that day.

Steamboat freight was brought to a standstill by the railroads when they started expanding north and south, and we in America thought we needed our freight in a hurry. But World War I showed that the railroads were incapable of handling the situation and the government organized and operated the Federal Barge Line. During the 1930's business learned that river transportation was a little slower but much cheaper, and the business increased until today 140 million tons of freight are shipped on the Mississippi River annually by modern diesel towboats, pushing acres of barges containing everything from sulphur to cattle.

Our river has served as the highway of history in America and we in Helena have shared in this history. Let's do all we can to attract the millions of Americans who are eager to learn of us and to visit us. The tourist trade is the largest industry in Arkansas and in 1963 over 5,000,000 persons visited our state. Let's attract them to Helena.

This report was given before the Phillips County Historical Society, January 26, 1964.

CENTENNIAL ADDRESS DEDICATING SIX CIVIL WAR MARKERS

COMMEMORATING THE BATTLE OF HELENA, ARKANSAS

delivered by

Waddy W. Moore, III, July 4, 1963

The Fourth of July has a double significance for most Americans. It is celebrated as the birthday of this great nation and commemorated as the day the fate of another nation was sealed in doom. We are here this morning to dedicate six markers that commemorate an important chapter in the story of the demise of the Confederate States of America. While the institutional concept of the Confederacy is dead, the emotional concepts that breathed life into it live on. It lives not as a revengeful hate, but as a heritage of a people who loved freedom deeply enough to die for it. The fact that we are still united as one great people is proof that, though we lost the battles for our freedom, we won the campaign. It hardly seemed so, however, to Holmes, Price, Fagan, Marmaduke, Lee, Pemberton, or Davis, one hundred years ago today. But from the vantage point we now enjoy, we can see that they won too.

The South seceded from the Union because that was the only course that our forefathers thought led to freedom. The failure of secession did not prove they were wrong, it proved that there was an alternative, one they may not have relished, but one that has proven satisfactory for all of us.

One hundred years ago today, a great drama, acted by over 300,000 men was coming to a climax. In the East, the termination of battle at Gettysburg was at hand; to the south, Vicksburg was falling, but here, Helena wasn't.

Helena occupies a strategic site on the Mississippi River. The Union army understood its significance all too well, occupying the town in July of 1862. During the months that followed, Grant slowly closed his grip on Vicksburg and communications between the Confederate government in Richmond and General Edmund Kirby Smith's Trans-Mississippi Department faltered. By the spring of 1863, Confederate Secretary of War James A. Seddon dared not risk sending messages directly to General Smith, lest they fall into Union hands. He had to rely on General Joseph E. Johnston in Mississippi to relay messages to Smith. With Pemberton trapped in Vicksburg, Seddon suggested an attack on Helena might compel Grant to relax his hold, and if that failed and Vicksburg fell, Helena might prove 'a great future advantage to the Confederacy'. Meanwhile, Lt. General Theophilus A. Holmes, Confederate Commander of the Arkansas District, had been considering just such a move.

If Helena could be wrested from the Federals, Grant's supply line would be threatened, if not closed. As long as Helena remained in Federal hands, it could be used as a staging area for the Union to control the northeastern counties of the state. Its capture then would serve many purposes.

On June 8, 1863, Holmes asked Major General Sterling Price, whose command was at Jacksonport, if his men were in condition to move on Helena. Price replied that his men were 'fully rested and in excellent spirits'. Price reported also that Brig. General John S. Marmaduke's cavalry had ascertained that there were only between 4,000 and 5,000 Federals occupying Helena. Holmes apparently felt that this was bad news, for he wrote on June 13, that 'Fortified as they are, to take [Helena] . . . would cost too much'.

Two days later Holmes changed his mind when, first, he received Secretary Seddon's telegram urging just such an attack and, second, learned that Price's original estimate of the strength of the Union garrison might have been exaggerated. He then set out for Jacksonport for a conference with Price and on June 18, after his consultation with his subordinates, issued the order for the attack on Helena.

In order to prevent the Union forces from guessing the object of Confederate activity, Brig. General Marsh Walker immediately threw up an isolating cavalry screen around Helena. No one was to be permitted in or out of the target city.

Price's infantry and Marmaduke's cavalry were to leave Jacksonport for Helena on June 22, marking through Augusta, Cotton Plant and Moro. Brig. General James F. Fagan's regiments left Little Rock and reached Clarendon on June 26, and departed for Trenton near Big Creek, the next morning.

Price and Marmaduke progressed on schedule for two days, then it began to rain. For four days the skies emptied on the countryside, turning the roads into ribbons of mud and what were usually easily fordable streams into roaring torrents. Price's columns bogged down. At times his men waded all day in water up to their breast. Finally, on July 1, Price and Marmaduke trudged wearily into Moro, five days behind schedule.

Fagan, waiting at Trenton, now resumed his march and Price made his rendezvous with the rest of the army five miles west of Helena at the Allen Polk house on the morning of July 3. Holmes called a council of war to brief his commanders and make assignments. The defenses of the city were more formidable than he had anticipated, he told them. The Federal engineers had done their usual good job of fortifying the ridges west of town. Each road leading into Helena was commanded by batteries on the crests of Crowleys Ridge. It was too late to turn back now so Holmes gave his orders.

His plan was a masterpiece of complexity. Four separate columns, marching over unfamiliar and extremely difficult terrain, at night, were to launch simultaneous assaults on each fortified position at daylight. Even the time of the attack was poorly stated, for Price interpreted his orders to mean sunrise instead of day-break.

Fagan's orders were to advance along the upper Little Rock Road and take the southern-most battery, on Hindman Hill. Price, following Fagan's route was to move off to his left and assault the battery on Graveyard Hill. Marmaduke's cavalry, fighting on foot, was responsible for taking Rightor

Hill. Walker's assignment was to march his cavalry down the Stirling Road and support the attack on Rightor Hill, and, once it was taken, he was to proceed into town.

Meanwhile, the Federal commander in Helena, Major General Benjamin M. Prentiss, seems to have awakened slowly to the danger of his position. On June 24, he had received reports from Memphis that Price was on the move, most likely against him. This was two days after Price's columns left Jacksonport. Prentiss thought the Confederates were on their way to the Red River area. Three days later he began to change his mind. Walker's Confederate cavalry screen was too complete, no one had passed through the Confederate lines into Helena for days. This was most unusual since the Confederates often smuggled supplies of shoes, clothing and food out of Helena. Prentiss noted that local people were daily growing more surly toward their uninvited guests. He decided to take precautionary measures. Large fatigue details began digging rifle pits and construction batteries on the bluffs west of town. On prominent points along Crowleys Ridge four batteries, designated as A, B, C, and D on the map from north to south, were begun. Trees were felled along all roads leading directly into the town and the western slopes of the ridge were partially cleared. Anchoring the Union fortifications was a large redoubt just west of town called Fort Curtis. Prentiss then ordered that after June 28, reveille was to be sounded at 2:30 A. M. and the entire garrison of 4,129 men was placed on twenty-four hour alert. Even the 4th of July celebration planned by the officers was cancelled.

The Union river fleet commander, David M. Porter, fathomed the Confederate strategy almost at once. On June 21, the day before Price left Jacksonport, he received information from various sources, spies, deserters, etc., that Price was moving on some point on the Mississippi River and guessed it must be Helena. He promptly dispatched three gunboats to support Prentiss. When the gunboats arrived and found Prentiss did not expect an attack, two of the vessels, the 'Hastings' and the 'Tyler', cruised down the river seeking prey. The 'Bragg', the third boat, left for Memphis for engine repairs. By July 2, the Tyler was back at Helena and ready to support Prentiss, who was now fully expecting an attack.

The attack came at 3 A. M. Saturday morning, July 4, 1863. The Confederate army got its first surprise when Fagan's column was halted by felled trees across the upper Little Rock Road. The excellent cavalry screen thrown up by Walker apparently kept him too busy to find out what the enemy was doing, for unaware of the obstacles, Fagan was caught without axes to clear the road. The only course open was to climb over and around the trees and proceed without his artillery. Fagan drove back the tenacious Union pickets as he approached within 150 yards of the breastworks on Hindman Hill, designated as Battery D by the Federals. What at first had been only the rattle of musket fire, now erupted into a thunderous battle.

The night before, as Fagan approached Hindman Hill, he sent Colonel William H. Brooks' combat team of infantry, cavalry and Etter's artillery battery, along the lower Little Rock Road to pin down the Federal pickets

south of Helena and to guard the Confederate right flank. As the engagement was joined on Hindman Hill, Brooks took up a position on a hill south of town on which the Clements house stood and prepared to put his artillery into action. He first noticed the enemy was shelling him from a battery over the levee to his right, then the gunboat Tyler began dropping shells in on him with deadly accuracy, driving Etter's battery off the hill. Brooks was caught between a crossfire from the Union guns over the levee, from Fort Curtis and, occasionally, from Battery D on Hindman Hill. Although Brooks suffered many casualties, he remained at his post until ordered to withdraw at 11 A. M.

Price's men had followed a trail that diverged from the upper Little Rock Road which local guides assured him would lead directly to Graveyard Hill. When his advance units reached a point one and a half miles from the Union fortification at Battery C, Price halted his column to await sunrise, which was the time he understood he was to attack. Not until Holmes raced to Price's side to find the cause of his delay was the error corrected, and, by the time Price's men were ready, the fight had been going on at Battery D for almost an hour.

Farther north, Marmaduke was deploying his command for the assault on Battery A atop Rightor Hill. Marmaduke too had found trees felled across the roads leading to his objective, and proceeding in the dark before dawn even his guides got lost. Wisely Marmaduke halted his men and waited until daylight to re-orient himself in order to proceed toward Rightor Hill. As the sky lightened in the east Marmaduke regrouped, found the Old St. Francis Road and continued his march, dislodging pickets as he approached Battery A. The advance was halted within 150 yards of the hill by a withering fire from the 29th Iowa, the guns of Battery A, and Colonel Powell Clayton's dismounted Federal cavalry located across the levee to the extreme left. Marmaduke's thrust was stopped dead in its tracks and would remain so until the troops and guns with Colonel Clayton were dislodged. Twice, Marmaduke says, he asked Walker who was between Clayton and himself to try to dislodge the Federals across the levee. But Walker was pinned down himself behind the levee and spent the day in a futile artillery duel with Clayton. At 11 A. M., Holmes' order to disengage and fall back reached Marmaduke who promptly complied. He was so peeved with Walker for not responding to his request to drive Clayton from the field that he left without informing him of Holmes' order. Walker soon noticed what was happening, however, and withdrew his men also.

In a complicated battle plan such as this one, every unit must perform exactly as ordered. Walker's refusal to risk an attack on Clayton may have been justified from the standpoint of the great loss of lives it probably would have caused, but his failure to attack doomed two prongs of Holmes' invasion to utter failure and hence, wrecked any hope of success for the campaign.

While the attack of Marmaduke and Walker was fizzling on the north end of town, a grim determined struggle was unfolding at Graveyard and Hindman Hills. The courageous assault on Hindman Hill by Fagan's men carried the Arkansans to within a few yards of the battery itself, but having carried the brunt of the attack alone for almost an hour, Fagan's weary men were repelled.

Price, once the confusion as to time and position was clarified, made a successful assault on Graveyard Hill, capturing the guns in Battery C and driving the Union command from the hill. Holmes rushed to Graveyard Hill and proceeded to make his greatest tactical blunder of the campaign. Instead of concentrating Price's men on one objective, he divided them. He ordered Brig. General Mosbey M. Parsons to move down the hill and attack Fort Curtis, while General Dandridge McRae was ordered to take another brigade and cross the ravine separating Graveyard Hill from Hindman Hill and support Fagan's hard-pressed men.

As Parson's troops took off with a whoop, they were stunned by the fire from the guns on Battery B, D, and Fort Curtis. The worse was yet to come, for the gunboat Tyler was now directing VIII inch shells on Parsons with incredible accuracy, literally ripping his men to pieces. McRae then met with the same fate. The guns from the fort, the Tyler, and Battery D unloaded an artillery barrage that smashed McRae's command before it could climb out of the ravine. His men dropped their arms and fled for cover down the ravine to the west.

Meanwhile, the Union commander, Prentiss, reorganized his shattered troops from Battery C and reinforced them with brigades of Iowans, Missourians and Hoosiers who proceeded to launch a counterattack on Graveyard Hill. The Federal guns had continued to rake the ridge and ravine with a steady, deadly barrage. Many of Parsons' men, not wishing to run the gauntlet, dropped in their tracks and surrendered.

Holmes realized the attack had failed and at 10:30 A. M., gave the order to withdraw. The Federals were almost as exhausted as the Confederates and made no attempt to pursue the retreating Holmes, who led his army back into Arkansas. This was the last attempt by the Confederates to secure a stronghold on the Mississippi River. The tide had turned against them. From the bluffs around Vicksburg, from the hills of Pennsylvania, or from the hills around Helena, it was now a down-hill march for Union armies everywhere.

Federal losses at Helena that day in killed, wounded and missing came to 339, or eight per cent of the 4,129 men present for duty. The Confederates lost 1,614 men, twenty-one per cent of their 7,646 troops.

More pleasant to contemplate is the sequel. After the battle, a Confederate hospital was established by Price's Surgeon General at the Polk place, and Prentiss' medical director appeared and offered to take the wounded into Helena for treatment. Although the Confederates declined the offer, the next day a Federal ambulance train appeared making the same offer. When it was declined for the second time, the Union officer then sent out ice and other medical supplies which the Confederates lacked. Such an act of mercy and brotherhood is indeed the stuff of which all Americans are made, whether they wore blue or gray in 1863, or whether they live in the North, South, East or West in 1963.

CONCERNING THE HEALTH OF HELENA IN DAYS PAST

In the early days of Helena, one of the first services that was related with public health was that offered by the city and county physician, which office in 1872 was held by Dr. George McAlpine. The duty of his office was to treat the indigent, the paupers at the poorhouse. That same year, there was an outbreak of smallpox, and suitable accommodations had to be found for those victims who could not provide for themselves. A house was fitted up with cots and blankets, and a male nurse was paid a dollar a day to attend the victims. This smallpox house was a good example of indigent medicine and why the City had a city physician. His salary in this office was \$20.00 per month.

In 1875, a house in the City had been fixed to receive patients, and Dr. McAlpine refers to it as the 'county hospital', offering 17 good cots and a sufficiency of good blankets. This hospital was strictly for paupers. In August, 1875, the doctor reports that there were 16 admissions to the hospital. These patients had to have permits from the city judge or the mayor to be admitted to the hospital.

In 1876, some of the citizens began to wonder if cottonseed, kept in large quantities in the 3rd Ward of Helena, might be derogatory to health, and the City Council recommended that the City physician examine the premises. He did so, and reported that there seemed to be no immediate danger to health from the cottonseed stored in the 3rd Ward.

In 1877, upon request of the City's physicians, an ordinance was passed that all births, deaths and marriages in the limits of Helena be recorded. For some time after this, however, the ordinance seems to have been largely disregarded. It was in this same year of 1877, that a Board of Health was created. There had been a temporary Board of Health during an earlier yellow fever scare, but this Board was to exist on a more permanent basis.

The real test of the beginning interest in public health in Helena came with the yellow fever epidemic in 1878 and 1879. In July, 1878, a meeting was held by the Council and rules were made by which the Board of Health would look after the sanitary condition of the City. The Board was to be composed of five members, three of them to be physicians, the mayor and one other member. These members were Dr. George McAlpine, Dr. A. A. Hornor, Dr. Charles E. Nash, Mayor Bart Y. Turner and C. R. Coolidge. (Other medical members at one time or another were: Dr. T. M. Jacks, Dr. H. M. Grant, Dr. D. H. Linthicum, Dr. Noel Burke, Dr. G. D. Jaquess.) At this meeting it was noted that the steamer 'John W. Porter' was going upriver with yellow fever cases aboard and the City Marshal was told to prevent the landing of the boat here.

In early August, 1878, the Board deemed it necessary that every precaution be taken to prevent the City from the threatened invasion of yellow fever. The street commissioner was instructed to clean up the streets and alleys, and lime was to be bought and retailed or distributed by the Marshal under the direction of the Board of Health. The Marshal would inspect all boats coming from New

Orleans where yellow fever was raging, and would prevent their landing or discharging any goods.

The matter of a Quarantine for the City was considered and a public meeting held to see if money could be raised to pay for the Quarantine. Now what was meant by the term Quarantine, was that a house outside of town, or, in most cases of river towns, a wharfboat, would be used to house anyone coming from a yellow fever district and having no home in the City. Private citizens subscribed \$1,050.00 to pay for the Quarantine Station and the Board of Health was empowered to purchase anything needed, provide suitable hospitals or places of residence of quarantined persons, and to do anything necessary to put the City in a better sanitary condition. The Board could also punish offenders against the quarantine regulations.

The people were ignorant of the fundamental nature of the disease. In Memphis, where yellow fever was epidemic, concussion was used as a remedial measure. One man offered 15 kegs of powder for detonation, the powder when exploded to cleanse the air of germs. The mayor of Memphis telegraphed Washington for some heavier guns to help with this remedy.

But all was not harmony among the members of the Board of Health. Dr. Hornor resigned from the Board, saying that certain citizens accused him of trying to infect the healthy portions of the City when he was not acting as a member of the Board of Health. Dr. McAlpine also resigned as he thought that the sickness in Helena was not even yellow fever, but that the 'Prevailing Endemic Disease of the City is a malignant form of bilious fever, assuming a congestive type' and that 'the written testimony of all physicians in Helena as sent to the Board of Health sustains me in my diagnosis'. He also was angry at the fact that the other members of the Board had been sending 'alarming telegrams abroad'.

The fight against the disease, whatever it was, continued on through the next summer. In July, 1879, a strict quarantine was established against Memphis and all infected points, and the river and all roads coming into town were guarded by 25 policemen. There was an officer on the ferryboat and no persons from infected districts or strangers who could not identify themselves were allowed to cross the river. No skiffs could land within 5 miles of the city limits. A guard was to be placed completely around the City.

There were 48 volunteers for guard duty and their names were given to Captain John L. Henderson, Captain of the Helena Rifles. Cots, tents, wood, food and supplies were bought for the use of the Quarantine Guards, and two horses were purchased for the use of the officers of the Guards. The paid guards received \$75.00 a month and were to be suitably uniformed at their own expense in dark pants, black shirt and policeman's star, with the full power of arrest of a regular policeman. The citizen volunteers worked with the paid guards.

During this period, a delegate from the Helena Board of Health went to a meeting of the State Board of Health of the State of Tennessee to gain further information on preventing and fighting disease.

By November 1, 1879, there had been several 'White Frosts' and the epidemic came to an end, but not before Dr. Nash and Dr. Jacks had delivered this message concerning sanitary conditions in Helena to the City Council in a Board of Health report:

"To the Honorable Board of Health of the City of Helena -

Gentlemen:

We your committee appointed to investigate the sanitary condition of the City would most respectfully report after a thorough investigation of all the points bearing upon the facts of ill health produced by local causes, they find many thoughts suggestive of improvement. The first we shall name is the lamentable condition of our sewerage.

The principal portion of the City stands in the valley between the river bank and the hill, running parallel with the river at a distance of about an average of 300 yards. The water runs from both sides to the center of the valley.

The water-shed from the hill side being about three miles, which brings a vast amount of water into the valley in excessive rains such as we had in the spring of 1877. When the river rises upon its bank to above the level of the valley, the seepage water runs back and keeps the flat full of River water until it recedes below the level of the flat. This generally commences about the first of the summer months.

That the ditches constructed at present are not sufficient to convey the water from its present bed to any place of safety, we would therefore recommend that a committee be appointed to make the necessary survey (if it has not already been done) with the view of speedily removing the water this winter.

We would also call your attention particularly to the time of drainage.

It is known to the old citizens that the flat above and below the city limits was filled with hundreds of corpses, death caused by various low grades of camp fever, which bodies are now lying smouldering under this sheet of water and the ground if denuded of its covering at an unpropitious season, would evolve those poisonous gases which would be likely to produce an epidemic of most serious import.

The next thought that suggests itself to our minds as being of equal value is the condition of the water used for drinking and culinary purposes. A very large per centage of the cisterns of the city are broken and in a leaking condition. In the winter these cisterns are filled with water from the summit of the hills, which have been used for years as a burying ground for all cases particularly during the war.

Now has it never occurred to these people that they are drinking water running over dead men's bones and putrifying flesh? It is sickening to think of and poisonous [sic] to the stomach, producing typhoid symptoms in all our pores.

The only pure water that gets into these cisterns is when they are filled with percolated water in the spring from the River. It is more often that the cracks are at the bottom of the cistern than at any other place which can be accounted for on hydraulic principles, and this gives a deceptive character to the water contained in the cistern, many not knowing that the crack is there owing to it containing an abundance of water.

If the poor can not be provided with cisterns, we would suggest a number of driven wells to bring the water from the river.

Our attention has also been given to the investigation of privies along the ditches, the excrement from which passes into the ditch and polluting the water to a high degree. This water is used throughout the winter and spring by the shantyites who live adjacent to them, and last but not least we would call particular attention to the butcher shops and slaughter pens.

The largest one of these is situated on the main branch which brings the water from a distance into the very heart of the City. The blood and offal are emptied into this branch. The cattle yard stands upon the side of the hill with an opening upon this stream. Surely the liquid excrement flows into the stream and is conveyed into the city, and numbers of persons are drinking this water without knowing that the head of this stream is filled with the carcasses of slaughtered animals and that they are drinking poison by the pail full.

Charles E. Nash
T. M. Jacks

Committee."

Most of this information was taken from the minutes of the City Council of Helena during the years, 1870 to 1880, with some help from a "Commercial Appeal" article of August 7, 1949.

HOPEWELL CULTURE BURIAL MOUNDS NEAR HELENA, ARKANSAS

by Dr. James A. Ford

The following excerpts are from Volume 50: Part 1, "Anthropological Papers of The American Museum of Natural History", New York, 1963.

INTRODUCTION

"The Helena Crossing Site was discovered by James B. Griffin, Philip Phillips and the writer in 1940 in the course of an archeological survey we were then making in the alluvial valley of the Mississippi River. Local residents were unaware that this was a prehistoric site, an understandable error, because the five mounds that then composed the group were situated on the southeastern edge of Crowleys Ridge, and the loess soil that caps this ridge had eroded into deep gullies, leaving narrow rounded ridges that in some cases resembled mounds. The archeological surveyors, however, were very much impressed; the field notes conclude: 'A very spectacular site, mounds occupying a commanding position at terminus of ridge with fine view of river and valley.'

The five almost conical mounds, varying little in size, were approximately 100 feet in diameter and 15 to 20 feet high. Mound A, located on flat land at the foot of the ridge, was 20 feet high; heights of the other mounds were difficult to judge, for they surmounted the tops of narrow, rounded fingers of Crowleys Ridge.

Sherds and flint chips were very scarce either on or about the Helena Crossing mounds. This fact, as well as their shapes and location, convinced the surveyors that these were burial structures of the Hopewell-Marksville cultural period. However, this was only an opinion, and as opinions cannot be seriated like potsherd collections, the Helena Crossing Site received very brief mention in the report of the survey.

Our special interest in the Helena Crossing Site derives from the fact that, although the burial complex of the Hopewell culture as it existed in Illinois is well known, and the closely related Marksville culture is known in Louisiana from the excavation of two sites, there existed a geographical gap in our information approximately 400 miles long through the central part of the alluvial valley. The Helena Crossing Site, located near the center of this gap, promised the needed information about Hopewell burial practices.

In the spring of 1958, while excavating the Menard Site on the Arkansas River, I had another opportunity to visit this locality. It was depressing to discover that it had suffered the same fate that has overtaken hundreds of other archeological sites since heavy, earthmoving machinery came into

common use. The highway that approaches the grade crossing over the railway tracks had been re-routed and traversed the spot where Mound D had stood. The preceding year Mound A had been leveled to provide a parking apron for a new filling station. The gullozer operator had found pottery and bones. A few of these objects were saved but were promptly lost. A house had been built on Mound E which had been partially leveled. Only Mounds B and C remained. It appeared, however, that even these two mounds would not be long undisturbed. A bridge across the Mississippi River was in process of construction, and the approach road ran into the foot of the bluff in front of the mound site. To the east and west of the remaining mounds large areas had been leveled by the borrowing of earth for road construction, and these areas were soon to be occupied by tourist courts.

Excavation of Mounds B and C of the Helena Crossing Site was begun September 12, 1960, and field-work was concluded December 20 of that year. The crew consisted of from seven to ten laborers working under my direction and that of Asa Mays, Jr., a graduate student in anthropology from the Ohio State University. James Hulsey of Helena assisted in the clearing of tombs and other special work. Excavation was begun in an oppressive heat wave, and the trowel work on the last four log-roofed tombs was done in freezing rain inside a tent enlarged with poles and sheet plastic.

The work at Helena Crossing was facilitated and made very pleasant by the many courtesies extended to us by the citizens of this community. Particular thanks are due to Mr. David Solomon, the owner of the land, for permission to excavate, and to his plantation manager, Mr. James Bales, for numerous courtesies. We are also grateful to Mrs. James Pillow who owns the land in which the Bouie [Bowie] Site is located, several miles to the southwest. Our test trench in this village demonstrated that it is of slightly later date than the mounds, and for that reason an analysis of the material recovered there has not been included in the present paper. Mr. Lawson Anderson, Vice-President and Cashier of the Helena National Bank, helped us to find places to live and solved many of the problems that always arise in field-work.

The equipment used for this excavation came from the very complete cache of tools and instruments which Philip Phillips and Stephen Williams of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, and I have been accumulating under the care of Stuart Neitzel of the Mississippi State Historical Museum for the past 10 years. The borrowed Harvard 'jeep', equipped with a winch, was particularly valuable in this unusually wet season. This field-work was financed by the Frederick G. Voss Anthropological and Archeological Fund of the American Museum of Natural History.

PHYSIOGRAPHY

The northern half of the alluvial valley of the Mississippi River is about 80 miles wide. The monotonous, flat terrain is sharply defined by steep

bluffs, 100 to 150 feet high, that mark the edge of the hills to the east and west. The most prominent geographical feature is Crowleys Ridge, a narrow ridge clearly defined on each side, extending for 200 miles from the vicinity of Helena, Arkansas, almost to the head of the alluvial valley at Cairo, Illinois. Between Crowleys Ridge and the bluffs to the east lies the modern flood plain of the Mississippi River, scarred with its old channel courses as well as with fragments of earlier surfaces laid down by the Ohio River before the beginning of the Christian Era.

West of Crowleys Ridge lie the western lowlands, now occupied principally by streams that provide local drainage. This flat surface, which slopes a little more steeply than the valley east of the ridge, is covered with the scars of braided courses of the Mississippi River occupied from approximately 6000 years ago to 2000 years ago when the Mississippi joined the Ohio River and the combined stream first occupied the eastern half of the valley.

Crowleys Ridge is the same formation as the hills that border the alluvial valley to the east and west. The most recent part of it, the southern end, dates from the Sagamon interglacial period which preceded the last advance of the ice, and the soils forming the ridge are older as one proceeds northward. This ridge was substantially carved into its present form at the time of the late Wisconsin ice. Sea level was lowered by the large volume of water imprisoned in the ice. The Mississippi flowed to the west of the Crowley divide and lay in a valley 180 feet deeper than the present surface; the Ohio, to the east of this divide, cut down to a similar depth.

Crowleys Ridge is also similar to the hills on the western and eastern sides of the valley in that it is capped with loess, a highly calcareous soil of very limited range of grain size that stands in vertical banks for long periods of time. The shells of living forms of land snails are commonly found in this soil. The peculiar characteristics of loess are due to the fact that the soil grains are cemented together by lime deposits. When this bond is broken, as by traffic in a dirt road, the soil is quickly removed by wind and water action. Old roads through loess-covered hills are typically narrow trenches 10 to 15 feet deep, in which the dust from a passing vehicle will hang for half an hour.

There are two theories as to the formation of loess. The traditional explanation is that the soil was deposited by wind during dry intervals of the Pleistocene. R. J. Russell has advanced an explanation which to this writer appears somewhat more plausible to the effect that loess was formed from the back-swamp clays in the pre-Wisconsin terraces that flank the entrenched valley. The process involves a downslope creep of these old, fine-grained soils and re-cementing of the grains by calcium deposits. This process is termed 'loessification'. Russell also points out that 'de-loessification' likewise occurs. As a normal weathering process, the cementing material is leached from the top stratum of these formations, leaving a brown loam.

Although the excavation of Mound C adds nothing to the moot question of the origin of loess, it does provide some evidence as to the rapidity with which this soil is leached by percolating water. We now have a sufficient number of radiocarbon dates for Hopewell to be certain that the mound was constructed about 2000 years ago.

Fisk has estimated that at the beginning of the Christian Era the Mississippi River lay against the edge of Crowleys Ridge below the Helena Crossing Site. It seems very probable that this is correct and that when these mounds were built the area of the site provided a spectacular view of the Mississippi. This same channel of Stage-2 curved around the southern tip of Crowleys Ridge and passed the location of the Bouie Site. The relative cultural dating of this small dwelling area follows very slightly after the period of the Helena Crossing Site. It too seems to have been placed on the bank of the Stage-2 Mississippi.

MOUND C

EXCAVATION: Excavation of Mound C was begun on September 2. This mound was slightly oval, a shape probably explained by the steep hill slopes that lay on the northeastern and southwestern sides.

Mound C was dug with a crew of from seven to ten men according to standard slicing procedure. It proved to have been built of loess, a most fortunate circumstance, for loess cuts easily with shovels and tall profiles can be left without danger of their slumping. Five-foot slices started on the north edge of the mound in Trench North 70-75 feet were continued southward until Tomb B was discovered, and uncovered completely by the cutting of the profile at North 45. As much of this dirt was pitched down the steep hillside to the north of the mound, there was no difficulty with encroaching back dirt.

While Tomb B was being examined, slicing was begun on the south side with the first trench between North 5 and North 10 feet. This trench was carried northward, slice by slice, until the burned Tomb D was uncovered and the profile along line North 35 feet was exposed. Back dirt on this side had to be removed by machine. By chance, . . . the other eight tombs and burial groups lay in the 10-foot-thick remaining section of the structure. This was dug in sections as finds permitted, leaving standing walls 1 foot thick so that profiles might be studied. Profiles were recorded after the completion of each 5-foot slice.

Basket loading showed quite plainly in the central part of the mound, which made it possible to detect the presence of collapsed, log-roofed tombs when the excavation had proceeded to within about 10 feet of each tomb. A telltale sag in the pattern of the basket loads would appear.

CONSTRUCTION: Burials in Mound C were either in log-roofed tombs at the mound base or arranged in groups higher in the structure.

There is no evidence that the rounded surface of the hilltop was specially prepared prior to the beginning of the construction of Mound C. Although trees must have been removed, we found no evidence of stump holes or roots. A very complicated network of small tunnels, barely large enough to be cleaned out with the hand, lay between lines North 45 and North 50 feet, extending from West 53 to West 60 feet. These tunnels, lined with niter deposits and partly filled with soft earth, originated on the old ground surface and extended about 2 feet beneath it. At first, this maze was thought to be tree-root molds. However, the lines branched and rejoined in so complex a fashion that it seems more likely that they were rodent burrows, almost certainly of a colony of rats. This suggested the possibility that this area of the hilltop might have been sheltered with a building before the mound was constructed; perhaps the mound replaced a bone house on this commanding spot. However, no additional indications of such a building were found.

Two large tombs, B and D, and one small one, A, were the first structures built at this locality. Tombs A and B were under the same primary mound. Whether Tomb D is also under this mound is not clear; it could have been a slightly later construction. Tombs A and B were excavated, the burials were deposited in them, and then they were roofed with logs. Tomb A was a small pit to accommodate a single extended burial; the details of the log roof were indeterminable. Tomb B, approximately 10 by 11 feet, was roofed by parallel logs each about 1 foot in diameter. A primary mound that seems to have centered over Tomb B was then constructed. This mound was about 50 feet in diameter and at least 8 to 10 feet high.

The small Tomb C was constructed in the course of the building of the primary mound. So small that only two logs were needed to roof it, it had its origin about 4 feet above the old ground surface. The roofing logs have a slight slope that may reflect the slope of the mound at this point of construction. Slightly higher in the mound, two skeletons of children, Burial Group I, were laid on the surface and covered. No tomb was prepared. The construction was undisturbed at this stage, until the log roof of Tomb B collapsed. While the tomb was open, niter or saltpeter crystals coated the walls and floor and formed in the casts of the logs as they decayed.

The length of time an earth-covered log roof may have lasted seems to be subject to a number of variables. Among these is the kind of wood, whether the logs were cut full of sap or relatively dry in winter, and whether or not the bark was left on to promote the growth of fungi. In Tomb D, which was burned, the log casts were clear enough to reveal the fact that oak logs, with the bark still on, had been used in the roof. If Tomb B were roofed with similar logs, decay must have been rapid. Loess is a very porous soil.

The large rectangular Tomb D, located on the south side of the mound, was excavated into the original ground surface and roofed with large oak logs. Earth was piled over the roof, and the logs were then set afire. It is not clear whether the earth over this tomb was part of the same primary mound that was built over Tomb B.

DESCRIPTION OF TOMBS AND BURIAL GROUPS: The largest tomb in Mound C had been burned. To build Tomb D the Indians had excavated a rectangular pit, 11.2 feet southeast to northwest and 7.3 wide, to a depth of 3 feet beneath the original ground surface. The marks of the digging sticks showed plainly on the pit walls.

The contents of Tomb B were thoroughly charred and rather fragmentary. Burial 26 was an adult extended on the back with head to the northwest. Above the skull was the charred fragment of a conch shell cup . . Parallel to the adult, but with the head lying in the opposite direction, was the extended skeleton of a young child. Very small fragments of these delicate bones remained. At the right wrist was a single pearl bead, also well burned. A pelvis and a few fragments of vertebrae were scattered along the northeastern wall of the pit, and near the northwestern wall were fragments of a skull.

Burial Group J consisted of the skeletons of two infants placed on the surface of the primary mound, lying extended on the back, with heads to the southeast. No further details can be given, for the two skeletons were removed by school children before they were completely uncovered.

RADIOCARBON DATING: Through the intercession of James B. Griffin the University of Michigan Radiocarbon Laboratory has provided dates for four carbon specimens collected at the Helena Crossing Site. Three come from tomb roofing logs in Mound C; one is from Mound B.

TABLE 2

Radiocarbon Dates of Four Specimens from Helena Crossing Site

Mound and Lab No.	Specimen	Elapsed Time Before 1960 A. D.	Date
Mound B M-1196	Charcoal from the charred end of a roofing log of large tomb	1740 \pm 150	220 A.D. \pm 150
Mound C M-1197	Charcoal from a roofing log of Tomb B	2100 \pm 150	140 B.C. \pm 150
M-1198	Charcoal sample from floor of burned Tomb D	1625 \pm 150	335 A.D. \pm 150
M-1199	Charcoal sample from roofing log over west end of Tomb D	1930 \pm 150	30 A.D. \pm 150

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There seems to be no reason to suspect that the construction of Mounds B and C represents any great span of time. On the basis of this assumption, it seems fair to consider the two structures together. The information obtained in this excavation can be summarized in a trait list, as follows:

STRUCTURAL FEATURES, Mound C:

- Five log-roofed tombs at base of mound; one burned.
- Six burial groups placed higher up in the mound, most of them on the surface of the primary mound.
- Primary mound over first group of log tombs.
- Repair of primary mound pit caused by collapse of Tomb B.
- Construction of secondary mound.
- Digging stick marks show on tomb walls.
- One tomb burned after it had been covered with earth.
- Wooden frame placed in oval pit beneath floor of Tomb B.
- Deposits of broken pottery in mound fill, evidently vessels broken in use and dumped into the mound before the fragments were scattered.

Mound B:

- One large, log-roofed tomb, excavated beneath floor of mound.
- Use of cane mats to line tomb.

BURIAL FEATURES:

- 19 burials were reported.
- Bundle burials.
- Extended burials.
- Occipital deformation of most skulls.

ORNAMENTS AND CLOTHING:

- Twined fabric of bast fibers.
- Beads made of marine conch.
- Marginella shell beads, pierced at end and sides.
- Small beads made of unidentified hollow globes.
- River pearl beads.
- Beads placed around neck, upper arms, wrists, and ankles.
- Beads woven or sewed into armband and wristlet bands.
- Belt and sash made of beads and canine teeth of red wolf.
- Bi-cymbal, copper earspools wound with cord and held in hands.

MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS:

Copper staff ferrule.
 Piece of sheet mica, probably a mirror.
 Flake knives of Harrison County, Indiana, flint.
 Copper button covers (?)
 Cups made of marine conch shell.
 Copper-jacketed panpipes.

POTTERY:

Marksville Plain.
 Thick crude plain, not typed.
 Red filmed ware, not typed.
 Withers Fabric Marked.
 Mulberry Creek Cordmarked.
 Tchefuncte Stamped.
 Indian Bay Stamped.
 Marksville Rim.
 Marksville Red Filmed.
 Marksville Stamped.
 Marksville Incised.
 U-shaped vessel.
 Pot form with round or flat bottom.
 Open bowls with rounded bottoms.
 One cordmarked vessel with four small feet.

As was expected, the two excavated mounds of the Helena Crossing Site share a number of traits with the fully developed Hopewell culture of Illinois to the north, and in ceramics especially with the Marksville culture sites to the south.

No attempt at extensive comparisons is made in this paper. The entire subject of the widespread Hopewell culture needs a review. In this, considerable attention should be given to the question of origin. For some years it has been clear that Hopewell must in some way be related to the Middle American 'Formative' and to the basic culture of the Andean region of South America. The radiocarbon dates available at present make it appear that these influences entered the Mississippi Valley from the south. This is one of the principal questions in North American archeology, and the complete answer is not yet in sight."

(NOTE: Dr. Ford's complete report on the burial mounds at Helena comes to 67 pages, including diagrams and photographs.)

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IN MEMORIAM: Mrs. Jack Keesee, one of our charter members, died in September, 1963.