

PHILLIPS COUNTY  
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME 3

MARCH, 1965

NUMBER 3

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HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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Published by  
The Phillips County Historical Society

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Dues are payable to Miss Bessie McRee, Membership Chairman, P. C. Box 629 Helena, Arkansas 72342. Make checks payable to Phillips County Historical Society, or payment may be made at County Treasurer's Office, Courthouse, Helena.

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Meetings are held on the fourth Mondays in the month, at 3:30 P. M., at the Phillips County Museum, Helena. No meetings are held in December, June, July, and August. The Quarterly is published in September, December, March, and June.

## FROM MY FATHER'S MEMORIES

by

Mrs. Dick Cunningham

Reminiscing has always been one of the favorite pastimes in our family, and Papa is most always the one who starts it off at every family gathering.

Papa is Joseph Ward Robards of Rondo in Lee County, Arkansas. He was born in February, 1887, so you can see that he has a lot of things to reminisce about in his 78 years. Some are good and some are bad, but all are interesting to us in the family. There is nothing here of historical interest, just an insight into an era and a way of life now gone these many years.

Papa was born in the lower Vineyard community in Phillips County. That was the way it was always identified and was not to be confused with upper Vineyard which was three or four miles away in Lee County. Lower Vineyard, in Papa's childhood and youth, consisted of the Rehoboth Baptist Church, the Christian Church, of which Brother Patterson was the beloved minister for many years. He was the grandfather of Mrs. John Anderson, Mrs. Louis Alpe and Mrs. Harry Neblett. The country store was there, a one room schoolhouse and later the old Tyner post office was moved there.

Papa became six years old in February of 1893 and, all in all, it was quite a year for him, and one none of us has ever forgotten. We always think of it as the year Papa broke his hip, and indeed it was that.

Shortly afterward, in April, his uncle Doc Holtzclaw, his mother's brother who lived with them, and a colored farm worker, old Josh Lipsey, were hauling rails from the woods to build a rail fence there on the farm. Of course, nowadays, rail fences are most unique and picturesque, but in those days they were a necessity. The stock all ran on open range and the crops were fenced to keep the livestock out.

As any normal six year old boy would do, Papa climbed aboard the wagon to go with Uncle Doc and Josh to haul rails. On the way to the woods some of the livestock ran out, scared the team of mules and they ran away. Papa was thrown from the wagon and underneath it, so that the left back wheel ran over his left hip and broke it. As soon as they could stop the mules, Uncle Doc came running back, scooped Papa up and carried him to the house.

Dr. Vineyard was sent for, and also the word went out for Dr. W. B. Snipes of the Spring Creek Community to come. This was several miles away, over near Aubrey, and I must say comparable to sending to Memphis for a specialist today.



Dr. Vineyard made a box of wood enclosed only on three sides, and placed Papa's leg in it. Naturally Papa was still on the other end of the leg. The box fitted from the foot to just below the knee. Then he took an iron rod and fastened it inside the box and that ran up Papa's leg to his waist. There it was tied to his body with strips of cloth. A rope was tied around the box and fastened to the ceiling, and his leg was suspended in air, held up by a pulley and hook.

That pulley and hook were never used again, but I guess Papa always kept them in readiness, just in case, because they were still in his trunk when my parents' home burned to the ground in 1951.

He lay like that for six weeks, and on the upper calf of his leg is an ugly, jagged scar where that box cut deep into the flesh. Sounds like a case of the cure being almost worse than the illness, although it really was a complete recovery with never a sign of a limp.

I asked if he was given any medicine for pain, and he said none for pain, however during the six weeks he lay boxed and suspended, a bad case of whooping cough paid him a visit, and in the mind of a little boy, it was poorly timed. Well, the treatment for whooping cough in those days in lower Vineyard was mare's milk, and the family began to look around for a kind neighbor who would lend them a mare with a young colt. They found one. The neighbor was Mr. Lowe, the mare was Pigeon, and they laughed and teased Papa that Pigeon would have had a pretty good colt if Joe hadn't starved him to death.

After he got over the whooping cough, he felt sad one day when the time had come for Pigeon and her colt to go back home to Mr. Lowe. He lay on his bed and watched them lead her out of the pasture and down the dusty road.

While Papa was in bed, his step-grandfather, Eugene Martin, began to prepare for the day when he would be up again. He was a great whittler and volunteered to make a pair of crutches. They cut a sassafras tree and from a slab of it he was soon busily whittling away, and by June Papa was learning to walk all over again, on a pair of crutches that he assured me were as good as any you can buy in a store today.

Well, the broken hip and whooping cough were behind him, but his first venture out into the world on crutches happened to be a pretty eventful day, because that was the day of the cyclone and Uncle Doc played an important role in that, too.

One June day he was busy in the field laying-by a beautiful crop of early March corn. He wasn't quite finished at noon so he left his plow in the field and came to the house for dinner and his regular daily 15 minute nap. In the meantime, to practice walking, Papa, helped by



his sister Carrie, went to the well and drew up several buckets of water for Uncle Doc's horse. This was his first chore after recovery.

During noon a terrible, black cloud came up, and it looked so frightening Grandmama asked Uncle Doc not to go back to the field for a while. Luckily he didn't, and a few minutes later a cyclone struck the northwest corner of the farm and swept it clean, making a 60 feet path to the southeast corner a half mile away. It took that lovely March corn right along with it and also the plow, which was found later a quarter of a mile away on a neighboring farm.

It uprooted trees two feet thick and tossed them about. Houses were destroyed, but Papa and all of his family watched in safety from their house. People who lived there still remember where they were when the cyclone struck in '93. One friend told me she was at school and the teacher told them all to get busy on arithmetic problems. The cyclone passed them by, too.

Papa said the doctor most often came on horseback. He had his medicine in his saddlebags with him. There was none of this sending out or sending back for anything. If he had the cure, it was in the saddlebag.

I asked about medicine, and he said they often bought their own blue moss and calomel powder and made their own pills. I asked for what illness, and he said, "Oh, general principles." He failed to say if it cured it or not. However, he added that there was lots of malaria in those days, and maybe calomel and blue moss cured it, I don't know. They always had to drink their sassafras tea, and he said he thought his grandmother actually believed that if you didn't eat so many messes of poke salad a year you would just die.

Then, inevitable, came the spring tonic of sulphur and molasses. For cuts there was coal oil and turpentine. If you stuck a nail in your foot, there was no fancy tetanus shot. You had a tar poultice popped on at once. For cough medicine there was the old standby of whiskey and rock candy. And that was Papa and lower Vineyard in Phillips County over 70 years ago.

His grandfather brought his share of the family slaves and came to Phillips County in 1854. And his grandmother before him had come from Goochland County, Virginia to Harrodsburg, Kentucky in 1784, just ten years after it was first settled. She came a few months after his husband, William Robards, had died. She brought a large family of children and many slaves, owning at that time 10,600 acres of land in Virginia and Kentucky.

She was Elizabeth Lewis before she married, a great great granddaughter of Dr. John Woodson and his wife Sarah, who were born in

Devonshire, England in the last 1500's. They sailed to America on the 'George' and landed at Jamestown in April, 1619. He was greatly loved and esteemed as one of the first doctors in the New World, and I can't help wondering how he, my distant ancestor, would have treated the broken hip of a little six year old boy.

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The following item is from the Burke family papers:

"Head Quarters                      Trenton Arkansas                      June 16th 1862

This is to certify that I have examined R. C. Burke (He being subject to the conscript law) And find him wholly unable to perform the duties of a soldier. Disability consisting -- Diseased (sic) kidneys - and general debility. I therefore recommend his discharg (sic).

Chas L Sullivan  
Surgeon

G. W. Gray  
Chas L Sullivan  
Post Surgeon

Approved A. W. Johnson    Col Com    Trenton Arkansas  
Eastern Ark"

# STREET NUMBERS

From Helena City Directory, 1909

PERRY STREET 6th street north of Mo. from Miss. River west to limits

100	J A Tappan Coal Yard	719	Mr & Mrs Lafe Solomon
114	Mr & Mrs Campbell	813	Mr & Mrs H Biscoe
201	Mr & Mrs Ed Sonfield	820	Mr & Mrs C R Coolidge
207	Mr & Mrs F W Haury	825	Mrs M Newman
214	City Hall	1003	Mr & Mrs J D Mitchell
312	Geo Allen Paint Shop	1004	Mrs J S Monnier
313	Sandberg's Shop	1009	Mr & Mrs M F Bruce
320	Mrs G D Jaquess	1011	Mr & Mrs White
515	Rev & Mrs C H Lockwood	1013	Lee Pendergrass
525	Mr & Mrs Halpern	1020	Mr & Mrs F H Merrifield
526	Mr & Mrs Will A Coolidge	1025	Mr & Mrs W White
531	Mr & Mrs W N Straub	1100	Merrifield Greenhouse
532	Mr & Mrs R C Burke	1101	Mr & Mrs W H Anderson
537	Mrs J R Bush	1102	Mr & Mrs Geo Merrifield
538	Mr & Mrs B L Lyford	1104	Mr & Mrs Lyford Hornor
608	Mr & Mrs C L Moore Sr	1105	Mr & Mrs S I Clark
	Mr & Mrs C L Moore Jr		Mr & Mrs Frank Clark
618	Mrs J J Hornor	1117	J Bister & wife
	Mr & Mrs J D Mays	1119	Emma Joins
625	Dr & Mrs W C Russwurm	1207	Amanda Kendall
703	Mr & Mrs G W Willey	1213	Rev J Ware & wife
707	Mr & Mrs A Ball	1215	Sarah Hightower
708	Mr & Mrs Lee	1219	Selina Gibs
	Mr & Mrs J D Moore	1223	Cora Moore
715	Mr & Mrs E Levy	1231	Robt Evans
	Mr & Mrs Joe Meyers	1235	Mr & Mrs J L Lee
718	Mr & Mrs J B Pillow	1241	Mr & Mrs A Gilford
	Mr & Mrs J Thompson	1249	T Word & wife
		1321	Mrs H H Klone

## Near West Limits

Mr & Mrs W H Elsessor  
Mr & Mrs Mouzula  
A Williams  
Mr & Mrs P Johnson



PECAN STREET 2nd street west of Cherry from Mo north to limits

128 Joe Fazio & wife	725 Mr & Mrs B F Knowles
204-18 Barlow Property	726 Mr & Mrs Porter
215 McCoy Lumber Yards	728 Mr & Mrs Frank Garner
228 Clem Planing Mill	800-16 Cook Property
301-29 Fink Quarters	801-19 Hornor Property
312 Annie Davis	829 Helena Gas Works
324 P C Caldwell	903 T M Jacks Property
328 Manda Wright	906 S L Bennett & wife
417 Mrs M McKune	907 Rufus Marlar
422 Mr & Mrs R F Wheeler	909 E Crum
429 Mr & Mrs H Hill	923 Mr & Mrs Cad Polk Sr
515 Jefferson Public School	924 Mr & Mrs Whitley Jarman
516 Tony Livery Stable	1001 Mr & Mrs W M Richardson
600 M E Church South	1002 North End Gro Co
615 Public Library	1004 E A Elphinstone
624 Mrs J Chick	1009 Mr & Mrs T M Short
628 Temple Bethel	1010 Lizzie Sheperd
629 St John's Episcopal Ch	1016 James Charles & wife
713 Mrs Hattie Graham	1027 Mr & Mrs C C Agee
717 Mr & Mrs J N Ware	1104 Frank Provenza
723 Mr & Mrs W B Stout	1123 Mrs Joe Summers
	1127 Wm Warfield

ELM STREET 2nd street north of Mo from Miss River west to Beech

100 Reynolds Gun Shop	414-18 Keeshan Ark
203 Wells Fargo Express Co	415-19 Keeshan Ark
205 Ridge City Drug Store	421 Clem Planing Mill
210 Pacific Express Co	430 Mr & Mrs J Fazio
212 Rafe Harris	501 M D Wheeler Gro
213 Laura Wilson	502-30 Fink's Quarters
320 Brown Photograph Gallery	511 Fannie Moore
323 A V Shull Gro Store	523 Joe Fazio
402 Mr & Mrs P St Columbia	607 I Coursey & wife
406 Hill's Meat Market	608 Joe Dixon & wife
411 Keeshan Blacksmith Shop	617 D A Keeshan
	720 H Avant & wife

COLUMBIA STREET west of Cherry from Mo north to limits

120	St Mary's Immaculate Ch	415	A M E Church
124	Mr & Mrs J Shenep	416-28	Mose Proffitt's Quarters
130	Mr & Mrs S C Gearhart	428	Tony Papa & wife
137	Mr & Mrs J Truemper	503	Mr & Mrs J C Rembert
144	Mr & Mrs J E Underwood	506	Dr & Mrs Chas Miller
145	Mr & Mrs L W Ellis	513	Mr & Mrs A Allin
208	Arkansas Midland Shops	525	Mr & Mrs D T Hargraves
222	Mr & Mrs Crump	605	Mrs S W Tappan
228	Mr & Mrs J G Maas	615	Mrs Y F Harrington
229	Mrs Emma McDonald	727	Mr & Mrs J A Tappan
230	Mr & Mrs S McGuire	805	Mr & Mrs S C Moore
302	Mr & Mrs J Wolf	815	Mrs L M Bookhart
314	Auditorium Flats	820	Mr & Mrs Edwin Bevens
315	Peabody School	821	James R. Mullins
328	Centennial Baptist Church	824	Mr & Mrs U Almer
401	H G Price & wife	827	Mr & Mrs R E Chew Jr
402	Methodist Church	907	Alice Graves
405	L Miller & wife	911	P Harris
409	Anna Miller	915	Mr & Mrs Lewis Solomon
412	Mose Proffitt & wife	927	Mr & Mrs C Gordon

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1937-1938 found several Helenians serving on commissions and boards of various state administrative departments. Among them were: J. B. Lambert, serving on the State Athletic Commission; Mrs. Bertha C. Sanders, A. M. & N. College Board; Mrs. C. M. Young, Tuberculosis Sanatorium Board; A. D. Whitehead, University of Arkansas; Peter A. Deisch, serving as chairman of the Board of the Tuberculosis Sanatorium for negroes.

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Helena was a town of approximately 1,500 people at the time of the War Between the States.

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## THE HISTORY OF STORM CREEK LAKE

A paper prepared for 9th grade Civics class  
by

Ron Dowda

Over 100 years ago when the frontier was beginning to grow, the area around the mouth of the St. Francis River and Storm Creek was the home of deer which licked salt out of the ground. They would paw and stomp out large holes in the ground to get the salt. As time went on, men discovered about these stomps of the deer by hunting for them for food. Men that sailed down the Mississippi and St. Francis Rivers usually stopped and tied up along the bank to kill deer for food. Sometimes the men would kill enough meat to last them until they got to New Orleans.

About 1929 or 1930, during the depression, the Federal Government decided to build a lake and a road in the Storm Creek area because many men were out of work and this would give them an income. Also, this area was in bad need of a swimming pool and a recreation area. During the process of buying the land, one of the engineers wrote a description of Storm Creek and called it "Stomp Creek." But when the secretary typed the description she made the mistake of calling it "Storm Creek."

Sometimes when there is a bad storm or a hard rain over the lake some of the fishermen think this lake is well named. But most fishermen do not realize that the name Storm Creek Lake was purely an accident.

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## CITY COUNCIL NOTES

November, 1870

Mayor G. D. Jaquess laments the number of men walking the streets wearing pistols and revolvers buckled on them.

November, 1870

An ordinance is passed against bulls and boars running at large.



## REAR ADMIRAL BENJAMIN TAPPAN

### NAVAL HERO

by

Mrs. C. M. Young

Last spring Mrs. James Countiss sent me a letter from Mrs. Robert R. Higgins of Kentucky, enclosing a letter from Benjamin Tappan, who was born in New Orleans in 1856 but came to Helena as a young boy and was raised by his uncle, General James C. Tappan, at his home on Poplar Street.

In 1871, Tappan was appointed to the Naval Academy by Congressman James Millinder Hanks and was graduated in 1876. He served in various places, was with the Bureau of Navigation and also Commander of the Philadelphia Navy Yards.

When his letter was written, probably on board the "Raleigh," he was awaiting orders to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, and as he speaks of the trouble in Cuba, was probably sent there.

The letter follows:

"Dear Brand;

As you can see from the above I am again afloat, rather sooner than I expected as my last was a four year cruise and I had only two years on shore duty, but I am again fortunate in getting a fine ship and am well pleased with the duty.

It was a great disappointment, however, not to get leave and spend Christmas at home and I had looked forward to the pleasure of seeing you and Mrs. Higgins and my little friends, Richard and Robert, and making the acquaintance of Miss Higgins.

I have intended writing to you ever since the arrival of the little lady, but put it off, hoping to extend my congratulations in person when I came home. Before leaving Norfolk, I sent her by express a little Christmas token which I hope she will accept with my love and best wishes.

We were under orders to go to Key West but just before leaving Norfolk the orders were revoked by wire, and we are waiting here for further instructions.

When this Cuban affair is settled, I hope yet to get a short leave and join you once more in the chase of the elusive bear, the finest sport in the world.

Please give my kind regards to Mrs. Higgins, your mother, and love to Richard and Robert. Also kind remembrance to the Toney's, Frank Reed and Marshall and Mrs. Key.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas,

Your sincere friend,  
Benjamin Tappan."

Brand was Brand Higgins who lived on a plantation south of Helena, and was the uncle of Mrs. J. H. Pillow and Mrs. T. J. Mitchell. Tappan had been in the Navy twenty years at this time and does not mention his rank, but as he visited here from time to time, his friends probably knew his rank.

There is no local information about him from this time until 1898 when he was advanced five ranks to Rear Admiral by Admiral Dewey, for his eminent and conspicuous conduct in the battle of Manila Bay, where he took part in the capture of the Spanish ship "Callao" and was put in command of the "Callao."

He later sent the figurehead off the "Callao" to the Nichols family here, who were relatives, and it is now in the Museum. He also sent a 28 inch gun and four shells, a bolo knife, a sword and other smaller artifacts from the Philippines which are in a case at the Museum.

In 1913, he was Commandant of the Navy station at Olongapo and Cabita, Philippines, and took part in many engagements during the insurrection in the islands. He was especially commended in dispatches by Admiral Watson for his command of the sea forces in co-operation with the land forces under Major General Wheaton. He was considered quite a hero.

He later commanded the New York Navy Base.

He courted several Helena women on his visits to Helena, but did not marry until late in life and the name of his wife is not known. He died Dec. 18, 1919, and he and his wife are buried in Arlington Cemetery.

The "Encyclopedia Americana," Vol. XXVI, 1954, p. 264, gives the following account of Benjamin Tappan.

"Benjamin Tappan, American naval officer: b. New Orleans, La., 10 April 1856; d. 18 Dec. 1919. He was graduated at the Naval Academy 1876 and in 1886 was commissioned lieutenant. From 1888-91 he served in the office of the Bureau of Naval Intelligence and from 1891-94 on the "Miantonomah." He was stationed at Brooklyn navy yard 1895-96 and while on board the "Raleigh" participated in the battle of Manila (1898). During the attack on the city of Manila he captured a Spanish battery and for this act was advanced five numbers by President McKinley."

This paper was given as a talk before the Phillips County Historical Society.

# ABSTRACT OF EARLY MARRIAGE RECORDS OF PHILLIPS COUNTY

(continued)

Marriages recorded in Marriage Record Book "A" of Phillips County, now missing, from the Index of Marriage Records Book 1. A comma has been inserted following surname of the bridegroom and entries have been numbered. A question mark following the name indicates we are uncertain of our translation. Otherwise, these names are exactly as shown on the Index. You will note many names have been spelled phonetically. This feature of our Quarterly will be continued indefinitely.

	Book "A"
63. Johnson, Jesse to Sally Dodson	Page 4
64. Joiner, Zachus to Anne Bowen	Page 5
65. Jones, Barnell to Phebe Dodson	Page 16
66. Johnson, James to Sarah Duke	Page 19
67. Jones, David C. to Elizabeth Smith	Page 52
68. Jones, John C. to Martha Ann Byan	Page 55
69. Jones, Joseph to Elizabeth Simmons	Page 20
70. Kelly, Arnold to Frances Bonen?	Page 13
71. Kine, George to Laura P. Craig	Page 25
72. Kellem, James J. to Eliza Roberts	Page 42
73. Kendrick, Austin to Martha Porter	Page 48
74. Larrick, John to Brunetty Crafts	Page 12
75. Lewis, Thomas to Martha Mitchell	Page 16
76. Lain, Jas. to Effama Bell	Page 19
77. Lewis, Eli J. to Harriet Phillips	Page 21
78. Lunsford, Bartholemew to Nancy Edwards	Page 47
79. Lane, James to Mary Lockett	Page 49
80. Laferry, Joseph to Louisiana Leitham	Page 50
81. Lunsford, Solomon to Betsey Mooney	Page 53
82. Law, T. T. to Nancy Glass	Page 55
83. Marten, Jesse to Elizabeth Owen	Page 5
84. Moss, Ebenezer to Catharine Stanley	Page 6
85. Mitchell, Michael to Polly Fillingin	Page 7
86. Malloy, David to Winnafred Jones	Page 14
87. McRary, Hughey to Jane Houston	Page 15
88. Mitchell, Abner to Polly Jones	Page 21
89. McGonigle, Jacob to Harriet Horner	Page 23
90. Mauntier, John to Elizabeth Crousin	Page 35
91. McCrary, Hugh to Polly Hagle	Page 36
92. Martin, William to Nancy Embre?	Page 38
93. McAdoe, Lewis to Sarah East	Page 39
94. Miller, David to Hannah Montgomery	Page 39
95. McKenzie, James to Eliza Brickley	Page 42
96. McLaughlin, Jesse to Elizabeth Jones	Page 43
97. Metts, John to Jane Brigance	Page 44



98.	Mooney, Stewart C. to Betsy Ann Burress	Page 53
99.	Moreland, John W. to Priscilla Porter	Page 53
100.	Montgomery, Farris to Hannah Woods	Page 54
101.	Morrison, Hiram to Parthenia Beal	Page 57
102.	Needles, Nathaniel to Nancy Benton	Page 18
103.	O'dear, Belitha to Ely Chambers	Page 32
104.	Patterson, William to Fanny O'Conor	Page 14
105.	Papans, David to Ann Decker	Page 22
106.	Patterson, John to Elinor Glass	Page 24
107.	Percifull, Bruce to Matilda Embrey	Page 31
108.	Pique, Dedirick to Jane Wolf	Page 41
109.	Raimer, Phillip to Isabel Lister	Page 1
110.	Reese, Alexander to Alice Duke	Page 2
111.	Rainey, Samuel to Nancy R. Smith	Page 3
112.	Richardson, David to Hannah Fletcher	Page 8
113.	Raimer, Phillip to Sarah B. Bailey	Page 8
114.	Robbins, Joseph to Nancy Duke	Page 10
115.	Roberts, Benjamin to Betsey Cumber	Page 45
116.	Robins, Joseph to Martha A. E. Martin	Page 59
117.	Stanley, John to Lavinia Cully	Page 6
118.	Sinclair, Joseph to Elizabeth Price	Page 7
119.	Stanlee, Joseph to Harriett Tyer	Page 15
120.	Story, Green to Matilda Hensley	Page 21
121.	Stanlee, James to Charlotte Davis	Page 23
122.	Singletary, Isam to Elizabeth Beechy	Page 49
123.	Smith, Edward to Mary Powers?	Page 49
124.	Steel, Clifton to Mary Reynolds	Page 55
125.	Scott, William to Polly Kendrick	Page 56
126.	Tindall, Isaac to Sophia Barnhart	Page 1
127.	Tier, Stephen to Lyddia Buford	Page 2
128.	Tacket, Allen to Susannah Nathan	Page 5
129.	Trimble, John to Polly Childers	Page 13
130.	Trent, Simon to Mahala Williams	Page 16
131.	Talbot, Isham to Rebecca Davis	Page 33
132.	Taylor, Wm. H. to Nancy Case Beare	Page 38
133.	Tyer, Davis to Elizabeth Casebier	Page 38
134.	Turner, James D. to Eliza Moody	Page 47
135.	Thompson, Goose to Patsey Lunsford	Page 50
136.	Williams, John to Susan Winphy?	Page 6
137.	Wylds, David to Mary Creaby	Page 14
138.	Wood, David to Margaret Houstin	Page 24
139.	Willison, Cornelius to Rhoda Hampton	Page 45
140.	Williams, Elisha to Catharine Hartim	Page 51
141.	Whitten (or Whilton?), Luther to Nancy Lunsford	Page 54
142.	Willis, Greenbury to Mary Ann McGonigle	Page 54
143.	Williams, John H. to Mary A. F. E. Martin	Page 58

Abstracted by Mary Alice Sanders

Note: As stated previously, Marriage Record Book "A" evidently covered the period from January 1, 1821 to February 21, 1832.

## EARLY UTILITIES IN HELENA

by

Dale P. Kirkman

The Helena Gas Company was organized and incorporated in 1871 by local people with H. P. Coolidge as its first president. As early as 1870, the St. Louis Gasoline Company had presented a petition, proposing to furnish lights and lamps for the city of Helena, but a franchise was given to the Helena Gas Company for 50 years.

The gas works were at the corner of Miller and Pecan Streets. The first gas was made of naphtha and sold for \$10.00 per thousand cubic feet. There was not enough demand for the gas and its manufacture was so expensive that the naphtha plant was abandoned and a coal and gas plant was built at the same place. Coal for the gas making was brought down the river on barges, and during periods of high water the boats were beached and coal was hauled over to the plant.

Most of the original gas mains were of poplar logs bored out, and the outside of the logs were painted with coal tar. These wooden mains leaked so badly at the joints that they finally had to be abandoned. When the mains were originally laid, it had been at a reasonable depth below the streets. But as time went on, the streets were filled again and again with dirt to get rid of the ponds and pools of stagnant water. The wooden mains were finally so far underground that it was impossible to get to them for repairs when they started to decay, except at enormous expense which the company could not afford.

In 1871, the City Council decided that 50 or more gas lights should be established in the city, and that, following the erection of the lights, the Helena Gas Company should also light and extinguish them. By 1873, the lighting and extinguishing had become the duty of the city police. By 1875, the city was asking the Gas Company to reduce its rates, and there are frequent references in the Council notes of that day to the high price of lighting the city with gas. Any any rate, by 1904, the "50 or more street lights" referred to in the 1871 notes, were electric.

The first electric lighting company here, the Helena Electric Light and Power Company, was organized in 1888 by Jacob Trieber, M. Newman, B. R. Fitzpatrick, James Summers, L. Lucy and E. P. Sliger. The first plant, furnishing arc lighting only, was at the corner of Phillips and Franklin Streets. Mr. Porter Rawlings helped supervise its installation and was plant engineer for 16 years. By 1904, the city had 51 elegant arc lights to light its streets. This type of lighting had been tried in stores, but proved to be too expensive.



The Helena Gas Company bought the lighting company in 1894 and consolidated it with the gas business. The Gas Company had two separate departments, one for gas and one for electricity, and sold either kind of light to the people.

A new electric plant was built on the levee. There were two 50-kilowatt alternators with a capacity of 1000 sixteen-candle-power lamps each. This plant remained in operation until about 1912, at which time a new electric plant was built on Hanks Lane, following the purchase of the gas and electric plants by Philadelphia interests. The new plant was about 20 times as large as the old levee plant and furnished electricity for Helena and West Helena and for the car line.

In 1920, a new water gas plant was built on Hanks Lane and the old coal gas plant at Miller and Pecan was torn down. About \$30,000 was spent installing and enlarging gas mains, and while this work was in process, some of the old wooden mains were rediscovered under the streets.

The Helena Gas and Electric Company was purchased by the Arkansas Utilities Company in 1923. At that time, the old engine which first lighted the city of Helena was located at the West Helena Cotton Mill, but was not in use.

In 1945, the electric system properties were leased to Arkansas Power & Light Company, and Helena was joined to a statewide electric system. A 115,000-volt line was constructed across the Mississippi River connecting with the system of Mississippi Power & Light Company, another 115,000-volt line was constructed into Helena from Brinkley and hooked to a new 15,000-kilowatt substation in West Helena. A new 10,000-kilowatt substation was built in South Helena, making it possible for Helena or West Helena to be serviced electrically from either of the big substations.

Helena is presently the site of a 55-million-dollar steam electric generating plant, with one generator capable of producing 357,000 kilowatts. A 40-million-dollar expansion of this plant will take place in the near future. The new generator will have a capacity of 4 billion kilowatt hours annually, enough for the average electrical needs of a million homes.

Above information was found in these places:

City Council notes of the 1870's.

"Helena World," May 11, 1904.

"Helena World," Nov. 11, 1923.

"Helena World," Centennial Edition, 1956.

"Commercial Appeal," Jan. 10, 1965.



## CEMETERIES AND THEIR VALUE TO HISTORY

Talk Given Before Phillips County Historical Society

by

Mrs. F. O. Griffin, Sr.

Mr. King, members of the Historical Society of Phillips County, I am pleased for your presence here today, not because of the things I may tell you, but it is proof you have taken the time to sustain the organization formed to preserve one of the richest and oldest historical heritages in the state, and I may be so bold as to say, in the nation. The proof of this statement was established by Dr. James Ford and his assistant, Asa Mays, who excavated the Hopewell Indian Mounds at Helena Crossing in 1961. Artifacts taken from the mounds established the date as 500 B. C., the date when this part of the country was inhabited by the original natives known as the Down-River-People.

The Scribe of Avon, secretary to the De Soto expedition that crossed the Mississippi River below and near the present site of Helena, wrote that the natives here were handsome men and much taller of stature than other Indian tribes of the south. He also noted that Pacaha, an Indian chief, had an exceedingly beautiful daughter, slender and of much fairer complexion than others of her tribe. He also referred to the natives by their Indian name (Ark-ken-see) or Down-River-People.

It was an educational privilege that Dr. Ford would spend hours of his time explaining his work and findings to all -- men, women and children, who were interested enough to climb the mound and ask questions. Because of this attitude, workmen brought a large bone to him and he identified it as part of the jaw bone of a prehistoric animal, a mastadon. It may be of interest to deviate a moment and tell you that Dr. Ford has a living relative here in Phillips County. The owner of the Ford Drug Company of Marvell is a cousin of Dr. Ford.

Several years ago when we first came to Helena, my husband brought home chunks of petrified cedar he found in a field he was cultivating below Helena Crossing on the old Robards plantation, perhaps better known as part of the Pillow Estate.

These three illustrations show how human, animal and plant life buried aeons and aeons ago are valuable finds to history and genealogy. This is true of our burial grounds today that are scattered throughout the county.

Our earliest inhabitants were so busy claiming farms from the

forest, providing shelter and food and clothing for their families, there was little time to record history, and too, their method of travel was slow and dangerous. In other words, they were too busy living to record the mundane things of their everyday life for posterity.

However, most families revered the memory of their dead and made burial plots near their homes or at their churches. They managed to import granite and marble stone from Georgia and Tennessee by boat or barge, and overland by ox or mule team over dirt roads. They did leave these records chisled in stone. Sometimes there are only the name and birth and death dates. Then again there would be a line, or some lengthy paragraphs telling where they came from and under what conditions they met their death. There were also bits of philosophy, description of the character of the dead chisled on the stone. One descendant went to great length to justify the life of some kind relative and assured all who will read that the departed could not be punished in the spiritual afterlife as he made others happy.

Perhaps it would be interesting to share a few of the favorite epitaphs.

On a large white marble marker in Maple Hill Cemetery is the name "Johnston" in large banner letters, and underneath in much smaller letters is this line, 'Born in Frankfort, Ky. 1885, Became a citizen of Phillips County 1909.' Only a genealogist would appreciate that one. There is this one that speaks volumes for the gratitude of the family. On a plain marker these words are inscribed, 'In memory of Ellen Whitelegg who for 28 years was a faithful friend and servant in the Thomas B. Faulkner household, Born December 25, 1820, Died January 1, 1881.' There was another epitaph that dealt with a bit of philosophy. The shaft of Ophelia Polk Moore reads; 'There are different orders of greatness to that sublime energy by which the soul reposes an unfailing trust in God in the darkest hour and ever ready to be offered upon the altar of Duty.'

Some years ago as I was driving to Helena from Marvell, where I lived at that time, I was shocked and distressed to see a bulldozer clearing a cemetery at Y Camp. (A year or so later, I saw in the Helena World an account of a descendant having sued, and a civil trial was held. He won the case but only received \$100.00 recompense).

When I reached Helena, I chanced to meet an acquaintance from Rondo and expressed how disturbed I was that anyone would demolish a cemetery, and, to my astonishment, she said the same thing had happened to one of the oldest cemeteries in Lee County. A person had bulldozed the old part of a cemetery near Rondo at the old Rehoboth Baptist Church. . . . then later I learned the same thing had happened to a cemetery at Marvell.



A year or so ago, Dr. Sonnett came to Helena from Oregon, seeking the burial place of some of her ancestors who were buried here. Mrs. Tom Faust and I assisted her all we could, but could not locate the graves even though we drove for half a day. She did find a few records and dates at the court house.

For these reasons I decided to try and locate and make records of the burial grounds in this locality, and to record names and dates from the stones.

There was a historical meeting in Little Rock that I attended, and a thirty minute meeting was held by those interested in genealogy. Cemeteries were discussed, a request was made that a representative from each county try and interest some organization at their home town to help with a cemetery survey. On my return, I approached one or two organizations but they had their programs filled for the year, and since then, for some reason or another, they have not cared to help.

Since I had obligated myself and because it was something I considered important, I began to locate grave sites through friends and relatives. Carolyn and Dick Cunningham, Louise Hollowell and Mary Frances Lee and two of my grandsons, Skipper and Buron Griffin, Jr., have located and gone with me on field trips.

Since Chris Griffin is better known through her news writing for the Press Scimitar, people confuse our identity and interest, and she gets calls and information meant for me, and she is kind enough to relay it.

Obtaining information and visiting burial grounds have been slow but interesting. There are only two seasons in which this can be done with satisfaction, in early spring before vegetation and in late fall when it dies. These burial sites have been neglected for years. Small trees, undergrowth, vines and other wild plants have completely taken over. Too, at this time, there are no snakes or insects.

The first grave site visited was the old Green burial ground, located between Barton and Poplar Grove. It is the ancestral burial grounds of one of Phillips County's early sheriffs, of whom Mr. E. G. Green, Eng., of Helena, is a direct descendant.

Then a Smiley lot and other graves on Storm Creek Road, nine miles from Plaza at 4th street in West Helena, were located, and another on Airport Road. Then we visited the old Keesee Cemetery on the Marianna Road, a few miles from Barton in a field now owned by a Mr. Hilton. The oldest one visited was the Lamb or Davidson Cemetery at Helena Crossing. Most all the graves there are over a century old.



A state genealogical organization was formed about three years ago and many of the northern counties have almost completed their cemetery surveys. At the meeting of the State Historical Society last year at Jonesboro, a Craighead County representative reported they had completed their records to date and had a crossfile index as to dates and names, and it was off the press.

Mr. King asked that I tell how the Phillips County Historical Society may help this project. I have no better suggestion than the proven outline used by Craighead County. The first thing we have to do here is to educate the public to the value of the old grave markers to history and genealogy. This could be done through the press and talks to groups and individuals, making familiar the laws of the state in regard to the destruction of this property and the help it gives to those interested in history and getting accurate information on this subject, and to those interested in genealogy. Perhaps if this was brought to their attention, it would help, and the fact it is a federal as well as a state offense, and that there are ten laws on the statute books in regard to the desecration of cemeteries.

Attorney Charles Roscoph was most co-operative when asked for information, and he had his secretary type copies of an old statute and a more recent one for our information. He too, had the experience of having a grandmother's grave destroyed. I wish to read the Statute 41 - 376, 41 - 3713 and 41 - 3714.

#### ARKANSAS STATUTES ANNOTATED 1947 VOLUME 4

41-3706. MALICIOUS INJURY TO GRAVE OR MONUMENT-PENALTY: Any person, or persons, which shall wilfully and maliciously destroy, injure, or deface, any grave or graves, or any monuments, erected or placed to mark the place of interment of any deceased person, or shall so wilfully and maliciously remove, or destroy, any enclosure, erected for the protection of any such grave, or monument, or shall aid, abet or assist any person, or persons, in the commission of any of the acts before mentioned, shall be guilty of a felony, and, on conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment, in the jail and penitentiary house of the state, for a term not less than two (2), nor more than five (5), years.

(Act Mar 5, 1867, No. 98, s 1, p. 203)

41-3713. PLACING DEBRIS IN CEMETERY - REMOVAL OF MARKER. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, corporation, partnership or association to place any brush, tree tops, rubbish or other unsightly debris on any cemetery (cemetery) grounds or to disturb, damage or carry away any marker in such cemetery (cemetery).

(Acts 1955, No. 108, s 2, p. 261)

41-3714. VIOLATION - PENALTY. Any person, firm, corporation, partnership or association violating any of the provisions of this Act (s 41-3712 - 41-3714) shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) and every day that such violation shall exist shall be a separate offense.  
(Acts 1955, No. 108, s 3, p. 261)

Mr. King also asked me to tell how the records of graveyards would affect genealogy, but I have told so much already, I believe there is no reason to say anything other than people make history, and to record it or run a lineage, we have to know their names and the dates they lived and where they were located.

If anything said will cause an infinitesimal spark of interest that will create an incentive to establish a written record of our grave plots, where they were located, and the names of those buried and the dates, our time has been well spent this afternoon.

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#### CITY COUNCIL NOTES

April, 1872

The City Marshal is instructed to close all barbershops on Sunday.

July, 1873

An ordinance is passed licensing ten pin alleys.

## G. D. JAQUESS

"Dr. G. D. Jaquess, physician and druggist, Helena, Arkansas. This prominent businessman was born in Posey County, Indiana, January 5, 1834 (probably 1824), and is a son of Garrison and Mary (Smith) Jaquess, natives of Kentucky. The parents immigrated to Indiana about 1811, located in Posey County, and there passed their last days. The father was a farmer by occupation, and was forty-eight years of age at the time of his death. Their family consisted of seven children, six sons and one daughter, four now living: James F., T. C., W. B. and Dr. G. D. The latter assisted the father on the farm until twenty years of age, attending school during the winter seasons, and at the age of eighteen years he began the study of medicine, graduating from the Transylvania University at Lexington, Kentucky in 1848. He then began practicing at Petersburg, Indiana, where he remained until the war broke out, when he was made surgeon of the 80th Indiana Volunteers, and served in that capacity until the cessation of hostilities.

He was married in 1848 to Miss Aurelia Hammond, a native of Indiana, who bore her husband two living children: Mary J. (wife of L. J. Wilkes) and Aurelia. Two sons were drowned in the Mississippi River. In 1866 Dr. Jaquess and family moved to Tunica County, Mississippi where the Doctor was engaged in cotton growing for two years. Not being fitted for this he gave it up, and in 1869 came to Helena, where he was appointed postmaster by President Arthur, serving in that capacity for four years. Since that time he has been engaged in the practice of his profession, and has also carried on the drug business in connection. He is a member of the Royal Arcanum, Knights of Honor, and Knights and Ladies of Honor, and Golden Rule. He owns considerable real estate in both the country and city, and is a successful businessman. He has been mayor of the city three times, and is one of the prominent Republicans of Phillips County."

This biography is taken from "Biographical and Historical Memorials of Eastern Arkansas," (The Goodspeed Publishing Company, Chicago, Nashville and St. Louis, 1890), p. 778.

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## DIANA

by

W. H. Woodin

Acknowledgment is made to the Memphis Commercial Appeal for the outline of this story.

Just before sundown on December 21st of the year 1898, a big side-wheel packet boat rounded to at the Memphis landing and eased in to the wharf boat maintained there by the line. There was considerable business to transact in Memphis. She brought down a heavy load of freight to be unloaded, mostly manufactured merchandise. There was more freight to take on going on down to New Orleans, mostly cotton. A few passengers got off, a few more got on, and of course most of the passengers aboard stayed aboard, as they were going on to New Orleans and a few other towns in between. Included in the passenger list was a vaudeville troupe whose booking agent had sent them to New Orleans to start on a circuit of several Southern states. In the vaudeville troupe was a trick rifle shot, a popular act in those days. I remember seeing several myself some years later. Some of them were amazingly skillful. This particular trick shot, however, was literally a doll. She stood less than five feet with high heeled shoes and weighed a scant eighty pounds, but hardly knew what it was to miss something with a 22 rifle. An older sister traveled with her and assisted her in her act.

The Captain and his crew did not have any serious troubles in Memphis, but it looked as if every little thing had to go wrong to be vexing and cause delay. The bills of lading on the freight they brought down from St. Louis were not properly made out. It took a number of trips uptown and several telegrams to St. Louis to get it straightened out. The compress that was furnishing the cotton that was going south did not get the cotton down on the levee in time. The steward ordered supplies as soon as they landed in Memphis and the markets that made a specialty of supplying steamboats had trouble getting everything wanted. With Christmas only a few days off, the steward and the Captain ordered their turkeys from a market at Helena. It seems that at that time there was a market at Helena that made a specialty of supplying steamboats with chickens and turkeys and could be depended upon to supply them with plump, tender birds. The coal fleet at Memphis were delayed in getting their barge of coal alongside to fill their bunkers. As the boat was unloading a much greater tonnage of freight than they were loading on to go south, the Captain and chief engineer decided it would be good business to coal the boat very heavy and be able to go on to New Orleans without stopping again for coal. Coal was cheaper in Memphis than it would be further south, and going down river the extra

load would not delay them much.

It was not until a little after daylight on the morning of December 23rd that the boat got away from Memphis. The weather was clear and there was a good stage of water. The pilots would not have to sound the crossings. When a big packet boat is under way in the river and everything is working all right the captain is about the most useless man aboard. He has no particular duties then. This skipper had lost much sleep while in Memphis, and with Christmas coming on he wanted to be feeling good and in good spirits to help his passengers celebrate Christmas Day. He went by the office, told the clerk to be sure and have him called before they landed at Helena, then went to his quarters in the Texas and turned in.

Everything went well until the pilot started running the crossing between the foot of Mhoon Bend and the head of Walnut Bend. The river here runs due west. As he came out from behind the protection of the high bank and heavy timber at the head of the crossing, he noticed a fairly strong breeze had sprung up out of the south. "Hmmm, where'd you come from?" he thought. "Didn't notice you up at the bight of the bend. Probably bring a rain with you." He took the boat on down Walnut Bend, past Battle-ax Landing; the wind was getting a little stiff. In Walnut Bend the channel is on the Arkansas side, and at the foot of the bend flows practically due east. The boat there was once more under the protection of the high bank and heavy timber. The pilot didn't think much about it, but when he came out past Hardins Point where the wind got a good swipe at him over the top of the bar, it was very much stronger than it had been up in Walnut Bend, and he had to pull the pilot wheel over a few spokes to compensate for the wind trying to blow him into the bank. High winds are not supposed to blow in December in this part of the world, so he thought nothing of it.

By the time he had rounded Fox Island Bend and was headed south down toward O K Bend, the wind was getting very unpleasant. Another five miles and he was having trouble keeping the boat under control. She was an old boat and was not equipped with steam steering gear. He called down the speaking tube to the clerk at the office and told him to get the other pilot and skipper up to the pilot house immediately. The other pilot was up and dressed and by the time he got there there was no necessity for a discussion as to what should be done. They must make a landing as soon as they could get to a sheltered place, which would be in the bight of O K Bend. There the river flowed due west for a short distance and coming in under the shelter of the bank on the Mississippi side it would break the force of the wind so they could make a landing and be safe.

The skipper got there a few minutes later. The pilots told him what they had decided on. The Captain agreed with them, went back down, and got the first mate out of bed, told him to go down on the main



deck, take command, and prepare to make a landing at the bight of O K Bend. By that time it was taking the strength and skill of both pilots to keep the boat under control. They kept her head to the wind, worked her on down to the bight of O K Bend, brought her up under the shelter of the high bank, turned her completely around, swung her head in against the bank and held it there with the port engine while the deck crew got the lines ashore. In twenty minutes they had six good lines out. They stopped the port engine and the boat lay quiet and comfortable to the bank. There was no more danger. In spite of the fact the weather was a little cool, the pilots looked at each other and grinned and wiped the perspiration from their foreheads. It had been a little unpleasant.

The Captain immediately went down to the cabin, called the passengers together, and explained to them that the landing had been necessary because of a most unseasonal high wind. Where they were tied up there was no danger at all. The boat could remain there indefinitely. Neither of his pilots nor himself had ever experienced a wind like this in December. They could not explain it, but as suddenly as it started it surely could not last very long, and they had hopes of getting away during the night or early next morning. Down in the cabin the wind was only a murmur. The passengers were not alarmed, and being used to the vicissitudes of travel in those days proceeded to amuse themselves according to their fancy.

With the boat safely tied up, the Captain stopped and tried to remember what other loose ends of business he had to tend to. "Oh, yes, horrors ! Turkeys !" The turkeys he had ordered were by now in the cold storage plant at Helena, and here he was tied up out in the woods forty miles upriver. He looked at his watch. It was a little after 10 a. m. "Hmmm. Well, that wasn't so bad. Let's see, this is December 23rd..." If he could get away during the night or by daylight the next morning he could run down to Helena and pick up his turks in time for the cooks to roast them for Christmas dinner. Having everything under control, he decided to go catch up on sleep some more. The entire crew were standing their regular watches, a pilot in the pilot house, the engineers at their posts, a mate on deck, the clerk in the office; there was nothing for him to do again.

However, the Captain did not sleep too sound. When he dozed off he dreamed about turkeys. When the watch changed at noon he went to the pilot house with the pilot going on duty. Up there the wind howled and screamed around the two big stacks. It was not very encouraging. He went below, talked to some of the passengers for a while, went down on the main deck, wandered around, talked to the mate on watch, the engineers. The firemen were keeping a full head of steam. It was fortunate they had coaled heavy at Memphis.

When the watch changed again at 6 that evening, he was back up in the pilot house, but there was nothing to discuss. The wind still



raged. He wandered around over the boat for a while, went back to his quarters and tried to sleep again. When the watch changed at midnight he was up in the pilot house again. There was still nothing to discuss. He began to think of that piece of paper he had had issued to him by the Steamboat Inspection Service -- "Master and Pilot of Steam Propelled Vessels of any Tonnage on any River." It was framed under glass and screwed to the bulkhead of the office, according to regulations. He was proud of that piece of paper. He had worked hard to get it and had kept it clear of smears. Of course, he had been in a few tight scrapes. One cloudy night in the dark of the moon he hit a snag and the old boat sunk. She was worn out and rotten anyhow. The inspectors called it the hazards of navigation, the snag had not been there when he ran that part of the river the last trip. No one got hurt. That was not so bad. But if he didn't get those turkeys he would have to feed his passengers ham for Christmas dinner. The thought gagged him. Ham was what they fed the deck crew on holidays and special occasions. Feeding his passengers ham for Christmas dinner was about on a par with walking into a Kosher restaurant and ordering ham and eggs.

At 2:00 in the morning he wandered into the lounge at the head of the main cabin. Of course it was deserted. In the office the clerk had dozed off to sleep with his head and shoulders sprawled across the desk. "Oh, oh -- asleep on watch. Oh, well, let the kid sleep. What is there for a clerk to do at 2 in the morning, tied up out in the woods forty miles from nowhere? Hmmm -- those sofas certainly do look inviting." Three minutes later the skipper was dead to the world. Presently the clerk woke with a start, looked around sheepishly and saw the Captain stretched out on the sofa. "Oh, oh," he said to himself, "the old man caught me asleep on watch and didn't do anything but curl up for a nap himself. All right, big man, I'll return the favor." He stepped down the cabin to an unoccupied stateroom and got the blanket off a bunk and covered the skipper with it. The big man was having a rough trip.

Six in the morning found the Captain back in the pilot house. There was still nothing to discuss. The wind howled and screamed. "Well," he thought, "I guess I'm in for it. I had better tell the passengers at breakfast they are going to get ham for Christmas dinner." It would be the first time he had ever had to do such a thing. He put it off as long as he could. He waited until they had nearly finished breakfast, walked up to his place at the head of the table: "Ladies and gentlemen, your attention, please. As you know, we have been tied up here now for nearly twenty-four hours. This wind is most unseasonal and neither of my pilots nor myself can remember ever having experienced anything just like it before. Several times I have had to tie a boat up in the month of March on account of high wind, but never before in December. There is no danger. As I told you yesterday when we landed, the boat is perfectly safe and is laying comfortable. But what is most humiliating to me is the fact that the steward and myself

ordered the turkeys for our Christmas dinner to be delivered to us at Helena. We expected to pick them up there about noon yesterday. Our reason for ordering them at Helena instead of taking them on at Memphis is that we get a much plumper and fatter turkey there than we do anywhere else, and all of the boats running on the lower river try to get their poultry at Helena. Of course, we have plenty of food aboard but it embarrasses me very much to have to tell you that we will serve --"

"Oh, Captain." The Captain stopped and looked around, rather startled. He didn't see where the voice was coming from. And then he saw her. It was the little doll, the trick shot with the vaudeville troupe. "Captain, I think we could have turkey for Christmas dinner. I am as good a shot in the woods as I am on stage. That's where I learned to shoot. With a high wind blowing like it is now, the turkeys will be roosting on the lower limbs of the heavy timber where they get some protection from the wind, and as much noise as the wind makes they will pay very little attention to the crack of a 22 rifle. They think it's a limb breaking off of a tree. And as small as I am, I can slip through the brush and get three or four, sometimes five turkeys out of a flock before they find out what is happening. Shortly after you landed yesterday sister and I took a walk out through the woods. We ran up on one flock of turkeys hardly out of sight of the boat, and three more flocks in the next quarter of a mile. If you'll let me have two of your men to go with me, I am sure I can come back with enough turkeys for Christmas dinner for the boat." "Oh, lady, lady. If you can get me some turkeys you can have anything on this boat."

The little girl went to her stateroom and changed to her hunting costume. If it was like some ladies' hunting costumes I remember seeing not so many years after this, it was probably a pair of knee-length laced leather boots, a corduroy skirt with a blouse and jacket to match, a tight fitting corduroy cap to keep her hair from getting caught in the brush. The hem of the skirt probably came about halfway between her ankles and her knees, considered very daring in those days and frowned on in more modest circles. It was also very practical for what the little girl had to do. Her favorite 22 rifle and a box of cartridges. The Captain had gone and got his first mate, who was on watch, told him about the turkey hunt, and told him to get one of his men to go with him. The mate had a deck hand, a man as large as himself, who hardly knew what it was he couldn't carry. "Oh, yassuh, I tote all the turkeys dat little gal gwineta shoot." However, the mate was optimistic or perhaps just cautious. Anyway, he put several yards of stout cord in his pocket. It was an odd looking trio that walked up the stage plank, something like a feminine David leading a couple of Goliaths forth to battle. They climbed to the top of the bank and were immediately swallowed up in the forest.

Two hours went by. The wind howled and screamed. The Captain began to get uneasy and wondered if he had another chunk of trouble. He went up in the cabin and talked with the girl's older sister. Big



sister laughed at him. "Don't worry about Diana," she said. "If your men will stay with her she'll bring them back and they'll have some turkeys. Where us kids were raised we had to be born with a compass in our heads and a rifle in our hands to get out to the settlement and back and visit our neighbors. By the time Diana was ten years old she was the best shot in the family, better even than Dad and the boys. Turkeys and squireels were just her size. Sometimes Ma would tell us at breakfast that if we wanted anything for dinner besides cornbread somebody better go to the woods and shoot something. When Diana was twelve she could go two miles back in the woods by herself, shoot the heads off of two turkeys, and carry them back to the house without stopping to rest. She'll be back after a while." Well, that was reassuring. The Captain went down on the main deck and talked to the second mate, who was standing the first mate's watch. They decided that if the party didn't get back within an hour the second mate would take a party and go looking for them. There were a number of men in his deck crew that knew their way around in the woods and were not afraid.

About half an hour later the little girl suddenly appeared out of the brush. As big sister said, she had two turkeys with their feet tied together slung over one shoulder, her rifle on the other arm. Then there was quite a commotion in the brush, and out staggered two of the most grotesque objects he had ever seen. At the bottom was a pair of feet. The top was a human head with a hat on it. The middle of the thing resembled a miniature balloon covered with turkey feathers. It was the mate and his deck hand. It seems there is a limit as to what two big men can carry, and the two men had exceeded that limit. They staggered out to the top of the bank and collapsed in two big piles of turkeys and made no effort to get up.

The Captain started to the top of the bank. The mate yelled to his deck crew, and thirty men raced up the stage plank. The Captain took the doll's two turkeys, took the doll herself on his shoulder, and carried her and the two turks up to the cabin, where she received a triumph that would have made a conquering Roman general quite happy. As soon as she could get a word in edgeways she said she was sorry she didn't shoot all of the turkeys through the head, but they needed so many and needed them so quick she was afraid to take a chance on letting some of them get away. The crowd gasped and then roared. The deck crew in their exuberance picked up not only the turkeys but the first mate and his deck hand, and carried them aboard with glee. It was probably the first time since early childhood the big mate was willing to be picked up and carried. He offered no objections.

The appearance of the little girl and the turkeys made a change in the morale of the passengers that was little short of a miracle. While they were not unpleasant or sullen, they were naturally somewhat depressed. There were about a dozen of them going home to Helena to spend Christmas with their families. But in those days people were used to the vicissitudes of travel. With the appearance of the girl and



her turkeys and the assurance of a turkey dinner, everyone forgot their troubles and disappointments and began to plan a party for that afternoon and for Christmas morning. Some of the passengers and the vaudeville troupe got together and arranged for a party. That afternoon would be devoted to merry making. Among the passengers there were quite a few who could play the piano and sing. The vaudeville troupe of course was all talent. After dinner the vaudeville troupe started things going. The magician ran through some of his tricks, an acrobat did some tumbling acts which he could do without any apparatus, and they had a very pleasant afternoon. After the evening meal, with Christmas getting close, the party took a more serious turn. They sang the old Christmas carols and the fine old Christmas hymns. Some of the passengers were rather surprised to know that the vaudeville troupe could sing Christmas songs as well or better than they could.

Down on the main deck the turkeys presented a problem. When the boat ordered poultry it was always ordered dressed and ready to put in the oven. Of course, no one was objecting, but these turkeys had been delivered with all of their feathers still on the outside and all of their insides still on the inside. Steamboat crews were used to emergencies. The other kind did not survive. The engineers drew several tubs of scalding water from the boilers and the second mate put the entire deck crew to picking and dressing turkeys. The big first mate by this time had recovered his breath a little. He was supposed to be on watch them. He got up, staggered around and tried to issue orders. The second mate walked up in front of him and said, "Listen, you big ape. You've been licked by a flock of turkeys. Go to the texas and go to bed. I'm going to stand your watch." Ordinarily such a breach of discipline would have called for a very forceful steamboat-style argument, even an actual fight. But by this time all the big first mate could do was glower at the big second mate and stumble off to the texas. He had indeed been licked by a flock of turkeys.

The steward and head cook got together and did a little figuring. The ovens would hold so many turkeys at a time. The turkey had to cook just so long. They had so many turkeys to cook; then a little more arithmetic. Some of the ovens would be needed for the other dishes the steward had planned for Christmas dinner. A little more figuring and a little more discussion. One of the older cooks was called aside and told to go to his quarters and go to bed. He would be called when the rest of the crew finished with the evening meal and would stand watch all night roasting turkeys.

When a steamboat crew threw a party they didn't skip anything. The boat's carpenter took one of the dining chairs down to the shop and spliced the legs out about four inches longer. It would get the doll's chin up out of her plate without putting her to the embarrassment of sitting on a pillow. When Christmas dinner was announced the skipper escorted the little girl and her older sister to the table, seated the doll to his right and big sister next to her. One of the passengers,

an elder in his church, was asked to say the blessing. As they were seated a waiter and the steward himself appeared, the waiter with a serving table which he placed behind the head of the table, and the steward was carrying a platter with a turkey roasted to a delicious brown, which he proceeded to carve and serve the girl, her sister, and the Captain himself. When the meal was pretty well started the clerk from the office stepped up to the Captain and whispered something in his ear. The Captain raised his eyebrows, looked pleased, and whispered something to the clerk.

It was a wonderful Christmas dinner, and about the time they got to the dessert -- which was probably ice cream, a dessert that has been standard on steamboats since the beginning of time -- the clerk came back again with a smile on his face and whispered to the Captain again. The Captain jumped up: "Ladies and gentlemen, your attention, please. I just have excellent news from the pilot house. The pilot on watch said the wind has eased off considerably and if it dies down as fast as it came up we may be able to get away from here during the night."

That was a wonderful Christmas present. But the wind was even kinder than that. At 3:30 that afternoon the deck crew pulled in the lines. They backed out and headed down river. The people for Helena would be able to spend Christmas night with their families. That would be wonderful, but nothing would ever dim their memories of what was perhaps the merriest Christmas ever celebrated aboard a steamboat. Nor would they ever forget their gratitude to the little doll that saved their Christmas for them. And when the big deck hand went up the gangplank with the head line he had a grin on his face and one end of a turkey drumstick protruding from the corner of his mouth. He was still eating turkey.



## LETTERS OF ROLAND J. COOK

The following letters were written during the Civil War by Roland J. Cook of Barton, grandfather of Mrs. Tom Faust of West Helena. According to the Goodspeed Memoirs<sup>1</sup>, the parents of Roland Cook came to Phillips County from Yalobusha County, Mississippi (where he was born in 1839), in 1856. Father and son cleared their Arkansas property of woods, developed a farm and built the house where Roland Cook still lived (in 1890). Roland Cook enlisted in the 2nd Arkansas Infantry Regiment in June, 1861, was an orderly sergeant, and fought at Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Perryville, Ky., and Chickamauga. He was wounded in the hand and chest at the last named place and was a prisoner-of-war for a short time. Following the war, he returned to farming, and married Miss Lucy Winbourn, daughter of Rev. A. K. Winbourn of De Soto County, Mississippi. He was the brother-in-law of Major S. H. King of Poplar Grove, Major King having married Miss Sallie Cook. Major King was the great-grandfather of John King of Helena.

Belle's Station, Ky. Jan'y 26th, 1862.

My dear Sisters,

I did not finish the letter I wrote yesterday, so will resume it today, hoping to finish it in quite a different mood of feeling from which I was laboring under when I quit writing yesterday. I was mad then and am not yet quite in a good humor. Mad I have not yet found that box of sundries on my return. I can't tell what I would have said and done, but having something to divert my mind from the contemplation of that abominable trip, I have some what revived and am in a fair way of sufficiently recovering to be fool enough to pitch off on another such excursion next week.

A week is plenty long for Hindman's excited mind to manufacture a sufficient excuse to send us down on some fruitless excursion. I am in hopes that my letters have reached you ere this, and relieve your minds from that suspense under which you all were laboring. I was quite uneasy myself when I was writing from Cave City and having the impression it would produce I have written often, and stated my condition correctly as possible. Now don't think that I write that I am well when I am not, for if I get sick you will be certain to learn of it. If not by letter I would telegraph immediately.

Before this letter reaches you you will hear news of some kind from or near Bowling Green. What it will be I am not able to say at this time, but from the indications of the movements of the enemy we will have a fight soon, and in all probability a severe one too.

1. Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Eastern Arkansas, (The Goodspeed Publishing Co., Chicago, Nash., St. L., 1890), p. 765.



We are continually on the lookout for spies, and shouting of the enemy. The Texas Rangers have again come up to water the cowering sculps of Johnson's hirelings. The Rangers have recruited very much, and hundreds, with horses and all look much refreshed since I last saw them. Now while writing this I learn that we have surrounded some twenty thousand of the enemy down upon the Tennessee River. The enemy have burned their baggage, wagons, etc and turned their mules loose. It is, I fear too good to be true, but we will all hope for the best even if it turns out to be false. Cannons have been firing at Bowling Green all day, but I know not for what reason. I am glad to learn that Bro. Corley has succeeded so well in raising his company, and do sincerely wish that I might join him myself.<sup>2</sup> I then would know that I, and all others would have justice done us -- a thing not known in this command. Every man takes care of No. 1. A man can accomplish nothing except by cunning and trickery -- a thing I have too much independence and self respect to do; even if I never succeed in obtaining a better position than I now hold, and willingly will I relinquish that to get to be a private in Mr. Corley's company. If you get to see the good old man again present him my compliments and kindest regards. I have not heard a Christian admonition since he left, until this morning when a young minister in the regiment gave us a short discourse. Today is the Sabbath; but work, cursing and swearing, card playing, and all the absurdities, and demoralizing influences continue as in any part of the week. Men pay no attention to the Sabbath. I can here see the difference in society where there is, and where there is not any influence of woman man will soon degenerate into a brute, as great many in this regiment have already become. I am satisfied that I shall soon look out, after my return home, for some good woman to restore me to something like gentility. You can tell the good young ladies that I will be a subject for them to try their genial influence upon, and think I will make rapid progress in again civilizing myself. I think you said Dick Macon had fallen in love with Miss Clarke. Well what of that? Did he ever see a pretty lady in his life that he didn't fall in love with her? And, "You see you have a rival." I think you said "pshaw." You, I hope, do not suppose that I would consider Dick Macon a rival if I were endeavoring to obtain Miss Clarke's favor or affections. I am certain I would feel no uneasiness upon the subject whatever as to what the result would be in her choice. I am in hopes I may be able to visit home soon enough to see you young ladies wearing your cotton dresses, and see you weaving more to supplant those most worn out. I found Miss Mattie's respects "Enclosed," and I "Inclose" mine

2. This is undoubtedly Major Sam Corley, Presbyterian minister and chaplain of Dobbin's Regiment (the 1st), Ark. Cavalry. He was a veteran of the Mexican War and was first in the 2nd Ark. Infantry, before Dobbin's Regt. He was killed at Battle of Little Rock, and is buried in the Confederate Cemetery at Helena, where his headstone is easily identified.

in this, which you will present to her as soon as you see her. The Texas Rangers caught a large deer yesterday within sight of headquarters. One of them caught him with his lasso, and rode off dragging the deer after him. He, in the meantime, crying out, "Here is your mule." Several deer have been seen near our camp. If Mr. Robinson wants to come up here and take my place I am quite willing to give it to him, and as much money as he wants. I am not certain though that I could exchange with him. I will see soon and then can tell what I can do. There are a good many cases of mumps in camp, but none of the cases have proven fatal yet. None in our camp have yet taken them.

I know not just how soon they may break out all around me. Duke and Ranson are in fine health, and send you all their respects. Captain Turner<sup>3</sup> has not entirely recovered, but is able to be up and about. Lieut. Roeper is the only commissioned officer with us. Dean has been sick almost ever since we have been back. Of the men who left Helena with me I am the only one fit for duty, or has been fit for duty for a long time. Lem Rodgers has been in the hospital ever since he came back. P. Taylor has a chill or two every week, and is consequently nearly ~~always~~ unfit for duty. Ben Norris has recovered and returned to camp looking quite well. Mr. Thompson keeps up finely, but complains a little some times. I believe the general health of the regiment has ~~improved a little~~. The number for duty having increased to two hundred and seventy five. I have been living now for two days on that "box of sundries," but did not find that lump of butter until this evening. And those sausages!!!! Oh hush . . . don't talk to me about them. I don't see how man can live without something good to eat -- I can't, for certain. Many a fellow has smacked his mouth over those nice cakes, and looked longingly at the little remainder as if to say "give me just another little piece." I have not opened those "zerbs" yet -- saving them for hard times. If should be so fortunate as ever to again get home, and then don't live for a while it will be because there is nothing to eat. I would want nothing better than some corn bread and some good buttermilk. How bad I do want some milk. I am getting sleepy, and will quit for tonight -- probably to resume it again in the morning if anything transpires of any importance. The mails are quite irregular, and it may be several days before I can send this off, and hence may be able to communicate something relative to the accuracy of the details of the capturing of those Yanks on Tenn. River.

Jan'y 28th. I have heard nothing confirming the capture of those Yanks on Tenn. River, but great many troops have been sent out from Bowling Green on that line of defense. It is supposed that the foe are endeavoring to cut a road through the hills north of us intersecting the pike road between us and Bowling Green, and thus cut us off, and have an easy time caging us up; but the Rangers are on the lookout, and will certainly detect their movements in time for us to make our retreat sure. Sid Macon arrived safe in camp last night, and astonished me very much when he said he had no letter for me - though I

3. Probably Bart Turner



know you all did not know when he started back. Great many rumors are afloat of fights and victories in the state of Missouri, A great fight will soon take place in this state one that in a great measure decide the contest between the belligerent sections of our great nation. The capturing of Bowling Green by the Federal forces will be an irreparable loss to the Confederacy, and a defeat of the Federals will likewise cripple them so much as to make their efforts hereafter ineffective and futile. I look upon Bowling Green as the turning point, or pivot, upon which our destiny may turn for or against us. The fight will be desperate, long and bloody, but we can not but be triumphant as long as there is a just God and a just cause to defend. Hoping we may safely pass through the firing ordeals, and again return to our happy homes. I must give my love to all, and kindest regards to all friends.

And subscribe myself, as ever,  
Your brother,  
Roland

Corinth, Miss. Camp 2nd. Arkansas Regiment  
March 20th, 1862.

Dear Parents and Sisters,

I wrote a letter two days ago, but have no opportunity of mailing it; and a letter gets quite stale in two days. When I wrote then we had just cooked three days rations for the purpose of going out to meet the enemy who had left the river five miles, and threatened an attack at this place, but they have now gone back to their boats, and I am now unable to say when we may get a pop at them. Of the forces we have concentrated upon this road I can give only an imperfect guess. At this point, which is the largest force at one point, we have at least 30,000 probably more than they are scattered along from Chattanooga to Memphis. I think there can, in a short time, be gathered 75,000 troops at any point upon this road. Of all general movements of troops you are as well acquainted as myself. I have a heap of information but so much of it is false that I can not believe any of it. I think if the "Abbs," want a licking now is their time to "pitch in" for we are all in a good humor to fight them. Rumors estimates the Federal forces at various numbers so I don't know which to believe; the largest or the smaller estimates. There was a battalion of cavalry who ran through the federal encampment a few nights since without the loss of a man. Several horses mired up in the mud, and were lost --- singular and daring feat. Clebourne Regiment is yet at Decatur. Mill Sale came out in the country until he could entirely recover. Nothing has been heard of Turner, Wilkes or Tinnin since we had to leave them. Duke is in danger of being taken prisoner. Turner, I fear, has died as he was very sick indeed. Mr. Weatherly and those with him, were at Iuka when we passed; but it being night prevented me seeing any of them. I have not yet heard from any of them.

I received your letter of the 9th, inst. and was glad to

hear you are all well; but was very sorry that Mr. Winbourn became so badly frightened as to send for Miss Lou, and then bringing her much closer to the Abbs, then if she remained at home.

What would you all give for one more night to pass like the ones we used to have when Miss Lou and I used to play drafts -- laugh and quarrel so much, and you all old folks sit by the fire and enjoy it as you used to do. Well; you say you'd give a heap. Yes; and I'd give two heaps. You must not expect to see me home for a long time yet. Battles have to be fought and won ere I can again see home and loved ones.

Pa you must come up and bring Ma and as many of the girls as you can. I can't say either that it would be prudent to bring Ma and Sisters; although I want to see them so very much. Mr. Jsrman will come up with you I know. I want something to eat very badly -- butter-milk, for instance. We get plenty coffee, sugar, flour, salt and fat meat. I eat the meat and keep mighty fat on it; but some how it makes me feel sorter studip. I need turnip greens and hog jowl. If I was certain I was going to be here long I would write to Aunt Sallie to send me something to keep me alive a little while longer. If you get an opportunity of sending me another box be certain and let Mr. Jarman know it for I am awful dry. I saw Dr. Newman a few days since. He looks quite well, and I think he is attending to his duties closely, for I don't see him once a week -- although our regiments are camped side by side.

Give my kindest regards to Uncle Buck's family, and all the friends and neighbors.

As ever,

Your son and brother.

Roland J. Cook.

Corinth, Miss. March 25th, 1862.

Dear Parents and Sisters,

As Lieut. Hayes is going down into Arkansas on a recruiting expedition I avail myself of so good an opportunity of writing you a few lines which leave me in very good health and spirits. Trusting he will soon deliver these few lines into your hands. Hays was appointed Lieut. a few days ago by Col'n. Govan, and a very good appointment too. He has been acting O. S. ever since I was taken sick last fall. I am acting Orderly Sergeant now. Nothing has yet been heard of Captain Turner, Wilkes or Tinnin. A ranger reports that a Captain and Lieut. was taken prisoner near Murfreesboro, but it can not be relied upon for certainty. The "Feds" are acting very slow and cautiously. Yesterday twelve thousand came out within twelve miles of us, and pitched their tents, but for some reason they took fright -- struck their tents and made it back to the river. I don't believe we will ever have any fight here. Our forces are getting too large for them to attack us. We may take the offensive and attack them soon -- or at least make them think so. I have been looking for you up here most any day for a week. I hope nothing has happened or



anything the matter to prevent you from coming up, I have heard nothing from home since yours of the 9th, inst. Why don't you write? I have seen or heard nothing from Weatherly's regiment. I suppose they are yet at Parker. Col'n Tappan's regiment is here. Tim Boothe and Tim Mitchel are both unwell - not much sick. I have not yet seen them myself. I reckon Nat Graves will wear my pants out -- thinking he may not find me. The Brigade was called out this morning and formed into a line of battle for the purpose of witnessing the "drumming court" of a member of Phifers Battalion accused of stealing. He was taken from jail in Bowling Green, and put in Chisman's Company. The court marshalled with Col'n. Govan as chairman has under consideration the conduct of a Dr. Morrison, who is accused of grossly neglecting his patients, and letting Dave Jones of company F., and Gus Atwell of company E. die for the want of proper medical attention while under his charge. It is highly probable he will be found guilty and summarily dealt with. I hope he may be severely dealt with, and half the other doctors sent home. The doctors in the army have killed, or suffered to die by neglect more men than we have ever lost in all our battles. 'Tis true they have had no great amount of medicines, but they so often fail to administer it, and what little they do only hastens them on to their death. Nearly all the majors and brigadier generals of the center department are now in Corinth. They came up in the cars -- sent out a runner to find them a fine house and sluths into it, and gives the owner "permission" to quietly move out leaving all his furniture, bedding, and utensils behind. General Johnston took two houses for himself and his staff -- both houses, too, belonging to widow ladies.

Now such eating and drinking as these dignitaries do do. Yet if one of us was known to have a quart of old "Bust Skull" they would have a fit, or get it away from us. I have had only one drink in a week of Sundays, and care but little if I never get any more -- unless after a hard march on a rainy day -- then it sets well upon my stomach.

I didn't think of writing more than two pages, but I have run so far into nonsensical matters that I will finish this before I quit, unless I quit too quick. I have not yet written to Aunt Sallie, but intend doing so soon. Ma send Pa up here and send me something to eat -- about twenty pounds of butter, pickles, jellies etc. We get our regular rations of coffee and sugar, which I expect is more than you can boast of. I got a good pone of corn bread last night for supper, which readily accounts for me being such good humor today. Pa you will hardly believe me when I tell you that pair of boots you sent me up to Pitman's Ferry are not yet worn out. If I can get them half soled any time soon I believe they will last me all the year. They have been the best boots in the whole brigade. Far better than the brag shop made boots. There was something else I wanted to write you about, but I have forgotten what it was. I'll be thinking of it next time I write. It wasn't much any how. You must give my respect to all relatives and friends.

And believe me, as ever,

Your son and brother,

Roland J. Cook

Corinth, Miss. March 31st, 1862

Dear Pa,

I expect I had better remain where I am -- at least for a while. I am now Orderly Sergeant. This war can't last always, and I can put with most anything for a while. I have much to attend to and but little time to do cooking and washing. Pa please send me one of the boys up by Mr. Pasley or Lieut. Hays --- if you please. I can make more money with him up here than you can at home. Harry will do me very well.

I'll write again soon,

Your son,

Roland J. Cook

Corinth, Miss. April 10th, 1862

Dear Parents,

Well; now that I have eaten heartily of pickles, cakes etc. nothing can give me more satisfaction than to continue writing you a few sketches of the fight and disasters. Many men stood boldly up to the rack who I believed would shirk, and many flickered who individually would make you believe to be as bold and fearless as a lion. As a general thing the quietest and best disposed men were the coolest and most daring.

Right here I must mention a member of our company, (and it is with a feeling of pride that I do so) Sergt. Thomas Sturnes, flag bearer of the regiment. During the entire fight he was standing boldly and defiantly up in the front ranks, and in making that charge across the open field he was ten good steps in front of the entire regiment. Of the five color guards with him five were shot down, but not a ball passed through Sturnes clothes. A flag, Col'n. Govan says, was never borne more bravely.

Ben Norris was shot in the head during the first fire. He had shot only once or twice. Jas. Harrill had his leg broken at the same time. It is all a mistake about those men over shooting. If our regiment had not lain down to shoot not a man would have been left -- to have told what killed the rest of us. I saw men wounded while lying upon the ground. Many of our men were wounded no near me that I could hear the bullet hit them. General Martin was shot down within three feet of me. Once one of our batteries fired into our regiment by mistake and three men fell so close to me that I could have put my hands upon either of them. I think from the number of shot that then whistled around my ears they must have shot a pack of grape shot at us. This was the only accident of the kind that happened to our regiment. One of General Hindman's Aides was shot by a Louisiana Regiment. They supposed him to be a Yankee officer. He was a noble young fellow and the best Rijor (?) I ever saw. A wounded man of this regiment, while being carried off the field was met by a Yankee prisoner. The prisoner remarked, "Oh yes, we gave you Hell, did we." the wounded man reached around to his side, drew his pistol, and as he fired he said, "Yes, and I'll give you a little



Hell." The ball passed through his body, and he fell dead.

I have again eaten heartily of the contents of that box, and I think things taste better than they did yesterday. If I could see you all I could talk to you a week.

Billie Willis, who will carry this to you, will tell you many things. Yet; he was so unfortunate as to be wounded early in the engagement.

I am, my dear relatives, as ever,  
Your devoted son, and brother,  
Roland J. Cook

Corinth, Miss. April 18th, 1862

Dear Sisters,

I received your letters sent me by Dr. Edmonson, and I could easily imagine how you all felt, and how disagreeable the suspense was to you all, and particularly to Ma's peculiarly sensitive nature. But before this time you have all the particulars, and no doubt know more about the fight than I do. I scarcely ever get a chance to see a paper and can put no dependence in what I hear. I know no more than a hog how many men we lost of our entire forces; nor in all probability will we ever know. Our wounded men that we could not send home are receiving every possible attention, and are getting along as well as could be expected. One poor fellow, J. R. Thinner, I fear has died, as we have heard nothing from him since we left the battle field. One of our men, Frank Stud, who was taken sick at Bowling Green was sent to Nashville, and was there taken prisoner. He escaped from there on the night of the 27th, ult, and safely reached us yesterday. He reports that on the day of his escape Gen'l. Buell started his forces South. Stud was at or near Columbia, Tenn. on the Sunday of our flight, and could distinctly hear the cannon. He crossed the Tennessee River, and came by Jackson, Tenn. -- leaving there yesterday morning. He reports meeting many Yankees who had deserted, and were going home; also while at Nashville one Yank. regiment of infantry and a battalion of cavalry threw down their arms and went home; but many of them were arrested before they could escape. He also said that the Yankees had about 10,000 sick in hospitals, and about 2,000 sick in Columbia. A week before he left there had been 5,000 Yankees sent North. He says a great many of them die daily. Our sick men were treated by our own surgeons, and waited upon by the ladies of Nashville as they were before the city was taken.

Uncle Buck Brooks was up here in camp a few days after the fight. He went around and found all the relatives in camp except myself who he left to that he tried and could not find. I saw the battery upon the battle field that Buck and Dutch belong to but was not close enough to see the boys. Tim Adherson told me that they lost all their pieces except one because of all their horses getting killed. They are in Stanfords battery. Adherson is in Randal Leigh's Company of infantry. Tim Molton, and Mr. Yarnage called to see me a few days since, and both were well. Tim is as red and healthy as a bear (beautiful comparison). Tim

told me that cousin Matt Simpson and Mr. Lynn were married. I am glad of it; as Tim says Lynn is a good clever fellow. Duke Tinnen is quite unwell. The old fellow was up here during the first of the week. Sam Anderson was wounded, but little Sam Garner was unhurt. I learned for the first time that Leander Rayborn was up here as Captain of a company of Texas Rangers. I can't see why I have not recognized him. I certainly must not have ever seen. He is a good officer, and abstains entirely from drink, and has done so for more than three years. He was wounded in the arm and went with Mr. Tinnin down to his father's in Miss. What may happen up here again I acknowledge -- I have but little idea. I had little supposed that we would have any fight up here at all, and neither do I yet believe that they ever have attacked us at this place. They buried our dead. Of the loss on each side you can know better than I.

Tell Sister Jennie to write again. I have not yet forgotten her Bob. Tell Nannie that buttermilk was good and thick, and I relished it finely. That corn bread tasted like "at home," and that cake was delicious. After all the exposure & fatigue attending our fight, and getting our wounded attended to, and getting them off to home my system entirely relaxed, and for several days I suffered severely from one of my old attacks of Cholera Morbus; but I am now getting up and at my post as ever, and ready to give a Yankee some more lead. I just learned a day or two since why they would not let us get closer than two hundred yards of them. They supposed that we had but few guns that would hold up farther than that distance, and that they would stand off and shoot us like we were targets, but can you imagine their surprise.

I am in hopes of hearing from you all again soon. Old Collins<sup>4</sup> appears well satisfied, and sends his kindest "expects" to his family, and you all. Give my kindest regards to Uncle Buck's family, and indeed to all the neighbors and friends.

Sisters, present me kindly to the young ladies, and tell them I have hopes of getting through this war unhurt -- and then .....

I am as ever, Your devoted brother,

Roland

4. Collins was his negro bodyguard that his father gave him.