

PHILLIPS COUNTY
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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The Phillips County Historical Society supplies the Quarterly to its members. Membership is open to anyone interested in Phillips County history. Annual membership dues are \$3.50 for a regular membership and \$5.00 for a sustaining membership. Single copies of the Quarterly are \$1.00. Quarterlies are mailed to members.

Neither the Editors nor the Phillips County Historical Society assume any responsibility for statements made by contributors.

Dues are payable to Miss Bessie McRee, Membership Chairman, P. O. Box 629, Helena, Arkansas 72342.

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

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The pictures included in the installments of the Fred Sheldon Diary were reproduced by Dorothy James. She took pictures of the drawings in the Diary, and these pictures in turn were re-photo-graphed in the printing process. If anyone has a collection of letters or a diary which could be used in the **Quarterly**, please say so. The Sue Cook Diary, the Fred Sheldon Diary, and the Cotten Correspondence have all aroused much interest and comment.

The Historical Society was pleased to have Mrs. Herbert Hill speak at the May meeting. She used extracts from the earliest diaries of Judge J. M. Hanks to give an interesting talk, and showed a picture of him. It is hoped that she will speak again on his diaries of later years. The officers of the past year of the Society were re-elected. Mr. James V. Belsha of Phoenix, Arizona, a member of the Historical Society, was a visitor at this meeting.

Mrs. Mary E. Miles relates that the late S. D. Warfield talked with Mrs. Mattie Thweatt Dube, the subject of an article in the December, 1968 issue of the **Quarterly**, when he was in Europe in the 1920s. She told him at that time that the Coolidge-Clopton-Polk-Barrow house, which formerly stood at the northwest corner of Perry and Columbia Streets, was the best example of Italian architecture that she had seen in this country.

The Phillips County Museum owns a whetstone about three by one-half inches, that ex-City Engineer L. R. Parmelee found in the hills around Midland Heights in 1955. Scratched on one end are the initials "N. R." 1821. The whetstone is thought to have belonged to Nicholas Rightor, who platted the lots and streets of Helena in 1820. The Museum also has a picture postcard (date unknown) of the remains of the old cemetery on Reservoir Hill, showing "shrouds, bones, and broken stones." That would have been a good one to send to somebody.

Dr. Albert A. Hornor of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, a frequent contributor of articles to the **Quarterly**, has tried to locate the sword of Admiral Benjamin Tappan, given to him by the City of Helena. His interest stems in part from the fact that he remembers Admiral Tappan, and on one occasion Dr. Hornor and his father dined at the New York Yacht Club in New York City with him. His efforts towards finding the sword have thus far been unsuccessful, but one piece of information that he found was not included in the short sketch of Admiral Tappan. He was a holder of the Navy Cross, the Navy's highest decoration. The search for the sword continues, and it may be found yet.

DR. JOHN W. BEAN
by
Louise B. Hollowell

One of the first things I remember about Dr. Bean happened when I was about fifteen. We had moved to Phillips County only a few months before and I was having my first attack of tonsillitis. In those days, about the only thing the doctor could do was swab the throat with iodine. This was most unpleasant, and I wiggled, squirmed and gagged so much that Dr. Bean said in disgust: "You're the biggest baby I've ever seen!"

My second recollection of the doctor is of his kindness, gentleness and patience on that long night before our first child was born. Dr. Bean had a favorite name for each new-born: if it was a boy, it was always "Jerry;" if a girl, it was "Nancy." When our third son came, we decided to name him "Jerry," and add "Bean" as a middle name. The doctor was very pleased. To our knowledge, no one else had ever given their child either of his favorite names. The doctor died eight months later. He and his wife had never had any children, but they loved all children and showed it in every possible way.

Dr. John W. Bean was born on a hill farm near Union Springs, Bullock County, Alabama, January 4, 1860. I have been unable to learn the names of his parents, but he had at least two brothers: Dr. James M. Bean of Buckhorn, Alabama who was older and preceded Dr. John in death; and Dr. W. B. Bean, born in 1868, who came to Arkansas in 1889 (with Dr. John), moved to La Grange in Lee County, and later moved to Marianna, where he practiced medicine until his death in 1940. There were three girls: the Misses Frances (Miss Fannie) and Eula Bean, neither of whom married, and who lived in Marianna with Dr. W. B. Bean. Both are now dead. And the third sister, about whom I could learn only that she was a Mrs. C. W. Poyner, and lived in Newton, Alabama, in 1930.

Dr. John Bean acquired his elementary education in a country school near his home and attended high school for one year at Brundidge, Alabama. He then studied medicine for two years

with his older brother, Dr. James M. Bean, at Buckhorn, Alabama, and also taught school part of the time he was there.

At the beginning of the fall term of 1887 Dr. John enrolled at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, and studied medicine there, including some summer classes, until he graduated in 1889.

On March 2, 1889, after his graduation, Dr. John came to Forrest City, Arkansas, where he spent a month with relatives and then moved to Trenton, Phillips County, Arkansas, on April 15, 1889. He practiced medicine at Trenton---which was a good-sized town at the time---until he moved to Marvell in 1908. During the time he was at Trenton, Dr. Bean took a post-graduate course in medicine at Tulane University, Louisiana

On June 16, 1896, Dr. John W. Bean and Miss Ada Mae (Mamie) Nicholson of the North Creek community were married---probably in a home wedding, which was customary in those days---by the Reverend Wade Preston, pastor of the Trenton Baptist Church. On their marriage license, the doctor's age is listed as 36, and his bride's as 23.

A biography of the doctor would not be complete without the inclusion of a short biography of "Miss Mamie," as she was lovingly called by those who knew her.

Miss Mamie was left an orphan while she was still quite young and she grew up in the home of her grandmother, Mrs. William Williford (nee Tabitha Shackelford), who was the mother of seven girls. Mrs. Bean's mother (Mrs. T. J. Nicholson) had been Ida Williford, the twin sister of Ada Williford. Ada became the grandmother of Mrs. Joel (Ada) Higgins of Helena. A younger sister, Katie Williford, became the mother of Mrs. Fred W. (Johnnie Porter Stephens) Schatz, also of Helena. Another Williford sister, Dora, became the grandmother of the late Kennedy J. Graves of Marvell. Kennedy went to live with Mrs. Bean after the doctor died, and was like a son to her. Having no children of her own, she named Kennedy in her will as her sole heir.

The Bean home in Marvell was a large yellow frame house on Carruth Street. It was a beautiful home, but also a comfortable

one. The L-shaped front porch held a swing where the doctor liked to relax in the evening. The porch was high off the ground and there was usually a cool breeze passing on a summer evening. The house was rented for a few years after Miss Mamie died, then the Mayor and Mrs. E. J. Hosey bought it and restored it to its former beauty. For three years before the doctor's death Wayland (my husband) and I lived in the old Browning home, just across the street from the Beans'. It is now in a sad state of repair.

The doctor and Miss Mamie both liked good food and Miss Mamie was an excellent cook. She made the best pecan pies I've ever tasted. They had several large pecan trees at their home in Marvell, and some down on one of the farms. They also had an orchard in Marvell for several years. They raised their own chickens and kept a cow, therefore they were always assured of fresh eggs and a good milk and butter supply. That was "the thing to do" in those days, if you were financially able.

For many years, Dr. John was a "horse and buggy doctor," but, so that he might reach more patients, sooner, he finally bought a car. During his lifetime, there were only two long "black top" highways in the county, and I can remember none of the country roads being graveled, though some may have been. There was always lots of mud and deep ruts in the winter, and dust as deep in the summer. Wayland went with the doctor a lot at night---he made night calls, too, until his death---to help with the driving, or if they got stuck.

The Beans had two servants: Charley -----, and Annie Garner. Charley tended the yards, the barns, and the garden; Annie helped in the house. They lived in a two-apartment house on the place, and were paid good wages for those days, plus their board and house. Both had been with the Beans for as long as I had known them, and were with Mrs. Bean until her death.

Dr. Bean was a shrewd businessman as well as a good doctor. He owned stock in the Bank of Marvell and Robinson-Swift Wholesale Company, as well as his home, the land surrounding it, other property in town and several large farms. Being raised on a farm, he still loved farm life, and he knew how to make his farms pay---even in those pre-depression years. It was in the early years of

the "Great Depression" that I knew him, a time when people paid their doctor in whatever they could raise---or not at all. A lot of folks still living can testify that the doctor didn't refuse to go when called, even to the poorest of the poor. He often carried oranges (and sometimes other food) to the children whose parents could not afford even the necessities of life.

Dr. Bean treated smallpox in the early days of his practice (several Phillips County schools were closed because of smallpox in 1906), but he soon got all of his patients to be vaccinated and put a stop to that. However, there was little he could do about the plague of malaria every summer except to give capsules of quinine and try to get the folks to put up screens against the swarms of mosquitoes at night. He also had numerous cases of pellagra among his poorer patients---who had to live on a saltmeat and navy-beans diet nine months of the year (and these weren't Negroes, either.)

Dr. Bean was a firm believer in the "placebo" when he thought it would help the case---usually a worn-out mother, with a large brood of children and an inconsiderate husband. When the mother fell in her tracks, the husband would decide it was time to call the doctor. That's when Dr. Bean would dose out sugar--pills, or something equally harmless. He'd tell the family that if they wanted to keep the mother alive they'd better see that she stayed in the bed and took every dose of medicine on time, until it was all gone. He knew if they all, including the mother, thought she was seriously ill, she would stay in bed until she got her strength back.

Another thing Dr. Bean firmly believed: that a mother should nurse her baby. He would never prescribe a formula for a child. He said God meant for the mother to breast-feed her baby and that if she'd rest and eat well, as she should, she could do it. He didn't believe in mothers going to parties, or even working, and leaving their children

Dr. Bean, as did all other doctors in those days, had to try to save too many babies from dying with that dreaded "second-summer" disease. The child's stomach would already be upset from teething, unpasteurized milk, hot weather, and/or any number of other causes, then the baby would get a bite or two of raw fruit, and the trouble would start. Even with proper care and the best

doctoring possible, too many babies died. I lost a baby sister this way, and may have lost our oldest son had the doctor not lived just across the street from us. It has been years since I've heard of a case of "second summer" sickness, but, before World War II, every mother dreaded that teething--time of her baby's second summer.

Dr. and Mrs. Bean were both "good Missionary Baptists." They loved the Lord, and their church, and what both stood for in their lives. Neither of them smoke or drank, and they disapproved of dancing in any form. They were not prudes; they were just Christians who practiced what they "preached."

Dr. Bean gave the land for the First Baptist Church of Marvell, and he and Mr. C. F. Thompson made the larger part of the payments on the building, which was erected in 1925, during their lifetime. Dr. Bean was church treasurer and Mr. Thompson was church clerk for many years before their deaths. Dr. Bean served as Sunday School Superintendent for one year (1916), but, due to his practice, he was unable to be there every Sunday, so he had to give that up. I can remember his having been called out of services many times, both day and night, to attend a sick patient. In those days, doctors didn't even have the nights off, and certainly not any days. For some reason, Marvell doctors didn't send their patients to the Helena Hospital (on Poplar Street, then) unless they could pay their expenses, either. Therefore, the doctor would kill himself with overwork to save as many patients as possible.

Dr. and Mrs. Bean were active in the Mount Vernon Baptist District Association from the time they joined the Trenton Church in the early 1890's. The doctor served on the Executive Board for seven years, was a trustee of the Forrest Chapel Fund (a fund loaned out by the association, at interest) for five years, served on the Mission Committee several times, and on numerous other committees. According to the annual Association minutes for October 21, 1900, Dr. Bean was elected treasurer of the Mount Vernon High School (Academy) Board of Trustees. In their report for February 13, 1900, the trustees had written: "Special mention is due Dr. J. W. Bean for his untiring energy and interest in the building of the school." The Academy was located at Trenton, and was a preparatory school, sponsored by the Mt. Vernon Association, to pre-

pare students to enter college. A number of persons are still living who attended Mt. Vernon Academy.

Dr. Bean served as trustee--treasurer until after the main building of the Academy burned on October 10, 1906. After that, he served on a committee appointed to rebuild the school at "a more suitable location." But the history of this school is another story---and a long one.

Dr. John W. Bean died at 3 A. M., Sunday morning, December 28, 1930, of a heart attack. He had had his first attack of angina pectoris while eating Thanksgiving Day dinner in the Stephens' (Johnnie Schatz) home. Knowing what I do about the disease, I'm sure he must have had a hint of it before. His office in Marvell was on the second floor, up steep steps; his home was off the ground---fairly high steps in front, very steep ones at both back doors---and he made calls at all hours of the day and night. All of this would be unwise for one who suffered from angina (caused by ischemia of the heart muscle, usually due to coronary artery disease) and who was a little on the plump side, as was the doctor. He wasn't the complaining type, so it is probable that even his wife didn't know if he had suffered mild attacks before. He tried to keep all worry from her when possible.

The **Helena World** of December 29, 1930, had this to say about Dr. Bean:

His whole life was spent in the service of others. He took an active interest in public affairs and was an honored member of the Phillips County Medical Association. In all his dealings he exercised the strictest integrity, and his acquaintance was practically county wide. His long residence in the western part of the county was filled with kindly and generous acts, and his loss will be felt for years to come. Always sincere and honest, he abhorred hypocrisy in every form, and his kindly spirit made him a friend to the unfortunate everywhere. No call upon his services or his pocketbook went unanswered, and news of his death has been received with profound sorrow in very many quarters.

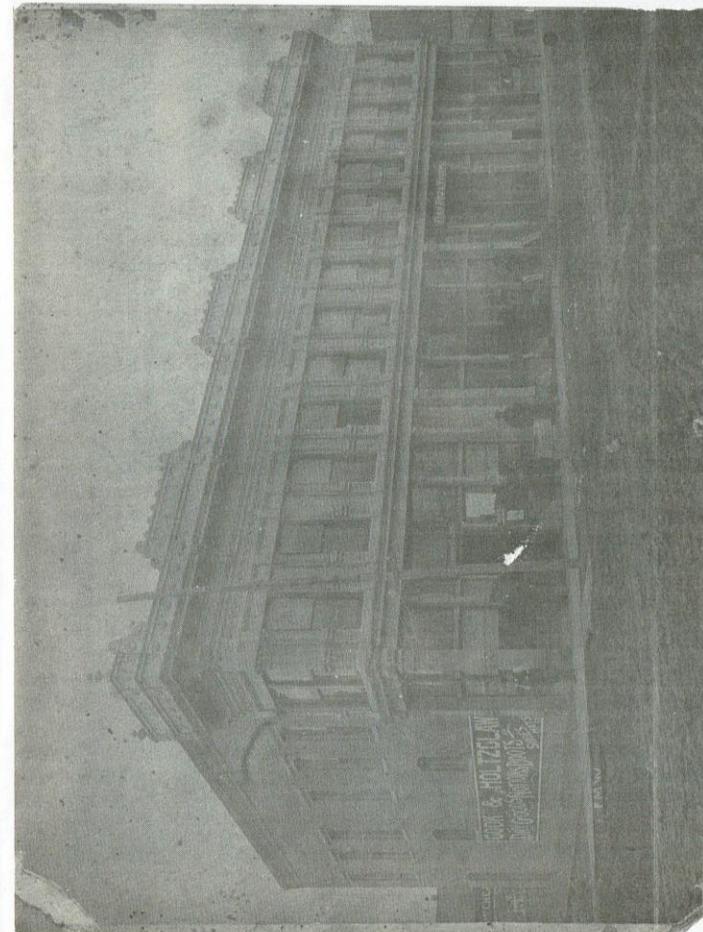
Dr. Bean was not only a member of the Phillips County Medical Association, but had held offices in this organization, including that of president. He was also a member of the Arkansas State Medical Society. And his acquaintance was at least four counties wide, as noted in the Mt. Vernon Association minutes over a 40-year period.

When our son Bob visited us this spring he reminded me of something I'd forgotten: He was too young when the doctor died to remember him, but Bob loved Miss Mamie and visited her often. One day he was out with Charley in the "tap room" of the stables and noticed the doctor's little black medicine bag. He took it in to show Miss Mamie and she took a few things out of the bag and told Bob he could have it. He was so thrilled and wagged it around until it came to pieces. She had left in a few empty bottles and the stethoscope, so Bob could play "doctor" to his heart's content. I think Bob would have become a doctor after that experience had it not been for the long years of study. Bob hated study.

Miss Mamie had to enter the hospital in early January, 1939, but was able to go back home for a while. However, she had to go back to the hospital and died there of pneumonia on Sunday, January 22, 1939. She was buried in the Marvell cemetery, beside her beloved "John." Wayland was one of the pall-bearers for her funeral.

The pall-bearers for Dr. Bean's funeral were: John Crenshaw, S. L. Cooke, W. H. Allison, C. F. Thompson, and J. B. Swift, of Marvell; Dr. W. C. Russworm, Dr. W. R. Orr and Dr. H. H. Rightor, of Helena.

Information for this biography was obtained from Dr. John L. Ferguson at the Arkansas History Commission, from page 1524 of Fay Hempstead's **Historical Review of Arkansas**, Vol. III (1911), from records of the Mt. Vernon District Association (of Baptist Churches), from copies of the **Helena World**, and from memories of those who knew and loved the doctor and his wife, including myself. Mr. Daggett of Marianna and Mrs. Fred W. Schatz of Helena were most helpful.



The store pictured on the preceding page was owned by two partners, Cook and Holtzclaw. Stephen H. Holtzclaw lived in the Rehoboth Community and he gave the ground on which the Rehoboth Baptist Church and Cemetery are located. He was always interested in farming and raising fine cattle. He continued to live on his farm "out in the country" and commuted to Helena where his store was located. In 1891, he was stricken while walking on the street in Helena, and died before any of his family could reach him.

Mr. Holtzclaw was born in 1849, and was the son of Elijah and Jane Green Holtzclaw who came to Phillips County in 1854, from Holly Springs, Mississippi. They brought twenty-three slaves with them, and thought they were real pioneers as living conditions were much harder here than in Holly Springs. They bought 160 acres of land on Big Creek and later added to this until they owned 320 acres. Mr. and Mrs. Elijah Holtzclaw had eleven children, thus starting a long line of Holtzclaws in Phillips County.

A daughter of Stephen and Margaret Chappell Holtzclaw is Op-helia, born in 1886. She married Rufus Neal of Mississippi, and they had five children. She resides near Rehoboth Church, and the picture of the store and of her brother Hugh are from her collection.



The picture of the ladies on the preceding page was found by John C. King, Jr. in the attic of his grandmother's house, the late Mrs. John W. King. Several people have studied the picture in an attempt to identify the group, and there has been considerable disagreement over the identifications. The house remains unidentified, as does the year the picture was made. The following listing tells who they are, to the best of the viewers' knowledge.

Standing, top row, left to right (five people): (1) Mrs. Lanier, sister of Mrs. Biscoe, (2) Mrs. Fannie Wilkins, (3) Mrs. Kitchens, (4) Mrs. S. H. King, (5) unknown.

Seated, center figure: Mrs. Jesse A. Jackson, Sr.

Seated, bottom row, left to right (six people): (1) Mrs. Miles, mother of Mrs. Willey, (2) Mrs. W. L. Nelson, mother of Mrs. Woods, (3) Mrs. John W. King, (4) Mrs. Vienna Wooten, (5) Mrs. Hugh Martin, (6) Mrs. C. N. Biscoe.

The young boy is probably Thomas Clancy or Frank Clancy.

The following is a copy of a letter to D. H. Crebs of Helena, owned by Mrs. Z. D. Jennings. A picture of Biscoe Hindman as a cadet at West Point appeared in the June, 1967 issue of the **Quarterly**.

West Point, N. Y.
Sept. 13th, 1879

Dear Mr. Crebs:

I have been intending to write for some time but suppose that Tink told you why I have not done so.

Have been in barracks now, two weeks today, and I believe I have suffered more in those two weeks (from the fact of my being so ill prepared for this course) than I have suffered before for years. The reasons are these: I have never studied algebra or any branch of mathematics whatever and this puts me at a **very great** disadvantage and on an unequal footing with my classmates, many of whom have been through algebra several times. There are however, a few (two or three) who are in my fix but they, like me, are doing very badly and one of the Professors told a boy a day or ago that if he has never studied algebra he need not expect to pass the Jany examination. This of course was very encouraging to me & to the others in my position and one of the 4th classmen resigned two days ago. You might judge from the above that I am also discouraged and would like to resign, but although I have little or no hope of passing my ex in Jan'y, I will stay here and do my best. I have always tried to overcome all obstacles and have been successful thus far, but now I am in a place where no mercy is shown a person and of course the prof. of mathematics expects as much from me as from any one else. Of course I study hard & try to overcome these difficulties which I am afraid I cannot do. To understand algebra at this Institution one must first have it drummed into him at some other school and then at the rate at which we go over that study he will be enabled to understand it as it is taught here. The methods of recitation are also very difficult, but of this I do not complain.

I can decide (by my marks) in one month whether or not I can pass my ex and be able to stay here. I will, however, try not to get discouraged in the mean time. I have thus written to show you that if I do come home in Jan'y it will not be my fault and then I know you will not blame me. I have concluded though that if I should fail I can come home and make a living at something else.

The Examining Board very often, when they find a Cadet is de-

ficient, give him a turn-back, which consists in turning him back into the same year that he has just gone over and giving him another chance to get out of these. However, influence must be brought to bear. Therefore, if I could bring any influence to my aid when I find that I cannot pass I might get a turn-back from Jan'y to June and as I will have been over the course once before I can easily pass the next examination. Of course I do not intend to work with the hope of getting a turnback, but I do intend to try and pass the ex so that I will not have to be set back six months (or a year) in the course. You now see what I have to overcome in order to pass the ex and if I fail you will know that it is not my fault.

Now I will talk of something more pleasant, but first I must add more gratitude & thanks to you for the new favor (among the many numerous ones) which you bestowed upon me by placing in the Bank to my credit \$100. Of course I cannot be more grateful to you now than before, but this reminds me that in you I have found a friend who takes in me the interest of a Father.

I suppose Sissie has told you that I have found I could get along without depositing any money so that you could have the \$100 replaced to your a/c & c. How is business now at Helena? and is your business thriving?

It has been very cool here for the past month, but the climate is nevertheless very healthful & delightful. Is the weather very warm at home and is the health of the town in a good condition?

Hear from Tink that Gen. Tappan is at Saratoga and hope that he will come down & see me. Mr. Seelig and wife were here last Sunday and probably left for home today. They stayed only a few hours.

Everything here is as regular as clockwork. We get up to reveille every morning at 6 o'clock (in camp at 5) and after the recitations are over, that is, at 4 P. M., we have to go to drill until 5:30 (which takes one and a half hours from study). Then we return to barracks & at 6 P. M. go out to parade to see how many visit the Point every evening.

As it is nearly time for dinner I will close this hurriedly written letter by saying that I will not get discouraged and if I come home in Jan'y, I can go to work at something else.

Yours gratefully,
Biscoe Hindman

P. S. Please remember me to Mr. Henderson and if John Thompson has returned remind him whenever you see him that he owes me a letter.

THE FORTY-NINERS

by

Dale P. Kirkman

In 1849, the country was alive with excitement over the discovery of gold in great quantities in California. The gold fever was so virulent that it was of small importance that California was an unknown and unexplored territory, thousands of miles from civilization, and that developed means of transportation were almost nonexistent. One writer of fantasy delighted the imaginations of his readers by describing a trip from New York City to the gold fields on an "aerial steamship," a description not unlike a modern trip by jet plane. A more realistic approach to the problem of transportation, though a questionable one, was planned by a pair of circus proprietors, who imported camels from Syria to start an overland line. They proposed to leave Independence, Missouri for San Francisco once a month carrying passengers on twenty-five camels, and then make the return trip with a similar load.

In the early days of the gold discovery, there were wild stories--and some of them truthful ones--about the amount of gold that could be had by prospectors. A New Orleans paper told of a piece of gold found in Upper California weighing twenty-four pounds and of another weighing seven pounds, and of many, many weighing from one to twenty ounces. These were described as being twenty and a half carats fine, which was very nearly pure gold. Gold was then selling for from \$11 to \$13 a troy ounce in California, and for \$19 in the United States. A Missouri man reported that his little girls could make from \$5 to \$25 a day washing gold in pans. It was estimated that California would produce \$100,000,000 in gold annually.

A regiment of the U. S. Army which had seen duty in California was mustered out in time to get in on the diggings, and it was also reported that all the government officers in California, including Governor Mason, were having much success in finding gold at Monterey, and would soon be millionaires. These and many other such stories in the papers of the day were read with eagerness by the young men of America. The men of Helena were as interested as the rest.

The February 24, 1849 issue of the Helena *Southern Shield* reported that ten or twelve young men from Helena were making arrange-

ments to go to California, and that they would leave about March 1st to join a group at Ft. Smith in whose company they would travel west in April. It was seen later in a Ft. Smith paper that the Helena Company (and it was called that, though some of the men were probably from other parts of the county) arrived at Ft. Smith on March 15th on the boat Oella, having come up the Arkansas River. This paper also gave the names of the Company: B. Bliven (spelled Biven in the Helena *Shield*), Hugh Martin, W. C. Stephenson, J. T. Moore, Dr. R. G. King, A. J. Heslep, J. Locke, R. H. Price, J. C. Shell, J. B. Hurd, A. C. Russell, and F. Fulkes. Here the men would outfit themselves for the expedition with animals, guns, and provisions enough for months on the road. Ft. Smith and Van Buren vied for the trade of thousands of men going west, and fortunes were made.

The Helena Company left Ft. Smith on March 31st or April 1st, and as it made its way to California, it traveled parts of the way with several different groups, parting from some after disagreements, passing others, etc. Apparently it left Ft. Smith as a part of the Mississippi Company, or the Cherokee and Mississippi Company, which had elected as its lieutenant, Stephenson of Helena, and as its captain, Dorsey, from elsewhere. After less than a week out, A. C. Russell wrote from camp on the Canadian River that their group had been reorganized without benefit of the Cherokee Company, which had not lived up to its agreements. They were sixty-eight in number then, but in the next few days, twenty-seven more men (mostly from Indiana) left them to pack out on mules.

This attrition of men in wagons continued all the way to camp on Little River, some of the men selling off their wagons as soon as possible, because of the near impossibility of dragging and pulling them over what passed for a road, and which Russell wrote was only good for Indian ponies. It snowed and they had a terrible time crossing Little River. One company was in such a state of confusion that it had not yet made the crossing, and the wagons of another company had sunk so in the quagmire of the prairies that it could neither go forward nor backward.

Russell said that Stephenson was the real leader of the group, Dorsey being a good man, but no leader. The Helena men were traveling now in a company of forty-five men, and Stephenson and Russell had swapped their jointly owned wagon for a lighter one, as had Theo Moore. Russell and Locke rode out ahead to try and get some idea of the terrain that the company would have to cross, and their most optimis-

tic guess to cross what lay immediately ahead was seven miles a day. Russell advised that any route to California would be better than the one they had chosen.

A letter written to the *Shield* on June 2nd from Santa Fe by an unnamed member of the Helena Company gave a resume of the route they had taken thus far. The line of travel was from Ft. Smith to the Canadian River near its junction with the North Fork; from there to Little River, a branch of the Canadian, using the north side. Then they went up the dividing ridge between the two Canadians to Spring Valley, where they re-crossed the Canadian. Thence the party traveled across to the headwaters of the Washita River where they hit the Canadian at its most southern bend, and followed it until they came to "Bent's broken-down Fort." They left the river here and crossed the prairies to the Rio Pecos River, reaching there after six days of southwesterly travel. On to the northwest to San Miguel and Santa Fe they went. Ft. Smith to Santa Fe consumed sixty-two days of travel time, thirty-eight days having been spent in actual travel, with twenty-four days of no travel at all.

They arrived at Santa Fe on June 1st, and thought they had beaten all previous companies on the same route by ten days of travel time, and that having been done with no guide--an unprecedented thing. (The Black River Company of Louisiana also reported that it made the trip without a guide.) The Helena Company, according to the letter writer, was one of the smallest companies to ever go through the Comanche Nation. No horses were lost and no men, though the Indians watched them constantly, and the trace from Little River to Santa Fe was a very fine natural road, the opposite extreme from what they had endured from Ft. Smith to Little River.

On arriving at Santa Fe, Hugh Martin had had enough. After seeing Santa Fe, he said that "he had seen the elephant's tail, and had no wish to see anything more of the animal." He left on June 6th with Captain Buford and some army Dragoons for the East and home, returning by wagon on part of the Independence route and then to Ft. Gibson. This trip was made in record time. He sent his servant on to Helena, and he proceeded to Tennessee to visit.

The Helena Company planned to pack on mules to California, and had been waiting to get to Santa Fe to get rid of the wagons. Their animals were all in good shape according to the *Shield*. Martin had gone home, and Price and Biven had decided to stay at Santa Fe. Many men were searching for gold in New Mexico, instead of going on to California. The *Shield* reported that all the rest of the Helena Company left for California on the same day that Martin left for Helena--the 5th or the 6th of June.

By June 23rd, the Helena Company, along with the Little Rock and Clarksville Companies, was at Albuquerque attempting to build a flatboat to cross the Rio Grande. The crossing was difficult, as the river was high and swift. From here, the men would follow the route that Colonel Philip Cooke had surveyed and opened down the Gila River to San Diego.

The Shield had said that all of the Company except Martin, Price, and Biven were leaving Santa Fe for California. In the same issue, the unnamed letter writer from Helena, writing from Santa Fe, said that some of the group (which included the Helena Company) were not going to take the Cooke route. Instead, twenty of the men were going by Taos in company with an army lieutenant, and north on the Old Spanish Trail and by the Great Salt Lake to California, with expectations of getting there in forty or forty-five days.

This venture of the twenty turned out to be a bad one. They were attacked by Indians and lost animals and supplies. The trip proved to be very difficult, and the party had to turn around and come back and go by the southern route along the Gila River. So the overland group from Helena arrived in southern California at two different times--the original southern route group first, and the Spanish Trailers second. It is not certain who went on the unsuccessful venture up the Spanish Trail, but of the men whose names are known of the Helena Company (and there were probably others from Phillips County who were of the Company, but who are not listed in this paper), only four possibilities exist--J. B. Hurd, F. Fulkes, and Price and Biven. The others are all accounted for by W. C. Stephenson in a letter which will be mentioned later.

While the main group from Helena was nearing California, and the second group was straggling there, another expedition was preparing to leave Helena to get to the promised land by sea. It went down the Mississippi River about August 10th, and it was composed of Samuel Martin, E. P. Scantland, and George Semple. This was the expensive way to go, as the men soon discovered.

They were to sail on the Alabama from New Orleans to Panama, but the ship had never come into port after a wait of two weeks, so 120 passengers who were gathered in the city chartered the steamer Portland, an old ship. They got to sea, the captain was incompetent, and after losing his way, he ran the ship aground on Yucatan. This delayed the trip for three or four days, but the Portland finally landed them at Chagres on September 6th, twelve days out of New Orleans. ("Stephenson's boys" were already at the diggings.)

After five days of traveling by canoe up the Chagres River across the isthmus, they came to Cruces, and from there went the twenty-one miles to the City of Panama by mountain mustang. This last experience was so exciting as to be heart stopping, according to Martin, as one misstep on the mountain paths would be fatal. In spite of all the change, Martin reported that his health had already improved, and the Shield had said that was his reason for making the trip. George Semple also wrote from Panama that "Mr. Martin looks better than he has in two years," and Scantland and Dr. Ringo (evidently a member of the party) were also in good health.

These men were to leave Panama on the steamer California in a few days, and expected to arrive in San Diego Bay in about eighteen days. The trip had cost them much more than they had counted on, but they had been fortunate in one thing. They had bought through tickets from New Orleans to California, and not piece tickets. The purchasers of piece tickets made it all right to Panama, but after getting there, they were stranded. They waited for months on end for another ship to pick them up and take them on to California, and in the meantime ran out of money.

Meanwhile, Stephenson and men, according to a letter from him to the Shield, had arrived in the San Francisco area in late August, and were at the mines on the Stanislaus River. The last part of their trip had been long and tiresome and dangerous, but they had made it walking after some of the mules gave out. Stephenson had bought an outfit for the Company--on time payments--in Sacramento City, and was much encouraged. Someone he knew from Memphis had left this area last June with \$25,000 that he had made from the diggings. Stephenson told the Shield that "the Helena boys will do to tie to," and mentioned by name, Moore, King, Shell, Locke, and Heslep.

Semple and Martin (and, one assumes, Scantland and Ringo) had arrived in San Diego Bay from Panama on October 5th. There were about 100 overland emigrants waiting there at San Diego, some from Arkansas, and the steamer California agreed to take them on north to San Francisco. Samuel Martin said that one of the men taken aboard was "R. B." of Helena (probably one of the men delayed by the ride up the Spanish Trail), and that it had taken these people six months to get to California.

Semple and Martin both reported arrival in San Francisco, Semple writing from Stockton to say that Martin had to linger in San Francisco to wait for his Negro man who had traveled on a different ship from Panama. Semple had his servant with him and they had met up with Stephenson and his men who were all doing well--King, Russell, Moore, Heslep, Shell, and Locke, and the Negroes, Wesley, Henry, and Dick. All of Stephenson's group were together, and Semple planned to join them and show them how to work. (The Helena men must have liked this, having already been at the mines for over six weeks.) Semple said that if they could each get out an ounce a day, he could get out two, and he had purchased lumber to make a rocker for his gold operations.

The *Shield* received a letter from Martin from the "Calavaris Gold Mines," dated December 1, 1849, and advised all its readers to believe it, as "anything Martin says can be believed." He told of working a gulch or "dry digging," and he said that the "cream of the gold mines is gone." No one that he had seen had found much gold, and the Phillips County overland men, whom he had joined, were doing as well as anyone. His advice to any more men leaving Helena for California was that \$1,000 was the very minimum with which one could get to the coast and back home again. His own plans were to return home in a few months whether he had made a fortune or not, but some of the Helena men said that they would stay in California until they made some money, no matter how long it took. These were the unmarried ones.

Samuel Martin got back to Helena in March, 1850, having recovered his health. The *Shield* received several letters that spring from the men in the West, and it said that all were despondent but one--unnamed. Russell had written that even if no more emigrants came to California, which was unlikely, that he did not see how the present population could make more than \$1 a day over expenses, working at the mines. E. P. Scantland arrived back in Helena on June 3, and said that gold was still being taken out.

The Helena men--land and sea--arrived relatively early in California, but too late to reap any of the benefits of the "big gold." The wild strikes had been made by the people who were already in California when gold was first discovered, and who immediately began to mine--that day or that week.

Living and working conditions in California were so abominable that few could stand them long. If one survived the rigors of travel

and the Indians coming across country, then often the worse was yet to come. As a Massachusetts paper wrote, "a man's life here (California) is worth about fifty cents on the dollar." Lawlessness was the order of the day, and people from all over the world crowded into the mines, Indians, Mexicans, half-civilized people from the Pacific Islands, convicts, etc.

Prices of food and all supplies were so high as to be prohibitive, and twenty-five cent pieces, dimes, and half-dimes went out of circulation because they were considered too small to bother with. Cholera was having its day in the country as a whole, and it and various fevers combined to lay the miners low. If these conditions were endured, then the fatigue of digging--especially in the wet diggings, where one stood in icy water under a broiling sun--was more than most could take.

Whether the Helena Company returned with much of the wealth of California is open to speculation, but probably the men who formed the Company never forgot their experiences on the Gold Coast.

Who were these men?

James Theodric Moore was the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. William F. Moore, early settlers of Phillips County, who had come out from Virginia by way of Alabama. He was born in Alabama, October 10, 1826, probably at Huntsville, and was a young man of twenty-two years when he went to the gold fields, and an attorney at law. Prior to leaving for California, he and Charles W. Adams were associated in the practice of law, with an office in the building of the Real Estate Bank at Helena. Adams later was one of Phillips County's generals in the Confederate Army. Apparently Theo Moore was very highly thought of by A. C. Russell, the note-taker and correspondent for the men from Helena, because he always mentioned him first in his letters to the *Shield*. Theo Moore had not returned to Phillips County when the census of 1850 was taken, but came home at some later date. In 1853, he married Miss Fannie Otey at Huntsville. Advertisements in the *Democratic Star* of Helena in 1854 showed that he and Rogal F. Sutton were in law practice together in an office near the court house, and he ran a separate advertisement as an insurance agent. He was also active in politics. By the census of 1860, he listed his profession as merchant, and his taxable properties showed that he was quite a successful one. He was killed in Texas in 1864, but whether in some war activity or otherwise is not known. His broth-

ers, C. L. and R. C. Moore, went to Texas to bring his body home, and he was first buried on Graveyard Hill and then removed to the Moore lots in Maple Hill Cemetery. His children all died at young ages, and there are no direct descendants of Theo Moore. He was an uncle of Ophelia Polk Moore, after whom the Ophelia Polk Moore Home at Helena is named, and he was a collateral ancestor of Mrs. Floyd Curtis, Robert M. Hornor, Charles L. Moore, James A. Tappan, J. B. Lambert, Mrs. Virginia Thompson, Mrs. T. E. Wooten, Mrs. Shelby Richardson of Dallas, and others. His widow in later years married Creed M. Bumpass of Helena. In the past year or so, a grandson of Mrs. Moore-Bumpass from New York, wrote a letter to the *Helena World* seeking information about her burial place, and remarked that he had some silverware of his grandmother, with the initials "N. F. M." inscribed on it.

Andrew Jackson Heslep was also a member of a family which came to Phillips County by way of a temporary location in Alabama (but originally from Pennsylvania). Andrew Jackson was a family friend, and he was given that name. His father had been successful in the ironworks industry of that time, and Andrew J. Heslep was born about 1815 at one of the family's forge and furnace locations, noted in family papers as Tennessee, but in the census of 1860, as Kentucky. His father died not long after establishing a furnace in Alabama, and the family came to Helena. He had not returned from the gold fields in time to be in the census of 1850 at Helena, but his mother, sister, and other relatives were living at Helena. In 1855, the *Democratic Star* listed him as a Mason, a member of the Helena Chapter, No. 5. In 1860, the census showed that he had married Christina Saint, and had one son. Living also within this household were his mother and his sister and her family. He had four children in all, one of whom, Joseph Heslep, was the father of Mrs. A. M. Coates and Douglas Heslep of Helena. Family records contain one notation about his trip to California. He was color blind, and as a consequence, he had a hard time picking his mule from the others belonging to the party. He died in 1884, and was buried in Maple Hill Cemetery.

Dr. R. G. King, described by the *Shield* as "one of Helena's best physicians," was in business with Dr. Joseph S. Deputy (who was related to the Alexander and Sanders families) as early as May, 1847. Dr. Deputy must have thought that Dr. King's stay in California would be a brief one, because their joint newspaper advertisement continued at least until the issue of June 29, 1850,

almost a year and a half after Dr. King's departure. The advertisement disappeared from the *Shield*, Dr. Deputy ran for a political position, and by the early part of 1851, the latter was in partnership in a drug store with William C. Comfort, besides practicing medicine. Dr. King was back in Helena by 1854, and practicing medicine with Dr. Deputy again, and they were renting out offices in their new building on Main Street. The doctors were also involved in a lawsuit that year, according to the local newspaper.

Edward P. Scantland was born in 1809 in Franklin County, Kentucky, and he was living in St. Francis Township (Helena) as early as 1840, appearing in the census of that year. He was married in 1842 in Phillips County to Anne Ball Waddy, half-sister of the Yerby brothers, William and Henry. He was in the wholesale and retail grocery business with John B. Ford for at least eight years before he left for California. Their partnership was dissolved, as announced in the *Shield*, when Scantland went with the small "sea" group from Helena. He had also gone out for health improvement, as had Samuel Martin, and supposedly was better when he returned to Helena in June, 1850, after leaving San Francisco in April. Evidently he wanted to come home, gold or not, because he thought that plenty of gold would still be taken out. He was listed in the 1850 census at Helena as being forty years old, making him one of the oldest of the travelers, married, and with three children, the youngest having been born either right before he left or while he was away. He was treasurer of Phillips County from 1852 to 1854, and probably lived near Old Town Lake at this time. His daughters attended school at a Catholic convent at Nazareth, Kentucky, and at least one of them also attended St. Mary's Episcopal School for girls in Helena. He died about 1855 in Phillips County. He was the great-grandfather of Mrs. Elisha Burke, a former resident of Helena and now living in California.

There were two young men living in Helena in time for the 1850 census, Josiah Locke and Jesse Locke, who undoubtedly were members of the Locke families living in Big Creek Township as early as 1840. These two men were probably brothers or cousins, and both were natives of Tennessee. Jesse Locke's advertisements for his livery stable continued uninterrupted in the *Shield* during the whole time that the goldseekers were away. Josiah Locke may have been the Locke who went to the gold mines. If so, he was back in town in time for the 1850 census, and was listed as twenty-three years old, unmarried, a merchant, and living in the home of W. C. Wyatt.

Identification of J. C. Shell, J. B. Hurd, F. Fulkes, Dr. Ringo, and B. Biven is also guesswork. The 1860 census shows a J. C. Shell, aged thirty-three, born in Louisiana, unmarried, living in the house of John W. Quarles in Searcy Township (Old Town), acting as manager of the farm. He is not in the 1850 census, and may well have been in California. Jacob Fulks lived in Walnut Township, Phillips County, in the early years, and the man named as "F. Fulkes" could have been his son, though he would have been at the most eighteen years old when he joined the California party. There were also Hurds living in St. Francis Township as early as 1840, but it is hard to make a definite identification of J. B. Hurd. He could have been the John Hurd whose wife died in 1851 at the age of twenty-two, according to the *Shield*, or he may not have been. There were two Ringos associated in the law business in Helena for years, W. H. and A. H. Ringo, and there were also Bivens and Bivins.

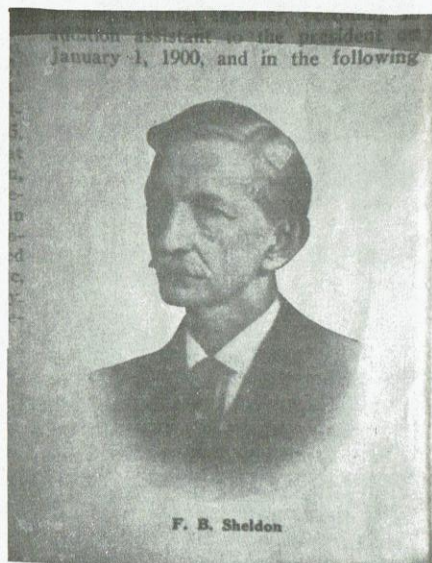
George Semple, R. H. Price, and W. C. Stephenson remain unidentified for lack of any information about them. Something is known about the *Shield's* correspondent, A. C. Russell. Grant Foreman's book, mentioned at the last of this paper, said that Russell had once been editor of the *New Orleans Evening National* and was later editor of the *New Orleans Evening Journal*. Whether he was from Helena, or just decided to go out with the Helena men, is not known.

Hugh Martin, who went by land, and Samuel Martin, who went by sea, were brothers, and they had a third brother named John Martin, to whom some of the letters back home were directed. All of the Martins were born in Tennessee. Hugh Martin left Santa Fe in time to have been home before Samuel Martin ever departed Helena, but it is not certain exactly when he got back to Helena having decided to visit in Tennessee first, though his servant was in Helena by July 21, 1849. He was in the census of the next year, aged thirty, unmarried, and living in the home of his brother John Martin. Starting in October, 1849, Hugh Martin and James Norton opened a combination dry goods and grocery store. Evidently the business continued in this way until shortly after Samuel Martin's return to Helena in the spring of 1850, when he bought out Hugh's part in the store and it became Martin (Samuel) and Norton (James). In 1851, Norton bought out Samuel Martin and the store became Norton's alone. Samuel Martin had a wife and young

son about a year old when he went to California. This son was named Hugh Martin, and he is remembered by many here as being mayor of Helena. Samuel Martin was an incorporator of the Arkansas Midland Railroad in 1854, and he must have died between 1854 and 1860. By 1860, Mrs. Martin had married James T. Harris and they and her son Hugh were living at Clarendon. It was this family whose kindnesses were remembered in later years by Judge P. O. Thweatt of Helena, when he reminisced about his return to Clarendon as a wounded soldier during the Civil War. Hugh Martin, Samuel's son, returned to Helena to live.

Most of the information for this article was found in the issues of the Helena *Southern Shield* of the period of time that the article covers, from the Helena *Democratic Star*, and from the Federal censuses of Phillips County of 1840, 1850, and 1860. Some facts were found in *Marcy and The Gold Seekers*. The *Journal of Capt. Randolph B. Marcy, with An Account of the Gold Rush Over The Southern Route*, by Grant Foreman, published in 1939 at Norman, by the University of Oklahoma Press, and from Francile B. Oakley's article in the Spring, 1947 issue of the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, "Arkansas' Golden Army of '49." Family data was supplied by Mrs. Floyd Curtis, C. L. Moore, Mrs. A. M. Coates, Mrs. Elisha Burke, Mrs. Walton Nicholls, and from a scrapbook of Mrs. Moore Tappan.

THE DIARY OF FRED B. SHELDON: CONCLUSION



Fred Sheldon was a fourteen year old English boy who came to Helena in 1870, to help survey the route for the Arkansas Central Railway. He kept a diary during the course of the survey, so that his family in Kansas could know of his experiences. A letter that he wrote to his grandfather in England was later pasted in the back of the diary.

Feb. 21st, 1871
Arkansas Central Railway Company
Helena, Ark.

My very dear Grandpapa,

We are in town again, and will be here for about a week now. On Thursday Alf Watts the leveller, and I walked from Taylors Store into Helena, a distance of 23 miles, as the Company sent out orders for us to stop work for ten days. On

Thursday evening Col. Gregg sent for me to go up to his private room in the hotel. I saw Mrs. Gregg, and she asked how Mamma was, and told me to be sure and send her love to her next time I wrote. Mr. Gregg said that they are in want of an Organist at the Church, and that the people wished me to play the Organ for them. He said that if I would play the Organ, he would try and make some arrangement for me to stay in the office, and draw all the maps and plans.

I have been making a large map this week, and will have it finished by tomorrow night. This afternoon I have been to see the organ, and can manage it very easily. It is a pipe organ and has six stops and a swell. It is very sweet toned, and easy to play. Tomorrow evening, I am going to get Miss Rice the head of the choirs to go down to the Church, and go through the service with me. I shall like Office work much better than field work for I shall be able to go to Church every Sunday, and have plenty of clean clothes, besides them, I shall always send off my letters and receive them regularly.

On Friday afternoon we had a terrible hurricane, which did a great deal of damage to the town. The wind came from the north-west carrying everything before it. It levelled a large church, right behind our office, with the ground, and that broke the fury of the wind, or we should never escaped. Our offices were on the second floor of a two story building, and we were in the engineers rooms working with our vests and coats off. We rushed out as the building began to totter and sway over on each side, and managed to get out into the street without the house falling. The air was so full of bricks and boards, that we could not tell which way to go. I noticed a low one story office, and as it did not shake, I took shelter there. Our Chief Engineer ran up the street, and was just turning round a corner, when he saw the gable end of a large house coming to him, so he took to his heels and made for the river, never once slackening his speed till he got so near the water, that it was only with great difficulty, he kept from falling in. Col. James E. Gregg was not in, but the Company that is H F Hale manager, and Col. Rogers, with James Seager, clerk, and so the Arkansas Central Railway Company, took to their heels, and rushed off in all directions, looking when they returned the most pitiable objects I ever saw. Hoping you are well, with best love to Grandma, Auntie, and yourself

I remain your loving Grandson

Fred

After working as flagmen on a survey party of the Arkansas Central Railway (now a part of the Missouri Pacific) and then draftman, Fred Sheldon left Helena in 1872 for Columbus, Ohio. From 1872 to 1877, he was topographer, draftsman, and assistant engineer on the Columbus and Toledo Railroad. He was successively engineer of the Columbus and Toledo, the Ohio and West Virginia, and the Hocking Valley Railroads.

He became assistant to the president of the Kanawha and Michigan Railroad, then president of the same. He was later vice president of several lines which merged as the Ohio Central lines of the New York Central Railroad, headquarters at Columbus, and he held that position until his death on March 1, 1927.

The journal which he had kept as a boy was sent to his grandparents in England, but in 1920, it came into his hands again. According to his sister, Mrs. Hanly, after re-reading the journal of his boyhood, "it fired him with the desire to return to Helena, where he had made many sincere friends, to see who were left there of them, and the trip was a joy to him to the end." This he did in 1921, coming with his wife, his sister, and his brother-in-law, in a private car of the New York Central lines.

This journal had two or three blank pages in the back of it, so Mr. Sheldon entered on them an account of his visit to Helena.

50 YEARS LATER

Thursday, Sept. 8, 1921. I again arrived in Helena with my wife, on the 40th anniversary of our wedding, travelling from Columbus, Ohio (my home ever since May 72) all rail via Memphis and Marianna, and entering the city over my old Arkansas Central Ry, now part of the Missouri Pacific system. The Station is at S. W. corner of Natches and "Caroline" now Missouri St., and NYC Lines Car 25 which I have used for past 11 years was parked there. My sister Edith, and husband John Hanly who left Helena early in Feb. 71 had joined us at Louisville and brother Alfred (of New Orleans) at Memphis. Col. Edward S. Ready, his wife, and her mother Mrs. Johnson (a friend of Edith's) and Mrs. Dora Hanly and Mrs. Neala Lewis (John's cousins) greeted us on arrival (8 PM) to ascertain our plans and offer entertainment. We decided to remain in the Car overnight,

except Alfred, who found a good room in one of the Hotels.

Friday, Sept. 9. Daylight revealed the great changes of 50 years. Ohio St. no longer the main business street, but a back street, all buildings gone from its East side and in their place a Levee 15 feet high. Cherry now the main street, East Side from Missouri to Elm occupied by Ill. Central Ry stations reached by car ferry over Mississippi River. Interstate Nat. Bank (Col. Ready Prest) occupies SW corner of Cherry & Rightor where stood the Episcopal Church in which I played the organ as a boy. SW corner of Cherry & Perry site of Shelby House, where I boarded, is now a little Park opposite a handsome Court House on the SE corner. NW corner of Ohio & Perry where ACRy office (prior to the tornado) was located is now a vacant lot. Second office in brick building corner of Franklin & Perry, and Mr. Jas. Norton's brick house on same block (where I lived after leaving the hotel) were both demolished years ago by Mr. C. L. Moore whose handsome house now occupies the site.

Fort Thomas (sic) used to fill the low ground, between Franklin and Walnut Streets, now occupied by beautiful Church and residence buildings on Asphalt Streets with concrete sidewalks, which extend North and West to City limits. Maj. Hornor's house still stands, in fine condition, and we met J. L. and E. C. the sons and Virginia (Mrs. J. Lambert, widow) and Betty (Mrs. G. T. Updegraff) and husband. The Major was last Prest of the old Ry and sold it to the Missouri Pacific. He died in 1905 and I saw his grave in the Protestant Cemetery; also those of Mrs. Gabrilla Moore (1845-1916) who sang soprano, and Mrs. Gen. Tappan (1835-1902) who sang alto in Episcopal Church when I played the organ. Jas. A. Tappan died some years ago, but I had the pleasure of reading to his son Moore Tappan some of my diary references to his father. At 4:15 PM we went to Clarendon and remained overnight. May Palmer (widow of Jno Gannor) lives there, and spent the evening with us--- also Coleman P another of John's cousins.

Saturday, Sep. 10. Returned to Helena, and noted along the line the improved drainage, clearing, and diversified crops. Spent afternoon with Howard Faulkner now VP 1st Nat. Bk. Sam (born in Manchester 2 days after me) died 5 yrs ago. Called on Mrs. Neala Lewis and her mother Mrs. Carrie Hanly. Left Helena on Mo Pac at 6:25 PM for Memphis & home.

E CITY OF HELENA. MARCH 22, 187

