

PHILLIPS COUNTY
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Volume 8	December, 1969	Number 1
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ADDITIONAL MEMBERS FOR 1969-1970

Mrs. Solomon Feldman	Helena
Mrs. Daisy F. Frazier	Evanston, Illinois
J. M. Howe	Wabash
Mrs. George LeMaistre	Tuscaloosa, Alabama
Al McCarty	Helena
Dr. Waddy W. Moore	Conway, Arkansas
Stuart Orr	Dallas, Texas
James A. Tappan	Helena
Mrs. James Webster	Helena

Captain and Mrs. T. C. Linthicum of Branson, Missouri were overnight visitors in Helena recently. Captain Linthicum wrote excellent articles about his great-grandfather and his grandfather which appeared in the December, 1968 and March, 1969 issues of the Quarterly.

Mrs. Louise M. Griffin has published in pamphlet form a seventeen page mini-history of Phillips County, to commemorate the Territorial Sesquicentennial of Arkansas.

Governor Rockefeller has appointed a Marquette Commemorative Committee for Arkansas, as a result of Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 13 of 1969. Its purpose will be to assist the National Commemorative Commission in arranging a 300th year celebration of the voyage of Marquette and Joliet down the Mississippi River in 1673. Several members of the Society were asked to be on the Committee, with John C. King as acting chairman.

Mrs. Ann Richardson Cherry of Little Rock, formerly of Helena and a member of the Society, gave several gifts to the Phillips County Museum this fall. They were: genealogy books, a black lace jacket of her grandmother, Mrs. Susan Reynolds

Johnson Keesee, and a painting by Mrs. Mattie Thweatt Dube. The painting shows a flower arrangement, the flowers having been gathered from the garden of Mrs. Amos Jarman who lived near Barton, and arranged in one of Mrs. Jarman's bowls. Mrs. Dube gave the painting to Mrs. Cherry's mother, Mrs. Annie Sue Keesee Richardson. Mrs. Cherry's great-uncle, George Green Johnson, married a sister of Mrs. Dube.

Major J. M. Massey's article, "The Lost Weapon, Truth or Legend," which appeared in the last issue of the Quarterly, brought two interesting letters to town.

October 30, 1969

Dear Major Massey,

The Lost Weapon is no myth.

My recollection is that in November 1901 it was a short distance north of Distillery Branch.

Your description of General Price marching toward Mississippi armed with heavy artillery explains the location of the gun. The only chance the Confederates had to interfere with Mississippi River traffic was at the mouth of the St. Francis.

In 1901 there were two roads from Lagrange to Stamp Creek (Storm Creek if you prefer), - one of which came over the hill to about one mile above Stamp Creek and the other between a small settlement on a creek that poured into the St. Francis above the Distillery Branch and Distillery Branch.

Of course, at the age of 83 years one's memory is unreliable, but I recall these two roads well and think I saw the cannon in 1901 near Distillery Branch.

Sincerely yours,
Albert A. Hornor
Chestnut Hill, Mass.

20 October, 1969

Historical Society,

.....Enjoyed Vol. 7, No. 4 very much, especially Major Massey's article on the missing cannon. From what I've learned of Col. Dobbins in my work on him, he could well have just left it behind, but am sure Genl. Holmes or Marmaduke would have mentioned it in their reports on the Battle of Helena.

All the best,
Bob Dalehite
Galveston, Texas

(Bob Dalehite, a direct descendant of Colonel Dobbins, will be remembered for his fine article on Dobbins in the September, 1965 issue of the Quarterly.)

The Major Tappan article in the last Quarterly brought this response.

October 20, 1969

Dear Miss McRee,

Just a few words to say how much my cousin, Albert King-of Huntington Park, and I enjoy the Quarterly.

The last issue was especially interesting, and the write up of Major Tappan was extra good.

Our father used to take my brother and me to the County Fair, and in our long walk up Cherry St. we would always look for the Tappan Hdw. store with the big dapple gray horse in the big show window. We admired the beautiful brass trimmed harness used in giving this wonderful dummy horse the look of champions.

On up the street was a Cafe where was to be seen each year the man in a wheel chair with his legs off at the knees. Without fail he was always sitting there as if he was expecting us

to be along, and to do his part in giving us this free show.

After getting into the Fair Grounds we were each given ten nickels, which was a lot of money in those last two years of the eighties. The old merry go round with horse power was the great attraction for us. As I remember, we paid for our first ride or two, but as we had a wooden car track with push car for hauling wood to house from wood yard--about 150 feet--we had done much hopping on and off moving cars. Soon we were getting plenty free rides by being expert hoppers and watching to hop on where the operator had been and collected tickets. Funny how smart little boys are when on their own. We saw operator watching for us so we got lost. About every $\frac{1}{2}$ hour or so only one of us would slip over and get our free ride. By noon, it ceased to be any fun, and drinks, eats had our lunch money--and we were ready for Bud Smith by 3 PM.

The next year there was a motor-way off to one side--with long rope belt going all the way around the frame works just under the seats outer edge down close to the ground. It was little faster, but we were year older, and had done lots of practicing on our own car, so we again had lots fun stealing rides. At the race track saw our neighbors, Mr. Sterling and Mr. Blackburn put on "The Gentleman's Race." We used to see them every day as they were at Barton to get mail that came in on the old Bud Smith at 9 A. M. so that race was nothing for us to get excited about. Every day they went by our school house.

Tales of long time ago-- Lady we know in this building of 150 apts. owned by Metropolitan Ins. Co. gets Quarterly from her home county not too far out of Chicago--nicely bound--most as big as U. S. News & World Report.

Most respectfully, H. W. Cook
Los Angeles, California

The following letter is a result of the item about Laurence Beilenson's book in the last issue.

Sunday, 19 Oct. 1969

Dear Miss McRee,

We all do some pretty unexplainable things, I suppose, but in the last issue of the QUARTERLY I read an article concerning Laurence Beilenson which brought to mind an incident which may be of some interest to the magazine. The only trouble is that I do not recall either the name of the editor or the address of the magazine for I forwarded the copy on to Penelope, my sister (Mrs. Lee Long) in Alexandria, Va. So I am sending this to you.

I remember Larry Beilenson and his family from my childhood days in Helena. I remember when he went away to Andover and then on to Harvard. But the last time I had seen him was during the days of World War I when Mother met him one day on the "veranda" of the St. Anthony Hotel here in San Antonio while she was waiting for someone else. At the time Larry was stationed at one of the military installations here.

I never saw him again for twenty years until one day in Kunming, China, he walked into my office and said, "Hello, Clarence. Do you remember me?" Well, of all places to meet a person you hadn't seen for twenty-five years, this was a real experience for in the intervening years our family had left Helena and he had moved to California. But he really had not changed a great deal and we had quite a few things to catch up on. At the time I was a Lieutenant Colonel and so was he. I held the position of G-1 (personnel) in the Chinese Combat Command, a part of the organization which had been sent to China to train units of the Chinese Army, and he was the head of a team of training personnel which was working with a division of the Chinese Army. The nature of my work made it necessary that my name appear on many papers which were sent

to subordinate units and in this way he had come across my name, a rather different one. I don't believe there ever was another with the combination of Clarence Q, so he had just put the combination together and come in to inquire if I was really the former Helenian he had known so many years before.

Larry had a most interesting story to tell for it seems he had become the Public Information Officer on the staff of General Jacob Devers but had wanted an assignment with more war activity and had asked for a transfer to Infantry and had attended the Infantry Officers' School at Ft. Benning, Ga. after which he was assigned to China where he had served with a division of the Chinese Army which had fought through from the Salween River ahead of the troops who were building the Lido (Stilwell) Road until his division reached the Burmese-China border and joined up with the Chinese armies with which our command was working.

At great length we told each other what we had done during the intervening years. He had been an attorney in Los Angeles and had been associated with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and several other influential and prominent moving picture producing concerns. During this same time I had been associated with a chain of drug stores in Washington, D. C. until World War II came along and I was called to active duty with the Army under a reserve commission. And there we both were, half way around the world together.

There is one story which he told me that I well remember. Supplies to the Chinese soldiers were so scarce that it was necessary for them to save the brass cartridge cases from the rounds of ammunition they used against the Japanese. These were reloaded and used over again and the penalties for losing an empty cartridge case were most severe. Frequently the Chinese soldiers went into battle with as few as four or five rounds of ammunition for which the individual soldiers were strictly account-

able. He told me that it was not unusual for a Chinese soldier to climb outside his fox hole to recover a spent round that had been accidentally ejected from his rifle outside the fox hole, thus the soldier became a target for the enemy resulting either in a wound or death.

We had seen the Chinese do so many incredulous things that this was far beyond just being a "yarn" and I had no reason to doubt the truth of his tale. We had heard from many air force pilots how the Chinese soldiers who were being transported in American planes liked to play a game to see which one could lean furthest out the door of the plane. Few of the planes actually had doors on them for they had been removed to facilitate the dropping of supplies. In this little game the "winner" was usually the "loser" for they fell out of the plane and without parachutes they must have made a pretty large splash when they hit the ground from a couple of thousand feet.

And there was another story told about an American pilot who was transporting Chinese soldiers who were all notoriously poor in the air being subject to air sickness. When the pilot was told that one of the Chinese was "being sick all over the plane" he said, "Get him out of there," thinking that his comrades would take him to some place aboard where his sickness would be less objectionable to the others. But the Chinese NCO took the order literally and simply threw the sick one out of the plane door. These, and a thousand other stories out of the Orient may sound incredulous to those of us at home today but when one realizes how cheaply life is held in that part of the world Larry's story had every element of truth to it.

And I can remember a remark made by General Kutschko about Larry to the effect that, "Beilenson is an excellent officer if he wasn't always an attorney. Every time he comes in here you would think he was representing his Chinese division

commander in court."

After the war was over and the two of us went back into civilian life, I heard from Larry several times and then, after about eighteen months, I went back into the regular army and moved from Washington to Fort Sam Houston, Japan, Korea, and numerous other places. In the process I lost touch with him and haven't heard from him since about 1947 until I found this piece in the QUARTERLY. So, this isn't such a big world after all and if you have his address and would like to send this on to him, your courtesy would be appreciated.

Sincerely,
Clarence Q. Graham
San Antonio, Texas

We remark with regret the deaths of two of our members of long standing, Mr. Aurelius P. Hornor of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and Mr. Sidney H. Hornor of San Antonio, Texas.

DR. MONTAGUE FINK

by

Lillian Claire Feldman
Memphis, Tennessee

Dr. Montague Fink, Phillips County's oldest physician both in years and point of service, was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in approximately 1865. He moved to Helena with his family when he was twelve or thirteen years of age. In his family were his brothers, Isador and Judge Jacob Fink, his sisters, Mrs. Sally Levy, Mrs. Rosie Seelig, teachers, Miss Eva Fink, and his mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Fink. Henry Fink named the school from which Dr. Fink graduated in Helena. Dr. Fink's father was a great believer in Thomas Jefferson, so for about seventy years Helenians passed through the doors of Jefferson School.

Montague Fink received his medical degree from Missouri Medical College, the oldest school of medicine west of the Mississippi River. It was the Medical Department of the University of Missouri. Upon graduation he moved to Rome, Georgia, where he practiced medicine for five or six years. In 1890 he came to Helena. It is not determined exactly when he became President of the Phillips County Medical Society, but in 1893, he was Secretary of that Society and served several years probably both before and after his Vice-Presidency and his Presidency.

It is interesting to note that not only was Dr. Fink a practicing physician, a licensed pharmacist, who made his own medicine, but he was a dedicated man highly devoted to his profession. Being a bachelor, he could serve his patients to the best of his ability as a doctor.

In 1903, the year when an act was passed by the legislature requiring state licensure instead of the previous county licensure, Dr. Fink was one of the five men listed as sponsoring this change in legislation. In 1910, he served as a member and Secretary of the Eclectic Board of the Arkansas Medical Society. This Board was organized to determine whether an individual who did not have an M. D. from an approved medical school should be licensed to practice medicine. In 1911, he was Secretary of the Arkansas Medical Society.

He was the first Health Officer for Phillips County and served as President of the City (Helena) Board of Health. This was an important position at this time, for in 1905-1906, there had been a heavy quarantine against yellow fever. By 1911, Helena and Memphis were noted throughout the country for the strictness of their quarantine that year--even against each other. (Few quarantines have been successful, but theirs were.) Also the smallpox pest houses were successfully used when needed for smallpox. Dr. Fink was active in persuading Helena that it needed a sewer system to replace the drays that were hauling all sewage to the water's edge and dumping everything into the river.

Dr. Fink must have had a kindness and gentleness of nature because those who remember him, do so in this manner. One such person who remembers Dr. Fink is Mr. Floyd Curtis, a good friend of Dr. Fink's. After Dr. Fink's death on March 1, 1957, in Memphis, Tennessee at Adler's Nursing Home, Solomon Feldman, trustee of his will and husband of Dr. Fink's niece, Josie Fink Feldman, presented Mr. Curtis with Dr. Fink's Phi Delta Theta fraternity pin. Both he and Mr. Curtis had belonged to the same fraternity. Mr. Curtis later presented this pin in Dr. Fink's name to the Phi Delta Theta Chapter at the University of Arkansas.

Dr. Montague Fink was presented during his

later years with one other pin of much merit--a diamond studded fifty-year medical service pin. He was buried with this pin at his request. His life was completely devoted to the serving of his fellow-man through his medical profession.

From The Helena Weekly World, June 29, 1898

To The Ginners of Eastern Arkansas:

The undersigned Cotton Buyers and merchants of Helena, Ark., desire to add their endorsement to the proposed standard and uniform cotton bale of 24 x 54 (twenty-four by fifty-four inches) and urge all ginners in this territory to change their press boxes to this size.

This is an absolute necessity in order to get full value for our cotton, as there will be a great difference in freight rates in favor of the standard bale.

W. A. Short & Co.	C. L. Moore & Bros.
H. S. Hornor & Co.	N. Straub Sons
Warfield & Butts	Lee Pendergrass
Wooten & Agee	Lesser Cotton Co.
T. J. Tanner & Co.	Wooten & Crump
D. T. Hargraves & Co.	J. B. Pillow
Y. F. Harrington & Co.	C. F. Farnsworth & Co.
Solomon Bros. & Johnson	

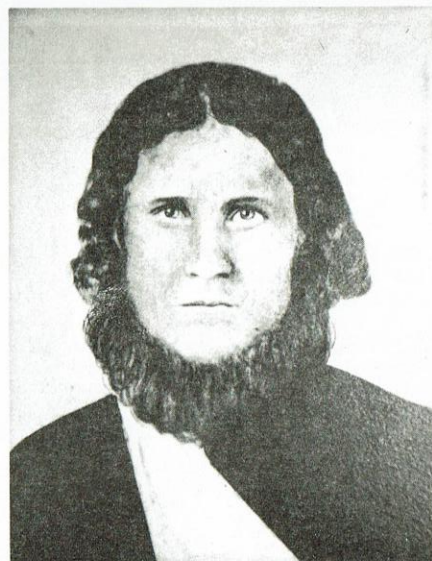
The following cotton buyers of Marianna, Ark., have also signed a like petition:

P. E. Northern & Co.	Jacob Shaul
Peter Brickey	Gray & Elder
M. Lesser & Co.	Mixon Brothers
Jarratt & Son	

ABSALOM V. WHITE

by

Mrs. John M. Pittman



The above picture was taken of Absalom White in the gold fields of California. The white towel around his neck was used to wipe perspiration from his face. He is wearing a pistol on his belt, which is not shown in this modified picture.

Absalom Victor White, one of several children born to a farm family in Indiana in 1819, left two marks of adventure.

Farmer Absalom White joined a group of daring men in 1849 in their quest for gold in California. They left their wives and children behind in Indiana and set out on horseback for the land of quick wealth, believing the fortunes they brought home would appease their families for the period of neglect.

As often happens to men's golden aspirations, Absalom White did not realize his dream of wealth in the Californian gold fields. He was an adventurous man, and apparently (although no record verifies it), he made some gain in his search for he returned to Indiana by way of a ship which sailed around South America and docked at New Orleans. The trip took almost one year. Sailing was the rich man's choice of travel. White chose this means of return, he said, because he had already traversed the land route.

He settled down once more with his family and farmed until the outbreak of the Civil War when he enlisted in the 59th Indiana Infantry Regiment, United States Army, and was mustered into service at Gasport, Indiana in February, 1862. From September, 1862 until his death, he was on detached service, detailed temporarily as an artilleryman with the 11th Independent Ohio Battery of Light Artillery, Army of the Mississippi, U. S. Most of his wartime service and his final assignment were with the Battery.

The 11th Ohio Battery was a part of the 16th Army Corps, U. S., stationed in the District of Eastern Arkansas as of July 31, 1863, having been transferred from Snyder's Bluff, Mississippi to Helena in late July. The United States expeditionary force was organized at Helena, and advanced on and captured Little Rock. The "Arkansas Expedition"

was commanded by Major General Frederick Steele with the 11th Ohio Battery then forming a part of the 2nd Division of the Army of Arkansas, U. S. During the days of preparation for the expedition, many of the Federal troops from Snyder's Bluff camped on the banks of the Mississippi River, two miles below Helena.

Absalom White fell ill with chills at Snyder's Bluff. After the Battery came upriver to Helena to join the force against Little Rock, his chills developed into typhoid fever. White died on August 20th at 10 P. M. at Helena. He was buried on the bluff west of Fort Curtis.

The graves were later moved to an undetermined location, probably to a section of Maple Hill Cemetery now unmarked. Major H. V. Pittman, White's grandson, tried in the late 1920's and early 1930's to locate the gravesite, but his efforts were of no avail.

The two letters following were sent to Mrs. Absalom V. (Dicy) White from a friend of White's explaining the circumstances of her husband's death.

Memphis, Tenn
August 27, 1863

Mrs. A. V. White:

It is to my sorrow that I have to inform you of the circumstances of your husband and more sorrowful to you I can assure you. He had been sick something like a week out at Sniders Bluff with the chills. Then he got better. The Battery then came up from that place to Helena Arkansas. There he was taken sick on the 8th of August with typhoid fever. He was sick only twelve days till he died. He died on the 20 August at 10 pm. Absalom V. White died as a soldier true to his country as all true soldiers out to be; and also a true soldier in Christ. He died at his post praising God. "Oh if I can only go home." These were his

prayers before he died. Mr. A. V. White was my bed-fellow after he was detached to the 11th Ohio Battery. I waited on him mostly all the time that he was sick. In the morning of the 20 at about 9:00 am he called me to his bed and wanted me to take money, knapsack and anything that he had and take care of them. I did. After his death we buried him with the respect of a good and noble soldier. Now Mrs. White all the contents that he had are in the possession of the Doctor in Charge. That is Doctor Strong. I gave it to him and gave him your address. He wanted to write to you for you to send him a receipt for the contents he had. You may likely get his receipt before you get this letter.

Now Mrs. White I have all ways done his writing for him and most of the time read his letters for him. Mrs. White them letters you sent with Benjamin Reiley just came 2 days before he died. He called me to his bed to read his letters. Then he thought he would wait till he was a little better but he got worse all the time. He gave me his letters to keep. Now Sister White I answer your lines for him. You hoped that your lines of the 12 July would find him well. Also Martha your daughter wrote him her line of the 17th July that she hoped they would find her pap well but they did not reach him well. No none of you will see him any more in this world. He died with the faith in his God and Maker. Now you must follow the ways of Christ as a Soldiers Widow and Martha you as his daughter, then you shall see him again where parting never shall come and no weeping or sorrow. He was a help in the army also in the church here but he is in a far better place of rest than if he were here in this troublesome world.

Now, Yours Truly, Mrs. White from a friend and soldier, his name John J. Heltzel of the 11th Ohio Battery.

Now Mrs. White you can do as the Doctor directs you to sign the receipt and you shall have all he left behind him. Dr. Strong has 54 dollars of money and knapsack. He wants the receipt him to send it to.

Little Rock, Arkansas
October 26, 1863
Headquarters 11th Ohio Battery

Mrs. A. V. or Dicy White:

I have received your letter of Sept. 11, 1863. It came to hand on the 21 day of October at Little Rock. Dicy White I was very glad to hear that you had received my letter and by your writing you were well pleased with my letter which I had written to you.

You also had stated in your letter that you had received a letter from Dr. E. J. Strong and that you had signed his receipts for Absalom V. White's goods and money and that Lieut. Reiley was there with you and that Reiley attend to his things.

Now about those things that you requested of me. I can tell you all he said to me after he had called me to his bed. I asked him what he wanted with me--"I want you to take my money and keep it and my knapsack the same." Then I asked him if he was prepared to leave this world. His answer was. "Oh if I can only go home." Then I asked him if I should send his things home. His reply was "Yes!" He never said anything about his family or about his affairs at home neither to me or anybody else that I have found out.

Now about the request of getting him. He is buried right west of Fort Curtece on the bluff and his name is on his head board A. V. White. To go to the Post Office, there his name, regiment and company is all registered and when he died. The man

at the Post Office told me this was done so if any person came for any of the corpse, they could tell them all about them, so that they could be gotten without much trouble. It will cost you about one hundred dollars to get him home. Those steamboat men charge awful high for carrying corps; about twice as much as live persons, or likely three times as much.

All the advice I can give you is this about your affairs. You must do the best you can. Absalom left no orders about anything. So you must go according to law in your state of affairs. I should like as you stated to talk awhile with you.

Now about his mail. That is all in his knapsack with all his other papers. Everything he had was packed in his knapsack. Yours truly from a soldier in the field.

Now Dicy White if you live as Absalom has for me and him were together you may have the full assurance to meet him where parting never will be. Many a woman has lost her husband the same way you have. These war times makes some sorrowful days to some families.

Yours Truly,
From John J. Heltzel (or Heltrel)
of 11th Ohio Battery To Dicy White

I have the sore eyes that I can hardly see to write anything I made out to scribble this letter.

Just 3: P. M. Oct. 26, 1863--

THE MISSISSIPPI

by

Porter C. Young

Many, many years ago the upper Mississippi was a land of happy hunting with its clear waters, ample forests, plenty of fish and game. In the middle of this wonderful land lived two Indian tribes. Each tribe's chief had a son, each the pride and joy of his father. Being the same age, the boys grew up as close friends and often times led their warriors against the common foe. Both had wigwams covered with scalps of their enemies.

Yatoba had rough coarse features, a large body and revengeful spirit. The other chief's son was Hawakitah, tall, erect, agile with beautifully formed limbs, a generous and faithful heart.

Living among one of the tribes was Wynona, the most beautiful of the Indian girls. Her eyes were softer and brighter than the eyes of the gazelle, her voice sweeter than the warbling of the birds, her step livelier than the evening breeze. Both boys adored her, sought her. Hawakitah won the courtship. Revengeful Yatoba was chagrined but did not show it. He swelled with resentment.

At the wedding on a beautiful fall day, the bride and groom met; but Yatoba was missing from the ceremony. Suddenly yells rent the air and the wild war whoop of savage contest broke upon the scene. The fire of Hawakitah's spirit flamed within him. He kissed the fair Wynona with burning passion and gave her to the care of her parents. Leading his followers, he advanced to combat.

Yatoba, thirsting for revenge and yelling savagely, led his warriors. As the fight progressed

Wynona saw her lover facing certain death. Springing from her father's arms she threw herself upon the bosom of Hawakitah just as Yatoba paused to strike a fatal blow. A moment more and both would lie dead at the feet of the hate-stirred savage.

But the Great Spirit, pitying so fair and innocent a creature, rent the earth at their feet. Yatoba was carried back by the widening gulf and a mighty flood of water roared in. The happy lovers were saved and thus was formed the Father of Waters.

**

Helena has played an important part in the history of the Mississippi River and inner America. DeSoto discovered the river near Helena in 1541. The first Christian service held west of the Mississippi River was held at Helena and we have a monument on Oakland Avenue commemorating the event. In 1673 Marquette and Joliet explored the mighty Father of Waters from Wisconsin as far south as Helena. The Louisiana Purchase was surveyed from a spot just west of Helena. Indians found Crowley's Ridge a perfect place to camp and for burial grounds.

Scientists tell us the Gulf of Mexico once was as far north as Cairo, Illinois. They say the Mississippi River ran west of Crowley's Ridge while the Ohio River ran east of the Ridge, the two rivers joining together just below Helena. Indian mounds have been uncovered at the Helena Crossing and scientists say they date back as far as 200 B. C. Indians living south of us in swamplands brought their dead by canoe and buried them on high ground, safe from flood waters.

In the year 1705 the first shipment of commercial goods was made down the river. That shipment consisted of deer, buffalo, beaver, bear, and other animal hides floated by raft to the mouth for overseas shipment. Cheating Canadian fur traders

caused trappers to seek other ways of exporting their furs.

In 1760, just over 200 years ago, the first keelboats were used to come downriver transporting settlers, the military, and goods. Rafts and flatboats soon followed. In 1811, the first steamboat appeared on the Mississippi River. It proved that steam was practical and within the next eight years, 63 steamboats were built for the Mississippi River trade. By 1830, the "steamboat era" had arrived, but 40 years later young mid-America was moving too fast for the slow boats and railroads moved in. However, boating never completely died and in 1918 the government discovered railroads were inadequate and that we could not do without river transportation. They revived commercial steamboating.

Old man river when left alone was a long, lazy body of water where catfish thrived. It drains the waters of 31 states, over 40% of land area of the United States. Congress assigned the U. S. Army the task of opening up the river for commerce. The Army assigned the task to its Corps of Engineers. In 1878, Congress authorized a $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet channel; by 1907 a 6 feet channel, and by 1930 a 9 feet channel. At one time the Mississippi was the longest river in the world. Today, due to cutoffs and other flood control measures, it is the second longest, measuring 2,550 miles, more or less.

Many now famous men used the river for transportation. Besides the early explorers, such men as Abe Lincoln, Zachary Taylor, Mark Twain and others knew Helena well. Mark Twain wrote that "Helena occupies one of the prettiest situations on the river." Zachary Taylor was kidnapped at Baton Rouge in an attempt to keep him from reaching Washington and being sworn in as President. He was rescued at Helena, put on the right boat.

Most of the steamboats burned wood. As a result, they had to make frequent stops along the

river to either cut or buy wood. As pioneers settled along the river banks, they cleared land, stacked wood in cords along the river bank. They also established landings, many developing into towns that grew into cities. Others faded away as the river changed course, or settlers moved farther inland. At one time there were 56 landings between Helena and Memphis, a distance of 90 river miles.

As steamboating increased, accommodations became better, the boats larger. Many of the old packets were more elaborate and offered all the services of the finest hotels. A trip from Friars Point, Mississippi to Memphis cost less than \$5. A round trip from Memphis to St. Louis cost \$14 on the old steamers. Today, aboard the Delta Queen, it costs \$132 round trip, with the same type accommodations. Pilots did everything possible to make their "first class" passengers comfortable and happy. Many even printed daily newspapers to keep the passengers informed.

A typical cargo shipment aboard a packet was 1,000 lbs. bulk salt meat; 627 sacks corn; 100 casks bran; 50 barrels whiskey; 1,000 lbs. bulk salt; 100 barrels meal; 50 tierces lard and 400 bundles cotton ties.

Probably the best known packet at Helena was the Kate Adams. But did you know there were three Kate Adama? The first was built in 1882 at a cost of \$102,000. She set a speed record from Helena to Memphis of 5 hours, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, which was better than the time set by the Robert E. Lee. It was one of the first boats to have electric chandeliers, each having 28 lights, imported French prisms of cut glass that sparkled like diamonds. The cabins were paneled in natural woods of various kinds.

She exploded and sank in 1888 at Commerce Landing, halfway between Helena and Memphis. 55 lives were lost. Cargo lost included 1,161 bales of cotton, 108 bags of seed cotton, 1,900 sacks of

cotton seed. She was on her 602nd trip between Memphis and Vicksburg. One man was blasted from his bed, having on only a nightshirt. He drifted two miles downstream along with several bodies. He robbed the bodies of clothing, put them on in the water and was rescued. In 1886 the Kate Adams was selected as the boat to escort President Grover Cleveland and his bride across the river at Memphis.

Kate No. 2 was built in 1888 at a cost of \$180,000. She was too big for the dwindling lower Mississippi river trade, so was sold to a man in St. Louis. She burned in 1903.

Kate No. 3 which most of us remember as THE Kate Adams was built in 1898. She was built especially for the Memphis--Arkansas City trade. In 1926 she was used in the movie "Uncle Tom's Cabin." On June 29, 1917, the Kate Adams was caught by a falling river at Helena and sat high and dry until October 12, 1918, when she slipped back into the river to resume her career. She burned at Memphis in 1927. She was often referred to as "Lovin' Kate."

W. C. Handy got his start to fame on the Kate Adams. Captain Rees Downs needed a band because the Kate was carrying a young crowd from Memphis to Arkansas City during the summer months at reduced rates. The youngsters wanted music and there was only a piano aboard...and the excursions were losing money. Captain Downs approached Handy one day on the streets of Memphis and asked if he could get up a band. Handy replied he already had a band that would take the job for \$10 each a trip. The Captain offered him \$5 plus room and board. Handy accepted, telling Captain Downs that several of his 6 member band were playing for food, and no money. They started that evening. The band earned their money, too. They played from breakfast through dinner and until 1 A. M. The band pleased the crowds and soon the Kate was carrying a capacity crowd on every trip. Handy later played on other boats and became

established as a blues musician.

Something that possibly will soon be history is the railroad transfer boat at Helena. In 1889, the Joy was brought to Helena to bring trains across the river. It held 3 boxcars. The Joy sank and was replaced by the Charles Bertram which held 4 cars. Next was the Dekoren in 1912. It carried 5 cars. In 1918 the W. B. Duncan, capable of carrying 10 cars, came to Helena. In 1930, the Pelican, the largest of them all, came here.

The Pelican had a capacity of 14 cars and is still in operation. The Pelican was built in Dubuque, Iowa in 1902. She is 305 feet long, 91 feet wide, has an 8½ feet hold divided into 54 compartments, and draws from 4½ to 7½ feet of water, depending on her load. Originally she had two side-wheels, operated by steam. Her cost was \$280,000. In 1960, the steam parts wore out and the Pelican was stripped of her superstructure and converted into a barge, pushed by the Wm. B. Barnett, a regular diesel towboat. The Illinois Central is attempting to discontinue the boat in a swap-out deal with the Missouri Pacific.

An interesting sidelight about the Pelican is that she has never been taken from the water in her 67 year history. She was built of 3/4 inch plate wrought in charcoal to prevent rust and oxidation. She was first used at Vicksburg along with her sister ship the Albatross. The completion of a railroad bridge there in 1930 voided the need for them. The Pelican was sent to Helena, the Albatross was sold and is now the famous pleasure boat Admiral at St. Louis. In 1939, the ice gorge at Helena tilted the Pelican but did no damage.

Many Helena families have ties with the steamboats. Either their forefathers worked on the boats or they came to Helena by boat. Two of the better known river families here are the Johnstons and the Johnsons.

The C. M. Johnston family has a long history of river travel. Captain C. M. Johnston was from a family of river pilots. He married a beautiful young lady named Mollie, who was afraid of water. Soon after the marriage flood waters threatened their home, and it was necessary to cross an expanse of water in their skiff. The boat nearly capsized as she stepped in, but Mollie braved it and overcame her fright of water. She became known as one of the bravest women pilots on the Mississippi who never backed off from a challenge. She said she felt her greatest moment was piloting at night with a full moon.

The Johnstons operated the Mollie Bell, a floating store. They floated downriver, hired a boat to push them back upriver. One day they were being towed upstream by the Jenny Gildcrest. The captain, for some reason, dropped them off at Helena, stranding them, even though they had paid for the tow. Faced with this predicament, the Johnstons bought the Grace Veley with Mollie doing much of the piloting.

Town merchants were jealous of river stores and hired renegades to shoot at them as they floated downstream. The Johnstons received many warnings, but always let it be known that they were ready. River rats knew the Johnstons meant business so they never actually attacked. Other boats that Captain Johnston owned were the C. M. Johnston which sank in 1909 at the mouth of the White River, the Harwood, and the City of Helena.

The A. C. Johnson family operated the ferryboat at Helena for a number of years. Nettie Johnson, A. C.'s mother, is reported to be the first woman to hold a river pilot's license. She was born Nettie Waldran. Her father was known as the "Corn King," shipping corn south on flatboats before the steamboat days. On January 4, 1912, the Johnson family left Marianna on the L'Anguille River with a

log camp outfit. It was zero weather when the steamer Nettie Johnson sank due to ice cutting through her hull. It was at night and the Johnsons escaped in a lifeboat, huddled together till morning. Their clothing froze together. They were rescued and taken to Marianna for thawing out. Captain Nettie Johnson purchased the Helena ferry from Barney Cunningham and set her son up in the business.

The cultural side of the river has not been neglected. Back in 1836, 16 year old John Banvard left New York dreaming of painting the longest canvas in the world. He paid more attention to the wild landscape than to the river currents, and as a result one day got stuck on a sandbar. He went to sleep and hours later awakened to find himself 12 miles downstream stuck on another sandbar. Banvard traveled for 5 years as a roving artist and peddler, filling sketch pads with cities, camps, forts, landings, etc.

In a riverfront loft at Louisville, Kentucky he started painting on a reel of canvas. In 1846, he completed "Banvard's Panorama of the Mississippi." The picture measured three miles long, showing a view of the country 1,200 miles long from St. Louis to New Orleans. The painting was shown along river towns, then in Boston, New York, Washington, and other cities. Congress passed a resolution praising the painting. Then Banvard went to London. Charles Dickens and Longfellow both wrote of the painting. He toured the continent. Banvard's canvas ended up as wallpaper in the basement of a house at Watertown, South Dakota and was lost to the art world.

Henry Lewis was another young artist who had the same dream. In 1836, he also started such a painting, completing it in 1848. He termed his as a "gigantic and continuous painting of the Mississippi from St. Paul to the Gulf of Mexico." He did his painting aboard a houseboat called the Minnehaha. Its fate is unknown.

Most of the steamboats or packets lasted from 3 to 5 years. A very few lasted longer, some did not last a year. Early boilers had a habit of exploding, setting boats on fire. By 1850, there were over 1,000 steamboats on the river, and more than 4,000 deaths had been recorded.

Some of our more adventurous Americans have gone to the tropical islands and other places looking for hidden treasure. They should look around the Mid-South as there are many buried treasures to be uncovered as the results of boats sinking. Bullion, greenbacks, relics, records, documents abound. The Golden City exploded near Memphis on March 30, 1882. Thousands of dollars were lost. The Sultana had \$150,000 in gold and greenbacks when she exploded and burned just above Memphis. The Pennsylvania sank just 20 miles north of Helena on June 12, 1858. \$50,000 in gold was lost. Incidentally, Mark Twain's brother, Henry Clemens, was lost in this explosion.

On February 1, 1876, the Rhoda tied up at Helena and sank when a storm tore her loose from her moorings. She was blown across the river on to the Mississippi shore. A "rich prize" was lost with her. The Legal Tender sank on the Arkansas River 40 miles below Pine Bluff. It was reported to be well heeled. The Confederate gunboat Jeff Thompson had \$75,000 in a strongbox when it sank just below Memphis. The money had been captured from the Yankees.

The Rosa Miller sank at Swan Lake, the Osceola hit a snag and sank at Peters Landing 28 miles north of Helena; the City of Quincy hit a snag at Fox Island and sank with a cargo of \$70,000 aboard. The Charles P. Choteau, a sternwheeler built from two Federal gunboats captured during the Civil War, sank at Sunflower Landing just below Helena when fire destroyed her cargo. The quarter million dollar loss was composed of 3,800 bales of cotton, 4,000 sacks of cottonseed, 1,000 tons of other

freight. 3 were killed in the fire. Aboard at the time were Misses Carrie and Sophia Sliger of Helena. They escaped unhurt.

Contrary to popular belief, U. S. Grant did not cut Yazoo Pass just across the river in Coahoma County, Mississippi. The Pass was actually an old spillway from the Mississippi River to the upper end of Moon Lake and on to the Coldwater River. Grant cut the levee between the river and the lake. Flatboatmen used the Pass, called Yazoo Bayou, to the Coldwater River to the Tallahatchie River to the Yazoo River which empties into the Mississippi River at Vicksburg.

While we are familiar with the famous river race between the Natchez and the Robert E. Lee, few of us recall the modern day race between the Helena and the Kokoda. That was a race made in 1948. The Helena was one of those new diesel towboats while the Kokoda was a steamer. Both belonged to the Federal Barge Line, both were pushing 9,785 tons of sugar on 4 barges. Captains James Seaman, native of Helena, and John Croder were pilots on the steamer Kokoda. Captains Robert L. Geary and Fred Sheldon piloted the Helena. The diesel Helena had two engine breakdowns and grounded a barge at Rosedale, Mississippi. The race came to a halt when the Kokoda reached Cairo and found the river blocked with ice. The Helena was trailing 212 miles behind.

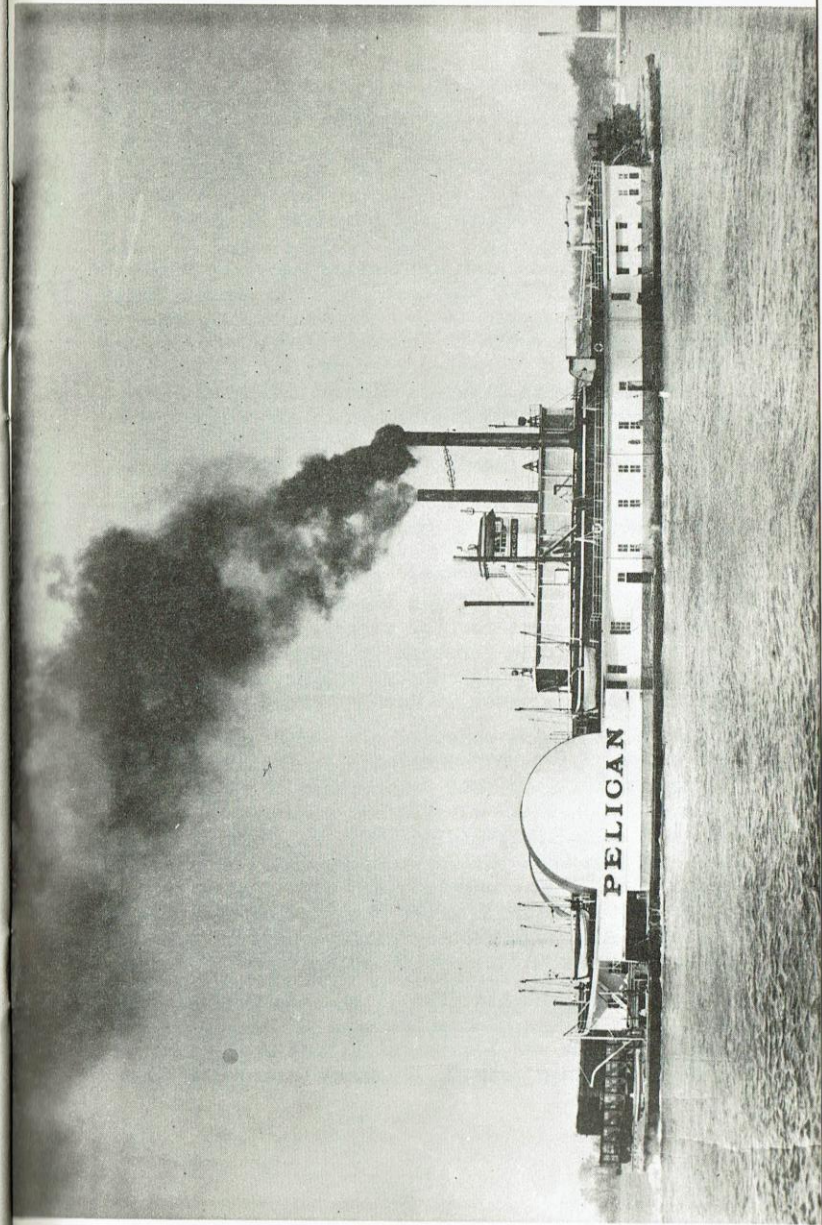
We have seen and heard of all types of river transportation. Possibly the one mode of traveling the river that gained the most publicity was done by the man who walked down the river in 1907. He was Professor Charles Oldrieve who walked from Cincinnati to New Orleans, a distance of 1,000 miles. He made his trip during the winter and high water. He wore pontoon shoes of cedar 4' 5" long, 5" wide, and 7" high. His wife accompanied him in a rowboat. He admitted to falling only one time. The professor did the stint on a \$5,000 bet. He averaged 25 miles

a day, taking 40 days to complete the trip. Great crowds greeted him as he approached each town along the route. Soon after the trip his wife died of exhaustion. He moved to Memphis, Tennessee because that was the town with the biggest crowd to see his walk. He died at the age of 31 on July 12, 1907, just a few months after completing the journey.

River traffic has grown over the years. From the first shipment of raw furs in 1705, commerce has grown until today over 219 million tons a year are shipped by river freight. Towboats range anywhere from 150 h. p. to 10,000 h. p. and push up to 60 acres of barges at a time. Each barge is equal to 40 freight cars in capacity and it would take 100 freight trains to move what one towboat is capable of moving. The river traffic is divided into three categories: domestic, import, and export. Exports in 1968 amounted to 25 million tons, imports to 14 million tons. The Helena harbor, third ranking port on the Mississippi, handled over 2 million tons of freight last year.

The Mississippi River is Helena's greatest asset and we will see even greater use of it put to work in the years to come.

This paper was given in the form of a talk at the September meeting.



A MAN BELOVED

by

Carolyn R. Cunningham

One hundred and eight years ago last May 1st a bouncing baby boy was born in Independence, Tate County, Mississippi, to Dr. and Mrs. W. A. Russwurm. They gave him the name of William Clark, and he was destined to become a leader and a beloved friend to many in Phillips County, Arkansas. His father had practiced medicine in Tate County for many years when the boy was born in 1861, shortly before the beginning of the War Between The States.

Dr. William Clark Russwurm, as he came to be known here, was from a long line of physicians and surgeons, according to his great-nephew, Stuart Orr, of Dallas, Texas. In fact, there were six in succession. One ancestor was a cavalry officer and was made a general for the surgery he did in the War of 1812. This forebear, the son of a Prussian general, came to this country and married the daughter of General Sumner of Revolutionary War fame.

Dr. Russwurm received his early education in the schools of Tate County, and at the age of twenty-four, it was to Tate County that he returned to practice medicine. He read medicine with Dr. R. C. Orr of Mississippi, and in 1884 was graduated from medical school at the University of Louisville. On March 10, 1884, he was licensed by the Mississippi State Medical Board. After one year of practice at his old home, he moved to Phillips County. Why, or by whom he was influenced, I do not know.

He hung out his first sign on a tree in the front yard of the plantation home of Mr. J. B. Pillow. The home was located at Pillow Station on Little Rock Road, and Dr. Russwurm boarded at the

Pillow home. It is not known exactly how long he stayed there. Fifty-six years later, a daughter of the Pillows was to entertain in her home honoring Dr. Russwurm on his 80th birthday. That was Mrs. H. H. Rightor.

Later he moved to Latour and practiced at Barton. He had a brother, also a doctor, living at La-Grange--Dr. Sam Russwurm. He described his practice at Latour as follows:

Those days when I practiced at Latour were the hardest--those days and nights. We had no epidemic that I remember, but my practice was scattered over such a large territory that to make it on horseback took most of my time.

The roads were bad in winter. Sometimes it was necessary to swim his horse to reach a patient, and sometimes he swam his horse to save time. On such an occasion one of the most amusing things of his career happened. He always chuckled when he recalled it:

I had a saddlehorse that was one of the best swimmers that I ever saw. But he was contrary, too. For instance, if we came to a fork in the road and he decided he wanted to go one way and I wanted to go the other, he just wouldn't go. Well, sir, I was making a call out near Latour. It was a cold morning, and there was a thin skim of ice on the water. I was near enough to the home of my patient to almost see the house, but to reach it without swimming a creek was a two mile trip out of the way. I decided to swim my horse across the swollen creek, and put him into the water. He decided not to swim, but to wade it instead. So he just bowed his legs and stepped high, holding his head up out of

the water, which came up to my waist.
I got a good soaking because that horse
was too stubborn to swim.

For ten years Dr. Russwurm was a country doctor. Those were the years he worked the hardest, riding horseback and in buggies over all sorts of roads in every kind of weather. After practicing at Pillow Station, Latour, and Barton, he came to Helena and set up an office. However, he continued to ride the trails on country calls, carrying his little black bag in his saddlebags, and filling his own prescriptions from the vials and boxes he carried with him, a great deal of which was calomel and quinine. His niece by marriage, Mrs. W. R. Orr of Dallas, said they remember one of his favorite quotations for many illnesses was: "Calomel and quinine, and a tincture of time."

It was in January, 1895, that he moved to Helena, and that same month he married Miss Florence Boone of Coldwater, Mississippi.

Dr. Russwurm was always anxious to know what was happening in the world of medical science, and spent much time and money in keeping up with the latest things. During the ten years he was serving here as a country doctor, he was taking post-graduate courses. In 1890, he graduated from the Medical Department at Tulane University, and in 1893 and 1894, he took post-graduate courses there. Then in 1898 and 1902 he did graduate work at the Polyclinic School of New York City. As late as 1920, he continued his graduate work at Tulane, Mayo Brothers Clinic, Chicago, and New York City.

He often recalled that his practice was slow when he first moved into Helena, and for that reason he sought and secured the job of city physician. Shortly after he took the post a dreaded smallpox epidemic broke out, and the doctor, now in his middle thirties, worked day and night. In telling of the epidemic, he told how burial spots were needed.

He was having trouble finding places to bury the dead, when finally a member of the City Council offered a place outside the city in the hills. This was a plot somewhere near Fern Hill. He often said he was the only doctor he knew of who had a private cemetery, for he buried eight or ten Negroes there himself. They buried at night, and once there were only two Negroes and himself to serve as pallbearers.

The epidemic, though hard and grueling, was in a way the making of the doctor in Helena, for he got to know people--lots of people, and as he said, "I began to make money," although it was a well known fact by all who knew him, that money was of no consequence when he was needed.

It has been said of Dr. Russwurm that he probably attended more people who were not able to pay than any other doctor who had ever practiced here. Those who knew him best say he never questioned a man's ability to pay, nor turned one down because he hadn't the money. Of himself, he said: "The miles are never too dark, the weather too cold, nor the roads too muddy for Russwurm to answer the call of a woman in labor."

People always wanted to know how many babies he had delivered, but he confessed he had not the slightest idea, he supposed many hundred. Jack Young wrote in his editorial in the Helena World, "Passing of An Era!," on the day of Dr. Russwurm's death:

If all the babies brought into the world by Dr. Russwurm over his 60-odd years of practice were massed together you would find enough people to make a good sized city.

He also said:

Dr. W. C. Russwurm is gone and Phillips County has lost one of its noblest citizens.

Dr. Russwurm was a staunch supporter of the Democratic Party. He served as a member of the Helena City Council. He was a Mason, having attained both the York and Scottish Rites, and the Mystic Shrine. He was a very kind and a very religious man. His family for many generations were Methodists, and he was brought up in that faith. He later joined his wife's church.

He was a member of the Phillips County Medical Society, the Arkansas Medical Society, the Southern Medical Association, and the American Medical Association. He served as president of the Phillips County Medical Society, and served three terms as city physician. He was spoken of as one of the most progressive physicians in the city of Helena. He was frequently called in for consultation by the leading physicians, and was recognized as a man of high moral instincts.

His hobbies were fine horses and gamecocks. In his earlier years, he was an ardent hunter and fisherman, but in his later years he became a rabid baseball fan and seldom missed a game of the Seaporters.

He was called the Dean of Phillips County medical men. Dr. Russwurm continued to go at a hard pace. About 1930, he lost an arm in an automobile accident, and that forced him to curtail his practice to some extent. He was then seventy years old. He was responsible for his nephew, Dr. W. R. Orr, coming here to practice medicine, and it was Dr. Orr who did his surgery for him during the last years of his life.

On April 27, 1941, the Helena World carried a large picture of Dr. Russwurm and the large black headlines, "Dr. Russwurm To Be Honored With Birthday Party. Veteran Physician Will Be Honor Guest At Garden Party Thursday Afternoon." The entire public was invited. It was held on Thursday afternoon, May 1st, from 4 until 6 o'clock and was given

by one of his colleagues, Dr. H. H. Rightor and Mrs. Rightor.

The party was held in the beautiful flower garden of the Rightor home. Through the newspaper, every friend of Dr. Russwurm was invited and although the party was Dr. Rightor's idea, there were others who assisted in making it a success. All of the doctors of the county and their wives assisted in receiving, and members of the nursing profession, dressed in sparkling white uniforms and caps, served.

For a number of years he served as a deacon of the First Baptist Church of Helena, and it was from there that his funeral services were conducted. Interment followed in Maple Hill Cemetery. He was in his eighty-ninth year when death overtook him on June 9, 1949, and it was only in his last year of life that he ceased practice completely. He died at 4 o'clock in the morning at his home on Perry Street. Death was attributed to the infirmities of old age. His wife survived him by three years. Most of us in Helena remember the two story red brick house on the corner of Perry and Columbia Streets. It was a familiar landmark for most of the twentieth century.

DR. RUSSWURM AS I REMEMBER HIM

Dorothy Townsend Miller
Jackson, Minnesota

In about 1929 or 1930, Dr. Russwurm lost his arm in an automobile accident. He was on his way home from a fishing trip. The man that was driving Doctor's car lost control of the car, the car turned over, and Doctor's arm was caught in the door. He never drove the car again. At first he had a driver, then Mrs. Russwurm drove for him.

Dr. Russ worked closely with Dr. Baker in West Helena, and when Dr. Baker would call Dr. Russ, he would tell him that he would be out as soon as I got out of school. I was then in the first grade. After that, Dr. Baker would call Doctor to come out after school and bring me. They would always give me a nickel or dime and I would go in to see Mr. Topp.

Dr. Russwurm was a friend of the poor and the colored people; he never refused to go, night or day, especially if they had no money to pay or could not get another doctor. They would bring the sick babies to the house in the middle of the night. He always had the medicine and gave it to them free of charge. He was loved by everyone who knew him.

I grew up in the Russwurm home. We lived downstairs and Dr. and Mrs. Russwurm lived upstairs. I never remembered my grandfathers, so he was just that to me. I know I couldn't have loved my own better.

Dr. Russwurm was a great story teller and could entertain people for hours telling them of his early years in Helena.

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