

Baxter County History



The Wolf House is the most historical
building in Baxter County.

Photo courtesy of Ray Grass

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THE BAXTER COUNTY HISTORY

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Contributions of material for the "History" should be sent to Howard M. Knight. These contributions are very much needed. They may include pictures. The originals will be returned to the contributor.

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ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE AND PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER AT THE JANUARY MEETING. The fiscal year begins January 1. New Members may join at any time.

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MINING SALTPETER - A GUNPOWDER INGREDIENT

Many of northern Arkansas caves were mined for potassium nitrate (saltpeter) during the Civil War. This cave mining was very dangerous and hard work. The light was usually only candles, lanterns or pine knots. To loosen the cave soil from the floors required picks, shovels and pry bars. This was taken to the cave entrance by man power in carts or bags.

A lot of the digging was made in passageways far from the entrance where the soil had to be dragged in bags by men crawling on all fours.

It is still a popular notion that the nitrate in the cave soil was the result of bat droppings, but the richest soils were found in caves which had no bats. Caves that had bats often had no nitrates. Scientists believe that the nitrates were formed by cave bacteria in a manner similar to the way nitrogen is "fixed" in the root modules of clover and other plants.

Nitrate rich soil was found only in certain caves. In some the nitrates occurred as potassium nitrate. This was the desired form. In other caves it was found as calcium nitrate.

When it was found as potassium nitrate, hot water was poured over the soil as it stood in wooden hoppers or wood troughs. The liquid drained from the soil was cooled so the sodium chloride impurities would precipitate out. When the remaining liquid evaporated crystals of potassium nitrate formed and were collected and formed into cakes.

If the nitrates were calcium nitrate, the soil was mixed with wood ashes and water. The wood ashes were rich in potassium and this replaced the calcium. The liquid was then handled in the same way as given in the preceding paragraph.

The potassium nitrate was either used locally or shipped to powder mills where it was mixed with charcoal and sulphur to form gunpowder. Charcoal was made preferably from willow or if not available, from cottonwood. Large quantities of sulphur came from the reserves accumulated by sugar refineries.

During the last five months of 1861, Confederates produced nearly a million pounds of powder, and by 1865 had made some five million pounds. All produced to kill fellow-Americans!

Reference: "Gunpowder Ingredients Mined in West Virginia Caverns"
by Kenneth L. Corvell. Wonderful West Virginia, Vol. 46, #3

PROGRESS OF THE BAXTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hazen Bonow, Historian

May 4th, 1982

We were fortunate to have Roger Logan, Jr. of Harrison for our speaker, - the subject being the "War of the Rebellion".

Mr. Logan graduated from the University of Arkansas and has been a lawyer in Harrison for 14 years. He has served as a State Representative, President of the Historical Society, taught, and has written four books on our history. He is especially knowledgeable on the history of the Civil War.

He became interested at the age of 12 as he heard stories of his Great Grandfather who fought for the Confederacy. He spent much time with his Grandmother who taught him a lot of history.

There has been no abundance of records, but he has been fortunate in obtaining some of the information which he brought with him. He had records of the number of slaves and owners from each county in this area, but the average was only one or two slaves per owner. He also had records of soldiers and a picture of his Great Grandfather in uniform.

There were 324,000 white people in Arkansas at that time. In 1860 there was a Presidential election, but no one voted for Abraham Lincoln as his name was not even on the ballot, people were afraid of him.

In 1861 an election was held to decide which position to take in the War, but the vote was not to do anything. Then the North called for 30,000 men for the Union Army, so on April 12th there was a vote to secede, and Arkansas was admitted to the Confederacy.

Yellville was the County Seat and the Fort was located nearby. Yellville became one of the sites for disasters and burnings.

Mr. Logan has a large pre-Civil-War-time map(1835-1840) showing roads and mail routes, one of which is the Old Military Road; also ferries and villages in this area. Mountain Home was first called Rapps Barren, Talbert Barren, then Mountain Home.

The soldiers' guns were loaded with powder from their powder flasks. Their equipment was carried in a pouch.

2,000 lbs. of gun powder was produced in this area per day which was made of the bat droppings (salt peter) from our many caves. The Mississippi River was a means of shipping it South.

We were told of the Battle of Pea Ridge and the fighting in Missouri and the killing of both the Union and the Confederates, also the terror caused by the Bushwhackers in this area.

Mr. Logan recommended "Border Land Rebellion" as an excellent book for information.

We gained a lot of historical knowledge from this excellent program.

June 1st, 1982

Quinby Smith introduced a member, R. M. Ruthven, Jr., who was with the Corps of Engineers from 1939-41. He left for World War II, later coming back to the Corps.

"Brick" Ruthven then introduced Tracy Fancher, a native of Berryville, Arkansas who is working with the Corps and also attending the University of Arkansas.

Tracy showed the film, "A New Era", which was narrated by Sara Hurst. The movie also had lovely background music and was a combination of old photos, the year-to-year progress of the building of the Norfork Dam, also many beautiful river and lake scenes. It was a well organized film and very informative and interesting. The Dam was started in 1941 and completed in June 1944. There were 1,200 employed. Questions and answers followed the showing of the film.

Tracy Fancher graciously consented to write an article for our Baxter County Historical Quarterly which will give us information concerning the Norfork Dam and will be much appreciated for our historical records.

July 6th, 1982

John Beecroft of the Owl Book Store gave the program, "Use of Books in Historical Research". Mr. Beecroft stressed the importance of keeping the facts straight. Facts constitute the truth. He said that genealogists often let a good story get in the way of facts. Oral history cannot be depended upon to be fully accurate and needs to be substantiated. One source is not adequate. One should have as many sources as possible to document a story.

A good librarian can save one hours of time. In writing, be accurate, be honest, be true!

WHY "WALLACE KNOB"?

The prominent hill north of Mountain Home, was named after Dr. J. H. Wallace.

The Baxter Bulletin in "Looking Backward" reports that 50 years ago, December 30, 1932, "Nieces of Dr. J. H. Wallace, an old pioneer of this place, were here Tuesday looking up old friends of their uncle, - many of the older people of this section also remember him well.

"The visitors were Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Blaine, Joplin, Mo., Mrs. Nell North, Miss Etolia North, Saginaw, Mo., and Miss Ella Dickey, Springfield, Mo."

* * * * *

NOTES

LOOKING BACKWARD, November 28, 1957

Dale Tipton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tipton of Mountain Home, has been promoted to the rank of sergeant. He is stationed with the Marine Corps helicopter squadron in Oppama, Japan. Dale is the President of the Baxter County Historical Society.

WELDON - Memories of Oklahoma Land Race and Horse Cars

The celebration of their 70th wedding anniversary on December 4, 1982 by Mr. and Mrs. James Orval Weldon of 707 Dryer Street in Mountain Home brings to mind the many changes that have taken place in their lifetimes.

James was born February 20, 1889 in a sod house at Benkelman, Nebraska. He and his parents participated in the Oklahoma Land Race of 1889. Together with a brother and sister they still own the original 160 acres of land that was homesteaded at Paul's Valley near Tulsa. His mother taught school in Oklahoma where the majority of the students were Indians. The family migrated to Kansas.

Faye Helen Weldon was born March 8, 1896 at Logansport, Indiana. Her father drove the horses that pulled the street cars, and her mother was a dress designer. She moved to Toledo, Ohio at the age of 5 and then to Kansas at 15.

Mr. and Mrs. Weldon have lived in Kansas, Ohio, North Dakota, Missouri, California and now, Arkansas. James was a rural mail carrier at Newton, Missouri. They had 9 children, 6 still living, 21 grandchildren, and 47 great-grandchildren.

LETTER postmarked July 28, 1982 was received from Lila Jones, 4609 $\frac{1}{2}$ Fern Place, Los Angeles. She states she is 80 and the last one of Sheriff Eugene Mooney's family. She was in the hospital three times from October 22 until after Thanksgiving 1981. She says she sent a \$ 5.00 check before Christmas but never got the cancelled check. She will send another. (The first check was found and the second check applied on her 1983 dues.)

RONALD F. SWITZER wrote July 26, 1982 that his address was now 22310 Morley Avenue, Dearborn, Michigan 48128 and he was glad to get the four Quarterlies. He and his partner, Jim F. McClure, were wondering when their dues were due. We wrote that it was January 1, 1982. They paid.

WHEN YOUR FATHER has worked in almost every state in the Union, it's hard to trace some of the phrases you heard as a child. A heavy storm is still a "rip snorter" to Amanda G. Hawkins of Gravette, Arkansas. Also in Arkansas, exact location unknown, that same hard rain is likely to be a "toad stringer" or a "trash lifter", or a "gully washer" or a "mud mucker" or even a "gutter gusher"!

DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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These photographs by Gerald Ratliff in the "Wonderful West Virginia", Vol. 46, #3, show the hoppers used in making gunpowder in Organ Cove, Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Similar scenes were probably seen in Arkansas "salt peter" caves during the Civil War.

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ELISHA BAXTER, Arkansas Governor 1872-1874

TALL TALK

The tall tale thrives in Arkansas, and it frequently involves crops, animals, and the hardships of Ozark life.

The hoop snake of Arkansas has a poisonous stinger in its tail, and when it wants to go after somebody it tucks its tail in its mouth, forms itself into a hoop, and rolls after its victim like a wagon wheel. But if the snake gets caught in a tree or something, it's a goner, because it can't pull out frontwise. And the stinger's liable to poison the tree. Once an unsuspecting Arkansas woodcutter used a splinter from such a poisoned tree for a toothpick, and he was dead before sundown!

It takes two men to plant corn in Arkansas; one pries the rocks apart with a crowbar; the other shoots the seed down the crack with a syringe.

According to Poge Mahone, he had a potato grew so big it couldn't be dug nohow, so they built a new cabin over it and cut a trapdoor in the kitchen floor. Whenever the kids began hollerin' for victuals, Poge just climbed down through the trap and shoveled up a big hunk of 'tater.

RAZORBACK HOGS

Among the leading characters in the Arkansas cast is the razorback hog. The name refers to the bristly, bony ridge of its back, so thin and sharp men claim they have shaved with it. This hog has other distinctive features; it is so spare it can only be shot sideays, so small it roosts like a chicken, and so swift and ferocious it attacks anything on legs - including men. In some tales the razorback seems half domesticated, but it is always assumed to be a unique species of wild hog.

In fact, any so-called wild hog in North America has been introduced here from the Old World. Although there may be a few pigs that have gone wild in Arkansas, zoologists do not recognize the razorback that stars in so many tales as a true species. Lack of official recognition does not daunt the University of Arkansas football team which uses the razorback as an emblem. Some years ago, a state official offered a reward for a razorback, dead or alive; he has not yet (as of 1978) had a claimant. But all Arkansans know that razorback hogs roam the Ozarks, threatening anything that gets in their way.

- American Folklore and Legend, Reader's Digest
Association, 1978



Organ Cave where Gen. Robert E. Lee's men made black powder during the Civil War.

Gerald Rattif



View of one of the 37 wood hoppers used in making gunpowder in Organ Cave.

Gerald Rattif

ELISHA BAXTER: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE TENTH GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS

By Michael David Polston

In the years following the War Between the States, Arkansas was racked by political turmoil. These years of unrest in the South are commonly known as Reconstruction. It was during these troubled times that Baxter County's namesake, Elisha Baxter, was elected as the tenth governor of the State of Arkansas.

Elisha Baxter was the sixth son of Irish immigrant William Baxter and Catherine Lee Baxter. Born September 1, 1827 in Rutherford County, North Carolina, Elisha was reared a farmer and like most boys of the Old South received little formal education. This lack of formal schooling never hampered young Elisha in life or business. In 1848, he and his brother-in-law, Spencer Eaves, entered into a mercantile partnership. The early success of this business resulted in the marriage of Elisha to Miss Harriet Patton. By 1852, the young couple grew restless and moved to the frontier state of Arkansas, settling in the river town of Batesville. With help from his brother Taylor, Elisha established his second mercantile business.

Elisha rapidly became one of Batesville's most respected citizens, being elected mayor of the town in 1853, and to the State Legislature a year later. Just as it seemed nothing could go wrong, the mercantile business failed, forcing Elisha to seek other employment. For the next year Baxter was employed by a local newspaper, the Independent Balance. During this short venture he was fortunate enough to study law under the tutorship of W. E. Fairchild, and in 1856 he was admitted to the Arkansas Bar. Two years later he was once again elected to the Legislature, and by 1859 he had formed a law firm with Mr. James Hines.

Once again the future seemed promising for Elisha Baxter and his family. But in 1861 the struggle between North and South had erupted into civil war. Though reluctant to secede, Arkansas joined her sister southern states in May 1861. Secession forced Elisha into a difficult decision. Feeling secession was unjust, but having no desire to take up arms against his adopted state, Elisha remained neutral, neither joining the Confederate or Union forces.

The first year of war proved uneventful for the Baxters, but in 1862, an invading Union army under the command of General Samuel Curtis occupied Batesville and began recruiting Union sympathizers. Being recognized as a local Unionist, Elisha was approached and offered command of a Union regiment. He wisely declined. Unfortunately when the occupying forces moved out of Batesville, Elisha was forced to flee north to Missouri for his safety. It seems that the Union occupation made Southern supporters less tolerant of Unionist neighbors.

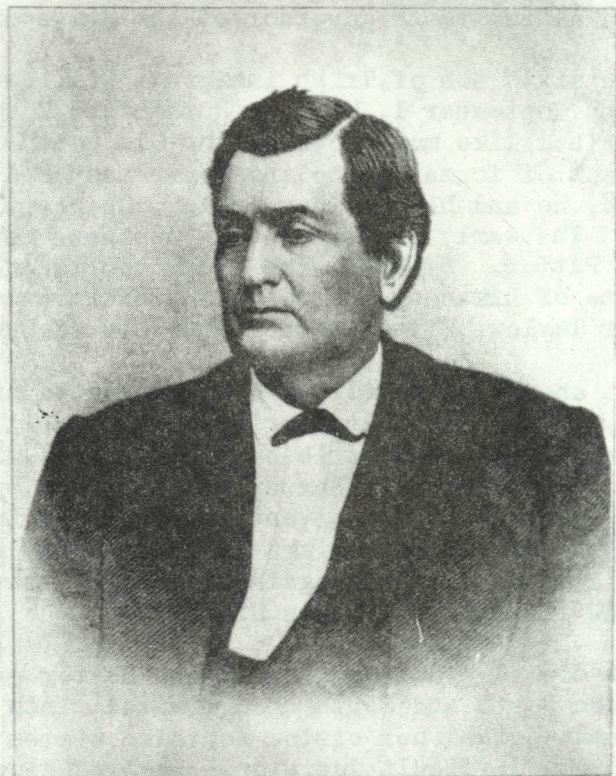
Events turned for the worse in Missouri. In 1863, Baxter was captured by Confederate forces commanded by a fellow-Arkansawyer, Colonel Robert C. Newton. He was paroled by his captors and ordered to report to Little Rock. Obeying his directions and honoring his parole, Elisha journeyed to the capitol city and turned himself over to civil authorities who in turn incarcerated him in the Pulaski County jail. Before his case could be heard he escaped, remaining in hiding for some eighteen days before making his way back to Missouri.

These trying experiences seemed to bring a change of heart to Baxter, resulting in his recruiting troops for the Union and the acceptance of command of the 4th Arkansas Mounted Infantry (USA). Colonel Baxter was placed in command of Batesville and remained there until late 1863, when he was appointed to the Supreme Court by the newly organized Unionist government under the direction of Governor Isaac Murphy.

Baxter's political career blossomed during the next few months with him holding the office of Register in Bankruptcy of the 1st Congressional District and Judge of the 13th Judicial Circuit. He and William Fishback were also chosen as United States Senators to represent Arkansas in Washington, D. C. Unfortunately Arkansas was still technically a member of the Confederacy. This fact resulted in the

By Michael David Rowland

In the years following the war between the States, Arkansas was ranked political equality. These years of unrest in the South are generally known as Reconstruction. It was during this period that Elisha Baxter, an Arkansas native, was elected Governor of the State.



ELISHA BAXTER,
Ex-Governor of Arkansas.

Elisha Baxter was born in the year 1812, in the town of Baxter, Arkansas. His father was James Baxter, a pioneer settler. Elisha was raised on a farm and received a liberal education. He was engaged in various occupations, including farming and mercantile pursuits. He served in the Arkansas Militia during the Mexican War, and was elected to the Legislature in 1848.

He was elected Governor of the State in 1858, and served two terms. During his administration, he was instrumental in the passage of the Act for the Relief of the Freedmen, which provided for the education of freed slaves. He was re-elected in 1862, but died in office in 1863.

After his death, he was buried in the town of Baxter, Arkansas. His remains were re-interred in the National Cemetery at Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1880. He is remembered for his efforts to improve the lives of the freedmen during Reconstruction.

The first year of his administration was marked by the outbreak of the Civil War. He was elected Governor in 1858, and served two terms. During his administration, he was instrumental in the passage of the Act for the Relief of the Freedmen, which provided for the education of freed slaves. He was re-elected in 1862, but died in office in 1863.

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refusal of Congress to seat the news Senators.

With the conclusion of the War, a semblance of peace returned to Arkansas and in 1872 the State held its first true gubernatorial election since the ceasing of hostilities. During the immediate years following the War, the Republican party reigned supreme in Arkansas, but by 1882 this dominance showed weakness. The Republicans had split over the issues resulting in two opposing factions. The new Liberal Republicans selected Joseph Brooks of Helena as its candidate for governor, while the traditional or Conservative Republicans chose Elisha Baxter to run on its platform.

After a hotly contested and sometimes disputed election, Elisha Baxter was declared the legal Governor of Arkansas. The new Governor quickly came to odds with the leaders of the Republican Party when he openly supported the restoration of the vote to ex-Confederates, thus assuring the rebirth of the Democrats and the decline of the Republicans. Other actions by Baxter also upset the Republican leadership. Included in these was the appointment of his old enemy and ex-Confederate, Robert C. Newton, to the command of the Arkansas State Militia.

Baxter's one time supporters, led by ex-governor and present senator Powell Clayton, moved quickly to reestablish their dominance by questioning the legality of the Baxter election and swinging their support to Joseph Brooks, who claimed he had been cheated in the election. The dispute entered the courts and when a Pulaski County Circuit Judge ruled in favor of Brooks, Elisha Baxter was forcefully removed from the Governor's office. The turbulent weeks that followed Baxter's expulsion are commonly known in Arkansas History as the Brooks Baxter War. In 1873 the tension over the dispute was finally relieved by President Grant, who ruled in favor of Baxter and reinstated the errant Republican as the legal Governor of the State.

The remainder of Elisha Baxter's term was less eventful. When the Democratic Party drafted a new Constitution in 1874, the Governor's term was reduced from four to two years. Under this new provision Governor Baxter was to lose two of his elected four years. In appreciation, the Democrats offered the gubernatorial nomination to Baxter, but he refused, deciding rather to retire from political life.

With the election of the new Democratic Governor, Augustus Garland in 1874, Elisha Baxter returned to Batesville where he lived the remainder of his years as a practicing lawyer. On May 31, 1899 at the age of seventy-two, Elisha Baxter died and was buried next to his wife in Batesville's Oaklawn Cemetery.

* * * * *

WINDOWS

The small windows with sashes that are never fastened but cling with nails half driven into the side casing were made so that windows could be removed or tightened easily. Most people hammer the nails in all the way with some annoyance at "the old ways of doing things", but find trouble during winter when wood shrinks and the rattling windows need tightening.

Others wonder at the cuts on window sills, often accompanied by numbers. These were indoor sundials for use in the days when a stopped clock could not be reset as easily as it is today! the shadow of a window strip on the sill could be depended on to tell fairly accurate time.

EIGHTEENTH IN A SERIES ON CEMETERIES

IN BAXTER COUNTY, ARKANSAS

By D. G. Carroll

November 1981

HEISKILL CEMETERY

To locate the Heiskill Cemetery, turn onto the Buffalo Road at Buford. Go approximately two miles and turn left. The cemetery is found $\frac{1}{4}$ mile down this road. The survey was made by the Buford Extension Homemakers Club, August 12, 1969.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Born</u>	<u>Died</u>
<u>BEAVERS</u>		
Ella M. Beavers	Mar. 11, 1858	May 8, 1937
James I. Beavers (Ark. PFC Veterinary Hosp. 16)	Jan. 4, 1894	June 15, 1952
Jane Beavers	no date	no date
Joe Beavers	no date	no date
L. D. Beavers	Apr. 10, 1885	Sept. 10, 1906
Samuel Beavers	no date	no date
Sidney C. Beavers	Sept. 13, 1871	Mar. 20, 1950
Stella Beavers	Feb. 9, 1916	Feb. 16, 1916
Willard Beavers	no date	no date
William T. Beavers (Ark. Pvt. 125 Inf. 32 Div.)	July 29, 1895	July 7, 1932
<u>BETHENA</u>		
Headrick Bethena	1876	1907
<u>CASTEEL</u>		
Charles R. Casteel (Ark. Pvt. 163 Inf. 39 Div.)		Sept. 19, 1918 only date
Grace Casteel	no date	no date
J. B. P. Casteel	Apr. 18, 1867	Feb. 26, 1891
Laura C. Casteel	Feb. 18, 1862	Aug. 17, 1941
Lillie M. Casteel	Aug. 12, 1836	July 19, 1837
Prudence Ann Casteel	no date	no date
<u>COVINGTON</u>		
Anna May Covington	Oct. 26, 1915	Dec. 29, 1917
Charles H. Covington	Sept. 25, 1904	Nov. 11, 1946
Elizabeth Arlonia Covington	May 27, 1874	Oct. 28, 1947
Jane Covington	1876	1917
Reubin Covington	1869	1920
<u>COX</u>		
Randy Doyle Cox	July 24, 1955 (only date given)	
<u>CUNNINGHAM</u>		
Jonathan Cunningham	Feb. 22, 1829	Sept. 26, 1896
Tabitha Cunningham (wife of J. C.)	June 11, 1844	Aug. 2, 1927

Heiskill Cemetery, page 2FLETCHER

Angel Fletcher	no date	no date
Clara Fletcher	"	"
Eldon Fletcher	"	"
Henry Fletcher	"	"
Julia Fletcher	"	"
Herbert Fletcher	"	"
Maudie Fletcher	"	"
Sally Fletcher	"	"
Willie Fletcher	"	"

HANEY

Helen Haney	Nov. 14, 1905	Mar. 30, 1959
Don C. Haney	Dec. 29, 1893	May 31, 1963
Mary A. Haney	Sept. 24, 1865	June 30, 1923
Matilda Haney	Jan. 2, 1825	Mar. 9, 1889
Thomas P. Haney	Oct. 28, 1863	Jan. 20, 1948
Van Buren Haney	July 11, 1895	Aug. 15, 1967

HAUGH

Arle T. Haugh	Oct. 22, 1897	Dec. 3, 1897
Elmer Haugh	July 25, 1900	Mar. 27, 1910

HEISKILL

Mary ---- Heiskill	June --, 1833	Sept. --, 1914
George W. Heiskill	Apr. 18, 1858	Mar 20, 1872
----- Heiskill	no date	no date

HUGHES

Jewell Hughes	21 years	Sept. 11, 1942
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HUDSON

Eva Hudson	no date	no date
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MAHAN

Infant Son of Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Mahan	July 10, 1938	July 10, 1938
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SARTIN

Helen Sartin	Aug. 11, 1870	May 20, 1953
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SETZER

Roka Setzer	no date	no date
-------------	---------	---------

SINOR

Lona B. Sinor	Feb. 11, 1892	Dec. 10, 1962
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RICHARDSON

George F. Richardson	July 31, 1909	Feb. 26, 1910
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WHITE

Ella M. White	1892	no date
George F. White	1889	1963

ALL FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

By Helen H. Tanger

In the days before modern mattresses, bedsteads were constructed in two ways. One type had holes bored through the rails six to ten inches apart. The other was built with knobs or pegs on the rails, spaced similarly. Cotton or hemp rope was pulled through the holes or around the pegs to provide a network surface on which to "lay the bed".

When the rope had been laced back and forth and to provide leverage to tighten it, bed wrenches made of oak or other hard wood were used. They were forked on one end with a perpendicular handle on the other. The rope was hooked in the forked end on the outside of the rail to take up the slack. When the last hole is reached and as much as possible of the slack has been taken up, the rope is carried over the rail and tied to a cross piece to hold it. Some early bed wrenches were cut with initials and dates, perhaps as gifts to newlyweds. Rope will stretch and sag and tightening it requires the strength of the men and boys in the family.

Early mattresses were made by filling "chaff bags" with chaff or seed coverings or other debris separated from the seed in threshing the grain. Straw was often used, some preferring rye, others oat straw. The Southern people were partial to cornhusks. These straws were cut into 4-8 inch lengths. Those who chose cornhusks used various ways of preparing the stuffing. Some used the entire husk, others cut or shredded it into small pieces while still green and allowed to curl, providing a soft springiness. Some preferred leaves of beech or other trees.

Feathers were used as stuffing for pillows and even for full beds, if they were available. The soft downy feathers of geese were preferred, although chicken and turkey ones were also used.

Metal bedsprings came into use after 1840, but some persons were afraid to use them because the metal might attract lightning.

The Farm & Household Cyclopedia published in New York in 1888 carried this cure for insomnia: "If troubled with wakefulness on retiring to bed, eat three or four small onions; they will act as a gentle and soothing narcotic. Onions are also excellent to eat when one is exposed to a cold."

Here is a curious charm dating about 1659 said by Cornwall, England folks when going to bed:

"Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on.
Four angels around my bed,
One to foot, and one to head,
And two to carry me when I'm dead."

* * * * *

CAVE EXPLORATION

The Baxter Bulletin for February 21, 1930 carried this item: "Recent exploration of a cave near Three Brothers close to the George Deatherage place brought to light facts that would seem to indicate it was the Old Spanish silver mine of legendary history. As long as any of the oldtimers can remember there has been a story of a lost silver mine in that section. The only thing missing to positively identify the cave is the absence of the white metal. Following a well defined break in the mountain the opening runs back for half a mile into the bowels of the earth through a mass of stalactites and stalagmites. That this cave was once a popular place for bears can be seen from the many signs they left. Bear tracks can be seen yet on some of the damp clay floors, and bear beds are numerous, as well as their claw marks on the walls.

BAXTER COUNTY HISTORY

Mr. Howard M. Knight, Co-editor
Rt. 9, Box 482, Emerald Bay Rd.
Mountain Home, Arkansas 72653

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