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St. Joseph's Orphanage Early 1900s

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Cover Photograph: *St. Joseph's Orphanage Early 1900s*

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Message from the Editor

During World War I, not long after Camp Pike began training Dough Boys, a group decided to build a community adjacent to the post to take advantage of the thousands of young men who might want to spend their money and take a little R&R. Laura Whitehead takes us on the journey of how the community of Belmont was built and how it served the soldiers. This issue of the *Arkansas Military History Journal* also includes a pictorial covering the POW camp located at Camp Robinson in WWII. Instead of his usual featured artifact article, which he even provided while he was deployed, LTC Matthew Anderson writes about the new weapons conservation lab at the Arkansas National Guard Museum. Finally, the illustration on this page is a caricature of COL Grover Cleveland Graham, who was the commander at Camp Robinson during WWII. During his time as commander, between 1941 and 1947, COL Graham kept a scrapbook, which was recently donated by his granddaughter and her husband, Susan Wright Wilson and Dean Wilson. Although very fragile, the scrapbook is an exciting addition to the Museum collection!

Dr. Raymond Screws

Editor/Arkansas National Guard Museum Director

501-212-5215; raymond.d.screws.nfg@mail.mil



BELMONT BOOM: THE RISE AND FALL OF LITTLE ROCK'S WWI CONEY ISLAND



BY LAURA WHITEHEAD

Right outside the old Camp Pike Gate a historic three story building rests on a hill, with the inscription “ST. JOSEPH’S HOME” in a stone arch. An orphanage was the longest and best known use of this building, but its brief time as a hotel during WWI was equally memorable. In some shape or form, this building has been occupied and in operation since it first opened its doors in 1910.¹ The town of Belmont, which developed around the Hotel Belmont, was an

important chapter in North Little Rock’s history and the city’s relationship with the United States Army and National Guard. Capitalizing on the construction of Camp Pike and the population influx it brought, The Hotel Belmont brought with it speculation and development which attracted some of the best entertainment of the time, as well as luxurious accommodations earning it the distinction of being one of the best hotels for officers in the country.

ST. JOSEPH'S ORPHANAGE



St. Joseph's Orphanage Early 1900s

The same characteristics that attracted Father John Morris to purchase land and build the eighty room orphanage drew the eye of the Federal Government.² Perched atop of what was locally known as Belmont Hill, the orphanage enjoyed some of the best views of the city and the Arkansas River. St. Joseph's occupies a large plot held by the Catholic Diocese, originally seven hundred and twenty acres, with the current holding at about seventy three acres.³ Three hundred acres of the orphanage were devoted to farm use, and would have been in production at the time the government began talking to the Bishop.⁴ Overall, this section of Levy had yet to go through any major developments, save a few farms and homesteads. As such it retained the beautiful Arkansas landscapes that still draws tourists. The building was finished in 1910 and designed for the Church by the architect

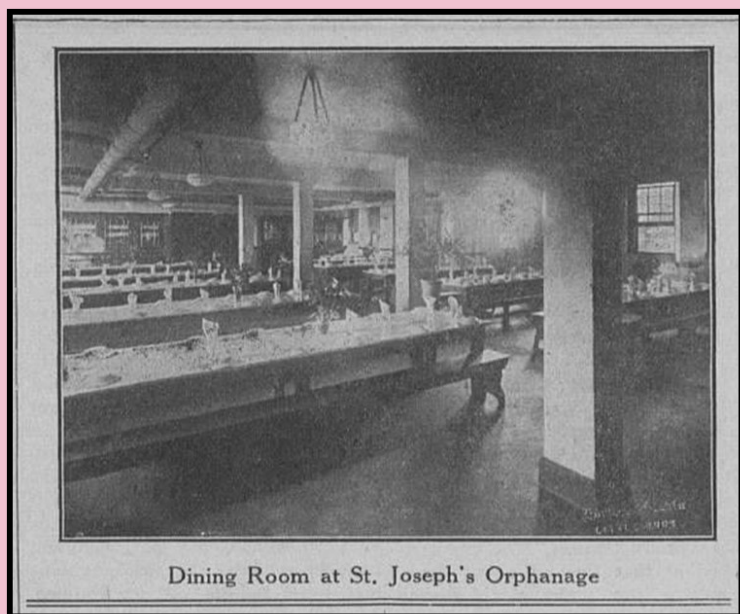
Charles L. Thompson for an estimated grand total of \$150,000.00.⁵ The recent construction of the orphanage made the building a practical choice for an officer's hotel. The Army wouldn't have any aging infrastructure or repairs to worry about, and would have little initial investment to adapt the space. Accounting for inflation, St. Joseph's construction bill of \$ \$3,859,377.55 ensured that it was not only solidly built, but offered modern comforts and technologies which would ensure the running of the church sponsored charity.⁶



Child in front of Orphanage, 1934

Money invested in the framework and systems in building ensured a higher standard of living in the orphanage. The twin water tanks in the attic, which are still there but no longer in use, guaranteed the building a reliable water supply. St. Joseph's also operated a self-contained electrical plant, ensuring that the building remained powered when others around went dark.⁷ The heavy use of brick and stone work was incorporated into advertisements for the hotel as creating a "fire proof" effect. When com-

pared to the wood framed and constructed buildings normally built in the early 1900's, the heavy use of masonry did grant an extra degree of protection.



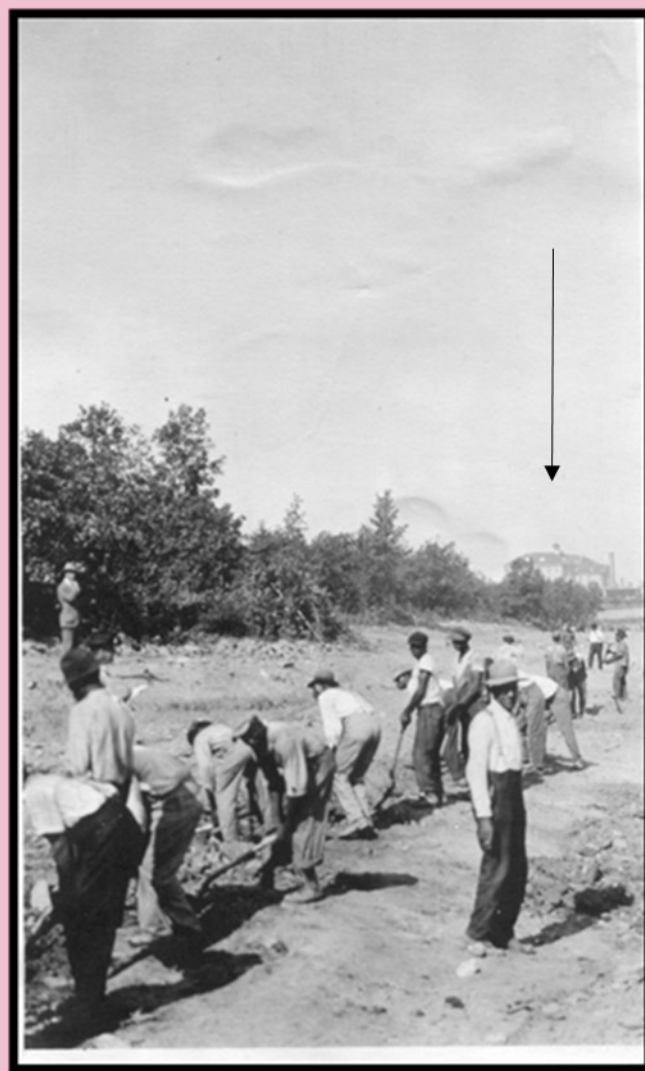
1934 Photo of Dining Room at Orphanage

The promise of an in-house bakery and commercially equipped kitchen, large dining facilities, and laundry made the hotel an attractive choice and reassured the government that the building would be able to serve its patrons at a level expected by officers and their families.

HOTEL BELMONT ERA

In 1917, the United States Government approached Bishop Morris to request the use of the orphanage's building for a Hotel. The close proximity of the building to Camp Pike can be seen in many of the historic photos showing the surrounding landscape. *The Guardian*, a Catholic newspaper, reports that

the Bishop volunteered the use of the building, as an act of patriotic duty to his country.⁸ Bishop Morris, the Benedictine Nuns, and the children relocated to another Church owned property at 24th and Gaines Street. They remained at the Pulaski Heights College Building in Little Rock for the duration of the war, and were able to return thereafter.⁹



Pipe line instillation on Camp Pike with Hotel Belmont in Background.

Local papers begin reporting in 1917 the intentions of The Belmont Development Company to establish a "cantonment city."¹⁰ The *Daily Arkansas Gazette*

Leases on Beautiful Belmont

ALL THE YEAR AROUND RESORT AND BUSINESS PLACE
(Former St. Joseph Orphanage Property)
ADJOINING CAMP PIKE AND FRONTING ONE MILE ON IT

Will Be Let Monday, September 3, Beginning at 10 A. M. ON THE GROUNDS

Monthly
Pay Roll
of
\$1,500,000
and
There Will Be
an Average
of 10,000
Daily Visitors
at Camp Pike



No Pass
Necessary to
Get on the
Grounds at
Belmont—
Everybody
Invited. Come and
See the
Beautiful View

HOTEL BELMONT, BRICKWORK STRUCTURE, 120 ROOMS, WHICH WILL BE OPENED TO
GUESTS THIS MONDAY—ADJACENT TO BE BARRACKS.

A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Block A, on which lots will be leased, lies between Crest Drive and the old Camp road. Only the road separates it from Camp Pike, where a population of 40,000 soldiers will be housed. They will be six miles from the city and its business and amusements. All of these will be right at their doors at Belmont. Business men and amusement caterers will see the extraordinary opening here for BIG BUSINESS in:

Dry Goods Stores	Movie Theatres	Soda Fountains
Drug Stores	Billiard Halls	Barber Shops
Confectioneries	Bowling Alleys	Savings Banks
Restaurants	Tailor Shops	Cleaning and Pressing
Shoe Stores	Gents' Furnishings	Jewelry and Watch Repairing
Shoe Repair Shops	Cigar Stores	Fruit Stores
		Garages, Etc., Etc.

Be On Hand Promptly and Select Your Site

The Most Desirable Sites Will Naturally Be the First to Be Chosen.
Office at the BELMONT HOTEL (Formerly Orphanage Building)
Do not wait too long, or the site you want may be gone and the price may be higher.

P. O. BOX 448
PHONE MAIN 9511 **BELMONT DEVELOPMENT COMPANY**

ran an article on August 26th, 1917 which indicates 320 acres were earmarked for lease and development. St. Joseph's building is said to have some interior remodeling work done by Frank W Gibb & Co. Architects, to outfit it for hotel service. Some exterior landscaping, and the addition of a terrace and southern portico were ordered as well. Lawrence V. Sheridan was employed by The Belmont Development Company to plan out the city of Belmont, the same man who was previously used to lay out Camp Pike.¹¹

City of Belmont Planned Development



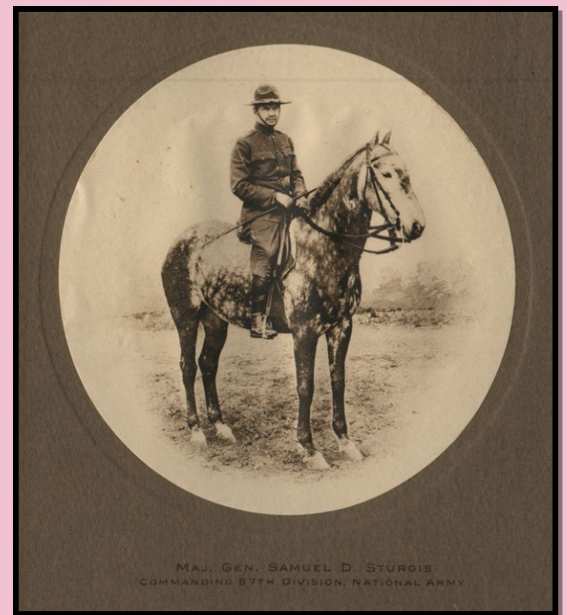


Officer's Club Building outside Hotel Belmont 1918

Belmont became the center of the social world surrounding Camp Pike as it filled with incoming officers and their families, as well as vacationers and the large staff needed to run the hotel. It remained the Hotel Belmont for 3 years, finishing service in 1920.¹² The decision to build the Officer's Club headquarters near the hotel increased the traffic to and promoted the idea of the space as a social destination for parties and dinners. Having a dance floor which was claimed to be "larger than any in Little Rock" probably helped a bit.¹³ Many holiday parties, balls, and celebrations were hosted by both the hotel and the club providing entertainment for both troops and civilians.

The Social listings in Little Rock newspapers between 1917 and 1922 highlight visits from out of state officers, their wives and relatives, or popular or

prominent civilians listed as staying or visiting the hotel. The Officer's Club officially opened December 31st, 1917 with a roll book listing around one thousand two hundred officers and a limited space for civilian members.¹⁴ A significant club member was Mrs. S. D. Sturgis who was married to Maj. Gen. Samuel D Sturgis. Sturgis commanded the 87th Division of the National Army during WWI. Unfortunately in January off 1919, the



Maj. Gen. S. D. Sturgis



An article announcing Mrs. Sturgis as Charmian of House Committee

club building burned and was reported as a complete loss.¹⁵ The destruction of the club building doesn't seem to have detracted from Belmont's ability to entertain for the remaining year of the hotel's service. The hotel and other businesses continued to serve as

**OFFICERS' CLUB AT
BELMONT IS BURNED**

**\$45,000 Loss in Early Morning
Fire—Two Women Are
Hurt.**

The Officers' Club at Belmont burned with an estimated loss of \$45,000 about 5 o'clock Monday morning. Mrs. A. M. Parker and her daughter, Miss Jessie Parker who were in the building at the time, escaped with serious injuries, and it was stated that other occupants of the club received minor injuries. W. G. Hutton said Monday at noon, that the origin of the fire had been traced to a defective furnace.

a source of fun and entertainment.

An indication of the hotel's reputation is found in a newspaper serial titled *The Lion's Mouse* which ran in the Daily Arkansas Gazette in 1919.¹⁶ The serial mentions the hotel as the lodging for one of the characters, implying that the hotel had become part of the cultural landscape. People in North Little Rock and beyond would have known about the hotel much as they would have known about the Capital Hotel or

Pfeifers' Store News for Men.

Refreshingly New!

Society Brand Clothes
for Spring
Schloss Bros. Clothes
for Spring
\$25 to \$40
Clothcraft Clothes
for Spring
\$20
New Spring Trousers
\$3.45 to \$5

Hat Tips That Are
Correct Style Tips
**Stetson Hats
for Spring**
—featuring the new "Stetsonian" Hat,
shown in all the latest colors, at.....\$6
Other new Stetson Hats, at.....\$4.50 to \$6
Heavy Fifth Ave. Hats, at.....\$3.50

Spring Weather Means
Spring Underwear
Munsing, Vassar and Cooper Lines,
\$1.65 to \$3
Out Cloths in madras, nainsook and mulls;
\$1.25 to \$2.

Spring Shirt News
New E. and W. Manhattan and Pfeifer
Shirts; soft and laundered styles.....\$2
Phoenix Little Sox; all colors and splendid
valve.....30¢
New Soft Collars; the latest styles, all
sizes.....20¢, 25¢, 35¢

**Correct Shoes
for Men**
Stacy-Adams Black Kid Shoes
\$10.
Stacy-Adams Russia Calf Shoes
\$11.
Pfeifers' Special Shoes; all leathers
\$6.50 to \$8

**Officers and Army Men
Visit Pfeifers'**
Cantonment Branch Store,
Camp Pike—Opposite Hotel Belmont.
Here you will find all the necessary equip-
ment as well as many other comforts.

Pfeifers'
MEN'S STORE
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

the Arlington Hotel. Belmont was much more than an updated officer's billeting, it was a destination.

BELMONT BOOMTOWN

Belmont was designed and built to be a destination from the start, and to rival the entertainment, style,

and comfort anything Little Rock could offer. It was envisioned as a source of clean entertainment, lacking the less tasteful vices of alcohol, gambling and other dangerous activities. The city grew in a very deliberate way, unlike the organic sprawling of slow developments or additions over time. For example, streets were laid out to work with the rise and fall of



View of Camp Pike front gate and guard shacks and Pfeifers Cantonment Store

the terrain, as opposed to a more traditional grid of right angles which reduced the need for large scale land leveling before construction started.¹⁷

Belmont earned the nickname as “Little Rock’s Coney Island” through the pool halls, skating rink, movie and live action theater, ice cream and candy shop, cigar shop, Ball Park, department store, gift and souvenir shop, and cafes.¹⁸ The two department stores belonged to the Pfeifer Brothers who already owned a large department store downtown on Main

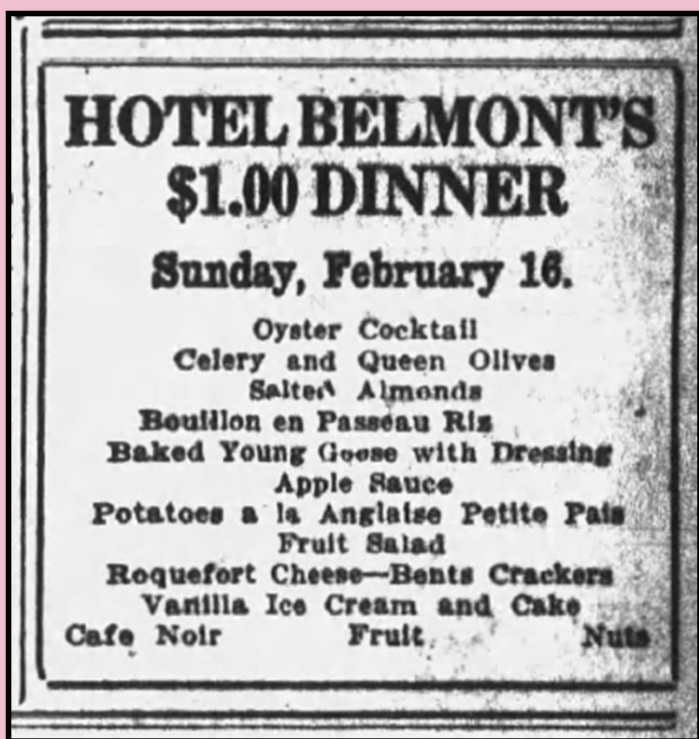
Street and a jewelry store. Pfeifers would have been a highly recognizable name and company for those in the Little Rock area, signaling quality and a degree of

Opening a store in Belmont offered Pfeifers an opportunity to test a new satellite location, and granted the new city the reputation of an older, familiar brand. The Pfeifer brothers’ stores lasted until the 1960’s when it was purchased by the Dillard’s Corporation. Details about other businesses remain vague, with the type or simply an owner mentioned in passing in records or newspaper articles. It is likely though with further research, more information can be uncovered.

A bank, a local post office branch, and a depot for the Missouri Pacific Rail Road were just a few of the city services in Belmont. The Army National Bank Branch was the only known bank in Belmont. It opened in 1918 and closed in 1919 based on news advertisements and announcements. A branch of The Lutheran Brotherhood occupied the small building afterwards.¹⁹ The Post Office and rail depot appear to have been housed in the same building, which is said to have been behind the Hotel Belmont. Much like the Army National Bank, the post office and rail station closed within a few years. An October 20, 1920 newspaper article says the Missouri Pacific Railroad claimed the reason for the closure was that “the salary of the agent exceeds [the] entire receipts of office.”²⁰

Another hotel amenity was an available stable and an auto garage for patrons. Judge Asher ordered the use of convicts and hired help to improve the roads leading up to and surrounding the hotel. The population spike demanded improvements to accommodate it and the road work served to help attract local automobile owners to the area. The news in North Little Rock support the idea of locals and guests of the hotel testing their car's abilities around the curves and hills surrounding Belmont. Accounts of auto acci-

large restaurant with weekly Sunday dinners featuring multiple courses, all for the tidy sum of one dollar. The dining facilities served the general public and soldiers from Camp Pike, and were also frequented by the staff that lived as boarders in the Hotel. Many socialites' or officer's dinner parties, dances, and celebrations were held at the Hotel Belmont during its short life which took advantage of the dining space and resources. For those that wished to venture to Little Rock and beyond for food or fun, a bus service to the train station, Camp Pike, and North Little Rock aided in their travels. Over time, the flow of traffic slowed, with less soldiers and locals filtering out of Belmont than in.²² The exact location of some stores and shops have been lost, but others such as the baseball field and the Army National Bank we are able to estimate with a degree of accuracy. Using Lidar, an aerial photography tool that uses radar to create images of the earth's topography with reduced vegetation cover, to scan the landscape and terrain as well as historic records and imagery, it is possible to create a map which show the known locations of buildings and our best estimates of others.



dents would indicate perhaps sometimes not very successfully.²¹

Soldiers had their choice of cantonment dining, but also the use of three cafes, as well as the dining facility at the hotel. The Belmont Café, Clark's Café, and the American Café are all part of the known restaurants in Belmont. The Hotel owned and operated a



Panoramic Photo of Belmont which shows many of the buildings and streets. Numbers correspond with map on page 15.

DECLINE, CLOSURE AND THE RETURN OF ST. JOSEPH'S ORPHANAGE

The end of the war signaled the decline for the city of Belmont. Over the course of a few years, the entertainment hub of Belmont opened and closed. The decrease in troops training at Camp Pike meant a sharp decline in income and population both on post and off. Business models which were based on capitalizing on the war time conditions failed to thrive in peace time, and as such, the effects were quickly felt in Belmont. Theaters, cafes, stores, and other features of the landscape shut their doors for service within a few years, yielding the area to farming once again.



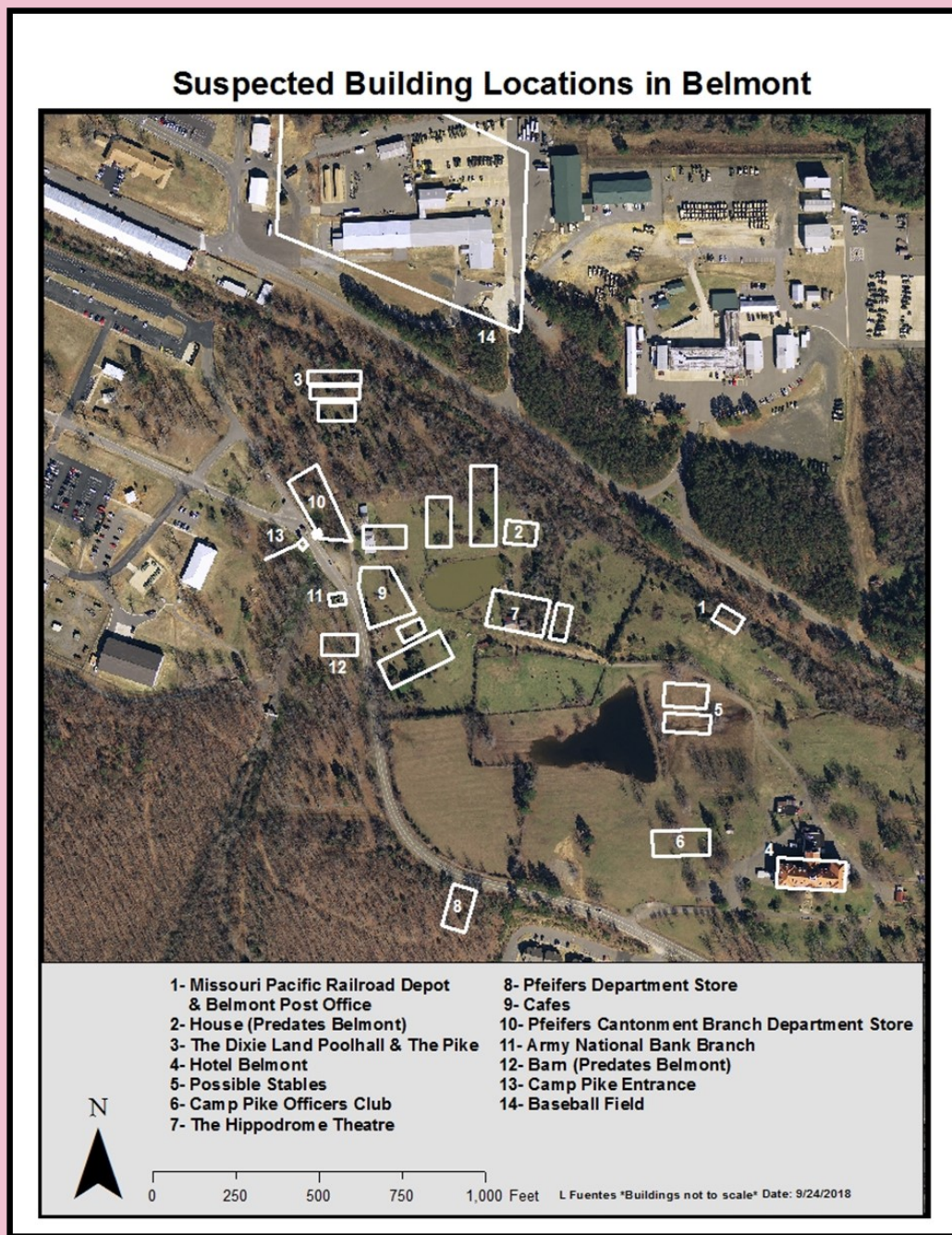
Advertisement for the sale of the Hippodrome Theatre's Piano.

Bishop Morris, the Benedictine Nuns, and the children returned in the summer of 1921.²³ The Officer's club which previously burnt was never rebuilt. It is unknown how fast or exactly when the other buildings were removed, reused, or rotted away. The speed at which the hotel and surrounding city grew does not seem to have created many lasting remnants. The planned roads were never fully completed or have become overgrown, lost, or shifted. Building foundations are equally obscured by vegetation or decay. Further investigations of land and tax records, archival resources, or local accounts and memories could hold clues which would reveal the true extent and placement of the city of Belmont. St. Joseph's was able to return and continue the work of the orphanage for another half century. Any improvements made by the Army and the Belmont Development Co. do not seem to have hindered Bishop Morris's charity works.

BUILDING TODAY

The St. Joseph's Center currently holds a lease for the Hotel Belmont building from the Catholic Diocese. Over the years, this property has been an orphanage, a hotel, a day-care, and is currently a multi-use space. The one hundred and eleven year old building retains much of its original character and features, but needs modernization and rehabilitation similar to other historic buildings constructed during this time. In 1974, the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its significance to the contributions to the history of Levy and Camp Pike. The St. Joseph's Center works to keep the doors open as well as raise aware-

ness of the value and history of the building, how it helped shape life at Camp Pike and Levy during the First World War, and how it can continue to serve the city of North Little Rock.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura Whitehead is an assistant in cultural resources under the leadership of the Camp Robinson Environmental Team. She works closely with Deanna Holdcraft who is the Cultural Resource Manager, which provides archology services for Camp Robinson.

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¹Taylor, Sandra. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*. October 1974. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas, p 8.

Photo: Mike Keckhaver, Entrance to St. Joseph's Homes in North Little Rock (Pulaski County), Digital, Encyclopedia of Arkansas, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/media-detail.aspx?mediaID=10298>.

² Holly Tatom Tindall, *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, St. Joseph's Home, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=5360>.

³ North Belt Freeway- Environmental Impact Statement U.S. Department of Transportation. February 3, 1984. Federal Highway Administration and the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District, Pulaski County, Arkansas. Report No: FHWA-AR-EIS-84-01-D.

⁴ Taylor, Sandra. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*. October 1974. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas, p 8.

Photo: Unknown, Belmont Hotel Camp Pike, Print, <https://activerain.com/blogsvie/4803240/belmont-hotel-camp-pike-little-rock-ar--is-it-still-there->

⁵ Taylor, Sandra. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*. October 1974. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas, p 5.

⁶ "CPI Inflation Calculator." CPI Inflation Calculator, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm. (note that this number is based on the year 1913 instead of 1910)

Photo: Unknown, Untitled. 1934, Print, Arkansas Catholic Newspaper Archives, The Guardian Oct. 20th 1934, http://arc.stparchive.com/page_image.php?paper=ARC&year=1934&month=10&day=20&page=1&mode=F&base=ARC10201934p01&title=Arkansas%20Catholic.

⁷ Taylor, Sandra. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*. October 1974. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas, p 2.

Photo: Unknown, Dining Room at St. Joseph's Orphanage, 1934, Print, The Guardian, October 20th, 1934.

⁸ "St. Joseph's Orphanage." *The Guardian*, 20 Oct. 1934, pp. 1–4.

⁹ Ibid.

Photo: Unknown, Pipeline Instillation, Print, AR ARNG CRM photo archive.

¹⁰ "Cantonment City to be Erected." *Daily Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas), August 26, 1917.

¹¹ Ibid.

Photo: Unknown, Belmont Development Company Advertisement, 1917, Arkansas Democrat September 1st, 1917 p 3.

¹² Taylor, Sandra. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*. October 1974. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas, p 8.

Photo: Unknown, WWI Officer's Club Building, Print, AR ARNG CRM photo archives.

¹³ "Open Club December 31 New Year's Eve is Date Set By Board of Directors" *Daily Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas), Nov 28th, 1917, p 3.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Photo Left: Unknown, Maj. Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis, Print, AR ARNG CRM photo archives.

Photo Right: "Mrs. Sturgis Chairman" Daily Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock, Arkansas) May 26th, 1918, p3.

¹⁵ "Belmont Club is Destroyed by Fire" *Daily Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas) Jan 14th, 1919, p3., "Officer's Club at Belmont is Burned" *Arkansas Democrat* (Little Rock, Arkansas) Jan 13th, 1919, p 1.

¹⁶ C.N. and A.M. Williamson, "The Lion's Mouse" *Daily Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas) Jan 19th, 1919, p 32.

Photo: "Belmont Club is Destroyed by Fire" Daily Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock, Arkansas) Jan 14th, 1919, p 3.

¹⁷ "Cantonment City to be Erected." *Daily Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas), August 26, 1917.

Photo: Daily Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock, Arkansas) March 9th, 1918, p 11.

¹⁸ "Little Rock Indeed Fortunate in Having Such a Hotel as The Belmont at Camp Pike" *Arkansas Democrat* (Little Rock, Arkansas) Aug 31st, 1918, p 36.

Photo: Unknown, Camp Pike Entrance, Print, AR ARNG CRM photo archives.

¹⁹ "Camp Pike Shrapnel" *Daily Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas) Jan 12th, 1919, p 3.

²⁰ "Wants to Close Belmont Station" *Daily Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas) Oct 20th, 1920, p 6.

²¹ *The Daily Arkansas Gazette* and *Arkansas Democrat* report accidents on at least two occasions: 11.29.1917 and 9.22.1919.

Photo: Daily Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock, Arkansas) Feb 16th, 1919, p 5.

²² *Photo: Unknown, Camp Pike & Belmont Panorama, Print, AR ARNG CRM photo archives.*

²³ "St. Joseph's Orphanage." *The Guardian*, 20 Oct. 1934, p. 1–4.

Photo: Daily Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock, Arkansas) March 31st, p 9.

PICTORIAL OF GERMAN POWS AT CAMP ROBINSON DURING WWII



German POWs arriving at Camp Robinson, 1944
Photo from COL Grover Graham, Post Commander WWII

On Camp Joseph T. Robinson was one of 142 major German POW sites in the US. The peak month for enemy POWs in America was in May 1945, with 425,871 captured soldiers, and 371,683 were Germans. Most POWs in the United States were from Germany. Besides those from Hitler's army, there might have been a few Italians at Camp Robinson as well.

Other major POW sites in Arkansas were at Pine Bluff Arsenal, Camp Chaffee, Camp Dermott, Camp Monticello, and Camp Jerome, where one of the two Japanese Internment Camps was located. The Camp Robinson site is located in the current TA-03 and consisted of 300 acres. It was the most important POW camp in Arkansas. The Camp Robinson POW site housed around 3,000 to 4,000 German soldiers, many captured in North Africa as part of Rommel's Army. Camp Robinson was also the administrative center for several POW work camps in the central and southern area of the State, which housed an additional 7,000 POWs.

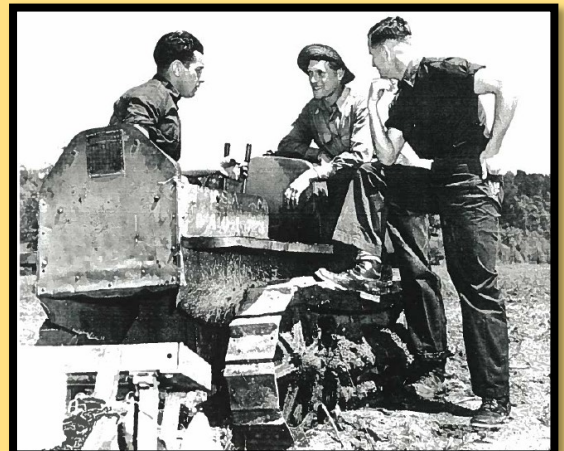


The Arkansas National Guard Museum Foundation is attempting to create an interpretive heritage trail at the POW site.

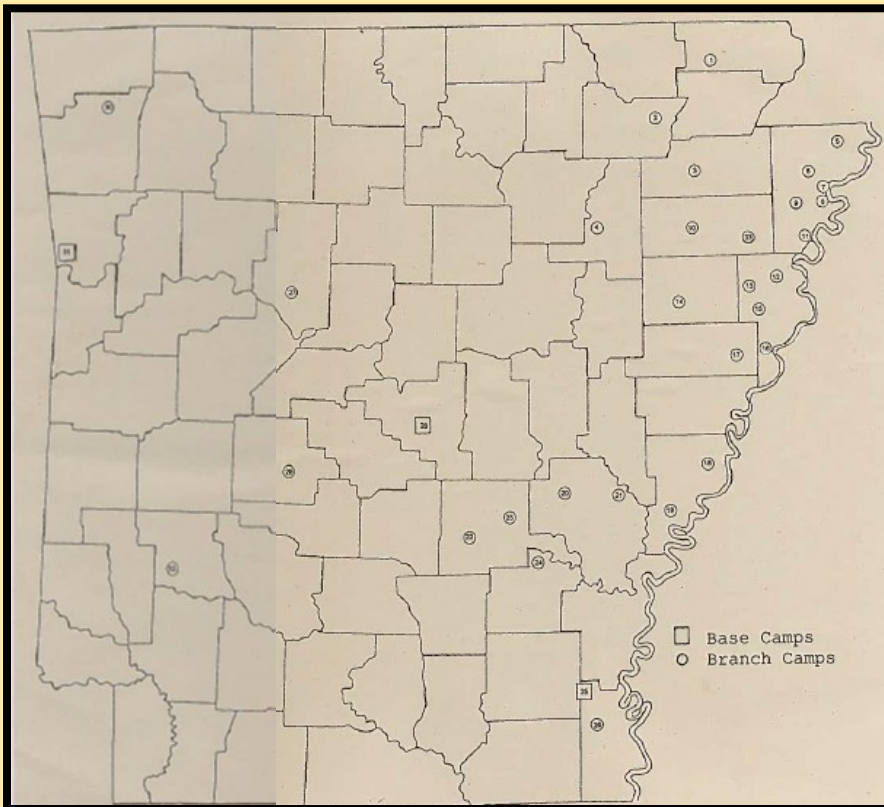
PHOTOS

Left: POW driving a tractor at a POW work farm.

Right: POWs working on a POW work farm.



Map of Arkansas POW Camps

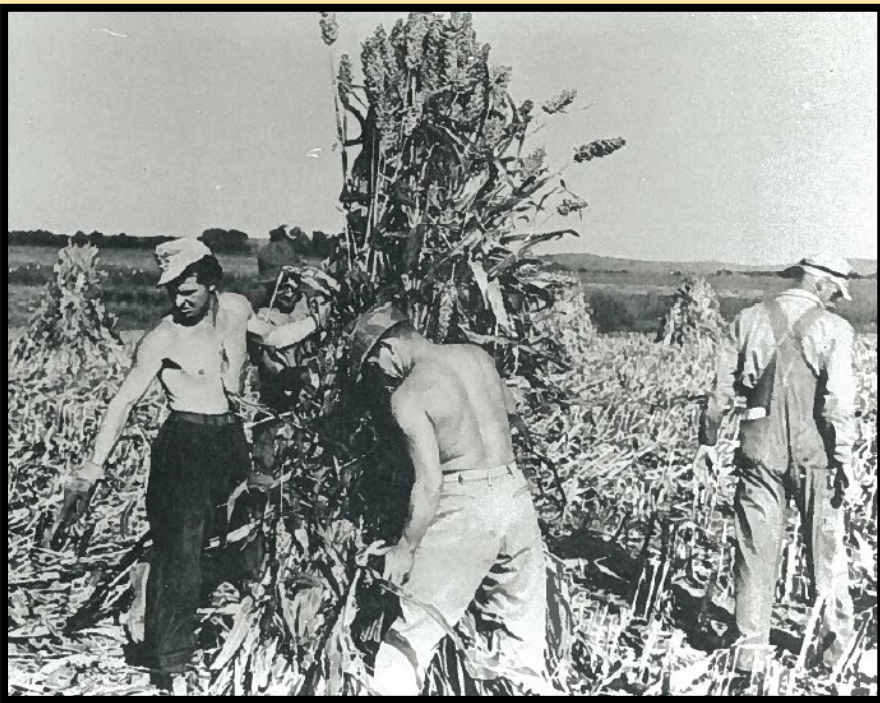


SC 390375

8SvC-9-43-1942 Lot # 5331 wait
 German prisoners of War unit/for the
 signal to began eating. The Mess Halla
 in the Camp Robinson Prisoner of War Intern-
 ment Camp are staffed by the prisoners.
 Camp Jos. T. Robinson, Arkansas. 9/23/43.
 Photo by T/4 Rudolph Krakora.
 Sig. Sect., Hq. Det.
 1861st Unit.

PHOTO
 T 4 OCT 1944
 LOT 5331

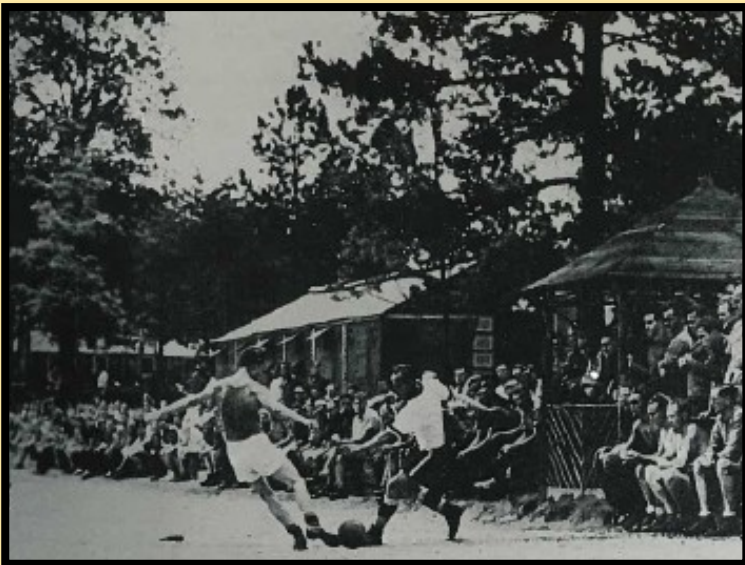




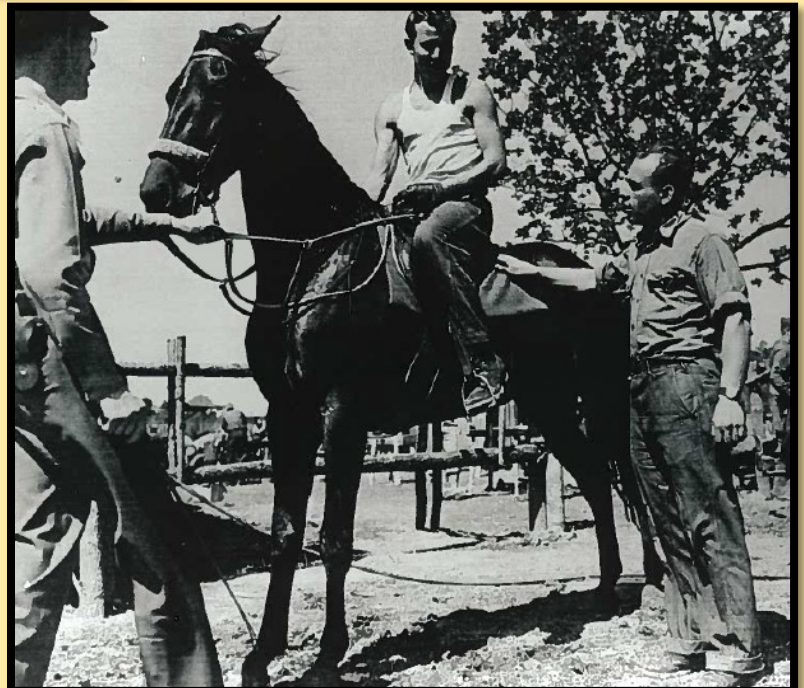
Building Milo Stocks



Planting Onions



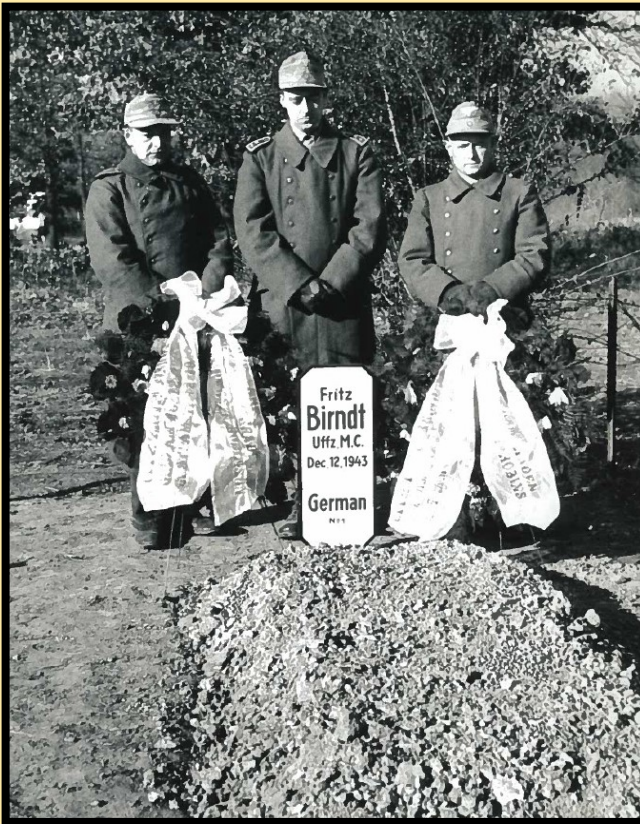
Soccer game among POWs, might be at Camp Robinson



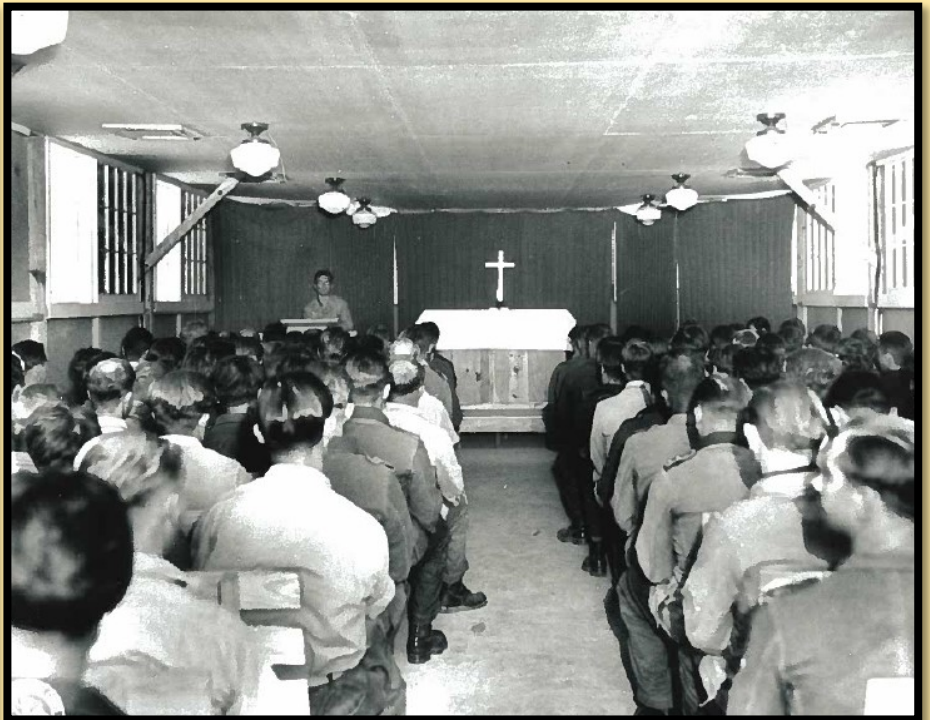
POW Workers on a Horse



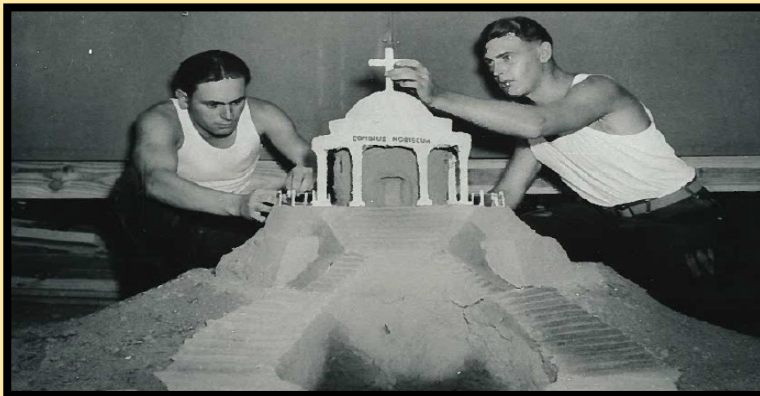
POWs returning from work detail, Camp Robinson



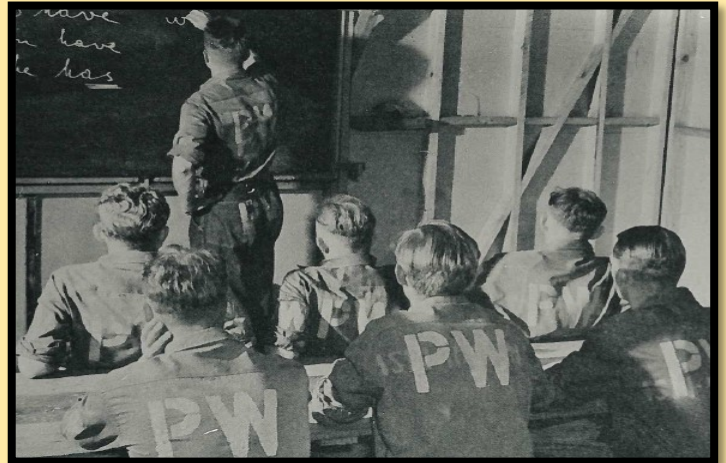
POW Funeral at Camp Robinson



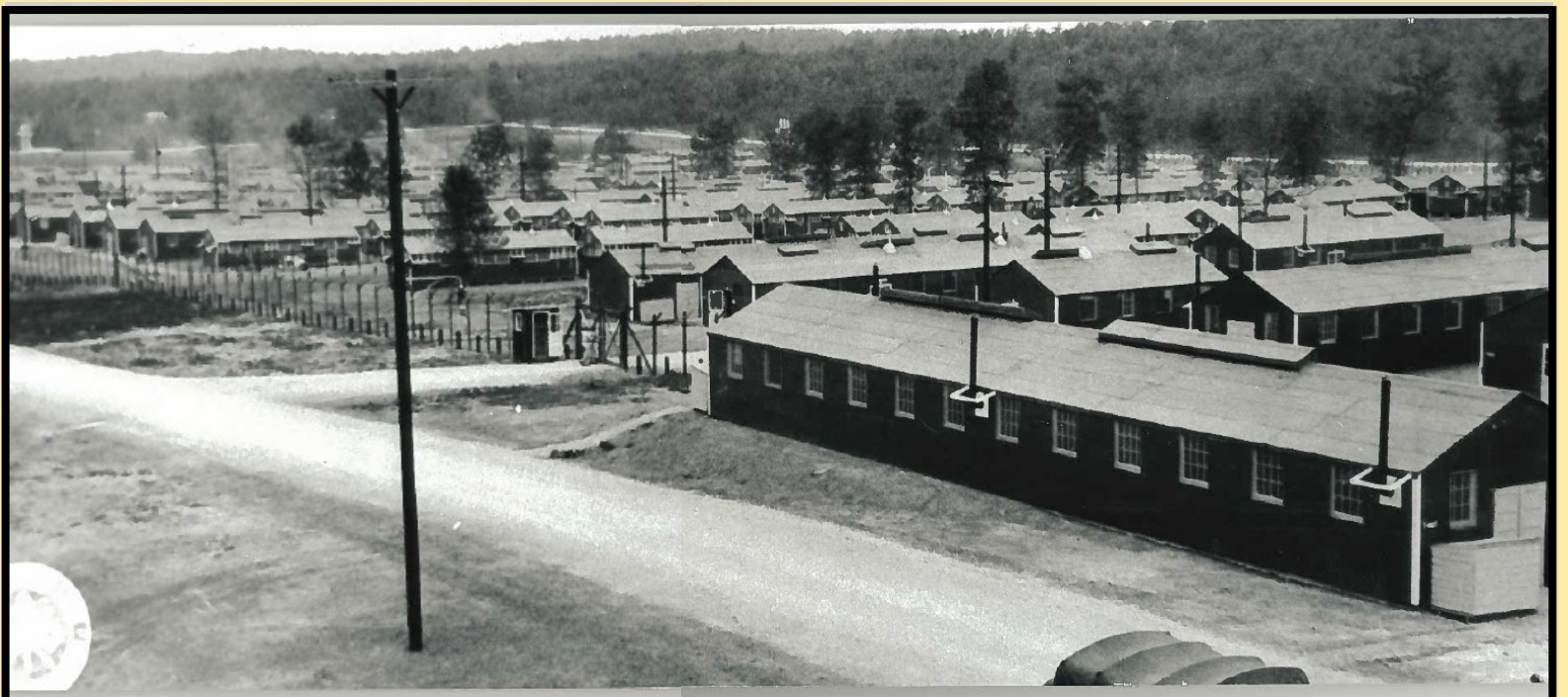
POWs attending church. Most preachers were from the German Military



Camp Robinson held competitions for decorative gardens.



POWs in Class, Camp Robinson



POW Camp, Camp Robinson



5331
This elaborate fortress of ancient Germany is reproduced here in very marvelous manner by these German prisoners of war. The materials used in building the structure were obtained from the rocks and pebbles within the prison compound.

Camp Jos. T. Robinson, Arkansas
88v0 - 9 - 43 - 1846 9/23/43
Photo by T/4 Rudolph Krakora
Sig. Sect., Hq. Det.
1861st Unit

9-43-1846



5331
German prisoners of war interned in the Camp Robinson War Prison Internment Camp spend their spare hours building replicas of old German castles. These tiny buildings are made of small stones chipped to form and held together by clay mortar.

Camp Jos. T. Robinson, Arkansas
88v0 - 9 - 43 - 1831 9/23/43
Photo by T/4 Rudolph Krakora
Sig. Sect., Hq. Det.
1861st Unit

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88v0-9-43-1846

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Lt. Col. Virgil Caldwell, Commanding Officer, Camp Robinson Prisoner of War Internment Camp inspects some of the handicraft displayed by the prisoners during their free hours. Here one of the prisoner masons explains the meaning of the replica that he has constructed of an old castle in Germany.

Camp Jos. T. Robinson, Arkansas
88v0 - 9 - 43 - 1832 9/23/43
Photo by T/4 Rudolph Krakora
Sig. Sect., Hq. Det.
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88v0-9-43-1833

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These prisoners of war have made a mosaic map of the world. In it they have traced their route across the South Atlantic Ocean to their port of debarkation and their route across the states to their present internment camp.

Camp Jos. T. Robinson, Arkansas
88v0 - 9 - 43 - 1833 9/23/43
Photo by T/4 Rudolph Krakora
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Weapons Artifact Conservation Lab

By LTC Matthew W. Anderson

Over the past twenty years the Arkansas National Guard Museum has amassed an enviable collection of 19th and 20th century martial arms. Most of which are on display. These artifacts are from several nations and show many aspects of the progression of military firearms development. Many represent the American Soldiers who carried them in peacetime and war. In some cases they are weapons captured from the enemy in battle. Each has a story to tell of a time and place in the history of our nation and the Soldiers who carried them. If we are going to continue to tell their story then we must make a determined effort to preserve these artifacts for future generations.

In 2015, the Arkansas National Guard Museum Board noted that several weapons in the collection were beginning to show signs of neglect. Several areas of concern were identified that needed to be addressed. First, flooding in the basement was affecting the ability to control the moisture in the museum. Second, the largest single weapons collection known as the Yeater Collection had been encased in an inaccessible display case. While this provided some level of protection, it prevented the access necessary to perform preventive maintenance and upkeep. Third, there was no means to clean and maintain the weapons properly. Dr. Raymond Screws, the Museum Director and Ms. Erica McGraw, the Museum Assistant set out to address these areas of concern. Through a large two-phase construction process much of the flooding issue was resolved. Next they worked to redesign and have a new display case built. For the final issue, Dr. Screws sought out the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, which was the only National Guard Museum that has a conservation lab. After visiting, and coordinating with Mr. Glenn Husted, the Collections Manager, a plan

was developed and executed to establish a Weapons Artifact Conservation Lab at Camp Robinson in the Museum.



Left to right: Timothy Broone, Mr. Robert Fite, SMSgt Daniel Norwood, Mr. Stephone Keeton, Mr. Glenn Husted, LTC Matthew Anderson, Dr. Raymond Screws Front: Mr. Dan Horan

On 24 to 25 January 2019, a class was held at the museum with Mr. Glenn Husted instructing along with his colleague Timothy Broone. In attendance was Mr. Dan Horan, SMSgt Daniel Norwood, Mr. Stephen Keeton, Mr. Bob Fite, Dr. Raymond Screws and myself. The presentation was an excellent primer, informing us that the process is much more than just cleaning weapons. It involves documenting the condition of the weapon as it is from crown to butt plate, photographing it and looking it over closely to determine if all parts are present and correct in type and finish for the time it was manufactured. Are any parts refinished or replaced at some time in its history? What do the marks and stampings tell about the manufacture, issue and repair of the weapon? All this involves detailed research and can provide some interesting in-

sight into its provenance.

Further research is often needed to understand how to properly disassemble/reassemble the weapon. In many cases we will take it beyond the basic field stripping procedure to ensure every part is inspected, documented and cleaned. In some cases it requires a judgement call to stop when there is risk that further action may cause damage either due to not having proper armorers tools specific to the weapon or due to the age and condition of the parts. We learned that there are two different types of care for museum weapons, they are conservation and restoration. Conservation involves cleaning and encapsulating in wax to preserve it as is. Restoration involves taking further steps to repair broken or damaged areas to return it to its original condition. Restoration must be carefully considered since it may erase some of the history of the weapon. An example would be a battered, beaten

and cracked stock may look bad but may be a reflection of the heavy use at the time it was carried or captured.

Since the class, the first team of volunteers began work on the collection starting with several weapons that are not currently on display. Many of these have never been touched since they were turned over to the museum, having dirt, rust, grease, cosmoline, carbon and copper deposits. This has given us an opportunity to refine our processes and skills before we begin to work on more rare and delicate arms. In all we have 278 weapons and accessories to conserve. They range from an early 1800's flintlock musket to WWII Japanese Type 96 25mm anti-aircraft gun. Each weapon can take from one week to six months depending on the condition and research required. It will be a long process but we have a team of dedicated volunteers determined to get it done.



Top Left & Bottom Right:

Volunteer SSG (Ret) Dan Horan working on a 1829 Pomeroy US Rifle.

Bottom Left:

MG 08/15 Maxim Machine Gun being worked on by LTC Anderson.



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Located at:
Camp J.T. Robinson
Lloyd England Hall
Building 6400, Box 58
North Little Rock, AR 72199-9600
Phone: 501-212-5215
Fax: 501-212-5228