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Patterson left large legacy behind for Clark County

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Patterson left large legacy behind for Clark County

By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

Robert Henderson Patterson was born in 1892 in Pike County, one of ten children of Robert O. and Alsie Henderson Patterson. The R.O. Patterson family had moved to Clark County in the 1870s, then to Oklahoma, returning to their farm in 1903. After serving in World War I, Robert H. Patterson spent most of the rest of his life in the Dobyville community.

A good, dedicated student, young Robert H. Patterson, like many other rural pupils, attended classes for three or four months each winter, and another few months in mid-summer. In the winter, long distances, cold weather, and overflowing creeks created many obstacles on the way to school. Patterson went to an academy in Port Gibson, Mississippi, where he had a grueling schedule — his day started at 4 a.m., milking cows; then, he attended classes all day; and in the evenings, he studied until 10 p.m. or after. Patterson followed the schedule seven days a week.

When the United States entered World War I, Robert Patterson joined the Marines. After his rigorous academy schedule, Patterson likely found boot camp to be almost like a vacation. While stationed in Haiti, he was made mess sergeant even though he had no previous cooking experience. According to reports, under his supervision, food in the mess hall improved considerably!

When the war was over, Patterson returned to Clark County and married Alice Tidball in 1920. At the time, she was teaching school at Dobyville. The couple moved to Hempstead County and had two children. Robert later married again, and the Pattersons lived in the Dobyville area where he farmed until retirement. He died in 1992 and was buried in the Dobyville Cemetery.

A veteran of World War I and a leader in community affairs, Robert Patterson left a significant footprint in local history matters. He helped establish the Dobyville Cemetery Trust Fund. He also compiled a history of the Dobyville area and wrote many



COURTESY OF THE CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Robert H. Patterson, U.S. Marine, is pictured in his World War I uniform.

news articles from his memories about that small, rural community, thereby preserving the information for future generations.

For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum at the train depot (www.clark-countyhistory.org or 230-1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or 245-5332).

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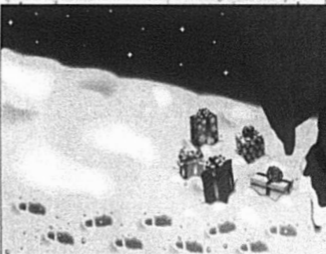
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