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Telephone one of top stories of 1915

By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

The 2015 edition of the Clark County Historical Journal was recently released by the Clark County Historical Association. The volume includes articles on a wide range of topics. One of the articles, as its title suggests, "100 Years Ago: Front-Page Stories from the Southern Standard," features items found in the 1915 local newspaper. Among the newsworthy subjects was a new means of communication — the telephone.

The March 18, 1915, paper carried an article titled, "First Use in Arkansas of the New Invention for Long-Distant Address Will Be Made in Our City." It read: "In connection with a faculty recital at the big auditorium of Henderson-Brown College, Governor Hays will make a 20-minute speech talking from Little Rock over the long distance lines of the Southwestern Telegraph & Telephone Company. We are very proud to have the honor of this new invention (The Loud Talking Telephone) wherein we are able to sit in our own auditorium and hear the governor of our state make an address while sitting in his office in the capitol building. This is the first speech to be delivered over the Long Distance Lines in the state. Every-



one should attend. Admittance is free."

An April article proclaimed a business application for telephone service: "Arkadelphia was pushed into the limelight on Wednesday of last week when the Arkadelphia Milling Company made a \$15,000 sale of flour to the Commission for Relief in Belgium over the long distance telephone from Arkadelphia to New York. The sale of 2,000 barrels was made in record time, Mr. Adams, manager of the company, having called at 10:55 (Central Time) and was connected with New York in less than five minutes and secured the contract at one minute before 12 o'clock (Eastern Time). The sale is one of the largest made in this state and is considered a deal of especial significance in the relation of the telephone to salesmanship."

Also in April of 1915, the telephone assisted law enforcement officials.

"Quick work was done by officers in apprehending a horse thief in our county last week. On Thursday night a young man about 25 stole a horse from Ben Helms and a saddle from W.P. Owen out about Unity. The theft was reported to Sheriff Golden at 6 o'clock Friday morning and by 7 o'clock that night Roy had his man safely landed in jail. The telephone was used to advantage in this case. Upon being informed of the theft, Roy began telephoning in all directions from town, and finally got trace of his man at Alpine. He notified the

officers at Amity, and when the horse thief came riding into that town upon his purloined mount, he was pounced upon and sent back to Arkadelphia."

For additional information about the Clark County Historical Journal, other Historical Association publications, or Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum at the train depot (www.clarkcountyhistory.org or 230-1360) or the Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or 245.5332).

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Shane Allen
Publisher

James Leigh
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Donnie Hollis
Circulation Manager
Lynn McAnelly
Lead Pressman

Marcia Hunt
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