

Highlights of The Covington Leader and True Tales of Tipton

- 1940 -

The Pure Oil Company begins the drilling of a test well on the Rob Roy McGregor farm three and one-half miles north of Covington on the Flatiron Road. Several oil companies are leasing land from Tipton County north to Reelfoot Lake. Predictions by state geologists are that West Tennessee may become one of the major oil producing areas of the United States.

The Covington Leader reports that "Tipton County's oil bubble has burst into more pieces than a boardinghouse pie." Whatever the Pure Oil Company wanted to know, it has found out in record time. Drilling operations have stopped and the drilling crews have returned to Illinois.

The Confederate reunion at Brighton is held for the last time. The reason for its demise, lack of interest, no doubt is caused by the passing from the scene of all the county's Confederate veterans.

O-Cedar Mill is largest industrial plant in county with 200 persons on the payroll.

Peak production maintained at the Mason Chair Factory.

Two tennis courts are built in Covington.

- 1941-

Henry Theis, a fisherman, discovers the charred remains of a steamboat which has washed out beneath the bluff at Randolph. The remains are probably that of the Mississippi which sank in 1846 under very unusual circumstances.

Richardson Landing Concrete Casting Plant was built.

Coca-Cola opened a plant in Covington.

Italy and Germany join Japan in war against the United States.

- 1942 -

New Ritz Motion Picture Palace opened.

Drive for scrap rubber began in county for war.

Banks were selling U. S. War Savings Bonds.

Sanford Farris Ray becomes Tipton County's first casualty of World War II, when he goes down with 100 officers and men aboard the destroyer Jacob Jones, torpedoed off Cape May, N.J.

Richard B. Baptist, who has been elected and reelected Judge of the 16th Judicial Circuit of Tennessee without opposition since 1918, is appointed Judge of the Court of Appeals of the State of Tennessee.

- 1943 -

Pfc. Elbert Keel of Atoka fires a shot in Sicily which makes headlines around the world. He has the distinction of firing the first American shell at Italy proper following the fall of Sicily to Allied forces.

The U.S.S. Cates, a Navy destroyer escort built by the Tampa Shipbuilding Company, is christened in honor of Seaman William F. Cates, who died at his gun aboard the cruiser San Francisco in battle off the Solomon Islands in November 1942. The 23-year-old Drummonds native has been cited posthumously by President Roosevelt for his "extraordinary courage" in the engagement.

- 1944 -

Tipton County is better off than one year ago, according to a composite statement of the six banks in the county and is well able to meet its Fourth War Loan quota, which is \$798,000, and still carry on business involving cash and credit in a handy manner.

Bonds were put on sell this week at the Ruffin and Ritz theatres and with each bond purchase a free ticket is given to the bond premier showing of the picture, "Thank Your Lucky Stars."

The Navy launches the U.S.S. Naifeh at Orange, Texas. The destroyer escort vessel is named in Honor of Lieutenant Alfred Naifeh, a Covington native who gallantly died in line of duty on Oct. 16, 1942.

Tipton County goes over top on war loan in last big push. Almost half of the quota was raised during the last week. Covington under Chairman John M. Walker set the pace in the final push with a total of \$186,615.25 raised during the last six days.

Some of the currency especially printed in combat areas has trickled back to this county. The bills issued in \$1, \$5 and \$10 denominations are in all respects similar to silver certificates issued for circulation in the United States, except that the seal is to the right of the portrait on the face of the note and is printed with yellow ink instead of blue.

Tipton Countians bought \$841,996.50 worth of War Bonds during the Fourth War Loan Drive, announced Chairman W. A. Barret.

Twenty pupils of the Munford School narrowly escaped serious injury, when the bus on which they were riding overturned in a ditch.

Tax collections to the Feb. 29 deadline amounted to \$212,526.41, Trustee W. C. Harris stated. This compares with \$233,671.53 collected to the deadline in 1942, down \$11,145.

Increases in postage rates will become effective March 26, Postmaster John McBride stated this week. Beginning on that date, letter mail for local delivery will be three cents instead of two cents. There is no change in the three-cent rate for out-of-town letters.

Fire broke out in the Federal Compress and Warehouse Co. building on East Liberty when a bolt of lightning struck the roof and ignited several bales of cotton. The warehouse safety sprinkler system was automatically turned on by the blaze and probably prevented more serious damage.

Alderman John M. Walker, owner and manager of the Walker Chevrolet Co., almost turned town crier when he received a brand new ton-and-a-half truck, the first in almost two years.

A copy of *The Covington Leader* lying on a desk somewhere in Cardiff, South Wales, brought letters this week to two residents of Covington. Two Welsh girls saw in that issue of *The Leader* where Wayne Taylor had had surgery and Malcolm Pace had been quite ill for the past several days. The two letters expressed sympathy for the two and requested that their letters be answered.

Four whiskey stills were raided by Sheriff Jim T. Scott and Deputy Vernon Pickens, two and one half miles west of Highway 59 in the Gainsville vicinity. The four stills were within one mile of each other. No one was found at any of the stills and no arrests were made.

Work on a new batch of 36,000 surgical dressings was begun at the Red Cross room in the Covington Grammar School and more volunteer workers are needed.

Mason has skyrocketed from no doctors to two doctors; Dr. H. V. Bell and Dr. Thomas Johnson are now practicing in Mason and the surrounding vicinity.

Two crap games were raided in Tipton County by state police during the past week, one at Tipton and the other at Randolph. Twelve were arrested for gaming and brought before Esq. W. J. Fredrickson. They were fined \$5 each.

Capture of the first French city by allied invasion forces was announced today from Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force. The Nazi-fortified town of Bayeux, five miles inshore in the center of the Normandy invasion coast, was taken and the highway from Bayeux to Caen was cut as allied troops moved inland in generally heavy fighting against the counter-attacking German reserves.

Fourteen Jap airplane carriers and other types of vessels were sunk by the United States Fifth Fleet Monday evening in a clash between a sizeable portion of Japan's naval forces and the U. S. task force supporting the invasion of Saipan Island in the Marianas. The action took place in the waters between the Marianas and the Philippines.

Close on the heels of the approval of a 12-cent increase in the county tax rate bringing the total rate for the year 1944 to \$2.90, the Quarterly Court Monday approved a motion of Esq. V. W. Bringle calling for the appointment by Judge J. B. Overall of a committee to study the tax structure of the county.

Several ponds have been built recently in the Mason-Gainsville community by the Smith Contraction Co., of Memphis under the auspices of the Tipton County Soil Conservation District.

All gasoline dealers are to meet at the courthouse in Covington on Friday night to discuss the present gasoline situation.

It is hoped that more stringent restrictions can be avoided if the oil companies and retailers' campaign is successful in wiping out counterfeit and stolen coupon rackets or misuses of legally issued coupons proves successful.

Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Hunter have resigned as superintendent and matron of Dunlap Orphanage, effective Jan. 1. Their successors have not yet been chosen. They have been at Dunlap for 22 years.

The status of the judgeship of the 16th Judicial Circuit of Tennessee remained obscured this week as election officials pondered the effect of Judge Lamar Spragins' name being left off the general election ballot on Aug. 3.

Cotton crop prospects in Tipton County continued good this week as light showers fell and the leaf worm menace failed to develop into a serious threat. Approximately 100 bales of the anticipated 45,000 bale crop had been ginned over the county. Reports indicate the staple is good, probably better than last year.

Thirty-five years in the employ of one person is the record of C. A. Elam, who retired this week as clerk of the Covington post office. Mr. Elam never saw his boss -Uncle Sam- but he worked under five of his representatives during the time he was postal clerk.

Volunteer workers at the local Surgical Dressing Unit were notified this week that this district is leading in the number of dressings that have been shipped. The local unit has completed 155,400 bandages up to Sept. 1.

Resurfacing of city streets by the Memphis Stone and Gravel Co. is under way here this week. The job includes application of a coat of tar to the old street surface followed by a coat of fine gravel. Asphalt is still a war critical material and not obtainable for street paving.

An emergency collection of clothing is being conducted by the Central Christian Church in connection with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

At least 15 million pounds of usable garments, new or used, are needed by men, women and children in liberated areas. Millions of people have been driven from their homes by bombing and shelling and lost all of their possessions, including clothes.

Tipton County put 45,650 pounds of waste paper into the paper trade channels during the month of September. The waste paper campaign is being carried on by Company M of the State Guard.

Three buildings are going up in the vicinity of the intersection of Highway 51 and West Liberty Avenue in Covington and will house two business enlargements and one new firm. The new buildings will house Service Center's farm implement sales and service department, a machine shop and grocery store.

Compress receipts at the local Federal Compress and Warehouse Co., totaled 17,000 bales as compared with 20,000 bales last year. Some Tipton County cotton was compressed outside the county, while the local warehouse was embargoed.

- 1945 -

With all Covington business houses closed in celebration of V.E. Day, the Rev. Paul E. Sloan conducts a thanksgiving prayer service on court square. The program is well attended as is another later that morning at the First Presbyterian Church. The latter, under the auspices of the Covington Pastor's Association, is presided over by the Rev. E. F. McDaniel.

A broken rail on the southbound Illinois Central Railroad track at Rialto causes the derailment of 33 freight cars. In the center of the wreck, cars are piled three deep with some turned crossways of the track. About half of the cars are damaged beyond repair.

- 1946 -

The War Department releases the first consolidated listing of Army dead and missing in World War II. It shows that 49 Tipton Countians have died while wearing the uniform of the Army of the United States.

The City Bus Company of Covington, owned and operated by Exum and Charlie Fisher and F. R. Fisher Jr., begins service. The bus makes three routes every hour from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. Fares are 10 cents for adults and five cents for children.

The Fisher brothers announce the termination of their bus service in Covington. The town is not able to support the high costs of operating the line.

- 1947 -

Recently released figures by the Navy Department are made public and show that Tipton Countians serving in Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard operations during World War II suffered a total of 18 casualties. The figure represents six killed, 11 wounded and one captured and later released.

Company M. Tennessee National Guard, Tipton County, takes an initial step toward reality with the signing of the first enlisted man in the unit, Roy Arthur of Munford. Alvin Byars will be the commanding officer of the unit with the rank of captain and William Bibb will be the executive officer with the rank of first lieutenant. Company M will be the first guard unit in the county since 1897.

National Guard to begin site survey. Acting after the County Court's approval of a \$5,000 appropriation for land to build a National Guard center, Captain John Byars announced Wednesday that Nashville is sending a U. S. Army surveyor down to look at the property chosen.

- 1948 -

350 register in first two days of new draw law.

Harry S. Truman is elected president of the United States.

800 people attend Brighton Harvest Festival where Nancy Simonton is crowned queen. She was escorted by Tommy Smith.

- 1949 -

Will Roper was elected Mayor of Covington. City board members were Charles Smith, F. R. Fisher Jr., Will Shoaf, Dan Jones, Dr. B. F. Jones and Will Dearing.

The Rev. Paul Earle Sloan, 48, dies after a long illness. After services at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Covington, he is buried several days later in St. Paul's Episcopal Church cemetery in his hometown of Pendleton, S.C.

Furnished by The Covington Leader; The Tipton County Historical Society, Tim Sloan Chairman, David Gwinn, Secretary; and the Covington Economic and Community Development Corporation. The year 2004. True Tales of Tipton is by Gaylon Neil Beasley.