

# The Clayton House

circa 1882 Historic House Museum



*Located in the*  
**Belle Grove Historic District**  
**Fort Smith, Arkansas**

The Clayton House  
Historic House Museum  
Belle Grove Historic District  
Fort Smith, Arkansas

The Clayton House is an authentically restored Victorian-era mansion that was the family home of an important Arkansas historic figure, William Henry Harrison Clayton.

In 1969, a citizen-led group saved the home, which was built in 1852 and then doubled in size and renovated by Mr. Clayton in 1882, from demolition. The home lies in the center of Fort Smith's oldest neighborhood, the Belle Grove Historic District.

Forming as a non-profit organization, the Fort Smith Heritage Foundation led a total technical restoration of the home with the help of a leading architectural firm through the 1970s. The massive structure became listed on the National Register of Historic Places -- the country's official list of historically significant sites worthy of preservation -- because of its Victorian-era Gothic Italianate architectural style and the importance of Wm. H. H. Clayton's career.

The Clayton House has operated as a historic house museum since 1977 and is renowned in Arkansas as an exemplary historic restoration.

Its 6,000-plus square feet include:

- a formal parlor
- sitting room
- study
- formal dining room
- upstairs landing common area
- four bedrooms
- semi-detached kitchen and former servants' quarters
- three large porches.

Its grounds include:

- a Victorian herb garden
- spacious lawns for events and demonstrations of Victorian-era recreations
- a large Victorian gazebo.

Special features include:

- the original, tall, cypress double front doors
- a massive and elegant original black walnut staircase
- a coal-burning fireplace in each room
- Victorian-style bay windows
- hand-crafted architectural woodwork
- complete period furnishings.

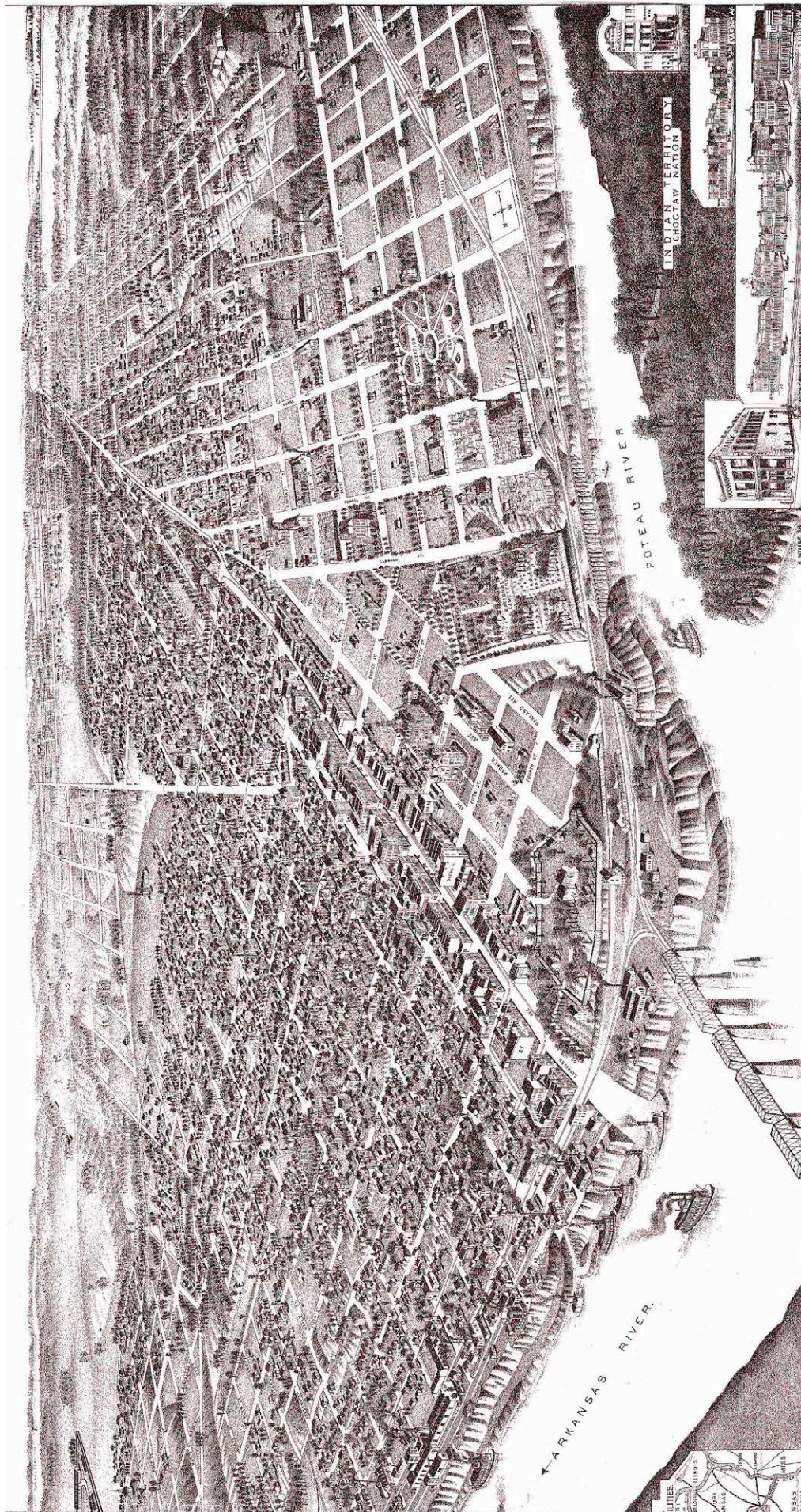
This living history book has many tales to share, from its origin as the home of a wealthy 1850s Fort Smith merchant, to its occupation by Union forces and use as a Civil War hospital, to its role as a boarding house in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The prominent story shared today is of Fort Smith's frontier history and the Victorian-era life of the Clayton family, which included six daughters and one son, and their Southern belle mother and prominent father. Wm. H. H. Clayton was the federal prosecuting attorney for the famous court of Judge Isaac C. Parker. The Clayton family resided in the elegant home from 1882 to 1897.



***The Victorian era** comprises the years of 1837 to 1901, the reign of Britain's Queen Victoria. America adopted and cultivated the Victorian lifestyle that reflected the high society of its former mother country, including attention to high morals, modesty and proper decorum as inspired by the Queen and her husband, Prince Albert.*

*Queen Victoria, 1819-1901, by Bassano, 1882. Glass copy negative, half-plate.  
National Portrait Gallery, London*





PERSPECTIVE MAP OF,  
**FORT SMITH, ARK.**  
 COUNTY SEAT OF FORT SMITH, DISTRICT OF SEBASTIAN COUNTY.  
 1887.  
 POPULATION 7,500.

Published 1887 by  
 THE NATIONAL BANK  
 Fort Smith, Arkansas.  
 First Centennial Edition - 5000 Copies.

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## 1887 Map of Fort Smith

This map of Fort Smith reveals locations such as the Clayton House, the Belle Grove Public School (which Clayton children attended and still stands today across the street from the Clayton House museum), and the Federal Courthouse for the Western District of Arkansas, where Wm. H. H. Clayton served as prosecuting attorney in the court of Judge Isaac C. Parker. The map also reveals a Garrison Avenue crowded with many buildings no longer standing, and “Indian Territory” across the Arkansas and Poteau rivers.



## William Henry Harrison Clayton

**1840:** William H. H. Clayton was born in Bethel, Pennsylvania. He was one of four brothers who grew up to lead distinguished careers in public service.

**1864:** Mr. Clayton moved to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, toward the end of the Civil War. Having fought with the 124th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, he saw some of the worst battles of the war. Mr. Clayton purchased a share of a plantation near Pine Bluff with two of his brothers, Powell and John (William's twin). William's oldest brother, Thomas Jefferson Clayton, remained in Pennsylvania, where he has a career in law.

**1868:** Wm. H. H. Clayton sold his share of the plantation to his brothers and began a career in public service. He studied law with Judge Stephenson of Huntsville, AR, and was appointed that same year as Assessor of the Internal Revenue Service.

**1869:** Mr. Clayton was appointed Circuit Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Seventh District of Arkansas. In this role, he developed approximately 30 public schools in seven counties where there were few or none present. He also married in 1869; his bride was a Pine Bluff resident named Florence Alabama Barnes.

**1871:** Mr. Clayton was admitted to the bar and appointed as prosecuting attorney for the First Circuit Court of Arkansas in the eastern Delta region.

**1873:** Mr. Clayton became judge for the First Judicial Circuit of Arkansas.

**1874:** President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Judge Clayton as U. S. District Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas. At the time, the Western District of Arkansas included one-third of Arkansas and all of Indian Territory, totaling 74,000 square miles. Mr. Clayton moved his family to Fort Smith. In 1875, he was joined by Isaac C. Parker, appointed as new federal judge of the court.

**1875-1897:** Mr. Clayton served with Judge Parker, except for two presidential terms in which he was not reappointed, to bring justice and peace to this largest federal jurisdiction in the nation's history. Mr. Clayton prosecuted more than 10,000 cases, most involving crimes by outlaws in Indian Territory. From these, 80 men were convicted of murder, and 40 of those were sent to the gallows.

**1882:** Mr. Clayton moved his family into a home at 514 North Knox (Sixth Street) that had been built in the 1850s. Mr. Clayton enlarged and renovated the home in the Italianate Gothic style popular during this period of the Victorian era. He and Mrs. Clayton raised six daughters and one son in the home over the next 15 years.

**1897:** Mr. Clayton was appointed federal judge of the Central District of Indian Territory by President William McKinley. Mr. Clayton and his family moved to McAlester, Oklahoma. In 1901, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him senior judge of the Federal Courts for Indian Territory. Mr. Clayton played a crucial role in the statehood of Oklahoma by serving on its district and canvassing board.







## Florence A. Barnes Clayton

Florence Alabama Barnes (Dec. 10, 1846 – Nov. 16, 1906) was a resident of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, when she married Wm. H. H. Clayton in 1869. She was a well-educated Southern “belle” whose grandfathers, Mr. Hewes Scull and Mr. Joseph Bogy, were early settlers of Arkansas Post. In Fort Smith, Mrs. Clayton stayed busy running the household and overseeing her six daughters and one son. However, she also contributed to the community, working with Mrs. Isaac (Mary) Parker as members of the Fortnightly Club to establish a library in Fort Smith.



*This photograph of the Clayton House shows it in its early years after the Clayton family moved in (circa 1882). These four children are most likely the Clayton children, with a man, perhaps a servant, standing in the background, and a woman standing on the porch.*

*The Clayton children were: **Mary Irene** (Born: July 29, 1870; died: 1910); **Ann** (Born: June 14, 1872; died: 1911); **Frank** (Francis) (Born: April 6, 1874; died October 1, 1875); **Florence** (Born: July 7, 1876; died: September 19, 1963); **William, Jr.** (Born: July 14, 1879; died: September 2, 1942); **Melanie** (Born: August 28, 1882; died: September 5, 1917); **Adele** (Born: November 1884; died: February 1, 1960); and **Beatrice** Born: January 5, 1891; died: September 6, 1954).*



## Daily Life of the Clayton Children

The Clayton children, born during the years of 1870 through 1891, grew up in a time of great change in America. Many new technological developments were changing life in the home during the late Victorian era. However, modern conveniences such as electric light and indoor plumbing were recent developments and sometimes absent even from the homes of the well-to-do, such as the Clayton House.

Electricity was brought into use in Fort Smith in 1885, but the Clayton home did not have electricity during the years the family lived there. The Clayton's lighting was from gas lights and kerosene lamps. Daily chores included the filling, lighting and extinguishing of lamps.

The Claytons did not have indoor plumbing in the home. For bathing, it was necessary to fill and empty a tub from a well. There were no bathrooms with flushing toilets, which meant one either went to an outhouse or used a chamber pot. Lime was kept close at hand to block the odor until the pot could be emptied in the morning.

The Clayton house used coal-burning fireplaces for heat in winter, and has high ceilings designed to help keep the house cool in summer, along with large windows that can easily be opened to let breezes in. Cool drinks on the porch also helped, perhaps with ice bought in huge blocks and carried home with tongs to be placed in a specially designed ice box that slowed the rate of melting.

Children of the late Victorian era were expected to be productive, and they spent much time learning various crafts at the knees of their parents and older siblings. The Clayton daughters most likely spent much of their time sewing, crocheting, or embroidering. The large bay window in the Clayton House sitting room was designed to allow a lot of daylight for such activities. Musical talent, such as piano playing, was emphasized, as well.

The Clayton House, like other late Victorian era upper class homes, was meant to be a stately place – clean, quiet and orderly, reflective of the values of the people who lived there. Children were expected to behave in proper fashion, without undignified behavior such as running, shouting or other horseplay. Rudeness or insubordination to one's parents was not tolerated. The bonds of family were considered to be very important, and the family engaged in activities together daily. Sometimes a member of the family would read to the others, giving them the opportunity to show how well they had learned their lessons in school. Other entertainments could include storytelling or making hand shadows.

For schooling, Will Jr. attended the Belle Grove School, built across the street from the home in 1886. He graduated from Fort Smith High School in 1897 and went on to a military academy and then college. He became a lawyer and practiced with his father in later years. The Clayton daughters, as with any well-to-do Victorian-era families, attended boarding schools out of state. Schooling for girls was meant to educate and refine them.

## **Twelve Golden Rules for Children in the 1880s**

1. Shut every door after you without slamming it.
2. Never shout in the house.
3. Never call to persons upstairs or in the next room; if you wish to speak to them, go to them.
4. Always be kind and polite to servants if you would have them the same to you.
5. When told to do or not to do a thing, by either parent, never object and obey cheerfully.
6. You may tell of your faults and misdoings, but not of those of your brothers and sisters.
7. Carefully clean your shoes before entering the house.
8. Be prompt at every meal hour, especially so in the morning, and thus cultivate the habit of rising early.
9. Never sit down at the table or in the parlor with soiled hands or disheveled hair
10. Never interrupt any conversation, but wait patiently your turn to speak.
11. Never reserve your good manner for company, but be equally polite at home and abroad.
12. Let your first, last and best friend be your mother.



## Twelve Golden Rules for Children of the 1880s

These Twelve Golden Rules for Children, researched by the Cambridge, MA Historical Society, are typical of the kind of material found in etiquette primers for children during the latter half of the nineteenth century. These primers sold very well to parents who wanted to educate their children on proper behavior and reflect the values of polite society.



The "calling card" was a necessary communication tool in the development of friendships in the Victorian era.

Source: [www.daysofelegance.com](http://www.daysofelegance.com)



## Victorian Calling Cards

In the Victorian era, calling cards were a means of introduction in society for both ladies and men. In an era when fast communication tools such as cell phones and Facebook had not been invented, the proper way to communicate with friends and acquaintances was through the use of calling cards. Dropping by a person's home unannounced was not done.

The process involved having one's card dropped off at the home of the person he or she wished to visit, and then awaiting the return of a card by that person to one's own home. The return of a calling card meant that a visit by the first "caller" would be accepted by the second.

Like all social customs or fashions, the calling card evolved through the Victorian era. Its first style was ornate, and towards the end of the era, the cards were simpler, yet still fashionable. The cards would have the person's name centered in the middle, with his or her street address in the lower right.

Much could be said with just a single card. During one phase of the Victorian era, simply bending the corners of one's card held specific meaning:

- If the "caller" dropped the card off in person, he or she would bend the right corner.
- If a servant delivered the card, then the card was left unbent.
- A black border meant the sender was in mourning.
- Plants, flowers, birds, animals and other objects printed on the card had symbolic meaning during the era, as well.

Calling cards were approximately the size of today's business cards. Ladies' cards were slightly larger than men's cards so their visiting times could be engraved in the lower left corner. A young lady's card had her mother's name above her own.

A gentleman's card was less elaborate, usually having his name engraved on the card with his address in the lower right corner. The primary decoration consisted of the style of script in which his name was printed.

It was custom to use the correct title, such as Miss, Ms., Mrs. or Mr. Only infants were allowed to have cards without titles.

### Bibliography

Longstreet, Abby Buchanan. *Cards: Their Significance and Proper Uses as Governed by the Usages of New York Society*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes and Brother, 1889.

*Victorian Calling Card Classroom Lesson*. Escondido, California: San Diego Archeological Center, 2006.

### **The Farris-Clayton Wedding.**

One of the most brilliant society events that has taken place in Fort Smith in many years was the wedding of Mr. W. L. Farris, of St. Louis, to Miss Anne Clayton, of this city, Monday evening. The high standing of all the parties concerned rendered the event of more than ordinary interest.

The wedding ceremony was performed at 6:30 p. m., in the handsome parlors of the bride's parents on Sixth street, Rev. Lawrence Smythe officiating. The attendants were Mr. Louis G. Kurtzeborn, of St. Louis, and Miss Mae Wheeler, of this city. Only the immediate relatives and a few intimate friends witnessed the ceremony.

A very elaborate wedding supper followed. A grand reception was held from 8 to 11 o'clock, for which a large number of invitations had been issued. A gay and happy throng filled the beautifully decorated rooms of Col. Clayton's residence until a late hour. The bride and groom, than whom no more popular couple ever went forth to do battle with the realities of life, received the congratulations of their numerous friends under an arch of cedar and mistletoe, while near them stood Col. and Mrs. Clayton, Mr. and Mrs. Farris, of Lebanon, Mo., the parents of the groom, and the attendants. It was a strikingly beautiful scene, one not soon to be forgotten.

A splendid luncheon was served in the dining room. The presents were numerous and valuable, showing splendid taste in their selection by the donors. The bridal couple left on the north bound Frisco at 1:00 o'clock a. m., for Lebanon, Mo., where they will remain several days before going on to their future home in St. Louis.

The photos of newspaper clippings on this page and the next are of articles published in Fort Smith newspapers in January 1894 after a wedding in the Clayton family home of Ann, one of six daughters. Fort Smith's two newspapers at the time each provided news from a particular political view – Republican or Democrat. Both papers included a society section, however, and the wedding of the Clayton daughter was a celebration of great societal importance. The two newspapers were the "New Era" (this page) and the "Fort Smith Elevator" (next page).



Fort Smith News  
married 1 Jan 1894

## ASAS, TUESDAY MORNIN

### MISTLETOE WEDDING.

**Marriage Bells Ring Out to Announce  
the Joyful Wedding of Miss  
Anne Clayton and Mr.  
W. L. Farris.**

There have been many weddings in Fort Smith, but none perhaps in later years that have been more brilliant than the Clayton-Farris wedding last evening. Everybody seemed to correspond and harmonize so as to make it so. The place of the wedding was on Sixth street at the residence of the bride's father, Col. W. H. Clayton, and the time, 6:30. At the appointed half hour the bridal party was ready for the ceremony. Reverend Lawrence Smythe was in the large parlor on the south side of the building, and ranged around the room were a few of the relatives and intimate friends, among whom were Mrs. W. H. Clayton, Miss Florence Clayton, Hon. John W. and Mrs. Farris, parents of the groom, Judge and Mrs. I. C. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Euper, Mrs. J. K. Barnes, Mr. Knittle, of Chester; Mr. Joseph Cosby, of St. Louis, and a few others. When across the spacious hall the door of the parlor on the north side was thrown open and out marched the groom, Mr. W. L. Farris, leaning on the arm of his best man, Mr. Louis G. Kurzeborn, of St. Louis. Next came the maid of honor, Miss Mae Wheeler, and lastly came the bride, Miss Anne Clayton, leaning on the arm of her father, Col. W. H. Clayton. The procession marched around the room to the bay window on the west side. Here a green arch of cedar surmounted by mistletoe had been erected and under this the bride and groom to be took their places, with Mr. Kurzeborn and Miss Wheeler on either side. Father Smythe then stepped forward and performed the beautiful and impressive marriage ceremony of the Catholic church, and Will Farris and Anne Clayton were made man and wife forever more. The party then repaired to the large dining room where all feasted on a banquet that had been specially prepared for them. The tables were loaded down with fruit, they groaned under the weight of many delicacies and were bright with the vintage of

and reminded them that the hour for the reception was at hand. They then rose and marched back into the wedding parlor and took new positions, Col. and Mrs. Clayton near the large parlor entrance, next Hon. and Mrs. John W. Farris, then under the marriage bell the bride and groom took their places and still beyond them in the reception line stood Miss Mae Wheeler and Mr. Louis G. Kurzeborn. Soon the crowd began coming in in couples and in groups. Carriages dashed up from all parts of the city and emptied their fashionable and precious freight. Society turned out to do itself and the wedding proud, and right well did it fill its aim. Soon the parlors, the sitting room, the library, the halls were filled and crowded with a gay, laughing throng. After they had gone down the receiving line they were usually looked after by Mrs. J. K. Barnes, who saw to it that everyone entered the dining hall and sat around the bridal banquet table. That over, they roamed and chatted at will, and a concealed band of musicians on the first landing of the grand staircase discoursed soft, sweet music that breathed and softly insinuated itself into every group. The reception lasted until 11 o'clock, when the bride retired to change her bridal costume for a smart traveling costume and then returned to the parlor to bid goodbye to many of the guests who still remained. It was fully twelve ere the last guest took his departure, feeling that he had been to the most brilliant reception Fort Smith has had for many a day. The presents were numerous, tasteful and many of them were beautiful. They were placed in the sitting room and took most of the available space. They were of every imaginable kind, color, cost and description from a spoon to a picture. The whole of the lower house was ablaze with light and associated with the prevalent green of the holiday season. Vines, cedar, potted plants, both house flowers, natural flowers were strung and clustered everywhere. It seemed truly a mistletoe wedding, since that mystic growth had so much predominance. Mistletoe was here, there and everywhere, in all the corners, over all the pictures, over the bridal arch, everywhere. Mrs. Farris looked queenly in a beautiful bridal costume of brocade satin with pearl passementerie and train. She wore camellias in her hair and carried a large bouquet of natural flowers. The maid of honor, Miss Mae Wheeler, looked handsome in a striking gown of pink satin with pink flowers and fan. More of the married couples were out than have attended a society function in a long time. They decidedly outnumbered the younger set. Colonel and Mrs. Clayton showed themselves the royal entertainers that they always are. With the best wishes of hundreds of her friends in Fort Smith, Miss Anne that was and Mrs. Farris that is, left last night with her bright and fortunate husband, Will, for their future home in St. Louis. May joy shine on them! Mr. and Mrs. Farris, Sr., Mr. Cosby and Mr. Kurzeborn accompanied the bridal couple.

Provide an estate for your family. If you die and one for yourself if you live! a New York Life policy does this.

Hunters are forbidden to take "Pac" without permission of his owner.

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*(TRANSCRIBED)*

Fort Smith Elevator  
Tuesday Morning  
January 8, 1894

MISTLETOE WEDDING  
Marriage Bells Ring Out to Announce  
the Joyful Wedding of Miss  
Anne Clayton and Mr.  
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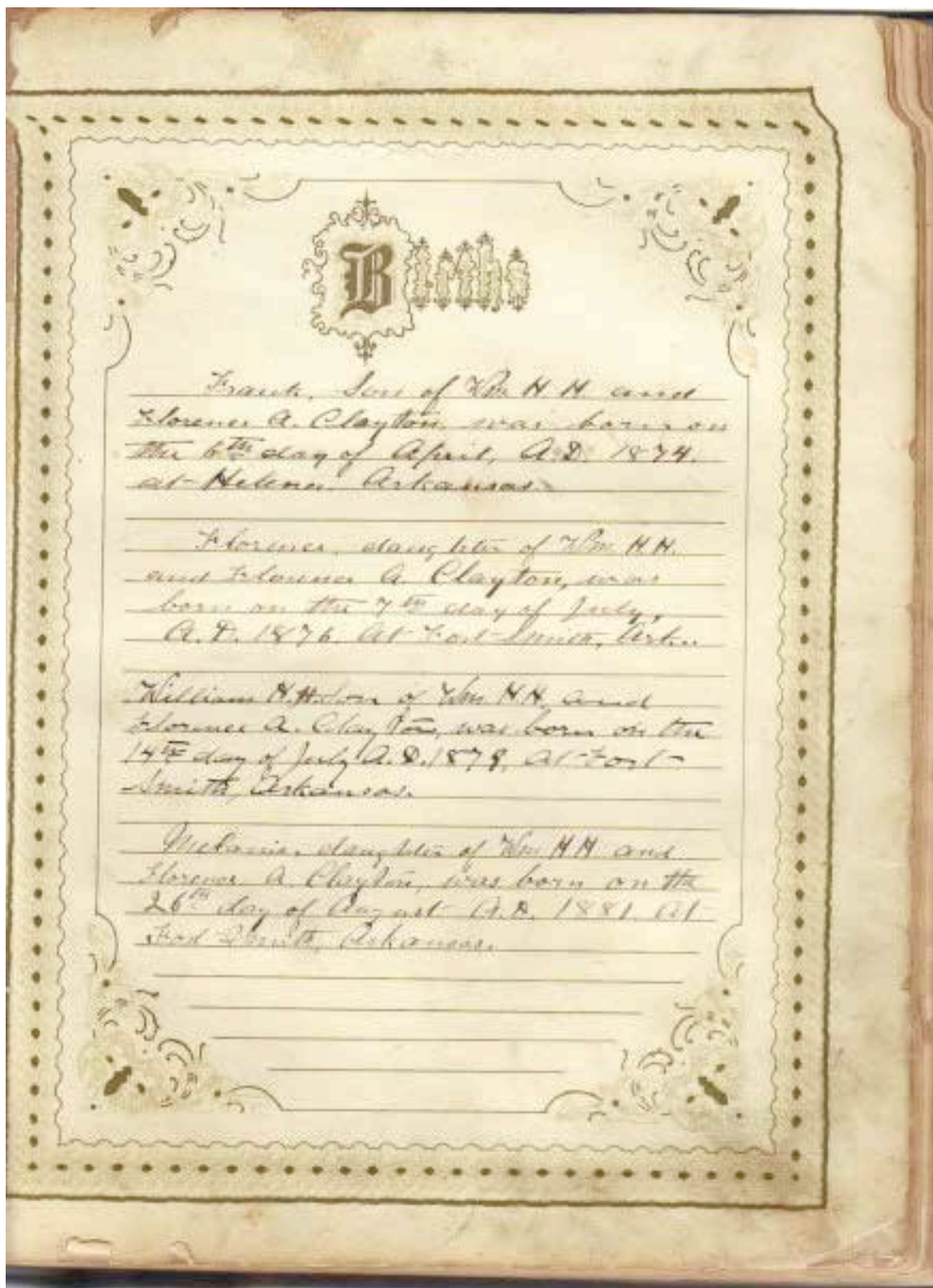
## Wedding Articles, January 1894 New Era and Fort Smith Elevator

These articles inform readers of the details of the wedding of William H. H. Clayton's daughter Anne to William Farris. Such articles were typical fare for the society pages, where members of society could keep up with important details of events, and those who were not "in society" could be regaled by the lifestyles of those who were. Note the attention to detail that showcases the wealth and success of the Clayton family.

The information in the articles shows that weddings today and of the Victorian era are very much alike. They included attendants (best man, maid of honor), flowers, gifts, a party with food following the ceremony, and a "honeymoon" for the newly married couple.

Wording used in these articles and still today include: *bridal party, procession, and reception line.*

Wording from these articles that we don't often hear today include: *were made man and wife forever more, banquetters, carriages dashed up from all parts of the city and emptied their fashionable and precious freight, chatted, bridal costume, smart traveling costume, queenly, and handsome.*



In the Victorian era, families recorded dates of births and other family tree information on specially designated pages in the Family Bible. Above, the births of four of the eight Clayton children are recorded: Francis ("Frank", 1874), Florence (1876), Will, Jr. (1878), and Melanie (1881).



H. H. Clayton,

United States Attorney.

Western Dist.

OFFICE OF  
**UNITED STATES**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY.

George A. Grace,

Assistant U. S. Attorney.

of Arkansas.

Fort Smith, Arkansas,

1888

Adele, daughter of Wm. H. H. and  
Florence A. Clayton, was born on  
the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November A.D. 1883,  
at Fort Smith, Arkansas. Not being  
room for this entry in the family  
Bible this is made on this separate  
sheet of paper to be kept in the Bible.

Beatrice, daughter of Wm. H. H. and  
Florence A. Clayton, was born on the  
5<sup>th</sup> day of January, A.D. 1881, at Fort  
Smith, Arkansas. Not being room  
for this entry in the family Bible this  
is made on this separate sheet of  
paper to be kept in the Bible.

Above, the births of two more daughters, Adele and Beatrice, are recorded on Mr. Clayton's official court stationery, because of no remaining empty pages in Family Bible.

Written words in photo on page 21:

Frank, Son of Wm. H. H. and Florence A. Clayton, was born the 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, A.D. 1874, at Helena, Arkansas.

Florence, daughter of Wm. H.H. and Florence A. Clayton, was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of July, A.D. 1876, at Fort Smith, Ark..

William H. H., son of Wm. H.H. and Florence A. Clayton was born on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, A.D. 1878, at Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Melanie, daughter of Wm. H. H. and Florence A. Clayton, was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of August, A.D. 1881, at Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Written words in photo on page 22:

Adele, daughter of Wm. H. H. and Florence A. Clayton, was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November A.D. 1883, at Fort Smith, Arkansas. Not being room for this entry in the family Bible this is made on this separate sheet of paper to be kept in the bible.

Beatrice, daughter of Wm. H. H. and Florence A. Clayton, was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of January, A.D. 1891, at Fort Smith, Arkansas. Not being room for this entry in the family Bible this is made on this separate sheet of paper to be kept in the Bible.



Judge and Mrs. William H. Clayton  
request the honour of  
*Mrs. Berkham's* company  
at the wedding reception of their daughter  
Melanie  
and  
Mr. John Elliott Le Bosquet  
on Saturday afternoon the eighth day of November  
Nineteen hundred and two  
at half-after four o'clock  
at their residence  
South McAlester, H. T.

Weddings were a big part of the Clayton family life, as there were six daughters. This invitation is to Melanie's wedding, which was held in McAlester, Oklahoma. The family moved from Fort Smith to McAlester in 1897 when Mr. Clayton was appointed judge of the Federal Court of the Central District of Indian Territory.

## **NO U. S. COURT NEXT TERM.**

### **What It Means.**

As was to have been expected, the failure of Congress to make appropriation for the fees of United States Marshals necessarily closes all criminal proceedings and all cases in which the compensation is paid out of the United States Treasury. The United States Court of Western Arkansas, having jurisdiction in the adjoining Indian Territory, and almost all cases of a criminal nature brought before the court originating in that

part of Uncle Sam's dominions, the following circular from the office of the United States District Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas, will be of importance on this frontier. The civil cases generally brought before this court are few and comparatively of small interest, while the numerous criminal cases, involving charges of murder and other high crimes committed in the Indian Territory, take up nearly the entire time of the court:

**FORT SMITH, ARK. July 10, '79.**

No action will be taken in any criminal case at the August term of the United States Court for the Western District of Arkansas. Parties and witnesses in such cases will not be required to attend until November 3, 1879. Respectfully, etc.,

**WM. H. H. CLAYTON.**  
United States Attorney.  
West. Dist. of Ark

*Article from the July 16, 1879 Fort Smith New Era written by Wm. H. H. Clayton, U.S. Attorney, Western District of Arkansas.*

## “Courts Closing”

This article from the July 16, 1879 *Fort Smith New Era* is an announcement by William H. H. Clayton regarding the temporary closure of the court during a time of political transition. Personally making such announcements in the newspaper was a responsibility officials frequently assumed and shows concern for the people of Clayton’s district.



Know all Men by These Presents:

I, **J. J. Henry Carnall**, Mayor of the City of Fort Smith, for and in behalf of said City, for and in consideration of the sum of Six Hundred and Eighty Six [686<sup>00</sup>] Dollars, to the said City paid by W<sup>m</sup> H. H. Clayton, (the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged) have this day granted, bargained, sold and conveyed unto the said W<sup>m</sup> H. H. Clayton and his heirs

the following described lot A or tract A of land situated in the County of Sebastian, State of Arkansas, and in the late Military Reservation addition to the City of Fort Smith, viz:

Lots number Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven & Twelve  
in Block number Five Hundred and Seventy One  
(lots M<sup>c</sup> 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 in Block M<sup>c</sup> 571) in Reserve  
addition to the City of Fort Smith

As the same are marked and designated on the plat or survey of said Reservation, made by Geo. H. Lyman, Civil Engineer, in the year A. D., 1884, and filed in the Clerk's office of said County, and known as part of the "abandoned Military Reservation at Fort Smith," and donated to said City by the United States by act of Congress, approved May 13, 1884, said lot A or parcel A of land being of the dimensions and boundaries as on said plat or survey marked and designated together with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging.

To have and to hold the above and afore granted premises to the said W<sup>m</sup> H. H. Clayton and to his heirs and assigns forever. And I, the said **J. HENRY CARNALL**, Mayor of said City of Fort Smith, for and in behalf of said City, hereby covenant to and with the said W<sup>m</sup> H. H. Clayton and his heirs and assigns, that in making this conveyance, and in everything, the same concerning, I have complied with the said act of Congress, donating said lands or Reservation to the City of Fort Smith, and with the patent of the United States, made in pursuance thereof, bearing date the 12th day of March A. D., 1885, and hereby convey all the right and title the City of Fort Smith has in and to same, and none other, in as full and ample a manner as I as said Mayor of Fort Smith can, could or ought to convey the same.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereto set my hand as Mayor

This is a notarized deed of the purchase of land by Wm. H. H. Clayton in 1885. The land, in the "abandoned Military Reservation of Fort Smith," lies in what is now called Fort Chaffee.



*These two objects in the Clayton House give us perspective on technologies of which we most likely take for granted today.*





*These two objects in the Clavton House reflect a different sense of fashion.*





*These two objects in the Clayton House reflect a recreational pastimes different – but also similar – to those of today.*

## What Are These?

### Wash Basin and Pitcher

During the time the Claytons lived in this house, there was no indoor plumbing. Water for baths or for “washing-up” had to be brought in from the cistern – a container built to catch and hold rainwater -- that was outside. Because of this, people took fewer baths, but they would keep a pitcher of water upstairs for a general “washing up” in the morning, before meals, and before bed.

### Chamber Pot

Before the invention of indoor plumbing, people had to use the restroom outside. They would have an outhouse or “privy.” The Clayton’s privy was located behind the kitchen. If a person had to go to the restroom in the middle of the night, instead of walking all the way out to the privy, they would use their chamber pot. A chamber pot is small, usually ceramic, bowl with a handle and a lid (our does not have a lid; it was either lost or broken) that was kept under the edge of the bed. In the morning, the chamber pot would be emptied, cleaned, and put back under the bed for the next night.

### Petticoat Mirror

A petticoat mirror was a useful object during the Victorian era. During this period, it was considered improper for a lady’s ankles or petticoat to be showing. The mirror was located at the bottom of a table and used by women to check to see if their dress was covering both. An extra benefit of mirrors placed in the home was their reflection of sunlight, as the homes did not have electricity.

### Top Hat

During the Victorian era, men wore some sort of hat at all times when outside the home. A most popular style was the top hat. Wealthier gentlemen wore these hats, made from waterproof beaver pelt or silk, as formal daywear and evening wear.

### Grace Hoops

The traditional American game of Graces, also known as “French Hoops” or “The Flying Circle,” is a historic outdoor game, primarily designed to develop feminine grace. At one time, “Graces” was also considered an acceptable boys’ activity. Young ladies were encouraged to play this historic game outdoors and to keep score. Young gentlemen were encouraged to play this game simply as a “lark.” This historic game was brought to the New World from France, where it was commonly known as “La Grace.” Today, both boys and girls enjoy playing the game.

### Stereoscope

The stereoscope was a popular form of entertainment in the 1800s and early 1900s. Sir Charles Wheatstone invented the stereoscope in 1838, but it did not become popular until 1881 when Oliver Wendell Holmes improved on the technology.

How it works: Two pictures are taken from a slightly different viewpoint that correspond closely to the spacing of the eyes, and placed side-by-side, making the image appear 3-D when one looks through the two separated eyepieces.

## Extra Activities:

### “Grace Hoops”

To play “Graces,” two players stand opposite one another, approximately 10 feet apart. Each player begins with 20 points. One player places a hoop over the crossed wands as shown in the illustrations. By quickly moving the wands apart, the hoop is sent flying toward the opposite player. The object is to catch the hoop on one or both wands and return it. The hoop is kept moving back and forth until one player misses. Each miss costs a point. The first player to use all of his/her points loses the game. After you have mastered one hoop, try tossing two hoops back and forth simultaneously.

[www.historicaltoymaker.com](http://www.historicaltoymaker.com)

### Calling Card Activity

#### **Supplies:**

- unlined 3x5 index cards
- crayons or markers
- Victorian type stickers- flowers, birds, plants
- edging scissors for scalloped edges if wanted
- any other material such as glitter, glue, ribbon

Simply let the children design their own calling card following the guidelines described in the narrative.



# Victorian Life in the Clayton House 1882-1897

D R C L A Y T O N P Y A K V J A M W E Q  
 R O O C V H B L M N I V I Q A Q I C D Z  
 A R N C D O O A T U O C R E K L I T W S  
 W R E E A L L O L S T V T P L E B I W L  
 I I T N H L M C Y O U N T I D D E W E J  
 N M F L I C L B R B O D A Y V A W G P Q  
 G T I O I Q T I F O R M A L P A R L O R  
 R A C T P U A I N T O P R E B M A H C E  
 O O E X A N Q R K G J W W C Q E E N S T  
 O C I C O L E Y K D C E O V X L C D O I  
 M I Y U I T I P Z R E A P F G A N P E Q  
 S T S M F R E A E A L H R M B N E V R U  
 H T X A Y U T I N B R Y C D C I R F E E  
 Q E C W P R L A U A V C C A V E O Y T T  
 R P W X E E A R E U T O K L T M L Z S T  
 B E L E D A N M A B P E U K O E F N Y E  
 G V G N M I F O R T S M I T H S D N M X  
 W J A D N E C A L P E R I F G C E A C U  
 Z H D G P T Y Z C L S N F Y U S M T W G  
 C A V J J B P M T S Q W N C Q I V I S X

ADELE  
 AFTERNOON-TEA  
 ANN  
 BEATRICE  
 CALLING-CARD  
 CHAMBER-POT  
 CHANDELIER  
 CLAYTON  
 CLOSETS  
 COAL-BURNING  
 CRAZY-QUILT  
 DETACHED-KITCHEN  
 DRAWING-ROOM  
 ETIQUETTE  
 FIREPLACE  
 FLORENCE  
 FORMAL-PARLOR  
 FORT-SMITH  
 ITALIANATE  
 MARY  
 MELANIE

OIL-LAMP  
 PETTICOAT-MIRROR  
 STEREOSCOPE  
 VICTORIAN  
 WILLIAM