

## CHRONOLOGY OF BAXTER COUNTY HISTORY

Arkansas became a state in 1836. Around 1820, the Jacob Wolf House at Norfolk was constructed. The two-story dog-trot home of a pioneer leader is the oldest known standing structure in the state. The house was designated as a county seat and courthouse in 1825 by the Arkansas Territorial Legislature. Parts of 14 present-day counties existed within its jurisdiction: Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Fulton, Izard, Madison, Marion, Newton, Search, Sharp, Van Buren, Stone and Washington.

**1810** – Major Jacob Wolf established a trading post and Indian Agency at the mouth of the Big North Fork of the White River.

**1836** – The Trail of Tears crossed through (what would become) Baxter County.

**1853** – Male and Female Academy opened in Mountain Home. The City of Mountain Home was built around the Male and Female Academy, which was founded by Professor J.S. Howard. The community was first known as Rapp's Barren, apparently because it was at that time almost without timber.

**1857** – Rapp's Barren name was changed to Mountain Home. The community decided it was time for a name change; many were suggested, but the three that were chosen were: Mountain Home, Wild Rose and Claburn (the name of the congressman). Stories vary as to how they decided on Mountain Home. It was said that the first settlers traveling through called the area "My sweet mountain home." When the community gathered to discuss a name change, it is also said in family stories that corn cobs were labeled and thrown in a pile with the three names (Mountain Home, Wild Rose, and Claburn) and Mountain Home was the one drawn from the pile. Rapp's Barren was not an actual name of a town, just an area. The town needing a name probably became important after the Male and Female Academy became an important destination.

**1858** – The Casey House was built. The building is a dog-trot structure built by pioneer, soldier and politician Col. Randolph D. Casey.

**1862** – The Homestead Law allowed a family to have 160 acres of land if they lived on it for five years and showed improvement. This brought an influx of settlers. Before this time, land had to be purchased from land speculators or from the government in blocks of 640 acres at \$1.25 to \$2.00 per acre.

**1873** – Baxter County was the 68<sup>th</sup> county created by the state of Arkansas; its organization was approved by the Legislature on March 24. It was named for then Gov. Elisha Baxter. The county was formed mostly from Izard County, whose county seat was at the Wolf House in Norfolk; from Marion County, which didn't have a representative in the Legislature; and Fulton and Searcy counties.

**1876** – Before the Civil War, the level fertile land in and around Gassville had drawn immigrants. The Mount Pleasant school house and Squire Coffee's cotton gin were the extent of the town until the summer of 1876 when S.E. Denton and P.A. Cox decided to build their homes, stores, mill, gin and other buildings. Folklore says the town derived its name from Mr. Cox, who was an incessant taker, called a "gasser," so the town was given the name Gassville.

**1876** – Baptists built the first church in Mountain Home, located a block west of the square.

**1877** – *The Quid Nunc*, the area's first newspaper, was founded by N.H. Bigger in Mountain Home. The first edition was published on March 28.

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**1879** – On the record of the court’s proceedings of October 6, Baxter County’s courthouse (the former boarding house) was deemed “entirely insecure and in a dilapidated condition,” and the building fund of about \$1,090 was appropriated for a building to be placed on the public square in the Truman Addition, in which the county had title.

**1883** – S.H. Talburt started a stage line for passenger, mail and freight traffic between Mountain Home and West Plains, Missouri. It took about 10 hours to travel the 75-mile trip from West Plains to Yellville. The last trip to Mountain Home was made on June 30, 1907.

**1884** – A petition was filed for the incorporation of the City of Mountain Home on May 18.

**1888** – Mountain Home officially incorporated in April.

**1890** – In February, the Baxter County courthouse burned to the ground. Nearly all county records were lost.

**1890** – In October 1890, taxes were levied for a new brick courthouse, which included a fireproof vault. Several attempts had been made to move the courthouse from Mountain Home, but during G.W. Walker’s administration as county judge, a third story was built, making it impossible to move it because of a state law that provided that when a courthouse of three stories or more was in a town, that town would remain the county seat.

**1891** – Mountain Home Baptist College was built.

**1891** – The *North Arkansas News* published its first edition on February 13 in Mountain Home. Editor was J.F. Copeland

**1892** – The Baker brothers completed the first modern building on what would later be the Mountain Home Square.

**1892** – Mountain Home Baptist College was opened by the White River Baptist Association.

**1892** – Sheriff Abraham G. Byler, the first Sheriff of Baxter County, was murdered by Jesse Roper. Roper ambushed Sheriff Byler when the Sheriff went to serve a warrant on Roper. Roper fled the area and was never brought to justice for the murder of Sheriff Byler.

**1893** – J.J. White homesteaded 160 acres where Gamaliel now stands.

**1894** – In February, a mob of approximately 200 men went to the Baxter County jail, overpowered the jailer and guards, took their guns and demanded the keys to the jail. The mob then shot two prisoners to death. The prisoners were being held for the murder of Hunter Wilson, which they committed on December 18, 1893.

**1900** – In the first few years of 1900, there were about 160 mining sites being explored, and newspapers were filled with accounts of shipping out high-grade ore of marble, zinc, lead and iron. During World War I, many of these mines were at their peak, but the end of the war would also bring to a close that chapter of history as the mines died out.

**1901** – Engineers began surveying the route for the White River Division of the Missouri-Pacific Railroad.

**1901** – *The Baxter Bulletin* was founded. The first edition was published on December 20.

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**1902** – The first Mountain Home Picnic was held by a balloon ascension and parachute leap by Professor Murgle of Tioga, Illinois, on August 1.

**1902** – First ore produced from steam drill, beginning the mining era.

**1903** – The Ozark Queen was the last steamer to travel a regular route from Batesville to Cotter. Will Shipp was the captain, and his brother John was the pilot. The last voyage was made in 1903 after the coming of the railroad.

**1903** – *Cotter Courier* newspaper was founded in Cotter. The first edition was published on December 4.

**1904** – A cyclone hit Mountain Home, doing extensive damage, including the destruction of the Methodist Church which was located next to the Livery at the SE corner of the square.

**1904** – Running water to the courthouse in Mountain Home was provided by windmill.

**1904** – The German colony was established when three families (Keller, Hauerkin and Hermann) settled on 1,000 acres between Mountain Home and Norfolk (about four miles southeast of Mountain Home). By 1910, there were 30 families in the colony. The experiment failed because the immigrants weren't farmers and couldn't survive off the land.

**1904** – The area Cotter occupies originally was called Lake's Ferry and there was a steamboat landing at the McBee place about a mile and a half above the ferry. It was named Cotter in honor of William Cotter, popular manager of the railroad. On July 7, 1904, according to the records of the county court, V.A. Matthews and others gave a petition to the court to incorporate the town of Cotter. The official opening of the town was not until November 23, 1905, and the opening was the largest North Arkansas had ever seen.

**1905** – On Christmas Day, the first "through" train came to Cotter as the last spike of the White River Railroad was driven in Boone County.

**1905** – Cotter suffered a major fire on September 6, which burned the Miser Hotel, McClain Furniture Co., W.H. Meers Store, Model Drug Store, E.L. Merford's Barber Shop and house, Nelson Co. Jewelry Shop, McBride's Grocery and the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Masons and Railroad Brotherhoods' lodge buildings, resulting in a loss of \$50,000.

**1906** – By 1906, a bank and a large canning factory for the tomato crop was built at Gassville by T.W. Wade of Springfield, Missouri. Later, Johnson and Eden, Marler and Son, J.G. Walker, Hayes and Crane, and Robertson and Adams opened stores.

**1906** – Roundhouse was completed at Cotter.

**1907** – Cotter had a second major fire on March 23, burning down the McDermott Restaurant and the J.G. Hall Store and two empty buildings, also owned by Dr. Hall. This fire caused a \$20,000 loss.

**1907** – Norfolk was incorporated. The town was previously named Liberty and Devero.

**1907** – Sheriff Eugene Mooney accidentally shot and killed himself on a train as it was pulling into the Holdenville, I.T. (Indian Territory), station. Sheriff Mooney was returning from Albuquerque, New Mexico, with an escaped prisoner (William Estes) from Baxter County. The gun dropped from the Sheriff's

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braces, where he was carrying it. The gun fell to the floor and discharged, striking the Sheriff just above the heart.

**1907** – Curtis I. Pierce, president of the Baxter County Real Estate Co., took up a homestead on Wallace Knob, which lies just north of town. He will build a house and improve it with the idea of making it a home. Wallace Knob is a landmark for the entire area. It stands 1,300 feet above sea level. Matney Knob, also in this county, stands 1,600 feet above sea level.

**1907** – The lone tree at the top of Wallace Knob was left as a signal tree. The tree was used to sight on from other high knobs in this part of the country by the United States geographical survey.

**1907** – The last stagecoach ran the Yellville, Mountain Home, and West Plains route on June 6.

**1908** – In March, the Ozark National Forest was established south of the river under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forestry Service. The Leatherwood Wilderness Area of the Ozark National Forest was created in October, 1984. Most of this wilderness area is within Baxter County. It is closed to all motorized vehicles and has other restrictions as well.

**1910** – An automobile service began, running from Cotter to Mountain Home, by M. Tanksley.

**1911** – The first Baxter County Fair was held at Buford.

**1911** – *The Cotter Record* published its first edition on February 3 in Cotter.

**1911** – *The Ozark Clarion* published its first edition on December 2 at Three Brothers.

**1913** – Frank Pierce built a round barn three miles up the North Fork River from Norfork. The round barn was 60 feet in diameter, more than 180 feet in circumference and was 68 feet high. He solved the circular roof problem by going into the woods and finding trees that had the natural degree of curvature that was necessary.

**1914** – The start of the war in Europe meant good news for local mining interests, and the price of ore sky-rocketed.

**1916** – In January, the largest floods in the history of the county up to that date played havoc on the rivers, and heavy damage was reported at Cotter.

**1918** – In July, Clarence G. White became the first Baxter Countian to be killed in action in World War I.

**1918** – November 11 brought the end of World War I and, like the rest of the country, Baxter County residents thought their lives would get back to normal. An outbreak of Spanish influenza was sweeping the country, and the many new markers in the cemeteries would show the effects.

**1920** – The first airplane to land in Baxter County touched down in a large field on the Baker Farm. The plane, a Curtiss bi-wing had a cruising speed of 50 miles an hour. Among the residents who rode in the plane was Uncle Mart Holland who was 94 at the time.

**1920** – Mountain Home Baptist College girls dormitory was completed.

**1920** – The census of Mountain Home showed a population of 492; Cotter, 884; Gassville, 191; and Norfork, 224. The busy areas had the best access to the railroad which linked Baxter County to the outside world.

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**1922** – Ku Klux Klan held a big meeting on top of Wallace Knob.

**1923** – Herbert Sease, who was convicted of the first degree murder of R.H. Davidson in 1922 at Winnerva (near Buffalo), became the first (and only) person from Baxter County to be executed for his crime.

**1923** – In November, the Cotter Realm Knights of Ku Klux Klan attended the Methodist Church service at Cotter and presented the pastor with a letter and \$54.

**1923** – Electricity came to Mountain Home when Wyatt Wolf moved to town and secured a franchise to operate a power plant known as the Mountain Home Electric Co. On March 29, 1923, current began to flow through the lines.

**1923** – A baby was born in the Baxter County jail because of prohibition. A woman visited her husband who had been thrown into the “lock-up” when he became “ensnared in the liquor laws.” While the woman visited her husband, the stork visited her. The newborn was wrapped in the jailer’s shirt for the trip home.

**1925** – On Thanksgiving Day, the Mountain Home Baptist College Yellow Jackets met the Arkansas College Reserves and were defeated 12-0 in football.

**1925** – The possibility of building dams on the White River was jeopardized when a fight developed between the Dixie Power Co. and the Ozark Hydro-Electric Power Co. over who would build the dams. A hearing before the Arkansas Railroad Commission gave the Ozark Hydro Electric Power the right to build three dams along the White River.

**1926** – The North Arkansas Power Co. was incorporated by Wolf, Bauman and Hall.

**1927** – Cotter suffered a flood that washed away a lot of the town’s livelihood. The population was beginning to decline in Cotter while Mountain Home started to grow. In 1927, everyone in the county would realize a very real need for dams on the White River after 36 hours of rain caused a raging flood that damaged or destroyed everything in its path. Some say the river reached from bluff to bluff in many places between Cotter and Norfolk.

**1927** – The movie “Souls Aflame” was filmed at Norfolk. Released in 1928, it was originally titled “Thou Shalt Not Kill.” It is a mountain story which takes place immediately after the Civil War. Many local residents appeared in the film.

**1929** – State Highway 5 was built through Baxter County.

**1929** – Contract was let on the Cotter bridge over White River at \$450,000. The contract was won by the Bateman Construction Co. of Nashville, Tennessee.

**1930** – The bridge across the White River at Cotter, rainbow-arch bridge designed by Frank Marsh of Topeka, Kansas, was dedicated in November with a record crowd of 4,000 people attending. The bridge was made up of 9,000 yards of gravel, 5,000 yards of sand, 60,000 sacks of reinforcing cement, 800,000 pounds of structural steel and 825,000 pounds of reinforcing steel. It was opened as a toll bridge, and there was a charge for crossing it until April 1938. The toll receipts helped defray the construction costs. Many who couldn’t afford the charge continued to use the ferry just up the river.

**1931** – Paradise Theater in Cotter was opened.

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**1933** – Mountain Home Baptist College closed.

**1933** – Miss Katharine Hopkins of Cotter won Baxter County's first beauty contest.

**1933** – Selling of beer and wine was legalized for the State of Arkansas.

**1934** – Dedication ceremony for the Henderson Bridge over the North Fork River on U.S. Highway 62 in December was attended by about 5,000.

**1934** – W.M. Finley operated a new "talkie" moving picture show in the courthouse and planned to find a permanent location for a theater.

**1935** – Legal liquor was sold for the first time in Baxter County.

**1936** – Arkansas was celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and, in Baxter County, the chamber of commerce was established in Mountain Home in February. A municipal waterworks contract was signed.

**1936** – Two hundred head of livestock changed hands at the first livestock auction in the city at the old light plant.

**1936** – Cotter High School gymnasium at 412 Powell Street, Cotter, was erected by Works Progress Administration (WPA). The gymnasium is now the North Arkansas Youth Center.

**1936** – The Buford School building south of Mountain Home was a 1936 WPA-built educational structure and now houses the Buford Fire Department.

**1937** – Growth continued with the Rollins Hospital opening in Gassville.

**1937** – A bridge across the North Fork River at Norfork was dedicated on June 17. The bridge was demolished in 2014.

**1938** – Big Flat School gymnasium, at Big Flat, is built by National Youth Administration.

**1938** – The Wolf House at Norfork was dedicated as a regional museum on June 5.

**1939** – Money was allocated by Congress for the construction of a dam across the North Fork River because plans by the private companies had never materialized. The biggest loss, according to the engineers, would be the new bridge across U.S. Highway 62 at Henderson. The bridge had only been completed in 1934.

**1939** – A special election assured the building of a new courthouse in Baxter County and, in 1940, an extra \$5 million was approved for the North Fork (Norfork) Dam project.

**1939** – Big Flat was incorporated in January, which made it the fifth incorporated town in Baxter County.

**1939** – Evans Theater opened on the east side of the square with the showing of the movie "Midnight." The theater had 250 seats. Saturday matinee cost 10 cents and 15 cents; night shows were 10 cents and 25 cents, plus tax.

**1940** – A wire from Congressman Clyde Ellis, told of an extra \$5 million approved for the Norfork Dam project assuring power generation capabilities would be included.

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**1940** – In August the War Department recommended construction of a dam at Bull Shoals. At that time, the area was known as Newton Flat. The city of Bull Shoals was founded in 1954.

**1940** – WPA funds were made available to build a new Baxter County Courthouse in Mountain Home. The work would take 18 months to complete.

**1941** – Foundation tests were completed on proposed Bull Shoals Dam while work continued on Norfolk project which started officially on May 2.

**1941** – On December 7 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the number of Baxter County men going into the army greatly increased with the official entry of the U.S. into the war.

**1942** – Tire rationing began in January. Gas rationing began in October, and general food rationing came in February 1943.

**1943** – Ferry service across Lake Norfolk was launched.

**1943** – The new courthouse was unveiled in August, and bids were opened for the construction of a new Pigeon Creek bridge.

**1944** – The Grant triplets were born in Baxter County.

**1944** – An open house was held at the Norfolk Dam and powerhouse in May, and generation began in June, but plans for the dedication were delayed due to the war.

**1945** – Baxter County voted dry by a vote of 584 to 432.

**1945** – Mountain Home Baptist College was condemned. Franklin D. Roosevelt died in Georgia, and Vice President Harry S Truman was elevated to the office of president.

**1945** – On July 9, the dry forces won the election making it illegal to sell liquor in Baxter County.

**1947** – Construction of the Bull Shoals dam and appurtenant works was started in June, and a second generator was installed in the power house at Norfolk.

**1947** – Flying saucers (unidentified flying objects) were reported in Baxter County for the first time.

**1947** – The “wet-dry” issue was once again on the ballot. Once again, voters said no to the sale of liquor in the county.

**1948** – Baxter Theater opened at its location on South 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The initial movie was “Tarzan and the Huntress.” The theater had 600 seats and a cry room. Admission was 35 cents. The Baxter Theater closed in the mid-1970s.

**1948** – Morgan Theater opened on the west side of the square. Its initial attraction was the Irving Berlin musical “Alexander’s Ragtime Band.” The theater contained 370 seats. It closed in 1974.

**1949** – Plans were made for a county home for aged and needy in Midway. [See entry at 1950 re: Rest Haven.]

**1949** – Construction began on the Saltzman Hospital (later a medical clinic) on Sixth Street. It was open to public in June with 10 private rooms and X-rays rooms.

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**1949** – The Baxter County War Memorial was dedicated on the courthouse square, honoring all men who lost their lives in the service during World War I and World War II.

**1950** – Ground was broken in November for Mountain Home's first sewer system.

**1950** – Rest Haven Home for the Aged, located at Midway, was dedicated in October and was operated by the Mission Board of the Mennonite Church. The home closed in the mid-1960s and became Midway Trailer Park and Apartments.

**1950** – The U.S. entered the Korean conflict, and the Bull Shoals project was put off limits to the public for security reasons.

**1951** – Construction was completed on Bull Shoals Dam in July, and the Bull Shoals Lake began to fill with water.

**1951** – A shortage of state funds caused the Cotter School system to close down in April.

**1951** – Baxter County voted to stay dry by a vote of 1,476 to 1,117.

**1952** – Dr. Z.T. Sheid retired at 50 years of service to county residents in January.

**1952** – January found the Mountain Home Schools closed due to a severe outbreak of influenza, followed by Cotter and Norfolk schools with 300 cases reported in the county.

**1952** – The Baxter County Fair was held at the new fairgrounds at the south part of town.

**1952** – The Starlite Drive-In opened at Gassville. "Blue Grass of Kentucky" was the first movie shown. Admission was 41 cents for adults and 10 cents for children. The drive-in closed in 1987 with the showing of "The Predator."

**1952** – On May 30, 1953, radio station KTLO went on the air with 250 watts at 1490 on the AM dial. Bruce Washburn was the station manager. In 1974, KTLO changed to 1240 on the AM dial with 1,000 watts day-time and 250 watts at night. It was owned by the Mountain Home Broadcasting Corp., with A. Stricklen as president and general manager, and Bob Knight as commercial manager. An FM station was added in 1971.

**1952** – Harry S Truman dedicated Norfolk and Bull Shoals dam. He delivered the dedicatory address for both Norfolk and Bull Shoals dams. He flew to Little Rock on the presidential airliner "The Independence" on July 1 and boarded a special train, arriving in Norfolk at 8:45 a.m., then was driven to the Norfolk Dam accompanied by Gov. Sid McMath. The caravan then drove to Bull Shoals Dam, passing through Mountain Home. After the speech and dedication ceremony, the president and his party drove to Cotter and boarded a special train for the return trip.

**1952** – It rained briefly during the president's visit, and that was almost all of the rain which fell on the county during the summer of 1952. Baxter County was recommended to receive a disaster designation with 17 other counties because of the drought.

**1952** – By 1952, the people in the county had come through two World Wars, were involved in the Korean Conflict, had lived through a depression, seen the construction of both dams and the filling of the basins of those dams, seen a new courthouse built and had observed a change in the population growth, with Mountain Home becoming the new growth center, and the influx of retirees to the area had begun.

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**1952** – In September, Sen. John McClellan threw the switch which started the first generator at Bull Shoals Dam on Labor Day.

**1952** – In October, the first recorded marijuana arrest was made in Baxter County.

**1952** – In November, the installation of parking meters in the business district of Mountain Home was completed. The city has set a 50 cent penalty for over-parking, which will be paid to the city collector at the city hall within 24 hours following the violation.

**1953** – The Ben Franklin store opened in April, located on the south side of the square in the Robertson building.

**1953** – The Baxter County library officially opened in July.

**1953** – Construction of the powerhouse and switchyard at Bull Shoals Dam was completed in July and the installation of the final two generating units in December. Overall cost was approximately \$85,896,000.

**1953** – In November, four fourth-class post offices in the county were closed: Three Brothers, Advance, Ellis, and Cumi.

**1953** – The enrollment in the Mountain Home School District had reached a total of 1,058.

**1953** – In December, a disaster committee, an organization of the American Red Cross, was formed with Quinby Smith as chairman.

**1953** – December marked the organization in Baxter County by representatives of the American Red Cross of a disaster committee to function in case of tornadoes, explosion or other disasters. Quinby Smith was named Chairman, B.B. Foster was vice chairman and other officers were Sam Powell, Kenneth Trammell and E.J. Pinkston.

**1954** – In March, a new dial exchange of the Mountain Home Telephone Co. was put into operation in Gamaliel. The population was still small enough that everyone still felt they knew everybody else, but the lakes were beginning to attract more tourists and retirees into the area.

**1954** – Baxter County again voted to stay dry.

**1954** – The Quorum Court voted to purchase grounds for the Fair Association. \$2,000 was appropriated for the purchase. The County will lease the property to the Association for \$1.00 per year. The Association will maintain the building and grounds at no cost to the county.

**1955** – In April, *The Baxter Bulletin* wrote, "One of the great news stories of our generation came over the wire. Infantile paralysis, one of the most cruel and deadly enemies, has been conquered." The Salk vaccine was soon delivered to first and second grade students in the county, free of charge.

**1955** – Gov. Orval E. Faubus came to Baxter County in June to speak at the new city park (now Old Hickory Park). A \$60,000 swimming pool was built at the park in 1956.

**1956** – Ray Wallace built a sale barn.

**1956** – At explosion at the Byrd Buick Co. on Main Street fatally burned two men: Leonard "Red" Morris, Chief of the Mountain Home Volunteer Fire Department, and Lee Bretz, a mechanic.

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**1956** – The National Fish Hatchery at Salesville was completed at a cost of \$455,000, and a \$100,000 charcoal-processing plant was established at Cotter.

**1959** – The Twin Lakes Golf Club officially was opened in June. The nine-hole course, worth more than \$50,000 upon completion, was constructed for about \$15,000 in donations of labor and machinery on land leased from T.J. McCabe.

**1960** – The Mar-Bax Shirt Factory was the first major industry to locate in Baxter County. The Gassville plant employed 730 people in 1973.

**1961** – On December 9, 1961, a \$160,000 water system was dedicated in Gassville by Sen. J.W. Fulbright and Rep. Jim Trimble.

**1962** – An announcement was made that a large plant would be built by Baxter Laboratories Inc. in Mountain Home. The plant would eventually become the area's largest manufacturing employer.

**1962** – Ground was broken for a new Baxter General Hospital.

**1962** – Mar-Bax dedication services were held in April for the \$535,000 shirt company employing 650 persons.

**1963** – On November 22, President John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. People here, as elsewhere, were shocked and saddened by the violent death of the young president. In Baxter County, flags in front of the courthouse were flown at half-staff in the winter breeze in tribute to the slain president. School children were sent home early on November 22, and schools and government offices were closed the following Monday for a national day of mourning, proclaimed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Many businesses were also closed and local churches held memorial services while others watched President Kennedy's funeral on television.

**1963** – The new Baxter General Hospital opened its doors on November 1 and Dr. Ben N. Saltzman was elected chief of staff.

**1963** – On May 17 a ground breaking celebrated the beginning of Baxter Lab. The first plans were for a five-acre building tract.

**1964** – The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed by Congress. The war in Vietnam escalated.

**1964** – Baxter County lost a landmark in 1964 when Old Main, of the former Mountain Home Baptist College, was razed to prepare for progress.

**1964** – In February the first items came off the production line at Baxter Lab and the Corps of Engineers announced plans to construct a new office building in Mountain Home.

**1964** – Baxter County Library was moved in December 1964 from its old quarters upstairs over the old city hall on Sixth Street, to the new \$35,000 library building on Crescent Drive. Mrs. Margie Dahlke was the county librarian.

**1964** – In April, Gov. Faubus came to Cotter to dedicate a new road built through an annexed section of Cotter, Rainbow Drive. The annexation was the first expansion of the city since 1904.

**1965** – The traffic light at Seventh and Main Streets in Mountain Home was removed because there wasn't enough traffic to warrant it, and a new system of traffic lights was installed at Sixth and Main Streets.

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**1965** – The first shopping center, Ozark Shopping Center, opened in Mountain Home north of the square.

**1966** – Twin Lakes Municipal Airport, later to become Baxter County Regional Airport, opened in January.

**1967** – The College Plaza Shopping Center on Main Street opened with 10 businesses, among them the new Wal-Mart Discount City store.

**1967** – Construction was under way at Baxter General Hospital for a nursing home wing.

**1967** – After more than 20 years of effort, the extension of the roadway across Norfolk Dam was completed. The project had been put off many times because of the high cost involved in cutting through the bluff. Cost was \$224,349. Project was completed in 1968.

**1968** – Sheriff Emmett Edmonds was shot to death in the county jail on the third floor of the courthouse during a jail break. The escapee, Edwin Odus Pittman, was captured 65 hours later. Charged with first degree murder, Pittman pled guilty and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

**1968** – The construction of Douglas Aircraft Company brought about 100 jobs to the area, but it closed in the fall of 1970 due to a “tight money” situation.

**1968** – A train derailed at Norfolk and the engineer was killed. A 7-year-old boy used a rock to move the sliding switch, causing the train to derail as it entered Norfolk.

**1972** – The Dr. Z.T. Sheid Memorial Bridge over the White River near Norfolk was completed.

**1973** – The (Jacob) Wolf House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Built circa 1825, it is a two-story, dog-trot log home of pioneer leader Jacob Wolf. It is located on Highway 5 South, near the West fork of the White and North Fork Rivers at Norfolk.

**1973** – Baxter County celebrated its 100 year anniversary. *The History of Baxter County, Centennial Edition 1873-1973* by Mary Ann Messick was published.

**1973** – The City of Lakeview was incorporated on November 16. It is the westernmost town in Baxter County and was previously known as Amos before the construction of Bull Shoals Dam.

**1974** – Baxter County Historical Society received its charter and adopted bylaws and a constitution. Quinby Smith was elected president of the group.

**1974** – Ten cars of a 50-car Missouri-Pacific Railroad train derailed as the train entered the Cotter tunnel, but no injuries were reported. Damage to a half-mile section of tract was considerable, but a Missouri-Pacific spokesman at the scene termed damage to the railroad bridge that stretches across the White River as possibly the most severe. No cause for the derailment has been determined.

**1974** – A 36-year-old plan to build a dam at Lone Rock on the Buffalo River in Marion County has been recommended for deauthorization by the Army Corps of Engineers.

**1974** – On May 15, the Twin Lakes Golf Course, on U.S. Highway 62 East, added nine new holes, making a total of 18 holes at the course, which will open for general public use as well as for association members.

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**1975** – The Casey House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 1858 dog-trot structure was built by pioneer, soldier and politician Col. Randolph Casey, and is located at the corner of the Fairgrounds in Mountain Home.

**1978** – In the heaviest voter turnout in Baxter County history, Baxter County voted to go “wet.” More than 12,000 votes were cast. For the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors: 6,175 votes. Against the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors: 5,991. The county went wet by a narrow victory of 184 votes.

**1982** – Old Joe Site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is a restricted address in the Norfolk area.

**1983** – Three-story addition to Baxter General Hospital dedicated. The 80-bed tower was part of a \$15.8 million expansion undertaken by Methodist Health Systems of Memphis, Tennessee.

**1983** – The Veterans Memorial Bridges, crossing Lake Norfolk at U.S. Highway 62 and State Highway 101, were completed. The bridges did away with the need for the ferries that brought motorists from bank to bank.

**1983** – On April 4, the *Baxter Bulletin* began publishing three times weekly.

**1984** – The Leatherwood Wilderness Area of the Ozark National Forest was created in October. Most of this wilderness area is within Baxter County. It is closed to all motorized vehicles and has other restrictions as well.

**1985** – The Mountain Home Vocational-Technical and Adult Basic Education Center moved to the former First Baptist Church on East Sixth Street.

**1985** – A tornado went through Mountain Home in the fall damaging, among other things, the gymnasium on College Street (now Pinkston Middle School) and the Casey House.

**1985** – The Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord (CSA) compound was surrounded by federal, state and local officials attempting to arrest three fugitives. The standoff ended peacefully, and officers recovered an array of weapons and ammunition. The CSA compound was located in Marion County, but Baxter County authorities assisted in this incident.

**1985** – *The Baxter Bulletin* became a daily newspaper.

**1986** – The bells rang across the state in celebration of Arkansas’ 150<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**1987** – Work was progressing rapidly on a new Highway 62/412 bridge over White River at Cotter.

**1988** – A multi-million dollar bridge opened across the White River at Cotter and pulled the main traffic flow away from the downtown area of the city. Highway 62 still runs through downtown Cotter as a business route. Dedication of the Bobby Hopper Bridge over White River was October 16.

**1988** – A time capsule was buried in front of the Mountain Home Municipal Building to commemorate the city’s centennial.

**1989** – A new swimming pool was built in Cooper Park.

**1990** – The city of Mountain Home has more than enough traffic to warrant nine traffic lights.

## CHRONOLOGY OF BAXTER COUNTY HISTORY

**1990** – Mountain Home has a population of 9,011, with almost 5,000 customers served by the water department and a project under way to expand the water system to twice its size. There was also an expansion project under way at the high school with a new gymnasium and auditorium being under construction.

**1990** – The Cotter Bridge, a/k/a R.M. Ruthven Bridge, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The 1930 Marsh rainbow-arch bridge is located on Highway 62B, over the White River at Cotter.

**1990** – The North Fork Bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Constructed in 1937, the bridge is a steel-deck Warren-truss bridge at Highway 5 South, over the North Fork of the White River at Norfolk. The bridge was demolished in 2014.

**1990** – Members of the 224<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Company of the Army National Guard are sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, before being deployed to Saudi Arabia.

**1991** – President George Bush ordered coalition military forces to suspend combat attacks at midnight, exactly 100 hours after the ground assault that doomed Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait. He made the announcement on the 42<sup>nd</sup> day of the conflict with Iraq.

**1992** – The Case-Shiras-Dearmore House, located at 351 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Mountain Home, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 1880 plain traditional-style home is linked to prominent local families.

**1992** – The BCRH Medical Arts building was completed, and the Bull Shoals ambulance station was established.

**1992** – The Buford School Building, on Highway 126 at Buford, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building was constructed in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

**1992** – The City of Mountain Home agreed to allow the Baxter County Historical Society to have a section of Cooper Park to erect Rapp's Barren, a pioneer village of buildings which were moved from several areas of the county. The village, maintained by the city of Mountain Home, now contains two log cabins, a shot-gun house, and the Shady Grove School. Mountain Home was once called Rapp's Barren. This was the name of the post office until 1857, when it was changed to Mountain Home. However, the name was still known as Rapp's Barren on the 1860 census and also appears as Rapp's Barren on Arkansas maps as late as 1865.

**1993** – The Big Flat School Gymnasium was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building is located on County Road 121, south of the junction with AR 14, and was built in 1938 by the National Youth Administration.

**1995** – Arkansas State University Mountain Home was founded in July.

**1995** – Highway 341, known as Push Mountain Road, was paved from the county seat in Mountain Home to Big Flat, allowing a direct route without leaving the county. Surrounded by forest, for many years, Big Flat was isolated from other parts of the county until 1995.

**1995** – The Baxter County Courthouse, located on the square in Mountain Home, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The structure, built from 1941-1943, was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

## CHRONOLOGY OF BAXTER COUNTY HISTORY

**1995** – The Cotter High School Gymnasium was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Located at 412 Powell Street in Cotter, the 1836-1938 structure was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

**1998** – The west side of the square was demolished to make way for future improvements.

**1995** – The Davis House, located at the Junction of Wolf Street and Highway 5 South in Norfolk, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The home is a 1928 pyramid-roof cottage.

**1996** – The Physical Rehabilitation Center opens at BCRH.

**1997** – Highway Department workers began paving the Highway 62 bypass after years of road preparation. Completion was expected by late 1998.

**1998** – New Baxter County Juvenile Services building completed to house juvenile services, the Alternative School and the Family Resource Center.

**1998** – Jesse and Julie Crowley of Mountain Home made history in this area when Julie gave birth to quadruplets on August 3 at Cox Medical Center in Springfield, Missouri. The four babies grew from three eggs – one split, making the girls identical twins. Tragically, Julie died of liver failure September 19 at the age of 28 when her newborns were younger than 7 weeks.

**1998** – Ground was broken on the BCRH six-story tower. BCRH bought homes along Hospital and Broadmoor drives to use for patients' families and additional parking space. Cardiac surgery began in September.

**1998** – Arkansas State University Mountain Home had a ground-breaking ceremony to celebrate the phase 1 construction of their new 117-acre campus. The new campus site is in southwest Mountain Home.

**1998** – The county's 911 Center began operating from the police department in February.

**1999** – Baxter County's new 911 Center opened with a special public open house.

**1999** – On December 27, Baxter County Regional Hospital is renamed Baxter Regional Medical Center.

**2004** – The Fort Smith to Jackson Road – Talbert's Ferry Segments was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The circa 1836 military road segments were traversed by the John Bengé Detachment during the Cherokee Trail of Tears. The location is a restricted area.

**2007** – The Horace Mann School Historic District a/k/a Norfolk Public School was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The property is located at City Hall Circle in Norfolk.

**2007** – The Cotter Water Tower was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Located at the NE junction of US 62B and State Street in Cotter, the tower was constructed in 1935 and is a Public Works Administration-funded water tower.

**2007** – The Rollins Hospital, located at 107 E. Main Street in Gassville, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The building was constructed in 1923 and used as a community hospital.

## CHRONOLOGY OF BAXTER COUNTY HISTORY

**2008** – The Cold Water School was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1926, the one-room rural school is located at 2422 CR 73, at McPhearson. [Note: The website for the National Register of Historic Places states that this location is in the “Big Flat vicinity.”]

**2010** – The Mountain Home Commercial Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The District is located in downtown Mountain Home (roughly bounded on the North to East 5<sup>th</sup> Street, East 9<sup>th</sup> Street on the South, South Street on the East, and Hickory Street on the West. Established from 1892 through 1959, the area is the commercial center of the Baxter County seat of government.

**2010** – The Donald W. Reynolds Library serving Baxter County opened in September.

**2013** – The Wolf Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The cemetery was established in the early 1820s.

**2014** – The Sid Hutcheson building at Norfolk was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The building was constructed in 1910.

**2020** – The Mountain Home Cemetery, Historic Section, was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The oldest headstone in the cemetery is dated 1857.

**2020** – The Galatia Church at Norfolk was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The earliest marked gravesite is in 1865.

**2025** – Two properties in Big Flat were added to the National Register of Historic Places: (1) Uncle Willie Huffins Park, and (2) Domino Shed.

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Chronology compiled by Maryanne Edge, with a sincere “Thank You” extended to Vincent Anderson and Jeff Lewis for their contributions to this project.

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Donald W. Reynolds Library Serving Baxter County, Reference Department