

Hartman, Arkansas History

In the early days, Hartman was one of the most prosperous towns in the state. Located just eleven miles west of Clarksville, the Johnson County seat, and fifty miles east of Fort Smith, Hartman presently has a population of approximately 600.

A good place to start with the history of Hartman would be with one of the first landowners. His name was Oren Davis Hogins, and he owned 80 acres through a land grant dated May 8, 1837. Others would soon follow, and all went well until the Civil War broke out in 1861. The men who were able soon left the area to serve in the infantry. Those left behind, mostly women and children, had to contend with bushwhackers who roamed the county stealing livestock and food supplies.

The economy did not fully recover until the Iron Mountain railroad came through in the 1870's. When the railroad came through, the farming community became a small village. People began to buy lots, and streets were laid out.

Some of the first businesses in the village were a saloon and the Brinks and Mahon cotton gin, which was built in 1878 by the creek just above the bridge. Other businesses that came later to Hartman included general merchandise stores, a blacksmith shop, one bank, two drug stores, millinery and jewelry concerns, two livery stables, two hotels, the Black Cat cafe, one tin shop, three cotton gins, a grist mill, a post office in 1879 (see below all postmasters to date), telephone facilities, three doctors offices, and one regular cow buyer. There were also two blacksmith shops, one of which was equipped to do all kinds of machinery repairing.

At this point, the town needed a name, but not everyone agreed on what the name should be. Mrs. Mary E, Hogin, who owned most of the land where the town now stands, wanted to call the town Coalburg. In fact, she sold some land to J. P. Webb, and the lot was described on the deed as "Lot 7, Block A" in Coalburg.

T. Hartman was a conductor on the railroad in 1874 when the tracks were laid only as far west as Clarksville, and partly due to his influence, the railroad came right through the center of the little village. Mr. Hartman told the people if they would name their town after him instead of calling it Coalburg, he would see to it that a side track and depot were built in their little town, and that the trains would stop at Hartman.

The people agreed and named the village Hartman. Mr. Hartman followed through with his promise, and Hartman got their depot and side track. Trains began stopping in Hartman, and the little town was established in 1881 as Hartman, Arkansas. Thus, Hartman derived its name, a name which still stands today.

Other names associated with early Hartman were Allen, Bunch, Douthit, Estep, Faucett, Harris, Howard, Jett, Johnson, Marvel, Moses, Oberste, Plugge (Plugge's Store was the last general merchandise store in Hartman), Price, Rinke, Smith, Smreker, Spanke, Stevens, Thompson, Wofford, and Whitaker.

Mr. W. P. Wofford, who came to Hartman in 1886, was the manager of the Thompson & Collier Gin in 1912. This gin has come down through a channel of ownerships from Cravens-Douthit, Johnston & Douthit, Johnston-Langford to Thompson & Collier.

When prosperity abounded in the early 1900's, the people of Hartman needed somewhere to keep their money. The Bank of Spadra was moved to Hartman on December 16, 1910 and was renamed The Bank of Hartman. W. W. Thompson was president, Pat McWilliams was vice-president, and Elmo and Buster Thompson were cashiers. Hartman Bank was recognized as one of the soundest banks in the state. It was closed during the depression, but not one customer lost a penny at the bank.

The good years of the 1920's came to an abrupt end in November of 1926, when a large part of the business district of the town was destroyed by fire. The fire was the beginning of the end for the booming town of Hartman. By 1960, the railroad discontinued its passenger and mail deliver service in Hartman. B. A. Thompson closed his store in the 1960's. Sometime before that, Luther Marvel's barbershop closed, and finally in the 1970's, Plugge's store closed.

It is also interesting to note in Hartman history that Duell R. Evans held one of the longest terms as postal carrier from September of 1968 to September of 1989. Hartman is also proud to boast that M. R. "Bucky" Walters has served as postmaster since January 1, 1967 and presently (2009) still holds that position (almost 53 years and counting. Hartman can also boast in electing the first female Mayor of Johnson County, Debra L. Davenport, who was elected in 1990 during Bill Clinton's term as Governor of Arkansas.

The list below consists of all of Hartman's Postmasters to date. Reappointments of the same person in a consecutive period are not listed.

<u>POSTMASTER</u>	<u>APPOINTMENT DATE</u>
William Allen	September 1, 1879
John D. Houston	April 1, 1880
William W. Brinks	September 15, 1881
Fannie J. Moore	April 18, 1884
Fannie J. Harraway	December 19, 1884
Gabriel C. Henry	July 20, 1889
Louis A. Cook	April 6, 1891
Mary E. Porter	August 21, 1893
Fannie Holland	May 24, 1895
Abb P. Phillips	May 6, 1899
John P. Blakely	April 5, 1900
Eugene M. Harraway	January 19, 1903

Robert A. Blakely	November 29, 1905
Patrick F. Maskell	May 15, 1907
Louis J. Oberste	December 20, 1913
Patrick F. Maskell	March 31, 1922
Hoyt D. Estep	June 8, 1934
Mrs. Emma Hurst	December 31, 1953
Merlin R. Walters	January 1, 1967