

CHAPTER 10

LATE 1900's

CHANGES IN POWER

A very rich and powerful leader influenced Arkansas's late 1900 period. Winthrop Rockefeller served as governor from 1967 through 1971. This wealthy New Yorker moved to Arkansas in 1953. His first act was to buy one end of Petit Jean Mountain. With a rich playboy reputation, he shocked the nation when he became a cowboy. He converted the newly acquired Arkansas land into a working cattle ranch. He dressed the part of a cowboy, wearing a big hat and cowboy boots.

Mr. Rockefeller spent a lot of money establishing a successful Republican party in Arkansas. He cultivated a close acquaintance with then Governor Faubus. In 1955, Faubus appointed Rockefeller to head the new Arkansas Industrial Development Commission. This organization helped bring industry to Arkansas. From that point on, the rich ex-New Yorker was very much involved in Arkansas politics. He ran for Governor in 1964, but lost. Persistence pays, however, and two years later Rockefeller was elected governor of Arkansas, serving from 1967-1971. He was defeated by Democrat Dale Bumpers.

DEVELOPING RESOURCES

Poultry has become the state's top agricultural product in recent years. Poultry processing is also now the number one industry in Arkansas. Lowlands of the delta in the eastern part of the state have rapidly increased in production of rice and soybeans during the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. The increased acreages have been from swamps and wetlands. During the late 1980's and early 1990's, environmentalists have all but stopped wetland clearing. New laws carry severe penalties for disturbing wetlands. A big part of the good delta cropland was drained before the wetland laws were passed.

In recent years, Arkansas has prospered in many ways. Tourism has boomed, agriculture is more productive, and most incomes have increased. Health for most Arkansans has improved. In 1900, the average age of death in the state was about forty-five. The most common cause of death was infectious diseases. By the late 1900's, tuberculosis, diphtheria, malaria, typhoid, and many other infectious diseases have been reduced and almost eliminated.

The Arkansas River Valley has been freed from severe floods by the Kerr-McClellan Navigation system. Construction of this enormous project began in the 1950's and intensified in the 1960's. The job was assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers. The work was finally completed by 1976.

There is a fourfold benefit to this work. First, navigation permits freight to be hauled by water all the way from New Orleans to Oklahoma. Water is the most economical way to move freight. The second benefit is recreation. Facilities have been provided for boating, fishing and hunting. Water moving through dams constructed along the rivers provide the third benefit which is hydro electric power. The water moving through the dams turn giant turbines that generate electricity.

The Arkansas River had a real problem of bank caving prior to the late 1900's. This was a hazard to boats and barges. River bank stabilization consisted of a series of projects by the Army Corps of Engineers. This involved shaping the channel along an alignment which used a series of "easy bends," taking out sharp turns which cause caving. Revetments, or retaining walls, and dikes were also constructed in severe cave-problem areas.

As a result of all these projects, the Arkansas River is now navigable all the way across Arkansas. The Mississippi River is navigable, as well as the Red River. The Ouachita River is now navigable to Camden.

Good quality water has always been in abundance in Arkansas, although in recent years some of the quality has been decreased by pollution. There is work ahead to keep the good water that God has given us from contamination. Drier states west of Arkansas have an eye on the water resource here. It could be that this state may be exporting water at some time in the future.

Not only are other states somewhat envious of the water resource, the "close to nature" atmosphere is a much desired quality in the 1990's. In our high-tech, pressure-tense society, the term "Natural State" is very inviting. That slogan, which has some truth, is very appealing to visitors and prospective new residents. The forest-like environment, even in large towns and cities, is attractive to those who desire a quieter and slower pace.

Retired people are finding very nice places to live in Arkansas's mountain country. There are many locations for pleasant places to live near lakes or in mountain scenery. Also, with all the new technology available today, it is possible to live in a rural setting and have a home based business. Many parents are recognizing the benefits of rearing their children in Arkansas's great out-of-doors. They believe valuable lessons can be learned when their sons and daughters have the responsibility for animals, gardens, and other projects that take space. Also, there is usually less peer pressure in rural areas.

The national system of four-lane interstate highways started in the 1950's and reached Arkansas in the 1960's. Interstates 30 and 40 entered the state at Ft. Smith and Memphis, and met at Little Rock. Interstate 30 continued to Texarkana and on into Texas. Interstate 55 links West Memphis and St. Louis. This has helped in bringing jobs and businesses into Arkansas. The wide, safe highways have opened Arkansas to trade with other states and even the world. Tourists can enjoy Arkansas's beautiful forests.

TOWARD SELF-GOVERNMENT

As we draw near the end of the 1900's, several states are challenging the power of the Federal Government. Before the Civil War, it was the South that demanded more states' rights. Now California, Colorado, Missouri, and Illinois have demanded more freedom. They are demanding a return to the principles of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution which states: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

A "Great Awakening" came to America in the 1700's. This was so powerful that it carried over into the 1800's. Arkansas was founded during this period. Individual self-government was a part of society then,

even though all were not "born again" Christians. With individual self-government there is less need for laws and police. Real freedom is the fruit that comes when most citizens are being responsible.

There is a revival of the spirit of self-government in Arkansas. In fact, the rugged pioneer spirit is still alive and well in this state in the 1990's.

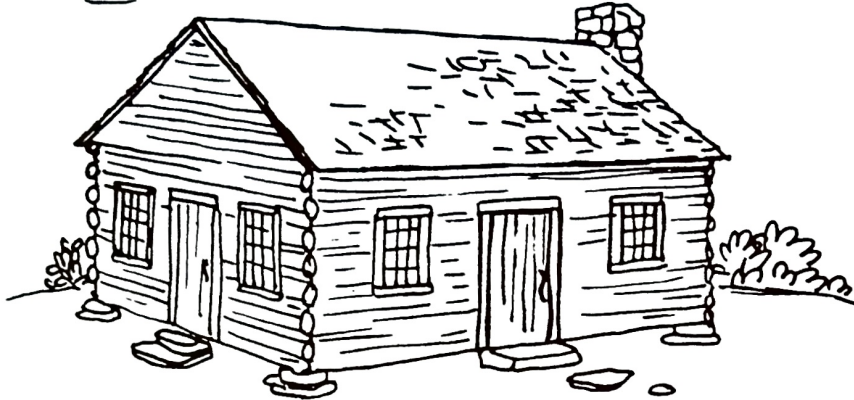
So many new federal regulations and laws have been passed that it is very difficult for small businesses to operate. Many of these new rules are made by federal bureaus such as the Environmental Protection Agency. The states are required to enforce these new laws, often without the money to do so. A law against unfunded mandates has been passed by Congress, and should relieve some of the pressure on small businesses.

The big problem now is moral. A large percentage of newborn Arkansas babies are not born into a God-designed family. God designed the family to be one man and one woman for life. Sexually transmitted diseases are now at an epidemic level because of the violation of this principle.

Second Chronicles 16:9 says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." Could that be you? Arkansas need the leadership of those whose heart is perfect toward God.



SIDE GLANCE



ARKANSAS' LOG CABIN PROGRAM

A return to the log cabin is perhaps a way to restore traditional family values to this state.

In September of 1996, Governor Mike Huckabee dedicated five log cabins to the training of Arkansas youth in Biblical principles. He followed that with a Governor's conference for stronger families in December of 1996.

The log cabins will serve as a tool for changing the lives of youth that are in trouble with the law. Our court system does not know what to do with these young people. This ministry is under the direction of local churches in different parts of the state.

Teaching character in a cabin has been developed by the Institute in Basic Life Principles. It works like this: Three young men live in a cabin for a certain length of time. Two of these youth are well trained in Biblical principles of life and have blameless characters. The third youth is a court designated offender. The three must perform all the daily chores of living such as cooking, washing their clothes, cleaning house, etc. They also either do home study or attend high school or college classes.

In the state of Indiana, the Log Cabin Ministry has been a big success. Many of the young people have become Christians and are experiencing *changed lives.

* Consider reading II Corinthians 5:17