

1955

CHS BIO

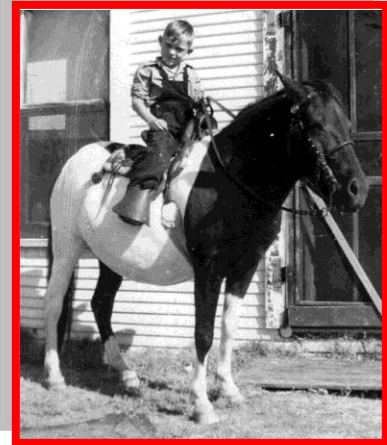
Wayne Sampson – Civil War Actor



After graduation from CHS I spent two years at University of Oklahoma with a major in Geology. However, the more I learned, the less I was overjoyed with this choice. Gratefully my advisor had recommended that I take a few courses in accounting and economics. And, by 1958 I was living at home and going to Tulsa University.

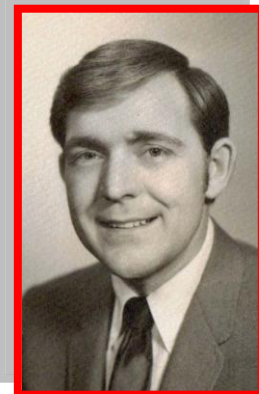


That was a little less expensive. However, the downside was that I was seriously missing the local Norman hot spots, Louie's 500, Degnan's, Mom's Menagerie, the Across the Street Cafe, which would eventually become the Ma Bell's, but mostly my friends. I actually missed the pink palace - that is, Irving House, Wilson Center. Every time I could take a day off I was on the road to Norman to see my old friends.



Wayne studying to become a Civil War actor

While at TU, business and accounting related courses seemed to be a good fit. In the interim I worked at several part-time jobs and finally took a position in accounting with a Tulsa based trucking company. Although I was hired as a temp, the position lasted for 28 years. It was a steady climb from accounting clerk, to Supervisor of Terminals, to Director of Operations. Then a side step to Accounting Manager which led to V.P. Controller and finally Vice-President Corporate Services. During this period the company managed to survive three changes of ownership and management styles. However, it did not survive the forth change and my final stint was to assist in the liquidation of its assets in bankruptcy. And, in 1989 I retired.



Vice President

Then in November, 1989 I got a phone call from a person with which I had worked for a time. He had been “sold” along with our flat-bed division to a company in Kentucky. Subsequently that company merged with a small flat-bed trucking company in Missouri. The combination had formed one of the larger flat bed trucking companies in the country. I was requested to make an analysis of this operation and to create a financial package for this new company. That request became a permanent job offer in 1991. It sounded like fun so I agreed. One thing the company needed was some newer equipment but they were not quite able to finance the needed equipment. So with the assistance of my life partner, we started acquiring trucks and trailers. By 1994 we owned 150 tractors and 330 flat bed trailers. In August, 1994 the President of the company had a heart attack and left the company. I had know he was a bit of a crook but as the new CEO I started digging into some of those secret locked drawers in his office and uncovered a considerable amount of fraud and phony accounts receivable. When I exposed this to the bank that financed the accounts receivable they shut down the operation in August, 1995.

So we took our trucks and trailers and leased them to several different trucking companies. But by 1998 it was no longer that much fun. You can buy insurance for almost everything in the trucking operation but as Ron White says, “You can’t cure stupid” and you can’t insure driver’s bad decisions. I have a whole list of horror stories but there was one that convinced me that it was time to just stop.

It was about 2:00 a.m. one morning and my phone is ringing. I can hear it but my body will not respond. After about 15 rings I finally get to the phone. It is the Illinois State Police reporting that one of my trucks has hit an overpass abutment. The tractor is broken into several pieces and the cab and engine are separated and the trailer and load are spread down the Interstate about 200 yards. The engine is about 200 feet from the cab and the driver is partially under the engine. All of the engine fluids are draining out onto the driver and they are attempting to raise the engine to get the driver out. He is subsequently taken to a hospital in Effingham to stabilize him. Then flown by Life-Flight to Champaign where he spent about four days to get the brain swelling under control and finally taken by ambulance to Springfield to a burn center where he would spend the next four months. Oh, by the way, the driver lost three fingers in the accident, suffered multiple broken bones and

burned over 40% of his body. It was about two months before I was able to talk to him at the burn center. I asked him what happened, not what he told the insurance adjuster or the police, the truth, and the explanation seemed simple enough. He said "I had just lit a joint and I dropped it and when I bent over to pick it up I must have pulled the steering wheel to the right." I just said stop, I don't want to hear anymore.

This was early in 1998 and about the same time that I received a notice from the IRS that they had estimated I had underpaid my 4th Quarter, 1995 taxes by \$589,863.23 plus interest of \$650,117.95. I would have sent them a check except for three reasons, the notice did not say "Please", they didn't send a postage paid envelope and I did not agree with their estimate. If they were guessing, I figured that I could guess as well as they could. I did find out that the IRS doesn't have much of a sense of humor when I informed them of the above reasons for non-payment but that's another story.

My partner had been telling me to pull the plug for several weeks so, taking his good advice, I called the finance company and asked my rep if he knew a good truck broker who would like to sell some trucks and trailers. He said he did and asked how many would you like to sell? The only answer was "All of them." The broker did a great job in just a few weeks we were free of debt and had a few dollars left over. I should have remembered the cartoon I had framed hanging over my desk. It was two bums sitting by a camp fire next to a railroad track. One of the bums was saying, "And then I said, why don't we get into the trucking business . . .?"

Of course, it was not all fun and games with trucks and drivers. In the spring of 1984 we had taken a vacation to see London. That seemed reasonable as I had not had a day off or vacation for the past eight years. London was bright lights, big city, with the West End Theatres, the Soho Clubs, the beautiful short term rental flats and lots of very friendly British people; we fell in love with the county. I even liked the food except for the bangers. We returned for a three week Christmas holiday that same year. After that we returned for an at least two week holiday every year until the year 2000 and celebrated the bicentennial standing on the Embankment overlooking the Thames with Big Ben tolling out the old century. So it would seem more like home by 1986 we had arranged for a flat when we were in London that faced onto Soho Square. Ever chance we had we would spend a week on the road seeing the sights and

a week in London going to the theatre every night they were open. My life partner and I celebrated our 30th anniversary at the Savoy in London but that was 15 years ago. We had planned after my second retirement to spent longer periods perhaps like six months at a time but that didn't work out. My father died in September of 1998, so we made a decision to care for my mother so she could live out her life in her own home. She cannot be left alone now and someone has to be in the house with her at all times. We have suggested that we could hire a nurse and a house keeper but she doesn't want strangers in the house. She is now 93 and besides being a little forgetful she is looking forward to her centennial celebration.

I haven't completely stopped even though I ought to see the handwriting after two heart attacks, triple by-pass surgery (two of them have since occluded) and 22 days in the cardiac intensive care ward with 16 days on a ventilator tube. Then I had a defibrillator/pacemaker installed but I still wanted to continue doing something. So in 2000 I joined the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), in 2004 I joined the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and in 2010 became a Charter Member of the Ira P. Nash Chapter of the Society of the War of 1812 (1812 Society). I am currently the Quartermaster/Treasurer of the Col. Elijah Gates Camp 570, SCV; the secretary for the Ira P. Nash Chapter and commander of the Gen. Alexander S. Asboth Camp 5 (SUVCW) and a trooper in Co. C, 5th Missouri Cavalry, 4th Military District, Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR). This, by the way, is the last mounted unit in the Department of Missouri. It is sort of like polo except you have a saber and a revolver (of course, shooting blanks). Actually, we participate in a lot of living history events, reenactments, school programs, locate unmarked civil war graves and assure that there is a stone to mark them. In addition to the above, the Gates Camp, SCV, is currently in a program of placing information panels along the Gray Ghost Trail. The section of Interstate we are assigned is Danville to Booneville. So far we have placed three panels and have three planned before the end of this year. Their purpose is to explain the history of the location, sort of, you are here and this is what happened. As you might guess my schedule is extremely busy with two or three events each month. This September, 2011 there are 6 events spread over 4 weekends. However, I consider the CHS Reunion the most important of those events and at this point, health permitting, I plan on being there.

(Down for more pictures)

