

AUGUSTA HISTORY



A photo of Browntown.

Living without the modern luxuries in oil towns

Augusta Historical Society and Museum

Virgil and Alberta Dagel, lifetime residents of Butler County, were raised on farms between Rose Hill and Augusta. Alberta was born on April 17, 1900 in Kansas City, Missouri, as a daughter of Albert and Lillie Patterson. She married Virgil Dagel on May 1, 1923 in Wichita. Alberta began working as a rural correspondent for the Gazette in 1932. But prior to that she worked as a housekeeper and waitress before her marriage. As a young woman, she worked to help support her family which included seven brothers and three sisters. At the time of her death in 1979 she was survived by three brothers, Allie, Clive and Clare Patterson and three sisters, Lillie Jackson, Lovey Boucher and Constance Urban.

During her time with the Gazette, Alberta wrote with authority about oil camp life in Browntown, Haskin’s Camp, Miller Town, and early days of Augusta. Except for a brief few

months during World War II, the Dagels lived in the old company town of Browntown that once prospered just a few miles south of Augusta. Alberta remembered they paid \$7.50 a month for the house, electricity, and gas. Virgil rigged a shower for the community using a bucket, some rope and a bit of wood for privacy. But during the nice months, they would pack a picnic basket and go down to the river and take their baths and then have supper. Sometimes the women would travel to a neighboring oil camp, such as Haskins Camp and Miller Town in the evening to use the showers at the plant after the men had gone home for the day.

Those days were without luxuries such as running water for most of the families of Browntown, but Virgil was elevated to near hero status after he and a neighbor devised an impromptu washing machine for the wives of Browntown. After adapting an oil barrel into a washing tub, they rigged it to the rod of one of the big company oil pumps that brought alternately hot and

cold water as well as lending a washing motion to the tub.

Alberta remembered the parties they had. ‘We’d have big square dances at the recreation hall – we were the best dancers and we never had a lesson.’ Social life for the hard-working homemakers in between square dances amounted only to daily morning meetings at the water well. They cooked everything they ate. There was no refrigeration and, in the winter, they would hang their beef out on the porch.

For many years, the men would work 12 hours a day, 7 days a week at their jobs. Later, they were given one day a week off, but never a holiday unless it happened to fall on that one precious day off. The Dagels and others lived through a very special time and in a very special place in America and southern Butler County.

Alberta passed away on March 16, 1979. Virgil lived until July 17, 1984. Both are buried in Elmwood Cemetery.



ALBERTA D. DAGEL

DEVOTION

What does your love say about you?

Matt Schaffner, Senior Pastor  
El Dorado First Baptist Church

What do you love most? It might seem a simple, straightforward question, but there is a profound truth in how we answer. Our human hearts are infinitely fickle things moving from passion to passion throughout our lifetime. As a child, I was passionate about GI Joe devotedly devouring everything I could and wishing (and asking at every opportunity!) for all the toys. As I grew my passion shifted to football. It not only occupied my interests but began to demand much more of my

time. Yes, that passion coupled with hard work paid for college, but was it worth it? Now, while I still enjoy football, it isn’t the center of my attention and life as it had been. Why do I say all this?

Because our hearts are made to worship and we are ridiculously good at finding things to worship! John Calvin aptly said, “The human mind is, so to speak, a perpetual forge of idols.” We find things to worship and are so good at creating them our hearts and minds are essentially an ongoing, ever-producing factory. Do you see yet why I ask what you love most?

I can always tell you what you are

worshipping with a simple test. Think through (honestly!) where your money is spent, where your passion is invested, and your time is lavished. If those three things meet- I can promise it is what you’re worshipping! More than that, I can tell you that it is what you love most. If you protest, consider that only one thing never gains only decreases, time (and at a further point, your money is acquired through the use of said time!). So, what are you worshipping?

Jesus pointed our hearts toward the most important- loving God and loving others. Why in that order with loving

God as the primary? Because we will turn anything into an object of worship if given the slightest opportunity- even things God has said instead of Him! This week, ask yourself the questions and really think about it- what do you love most? Even good things like my wife, kids, job, and church can become idols with the slightest push when I’m not loving God the most. However, when I love God the most I can love my wife, kids, community, and others the best. So what does your love say about you?





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**ROBIN HOOD**  
Continued from  
A1

**Quick details**  
What: Theatre production,  
Marian or The True Tale of  
Robin Hood  
Where: Campus Auditorium,  
700 building, El Dorado campus  
When: Thursday, Sept. 25 –  
Friday, Sept. 27 at 7 pm; matinee  
on Friday at 2 pm  
Cost: Free for staff, faculty and  
students with college ID; \$10 for  
adults; \$5 for seniors. Limited  
seating. Early reservations  
strongly encouraged.  
Learn about theatre, art, in-  
strumental/vocal music and mass  
communication scholarship op-  
portunities available to all majors.  
Cast and crew are listed below by  
hometown:

<b>Technical</b>	<b>Howard</b>
<b>Theatre</b>	Gracie Moore
<b>Students</b>	<b>Hutchinson</b>
<b>Atchinson</b>	Michaela
Clara Hall	Willard
Ivie Wolfe	<b>Madison</b>
<b>Augusta</b>	Cheyenne
Claire Brown	Trower
Corbyn Mosley	<b>Minneapolis</b>
<b>Clearwater</b>	Brysie Cox
Ella Bernsten	<b>Towanda</b>
<b>Derby</b>	Rory Mosher
Brooke Rice	<b>Valley Center</b>
<b>El Dorado</b>	Finn Galliart
Eli Wonsetler	Savannah
<b>Harper</b>	Wolff
Sergio Garcia	<b>Wichita</b>
Reyes	Roz Hodge

MJ Jarrett  
Jasper  
White-Knight  
**Cast**  
**Bel Aire**  
Shane Wilson  
**Clearwater**  
Kalea Gooch  
Tate Smith  
**Dexter**  
Laikin  
Bratcher  
**El Dorado**  
Emiline  
Spradling  
**Junction City**  
Jaxon Hodge  
**Newton**  
Ronni Horn  
Kinsley  
Peterson-Nevill  
Grey Thaw  
**Topeka**  
Kallahan  
Mielenz  
**Valley Center**  
**Anna Black**  
– Stage  
**Manager**  
**Wichita**  
Bronwen  
Burch  
Audrey Buser  
Addi Gimple  
Sarah Hittle  
Aven Hottle  
Jaden Murdock  
Riley Outhier  
Theo Scribner  
Melia Voshell  
Candice  
Weilert  
**Waterside,**  
**Connecticut**  
CJ Manual