

# A Look Back: How Lakeview came to be 'the best town by a dam site'

From Baxter County Historical & Genealogical Society

Reprinted courtesy of *The Baxter Bulletin*

September 18, 2012

*(This story was researched and written by Mary Ann Messick and edited by Linda Bradbury.)*

Hazel Smith was born Sept. 2, 1909, at Oxford in Izard County, the youngest of the four children of Mark and Ella Tatum Smith. Hazel describes her father as “a prosperous farmer who was prominent in the affairs at Oxford.”

“He always owned a farm, we never rented. Dad’s goal was to provide a good life for his family and a good family for the community.”

After Hazel finished school at Oxford, she chose to attend a business college. In 1928, she married M.O. “Monty” Montgomery, who also was born and raised at Oxford. They tried farming but Hazel said, “The drought and Depression starved us out of the Ozarks.”

Monty followed construction work up and down the West Coast and the war years found him working in the California shipyards and Hazel at Western Union. In 1946, they returned to their beloved Ozarks. As Hazel said, “We came back to Arkansas to build Bull Shoals Dam and the best town by a dam site.”

The site of the proposed town was settled in the mid-1880s by migrating members of the early pioneer families who, like Hazel were, from Izard County.

It first was called Trimble Flat, for the Trimble family, first settlers on the flat fertile plateau, overlooking the White River. The McNeilfs, Aylors and Wayland families soon followed from Izard County.

When the school, Baxter County District No. 25, and the post office were established, they were called Amos. The community, church and cemetery remained Trimble Flat, often shortened to simply “The Flat.”

As early as the mid-1920s, a dam had been proposed farther upriver than the mouth of both the Buffalo and North Fork rivers. Several core sample drillings were made, especially in the Wildcat Shoals area. In early 1946, after the war, and the wartime completion of Norfolk Dam, the site was chosen and the contracts were let for the construction of Bull Shoals Dam. In the fall of '46, Kirby and Bertha Smith and Monty and Hazel Montgomery came to the area to help build the dam and a town with housing units for the construction workers.

C.S. Woods had purchased large tracts of land and had laid out a town on the west side of the dam site to be called Bull Shoals City. The Montgomerys and Smiths looked there, then chose a site on the east side, the Baxter County side of the river, for their town site.

In 1935, Clyde Bryant had purchased a large farm at Trimble Flat, and the next year he built a comfortable farm house. In 1941, electricity came to the flats. The Montgomerys had found the spot ideal for building their housing units when Washington put a moratorium on dam construction. The end of Bull Shoals Dam before it began?

But, Monty didn't think so, although his partner had pulled out.

In December 1946, they moved into the gracious Bryant farmhouse, cut the pasture fence and began construction. When the contracts for Bull Shoals Dam were let in early 1947, they had six housing units finished. Their first patron was none other than Mr. Dam Builder himself, Harvey Slocum, the construction superintendent for the entire project.

He leased five units for the duration of the project. The Montgomerys lived in the first unit and used it for an office, and four units were occupied by department supervisors at the dam and their families.

The Montgomerys then built six larger units, naming it Lakeshore Court. Later, they added a gift shop, soda fountain and new living quarters. In the meantime, Monty got a real estate license, installed a “Lots for Sale” sign and became instrumental in developing a town that would later become Lakeview. Hazel petitioned for and obtained a post office, getting it named Lakeview when only hills and timber were the view at that time.

When the lake filled, the Montgomery's Lakeshore Court was 200 feet from the water, and the view became miles of lakeshore and water.

In 1953, the Montgomerys sold their operation and bought a motel on the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri. One season was enough there. They moved to Branson, Mo., where Table Rock Dam was under construction in 1955, and Monty was back to work as equipment oiler foreman and Hazel was back in a drug store.

They moved back to Mountain Home in 1956, built a new home and he began building the Mountain Home Motel. After a couple of years, they sold the motel, relaxed a year, and in 1961 they began development of Beautiful View Acres on Highway 62 west of Mountain Home.

Monty passed away in September 1971. Hazel remained active in church and other hobbies, then in 1976 she married Doyle Smith, the first boyfriend to walk her home from church in Oxford in 1923. Doyle passed away in October 1990.

Hazel has had an interesting life, and at 103, she still can tell you all about her life and the town of Lakeview.

*Photographs and information provided in this series was provided by the Baxter County Historical and Genealogical Society. If you have additional photos and information you would like to have properly preserved please contact the BCHGS by phone at 425-2551, by email at [bcarchives@centurytel.net](mailto:bcarchives@centurytel.net), or by mail at Baxter County Historical & Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 2125, Mountain Home, AR 72654. Additional information may be found at [www.baxtercountyhistory.org](http://www.baxtercountyhistory.org). A Look Back can be found on-line at [www.baxterbulletin.com](http://www.baxterbulletin.com).*



M.O. 'Monty' Montgomery in front of the Lakeshore Court office circa 1950. / Courtesy of BCHGS



A postcard view of Bull Shoals Lake from Lakeshore Court. / Courtesy of BCHGS

The 1948 form for establishing the Lakeview Post Office. / Courtesy of BCHGS