

The Pfeifer Story

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“There is an element of romance back of the growth of Pfeifers of Arkansas, and the story begins when in 1853, almost a hundred years ago, there landed in New York on Christmas Eve a youth from Germany. The boy, alone and a stranger in a strange land, possessed a cash capital of 20 francs, the equivalent of \$5.00. But he had come to seek his fortune in America and he did just that. He was born in Eberbach in the Dukedom of Baden and his name was Joseph Pfeifer. ...In the year 1865 Joseph Pfeifer came to Arkansas and embarked in business under the name of Miller and Pfeifer. The store was located between second and third on Main and at the time of his coming to Little Rock there were about 15,000 people here.

Joseph Pfeifer’s idea of working hours was to go to work early and stay until late at night. Every day he would go to the back and take a nap even if he ran the risk of people stealing from the store. His motto was to give everybody value received for their money and upon this foundation the small business grew to a very large one.”

Joseph Pfeifer was born in May, 1835 and died at age 92 on December 19, 1926. He was married to Henriette Rudolph and they had four sons, Leo, Harry, Albert and Preston, and one daughter, Bertha. They are buried in Oakland Jewish Cemetery in Little Rock.

“Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pfeifer lived to celebrate their 56th anniversary and then died two weeks apart.”

“Mr. Preston Pfeifer joined the Kiwanis Club of Little Rock saying ‘I joined with the idea that I would put something in it if I got something out of it’, he said. One of his first tasks was to serve on the vocational guidance committee. ‘Just what is my job’, he asked the president. ‘You’ll find out’, he replied. ... Mr. Preston went East and while gone he visited the National Kiwanis Headquarters in Chicago and also the chairman of the national committee in New York. When he returned to Little Rock he knew what he wanted to do...Little Rock became the first city in the United States to have a school where boys and girls could learn the fundamentals of retailing.”

“To honor his (father’s) memory, the Kiwanis Club of Little Rock has established a camp called the “Joseph Pfeifer Camp” which is used for underprivileged children. It is located on an 80 acre plot and is a 30 minute drive in the westward direction from the heart of the city. It was named for the pioneer merchant when his son, Preston, donated a substantial sum for establishing the camp” in 1929.