



# Christian Frederick Eberhardt photographed most of the images in this section and Halley's Comet

Christian Frederick Eberhardt was an early, and prolific, photographer of all things Arthur. Many of the photographs used in this Sesquicentennial edition of the Arthur Graphic were his photographs that had been archived by Noel Dicks.

Knowing Mr. Eberhardt's knack for taking unusual pictures, it is believed that this blurry picture was taken sometime between April 10 and April 20, 1910, of Halley's Comet as it passed across Arthur's sky.

Halley is the only known comet that is regularly visible to the naked eye every 75-76 years, and, so, it is the only naked-eye comet that can appear twice in a human lifetime. 1910 was the first time the comet was ever photographed by anyone.

The 1910 appearance of the comet was considered by many as a bad omen. Superstitious people thought the comet caused the death of Britain's King Edward VII and some Europeans thought it was the foretelling of the upcoming invasion of Germany.

Mark Twain was born on November 30, 1835, exactly two weeks after the comet's previous appearance when it was at its closest orbit to the sun. In

his autobiography, published in 1909, he said, "I came in with Halley's comet in 1835. It is coming again next year, and I expect to go out with it." Twain died on April 21, 1910, the day following the comet's closest orbit to the sun on that trip.

When Halley's Comet was due to pass close by Earth in 1910, everyone from religious fanatics, to scientists, to news reporters stoked the fires of a global panic, believing it was the end of the world.

A French scientist warned that the Earth would pass through the tail of the comet and there was a chance that "cyanogen gas would impregnate the atmosphere and possibly snuff out all life on the planet."

A Kentucky newspaper printed an article, "Will Coming Comet Collide With Earth?"

Suddenly, anti-comet pills flooded the market. Gas masks became best-sellers, and some even bought up "comet-protecting umbrellas."

Some people claimed the comet's approach would "cause the Pacific to change basins with the Atlantic," causing a "mass of chaotic confusion." Chaotic confusion was the order of the day.

As Halley's Comet would travel closest to Earth on May 18, 1910, worried people



HALLEY'S COMET photographed by Christian Eberhardt in 1910 near Arthur.

looked to the skies and counted down their last days. Some women even stuffed cloth in their door frames to block the deadly cyanogen gas. Many prayed on bended knees in the streets and parks.

Halley's Comet last appeared in the inner parts of the Solar System in 1986, but

it was not as visible as it was in 1910. It will next appear in mid-2061, about a dozen years before Arthur's Bicentennial. Surely its appearance will not cause panic then, but be viewed with the same awe that C. F. Eberhardt must have experienced when he photographed it.



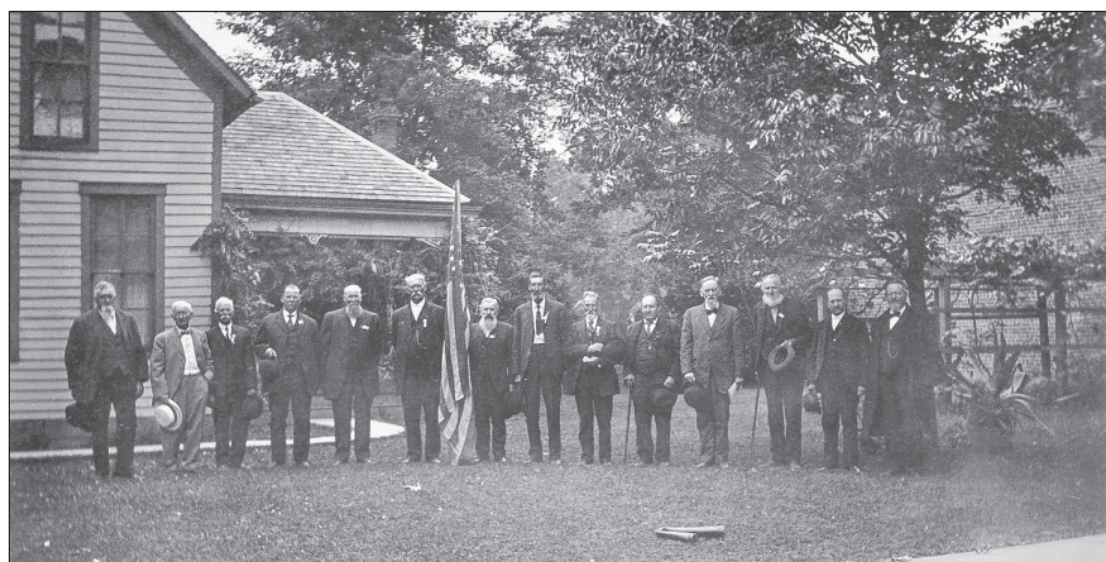
THE EBERHARDT FAMILY in front of their home at 321 S. Elm St. in Arthur.



CHRISTIAN FREDERICK EBERHARDT with his wife, Paulina, and their two daughters, Elsie and Emma circa 1910.



NEWSPAPER TYPESETTING room, possibly The Arthur Graphic.



GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC. GAR Civil War Vets ready to march in parade, 215 S. Vine. J.W.Hauseman, J.W.Barrum, Thomas Pribble, Wm. Epperson, Wm. Quarry, Charles Jones, Charles Fleming, Wm. Vandeventer, Wm. Henry Smith, Wm. Bennett, D.N. Magner, Adler, John Jones.

## Fires in 1879 and 1901 destroyed much of Arthur's business district

Fires almost always produced tragic results in early towns where houses and businesses were all constructed of dry wood and there was little fire-fighting equipment available.

On July 3, 1879, a fire burned down most of the businesses on the west side of the first block of South Vine Street. On Nov. 10, 1901, another fire burned down most of the businesses on the east side of

that same block. On Dec. 10 of that same year the brand new grade school building burned down.

Some of the largest fires took place at Progress Industries. On April 10, 1943, about three-fourths of the Oil Equipment Division was destroyed by fire and two office buildings were leveled.

The recovery from the fire was a tribute to the ingenuity, courage, and aggressiveness

of Progress personnel at the time. Within two weeks partial production had begun and by the end of the first month the company was back in full production to aid in the war effort.

One of the largest fires in Arthur's history was on April 12, 1944, when the west half of Progress was destroyed by an explosion and fire. Because of large amounts of war material on hand, it was probably the most costly fire.



ARTHUR FIREMEN in front of their homemade fire truck that was built on a Nash car chassis circa 1925-30.