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Colonel Samuel Nase Hunter: His Life and Accomplishments

By Richard H. Hunter
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Samuel Nase Hunter was born on March 19, 1888, on a farm in Lake Creek Township, Williamson County, IL. His birthplace was the home built by his grandfather Jacob Hunter (1809-1874).



Sam's father, George Washington Hunter (1846-1937), inherited the farm as the oldest surviving son when Jacob Hunter died in 1874. Jacob's oldest son Thomas Riley Hunter had died in 1866, eight years before Jacob's death. This property is the current

location of the Jacob Hunter Cemetery. In 1906 George Washington Hunter sold the farm and moved his family to 1400 North State Street in Marion.

In 1907, at age 19, Sam joined the Marine Corps and served in San Diego, California. He was honorably discharged in 1909.

Sam married Ruby Corydon McElvain (b. 18 Dec 1889, d. 14 Dec 1960) on 11 Feb 1911. Sam was 21 and Ruby was 20. She was a daughter of Corydon McElvain (1846-1938) and Lurinda Reid (1852-1920). Corydon was 15 and his brother Ephraim was 17 when they joined the 81st Illinois Volunteer Infantry to fight in the War of the Great Rebellion on August 1, 1862. Corydon was wounded at Vicksburg and he and Ephraim were captured at the Battle of Bryce's Crossroads near Guntown, Mississippi. He and his brother spent 11 months starving and struggling to survive in the infamous Andersonville Stockade. (Read more about his Civil War service at: <https://jacobhuntertrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/JHT-Newsletter-26-1-2017.pdf>).

According to Judith Hunter Mathews' interview with our father, George Hiley Hunter (undated), Ruby "was the most beautiful girl in Du Quoin. Everyone said they were the most handsome couple. Ruby had been Queen of the May (akin to today's Homecoming Queen) at the Du Quoin High School. She was a wonderful seamstress and designed and made her own patterns for her clothing." Thanks to Judy for her help in providing dates and locations cited in this report.

After their marriage Sam and Ruby lived in an apartment in Salem, IL. Sam worked for the C E & I Railroad. They moved to Du Quoin in the fall of 1911 before their first daughter Ruby LuNase (1911-1992) was born. Their son George Hiley (1914-1982) attended 1-6th grades at Du Quoin Grade School. By 1920 the family lived on the corner of Line and Park Streets, on the Southeast corner in a two-story white house. Sam, Ruby, Ruby LuNase, Hiley,

Corydon McElvain, Lurinda Reid McElvain, Lola Love Kirkpatrick (Ruby's sister) and her daughter, Corydon Isabelle, all resided in the home at Line and Park Streets.

Sam entered the insurance field working as a partner in the Lou Kelly Insurance Agency in DuQuoin.

By 1917 he had joined the Illinois National Guard, had raised a National Guard regiment (the Ninth Illinois Volunteer Regiment) in DuQuoin, and achieved the rank of Captain. His military career will be described below.

In 1918 Sam ran for the office of Perry County Assessor and Treasurer. He won the office and served from 1919 through 1922. Sam's political career will be described below.

In 1926 Sam moved to East St. Louis and was hired as a journalist for the *East St. Louis Journal*. He was the political editor, writing columns covering both Illinois and national affairs. He left that position in late 1929 and moved to Springfield, Illinois.

In Springfield, in addition to serving as a Colonel in the National Guard, he ran an insurance agency. He lived at 322 S. Glenwood Avenue.

In late 1930 Sam moved his family to Chicago where he took a job as manager for the Public Indemnity Insurance Company in Chicago's "Loop." They lived at 5836 Wayne Avenue, Chicago. In 1932 the company merged with another insurance company and Sam lost his job.

Sam knew Henry Gresiedieck, a Belleville beer manufacturer who offered Sam a distributorship in Chicago. Sam partnered with a Mr. Weber who put up the financing for the trucks, supplies, and a warehouse on 92nd Street. The southside distributorship was successful, but Mr. Weber was a difficult person and Sam left the business later in 1933.

In 1933 Sam returned to DuQuoin where he again sold insurance. Then, he moved the family to Belleville where he directed the National Guard Headquarters. Sam began a self-study program and became proficient in metallurgy and chemistry. He rode a bus from Belleville and later from East St. Louis to Washington University in St. Louis where he sat for hours in the library reading and copying volumes of chemistry books. He took a job as a metallurgist at the Weldon Springs Defense Plant and began teaching metallurgy and chemistry at the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command at Robertson Aircraft Aviation College and Parks Aviation College. Sam continued his studies of chemistry and metallurgy during his various times living in East St. Louis. His teaching appointments covered several intervals into the early 1950s.

In 1934 Sam moved to Tulsa, OK before returning to DuQuoin. His employment there was unclear. He returned to DuQuoin by 1935.

In 1936 Sam was working as a blacksmith at a coal mine in White Ash, IL. He suffered a horrible fall from a scaffold. While installing a large piece of metal, the scaffolding collapsed. Sam fell to the ground and the metal sheet landed just above his right ankle and nearly severed his foot. The foot was dangling by a tendon. Sam was carried to his home in DuQuoin and placed in a rocking chair with his leg resting on an ottoman. When the physician arrived, he informed Sam that his foot would have to be cut off. Sam had a bottle of whiskey in one hand (to kill the pain) and a 1911 45 caliber pistol in the other. Sam demanded the physician to sew his foot back on, and if he woke up and his foot was gone, Sam would deal harshly with the physician. The doctor sewed the foot back on the leg and after a lengthy period for healing, Sam was able to walk without a limp the rest of his life. The right ankle remained swollen but did not cause any other limitations.

In 1940 Sam was living at 215 S. Mulberry St., DuQuoin. He was active as a Colonel in the Illinois National Guard and was running an insurance business.

By 1942 Sam moved back to East. St. Louis living at 639 Veronica Avenue. Sam built a fully stocked chemistry laboratory in his basement and conducted experiments over the course of several years. Sam developed paints and putty formulas designed to withstand heat in outer space and resist rust. His putties were designed to not dry out and crack. Multiple experiments were ongoing at all times. Sam founded a research company, Hunter Metallics Products Corporation, and received patents from the United States, Canada, and England. He continued his research up until the time of his death in August of 1958 at the age of 70.

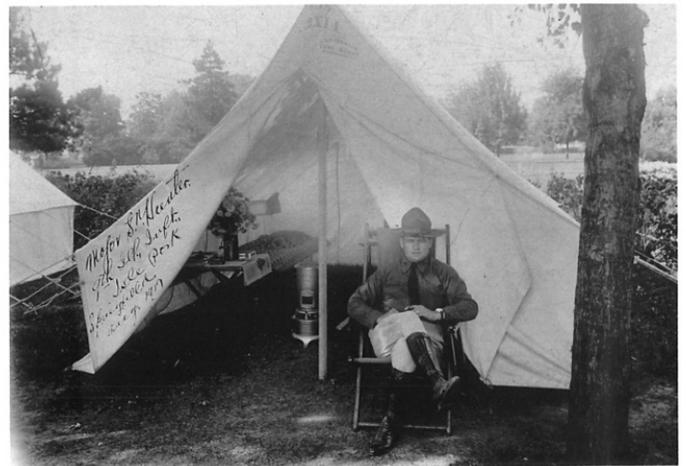
Military Career



In 1907, at age 19, Samuel Nase Hunter joined the U.S. Marine Corps and was stationed in San Diego, CA. He was honorably discharged in 1909 after an injury while holding the rank of Private. His military record between 1909 and 1915 is unknown, but in 1917 he held the rank of Captain, Ninth Illinois Volunteer Regiment, DuQuoin, IL. At that point he had organized and led a regiment of the Illinois National Guard.

On June 24, 1917, he was appointed Major in the 9th Illinois Infantry, Illinois National Guard and on April 8, 1918, was Lieutenant Colonel of the 9th Illinois Infantry. He was living in DuQuoin.

On January 28, 1919, Lieut. Col. Samuel N. Hunter, 9th Illinois Regiment was detailed by Adj. General Dickson to inspect all the national guard armories and equipment throughout the state. Lieut. Col. Hunter was assessor and treasurer-elect of Perry County. He was recently badly injured in a fall and will not be able to make his tour for several weeks (Chicago Tribune, Tuesday, Jan 28, 1919, page 2).



In June 1921 the 9th Regiment, Illinois Infantry, consolidated into the 4th Infantry. In December 1921 the 4th Infantry was redesignated the 130th Infantry, 33rd Division. On March 8, 1922, he was promoted to full Colonel, 130th Infantry, 3rd Division. On March 9, 1922, he was assigned as personnel officer, Adjutant General's Office, IL National Guard Springfield Headquarters.

Sam maintained his National Guard service for 30 years while living in DuQuoin, Springfield, Belleville, Chicago, and East St. Louis, IL. In this capacity he experienced many critical state disasters including the Herrin Massacre in 1922 and the Tri-State Tornado in 1925.

The Herrin Massacre

On Saturday morning June 17, 1922, Colonel Samuel Hunter (age 34) was in Springfield covering as the senior officer at the Illinois National Guard Headquarters. His superior, Adjutant General Carlos Black, was at Camp Grant (near Rockford) attending a school for non-commissioned officers and on Sunday, June 18 Black travelled to Camp Logan (near Chicago) where he was inspecting equipment needed for future camps. General Black did not return to



ADJT. GEN. CARLOS E. BLACK.
(TRIBUNE Photo.)

Springfield until Monday, June 19, 1922. Governor Lennington "Len" Small was in court in Waukegan facing serious charges of corruption. Colonel Hunter read an article in the *Chicago Tribune* about the Southern Illinois Coal Company, owned by William J. Lester of Chicago, currently living in Cleveland. The mine was located between Marion and Herrin, Illinois. Lester had hired strike breakers with the intention to ship coal during a nation-wide United Mine Workers of America strike. Hunter then called Williamson County States Attorney Delos Duty to inquire about the situation on the ground. He immediately recognized that major conflict was imminent due to the strong support for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in Williamson County. (1923 House Committee on Investigation of Herrin Massacre transcripts (HCT), 1-100 p. 14)

Colonel Hunter unsuccessfully attempted to reach Adjutant General Black. He contacted Governor Len Small's chief of staff, George Sutton, and informed him of the potential danger and asked Sutton to give notice to Governor Small that Col. Hunter was going to leave for Marion to assess the situation. He then sent a telegram to Williamson County States Attorney Delos Duty telling him to set up a meeting with Duty, Sheriff Melvin Thaxton, representatives of the Southern Illinois Coal Company, the UMWA representatives, and striking miners in the early afternoon on Sunday June 18. On Sunday morning (June 18, 1922) at 3:15 A.M. he took a train to Carbondale and met his subordinate Major Robert W. Davis. He and Davis took the train to Marion, arriving at 1:45 PM. There they met with Sheriff Thaxton and States Attorney Duty. Duty had not invited the other participants.



26th Governor of Illinois

Col. Hunter and Major Davis were informed that the Lester Mine had hired strike-breakers, "scabs" as they were called, and the mine was being protected by armed guards from the Edward Hargrave Secret Service organization of Chicago. Sheriff Thaxton reported that local citizens complained about being stopped, threatened, and abused by the armed guards.

On Sunday evening Col. Hunter and Police Officer William Thornton of Marion drove to the mine. They were halted by four guards. When the guards saw Col. Hunter's uniform, they took him to mine Superintendent, Claude Kline McDowell. Col. Hunter advised McDowell to close the mine and if he didn't *there was serious danger ahead*. McDowell stated, *his company had a considerable amount invested in the property and they were determined to operate the*

mine. He had operated in other strikes in Kansas, Ohio, and Colorado and that he could also run this mine. McDowell asked Col. Hunter to provide National Guard troops to protect his mine. Hunter told McDowell, *if, in my opinion troops would be needed to protect life and property that I would not hesitate to recommend that troops be sent in, but that I did not or would not entertain them as private guards to serve a company's interest and save company expenses* (HCT, p. 852; HCT 1151-1250, p. 80).

The *Chicago Tribune* reported that on Sunday evening Col. Hunter, Major Davis, Senator Sneed, Sheriff Thaxton, and deputies J.A. Schaffer, W. A. Thornton, and Claude Holmes drove to the Lester mine to meet with mine superintendent, Claude Kline McDowell, and demanded that he immediately cease all mine operations until the UMWA strike was over (*Chicago Tribune*, July 2, 1922). This report actually referred to the Monday afternoon meeting, but Hunter did advise McDowell to close the mine and order all his workers and guards to leave the county during his Sunday evening meeting with McDowell. This was well before the mob formed and all could have safely left. McDowell stated that he intended to continue the mining operation and that he had plenty of armed guards to protect his operation. McDowell asked Hunter to provide him with a company of troops and he would discharge his armed guards. McDowell also attempted to bribe Hunter if he would provide the troops. Hunter rejected McDowell's bribery attempt. McDowell further told Colonel Hunter, *he had broken other strikes 'and I'll break this one too'* (*Illinois Miner*, October 7, 1922). Hunter again advised McDowell he was courting serious danger by using strikebreakers in a union stronghold. McDowell replied that he knew his rights and intended to mine coal. (Col. Hunter's personal notes and diary). Angle wrote in his book, *Bloody Williamson*, that earlier McDowell told a local man who had come to collect a bill, *we came down here to work this mine, union or no union. We will work it with blood if necessary, and you tell all the Goddamned union men to stay away if they don't want trouble* (p. 15). It was obvious that McDowell was intent on working the mine regardless of the cost.

Col. Hunter then returned to Marion and began interviewing people to gauge public sentiment. He interviewed some UMWA miners and found them to be very upset over Lester's attempts to break the union. He also interviewed others, including taxi driver, Claude Holmes, who described how he and a customer were accosted by Lester's mine guards.

On Monday June 19 Col. Hunter and Major Davis met with States Attorney Duty, Sheriff Thaxton, and William J. Lester, the Chicago owner currently living in Cleveland. Hunter and Duty pleaded with Lester to close his mine until the UMWA strike was concluded. William Lester was adamant that he had the right to mine coal with imported labor, and he demanded that Sheriff Thaxton appoint his armed guards as special deputies. Thaxton refused. After the meeting Hunter



took Lester aside and told him he did not believe Sheriff Thaxton would make any effort to prevent trouble, and again he urged him to close the mine. Lester replied, *I'll be damned if I will* (HCT 1151-1250, p. 85).

After the meeting, at 11:00 AM, Col. Hunter called Adjutant General Black, who had returned to Springfield. Hunter informed Black that the situation in the county was serious and that miners throughout the county were fearful and angry. Hunter also informed Black that local officials sympathized with the union miners. He further informed Black that he did not think Sheriff Thaxton would take any action to suppress the violence since Thaxton was a member of the UMWA and was running for County Treasurer in the upcoming election. He reported that 70 to 80% of the population were supporting the union and that Thaxton was well aware of that. Hunter requested that Black immediately authorize two companies of national guard troops be sent to Marion. Hunter advised Gen. Black that he wanted the troops *to march to the mine to escort the men out of the country, to call on the men individually if the management refused to close down*. Hunter informed Black that Sheriff Thaxton told him that there were armed guards on the highway at the mine. Hunter said, *I advised him to put them under arrest*. Thaxton refused saying, *he wanted to be fair to the company*. General Black told Col. Hunter, *Lay down on that damn sheriff. Have him do his full duty. I cannot send troops until requested by the sheriff*. Col. Hunter then advised General Black to hold two companies in readiness because he thought they would be needed (HCT, pp. 856 - 859; HCT 1151-1250, p. 90; *The Belleville Daily Advocate*, April 12, 1923, p.2).



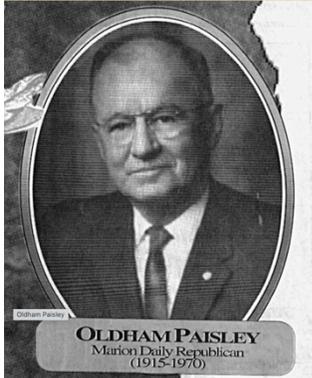
General Black let Hunter know that neither he nor the Governor were in support of sending troops and *that no troops would be sent unless Sheriff Thaxton stated the situation was beyond his control and made the request for help*. General Black and Governor Small did not want to be seen supporting anti-union efforts during an election year. Hunter was advised that troops would not be authorized unless Sheriff Thaxton personally made the request.

Sheriff Thaxton was also sensitive about showing support for striking miners in an election year. Thaxton in no way wanted to be seen providing support to “scab” labor in defiance of the United Mine Workers of America. Thaxton’s term was ending, and he was running for County Treasurer in the fall. Thaxton knew very well that if he had protected Lester in any way his political career would be over. In 1923, when then County Treasurer, Melvin Thaxton was testifying before the House Committee on Investigation of Herrin Massacre, he stated under oath, *Probably Colonel Hunter did mention troops to me, but I told him I did not think we needed them. At the time Storme was a candidate for County Clerk and Schaffer was a candidate for Sheriff*. Both Storme and Schaffer were Thaxton’s deputies in 1922 (HCT, p. 183). It will never be known if the politicians, both state and local, would have been more judicious in providing protection if 1922 was not an election year.

After his call to General Black, Col. Hunter called Sheriff Thaxton and asked him to comply with the Adjutant General’s request that he swear in *a sufficient number of deputies to*

control the situation. Sheriff Thaxton replied, *his regular force was sufficient and that troops would not be needed* (HCT, p. 859; HCT 1151-1250, p. 90).

Later, in an interview with Oldham Paisley, editor of the *Marion Daily Republican*, Col. Hunter stated that he thought the agreement he had with local authorities would preclude



trouble, that the local authorities were competent to handle the emergency, and National Guard troops would not be needed. Hunter later testified that he made that statement to calm the public's nerves. Had he told Paisley that he was pleading with Adjutant General Black to send troops, the riot would have begun immediately after the paper was published. Hunter believed the striking miners would quickly act to assault the mine before the troops had time to arrive in Marion. In 1952 when Angle's book, *Bloody Williamson* was published, Col. Hunter added notes to the margins of many sections. Hunter noted, *Had I told Paisley that I had requested troops he would*

have had a story in his paper to that effect and the riot would have started just as soon as the paper was off the press and before we could get troops in. My plan was to escort the non-union workmen out of the county under military guard. Paisley was bitterly anti-Small and besides I did not have any confidence in him being friendly or helpful (Angle, p. 17). Hunter also wrote, *Sheriff Thaxton told me he had some deputies and would swear in a number sufficient to handle the situation. I did not believe him* (Angle, p. 18).

That afternoon (Monday, June 19, 1922) Col. Hunter, Sheriff Thaxton, State Senator William J. Sneed (President of the UMWA subdistrict 12), and several newspapermen made an inspection of the mine. During that meeting McDowell took Hunter aside and again offered him a bribe of \$ 50 a day if he would supply McDowell troops. Hunter rejected the offer.

Col. Hunter, knowing that the Governor and Adjutant General would not act, demanded Sheriff Thaxton add deputies and provide adequate security to keep the peace. Thaxton assured both Col. Hunter and William Lester that he had the manpower in place to keep the peace and that he had the situation *well in hand*. Colonel Hunter knew the political situation and did not trust Sheriff Thaxton or States Attorney Duty to take any action that would make it appear they were protecting Lester's mining operation.

Hunter told Lester and McDowell the situation was serious and urged them to close the mine. McDowell again stated he *had broken other strikes and would break this one*. Col. Hunter informed McDowell that *he felt he was bringing murder down upon his own soldiers and that if any lives were lost, he would be largely responsible* (HCT, p. 860; Col. Hunter's notes and diary; HCT 1151-1250, p. 91; *Chicago Tribune*, April 13, 1923, p. 3).



Col. Hunter returned to Marion around 4:30 P.M. and talked to more miners and citizens about the strike. He then called Sheriff Thaxton and *advised him to swear in a large*

force of deputies. Thaxton replied, *his regular force was sufficient and that troops would not be needed* (HCT, p. 862).

Monday evening Hunter called Adj. General Black at 6:05 P.M. to inform him that the sheriff had not sworn in additional deputies as he had urged and stated, *I did not believe he (Thaxton) could be depended upon in getting non-union men out of the county or protecting mine property* (HCT, p. 862). Black informed Hunter that the sheriff had not asked for troops. Hunter informed General Black that the sheriff could not be depended on and that he would not ask for troops. (Col. Hunter's personal notes and diary). General Black would still not authorize the two companies of troops from Cairo and Salem.

On Tuesday (June 20th) Col. Hunter called Sheriff Thaxton and again urged him to swear in more deputies. Thaxton told Hunter that, *he had the situation well in hand* (HCT, p. 863; HCT 1151-1250, p. 94). Hunter then met with the Herrin Lion's Club



Senator William J. Sneed

and received its agreement to cooperate with the local civil officers to *keep order and suppress violence.* After the Lion's Club luncheon, Hunter learned of a mass meeting of union miners at the Sunnyside Mine near Herrin. He contacted Sheriff Thaxton to investigate the meeting and find out the possible consequences of the meeting. Hunter then called Senator Sneed and asked what the meeting was about. Sneed did not give him a direct answer but assured Hunter that he need not be alarmed.

Around 7:30 PM Hunter placed another call to General Black and advised him of the Lion's Club meeting and the mass union meeting at the Sunnyside Mine. Following that call, Hunter called Sheriff Thaxton inquiring about the results of the investigation of the union meeting. Thaxton replied, *he had the situation well in hand* (HCT, p. 864).

On Wednesday morning (June 21st) Col. Hunter placed a call to Sheriff Thaxton but he was out. The deputy on duty informed Hunter that everything was quiet. There had been no disturbances through the night and that he did not expect any. Hunter asked if any new deputies had been sworn in and the deputy replied, *not to his knowledge.* Hunter wrote in a telegram to General Black, *Sheriff Thaxton said he had 20 to 30 deputies on duty, but I know of only two whom I actually saw, one of them in office practically all the time.* (*Chicago Tribune*, April 13, 1923, p. 3; *Alton Evening Telegraph*, Friday June 23, 1922, p. 1).

Hunter then went to States Attorney Delos Duty's office. Duty called Sheriff Thaxton who joined the meeting. Hunter advised the Sheriff to comply with the Governor's request to swear in a large number of deputies to handle the situation. After Thaxton's resistance, Col. Hunter asked Sheriff Thaxton to request National Guard soldiers be sent to Williamson County. Duty immediately interrupted and said he *would not call for troops under any circumstances.* (Col. Hunter's personal notes and diary; *Chicago Tribune*, April 27, 1923; HCT, p. 864-865 & 896; HCT 1151-1250, p. 95). Later in the meeting Duty again advised Sheriff Thaxton to *stay away from the scene for fear he would get bumped off.* (*Marion Daily Republican*, January 31, 1923). Neither Thaxton nor Duty wanted to appear that they were supporting strikebreakers.

The Brooklyn New York Eagle reported, Col. Hunter found the sheriff quite placid, with no new deputies and uttering his stereotyped expression: 'I have the situation well in hand.' Col. Hunter grew emphatic in urging the sheriff to make a request for troops. This was done in the presence of State's Attorney Duty. The sheriff said he had 'no idea of calling for troops' and Duty offered the sheriff the advice that 'if I were sheriff, I would not call for troops under any circumstances.' To Col. Hunter Duty said that he 'had full confidence in Sheriff Thaxton' (# 4, August 18, 1922). Hunter was again stranded with no support from the local officials or from his superiors in Springfield.



CHARLES R. EDRINGTON

At 10:30 AM Col. Hunter called on Charles Richard Edrington, Secretary of the Greater Marion Association, and informed him that he could not impress upon the Sheriff the seriousness of the situation and that he (Thaxton) refused to act. Hunter realized that he needed to gain more support from local community leaders in order to persuade local officials to act. Mr. Edrington agreed to organize a Citizens' Committee of reputable businessmen, mine officers, union officials, and union miners. The first meeting of this Citizens Committee was held at noon that day and met in Edrington's office. Edrington had offered Col. Hunter office space to use for his headquarters. The Citizens Committee included Hunter; Sheriff Thaxton (who never attended the meeting, he was out of the office, and no one could find him); William H. Warder, attorney; R.B. Mitchell, a local mine manager; William Rix, president of the Marion Trades Council; Oldham Paisley, *Marion Daily Republican*; A. B. McLaren, coal operator; and Edrington. This group was formed to exert pressure on Sheriff Thaxton and States Attorney Duty to add deputies, take preventative action at the mine, and pressure them to call for National Guard troops. They all agreed that violence was imminent. This group discussed ways to pressure both the sheriff and mine owner, William J. Lester, to shut down the mine. They heard rumors of union meetings in Herrin and that hardware stores were being stripped of guns and ammunition. Hunter learned of the attack on the truck bringing in more miners from Carbondale. He called for Sheriff Thaxton and got Deputy Sheriff Storme. Storme advised Hunter that the Sheriff had gotten a call about the truck incident and was making an investigation. Hunter told Storme to take some deputies to Herrin and investigate conditions there and to disburse and mobs (HCT 101-200, p. 151 – 153; HCT p. 866-867).

Hunter called General Black at 1:25 PM. *I advised him of the reported attack on the truck and of the raiding of stores at Herrin and that the Sheriff could not be found and that he was reported out of the county.* Hunter reported that local coal miners were arming and holding meetings to incite further anger, that violence was imminent, and troops were needed immediately. Black reiterated that the Sheriff would have to request the troops and that *he [Black] was unable to cope with the situation.* General Black informed Col. Hunter to *Lay down on that damned sheriff and have him do his full duty. We cannot send troops until requested by the sheriff.* (*Chicago Tribune*, April 13, 1923, p. 3; HCT p. 867). General Black then hung up the phone on Col. Hunter.

During the afternoon several reports came in about the mob forming and moving towards the mine. After the call with General Black, Hunter called McDowell and informed him

an armed mob was assembling at his mine. Later, McDowell frantically called Hunter and informed him the mine was surrounded and that hundreds of shots had been exchanged. None of his men had been hit. Col. Hunter advised McDowell to immediately raise a white flag of surrender so he could begin negotiating a cease fire with Union officials.

Col. Hunter made several unsuccessful attempts to locate the Sheriff and States Attorney who together had left the county. Sheriff Thaxton could not be located. Hunter later wrote that *the Sheriff was in hiding*. He then got in touch with Deputy Sheriff Storme and pleaded with him to immediately swear in more officers and go to the mine to disperse the mob. He also asked Deputy Storme to call Adj. General Black and ask for troops. Deputy Storme replied that *they can handle the situation* (HCT, p. 868; HCT 1151-1250, p. 99).

At 3:15 PM Col. Hunter again called General Black to advise him that two union men had been killed by McDowell or his guards and that he could not find the Sheriff. Hunter informed Black of McDowell's plea for troops. Hunter stated, *General Black advised me to see to it that the Sheriff got on the job, and told me to stay in the clear, that he (Gen. Black) could not send troops yet as civil authorities had not requested them* (HCT, p. 868; HCT 1151-1250, p. 99).

At 3:50 PM McDowell called Hunter stating the mob was increasing and asking if he had found the sheriff. Hunter told him no, but the deputy was on the road to the mine and the deputy said they could handle the situation. At 4:15 PM Hunter called McDowell at the mine and said the sheriff could not be found. McDowell asked Hunter what he should do. Hunter advised McDowell to initiate a truce. McDowell said he would agree to a truce on any reasonable terms. Hunter then called Fox Hughes at the Herrin union office to begin discussing the terms of a truce (HCT, p. 869; HCT 1151-1250, p. 100).

Around 6:00 PM Hunter again called General Black and appealed to the General to call up the National Guard since the Sheriff was absent from the county and shots were being exchanged with the mob, Lester's security forces, and the non-union mine workers. General Black responded, *Let them damn fools go to it. Maybe if they kill off a few they'll quit.* (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 13, 1923, p. 3; *Moberly Monitor*, April 12, 1923, p. 1; *Indianapolis Star*, Friday April 13, 1923, p. 1; HCT, p. 867). Black, knowing by then that the Sheriff and States Attorney would not act, was willing to let the carnage play out in an all-out effort to protect Governor Len Small from appearing to support anti-union strikebreakers. After all, Governor Small was up to his neck in trouble at his corruption trial taking place in Waukegan. General Black refused to activate the National Guard, and Col. Hunter was left isolated and in an impossible situation.

During the meeting with the Citizen's Committee, Hunter learned that a local man named Charles F. Hamilton was a close friend of William Lester. Col. Hunter tracked down Mr. Hamilton and informed him of the dire situation at the mine and requested Hamilton call William Lester to influence him to close the mine. After another frantic call from Superintendent McDowell at 4:14 PM, Col. Hunter contacted Mr. Hamilton who agreed to call William Lester and inform him of the gravity of the situation. Hunter had previously talked to Lester without success. Now that the shooting had begun, Hamilton was more insistent in his call to Lester. After Hamilton's call, Col. Hunter called Lester and he agreed to close the mine for the duration of the strike and to raise a white flag at the mine.

Hunter and the Citizens Committee began working out terms for the truce. The shooting must be stopped, and each side would raise a white flag so that strikebreakers might

safely leave the county. Col. Hunter called McDowell who agreed to the terms and stated he would raise a white flag.

At 5:30 PM Edrington called the union office to speak with Senator Sneed or Hugh Willis, a state board member of the UMWA. Neither were present so he talked to Fox Hughes, the vice president of subdistrict 12. Edrington turned the phone over to Hunter who informed Hughes that Lester had agreed to close the mine and was willing to discuss terms for the safe passage to the train station for his non-union workers and security guards. Fox Hughes agreed to the terms laid out by Col. Hunter and informed Hunter that he *believes he could sell it to the union men who were laying siege to the mine*. Hunter asked Hughes to take several men to the mine and get the shooting stopped. Hughes was to carry a white flag and post it in a position that could be clearly seen by McDowell and his men (Col. Hunter's diary; *The Marion Evening Post*, June 24, 1922).

Hunter then called superintendent C. K. McDowell at the mine and informed him of the terms of the cease-fire agreed to by the union. Hunter instructed McDowell to raise a white flag and that he should not fire on Vice President Hughes when he arrived at the mine. McDowell informed Col. Hunter that he was afraid to leave the mine during the night and wanted to wait until daylight for he and his men to leave the mine. McDowell reported that the shooting had stopped.

Hunter asked both Hughes and McDowell to call him as soon as the fighting stopped. Hughes delayed going to the mine and Hunter again called the union office to find Hughes still there. Hughes promised to leave immediately for the mine. Hunter then called McDowell to inform him Hughes was on the way and to order his men not to fire. Hunter called General Black to give him a report of the agreement. Black seemed relieved, but Hunter was more cautious. Hunter wrote, *It was hoped the agreement would hold, but there is always danger in a mob some 'trigger happy' and excited fanatic might commit an overt act that could incite a hysterical mob to violence. We, of course, were hopeful that the truce would be observed. However, in such explosive situations one cannot be certain.* (Col. Hunter's notes and diary).

Hunter then attempted to locate Sheriff Thaxton without success. He wanted the sheriff to go to the mine and make sure the cease fire held and that the union miners stopped shooting. As it turned out, Fox Hughes went to the mine alone, taking his time. Hughes never displayed a white flag as he agreed to do. Hughes claimed he did not see McDowell's white flag and concluded the strikebreakers had not kept their end of the bargain. McDowell's flag was prominently placed on a telephone wire, so perhaps Fox Hughes didn't want to see it.

Later Wednesday evening Judge D. T. Hartwell returned from Metropolis and learned of the truce. He located Sheriff Thaxton and States Attorney Duty around 9:00 PM. Both had by then returned to Williamson County. Hugh Willis, UMWA state board member, also arrived. Duty then called Hunter and invited him to the meeting. Hunter informed Duty he would be a few minutes because he had just initiated a call to General Black in Springfield, and it could take up to 30-minutes for the telephone operators in various cities along the way to connect the lines. After a short delay Hunter and his assistant Major Davis joined the meeting in the States Attorney's office. Hunter advised them of the terms of the truce to which they all agreed. Willis informed the group that *things are quiet at the mine and the terms of the ceasefire are being honored*. In his testimony before the House Investigation Committee Judge Hartwell

stated, *I thought it was settled myself and I thought Colonel Hunter and all of us thought it was settled* (HCT 601-700, p. 16).

Hunter and Judge Hartwell told the Sheriff to organize his deputies and immediately go to the mine and see that the truce was carried out. Hunter, Davis, and Willis offered to go with the Sheriff, but Thaxton refused. Thaxton stated that he was too tired to go and needed to get some rest (HCT 1251-1350, p. 4-5). Thaxton informed Col. Hunter and Major Davis that he already had deputies at the mine keeping the truce. As was later revealed, if the deputies were there, they were not keeping the peace but aiding the mob in moving closer into the mine and destroying the equipment and rail spurs. Except for three men, the remaining Hargrave Secret Service guards fled late Wednesday night through a corn field south of the mine leaving Lester's non-union miners to fend for themselves.



Hunter, Davis, and Sheriff Thaxton agreed to meet at 6:00 AM the next morning (Thursday, June 22) and go to the mine to ensure the terms of the agreement were being met without further loss of life and property. Hunter called General Black and informed him of the agreement and stated troops would not be needed given Willis' statement that the ceasefire was being honored and of the sheriff's statement that he had deputies on site enforcing the truce. Sadly, both promises were not true.

At some point in the meeting Wednesday night, Sheriff Thaxton must have had a private conversation with union representative Hugh Willis because Willis returned to the union office in Herrin and told members that *Thaxton was a mighty good fellow and that they shouldn't forget him in the upcoming election*. (That fall, Thaxton was elected as County Assessor and Treasurer, winning in a landslide). According to Paul Angle, Willis returned to the union hall in Herrin and allegedly said to his union members, *God damn them, they ought to have known better than to come down here. But, now that they're here, let them take what's coming to them* (p. 11). Col. Hunter had no knowledge Willis was working both sides. He thought Willis was sincere in his promises to enact the truce and allow the strikebreakers to safely leave the county. Hunter made a notation on page 6 in Angle's book, *Willis and Senator Sneed had agreed to help get the men safely out of the county*. At that point Hunter needed all the help he could get. His superiors in Springfield had refused his pleas for troops and the local authorities seemed disinterested and not taking serious steps to curtail the mob.

On a side note, on page 11 of Paul Angle's book, *Bloody Williamson*, Angle wrote that Hugh Willis stated, *God damn them, they ought to have known better than to come down here; but now that they are here, let them take what's coming to them*. When reading this statement in 1952, Col. Hunter noted, *Hugh Willis is dead and cannot speak for himself. He told me he made no such statement. Willis was a Mason*. Col. Hunter was more forgiving of Willis. He wrote, *Hugh Willis promised that he, Senator Sneed, and their sub-district officials would see to it that the truce was observed, and the non-union men would be given safe conduct out of the county. I think they tried in that effort, but the mob increased in numbers momentarily and got out of control*. (Col. Hunter's notes and diary).

After the Wednesday night meeting broke up, Hunter and Davis returned to their office at the Greater Marion Association where Edrington, his wife, and secretary were waiting for the news and updates.

At 6:00 the next morning (Thursday June 22), Col. Hunter and Major Davis arrived at the jail and knocked on Sheriff Thaxton's door but could not raise him. Hunter and Davis went to the courthouse to see if Thaxton was there. They then went to several other locations in search of the sheriff. After about 2 hours, they saw the sheriff walking towards the courthouse. Thaxton said he thought the meeting time was 8:00 AM. Hunter and Davis informed the sheriff what they had heard that morning, that some of the strikebreakers had been treated badly and urged that they immediately proceed to the mine. Thaxton made light of the rumors. Sheriff Thaxton, Deputy Schaffer, Hunter, and Davis took Thaxton's Ford Touring Car to the mine. When they arrived around 9:00 AM, they learned that the strikebreakers had surrendered earlier that morning and marched towards Herrin. Hunter and Davis saw the fires and destruction that had occurred at the mine. Members of the mob had looted the mine and stolen merchandise from the mine store. Col. Hunter asked members of the mob what had happened to Superintendent McDowell and his workers. Hunter was told they had been marched toward Herrin. Col. Hunter wrote in his diary, *both the sheriff and I believed the trouble was over and I went back to Marion so I could notify the Adjutant General* (Col. Hunter's diary; *The New York Herald*, September 12, 1922). Hunter told Sheriff Thaxton and Deputy Schaffer to head toward Herrin to see that the men had arrived safely at the train station. Both Hugh Willis and Senator Sneed had earlier promised Col. Hunter that they would help Lester's men safely leave the county. Hunter respected Senator Sneed and Hugh Willis and believed they would honor their word. Col. Hunter and Major Davis found a ride back to Marion so Hunter could report to Adjutant General Black.

Hunter and Davis returned to Marion to report the destruction to General Black. Sheriff Thaxton and Deputy Schaffer headed toward Herrin to observe the march to Herrin. When Hunter called General Black, Black informed him that many men had already been killed. Hunter was incredulous. Hunter immediately contacted Judge Hartwell and he, Hartwell, and Davis drove back to the mine. Then they proceeded to Herrin where they observed the carnage. They found some survivors and made sure they were safe from the mob. The massacre had taken place early that morning and Hunter, Hartwell, and Davis were devastated.

The Herrin Massacre resulted in the death of three union miners, shot by McDowell or Lester's guards on Wednesday, June 21. On Thursday morning (June 22, 1922), as the non-union miners were forced to march towards Herrin, Superintendent McDowell and 18 of 50 strikebreakers and mine guards were brutally murdered. These atrocities were documented in newspaper reports and books and have been studied multiple times over the years. A total of 23 men lost their lives during what became known as the Herrin Massacre.

These events would play out later in 1923 during a House investigation committee where Hunter outlined his desperate attempts to stop the carnage by requesting National Guard troops multiple times. During the hearings Col. Hunter blamed the massacre on Lester for not closing the mine and for hiring armed guards, Sheriff Thaxton for failing to act, and General Black for his failure to send troops. Black, in turn, blamed Col. Hunter and Sheriff Thaxton.

The Aftermath

In April of 1923 legislative hearings began investigating the troubles at the Southern Illinois Coal Company owned by William J. Lester. By then there had been an avalanche of negative pressure resulting from nationwide newspaper accounts of the massacre. The legislature was intent on removing itself from any responsibility and to assign blame.

During the hearings Col. Hunter testified that a week or ten days after the House resolution assigning blame to him and Adjutant General Black was released, General Black ordered him to alter his official report and claim that he had not requested troops be sent to Williamson County. Hunter stated he did not change the report, noting, *I have never revised or changed it. There is nothing in it to be changed. It is correct.* (*Belvidere Daily Republican*, Belvidere, IL. Friday April 13, 1923, p. 1).

On Wednesday, March 14, 1923, the headline in *The Dispatch* (Moline, IL, p. 1) read, BLACK ASSAILED FOR FAILURE TO FURNISH TROOPS: LETTER PRAISES HUNTER. The article reported on a House resolution, adopted by acclamation, that included a letter from Secretary Charles R. Edrington, of the Greater Marion Association. Edrington's letter declared:

Col. Samuel N. Hunter, who was stationed at Herrin, kept General Black fully informed of the mine situation and of the need for troops. Colonel Hunter did everything a human could do to avert this terrible calamity, and instead of blaming him for failure to do his duty he should be commended for the excellent way in which he handled the situation. The blame for the failure to send troops lays with General Black, as he was fully in touch with the situation at all times while this affair was in progress. My statements can be borne out by several business and professional men who were in the office with Colonel Hunter and myself during the whole of that afternoon. We were all working towards a possible settlement of this affair without bloodshed and were very much surprised at the lack of interest shown by General Black in this matter, at a time when it was a matter of hours in getting troops in here to stop the riot. If General Black had listened to the counsel of Colonel Hunter on that eventful afternoon, he would have immediately ordered troops into this field and would have prevented the most horrible massacre that has occurred in the United States in years. The writer has been at a loss to understand why General Black has not been investigated in this matter and removed from office long ere this for his absolute failure to do his duty in the face of the fact that he was thoroughly cognizant of the situation at all times through constant communication with Colonel Hunter.

Secretary Edrington continued,

I happen to know exactly what efforts were made by Colonel Hunter to avoid the riot. Colonel Hunter made my office his headquarters and was with me from about 11:30 AM on Wednesday June 21 to after 8:00 that night making every effort to avert the riot that seemed certain to happen. He made an appointment with the sheriff to go to the mine and see if something could be done. The sheriff never showed up until late that night. As soon as Colonel Hunter was appraised of the fact that the mob was advancing upon the mine from Herrin, he communicated with the mine officials and warned them. Then he tried again to get the sheriff on the phone and being unsuccessful in this he called General Black on long distance in my presence and told him exactly the situation and

advised that troops be sent at once. He called General Black on long distance several times during the afternoon and told him just what was taking place at the mine and how many shots had been fired and how many had been wounded. This latter information was secured by telephone connection Superintendent McDowell of the mine, who was later murdered by the mob.

This also was reported in the March 15, 1923, issue of the *Chicago Tribune*, p. 1.

The Moline, IL *Dispatch* further reported on March 14, in its headline:

BLACK IS ASSAILED. Springfield, ILL. March 14. CHARGING THAT ADJUTANT GENERAL BLACK HAD BEEN DERELICT IN HIS DUTY IN FAILING TO SEND TROOPS TO HERRIN, ILL.

During the rioting last June, Representative Michael Igoe, Democrat, Chicago, today presented in the House of Representatives a resolution appointing a committee of five to make a complete investigation of the rioting. The resolution declared that if the adjutant general had sent troops to Herrin when they were requested the bloodshed and damage would have been averted. It further asserted that Col. Samuel N. Hunter advised General Black of the situation several times a day for three or four days preceding the riot. The House voted to suspend the rules to allow the introduction of Mr. Igoe's resolution. Representative Igoe said he wanted to fix responsibility for the failure to send troops. He declared Mr. Black was inefficient and should be removed from office. He pointed out that no report has ever been made to the legislature of the affair in Williamson County, and that Colonel Hunter had been unjustly accused of being responsible. (p. 15).

On June 30, 1923, the House Committee investigating the Herrin Massacre issued its final report. The report was scathing to all participants in the Herrin affair. The report blamed UMWA officials Hugh Willis and Fox Hughes for the massacre stating they could have averted it if they would. The owner of the strip mine where the massacre occurred, William J. Lester, was condemned for having armed men to guard the strikebreakers. The report states General Black was derelict in his duty in not taking personal charge of the situation and in not ordering out the troops. That the conditions reported to General Black were of such serious nature as to warrant any reasonable person to believe that trouble was sure to come. The report cited Col. Hunter as being incompetent in performing his duties and unqualified to hold his position. Sheriff Melvin Thaxton and his deputies, John Schaffer and S. D. Storme, were declared irresponsible and incompetent to hold any office of trust. (*The Daily Advocate*, Belleville, IL, Saturday June 30, 1923, pp. 1 & 9).

The report stated that Hugh Willis could have controlled the situation.

This committee believes that he could be convicted of murder in any other county in the state. We believe the miners organization should discharge Willis and Fox Hughes.

The report was also highly critical of Lester for hiring armed guards. (*The St. Louis Star and Times*, June 30, 1923, p. 1).

The report found that:

former Sheriff Melvin Thaxton and his deputies, John Schaffer and S.D. Storme are declared irresponsible, and incompetent to hold any office of trust in that or any other county in this or any other state.

States Attorney Delos Duty avoided condemnation in the affair even though he advised Sheriff Thaxton *to not call up troops under any circumstances* and left the county with the Sheriff on

the day the fighting began. Duty was exonerated because of his attempts to prosecute wrong doers after the event was over.

Two members of the House Committee investigating the Herrin Massacre refused to sign the report. The report was accepted by the House, but members of the Senate refused to vote to accept it. (*The Daily Advocate*, Belleville, IL, Sat. June 30, 1923, pp. 1 & 9; *The St. Louis Star and Times*, 30 June 1923 p. 1; *Chicago Tribune*, July 1, 1923, p. 1).

On June 27, 1922, Colonel Hunter left Williamson County issuing the following public statement,

I am leaving the scene of the recent riot today, conscious, and satisfied in my own mind that I performed my whole duty in so far as it within my ability to do so. I advised and pleaded with everyone whom I thought could be of assistance in averting what occurred on June 21 & 22 at the Strip Mine of the Southern Illinois Coal Company. There are many good citizens of Marion and Herrin who labored and worked equally as hard as I did to prevent the outbreak. To those high-minded citizens, the county, the state, and the nation should be grateful for their untiring efforts to suppress mob violence and prevent the destruction of life and property. Williamson County should not be wrongfully pictured or criticized for the unlawful acts of a frenzied mob. What has occurred should serve as a warning to civil officials and the general public to be on the alert to prevent any possible occurrence. (The Daily Free Press, Carbondale, IL, June 27, 1922, p. 1).

Governor Len Small's reaction to the Herrin Massacre was interesting. In his testimony before the House Committee on Investigation of Herrin Massacre in 1923 he stated, *I was and am still of the opinion that Colonel Hunter did all that he knew how to do to prevent trouble. I think he tried very hard to avoid it and was justified, in my opinion, in entering into an agreement with the people of that place that there would be no further trouble. I think he went into that agreement in good faith and I believe he was justified in making an agreement of that sort. I believe General Black acted as he thought was best and I don't think either of them, from any reports that I received of that very unfortunate affair, should be censured. I don't think this department is to blame for what happened. There are the conclusions I came to at the time and since (HCT pp. 282-283).*

Bloody Williamson, by Paul M. Angle

The most widely read book describing the Herrin coal mine riot was published in 1952 by Chicago historian, Paul M. Angle. It was released 30 years after the riot and Col. Hunter was 64 years old. Hunter, like many in southern Illinois, was not pleased with the book. He believed Angle was interested in writing a story to appease his Chicago audience and make a profit. At times, the story he was telling took precedence over facts.

Col. Hunter's major concern was the depiction of Williamson County residents as violent people who lacked civility. This theme was repeated in many newspaper articles of the day in New York, Chicago, and many other cities across America. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* described people in Williamson County as participating in "savagery and barbarism." It described citizens of Herrin as symbols of human butchery (March 17, 1923, p. 6). Residents were depicted as uncivilized who would settle their differences using brutality and violence. On the inside flap of

the book cover Angle reinforces these disparaging views by the following statement, *On the map Williamson is just another county. But in history it is a place in which a strange disease has raged for more than eighty years—a disease marked by a pathological tendency to settle differences by force.* In his forward (p. x) Angle writes of the various causes of violence, *family hatreds, labor strife, religious bigotry, nativistic narrowness, a desire for money and to hell with the rules.* Then, he states, *With the possible exception of Harlan County, Kentucky, I know of no other American locality possessed of these attributes.*

Col. Hunter was appalled by Angle's indictment of Williamson County residents. Hunter was born and raised in Williamson County and many of his relatives were successful businessmen, ministers, teachers, and upstanding citizens. Further, he knew many wonderful people from both Marion and Herrin with similar qualities, all horrified by the violence. Newspapers and now Angle's book claimed Williamson County residents were somehow different and less civilized than other people in America. It was unjust and insulting. Even the title of the book, *Bloody Williamson*, reinforced this negative bias. Col. Hunter believed that most people in Williamson County deplored the torture and killing by the frenzied mob, and many worked diligently alongside him attempting to prevent it.

In his departing statement, as he left the county after the riots, Hunter stated, *There are many good citizens of Marion and Herrin who labored and worked equally as hard as I did to prevent the outbreak. To those high-minded citizens, the county, the state, and the nation should be grateful for their untiring efforts to suppress mob violence and prevent the destruction of life and property. Williamson County should not be wrongfully pictured or criticized for the unlawful acts of a frenzied mob.*

In 1952 Hunter inserted marginal comments in his copy of Angle's book. These comments note many areas as "true" and others as exaggerations, noting descriptions that were not factual, and several where the proper context was not provided.

Col. Hunter thought Angle purposely omitted the fact that striking coal miners from other counties and states had come to Marion to protest the Southern Illinois Coal Company's efforts to break the UMWA. It was a national coal strike, and many miners were very fearful of the union being "broken." This would lead to lower wages and less safe working conditions. Many supported the improvements in working conditions and wages the UMWA had negotiated and were willing to take extreme actions to protect the union. "Radicals" from several other counties and states came to join the protest at Lester's mine. Those provoking the violence were not all citizens of Williamson County, yet this point did not fit the narrative Angle was trying to promote.

During the 1920s unions were just beginning to exert power and strikes were common. For example, on April 20, 1914, there was a massacre at Ludlow, Colorado involving striking miners. Violence was common in many coal mining communities in Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, and West Virginia. Also, there were many gang "wars" in cities like Chicago, Kansas City, New York, etc. Yet, historians writing about these mob wars did not indict the entire population of the cities as being "diseased" or "pathological."

There is little doubt that the horrendous events Col. Hunter witnessed, the ongoing investigations, the disparaging news coverage, and his continuing to work for his antagonist General Black, led to a very stressful time in his life. The aftermath of the Herrin Massacre

certainly tainted his view of politicians, and the horrors he witnessed affected Col. Hunter for the rest of his life.

Intervening Years

Over the years various writers have criticized Col. Hunter for not personally stopping the massacre. They are misinformed about his actual role. Col. Hunter came to Williamson County on his own initiative as a factfinder for Adjutant General Black and Governor Small. His role was to assess the situation on the ground and advise his superiors of the potential for danger that might exceed the ability of local law enforcement authorities to keep the peace. He had no law enforcement authority until or unless the Governor officially declared a state of emergency in Williamson County and authorized the Illinois National Guard to intervene and supersede the authority of the Sheriff. Col. Hunter was not even authorized to carry a weapon in his role as a factfinder. He remained unarmed throughout his time in Williamson County. Had the Illinois National Guard been activated they, and Colonel Hunter, would have had the authority to engage in law enforcement activities and take other actions as necessary to protect life.

Col. Hunter carried out his role in determining Sheriff Thaxton would not take appropriate action to protect the strikebreakers and repeatedly requested General Black and Governor Small immediately send troops to Williamson County. Further, after having many of his pleas for troops denied, he demanded Sheriff Thaxton and States Attorney Duty request troops. On Wednesday, June 21, when he could not locate the Sheriff, he requested Deputy Sheriff Storme call General Black and request troops, and he even demanded that mine owner William J. Lester call General Black and Governor Small to request national guard protection. Further, Col. Hunter worked with local business and community leaders to pressure local authorities to either deputize sufficient law enforcement personnel or request troops. None of the Williamson County officials would request troops, as was required by General Black and Governor Len Small, nor would local law enforcement officials intervene to protect strikebreakers and the Southern Illinois Coal Company mine. Colonel Hunter performed his responsibilities within the legal constraints imposed on his activities. Had he attempted to intervene in assuming law enforcement activities he would have violated the law and been subject to arrest. He performed valiant efforts despite discouragement from his superiors and local authorities who failed to act.

Sources:

- Multiple newspaper accounts across the U.S from 1922 to 1926.
- Parker, Chatland. (1923). *The Herrin Massacre: A Fair and Impartial Statement of All The Facts: The Trial, Evidence, Verdict*. Chicago, IL: Parker Publishing Company.
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- Griswald, John. (2009). *Herrin: The Brief History of An Infamous American City*. Charleston, SC: The History Press.
- Angle, Paul M. (1952). *Bloody Williamson: A Chapter in American Lawlessness*. New

York: Alfred A. Knopf.

- 1923 House Committee Investigation of Herrin Massacre Transcripts. There are two types of citations for these transcripts. First is from the microfilm files of the Illinois State Archives that contains a page number only. The second is from the Cornell University Catherwood Library Archives. These references include the batch numbers e.g., 201-300 plus a page number. HCT is the abbreviation used for both.
- Col. Samuel N. Hunter's personal notes and diary.
- Colonel Samuel N. Hunter's notes written in the margins of his copy of Angle's book, *Bloody Williamson*.

Hillsboro-1923

On August 13, 1923, Col. Hunter led 300 National Guard troops to keep the peace at a strike at the American Zinc Company in Hillsboro, IL. Governor Len Small declared a state of emergency in Montgomery County and ordered National Guard troops to Hillsboro. Adjutant General Black sent Col. Hunter and troops to Hillsboro to prevent violence like that which occurred at Herrin in 1922. The presence of the National Guard troops prevented violence during that strike. Unlike in Williamson County in 1922, Governor Small and General Black did not demand that the Sheriff of Montgomery County declare the situation beyond his control before authorizing National Guard troops. Apparently they had learned their lesson in 1922 in Williamson County.

The Tri-State Tornado-1925

On March 18, 1925, one of the deadliest tornado outbreaks in recorded history hit southeast Missouri and Southern Illinois. At least 750 people were killed and more than 2,298 were injured, making the outbreak the deadliest tornado in U.S. history. The tornado tore a path 219 miles long as it crossed from southeast Missouri, southern Illinois, and southwestern Indiana. In Illinois it destroyed much of Gorham, Murphysboro, Desoto, Bush, and devastating rural areas before hitting West Frankfort. The devastation continued through several small villages including Parrish where 33 people were killed and the town was so destroyed that the surviving residents and businesses moved on and never rebuilt their community. In all, Franklin County lost 192 lives. The tornado crossed Hamilton and White Counties leaving 45 dead and injuring 140 people. The tornado crossed the Wabash River just north of New Harmony, Indiana and demolished the town of Griffin where not a single structure was left untouched. Forty-six people were killed at Griffin and another 202 injured. The tornado continued causing death, injury, and property destruction.



Colonel Samuel N. Hunter called up two National Guard units on the day the Tri State tornado hit, and he and his units arrived that very afternoon. These troops worked day and night for several days without rest or sleep pulling the injured and dead out of rubble, providing medical aid, and taking the injured to hospitals in DuQuoin and Carbondale. They provided water and worked with the Red Cross to distribute food and medical supplies. Further, they backed up law enforcement in all the areas hit by the storm. The National Guard troops were involved in providing tents and supplies needed by the people who lost so much. Many of these brave first responders suffered from what today we call PTSD because of their many days of exhausting service and witnessing so much death and destruction.

The *Daily Free Press*, Carbondale, IL. Wednesday April 1, 1925, page 2:
 DESOTO THANKS THOSE WHO AIDED HER IN DISASTER
 DeSoto, ILL March 29, 1925

The citizens of DeSoto wish to express their thanks and appreciation to Col. Hunter and his efficient staff of officers and men who brought order out of chaos in the great storm of March 18th at DeSoto.

We were beyond helping ourselves when Col. Hunter assumed charge of the situation and brought to order a town utterly demoralized. He used all kindness to our citizens at a time when kindness and comforting words mean much to us. The memory of this man and his work

for us in our tribulation will live forever.

SHERMAN DOWELL, Chairman Citizens' Committee

GEO. G. WALKER, Secretary



A photograph of Colonel Samuel Hunter working at the DeSoto School helping to remove 33 dead bodies of children was published in the *New York Daily News* (Sun. March 22, 1925, p.2). This school tragedy was the worst tornadic death toll at a single school in U.S history. Col. Hunter participated in this horrendous task on his 37th birthday.

He and his troops were applauded for their efforts in an Illinois House Resolution No. 65 that was passed by the House of Representatives on May 27, 1925.

The resolution states:

WHEREAS, Colonel Samuel N. Hunter, aided by his staff of officers and men, was dispatched to the areas devastated by the storm of March 18th, 1925, and there found communities in a state of helpless confusion; and,

WHEREAS, With a keen sense of responsibility, he, and those under his command, took charge of the situation, and rendered an invaluable service in restoring order and bringing aid and assistance to the towns and communities stricken by this great disaster; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Fifty-Fourth General Assembly, that we commend Colonel Hunter, his officers, and men for their untiring efforts in bringing order out of chaos, and that we extend to Colonel Hunter, his officers, and men, our appreciation and gratitude for their services rendered to the people of this State in a time of dire need; and be it further

RESOLVED, That, this preamble and resolution be entered on the Journal of the House, and that a copy thereof be forwarded to Colonel Hunter, his officers, and men.

And, the resolution was adopted.

There were many newspaper articles published across the US after the tornado in 1925 that described the heroic efforts of southern Illinois citizens and the IL National Guard troops who helped restore order and provided safety, housing, and supplies to those impacted by the storm.

Col. Hunter and the IL National Guard provided unwavering service during the aftermath of that horrible tornado. The efforts of so many who contributed to restoring order after the storm prevented even more disaster. Many of the first responders suffered a lifetime of haunting memories from their continuous exposure to the death and destruction that horrible storm created. This event added darkness to the lifetime memories of Col. Samuel N. Hunter.

Winding Down His Military Career

Colonel Hunter continued to serve the Illinois National Guard for many more years. He never had to again face horrendous circumstances as were presented by the Herrin Massacre in 1922 and the Tri-State Tornado in 1925. Nevertheless, he carried the memories and trauma of those events the remainder of his life.

Colonel Samuel N. Hunter resigned his commission as Commanding Officer and Colonel in the Illinois National Guard on October 10, 1941, at age 53. His last regiment was headquartered in Belleville, Illinois.

In 1943, as WW II was getting underway Colonel Hunter applied for reinstatement in the Illinois National Guard. Letters of recommendation listed his outstanding qualities.

TRAINING DETACHMENT
ARMY AIR FORCES TECHNICAL TRAINING COMMAND
ROBERTSON AVIATION SCHOOL
LAMBERT FIELD
ST. LOUIS, MO.

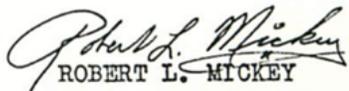
M-5-13
June 4, 1943.

312.1

SUBJECT: Recommendation of Colonel Hunter.

TO : Whom it may concern.

1. It has come to my attention that Colonel Samuel N. Hunter, Illinois National Guard, retired, has applied for reinstatement of his commission.
2. Colonel Hunter has been the senior instructor in the heat treating phase at this Civilian Mechanics School and his leadership, technical knowledge and administrative ability were highly instrumental in the attainment of a superior rating by this school in the past semi-annual inspection. His ability to handle men and as a morale builder has been invaluable to this school and to this command.
3. Colonel Hunter has proven in the past that he is an officer and a gentleman and any consideration given him would be definitely to the benefit of the services.


ROBERT L. MICKEY
Captain, Air Corps,
Commanding.

TRAINING DETACHMENT
ARMY AIR FORCES TECHNICAL TRAINING COMMAND
ROBERTSON AVIATION SCHOOL

LAMBERT FIELD
ST. LOUIS, MO.

312.1

June 5, 1943.

SUBJECT: Colonel Samuel N. Hunter, Recommendation of.

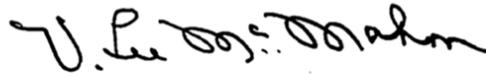
TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

1. It has come to my attention that Colonel Samuel N. Hunter, Illinois National Guard, retired, has applied for reinstatement of his commission.

2. Colonel Hunter is a man of even temperament, reserved and resourceful, linked with a magnetic personality which typifies fundamental characteristics of a great leader. Colonel Hunter is a self made man possessing the necessary technical and administrative ability.

3. The writer, as Intelligence Officer, in connection with employment at this Civil Mechanics School, initiated a thorough check of Colonel Hunter and the investigation discloses him to be beyond reproach.

4. It is the opinion of the writer that the reinstatement of Colonel Hunter would be of benefit to the service and to the country.


V. LEE McMAHON,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Adjutant.

Due to his age and declining health Col. Hunter was not reactivated.

Political Career

While serving in the Illinois National Guard, Sam ran for Perry County Treasurer and Assessor in 1918. He was elected and served in that capacity from 1919 to 1922.

January 22, 1920, Col. Samuel Hunter, represented the national committee of the Republican Party. (Daily Republican-Register, Mount Carmel, IL)

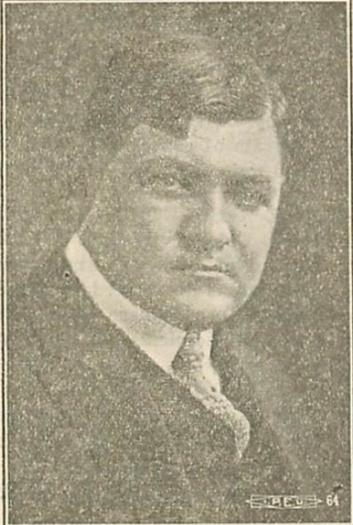
April 1920 he was vice-chairman of the National Republican Committee in Illinois.

August 29, 1920, Col. S. N. Hunter, Commander of the 9th Illinois Regiment National Guard, served as Vice Chairman of the National Republican Committee in Illinois. (*The Daily Free Press*, Carbondale, IL)

April 21, 1922, Col. Hunter served as secretary of Perry County Republican Central Committee and was a Delegate to State Republican Convention

In 1924 the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, along with many prominent Republicans, endorsed Col. Samuel N. Hunter to run for Lieutenant Governor. Sam declined to run for that office.

For the Republican
Nomination for
Representative
44th District



SAMUEL N. HUNTER
OF DU QUOIN

You Know Him--Win With Him

Primary April 13, 1926

On March 15, 1926, Sam announced his candidacy for Representative in the General Assembly from the 44th Senatorial district on the Republican ticket subject to the primary election April 13, 1926.

March 22, 1926, "Between 400 and 500 delegates representing local labor unions in five counties comprising this Senatorial district held a mass meeting here today and endorsed the candidacy of Col. Samuel N. Hunter, Du Quoin, for the Republican nomination for the Illinois Legislature. Speakers at the meeting were Frank

Farrington, president of the Illinois United Mine Workers, and Angus W. Kerr, general attorney for that organization." (*St. Louis Globe Democrat*, Mon, Mar 22, 1926, p. 14).

SAMUEL N. HUNTER
OF DU QUOIN
Republican Candidate for Representative
Forty-fourth District

Born and raised on a farm, I shall favor legislation which will bring about relief for the agriculturist.

Education is facing a serious crisis through lack of adequate State aid, I shall favor legislation which will improve the public schools. Every boy and girl is entitled to an equal chance.

I shall favor legislation designed to safeguard health and life.

The legislative program sponsored by the Sportsmen's League of Southern Illinois is wise and timely. I stand committed to support that program of conservation and propagation of wild game life in Illinois.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 65
WHEREAS, Colonel Samuel N. Hunter, aided by his staff of officers and men, was dispatched to the areas devastated by the storm of March 18, 1925, and there found communities in a state of helpless confusion; and,
WHEREAS, With a keen sense of responsibility he and those under his command took charge of the situation, and rendered an invaluable service in restoring order and bringing aid and assistance to the towns and communities stricken by this great disaster; therefore, be it
RESOLVED, By the House of Representatives of the Fifty-fourth General Assembly, That we commend Colonel Hunter, his officers and men, for their untiring efforts in bringing order out of chaos, and that we extend to Colonel Hunter and his staff our appreciation and gratitude for their services rendered to the people of this State in a time of dire need; and, be it further
RESOLVED, That this preamble and resolution be entered on the Journal of the House, and that a copy thereof be forwarded to Colonel Hunter, his officers and men.

March 25, 1926, Col Hunter was endorsed for state legislator in 44th Illinois district by the *Nashville Journal*.

April 13, 1926, Candidate for State Representative of 44th District; Samuel N. Hunter finished 2nd out of four candidates with 3,067 votes. The winner, Elbert Waller, the incumbent, received 3,480 votes. Henry Eisenbart received 772 votes and William Stein came in last with 450 votes.

1928 Col. Hunter served as campaign manager for A. T. Spivey in his race for congressman-at-large.

November 15, 1929, "Samuel N. Hunter, living in Chicago, for many years a newspaper man, has long been active in state politics." He is running for State Treasurer." (*Carbondale Free Press*, p. 1)

November 15, 1929, Col. Samuel N. Hunter of Chicago, formerly of DuQuoin announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for state treasurer of Illinois.

**SAMUEL N. HUNTER CANDI-
DATE FOR LEGISLATURE**

Samuel N. Hunter, the last legislative candidate to enter the race in the Forty-fourth district, is making an active campaign in every part of the district and visited Nashville Friday on his tour of his territory. Hunter's home is in DuQuoin and he has long been prominent in Republican politics. He was born and reared on a farm and has the interest of the farmer at heart.

If nominated Col. Hunter will make a strong candidate in the election because of his wide acquaintanceship throughout Southern Illinois. The Perry county man is well qualified for the office to which he aspires and solicits the support of the Republican voters at the primary election Tuesday, April 13.

**Col. Sam Hunter
Out for State Treas.**

CHICAGO, Nov. 14—Col. Samuel N. Hunter of Chicago, formerly of Du Quoin, where he served as treasurer of Perry county, today announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for state treasurer of Illinois. Col. Hunter, born on a farm near Lake Creek, Ill., in 1888, for many years a newspaper man, has long been active in state politics.

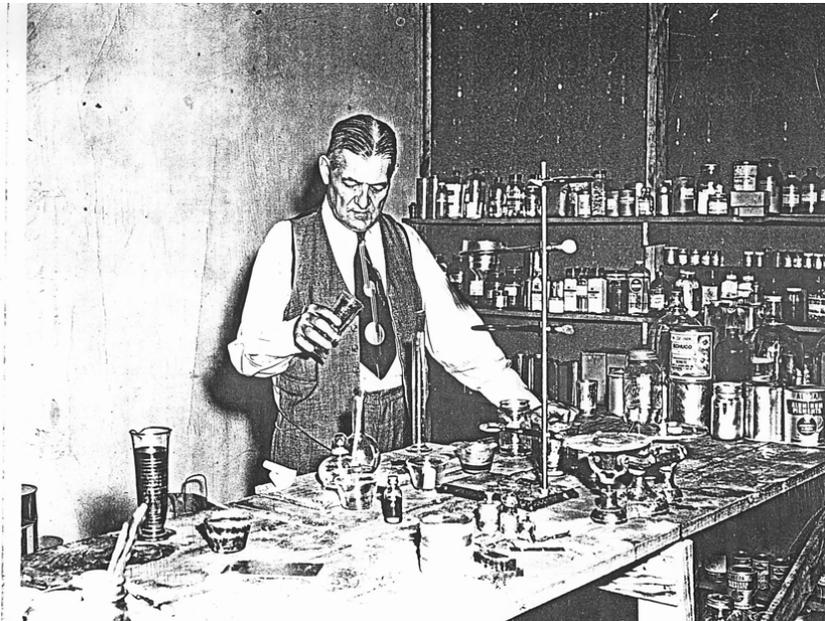
As an officer in the National Guard of Illinois, he has been in command during emergencies which have attracted national attention. He toured the state speaking in practically every county urging the adoption of the Illinois adjusted compensation bill which was successful.

On the left is an announcement published in the *Carbondale Daily Free Press*, dated Friday, November 15, 1929, p. 1. It mentions Sam speaking in *practically every county urging adoption of the Illinois adjusted compensation bill which was successful*. Sam was a very gifted speaker and made hundreds of political addresses in Illinois and across the Midwest.

April 8, 1930, In the primary election as Candidate for State Treasurer (among 7 candidates), Sam came in 4th with 87,225 votes, losing to the incumbent, Clarence F. Buck. Buck was the incumbent and Presidential convention manager for former Governor Frank O. Lowden and former secretary of agriculture in Governor Emmerson's cabinet. Buck was from Cook County and that county gave him 280,858 votes.

Metallurgist and Chemist

Colonel Hunter spent years reading and educating himself in metallurgy and chemistry. Sam would travel from East St. Louis by bus to the Washington University Library in St. Louis



and spend hours upon hours studying chemistry and metallurgy books. While living in East St. Louis, Hunter built a laboratory in his basement and conducted many experiments that led to patents in the US, Canada, and England.

He concentrated on developing paint pigments and improving paints and putty. His paints were designed to withstand heat for use in space travel. He also designed putties that would resist drying and

cracking.

'Radically New' Paint In St. Clair County

EAST ST. LOUIS, Ill. (UP) — An East St. Louis researcher Tuesday announced he had granted exclusive license for manufacture of a radically new paste paint pigment to Chemical Sealers Inc., Belleville.

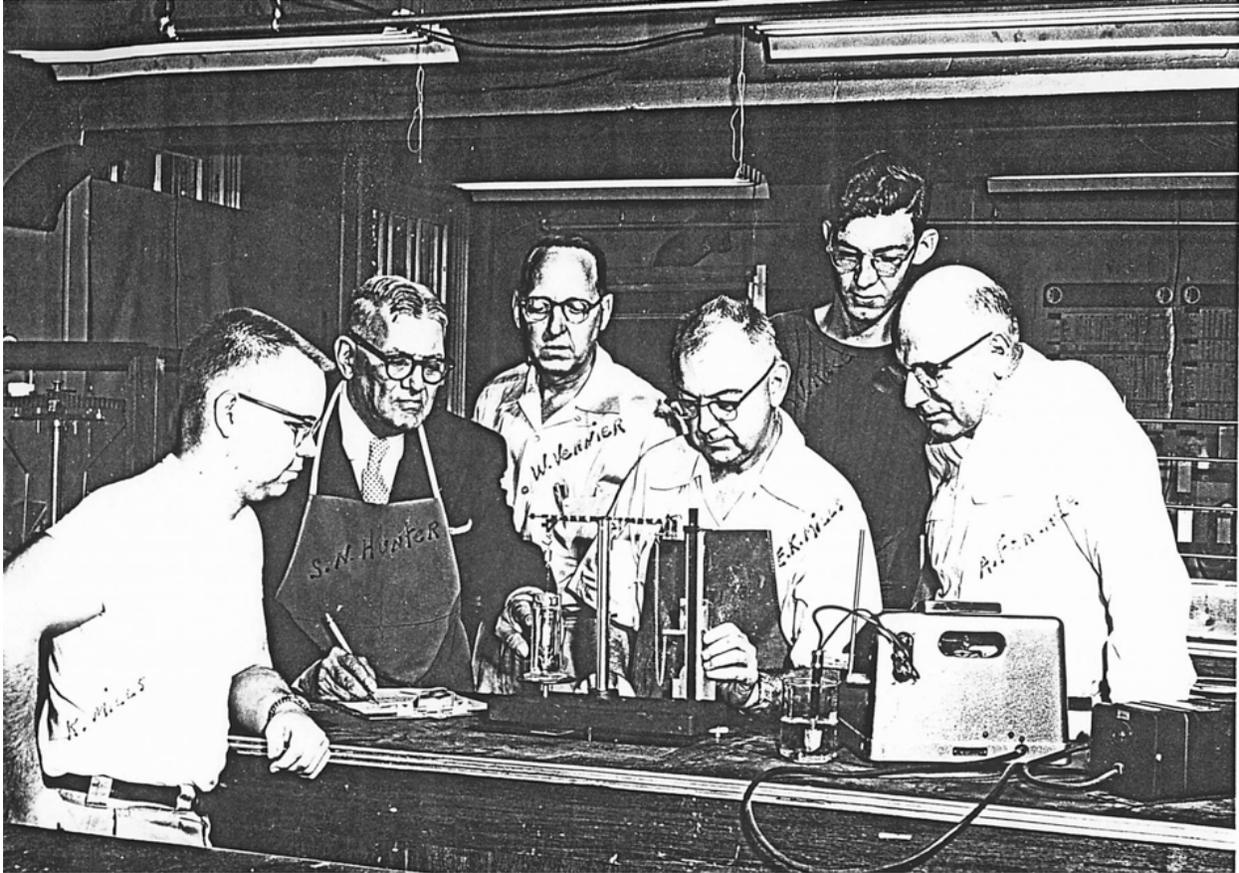
Samuel N. Hunter, who said he had been granted a patent for the new pigment after seven years of intensive investigation, reported the new product is based on use of liquid chlorinated polyphenyl. The inventor said the pigment is rust-proof, non-inflamable, odorless and will not absorb or retain water.

It will have a "profound effect" on the nation's paint industry, Hunter said.

In 1951 he created a company, Hunter Metallic Products Corporation, 1910 Lincoln Drive, East St. Louis, IL. Here he developed and tested paints and pigments under the label, "Para-Seal Brands." He licensed Chemical Sealers Corporation in Belleville to manufacture his products.

In 1956 *Chemical Week* magazine featured Col. Hunter and his laboratory in Vol. 79, No. 2 issue dated July 14, 1956, (pp. 52 & 57). Their article titled, "New Colors in a Can" offered praise for the innovations Hunter had made improving paint, resins, pigments, and putty.

At left is an article from the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, Tuesday, February 28, 1956, p. 1.



This picture shows Hunter with his staff at Hunter Metallic Products Corporation in 1956.

Col. Hunter assisted with the startup of Chemical Sealers Inc. of Belleville, IL in 1956. He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors and was in charge of research. Chemical Sealers was licensed to manufacture products developed by Hunter and his team at Hunter Metallic Products Corporation. Hunter held patents on the products manufactured and distributed by Chemical Sealers.

Colonel Hunter's patents include:

Canadian Patent No. 492,146 titled, Paste Pigments, granted on April 14, 1953

United States Patent No. 2,713,006 titled, Paste Pigments, granted on July 12, 1955

United States Patent No. 2,743,188 titled, Putty, granted on April 24, 1956

British Patent No. 748,410 titled, Paste Pigments, granted on August 22, 1956

These patents covered several different compounds that involved rust resisting applications in paint, thread coverings, high temperature lubricants, and water-resistant coverings for metals.

Chemical Sealers Lease Portion of Enterprise Fdry.

Officers of Chemical Sealers Inc., which registered last week as an Illinois corporation with capital of \$100,000, were named today. The firm has leased part of the Enterprise Foundry plant at 1121 East B Street.

E. R. Perry, a stock broker who formerly was principal of Freeburg High School, is president of the corporation. Dr. A. J. Jordan of Freeburg is executive vice president and Dr. Edward G. Dewein of Freeburg is first vice president.

Clarence C. Hoffman of Belleville is second vice president and A. A. Forcade third vice president.

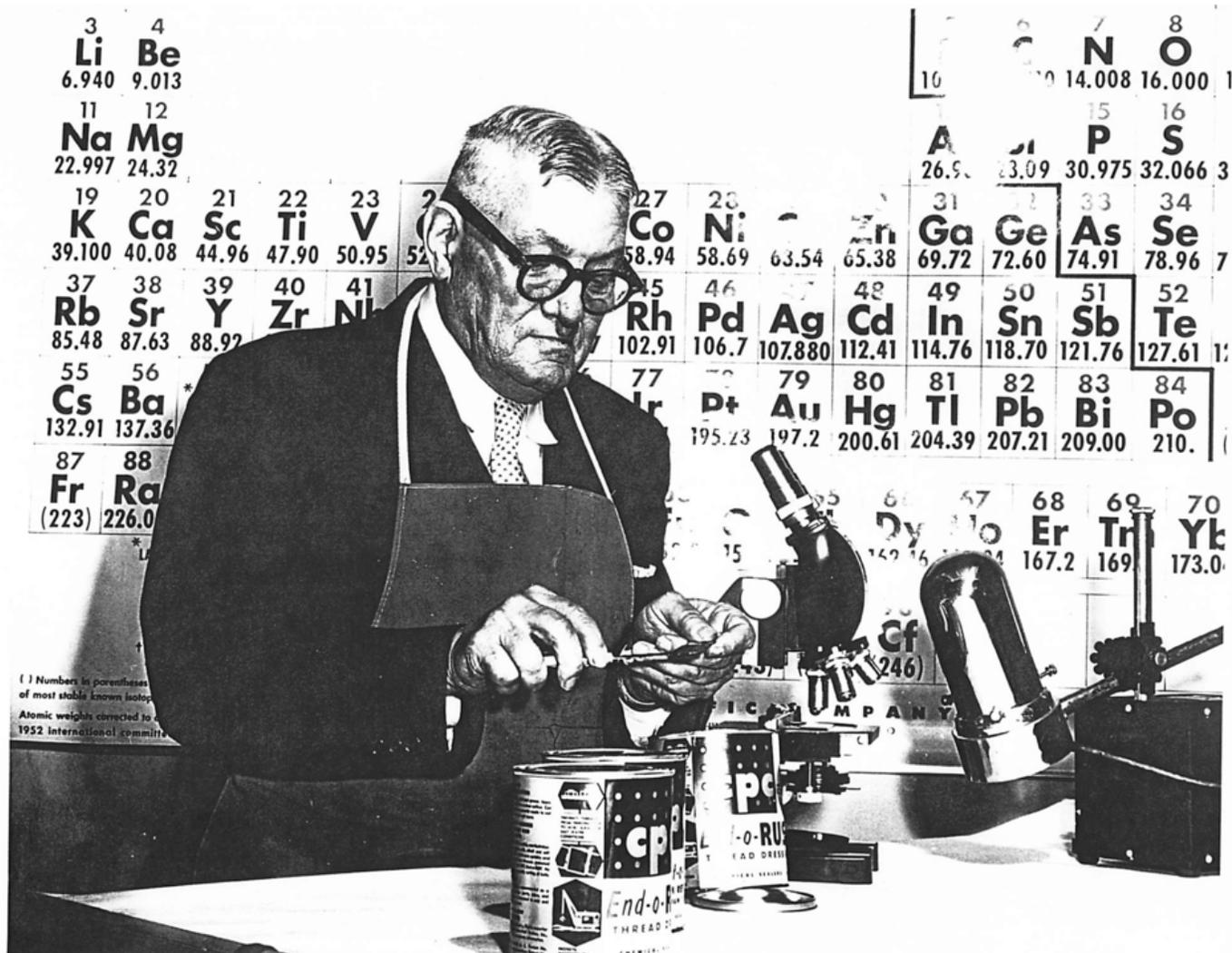
Samuel N. Hunter of East St. Louis serves as chairman of the board of directors and has charge of technical research. He is the original patentee of the sealing process.

Other officers include E. A. Yoch, executive secretary; Dr. L. J. Scheske, assistant secretary; Russell H. Classen, executive financial secretary and counsel.

County School Superintendent Clarence D. Blair is executive treasurer; Dr. A. D. Schilling, assistant treasurer and E. Kenneth Mills of Alton is chief chemist for the firm.

This article is from the *Belleville News-Democrat*, Feb 28, 1956, p. 5.

Chemical Week magazine also published a picture of Col. Hunter standing before a periodic table showing some of his products.



July 14/56

From a Monsanto Document dated February 1961
<http://www.epa.gov/region4/waste/sf/annistonsf/10302230.PDF>

^399-

MONSANTO CHEMICAL COMPANY, ORGANIC CHEMICAL DIVISION, ST. LOUIS 74, MISSOURI

February, 1961
0627503

P. WSTICIZER SALES DEPARTMENT
J. R. Darby Res-JFQ

PLASTICIZER END USES FOR AROCLOR COMPOUNDS
GENERAL INFORMATION SURFACE COATINGS ADHESIVES AND SEALERS
PLASTIC APPLICATIONS MISCELLANEOUS

PUTTY made with the Aroclor compounds are non-hygroscopic, flame resistant, have excellent adhesion and remain flexible, soft and usable indefinitely.

U.S.P. 2,743,188 by Samuel N. Hunter assigned to Hunter Metallic Products Corporation, East St. Louis, Illinois.

During the mid-to late 1950s, the E. I. DuPont Corporation made offers to purchase Col. Hunter's patents. Sam was producing and selling paint, paint pigments, and putties that were superior to what DuPont had to offer. Sam thought that DuPont's offers were too low, and he refused to sell the patents for his products. In response, rather than negotiate a better price, DuPont began selling their products at a loss so they could undermine sales of Hunter's products. This led to a severe hardship on Hunter Metallics Products Corporation and their manufacturing partner, Chemical Sealers. As a result, Hunter Metallics and Chemical Sealers

had to close their businesses.

ROBERTSON AIRCRAFT CORPORATION



Col. Hunter with his team at the Robertson Aircraft Corporation where he taught chemistry and consulted in developing enhanced metals, sealants, paints, and pigments.

Death

Over the course of Colonel Hunter's career as a chemist and metallurgist he experimented with several types of polychlorinated biphenyls and polyphenols. Sam developed stomach cancer at age 70. It was later learned that the polychlorinated biphenyls were carcinogenic and most likely led to Hunter's subsequent cancer and death.

Sam lived a varied and interesting life with many significant achievements. He was a very easy-going and generous man. Having lived during the depression he had great sympathy for people "down on their luck" and would privately send them money, take groceries, or help in any way he could. Guiding him throughout his various careers was a deep sense of honesty and personal integrity. He stood up to power with uncommon courage and would not submit to corrupt practices or sacrifice his principles.

Samuel Nase Hunter died at 5:55 PM on Tuesday, August 5, 1958, at St. Mary's hospital in East. St. Louis, Illinois. His funeral was conducted from the First Christian Church by Reverend John F. Scantland at the Schroeder Funeral Home in DuQuoin. He was buried at the IOOF Cemetery in DuQuoin, Illinois. He left a wife, daughter, son-in-law, son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren.

Familial Line: William Hunter (immigrant who arrived in Nansemond County Virginia from England around 1685) → Nicholas → Isaac → Dempsey → Jacob → Emmanuel → Jacob → George Washington → Samuel Nase Hunter.