

Hines' City Drug Store and "The Oaks" in Tracy City

by Jackie Layne Partin

Folks, I confess that I usually have an ulterior motive for researching a story for weeks, months, years – well, since **1960** on this one! When I married in **that year**, one of the many stories my husband told me was about "the two little Hines boys who died from eating too much sugar and drinking too much 'soda pop.'" This was a scare tactic his mother used on him when he asked for too many sweets. Nearly sixty years later, I finally decided to stir around in that little bit of information thus covering some real history on the L. M. Hines family.

"The Oaks" was the brainchild of two of Tracy City's earlier settlers, Mr. Lewis Moore Hines and his wife, Nan (Hawkins) Hines. The well-known Tidman Hotel stood across the creek from "The Oaks," both on Railroad Avenue. The key to the success of each was having the railroad and depot across the avenue from their places of business. Travelers could step right off the train, walk across the avenue and step into the accommodations of a hotel or a boarding house.



1924 Newspaper clipping of "The Oaks" in Tracy City



"The Oaks" with a Facelift



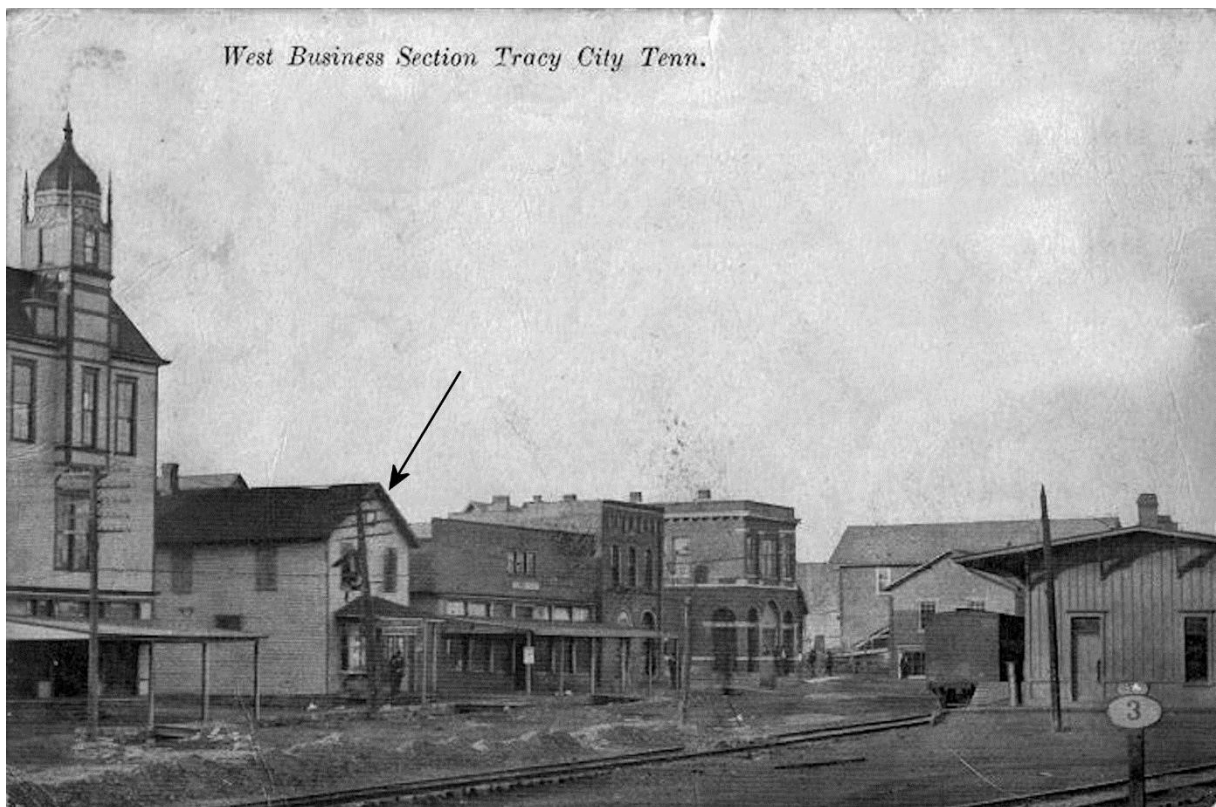
Lewis Moore Hines (1858-1935) was the son of Robert and Sarah Maria (Moore) Hines. His wife Nannie May Hawkins (1870-1960) was the daughter of Henry James Hawkins, Sr. and Mary Francis "Kitty" (Ross) Hines. Lewis and Nannie had married in Franklin Co. on **May 7, 1892**, and two children Sarah May Hines (1897-1946) and Lewis Ross Hines (1900-1965) were born from this union. Sarah May was born in Cowan before the family moved to Tracy City. Lewis Ross was born in Tracy City after their move to the mountain.

According to the **1900** Census record, Nannie had lost two babies probably before Sarah was born. In the Hines burial plot in Tracy City Cemetery, there appear to be three unmarked but obvious burials. The two lost babies were probably buried in Franklin County, but we know from his death certificate that a grandson, Robert Moore Hines, died in **1943** and was buried in the Tracy City Cemetery in an unmarked grave. Now my search goes into the "Sherlock Holmes" mode; who was buried in the other mystery graves? Could young Robert be one of the "little Hines boys" who liked sugary food and drink items? The time period fits the marriage of my husband's parents in **1940**; one of the first places they lived was the little green "Hines house" as it was called for years. It had become a rental and continuously carried the Hines name even though they soon ceased to live in Tracy City. But let's continue on with our Hines history while looking for another little boy who may have died early.

Mr. Hines came to our growing town already trained and operating as a druggist. He also came with money and real estate experience, for he bought and sold land immediately, especially dealing around **Lot 224** where the Grundy County Heritage Center is now. In **1900** he rented a house and property that had belonged to Mrs. Arthur St. Clair Colyar, her own little piece of property running parallel to her own little street, St. Clair. The Colyars were at the "*tippy, tippy, top*" of the money climb, as one politician described rich people in **2019**.

Later she sold her estate to William J. Thomas, a former Justice of the Peace in Tracy City, a man spoken of with the following words as his funeral train slowly moved through Monteagle in **1894**: "*All gazed with reverent sympathy; none spoke but to praise the dead; they told of his kindness to the poor, of his strict sense of justice, of many good traits of character...*" His widow had a life estate in the house and land. She had a home as long as she lived. The estate was the large area east of Rebecca Hunt's residence, aka the Flannagan house, now Foster Funeral Home property.

By the time the **1910** Census was taken, Mr. Hines was listed as a merchant/druggist, but he was still paying rent and did so until he bought the house from the Thomas' heirs on **January 16, 1911**. With the names of former owners being those of means in the town, one can assume the house was well-built and accommodating. Nannie Hines finally had a home big enough to have a boarding house. She named her home "The Oaks," justified by the acreage of large oak trees surrounding the house. She then set out on a pleasurable journey of designing and decorating—I call it "nesting."



Original Hines Pharmacy (arrow) on Railroad Avenue

In 1920, all indications pointed to both businesses belonging solely to the Hines family. The Drug Store business was growing, and "The Oaks," buzzed with boarders, parties, luncheons, weddings and receptions. Their son worked as a clerk in the pharmacy when he was not in school. The drug store became known as the City Drug Store.

On **October 27, 1924**: "The Oaks," Tracy City, Tenn. Offered an enchanting setting Monday afternoon October 27th, for the marriage of Miss Sara Hines, only daughter, of Dr. and Mrs. Louis M. Hines, and Mr. William Maddox Travis, of Chattanooga, Tenn., with decorations of ferns, smilax, Chrysanthemums and roses. The large stone mantel in the spacious living room was

arranged as an altar and banked with smilax and ferns on which burned many candles in silver candelabra. On either side was placed tall baskets holding specimen chrysanthemums of white and orchid tied with tulle and tall white candlesticks holding cathedral candles with streamers of tulle between were placed forming an aisle to the dining room thru which the bridal party entered. Tall massive baskets holding white and orchid chrysanthemums were placed at entrance to dining room and the doors and windows were banked with smilax and studded with rosebuds..." The news article continued on over a third of the front page of the Mrs. Grundy issue. The wedding and reception were extravagance beyond imagination.

On **October 17, 1928**, Lewis **Ross** Hines bought fifty acres of land from the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company. That fifty acres contains the Hines Pond which we see today every time we drive from Monteagle to Tracy City on Highway 56/41. The Tracy City water works' lake and dam are on that fifty acres. The original rock dam held back enough water to make a sweet waterfall from the flow of the Fiery Gizzard headwaters; we all enjoy seeing this beauty of nature often believing it was built by Mr. Hines for his family and patrons of "The Oaks" to enjoy as a swimming hole. This pond is not to be confused with the Haynes Hole which lies down the Fiery Gizzard a little further and was named after the Ephraim Madison and Clercy (Wooten) Haynes family who lived above on the start of the Fiery Gizzard Gulf gorge.

In **1930**, Dr. Hines still managed his own drugstore while Nannie continued receiving boarders at "The Oaks." Their son Lewis Ross Hines, his wife, Josephine (Cole) Hines and their baby son, Lewis Ross Hines, Jr., were still in the home. Lewis R. Hines and Josephine Cole had married on **July 25, 1928** in Grundy County. Josephine gave birth to her second son, Robert "Bobby," on **March 2, 1931**. When time allowed, she eagerly helped with the businesses as seen in the **Oct. 21, 1932** *Cumberland Outlook: Mrs. Josephine Hines is in Chicago, Ill. this week buying Christmas goods for the City Drug Store.* That is the last information I can find on her. I've looked for a death certificate, a divorce decree, searched old newspapers, anything to give me a hint on her whereabouts. This makes me wonder if she may have become the first burial in the Hines family plot in Tracy City Cemetery. Realizing the family had money, then why would she not have had a burial marker if she did die? By the way, I now have "two little Hines boys," Lewis R., Jr. and little Bobby.

On **November 25, 1931**, an advertisement, "*Eugene Beauty Shop, Oaks Hotel, Guaranteed Work, 'Our Permanent Waves Are the Best,' Tracy City, Tennessee,*" can be read in the *Cumberland Outlook* issue. Another example can be found in the **July 5, 1934** issue. The Hines family seemed to be living the good life, but reality was just about to knock the wind out of their sails.

EUGENE BEAUTY NOOK
Special For July
Free Facial or Manicure
with each
Croquignole Permanent
MRS. L. M. HINES



"The Oaks" Hotel stood within the oak trees across the creek from the Tidman/Foxworth Hotel (see arrow). This was a portion of town Lot # 223.

Read the following article from the *Cumberland Outlook* issued Thursday, **August 2, 1934**: **"THE OAKS HOTEL DESTROYED BY FIRE ON MONDAY NIGHT – Again Tracy**

City suffers from inadequate fire protection. Once more hundreds of people are summoned by fire alarms to stand helpless while thousands of dollars go up in smoke. Monday night the Oaks Hotel, owned by L. M. Hines, burned. The fire, originating on the second floor, started about 11 p. m. and one hour later only smoking ruins remained of an investment that probably amounted to thirty thousand dollars. The fire was first noticed by two young men who were passing and the alarm sounded. It was seen that efforts to save the building were futile and nothing could be done other than removing as much of the furniture as possible. Only a small amount of the furniture on the second floor was saved but much on the first floor was carried out though some of this was badly damaged.” That happening was just the beginning of the Hines family’s tragedies. Lewis Moore Hines and his son had a drugstore to keep in operation. They could not afford to let this episode of ruin stop them from providing for their families. It is assumed that the family moved into a smaller house or building nearby, or even on the same property, after the fire, for we read more on their abode at the end of the next article.

The Tennessean—**29 Apr. 1935**; *“Tracy City, Tenn., April 28 – Fire that Sheriff P. H. McGovern blamed on a “firebug” early today virtually wiped out a block of Tracy City’s business district, causing damage estimated by the sheriff at \$100,000. McGovern said that a piece of weatherboarding had been torn from the rear of one of the buildings burned and that oil-soaked waste, similar to that used in railroad boxcars, had been found stuffed in the hole thus made. There were traces of oil along the weatherboarding, he said. “We have had a firebug here for some time,” the sheriff declared. “The high school building was burned the night of **March 7**. The latest fire was set, and I think there were probably two men mixed up in it. I have a pretty good idea who they are and expect to make an arrest in two or three days.”* Asked for a possible motive, McGovern said it was *“just meanness.”* I figure I know who they were because I have read enough about fires in Tracy City to convince me. Also, there are newspaper articles calling the names of two men—a story for another writer. I will declare that I crawled under a large wild rose bush years ago to find the name of one of these fellows on a quite rusty funeral home marker. Not that he heard me, but I said, “Gotcha!”

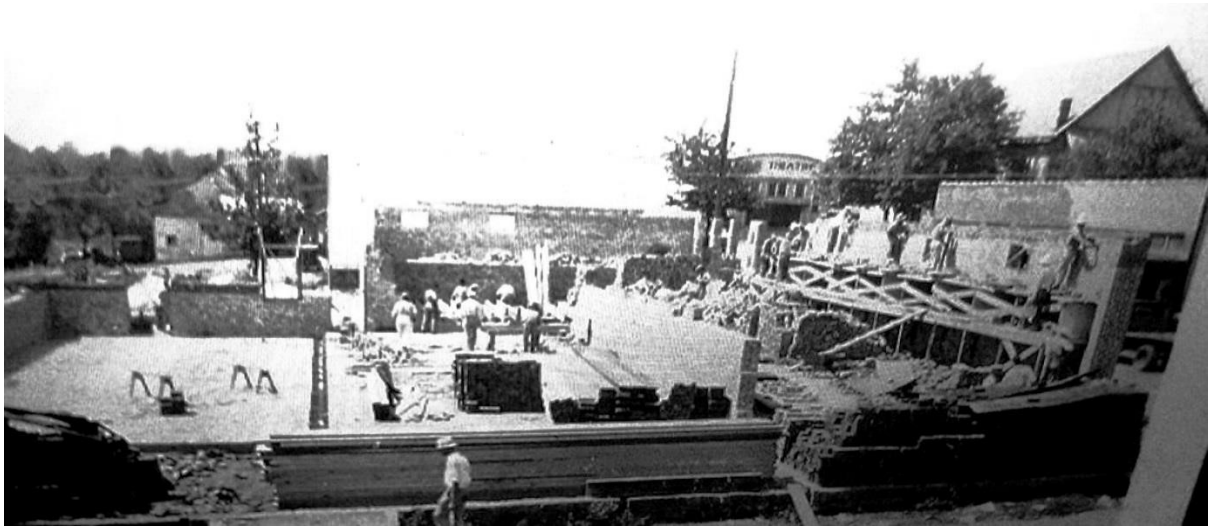
*“The Foxworth hotel was destroyed, along with buildings housing the E. C. Norvell undertaker establishment, Oliver and Brawley’s shoe shop, Roy Wright’s grocery store, **Lewis Hines’ drug store**, the post office and Knights of Pythias hall, the L. E. Hassler clothing store, the Dixie Telephone Company’s office, and **the dwelling of Lewis Hines**. Deputy Sheriff Walter Keets discovered the blaze shortly before midnight. The fire burned itself out about three hours later. The only building in the block to escape was a concrete structure housing a restaurant and offices of the federal relief administration. Tracy City is in Grundy county, north of Chattanooga. It has a population of about 2,500.”*

Some of the lost businesses shared buildings with other vendors. Some of them stood behind what we see in the photos on Laurel St. as it ran across a little wooden bridge at the creek allowing the end of Douglas St. to butt into it. Today Douglas St. is known as Shelby Rd. The Dixie Telephone Company's office building used to house the Methodist Episcopal Church, North and the Missionary Baptist Church with mutual agreement on the time of each gathering. E. C. Norvell moved his funeral accessories over into the Cumberland Presbyterian Church building which was basically empty at the time, and later he bought the old Flannagan house, remodeled it and started his new funeral home there. The L. E. Hassler Store used to be The New York Store.



Hines City Drug Store After the 1935 Fire

That same year on **Nov. 26, 1935**, Lewis Moore Hines died at the age of seventy-seven. He was buried in the family plot in Section 1 along the front fence of the Tracy City Cemetery. The building back of the burned-out section of town started immediately in the Spring, and probably mostly completed in the same year. The owners of any brick buildings salvaged as many bricks as possible and put them back into service. Some businesses did not build back, but the Hines family just went around the corner on Depot St. and built a much larger, more accommodating building.



Some rebuilding can be seen. The large building on the right in the background is the Cumberland Presbyterian Church which looked straight into the Dixie Theatre.



The new Hines Drug Store or City Drug Store was on Depot Street.

In the **1940** Census record, sixty-nine-year old May Hines lived in Tracy City but in the Dutch Town area of town. This was a short walk from where “The Oaks” had burned. Interestingly, she was rearing two grandsons, Lewis (10) and Bobby (9). This Bobby was the same grandson we met in the beginning of our story by the name of Robert Moore Hines who died **August 15, 1943**, and was buried in the Tracy City Cemetery. His death certificate gave several symptoms for cause of death. (1) *nephritis – duration 2 yrs* (inflammation of the kidneys--jackie); (2) *secondary anemia – duration 6 mos.* (3) *bronchial pneumonia – duration 2 days.* Dr. Clements in Palmer, Tennessee attended young Bobby for two months before he died. These symptoms possibly could be caused from too many sugary “pops,” but not necessarily so. Others have spoken of the two Hines boys dying from the same thing, but I haven’t any proof at this time.

On **August 13, 1940**, Lewis Ross Hines sold his fifty acres to Emil E. Von Bergen. This may have been a hint that a move away from Tracy City was in the making. I found it interesting that his wife, Josephine, did not sign the deed. Another hint that she was no longer in the picture – dead possibly?

In **1941**, the state law provided that anyone applying to take the examination to practice pharmacy must be a graduate of a recognized school of pharmacy. It is quite possible that Dr. Lewis Ross Hines got caught up in the controversy surrounding that law and had to attend a school for a license. That may be why he went to Madison, Davidson Co., TN to live, leaving his sons with his mother in Tracy City. They, no doubt, were well established at Shook School and had many friends.

Now is where the story gets even more interesting! Where was Bobby’s older brother Lewis Ross Hines, Jr.? He would have been thirteen at the time his brother died in **1943** if he was still alive. I can find no death certificate for him, but what I can find is that his grandmother Nannie May Hines’ obituary of **1960** does not even mention him as a survivor. The obit only tells me that she had one son whom we know to be Dr. Lewis Ross Hines, Sr., and two grandsons with the surname Travis. Of course, these were Sarah May (Hines) Travis’ children. Even she had died before her mother. She died on **April 29, 1946**, in Campbell Co., Va.

Nannie’s obituary tells me that Bobby’s brother was dead, but no one knows when he died. It seems obvious that he didn’t go to Madison, TN with his grandmother when her son took her home with him in **1943**. That was a key year, **1943**. Young Bobby died, was buried at Tracy City Cemetery with no real marker, and Grandmother Nannie moves to Madison, TN to live with her son. My theory is that Bobby’s brother died before he did, and that both grandsons are buried in the Tracy City Cemetery. This family had

money at one time, so why are there no real burial stones with data marking the burial spots of the boys. More interesting questions arise in the year **1943**. Could Junior have died with the same symptoms as Bobby? Was there something to hide? Did the town folks have rebuking words for Nannie on the deaths of the boys—if both died like my husband's mother told him they did? Is it possible that the third unmarked grave could be that of their mother Josephine V. Hines? Or did she walk out on the children? I find it impossible to follow her through Census' records.

When Nannie died on **February 9, 1960**, her body was brought back to Tracy City for a funeral and burial. She was 95 years of age. The birth year on her stone is wrong. According to her obituary, she would have been born in **1865**. What secrets, if any, did she take to the grave with her? The burial plot has Lewis Moore Hines, then Nannie Hines, then Lewis Ross Hines at the top of the spot. My eyes see three more burial spots at the foot of the plot. Who are they?

Five years later on **December 18, 1965**, Dr. Lewis Ross Hines died at his home in Madison, TN. I suppose the title "Dr." comes from his work as a pharmacist. His only survivors were his two Travis nephews and several great nephews. His funeral was officiated by Rev. S. Dewey Organ, a name I associate with the Brown families on Hobbs Hill, Grundy County; Dewey is buried in the Hobbs Hill Cemetery. Like his mother, Lewis' body was brought back to Tracy City for burial beside his parents. Would one not also assume that his two sons were buried in the Hines family plot? The Travis nephews and some Hines relatives from the Winchester area would have been the only family members left who could have taken care of the burial of their uncle.

I've always enjoyed a great mystery, but not one I can't solve. If any reader can tell me what happened to Josephine V. Hines and her elder son, Lewis Ross Hines, Jr., please let me know.

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