

William Cashin

“In Caracas, Venezuela in 1965, William and Eva Cashin were growing weary of the foreign scene. As a State Department employee, the Cashins had lived in Europe, South America, and the Orient, and they were looking for a quiet spot in which to spend their later years. In the same year in Northwest Arkansas, John Cooper Sr. began selling home sites in his newly opened resort community called Bella Vista. The Cashins, on a stateside visit, bought a lot....”
(From the Bentonville Daily Record, August 31, 1989.)

After buying their first lot in 1965, the Cashins returned to Bella Vista two years later and traded it for one at the corner of Cooper Road and Orr Lane. They finished their assignment in Venezuela while Cooper built their house, and they moved into it in July 1967. Mrs. Cashin died in 1993, but the house was not sold until after Mr. Cashin's death in 1998.

Prior to retiring to Bella Vista, Cashin had an exciting career in the field of fingerprint identification. According to the website for the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, www.criminaljustice.ny.gov, he started out wanting to indulge his childhood love of horses by becoming a trick rider for the New York State Police, but in 1926, his first year on the job, he was badly injured in a trick riding accident. During his lengthy convalescence at the Samaritan Hospital in Troy, he began looking at other career possibilities. That is also where he met, and eventually married, his nurse, Eva Beaulac.

Having read about the new fingerprint system of identification, Cashin asked his uncle, Father William Cashin, Chaplain of Sing Sing Prison, if he knew anything about it. Father Cashin advised him to contact Clara Parsons, who was in charge of the Prison Department's Identification Files in Albany. She agreed to become his private tutor, and taught him well. Upon returning to work, Cashin established a Bureau of Identification for his troop and began serving as a fingerprint instructor at the State Police School, as he continued to increase his knowledge in the field.

The sudden death of Clara Parsons in 1936 left a vacancy, and Cashin was offered the title of Director of the Division of Criminal Identification, a job he held until 1943, and then again from 1946 to 1960. During his tenure, he introduced so many innovations that fingerprint experts from Canada, Japan, Spain, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Thailand, Israel, Greece, Indonesia and Lebanon came to the Division to study his new technology.

Because of his work in training foreign officers, the State Department invited Cashin to go to Greece in 1959. He spent three months there helping to set up an identification bureau and, upon his return, was offered a job with the State Department.

Cashin retired from New York State in 1960 and accepted the job with the US State Department. According to the Criminal Justice website, he worked in Brazil, Bangkok, the Philippines and Venezuela before a close call with an earthquake in Caracas in 1967 convinced him it was time to retire for good, and that's when they settled in Bella Vista.

Picture 1: The Samaritan Hospital in Troy, New York, opened in 1898 and pictured on this 1906 postcard, is where William Cashin met his future wife, nurse Eva Beulac, when he was recuperating from a horseback riding accident in 1926. (Courtesy of Bella Vista Historical Museum)



Picture 2: When William Cashin started his new job in 1936, he investigated ways to automate the time-consuming search process of fingerprint identification. (Courtesy of NY Criminal Justice website)



Picture 3: Employee Margaret McCarthy Demonstrates Automated Fingerprint Searching on the new IBM card sorter in 1937. (Courtesy of NY Criminal Justice website)

