

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Jerry McKelvy, Editor

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A VISIT WITH MRS. MINNIE MAE HILDEBRAND

About three weeks ago, I made the short trip from Camden out Hwy. 24 to Harvey's Grocery, one of the well known landmarks in this area, and had a pleasant visit with Mrs. Minnie Mae Hildebrand. Mrs. Minnie Mae just celebrated her 95th birthday and still spends several hours each day at the store visiting with customers and the "regulars" who congregate there most every day. Her son, Bobby Hildebrand, takes care of the store these days. Her daughter, Dorothy Herrington and husband, Al Herrington, live just across the road from the store.

Mrs. Minnie Mae has a remarkable memory of how things were when she was young growing up in the area around Sayre, Chidester, and Bluff City. Since I am not an official newspaper man, I don't have any real experience in interviewing someone. I decided to compile a list of questions to ask Mrs. Minnie Mae when I got there. Here are the questions I asked and Mrs. Minnie Mae's comments.

1. **Who were your parents?** Henry Harvey and Amanda Dean Sudsberry Harvey
2. **Who were your grandparents?** Michael Edward Harvey and Mary Frances "Poney" Starnes Harvey on my father's side. George A. and Mary E. Sudsberry on my mother's side.
3. **Who were your brothers and sisters?** Syble Harvey, Doyle B. Harvey, Monroe Ellis Harvey, A. G. "Doc" Harvey, Henry Harvey, Jr., and Guy Roland Harvey
4. **Where was your old home place located?** The first one was near White Oak Creek, but we moved several times. My father bought up land over the years and had accumulated about 3000 acres by the time the depression hit. We moved here in the 1940s.
5. **Where did you go to school?** At Campbell Hill which is on the gravel road that leads from the overflowing well north to Sayre. The school was built like a T. Cora Payne taught the young kids. There was a high fence around the school. I remember one time when the teacher lined up the kids and we all marched like soldiers up the road to Turner Cemetery to attend a funeral. We walked a mile and a half to school in those days. The teacher rode a horse to school.
6. **Do you remember any funny things that happened during your school days?** I remember once when the boys brought us some vines to smoke. It was unheard of in those days for girls to smoke. We almost got in trouble over that.
7. **Where was the nearest store when you were a kid?** I guess it would be Chidester. The railroad ran from Sayre to Chidester. The distance was about four or five miles by rail.

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8. **How often did you go to town in those days?** We didn't go to town. My dad would sometimes flag down the "local" and go to Chidester. I remember one time when I went to a spelling contest in Camden. We had to carry a lantern and walk those long railroad trestles to Sayre to catch the train.

9. **Describe Sayre in those days.** There was the railroad and depot. Sam Hesterly had the post office and Victor Wallace had the commissary. There were two churches (Methodist and Baptist) and a school. There was Harvey's store nearby at a place called Wedgetown and the old stagecoach stop across the tracks. There were lots of houses. It was a good sized town in those days.

Do you know how Sayre got its name? No

10. **What did children do for amusement when you were a child?** Played baseball and basketball. The boys and girls usually played together so there would be enough to make a team. We also played games like Hide and Go Seek, Bear in the Gully, Annie Over, Hop-Scotch, and pitched silver dollars.



Minnie Mae Harvey as a child

11. **What was your father's occupation?** He was a farmer and also had seven stores in his lifetime.

12. **Who was the doctor for your family?** Dr. Whaley when we lived near Bluff City. We also used Dr. Rushing and Dr. Purifoy.

13. **What home remedies do you remember your family using?** Castor oil; dry quinine with juice from canned peaches; buttermilk biscuit poultice; red clay and vinegar for swelling; quinine for malaria.

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14. **I'm sure people helped each other back in those days. Do you remember anything in particular like that?** I remember one time when the boiler at the saw mill blew up and killed three men. My father let the widow of one of the victims use a plot of ground so she would have some cotton to sell to have money for her family. He did the plowing and she hoed the cotton.

15. **Do you remember any bad crimes in those days?** No. I remember we were afraid of the Ku Klux Klan in those days. I can remember them meeting in the lodge hall at Bluff City.

16. **What was it like during the Great Depression?** Times were hard. We saved everything, especially all kind of sacks. We made our clothes out of sacks.

17. **What was the first television show you remember?** Probably Amos and Andy

18. **Do you remember any fads (hair styles or clothing styles) that your parents complained about?** No. We plaited our hair and wore long dresses.

19. **Do you remember any old sayings or words of advice your parents or grandparents used?** "A still tongue makes a wise head" and "Blessed is he that tooteth his own horn, for he shall not be disappointed"

20. **Have you ever flown in an airplane?** No, but I did look inside one once.

21. **Did you drive a car?** I started driving when I was 16 after I married and drove until I was 84. I had my first ride in an automobile when I was six years old.

22. **What do you remember about Bluff City in those days?** Most of the businesses were on what is now Hwy. 299. Hwy. 24 developed later. There was Harvey's store, Upton's store, the post office run by Ella Carter, Byrd's store, and Dr. Whaley's office or drug store. Mavin Hildebrand once had a store there, but it burned. There was the school and I remember a blacksmith shop south of the road not far from the cemetery. There was a large cotton gin and the churches.

23. **What is the longest trip you ever took?** I went to McGee, Mississippi once and to Louisiana. I've never been very far from here.

24. **Who was your favorite teacher?** I guess it would be Julius Bradley. He was a good teacher and made us study.

25. **How were young folks expected to behave in those days?** We were taught to act properly. We said "No sir", "Yes sir", and "Thank you". When a grown person visited, we excused ourselves and went to the other room. We respected our elders.

26. **How did you meet your husband (William L. "Bunn" Hildebrand)?** We met at church. I was 16 and he was 22 when we married. Wilkie Moore married us at the church.

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After we got married, I went back to school and he went on back to work. **Did you have a big wedding?** No, we just ran away and got married. He didn't ask my father's permission.

27. **Did your mother have any hobbies? Was she artistic or did she have musical talent?** She was a good singer. Most of the Sudsberrys were good singers.

28. **What was a favorite dish that your mother cooked?** She made good chicken and dumplings and good dressing. She also made wonderful cakes and pies.

29. **Who was the most interesting person you ever met?** I met President Bill Clinton several times and Dale Bumpers who was governor and U. S. Senator. I've met lots of politicians. Even the governor called and wished me happy birthday this year.

30. **What advice do you have for the young people of today?** I think they need to dress differently for one thing. You hardly ever heard of a girl getting pregnant in the old days, but it seems to be fairly common these days. Parents need to teach their children how to act like our parents taught us in the old days.

Well, time passed fast and before we knew it, two hours had gone by. During that time, Mrs. Minnie told several interesting stories like the time Mr. Sudsberry, who was blind, accidentally fell in the well and almost drowned and the time her daughter, Frances' bonnet got sucked up into the cotton gin while she was riding on a wagon load of cotton.

Harvey's Grocery was built by Mrs. Minnie Mae's father, Henry Harvey in 1948 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A bronze plaque hangs by the front door. The store has also been featured in *Southern Living* magazine. When the political season heats up, all the candidates make a point to stop at Harvey's Grocery. Even the sign on the highway says "Politics Spoken Here" and Harvey's is well known for its good bar-b-cue.

If your travels take you anywhere near Camden, stop by Harveys. You can still get an ice-cold coke in the small 6 oz. glass bottle and if you're lucky, you can visit with Mrs. Minnie Mae. She will be glad to see you.



HARVEY'S STORE NEAR CAMDEN, ARKANSAS

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Mrs. Minnie Mae Harvey Hildebrand

at Harvey's Grocery

June 30, 2004

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EARLY HISTORY OF CAMARK POTTERY from The Camden News—July 30, 1927

Camark pottery is the newest wonder of the Wonder State and it is the finest product of a most modern and successful manufacturing plant which has claimed Camden as its home for less than six months, but in that short time, by the excellent qualities of its product, has advertised this city over the entire country.

This plant, the Camden Art, Tile, and Pottery Company, was established by Jack Carnes, a young business man, whose inspiration to utilize the natural resources of this section profitably, has proven a wonderful industrial advancement for Camden, as well as a great achievement in ceramic art.

Though fashioned from the common natural clay dug from the banks near Camden, this new ware reveals a rare beauty in pottery which is winning distinction in art circles and acclamations from critics and connoisseurs who declare it is an artistic product of which Americans may well be proud.

Camark has met with almost instantaneous popularity in the past few weeks it has been on the market. Salesmen of the company are meeting with success and a great number of the larger stores and gift houses, especially in the home state, have adorned their cases and shelves with the attractive ware which is manufactured in such a wide variety of design and color so as to appeal to every artistic taste.

At present, Camark is being manufactured in twelve different decorated styles and many plain glaze finishes and in pieces ranging in value from twenty-five cents to twenty-five dollars.

The manufacture through every step from the plan of the decorative motif to the finished piece, is completed by experienced designers, talented decorators, and skilled potters which accounts in a large measure for its unusual beauty.

The natural clay is first ground into a dust and mixed with water to thin mud-like consistency. Then it is poured into moulds of which there are thousands, constructed of plaster of Paris, which, when placed on the hot air drying tables, draws the moisture from the clay leaving it compact and shrunken from the side of the mould so it can be easily removed.

The soft pieces are then trimmed and straightened before they are placed in the kiln for the first baking of 20 hours at an 1800 degree heat. There are two of the great kilns which will hold a large number of pieces when they are placed in the oblong seggers (?) which fit on top of each other.

Various dips and color solutions are used to produce the different shades and finishes and several different bakings are required to properly prepare the combinations of colors and designs.

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In the artist's room, skilled decorators outline the design, landscapes, flowers, silhouettes, etc. on the decorated models, and then in the sample room, one must stop for a long time to enjoy the indescribable beauty of the finished articles displayed on the shelves and racks. Such an array can only be appreciated by the eye, for words fail to express the fascination experienced by lovers of art, color, and beauty when they examine the beautiful creations.

This display resembles a rainbow jumbled together and splattered with gold, brandishing bronzes, glistening golds, vivid yellows and greens, and soft gray blues—with perhaps an outline of frosty dots, a sand dune and palm tree landscape, or the plain colors with contrast stipple dropped from the top or an all-over crackle finish.

The variety of designs is almost as stupendous as the color variety for there are tiny bud vases, bowls, rose jars, etc. in graduating sizes up to the large urns standing several feet off the floor.

No doubt, the universal appeal of Camark is partly accountable by the wide variety offered, but we must realize that this would account for nothing were it not for that essential quality of the pottery—it's artistic beauty.

The pottery plant is located a short distance off the main Camden-El Dorado highway a few blocks south on Adams Street and is ultra modern in every respect and is now making a systematic production. There are 25 persons employed in the plant under Charles J. Sebaugh, the manager and all are directing their accomplishments toward that successful development of natural beauty.

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS Randolph Hamby, Mayor of Prescott 2-16-1942

BE PREPARED—Keep where convenient at least 50 feet of garden hose with spray nozzle; a ladder long enough to reach your roof; a hoe, rake, or shovel; 30 feet of rope; a bucket of dry sand. Keep your attic free of paper and trash.

THE ALARM—Notice of the approach of enemy planes will be given by sounding the fire siren on the city hall by raising and falling the pitch or a series of short blasts lasting about two minutes; The all-clear will be given by a single long blast; The warning may be given many minutes before the arrival of planes.

WHAT TO DO—Seek shelter; keep cool; stay indoors until the all-clear is sounded. There is often as much danger from machine guns on planes as there is from the bombs. Keep off the streets. Children in school are safer there than on their way home. If in a car, immediately park next to the curb, extinguish all lights, and seek shelter. The best place during a raid is under a table. Keep away from windows. At night, following the alarm, turn off or shade all lights. Do not turn off your main light switch. Turn off all gas jets. Catch water in buckets or bathtub with which to fight fire.

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HOW TO FIGHT INCENDIARY BOMBS—Do not approach a burning bomb the first 45 seconds after it lands; the heat is terrific. Spray the bomb and area around it with water or soda and acid fire extinguisher. Do not use solid stream; it will cause the bomb to explode. As soon as possible remove bomb from building in a bucket containing at least two inches of sand. Use hoe, rake, or shovel. Throw dry sand on bomb to extinguish. Spraying water on bomb will cause it to burn up rapidly, but will not extinguish it.

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT—The fire department cannot extinguish all fires caused by bombs. It is the duty of each to assist his neighbor in fighting fires. You cannot collect insurance for fires caused by enemy bombs. Do not get in the way of the fire department.

WATER SUPPLY—Bombs may cut off the water supply, therefore when alarm is sounded catch water in tub or buckets. Use water sparingly, but effectively.

REMEMBER—The air raid wardens have complete police authority. Obey their orders.

BLACKOUTS—Blackouts are effective only when ALL LIGHTS are out or windows are covered so NO LIGHT shows on the outside. Keep off the streets and walks during blackouts; if caught in a blackout while driving a car, park at the curb immediately and extinguish lights. Seek cover.

THE LAW—Persons violating orders of air raid wardens will be punished according to law.

Re: Survey

Thanks to all who responded to the survey in the last issue. Here are the results of the survey: Categories from favorite to least favorite—(1) family histories; (2) old newspaper; articles; (3) old photos; (4) recipes; (5) trivia; (6) humor; (7) poems.

Most readers were interested in Nevada County, but many were also interested in Ouachita County or anything about southwest Arkansas. About half of those who responded say they keep the papers—some in three ring binders and others keep articles that interest them on their computers.

Several readers said the paper was not long enough or wanted it to come out more often. One person said they did not like depressing family stories like the Fielding Irvin story.

I got several suggestions. Several readers wanted more articles written by the readers, so if you have something to submit, send it in. Some wanted more regional history and others wanted more local news.

I will consider all your suggestions. I will try to add two more pages to the paper (at least for some issues). The main problem with making the paper larger is the cost for printing and mailing the paper. If you have the Internet, consider reading the paper online when it's time to renew. That will save both of us some money.