

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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Cale is a small community located on Hwy. 200 near the center of Nevada County, Arkansas. The population count in the last census was 75 people, but it is believed to be at least 80 today. It was named after John Cale. The following article appeared in the July 14, 1906 issue of *The Nevada News* which gives some of the history of this small community.

In the northeast corner of Caney Township on the broad ridge between Little and Big Caney Creeks is situated the interesting post office of Cale. Surrounding this little burg live some of the best people in Nevada County and they are fast building up a most prosperous community. They are at present supporting two first class mercantile establishments--that of Jno. H. McDaniel and Westmoreland Bros. Both carry first-class stock and do a heavy business. Westmoreland Bros. also operate a saw mill with a capacity of 10,000 ft/day. The mill supplies all the local demand and considerable lumber is hauled to a point on the Lester and Ouachita Valley railroad and shipped to distant places. There is considerable timber in the community and besides owning quite a body themselves, the proprietors of the plant pay good prices for logs delivered to the mill.

Cale is the center of a rich agricultural district and like most all portions of the county, everything can be raised. The soil is a mixture of sand and dirt and produces well. Crops this year are especially fine. Cale rejoices with everyone over the prospects.

The school advantages are splendid. District No. 21 always votes a full tax and has from six to seven months of school each year. Miss Rosa Wicker of Willisville will teach the coming session.

Near Cale is Mt. Zion, one of the oldest church structures in the county. It is Missionary Baptist with services held at stated intervals by Eld. J. W. Dorman of Bodcaw.

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Cale is at the terminus of the east end of the Prescott and Cale mail route. Bailey Westmoreland has a contract for carrying the mail, which also supplies Weaver and Morris. An effort was made recently to have rural free delivery from Rosston to cover Cale and abolish the post office, but there were objections and the route failed.

One of the important enterprises of the community is the Prescott and Cale Telephone Co. owned and operated by local people. The system now has over thirty boxes and gets a number of supplied requests. Lines extend over four townships and have connections with Prescott, thus bringing in closer touch the two communities, for every citizen of Prescott who has a phone in his home can speak to the good people of Cale eighteen miles away.

Stock raising is engaging considerable attention among the farmers and the fine range in the bottoms makes it quite profitable. The natural conditions about the place render it very healthful and there is no physician at Cale. However, should one be needed, it is less than a six mile ride from either Rosston, Hatley's Store, Theo, or Morris, at all of which places splendid physicians reside.

The society around Cale is the very best. Probably one of the most prominent men in this section is R. O. Westmoreland, the popular postmaster, justice of the peace, sawmill man, merchant, and one of the proprietors of the telephone system. There are people who would like to see him as county judge and the interests of the county would not suffer should their hopes at some future date be realized.

Cale is also the home of W. S. McDaniel, father of our esteemed townsman, Owen R. McDaniel. "Uncle Billy", as he is familiarly known by closest friends, moved into the community in 1869, having previously located near Falcon in 1851. He was the first treasurer of Nevada County elected by the people after the county was formed in 1871. He held the position for four years and has never since aspired to office. "Uncle Billy", while somewhat feeble, still gets around remarkably well for someone his age and comes to the store every day for a few minutes to chat with any passing acquaintance that he might chance to meet there. He has been a useful and honorable citizen during his long residence in the community and everybody is his friend.

Among other prominent people living near Cale might be mentioned the Ridlings, the Steeds, the Mathis's, and the Honea's.

The greater majority of the people are white citizens, although a small sprinkling of Negroes lives south of Cale.

NEWS FROM CALE (from the April 16, 1936 issue of The Nevada News)

---Well, as this is my first time to write to the News, I thought I would let ye readers here [sic] from this part of the state.

---Health is very good with the exception of colds.

---Very glad to know Miss Effie Allen is back in her school room after several days' absence on account of her sister's illness.

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---School is progressing fine, although Prof. Dale Gentry has the flu. Hope he will soon recover.

---My, it looks like we are going to have cold weather all the year. It is making the gardens look droopie [*sic*], especially the Irish potatoes, which the freeze we had last week killed most of them that were up.

---The wedding bells are ringing in Cale as Mr. Alvin Fuller and Miss Elizabeth Smith were quietly married the 17th of March, announcing it the 12th of April. We wish them much joy and happiness.

---Well, I suppose times are getting better. Mr. G. W. Fuller has installed a new radio. Also Mr. Percy Blakely.

---I hear that Mr. E. L. Smith, our merchant of Cale, has put on his third truck. It is mighty nice to have groceries, etc. delivered at your door.

---I suppose Mr. A. C. Cummings really intends to farm, or have it done, as he is having all the Bermuda grass carried off his farm. If there is anyone in need of a bed, I suppose he has the hay to make it.

---Well, let's make the paper more interesting by having more correspondence. I will ring off for this time.



NEWS TIDBITS ABOUT CALE FROM NEVADA COUNTY NEWSPAPERS

June, 1907—The Cale Mill Co. will haul lumber to the Lester railroad.

1908-- We were informed yesterday by Uncle Perry Westmoreland that the bricks are on the ground for the erection of the canning factory. We suppose Uncle P. will be the president of same.

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Aug., 1911—The Cale School was established in 1908. Last year (1910), there were 64 non-resident pupils and 79 resident pupils.

March, 1915—Dr. Tompkins is mentioned as being a doctor at Cale.

1916—Westmoreland Bros. mill is located one and a half miles northeast of Cale and employs 25 men.

Jan., 1916—J. W. Ridling has a general mercantile business at Cale

Aug., 1916—J. W. Ridling is a Cale merchant. He has bought out the firm previously know as McDaniel and Ridling.

Mar., 1917—Cale basketball team is in Little Rock trying for the state championship

April, 1917—J. H. McDaniel is postmaster at Cale.

Oct., 1928—The Cale Consolidated School is starting its second week with good attendance. A pie supper will be held to raise funds to equip the Smith-Hughes, Home Ec. and other departments of the school.

Oct., 1928—E. L. Smith has installed an up-to-date grist mill which will be ready by the last of the week. We are glad someone is installing a mill. We needed it. We also need other things such as a good garage, another store or two, a barber shop, and other things to boost our little town.

Nov., 1929—We have six real good teachers and five buses.

April, 1936—E. L. Smith is the merchant at Cale.

1942—Cale and Bluff City schools established the first school-owned forests in the state with the children doing the planting, both boys and girls. Cale has a five-acre forest and Bluff City has a ten-acre forest.

Like so many other small towns in this area, Cale is without a store today (in 2008). One store building (Kirk's Grocery) still stands, but it has been closed several years. (see photo). The last owners were Shirley and Frances Kirk who moved to Cale from their farm a few miles away in 1972 and purchased the store from Vernon and Faye Garrett. The post office at that time was located in the store and Mrs. Faye Garrett was postmaster. Frances Kirk also served as postmaster after they purchased the store. Another small store owned by Erbert and Vada Glass Mathis was once located across the road from the school. It was later purchased by Dean Bradley who was the last owner/operator.

The school at Cale was consolidated in 1987 with other small schools to form the Nevada School at Rosston. Shortly thereafter, the main school building was torn down and part of the school site was converted into a community park. Some of the smaller school buildings

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were converted to other uses. The library building became the city hall and the agri./science building was added onto the Mt. Zion Baptist church for classrooms and a kitchen.

Cale still has a post office which is now in a separate building owned by the city and leased to the USPS. Betty Brown of Bodcaw is the current postmaster. This building was previously the city hall. The city hall is now in the old school library building nearby.

The Mt. Zion Baptist church mentioned in the 1906 article still exists at Cale. Dennis Cole is the pastor. The inside has been renovated except for the original pews and a new metal roof has been added.

The city has a fire department with Danny Martin (sheriff-elect) as fire chief and Richard Martin as Assistant Chief. They have two fire trucks.

Bill David Barham is the current mayor. Council members are: Janis Warlow, Wayne Barham, Richard Martin, Betty Barham, and Danny Martin. Janie Franklin is the recorder/treasurer. The first mayor when the city was incorporated in 1971 was Lester Davis followed by Ike Johnson, W. S. Kirk, and Davis Benton who served as mayor for 26 years.

Cale is located on the historic Washington Post Rd., an early road laid out about 1841 leading from Camden to Washington, Arkansas. Many of the early pioneers traveled this road past Poison Springs, Carolina, Friendship, Mt. Moriah, and Harmony. Streets in present-day Cale include Mt. Moriah Rd., Westmoreland Drive, Lake Rd. (leading to Barham's Lake), and the Honea Route (named after the Honea family who once lived there).

There are no major industries in the area today. Residents must drive to other places to find work unless they are retired. When a community loses its school, the stores soon close and a decline begins. The residents who still live at Cale are hopeful that their population can increase before the next census. Most of the houses are occupied at the present time.



**Kirk's Grocery at Cale (Photo taken in 1993)
(formerly Garrett's Store)**

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OLD SCHOOL BELL

This Bell Rang for Students at this site from 1928-1988

**U. S. POST OFFICE
CALE, ARKANSAS 71828**



**PAVILION AT CALE FUN PARK
ON
OLD SCHOOL PROPERTY**

**CALE CITY HALL AND
COMMUNITY CENTER
(formerly the school library)
This is frequently used for community
pot-luck dinners and other activities**



**MT. ZION
MISSIONARY BAPTIST
CHURCH
Cale, Arkansas
Est. 1876**

(Photo taken 1993)

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THE IRON MOUNTAIN BABY

Editor's Note:

I spent three years teaching school in Washington County, Missouri back in the 1960s. Washington County is located about 60 miles southwest of St. Louis. It's a rural area with pretty scenery. The county seat is Potosi, Missouri (population 2,662).

The Missouri Pacific railroad line passed through this county a few miles from where I was living. This is the main railroad line that connects St. Louis to Little Rock and on southwest to Texarkana. There is an interesting story familiar to those in Missouri concerning an incident that happened there in 1902 when the railroad was known as the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad.

According to the legend, a 72 year old farmer and Civil War veteran named William Helms was on an errand and had stopped by Big River at the railroad track near Irondale when a northbound train went by. Moments later he heard what he thought were field mice squeaking.

He investigated the noise and was surprised when he discovered an old fashioned valise containing a small infant which he believed had been tossed from the passing train. The valise was torn and the baby was badly bruised and had some other injuries. He rushed home with the infant and the valise. The Helms family cared for the infant who was believed to be no more than five days old and the child recovered from the injuries. The child was given the name of William Moses Gould Helms--William for his rescuer, Moses for being found by the river and Gould for the owner of the railroad.

The story of the rescued baby spread all across the nation thanks in part to a song that was written about the incident called "The Ballad of the Iron Mountain Baby". The publicity brought many women to Washington County who claimed to be the child's mother, but nothing could be proven. When the child was age 6, he was legally adopted by the Helms family.

When his adopted father died in 1917, William moved with his mother to Salem, Missouri where he graduated from high school. He then attended Braughton University and Southwest State Teachers College in Springfield, Missouri where he learned to be a printer, the profession he practiced most of his life. His schooling was financed by the Iron Mountain Railroad, which later became the Missouri-Pacific line. It is said that William did not like all the publicity his story brought him.

William married August 5, 1933 in St. Louis. He then moved with his wife, Sally to Texas. They had one son, also named William.

William Moses Gould Helms died January 31, 1953 at the age of 51. His body was brought back on the Iron Mountain Railroad for his burial at Hopewell Cemetery in Washington County, Missouri. It was only the second time in his life he had ridden a train. The small funeral service received no publicity.

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The story goes that his son died at age 14 and that his wife became ill and moved back to St. Louis. According to the story published in a railroad magazine, his wife and child were not buried beside him at Hopewell Cemetery, but his adoptive parents, William Helms (1835-1917) and Sarah Jane Knight Helms (1850-1925) are buried there.

The true identity of the Iron Mountain Baby remains a mystery.

A FISHING TRIP TO REMEMBER

By Jerry McKelvy

I grew up in an area that had several choices when it came to fishing. There was Caney Creek, several old gravel pits, the ponds on our farm, the Ouachita and Little Missouri rivers, and White Oak Lake within a few miles from our home. My father liked to fish the rivers occasionally, putting out trot lines across the river. It was not unusual to catch a great number of good size catfish and there was always the hope of catching a real whopper. We also enjoyed camping out and cooking outside.

I remember one occasion many years ago when my parents and I decided to fish the Little Missouri River near the mouth of Terre Rouge Creek. We had a 14 foot aluminum boat that was in pretty good shape, but the outboard motor was an old clunker. It was about a five horsepower motor and was very old. It had the gas tank on top of the motor and had a rope starter that had to be wound by hand. There was a small leak in the gas tank, but we didn't think it was too serious.

We got to the river and set up camp, loaded the equipment in the boat, and went upstream on the Little Missouri until we reached the mouth of Terre Rouge Creek about a mile or more from camp. We set out our trot lines as we normally did. We would check them later after dark.

The return trip to check the lines was slower because it was dark. We had to watch for logs or debris floating down the river and also watch for the spots where we had placed our trot lines.

My father had a carbide lamp at that time. I haven't seen one in years. It was just a small lamp that used calcium carbide and water to produce acetylene gas. This gas produced a small flame which was reflected to make a light. These lamps were once used in mines and are still used by cave explorers.

As I said before, there was a small leak in the gas tank of the motor and my father was using the carbide light while operating the motor. You can guess what happened. The fumes ignited from the carbide lamp and the outboard motor burst into flames. There we were in the Little Missouri River about a mile from camp with our boat on fire.

Under the circumstances, there was only one thing to do. We had to abandon ship quickly and I didn't know how to swim. Fortunately, we were close to the edge of the river and the water was not too deep. As soon as we could, we managed to get the motor under

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water to extinguish the flames which resulted in having a boat full of water. During this process, we lost all our fishing tackle and several good catfish we had already caught. None of this mattered at the moment. We had to hold on to the boat because that was our only way back to camp.

We retrieved a bucket we could use to dip the water out of the boat. We noticed that our boat paddles had floated away but were caught on some bushes and we were able to reach them. After salvaging all we could and dipping most of the water out of the boat, we climbed aboard for our return trip to camp. Since we were upstream from the camp, we could let the current bring us down river and mainly use the paddle to guide us. There were some swift rapids downstream from camp, so we had to be sure we could reach the shore at our camp or we would be swept downstream through the rapids. We didn't need any more excitement on this fishing trip.

It took a while to float back to camp. We had no light to guide us and everything looked the same in the dark. We were soaking wet and feeling miserable.

We made it back to camp with no major problems. Our enjoyable fishing trip had not ended as we had planned. When we reached camp, we decided that home was where we needed to be. We were thankful that nobody was injured or drowned in this incident. I don't remember my father ever using a carbide lamp after that experience.

MID-WIVES SUPERSTITIONS (from the 5-7-1931 issue of The Prescott Daily News)

---Wild boar's teeth, fried rats, and hogs foot oil were sometimes used to chase away evil spirits.

---Running water, fire, and smoke had purifying powers against the demons that lie in wait.

---Three nails were sometimes driven into the door so evil spirits could not enter

---Mustard seed thrown on the threshold would keep out evil spirits.

---Gunpowder was sometimes given the laboring woman to help her along.

---Hanging a hornet's nest in the corner of the room would facilitate the birth.

ADVICE TO BOYS IN 1885 (from the Dec. 3, 1885 issue of The Nevada County Picayune)

Remember, my son, you have to work. Whether you handle a pick or a pen, a wheelbarrow or a set of books, digging ditches or editing a paper, ringing an auction bell, or writing funny things, you must work. If you look around you will see the men who are the most able to live the rest of their days without work are the men who work the hardest.

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Don't be afraid of killing yourself with overwork. It is beyond your power to do that on the sunny side of thirty. They do sometimes, but it is because they quit work at 6 p.m. and don't get home until 2 a.m. It's the interval that kills, my son. The work gives you an appetite for your meals, it lends solidity to your slumbers, it gives you a perfect and grateful appreciation of a holiday. There are young men who do not work, but the world does not even know their names; it simply knows them as "old so and so's boys". Nobody likes them; the great busy world does not know they are there. So find out what you want to do, and take off your coat and make a dust in the world. The busier you are the less harm you are apt to get into, the sweeter your sleep will be, the brighter and happier your holidays, and the better satisfied will be the world with you.

SHOT FROM BEHIND

(from the 2-26-1890 issue of *The Nevada County Picayune*)

Friday afternoon about 4 o'clock, Mr. Percy Upton, living on the old Joe White farm eight miles east of here, was shot down in cold blood by parties unknown. He was cleaning up a new ground, piling brush, etc., and his wife, who had brought him his dinner, was with him at the time. By means of brush heaps, a party had crept up to within twenty-five yards and while Mr. Upton's back was turned, fired a full load of buckshot, eight of which entered his back, two going through and lodging against the skin. He fell, and his wife, who was so excited that she could not think what had happened, rushed to his side, and the assassin escaped without being seen, in the same manner in which he had come.

Mr. Upton is a young man about 22 years old, and but recently married the daughter of a neighbor, Mr. John Crowell. Physicians were summoned, and it was thought the wound was fatal, but we learn from Dr. W. E. Arnold that it is possible he may recover. When last heard from, he was doing well with little bad indications of inflammation setting in.

Young Mr. Upton lives with his father, Mr. John Upton, an Englishman, who came to this county from Hempstead about a year ago, buying the farm from Rev. J. F. Lowdermilk. We learn a lawsuit about the place has engendered hard feelings, both Messrs. Upton, Sr. and Jr., having received threatening letters, telling them to leave the country. The Uptons are well regarded by neighbors generally, and forty or more men turned out Saturday to try and ferret out who did the shooting—all were indignant and shocked at the outrage. All our people deeply regret that so foul a crime has been committed, and will leave no stone unturned to catch and properly punish the criminal. Our efficient sheriff was on the ground Saturday morning, and hopes are entertained that he will follow all clues and soon jail the deep-dyed villain, who so wantonly shot the young man. For the present, we leave off rumors implicating anyone, awaiting further developments. As we go to press, Upton is getting along well, but his chances of recovery are slight.

Editor's Note: Evidently, Mr. Upton recovered from his wounds and lived another 37 years. The Uptons are buried at Bluff City Cemetery.

Percy C. Upton—born Aug. 6, 1870; died Apr. 22, 1927

Martha A. Upton—born Oct. 22, 1871; died Mar. 2, 1919

John Upton—born Nov. 27, 1834; died Feb. 4, 1908