

Jerry McKeiv's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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FAIRVIEW--A PRESCOTT LANDMARK

One of Prescott's most beautiful old homes is located near the intersection of Hwy. 24 and Cale Road. It's a little hard to see since it sits well off the road, but you will have no trouble picking it out. You don't see houses like this much anymore.

Betty Meeks wrote an excellent article about this home for *The Nevada County Picayune* back in 1976. She visited with the owner, Mr. Wells Hamby, and was given a tour of the home and some of the history of this elegant old home.



The home was designed in 1900 by a Little Rock architect for Mr. Hamby's father, Mr. C. C. Hamby who was a prominent Prescott lawyer. The Hambys had six children-- Randolph, Irma, Leonard, Helen, Wells, and Elizabeth. The house was designed to accommodate a growing family. It has fourteen rooms with four over-sized bedrooms, two halls (one upstairs and one downstairs), eight huge walk-in closets, 44 windows and six outside doors. The rooms have 14 foot ceilings which helped keep the house cool on hot summer days. It had four fireplaces

and two staircases. Many of these old homes had names and this one was called Fairview.

After Mr. C. C. Hamby's death in 1921, the house became the home of his son, Wells Hamby and his wife, Myra. It would be their home for the next fifty six years. Mr. Wells Hamby, you may remember, was one of the players on Prescott's first football team in 1911. He was a planter and the spacious grounds surrounding the house provided plenty of room for growing tomatoes for which Mr. Hamby was well-known. He constructed greenhouses and an irrigation system to water the plants.



The porch which almost surrounded the house was removed in 1952 because it had become unsafe and would cost too much to repair. After Mr. Wells Hamby's death in 1977, Mrs. Hamby sold the home to Bill Taylor of Prescott who renovated it and added central heat and air. Mrs. Hamby moved to her family's old home at Blevins. That house, the Stephens house, was donated after her

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death to the park at Old Washington and is now used as the park's headquarters.

The top picture on the previous page is the way the house looks now and after the Taylor's restored it. There is a widow's walk on the top by the chimney. The little space just above the front porch peak is a small balcony. The Hambys always put a Christmas tree there during the Christmas season.

There have been stories about this home being haunted, although the Hambys never saw any ghosts while living there. The story comes from an incident back in 1864 during the Civil War when soldiers were moving through the area. After the battle of Prairie De' Anne, the troops were moving toward old Moscow on their way to Camden. This was several years before the town of Prescott was incorporated.

According to the story, four Yankee soldiers were killed during a skirmish and were buried about where the house now stands. After the war, the government removed the bodies for burial in a federal cemetery. This story caused many to imagine the house might be haunted by the ghosts of these Civil War soldiers. Any old home that large might be a little spooky to small children and some adults. I recently watched a show about country singer Loretta Lynn talking about her home in Hurricane Mills, Tennessee. Her home has a similar story about Civil War soldiers associated with it and many unexplained things have happened there. Such stories are interesting to contemplate and large old homes like the Hamby house are the ideal setting for such stories.

Mrs. Irma Hamby Evans, a reader of *The Sandyland Chronicle* who now lives in Texas, grew up in this old home. I asked her to tell us what it was like living in such a large home. She writes:

I grew up in this house with my parents, my grandmother, my brother and sister. All four of the bedrooms were upstairs. My sister and I shared a large front corner room wall-papered with big red and pink roses, and we called it the "Rose Room". All the rooms in the house had high ceilings. There was no central heating, so each room in the house had a gas stove. Our "family room" was known as the "library" because it had a large built-in bookcase with glass doors. In the winter, a fire was built in that fireplace where we made popcorn in an old-fashioned long-handled popper and listened to the radio to 'Lum and Abner'. Our dad would read to us sometimes, and mother would sit with her sewing and fall asleep with the needle in mid-air. A TV came much later.

We had two staircases, each with a landing in the middle. The one in the front of the house was polished wood with an ornate railing. The back one was the one we used for everyday passage. It was just plain wood with no railing at all. I could run up and down it in the dark without looking.

I walked to grammar school up East Elm Street, through town and across the tracks. I walked to the Junior High School, now McRae and later to the high school around the corner from the house. Only on very rainy or cold days did our parents take us in the car.

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We had a large screened-in back porch with a seat swing, and a sink with cold water from a well. On hot days, we would set up a table and chairs to eat lunch there to escape the heat of the kitchen. The icebox sat out there, and the iceman would bring ice from the Cale Road which ran along one side of the house. We had a little square sign with numbers to show how many pounds to bring. It was a red letter day when we finally got a refrigerator that would make ice and ice cream in a big tray in the freezer part.

The long sidewalk from the front of the house all the way to the street was a favorite play area for us. We had roller skates with the clamps to hold them on, and we'd skate up and down the long slope. The main accomplishment was when we could do it backwards without falling off the side.

The huge wooden sliding doors connecting the parlor and dining room to the hall were a special feature. They were room high and would recess into the wall. The parlor was only used occasionally, and the dining room only for Christmas and Thanksgiving. We had a separate "breakfast room" off the kitchen; but when the family was smaller, we just ate around the kitchen table.

There were happy times in the parlor when we'd set up a Monopoly game and leave it for days or practice the piano. There was a sad time when my grandmother passed and they had her funeral in the parlor. I was in college by that time. I remember friends staying up all night for a wake and the room's being filled with friends and flowers at the funeral.

I would like to thank Mrs. Evans for sharing information about this old home. Anyone who would like to contact her may do so by emailing her at ievans@hal-pc.org

I like these old homes. They have "character" that is missing from most modern homes. They add charm to small towns and even in some places have become tourist attractions in some places. The city of Camden is well known for its historic homes, some dating back to pre-Civil War days.

It would cost a small fortune to build such a home these days. We need to enjoy them as long as we can, because they don't build houses like the Hamby home any more.



WHAT IS IT?

Some of you already know the answer. This picture was in a collection of old photos and I couldn't figure out what it was. The date on the picture was 1948. I showed it to several people and got all sorts of answers. Patricia Farr was pretty sure what it was and after some research on the Internet, I confirmed that she was right. Make your guess and then check page 7 for the correct answer.

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In 1951, the Chamber of Commerce had a slogan contest to come up with a slogan for Nevada County. The contest was open to all school students in the county. The slogan had to be four words or less and have something to do with trees. There were over 800 entries. Six students came up with the same winning slogan and had to split the \$50 prize money. The winning entry in the 1951 contest was –PINE TREE COUNTY.

This little clipping from an old newspaper was tucked inside my grandmother's old family Bible.

“Dear Teacher,” wrote an indignant mother, “you must not whack my Tommy. He is a delicate child and isn't used to it. We never hit him at home except in self defense.”

COMMENTS FROM READERS

I think I've been sitting here over an hour now, going through some of your old Sandyland issues. One was of particular interest to me, and that one was about "Old Mike" who I remember as "standing up" in the Prescott funeral home. I GUESS that's where he was standing. Several times, when I was very small and out around Prescott with my dad, he would take me by to see 'old Mike'. Since we moved to Louisiana before I was 4 years old, I was quite young when we made these visits, but I'll never forget them. I guess, at such a young age, I didn't know enough about death to question why this man - though dead - was still standing and in public view. I just enjoyed those outings with my dad and hated the tongue-lashing he got from Mother about taking me to see Old Mike.--- *Earlene Lyle*

Another great issue! Sorry I can't reply to the flour sack query. I've heard of them and my parent's generation used them. Guess I was fortunate I didn't wear flour sack dresses. Although I've seen some and they weren't bad...---*Teresa Harris*

Thanks for another good Chronicle. I really liked the memories of the fairs and parades. I remember riding on the DAR float one year in the '40's dressed as a colonial girl. And I actually won a ribbon for a doily I crocheted at the tender age of 10. My grandmother had taught me to knit and crochet and entered it for me. It's amazing now to remember what a big deal it was back then with so many people participating and the crowds gathered. You're right--I'm thinking that the lack of all the electronic entertainment we have now made us enjoy getting together and making our own fun and excitement.

I really liked the pictures, too. You are so creative to gather all this for us, and we readers are very appreciative.---*Irma Hamby Evans*

Had it not been for flour sacks and feed sacks my wardrobe would have been a lot sparser during my childhood. The fabric mills were making fabric for the military and stores were unable to get the material their customers needed for sewing. My mother made most of our clothes and she always checked all the stores when she went to [Prescott](#) to see if there was anything available. I remember her looking at bolts of material and saying that "you could throw broom straws" through some of it because it was so loosely woven. That also meant that it would probably shrink a lot when it was washed.

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Flour, corn meal, and sugar sacks were finely woven and many were turned into nice blouses and slips for me. They also made excellent kitchen towels because they were absorbent. Of course, they were all white and that didn't lend much variety to the wardrobe. The sugar sacks were small and the pattern had to be made up of a lot of little pieces but a twenty-five pound sack of flour made a decent piece of material. There are lots of quilts that have white sugar sack pieces in them.

I remember that if my dad were going to town to buy cow-feed, he was told to check for snag holes and he was to buy at least three sacks alike of feed--that meant a new dress for me--Mother needed four for hers. The cow-feed sacks were very good quality fabric or the feed would have sifted out during shipping. The sacks of feed were dumped into barrels and covered at our barn so that the barn rats wouldn't get a chance to chew through the material. The chain-stitching was unraveled and the sacks were washed, starched, and ironed "on the grain" so that they would be ready to cut as soon as Mother had the time to sew them.

Many women would carry their "odd" sacks when they went visiting to trade to get enough together for garments, curtains, quilts, pillowcases, men's underwear or some other creative endeavors.

My Grandma Morgan made me two stuffed dolls when I was a very little girl from sacks that had the doll printed on them. I do not know if they were flour, corn meal, or sugar sacks but suspect they were sugar since the dolls were only about twelve inches tall. The time period would have been the mid 1930's.

Many cartoonists portrayed the country bumpkin wearing the underwear with triple X's on the rump and I suppose that many people may have not liked wearing the clothing made of sacks, but since almost everyone I knew wore it, too, there was no stigma involved and the fabric in the bags was many times better than could be bought at the department store. Since so little fabric was coming to the stores, you frequently met others wearing the same fabric as your garment was made of whether it was from feed sacks or off the bolt.

Sometime along the way everything started being packaged in paper. Those were easy to dispose of and probably cost a lot less than cotton bags. Sure can't use them for anything else though!—*Betty Thomas*

Finding the picture of me back in the 1940s in a feed sack dress took a bit of looking. The design of the Indian chief on horseback was imprinted on a flour sack and embroidered by my mother, Myrtis Barham Jones. It was done at an earlier date than the dress.

I had two or three dresses out of feed sack (or flour sacks, I'm not sure which). One of the "rich" ladies at church asked my mother where she had gotten the nice linen dress for me.

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I really liked the dresses I had made from the feed sacks (or flour sacks). The one in the picture was with a white background with yellow flowers. I had another which I liked a lot which had a pink'ish' background with pink flowers and green leaves. It was two-piece.—*Mary Anna Scheie*



Here are some uses for cloth flour sacks taken from the poem “Remembering the Flour Sack” by Colleen Hauberk. You can read the poem on the Internet by searching for it by title.

The flour sack could be filled with feathers to make a pillow or made into a sleeping gown. It could be used to carry things, made into diapers, skirts, blouses, or slippers. It could be made into curtains to cover a window, used to strain milk, or as a signal to get someone’s attention. It could be used as a sling for a sprained wrist, to stuff a crack to keep out the cold air, or to dry the dishes. It could be made into a ghost for Halloween decorations or placed over a bowl of yeast dough during the rising process.

These are just a few uses for the cloth flour sacks. I’m sure there were many others. Feed sacks with colorful patterns could be made into quilts or clothing. Many of our ancestors even saved the twine from these sacks. I can remember my grandmother having balls of twine stored away in case she ever needed some string. People who lived in the country had to improvise. The option of running to the store for something you needed usually wasn’t an option for most folks.

Several years ago when I was doing research for my book about Goose Ankle, my neighbor told me a story she remembered from her school days at Bluff City. She said a young girl had choked on something while at school. This was before the days of the Heimlich maneuver for treating choking victims. Back then they usually just turned a kid upside down and patted them on the back until the object was dislodged. This was back in the days when people made their own clothes, including their underwear, from feed or flour sacks.

The object was dislodged satisfactorily in this case, but my neighbor said what made the situation funny was the writing visible for all to see on the girl’s underwear—100% Pure.

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The cloth flour sack has taken its place in history along with S & H green stamps and so many other things from the past.

Answer to What Is It?

This is a cowboy liquor decanter with four nip cups. It is about ten inches tall. The four cups were of different colors. Underneath the cowboy's hat is a cork stopper for the decanter. The item is listed on e-bay for \$105.

Some of the answers I received were: thimble holder, toothpick holder, holder for individual cream containers, a night light, and salt and pepper shakers.

PRESCOTT 100 YEARS AGO—NOVEMBER, 1911

---An article mentioned pilots dropping mail bags to the Ft. Smith post office from a height of 2000 feet. This was only the third time it had been attempted. The pilots held the bags in their laps and dropped them when over the intended target. One drop narrowly missed a group of men working nearby. (*Is this what they mean by "air mail"?*)

---Prescott had a club called the Self Culture Club

---A group of 32 men organized a club called the Prescott Club open to all males in the city limits.

---Prescott Hardware announced it had an air compressor in their garage which would eliminate the old hand pump.

WELL-KNOWN INDUSTRY IN SOUTHWEST ARKANSAS

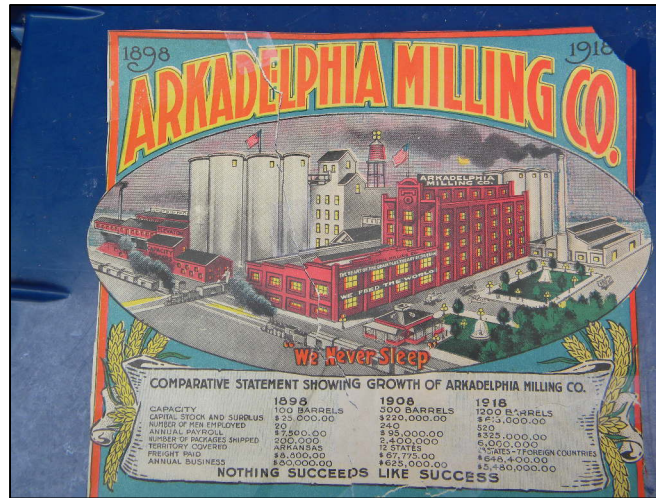
The Arkadelphia Milling Co. was an important industry in southwest Arkansas producing flour, corn meal, livestock feed, and barrel staves. The company began in 1898 with 20 employees and its sales territory covered the state of Arkansas. By 1918, the company had grown substantially, employing 520 workers with its products being sold in 25 states and seven foreign countries. It was one of the major customers of the Missouri-Pacific Railroad. The company went out of business in 1932, a victim of the Great Depression.

The company slogan was "The Heart of the Grain Plus the Art of the Brain". The company operated around the clock. Below is a drawing of the plant from an advertisement in 1918. On the side of the building is the company slogan along with the phrase "We Feed the World".

The Arkadelphia Milling Co. even did business in Bluff City. An item in the newspaper in 1910 states: "The Arkadelphia Milling Co. is doing a good bolt business in Bluff City, putting a lot of money into circulation. Bluff City looks like a regular bolt yard".

Stave bolts is a term that refers to short cuts of hardwood timber used in the manufacture of barrel staves. Staves are narrow strips of wood used to make wooden barrels. From the above description in 1910, we can conclude that there was some sort of wood yard in Bluff City at that time where these short logs were stored or maybe even made into barrel staves.

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One of the most popular products of the Arkadelphia Milling Co. was Dolly Dimple flour which was packaged in cloth sacks with instructions on how to make a doll from the flour sack. Here is a picture of what the sacks looked like. The self-rising flour came in a red stitch cambric sack while the regular flour came in a blue stitch sack.



Other brands sold by the company included Robin Redbreast Cream Meal, Butterfly flour, White Dove flour, and Jack and Jill flour. I'm sure that many of our ancestors were very familiar with the products of the Arkadelphia Milling Co. and many of the young girls prior to 1930 had Dolly Dimple dolls. These dolls are now collector's items.

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The Sandyland Chronicle strives to educate as well as inform. Just for fun, see how you do answering these 20 questions. Each question is worth five points. Grading scale is: A = 90-100; B = 80-90; C = 70-80; D = 60-70; Below 60 = not good (Answers on page 12)---Don't Peek



1. This is a picture of
 - a. the governor's mansion in Little Rock
 - b. The White House in Washington D. C.
 - c. Mt. Vernon—George Washington's home
 - d. the plantation house in the movie "Gone with the Wind"
2. Where is the Eiffel Tower located?
 - a. New York City
 - b. Paris
 - c. Chicago
 - d. San Francisco
3. The year 2011 in Roman numerals would be
 - a. XXCI
 - b. MMXI
 - c. DDXI
 - d. LLXI
4. Kale is
 - a. an animal
 - b. a mineral
 - c. a vegetable
 - d. there is no such thing
5. Which of the following is not an animal?
 - a. badger
 - b. ferret
 - c. cello
 - d. ermine
6. How many acres are in a section of land?
 - a. 1000
 - b. 5,280
 - c. 10
 - d. 640
7. Which of these president's faces is not carved on Mt. Rushmore?
 - a. Zachery Taylor
 - b. George Washington
 - c. Theodore Roosevelt
 - d. Abraham Lincoln
8. It is said that Alexander the Great wept after conquering a large empire. Why?
 - a. his favorite horse was killed in the battle
 - b. he had accidentally killed the woman he intended to marry
 - c. he had spent all of his money to finance the battle
 - d. there were no more worlds to conquer
9. The preamble to the United States constitution begins with this phrase
 - a. Oh, beautiful for spacious skies

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- b. Fourscore and seven years ago
- c. We have nothing to fear but fear itself
- d. We, the people of the United States

10. Which of these is not a reason for writing the U. S. constitution as given in the preamble?

- a. to give every citizen over the age of 18 the right to vote
- b. to provide for the common defense
- c. promote the general welfare
- d. insure domestic tranquility

11. According to the Declaration of Independence, all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. Which of these is not one of these rights?

- a. life
- b. pursuit of happiness
- c. the right to own property
- d. liberty

12. Which of these countries is north of the equator?

- a. Chile
- b. Argentina
- c. Australia
- d. United States

13. The longest river in the world is the

- a. Mississippi
- b. Nile
- c. Amazon
- d. Ganges

14. Which of these wars happened first?

- a. War of 1812
- b. Civil War
- c. Revolutionary War
- d. Mexican War

15. The inventor of the cotton gin was

- a. Eli Whitney
- b. Robert Fulton
- c. Thomas Edison
- c. Benjamin Franklin

16. The patriot who said "Give me liberty or give me death" was

- a. Paul Revere
- b. Thomas Paine
- c. Davy Crockett
- d. Patrick Henry

17. Which of these would hold the most shelled corn?

- a. bushel
- b. peck
- c. quart
- d. gallon

18. A distance of 5,280 feet would equal a

- a. fathom
- b. mile
- c. furlong
- d. yard

19. A large group of crows would be called a

- a. covey
- b. colony
- c. murder
- d. herd

20. The largest state in the United States is

- a. Wyoming
 - b. Alaska
 - c. Texas
 - d. Colorado
-

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Can you identify this?

This is from a chinquapin tree (sometimes spelled chinkapin) growing on our old home place at Bluff City. These trees were once common in this area, but most were killed by the blight back during the 1950s. The chinquapin is a distant cousin of the chestnut tree. The nut is smaller than chestnuts--about the size of a penny when ripe. The nuts can be eaten directly from the tree once the burr opens in late September or early October. The nuts are a favorite food for wildlife, especially squirrels.

Our chinquapin tree is about twenty feet high and maybe six inches in diameter. They rarely get above thirty feet tall. Most of the trees killed by the blight re-sprout from the stump, grow into small saplings, produce a few nuts, and then die from the blight once again. Most people who grew up after the 1950s have never seen a chinquapin tree and have never eaten this nut. I prefer pecans to eat, but chinquapins are another option if you are lucky enough to find one of these rare nut trees still producing these days.

QUESTION FOR NEXT ISSUE

Suppose you were given one wish in which you could bring back one thing from the old days that is no longer available. What would it be? I need your answers by Nov. 15th.

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Due to the extreme drought, the fall colors may not be too good this year in southwest Arkansas. The leaves of many trees, especially oaks, turned brown early this year. Just in case we miss out this year, I am including this picture I snapped last fall on a bright sunny day. This is a sugar maple tree that I planted a few years ago from a seedling I dug up in Missouri.

Sugar maple trees are not found in this area growing naturally, but can be purchased from nurseries (*and they are not cheap*). This is one of my favorite trees. Each tree seems to have its own personality. The color of the leaves in the fall depends on the soil in which it is planted. Most of them that I have transplanted here have golden leaves, but once in a while, one has vivid reddish-orange leaves like this one. I planted

this one on a hill overlooking the highway. Many people passing by have said how much they enjoy this tree every year. The only problem is the beautiful leaves only last a few days and then the show is over. We will not get to see the beautiful leaves on this tree this year. It is stressed from the drought and most of the leaves fell early. Maybe it will survive and give us a good show in the fall of 2012.

Answers to the test:

1. = C; 2. = B; 3. = B; 4. = C; 5. = C;
6. = D; 7. = A; 8. = D; 9. = D; 10. = A;
11. = C; 12. = D; 13. = B; 14. = C; 15. = A;
16. = D; 17. = A; 18. = B; 19. = C; 20. = B



See what you can do with those empty milk jugs!