

Jerry McKelvy's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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sandman43@att.net

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HANGING DAY IN PRESCOTT

There have been three legal hangings in Nevada County and a few that were illegal. One of the hangings followed a court case tried in Nevada County because of a change of venue from neighboring Clark County. The defendant was a man named Charles Clyburn who had been arrested for the murder of Deputy Sheriff Sol Rollins near Okolona in March of 1897.

Clyburn had recently escaped from the jail in Camden and was staying with family near Okolona. He was suspected of stealing some merchandise from a store and the depot at Okolona and the evidence collected pointed to Clyburn as the guilty person. A warrant was issued for his arrest. When Deputy Sheriff Rollins went to arrest him, he was not at home but the deputy met Clyburn on the road driving a wagon. When the deputy told him he was under arrest, Clyburn took his rifle and shot Deputy Rollins in the chest, killing him instantly.

Clyburn then went into hiding and a large group of men began an intensive search for him. Feelings were strong against Clyburn because of the killing. Clyburn managed to make it to a cave on the Antoine River where he hid out for a time. With some assistance, he managed to jump on a train headed south. He made it all the way to New Orleans where law enforcement officers identified him from wanted posters from Arkansas. They notified the sheriff of Clark County and he went to New Orleans, arrested Clyburn, and brought him back for trial.

Clyburn asked for a change of venue thinking he could not get a fair trial in Clark County and that request was granted. The trial was moved to Nevada County which attracted much attention from local residents as well as folks from Clark County.

Clyburn's trial was held less than a year after the crime was committed. When the judge asked the jurors for their verdict, they responded: "We, the jury, find the defendant guilty of murder in the first degree."

A motion for a new trial was denied, and the sentence passed: "It is adjudged by the court that the defendant be taken to the jail. . .until the thirty-first day of March, 1898, on which day, between sunrise and sunset, the sheriff of Nevada County shall hang him by the neck until he is dead."

Mrs. Irma Hamby Evans sent me the following newspaper clipping from the Nevada County Picayune that her mother had saved. The article was written by her uncle, Randolph P. Hamby, a long-time mayor of Prescott and a local historian.

The clipping tells about the remarks made by Charles Clyburn on the day of his hanging. He did not deny killing Deputy Rollins, but claimed it was in self defense. In those days, it was common for condemned persons to speak to the crowd before the hanging took place. Usually large crowds gathered to witness these hangings. Songs were sung and a preacher usually made some remarks also.

On the next page is the clipping from the newspaper about the hanging of Charles Clyburn at the court house in Prescott on March 31, 1898.

THURSDAY NOV. 4, 1965

NEVADA COUNTY PICAYUNE

Last Remarks Of Condemned Man

By R. P. Hamby

Several weeks ago I caused to be printed in this paper accounts of three legal hangings in Nevada County as well as the speech of Squire Smith, the negro who killed the Gleghorn brothers in 1906. Since then, through the courtesy of Mrs. Scott Hannah of RFD 1, I have secured a clipping from the Peoples Tribune, a Prescott newspaper in 1898 Mrs. Hannah's mother had preserved, giving an account of the hanging of Charles Clyburn at Prescott in 1898 for the murder of Sol Rollins, a deputy sheriff in Clark County, as well as his speech made just before he was hanged.

PAID THE PENALTY

Last Friday was hangman's day in Prescott and deputy sheriff Sol Rollins life was avenged in the hanging of Chas Clyburn in the court house yard. There were about 33 people present to see Clyburn

swing into eternity, not a quiver save the contraction of the muscles which always follow a sudden death and not a particle of pain. On the scaffold Clyburn had nothing to say only to tell his friends goodbye and expressed a desire that his wife be sent back to her father. When asked by a Tribune reporter if he had anything he wished published only shook his head but later said if he had said anything in his speech to hurt anybody's feelings he asked their forgiveness. Below is Mr. Clyburn's speech just as he spoke it from the courthouse balcony. The occasion being introduced by the Rev. Mr. Hawkins, pastor of the Methodist church of this place, in a pointed talk and an earnest prayer.

After reading the 18th chapter of Matthew, Mr. Clyburn said: "Kind people, I am not able to say very much. I will say one thing, if there is anybody here today that

I have ever done aught against, I ask you to forgive me. I forgive the bitterest enemies I have on earth. I feel that I have made peace with God. I am ready and prepared to go. One thing especially I will ask you to do for my sake, that it may benefit some of the young people, if not old, in days to come. It is this; the next general election I believe comes off in September. Every one that has a right to vote at the polls cast their vote against whisky. Vote it out of the state. It has been my ruin forever. It is the cause of my death this day. It is true I do not know whether it is right for me to say it or not, but I will say it anyway. I have been accused of many things that I am innocent of; God knows it in heaven. I have sinned against God; I have done things against my fellow-man that I should not have done or said and beg their forgiveness; and I feel in my heart that God has forgiven me all, and I hold nothing against a living soul on earth. It is true I had a hard name. I have been mis-

represented by the papers and the people of the country. God knows my heart and knows what is right and what is wrong; but I beg you all to take warning from me today that it may be of some benefit to some of these young people that are here. Shun bad company and leave whisky alone. It is not for me to say whether it is right for me to die or not. I went out this morning and looked at scaffold, the

first one I ever saw in my life. I am perfectly willing to walk on the scaffold and die for Jesus. I have a wife and two little children - baby boys - and I want to beg one and all to remember them in their prayers that they may meet me in heaven. She was not able to be here. I have not seen her and my children in over eleven months. I have here a lock of her hair which she sent to me and I will carry it to my grave. (Here he showed a lock of hair pinned over his heart.) God bless her and my babies. As for me being guilty of the charge that I am to die for today, God and the angels in heaven knows that I am as innocent of it as that little girl standing there. The angels know that I am not guilty of wilful murder. I don't deny killing the man. I killed the man but I done it in self defense to save not only my own life, but also my brother who is in Georgia now to join the army to fight for his country and may God let him return to his dear old mother and father once more. I have one dear uncle here today and one dear brother. My brother kissed me goodbye, told me he could not bear it any longer and promised to meet me in heaven, and God grant that he may. I have a dear sister and two brothers gone before. I hope they are in heaven waiting for me. I hope to meet them there and hope to meet all good people in heaven some day where there are no robbers and thieves there.

(Final remarks of Clyburn were a repetition.

By Mr. Clyburn's request a choir sang "Jesus Lover of My Soul" and when dismissed by the mini-

ster the crowd of more than 300 swarmed about to see the prisoner led to the gallows. The prisoner was courageous to the last and seemed to die with unassuming faith in the certainty of his salvation by Him who was led to the cross to die for all.

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One of the most difficult responsibilities of a governor of a state is setting the execution date of a criminal. Back in 1898, when Charles Clyburn was hanged, it was the responsibility of the county sheriff to carry out the execution. Charles Clyburn was sentenced to be hanged on the date set by the judge and Nevada County Sheriff Alexander P. Greer had the solemn duty to carry out the sentence.

Mr. Greer was 65 years old at the time of the hanging. He only lived a few more years, passing away in 1905. A friend of his, John Milburn, wrote an obituary for Mr. Greer that was published in *The Nevada County Picayune*. In his article he mentioned a discussion he had with Mr. Greer just after the hanging was carried out.

OBITUARY OF ALEXANDER P. GREER

Dec. 9, 1905 (Reprinted in centennial edition of *Nevada County Picayune* May 25, 1972)

Alexander P. Greer saw the light of this world April 26th, 1833 in Mecklinbury Co., NC. Therefore, when his death occurred at his home at Lackland Springs, Ark. Oct. 25, 1905, he was seventy two years, 5 months, and twenty-nine days old.

Mr. Greer came to this state from his native state in 1849, being a boy of 16 years old. He was a soldier in the Civil War between the states, having enlisted in Armstead's regiment, Topan's Brigade in 1862 and was a brave soldier until its close in 1865. It was the writer's lot to know Mr. Greer intimately for the last fifteen years, to know him was to admire and love him. He was a farmer by profession and followed this for a livelihood excepting the time in which he served four years as deputy sheriff under J. S. Regan and sheriff two years.

He made a good officer and a most excellent sheriff, was courageous, brave, and true. Nevada County never had a more competent sheriff than A. P. Greer. The writer got an idea of his fidelity in a conversation with him in the afternoon of the day in which Clyburn was hung., the executioner being Mr. Greer, who was then sheriff of this county. Clyburn's trial was transferred from Clark County to this county, and but for his general character, Clyburn would not have been convicted for murder in the first degree. Many thought and yet think Clyburn acted in self defense in killing Rollins, the officer who was trying to arrest him, the guns of each going off at about the same time.

The jury adjudged him guilty, however and the law said he must hang and Mr. Greer must do the hanging or resign his office. He was then a candidate for re-election and many of his former friends refused to support him in his second race for sheriff because he refused to violate his oath and shirk his duty as an officer of the law.

Mr. Greer did not hang Clyburn. The crime with which he was charged and convicted and the law did it. Mr. Greer was only an instrument of the law in its execution.

Many think for this Mr. Greer could not have been beaten for sheriff. The conversation which I have referenced took place between Prescott and Lackland in the evening of the day of this execution. We were in a buggy together on our way to Lackland, where my family then camped, and his lived. I asked him if he did not feel a little remorse of conscience over the work of the day and he said no, while he hated such things had to be done, he felt that he had only discharged

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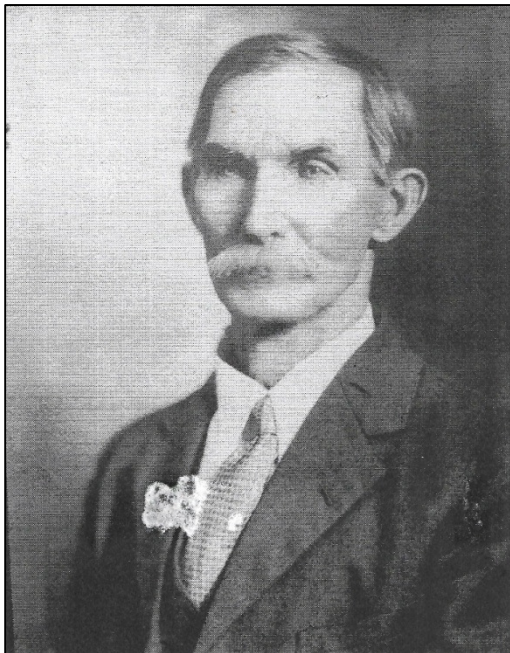
his duty; says he "John, I had to do a worse thing than that during the war, which worried me then and since. I had to go with others and by manual strength pull a man away from his wife and children and left them entreating and screaming not to have him shot, this man having violated the rules of war by stepping aside without leave of absence from the marching throng to see his wife and children from whence he had been separated for quite a while doing duty as a soldier for his country, his family only living a short distance from the road over which the army passed. This is some of the bitter fruits of war."

Mr. Greer said he came near refusing to obey this command of a higher officer at the risk of being shot himself.

I refer to these acts of his life to show the character of the man. No man was more tender in feeling, more kinder in disposition, and more charitable. In him the needy had a helper to the extent of his ability. He was a good citizen, a good father and husband, and a professed and consistent Christian.

His wife was a Miss N. C. Lee. She, who has long since preceded him, there being ten children born to them, 5 boys and 5 girls, all except four are dead. Two of these, John and N. C. Greer, live near Lackland, and the others are in Texas. All are honorable upright citizens and well thought of by those who know them. A good man has gone from among us, whose place will be hard to fill.

Jno. M. Milburn



Alexander Pringle Greer

One of the descendants of Alexander P. Greer sent me this photo of him. It turns out that Mr. Greer's son, John Greer, married my great aunt Hattie Mae McKelvy.

The Greer descendant also sent me her research file on the Greer family. Some of his relatives are buried in Bluff City Cemetery and Ebenezer Cemetery. Mr. Greer is buried at White Church Cemetery in Nevada County.

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THE ZAMA POST OFFICE

When I started doing research about our local area, I was intrigued by the name of a small post office about four miles south of Bluff City called Zama. It was just a small post office located inside a country store like many others. I learned that John G. Purifoy was the postmaster and storekeeper at Zama. I wondered why they chose the name Zama for a post office and I still don't have a good explanation for it. In ancient history, Zama was a place in northern Africa where a major battle was fought in 202 BC. That area is now known as Tunisia. Maybe somebody in Nevada County knew enough about ancient history to come up with that name for the local post office.

I recently discovered that the National Archives has put some information online about early post offices. When I checked about Zama, I found applications for the post office for the years 1886, 1889, and 1890. In order for a new post office to be established in those days, an application has to be filled out and examined by the postmaster of a nearby post office before being sent to the Post Office Department. One of the questions was what the new post office would be called. Other questions on the form included how far it was from an existing post office, the name of the nearest river, name of the nearest creek, the name of the nearest railroad, and the number of people to be served by the proposed post office. They also wanted a map showing the location of the proposed post office in relation to the rivers, creeks, railroads, and other post offices.

The application in 1886 for the Zama post office shows Miss Hattie J. Blake as the proposed postmaster and the form was sent to G. R. Blake. The Blakes lived where the State nursery is today. The location of the proposed post office was in the SE quarter of Section 16, Township 12 South, Range 20 West.

The 1889 application shows L. B. Moores as the proposed postmaster and shows the location of the post office to be in the NW quarter of Section 16 of Township 12 South, Range 20 West. That location is about where Dennis Plyler lives today which is probably where Mr. L. B. Moores lived at that time.

The 1890 application shows John G. Purifoy as the proposed postmaster and the location of the post office to be in the NW quarter of Section 28. That location was south of Ebenezer Cemetery on County Rd. 47 about a half mile from Hwy. 299 as the roads are numbered today. The hand drawn map with that application shows Zama in Section 16 and also in Section 28 with that location marked as "new".

Evidently, the post office called Zama was wherever the postmaster lived when the application was approved. It could have been in a small store or maybe even in the postmaster's home. John G. Purifoy had a store in Section 28 and the post office remained at that location until it was dissolved in 1909. All the early maps I have seen show that to be the location of Zama. Records show the Zama post office existed from 1887 to 1909.

All the applications were reviewed by R. W. Black, the postmaster at the Bluff City post office who certified that the information on the application was correct.

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Instructions were given on how to choose a name for a proposed post office. The name should be short and not resemble the name of any other post office in the state. Maybe that is why Zama was chosen. It was short and definitely an unusual name.

In April, 1894, the Post Office Department issued new instructions regarding naming of post offices. These instructions stated that after that date, only names with one word would be accepted. Exceptions would be if the name has some historical significance or was a name used locally by the people of the area. The Post Office Department reserved the right to accept or reject any name submitted.

Further instructions gave examples of names that were not acceptable because they could be confused with names of other post offices. Here is a list of unacceptable words that should not be used in the names for new post offices:

New	Hill	River
Old	Hotel	Run
East	Hollow	Ridge
West	Junction	Store
South	Mill	Station
Burg	Mound	Springs
Center	Peak	Town
City	Plains	Vale
Corners	Point	Valley
Creek	Port	Village
Crossroads	Prairie	
Depot	Rock	

It was suggested that the applicant submit several names in case the first one was not accepted.

I still do not know why Zama was chosen for the name of this post office, but at least now I know more about the process of how new post offices were established. The Zama post office was only about four miles from the existing post office at Bluff City, but riding a horse eight miles round trip to get your mail would be a hardship for many people. Mail in those days was usually delivered only twice each week.

Some of the other Nevada County post offices established about the same time include names such as Register, Wildcat, Theo, Weaver, Pink, Lyda, Irma, and Foss. It makes me wonder why some of those names were chosen. Some were named after people like Theo, Irma, and possibly Lyda. Names like Register, Pink, and Foss are just as much a mystery as the name Zama.

RAINFALL RECORD

Jan. (3.1 inches); Feb. (6.6 inches); Mar. (3.0 inches); Apr. (9.0 inches); May (7.9 inches); June (4.4 inches); July (3.7 inches); August (5.4 inches)

TOTAL JANUARY THROUGH AUGUST = 43.1 INCHES

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The Broadway Hotel Coffee Shop served Prescott for many years. The Coffee Shop opened in 1933 according to an article in *The Prescott Daily News*, although an advertisement says it opened in 1920. Maybe that's when the hotel opened. The hotel has been closed for some time and the coffee shop closed in 2015. It was renamed The Railroad Café for a short time before it closed. The coffee shop served meals continuously for at least 82 years making it one of the oldest restaurants in Arkansas. The hotel was featured on the annual Christmas ornaments from the Chamber of Commerce in 2011. The hotel and coffee shop buildings stand vacant today except for a flock of pigeons I see perched on the roof of the hotel in this photo I took a few days ago.



This ad for a special Sunday dinner appeared in the paper in 1951. It was a special meal celebrating the anniversary of the coffee shop under the current managers at that time, Mrs. Blaine G. Hays and Don Hays. For several years while they managed the coffee shop, they offered the anniversary meal each year for only one dollar. Roy Callicott was the previous manager of the coffee shop in 1947.

You may not be able to read the menu, but it sounds like a very good meal and the price included dessert and a drink. I expect the small coffee shop was filled to capacity when these anniversary meals were offered.

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Here's a little quiz for you. Do you know the middle names of our presidents? Here is a list of 18 of our presidents I picked from the list. Answers are at the bottom of this page, but I spelled them backwards in case you decide to peek at the answers.

1. William H_____ Harrison
 2. James K_____ Polk
 3. John F_____ Kennedy
 4. Chester A_____ Arthur
 5. William H_____ Taft
 6. Richard M_____ Nixon
 7. James A_____ Garfield
 8. Donald J_____ Trump
 9. Barak H_____ Obama
 10. Lyndon B_____ Johnson
 11. Dwight D_____ Eisenhower
 12. Ulysses S_____ Grant
 13. Rutherford B_____ Hays
 14. Warren G_____ Harding
 15. Franklin D_____ Roosevelt
 16. Gerald R_____ Ford
 17. Ronald W_____ Reagan
 18. William J_____ Clinton
-

A GOOD ONE

(from the 9-16-1909 issue of *The Nevada News*)

Fort Smith—There is nothing in a name if anyone may judge by the records of the divorce court. Here is an illustration of how things go:

Mrs. Mary M. Goode has just filed suit for divorce from Preston Goode on the grounds of desertion. It would appear that Mr. Goode had not been good to Mrs. Goode, although it is possible that Mrs. Goode was not good to Mr. Goode, and that in order to be good, he had to say good-bye forever. At any rate, the Goodes know that it is not easy to be good.

1. yrneh; 2. xonk; 3. dlaregztif; 4. nala; 5. drawoh; 6. suohlin; 7. marba; 8. nhoj; 9. niessuh; 10. seniab; 11. divad; 12. nospmis; 13. drahcrid; 14. leilamag; 15. onaled; 16. hplodur; 17. nosliw; 18. nosreffej