

Jerry McKelvy's  
**SANDYLAND CHRONICLE**

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## QUARANTINES

The current Covid-19 virus is probably the first experience many of us have had with quarantines and shutdowns to help stop the spread of a disease. Some are old enough to remember the dreaded disease polio which caused paralysis and primarily affected children. Many of us remember getting the polio vaccine in the 1950s.

We have had other bad diseases since 1900 that were of great concern to our ancestors. They dealt with these diseases in the best way they knew how with the limited medicines of that day. They knew the best way to prevent spread of a communicable disease was to keep the sick people separate from the healthy people. That involved the use of quarantines with strict enforcement of them.

## SMALLPOX

Smallpox was brought to this hemisphere by Spanish explorers and spread rapidly among the people with whom they came in contact. One web site I was reading says that smallpox probably killed more people than all other infectious diseases combined. It was responsible for about 300 million deaths world-wide. Smallpox could be spread by coughing, sneezing, and talking. A person was more likely to contract smallpox if they were in close contact with an infected person. Therefore, health officials warned about being within six feet of other people. Social distancing is not a new concept.

Prescott, Arkansas had several smallpox scares. The newspaper reported in 1908 that a man named Oliver Harrel had been quarantined in the pest house which was in a pasture west of town. The town officials met and decided a physician would be sent to attend to him and was authorized to make sure anyone exposed to the man stayed on their own premises.

I had never heard the term “pest house” before. According to *Wikipedia*, a pest house, plague house, or fever shed was a type of building used for persons afflicted with communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera, smallpox, or typhus. Often used for forcible quarantine, many towns and cities had one or more pest houses accompanied by a cemetery for disposal of the dead.

Pest house is short for pestilence house. A typical pest house might have several beds separated by temporary curtains. Men, women, and children were kept in the same building. A single caretaker took care of the patients in the pest house. This person was someone who liked to care for sick people and was immune to smallpox because they had survived the disease. The patients were kept fed, warm, and comfortable. A doctor checked on the patients and gave advice for their care. Volunteers would bring food or firewood to the pest house and leave it outside the door. There was no running water, so the caretaker had to draw water from a well, heat it on a wood stove, as well as keep a fire burning for heat in cold weather.

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About 30 percent of smallpox victims died from the disease and many who survived were left with severe scars. Patients were kept confined until it was considered safe to release them. I saw one report in the Prescott newspaper of a man who was released from quarantine after 37 days.

Prescott had another scare from smallpox in 1913. The Board of Health issued a quarantine against the state of Oklahoma and the towns of Blevins, DeAnn, Emmet, and Hope to prevent exposure to the citizens of Prescott. A special health officer was given authority to strictly enforce the quarantine which applied to a five-mile radius around Prescott. Anyone from those places who tried to come to Prescott must make an affidavit before a notary public that they had not been exposed to smallpox and then get a health certificate from a doctor before being allowed into Prescott. Anyone having the disease was to be placed in a pest house which was to be marked with flags and guarded.

All children entering school in the fall of 1913 at Prescott were required to be vaccinated against smallpox. Some residents were opposed to this law. Some thought the vaccinations might cause smallpox and some objected on religious grounds. Some parents kept their children out of school rather than have them vaccinated. The vaccinations given at that time were said to offer protection from smallpox for ten years. Some children complained of sore arms following the vaccinations.

### **DIPHTHERIA**

Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection that affects the mucous membranes of the nose and throat. In advanced stages, it can cause damage to the heart, kidneys, and nervous system. Even with treatment, it can be deadly, especially in children. It can be spread by coughing, sneezing, or coming in contact with open sores on an infected person. Diphtheria is rare in the U. S. today after the development of a vaccine and better living conditions, but in the early 1900s, it was a much-feared disease. It is estimated that in the 1920s there were between 100,000 and 200,000 cases with 13,000 to 15,000 deaths.

In early November in 1911, Prescott had eight cases of diphtheria within just a few days. The city officials met with doctors and made the decision to close the grammar and primary schools in town for at least 17 days. Sunday schools and all church services were closed. Special officers were employed to strictly enforce the quarantine. Five houses in town were identified as having cases of diphtheria and those were marked with yellow flags. At the end of the quarantine period, it was reported that that there were only two new cases and that none of those infected were dangerously ill.

A pamphlet from 1880 in the state of Michigan on how to care for patients with diphtheria states that the patient should be confined to one room with one or two caretakers. The room should be cleared of all needless clothing, rugs, drapery, and bedding that might harbor disease. A liberal amount of fresh air should be allowed into the room but not directly on the patient. Sunshine directly on the patient is advised. Any

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discharges from the mouth, nose, or throat should be wiped with a soft cloth and the cloth promptly burned.

Immediately after a death from diphtheria, the body was placed in a coffin not to be opened for viewing. Only a very few people and no children were allowed to attend the funeral. The room where the patient had died was fumigated. This was done by burning a sulphur compound in the room for several days or by a gas made from compound of manganese covered with muriatic acid with the doors tightly closed. All bedding, rugs, curtains, and clothing were burned.

## MENINGITIS

Prescott was also hit with a meningitis outbreak in early 1912. This was another serious disease. There were scattered cases all over Arkansas and a very heavy outbreak in Texas. Six families in Prescott were affected with the disease and several died from it. The disease affected both young and old. The Nevada County sheriff, D. L. Dillard and his young son, contracted the disease. The sheriff recovered from it, but his young son died.

In February of 1912, the local Board of Health made the decision to close all schools, moving picture shows, Sunday schools, and any public gatherings for a period of two weeks. Residents were advised to spray their nose and throat three times a day with diluted hydrogen peroxide, glycythymoline, listerine, or parturine followed by an oily substance like chloratone inhalant. This would not destroy the germs, but was believed to wash them out and possibly prevent infection. After being dismissed by a physician, those having had the disease were quarantined for a period of two weeks and each house was fumigated.

I found an interesting report from embalmer J. D. Cornish at the end of 1912 in which he detailed deaths in Prescott for the year 1912. Despite the meningitis outbreak in early 1912, his report showed that Prescott was a very healthy place to live. Here is his report broken down by race:

	WHITE	NEGRO
Total Deaths	31	32
Meningitis	6	4
Pneumonia	4	2
Dropsy	0	9
Appendicitis	1	0
Old Age	1	2
Congestion	3	0

Only 60 or 2% died from any disease in 1912 out of a population of 3,000 in Prescott. The meningitis outbreak was the most serious disease that year and only one-third of one percent died from it.

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## **INFLUENZA**

The Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 affected countries all over the world. The disease killed about 50 million people world-wide, 675,000 Americans and about 7,000 in Arkansas. In October, 1918, the Arkansas state board of health announced the most sweeping quarantine ever in Arkansas. Every school, moving picture theater, church, and any place of public assembly was ordered closed until further notice. No person under the age of 18 could board any street car, bus, or train unless they had a job. It was unlawful to congregate on streets, in department stores and other businesses, lodges, and clubs. Any student living in a college dormitory or a boarding house was not allowed to leave the building if someone in the building contracted influenza. In Arkansas, all public funerals were prohibited. Only immediate family members, the preacher, and the undertaker were allowed.

Wearing of masks was recommended back in 1918, but not everyone complied. Some thought the government forcing them to wear a mask was violating their personal freedoms. Some cities passed laws requiring masks and those not wearing them were fined. Other places only required masks for those in direct contact with a sick person. Men were more reluctant to wearing masks than women. Some men considered it to be too feminine. Many didn't wear their mask correctly and some masks were not made of the right materials, but anything used was considered better than nothing. One of the main problems with the men wearing masks was that many of them poked a hole in the mask so they could smoke while wearing it.

Another problem back in 1918 was the habit some men had of spitting on the sidewalk. This practice was believed to help spread the disease as people's shoes came in contact with the spittle on the sidewalks. Spittoons were common in barber shops in those days, so men were accustomed to spitting while chewing their tobacco.

The strict quarantine lasted about one month and then it was gradually lifted. The disease was said to be under control but not completely gone. Everyone was warned to take precautions. Lodges and clubs were allowed to re-open. Libraries could open but only for adults. Retail stores were to remain closed except they could open on Saturday evenings. Colleges could resume classes but only in buildings with no influenza.

## **POLIO**

Polio was another much-feared disease that caused paralysis and death. A polio epidemic in New York City in 1916 resulted in 2,000 deaths. The disease was more prevalent in the summer months. Parents were warned to not let their children swim or play in bodies of water during the hot summer months. Many cities issued quarantines ordering all children under 12 years old to remain at their homes. Pregnant women were advised to also stay at home. Outbreaks of polio continued for many years in various parts of the country. Even President Franklin D. Roosevelt contracted the disease but kept it secret from the public while he was in office. Finally, in the early 1950s, Dr. Jonas Salk came up with a vaccine to prevent the disease and after the vaccine was approved,

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children all across America lined up at schools and other places to receive the polio vaccine.

I don't know of any quarantine for polio in Nevada County, but there were some cases of polio in the county.

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In addition to these major diseases, our ancestors had to contend with other communicable diseases like measles, scarlet fever, typhoid fever (slow fever), mumps, whooping cough, and others. The old newspapers reported on how communicable diseases were handled in the larger cities, but very little was mentioned about how cases were handled in the small communities and rural areas.

In recent years we have heard about other bad diseases like Ebola, SARS, and various new strains of influenza. This current Covid-19 virus is similar to the Spanish flu of 1918 since both affected the whole world, spread very rapidly, and both caused a large number of deaths. One thing different about this virus is that it can be spread by people who exhibit no symptoms according to the experts. That makes it much more difficult to control. We now have about 90,000 deaths in America from Covid-19 and it's not over yet. Much will be written about this pandemic and how we reacted to it. Quarantines and temporary shutdowns are sometimes necessary, but this is the first time we shut down our entire economy for such a long period of time.

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## RAINFALL RECORD

April was another wet month. Here are the monthly totals for the first four months at my house---January (7.5 inches); February (7.7 inches); March (7.8 inches); April (10.4 inches). That's 33.4 inches. Normal annual rainfall for our area is 52 inches.

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My step-mother is now 91 years old and is in a nursing home. She has dementia and can no longer take care of herself. She was always a hard worker. We lived on a farm and there was always some type of work to be done. We usually had about twenty-five head of cattle to take care of plus we grew vegetables for our own use and other produce to sell. My dad also hauled pulpwood for many years.

Besides being a housewife, she was involved in all activities on the farm and could do any job about as well as any man. I was recently going through a bookcase in her house, throwing away some old magazines and other things we no longer needed when I found an old yellow legal pad containing the following hand-written story she had written. I don't remember the incident she describes in the story nor do I have any idea of when it happened. I know she was always looking out for all the animals on our farm and would not have hesitated checking out something unusual involving one of her cows.

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## **BESSIE'S CALF** **By Vernell McKelvy Loe**

It was the fifth of December and the weather was nice and warm. It was not our ordinary weather for this time of the year. The leaves were just about gone from an early frost.

I stood looking out the window while washing dishes. I had gotten up at five o'clock, cooked breakfast for my husband, and he had gone to work.

I heard Old Bessie bawling as she came through the gate. She was walking slowly and looking very upset. She came close to the house and then went back the way she had come. She was still bawling.

I knew something was wrong. She had given birth two days before to a baby calf and the calf was not with her. My curiosity got stronger and I decided to follow Bessie to find out what was bothering her.

I put on my boots and sweater and I got my gun and followed her. She went across a field and down a road to the hay field past the persimmon tree and through a pine thicket. She turned back to the woods and down a steep hill and crossed a branch of water, up a steep bank, and into a thicket with a small clearing and then she stopped. She looked all over the place, still bawling as if her heart would break.

There was a place where she had slept and where the baby had slept also. The baby was nowhere to be seen. I looked all around some more and then started back to the house. Bessie started back down the trail, still bawling.

After about fifty feet down the trail, I decided to go back and see if I could find out what had happened to the baby calf. After searching all over the place, I found where something had been dragged across the dry leaves. I followed the trail. It led to a ravine about seven feet deep. There was a big oak tree at the head of the ravine. Roots from the tree had covered a large place across the ravine. Water had washed out a hole under the roots making a cave under the roots and back under the ground.

I was beginning to worry what I was getting into. There was a round hole in the middle of the roots in the ravine. There was fresh blood all around the hole where something had been dragged down the bank and through the hole.

I had seen a wolf in the field when I came down there. I could see nothing moving. Then I saw a spider web hanging down and it was moving back and forth as if a breeze was blowing. There was no wind blowing and there was no noise from the hole.

Bessie had gone back to the house again. Getting my courage up, I loaded my .270 rifle and slid down into the ravine below the roots trying to be as quiet as possible.

There was no sound at all from the cave. I looked into the cave and could see a little ear close to the spider web. I decided to get closer and could make out the little calf's

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head. I decided if there was anything in there with the calf, it would be moving around. I reached in and got hold of one ear and pulled it out a little and then got hold of the other ear and pulled the calf out from behind the tree roots. My gun was ready and close by.

The calf was as quiet as a mouse. She never moved or tried to run or anything. She seemed as if she was hypnotized. I managed to get it up the edge of the bank. I laid the gun up on the bank and crawled up a piece until I could move the calf up on top of the bank.

After getting out, I looked at the calf. After examining her, I saw that there were two slashes down her back and two deep holes on each hip just above the tailbone. She had been bitten by something high on her back, but the teeth did not sink into the flesh, but had made the gashes down the calf's back as is had tried to run.

I couldn't carry a gun and the calf, so I laid my rifle on the bank and picked up the calf and carried her about twenty-five feet. Then I would lay her down and rest. I made it across the branch and up the bank of the other side when I heard Bessie coming back still bawling.

After putting the calf down, I began to make a noise like a baby calf. Bessie came running as fast as she could. When she got close enough to see her baby, she stopped and bawled again. It was the first time the baby had moved. Up she jumped and ran to Bessie and began to nurse.

I drove her and the baby back to the barn and kept them up for a while. I put some antibiotic salve on her back and she healed up really fast.

She was named Wolfie because of the encounter with the wolf, for I'm sure that is what had pulled it down into the ravine. Why it had not killed the calf has me puzzled to this day.

Bessie's calf lived a good life after her ordeal. She grew really fast. Had it not been for Bessie's persistent bawling, I would not have investigated the situation, and Wolfie would have died in that cave behind the tree roots.



**This shows both sides of wooden fold-up ruler. What is it used for?**



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## **D-A-D Acrostic Dictums**

An acrostic is generally a poem or phrase in which the first letters spell out a word. It's Fathers' Day! How many of these old sayings apply to you? How many apply to your dad? Acrostics were created by Don Mathis; axioms were written by children and fathers across history.

### **Don't Ask Dad**

He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it. – Clarence Budington Kelland

### **Daughters Are Different**

There's something like a line of gold thread running through a man's words when he talks to his daughter, and gradually over the years it gets to be long enough for you to pick up in your hands and weave into a cloth that feels like love itself. – John Gregory Brown

### **Divisions About Daddies**

There are three stages of a man's life: He believes in Santa Claus, he doesn't believe in Santa Claus, he is Santa Claus. – Author Unknown

### **Directly After a Deity**

Directly after God in heaven comes a Papa. – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

### **Delectation At Detecting**

Blessed indeed is the man who hears many gentle voices call him father! – Lydia M. Child

### **Docious And Ductile**

A truly great man never puts away the simplicity of a child. – Confucius

### **Display A Demeanor**

Father of fathers, make me one, A fit example for a son. – Douglas Mallooch

### **Desires About Devices**

The child had every toy his father wanted. – Robert C. Whitten

### **Destiny Always Descends**

Every parent is at some time the father of the unreturned prodigal, with nothing to do but keep his house open to hope. – John Ciardi

### **Details About Development**

I didn't know the full facts of life until I was 17. My father never talked about his work. – Martin Freud (son of Sigmund Freud)

### **Did And Didn't**

Fathers send their sons to college either because they went to college, or because they didn't. – L.L. Hendren

### **Duty At Death**

In peace the sons bury their fathers, but in war the fathers bury their sons. – Croesus

### **Duplicate After Development**

Middle Age At forty-five, What next, what next? At every corner, I meet my Father, My age, still alive. – Robert Lowell

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## **Division Across Decades**

His father watched him across the gulf of years and pathos which always must divide a father from his son. – John Marquand

## **Defect After Design**

The fundamental defect of fathers is that they want their children to be a credit to them. – Bertrand Russell

## **Discern A Double**

A man knows when he is growing old because he begins to look like his father. – Gabriel García Márquez

## **Duty As Defender**

I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection. – Sigmund Freud

## **Difference At Daylight**

All fathers are invisible in daytime; daytime is ruled by mothers and fathers come out at night. Darkness brings home fathers, with their real, unspeakable power. There is more to fathers than meets the eye. – Margaret Atwood

## **Describe Any Dependence**

Perhaps host and guest is really the happiest relation for father and son. – Evelyn Waugh

## **Determined About Development**

My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it. – Clarence B. Kelland

## **Desire A Duplicate**

A man's desire for a son is usually nothing but the wish to duplicate himself in order that such a remarkable pattern may not be lost to the world. – Helen Rowland

## **Dispel Any Doubts**

My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me. – Jim Valvano

## **Down-to-earth And Dependable**

My best training came from my father. – Woodrow Wilson

## **Deserving And Delighting**

Be kind to thy father, for when thou wert young, Who loved thee so fondly as he? He caught the first accents that fell from thy tongue, And joined in thy innocent glee. – Margaret Courtney

## **Don't Allow Discouragement**

None of you can ever be proud enough of being the child of such a father who has not his equal in this world-so great, so good, so faultless. Try, all of you, to follow in his footsteps and don't be discouraged, for to be really in everything like him none of you, I am sure, will ever be. Try, therefore, to be like him in some points, and you will have acquired a great deal. – Queen Victoria

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## **Dads Are Different**

For rarely are sons similar to their fathers: most are worse, and a few are better than their fathers. – Homer

## **Discover A Dictum**

It's only when you grow up, and step back from him, or leave him for your own career and your own home -- it's only then that you can measure his greatness and fully appreciate it. – Margaret Truman