

Jerry McKelvy's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

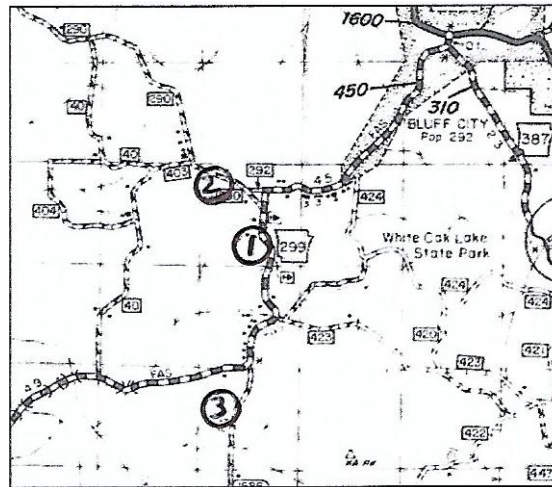
Vol. 22 – No. 3

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March, 2022

ZAMA

An old community
In
Nevada County, Arkansas



Zama was the name of a post office about four miles southwest of Bluff City. The actual location of Zama depends on the year. The post office existed from 1887 to 1909 and there were three different locations for the post office (see map). Post offices in those days were usually in the postmaster's home or at a country store.

The first application for a post office was dated 9-18-1886. The location was given as the SE ¼ of Section 16, Township 12 South, Range 20 West. The proposed postmaster was Miss Hattie J. Blake. That location is across from the Arkansas Forestry Commission nursery about where the old Barlow house is today. That property was owned by the Blakes at that time. The application stated that the post office would serve from 80 to 100 people.

The next application is dated 8-29-1889. The location is given as the NW ¼ of Section 16, Township 12 South, Range 20 West. The proposed postmaster was L. B. Moores.

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This office was probably in his home. That location was just east of the old Gum Grove church site about where Dennis Plyler lives today. The application stated the office would serve about 125 people.

The third application is dated 11-25-1890. The location is given as the NW ¼ of Section 28, Township 12 South, Range 20 West. That location is about a half mile off Hwy. 299 on County Rd. 47 (shown on early maps as Kirk Rd.). The proposed postmaster was John G. Purifoy and the office was to be located in a country store. That is the last location of the Zama post office and that is the location shown on maps dated during that time period. The application stated the office would serve about 200 people. Hand-drawn maps with other post office applications show the Zama post office being located on the west side of the public road. The timber was recently cut leaving a couple of hardwood trees next to the road. I believe this was the location of the Zama store and post office.

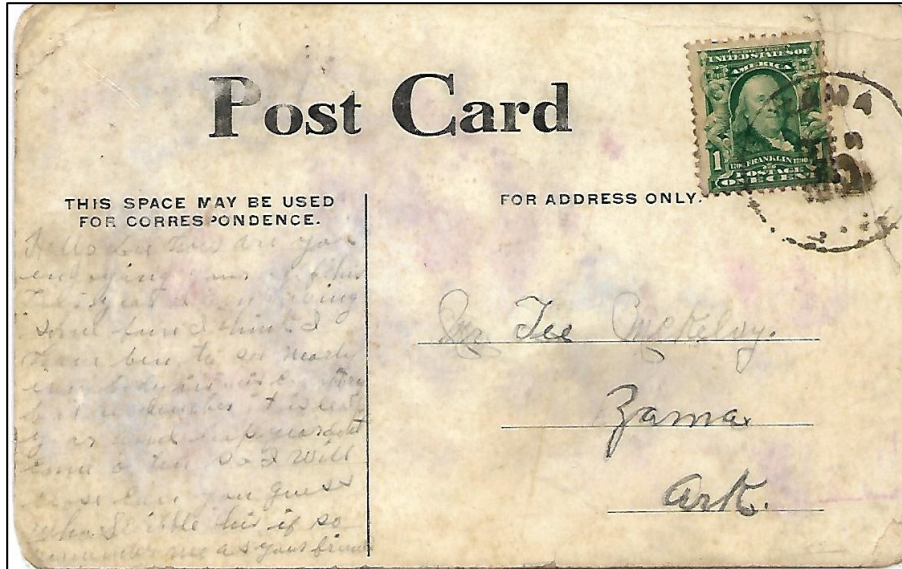
Zama is mentioned as a stop for the tax assessor and tax collector as they traveled around the county assessing and collecting property taxes. Since travel to Prescott was a problem for people in those days, these officials traveled around the county to make it more convenient for the people to assess and pay their taxes.

My grandparents and other family members in the Rocky Hill community got their mail at Zama and some of their old letters have the Zama post mark. I was told that some pronounced it as "Zamer" instead of Zama and that someone usually rode to the post office on horseback to get their mail since rural home mail delivery had not yet been started.

The last location of the Zama post office is the same place my great-great grandfather, Jabez McKelvy settled when he came to Arkansas from Georgia in the 1850s. When I was a teenager, I plowed some of that land with our little Farmall Cub tractor not realizing that it was the same land my great-great grandfather had farmed about a hundred years earlier. At least I had a tractor to use instead of following a horse or mule.

It is not known why they chose the name Zama for the post office. The Battle of Zama was a famous battle fought in 202 B. C. in what is now Tunisia. Maybe that's where they got the name. The Post Office Departments required new post offices to have a unique name to avoid confusion with other offices with similar names.

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A post card mailed to Mr. Lee McKelvy of Zama. Postage was one cent.

I only found three local news columns from Zama in the Nevada County Picayune, all from 1908. I scanned the old papers and found the following references to people who once lived in the Zama community. Some lived several miles from the post office and were considered to be from Zama because they received their mail from the Zama post office.

1887 – the first time Zama is mentioned in the newspaper

1888

Feb. 15 –death of Mrs. G. R. Blake. She died at her son’s residence near Zama on the 6th.

Oct. 1 – J. B. Crossland of Zama subscribed to the newspaper.

Nov. 21 – Proposed postal route announced from Prescott via Carouse, Lackland, Bluff City, Zama, Caney, Honeaville, and back to Prescott

1889

Jan. 16 – The tax collector will be at the Zama post office

Aug. 7 – Prof. James G. Hill of Zama is mentioned

1890

Jan. 1 – H. T. Barksdale and J. M. Jetton of Zama are two of Nevada County’s best citizens and successful farmers.

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Apr. 2 – Mrs. Susan E. Otwell died at her home near Zama March 20 at age 78.

Sep. 25 –Miss Hattie Blake of Zama is mentioned

Nov. 13 – C. H. Fields, colored, of Zama subscribed to the newspaper

1891

Jan. 22—A. F. McKelvy of near Zama is one of our well-to-do and successful farmers.

Feb. 26 – J. G. Purifoy, the Zama merchant

No papers available from 1892 to 1906

1907

Aug. 2 – Hon. J. W. Whaley of Zama is mentioned

Sept. 12 – J. M. Hardwick of Zama is mentioned.

Nov. 2 –Ike Tunnell of Zama has scarlet fever in his family

Nov. 28 – S. R. Johnson of Zama is mentioned.

1908

Jan. 9 -- A. F. McKelvy and W. F. Otwell mentioned

Jan. 22 – Marriage license issued to Miss Hattie Blake of Zama and Mr. Joe Rhodes of Morris

Feb. 13 – Will Irvin of near Zama

Feb. 19 – J. S. Martin. Formerly of Zama, now of Bodcaw

Feb. 25 –John Hall of Zama mentioned

Apr. 2 –Willie Haddox of Zama mentioned

May 12 –Lee Moody of Zama mentioned

May 21 – Mrs. Johnson of near Zama died and was buried at Friendship.

May 27 –First local news column from Zama community

July 21 – Miss Sue Whaley of Zama leaving for Clark County where she will teach

Aug. 31 – A. C. Tunnell, son of Ike Tunnell, left to go to Peniel, Texas

Sept. 19 – Miss Elma Cross of Zama leaving for Texarkana where she will attend school

Oct. 1 – Lee Moody's barn burned after being struck by lightning

Dec. 18 – J. A. Parker of Zama mentioned

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Dec. 31 – John P. Otwell mentioned

1909

Jan. 7 – Mr. and Mrs. Bert Smith of Zama mentioned

Feb. 8 – The Zama post office will be abolished unless someone volunteers to serve as postmaster. Mr. J. G. Purifoy, recently appointed as postmaster, failed to make his bond.

Feb. 17 – Oscar Johnson of Zama in Prescott selling cotton

Feb. 17 – Gus Ammons of Zama married to Miss Shipp of Rosston

Feb. 18 – Mrs. Ella Mayberry of Zama mentioned

1910

Feb. 18 – J. G. Purifoy has sold his home and will soon move his stock of goods to Chidester.

Sept. 24 – Tom Martin of Zama died at his home

1916

Oct. 24 – Raymond McIntyre of Zama was in Prescott selling cotton

Nov. 15 – Newt Kirk of Zama was trading in Prescott

Nov. 18 – Aubrey Barlow, a prominent young man of Zama

Nov. 21 – Wras Beaver of Zama in town selling cotton

1918

Aug. 24 – Henry Irvin of Zama is mentioned

1921

Feb. 24 – Mr. and Mrs. Ike Tunnell returned to their home at “old Zama”.

June 16 – J. M. Bevill of “old Zama” is mentioned

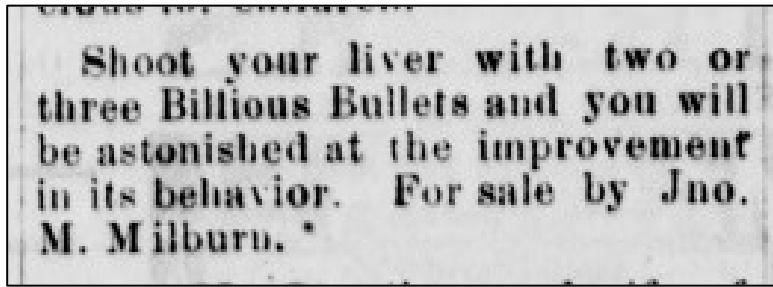
The closing of the post office at Zama in 1909 officially brought Zama to an end as a Nevada County landmark, but the name was continued for a few more years.

RAINFALL RECORD

I only received 8 tenths of an inch of rain at my house in January.

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BILLIOUS BULLETS



An ad from 1887 for Billious Bullets for the liver.

A WORD NO LONGER USED

PERAMBULATE -- to travel over or through on foot; stroll

Examples of this word being used (from the Nevada County Picayune)

1884—A blind lady with a little girl leading her was perambulating our streets Tuesday soliciting contributions.

1885—Dr. L. J. Gillespie of Emmet was perambulating the streets of Prescott Saturday.

1918—J. A. McKissack of Rosston was perambulating around town Saturday.

In Britain, a baby carriage was once called a perambulator.



Henry and Dester Jones' store at Bluff City on Hwy. 24 (Photo taken 1993)

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March is National Caffeine Awareness Month. Coffee can provide a jolt of energy throughout the day but it may not be offering the perk it once did. Some people may build up a tolerance to caffeine and require more to feel the same boost. When our blood pressure rises, or sleeplessness creeps into our bed, or stomach acid bothers us, maybe it's time to lay down that pick-me-up. Savor this poem as you savor your next cup of coffee.

Cup Runneth Over – Don Mathis

When I was a little pup,
Grandma would splash coffee in my cup
of milk and I would drink it up.

One of the things she'd enjoy most
was to take a piece of toast
and 'baptize' it in Maxwell's roast.

As she sat there drinking
her coffee, her eyes twinkling,
God knows what she was thinking.

It was almost like a ritual,
partly habit, partly mystical,
down to earth, but also spiritual.

Now I'm old but I can see
how that kind of memory
has helped define the present me.

As I grew a little older
I liked my coffee a little bolder
and soon I left my brand of Folgers.

I'd run it through the filter twice
just to make it hot and nice,
but still the taste would not suffice.

I would grind the beans a little rough
but I just couldn't get enough
so I tried that espresso stuff.

I knew it was probably wrong
to like my coffee super-strong
so it wasn't very long

I began to see little critters
running around with caffeine jitters
after drinking about three liters.

One side effect from my fixation
on the pleasures of caffeination
was my favorite hallucination.

Sometimes the cup itself
would hop down from the shelf
with the legs of a tiny elf

And fill itself from the coffee pot,
nice and steaming, screaming hot,
and then it would actually trot

With style, elegance, and flair,
leaping wild without a care,
my cup runneth over to my chair!