

Jerry McKeelvy's
WAY BACK WHEN

September, 2023

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Email ---- sandman43@att.net

EARLY HISTORY OF LANEBURG

Laneburg is a small community located about six miles south of Prescott, Arkansas. A reporter from the Arkansas Gazette traveled through Nevada County in 1885 and reported that there was a new post office called Lanesville that had just been established. That's the only reference I could find using the name Lanesville, so I think the reporter may have made a mistake in his article. The earliest post office records used the name Laneburg, although in some of the records, it is spelled Laneburgh.

Here are a few items taken from The Nevada County Picayune for the years 1886 to 1892:

December, 1886

Laneburg had a local news column in the paper called "Laneburg Leaflets"

February, 1887

Messrs. J. W. Hudson and G. W. Munn are two of Laneburg's best citizens and mill men.

August, 1887

W. C. Halbert has opened a school at Laneburg with 76 pupils.

October, 1887

The town of Laneburg was named for B. T. Lane, a prominent citizen, storekeeper, and postmaster.

October, 1888

A farmer's coop store is being planned for Laneburg operated by The Wheel, a farmer's organization.

December, 1888

Eggs are selling for 17 ½ cents per dozen.

A traveling photographer has been in Laneburg for a few days.

B. T. Lane advertises that his store is the place to go for Christmas gifts. He has 1000 pounds of candy in stock. He also advertised canned goods and staple and fancy groceries.

Each year Mr. Lane made a trip to St. Louis to purchase stock for his store and had it shipped to Prescott by rail. He then had to transport it to Laneburg by wagon. This was the way most merchants got their merchandise in those days before delivery trucks.

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January, 1889

B. T. Lane reports that he lost \$250 when someone took it from under his head while he slept.

February, 1889

B. T. Lane is building a new home at the location where his store burned and plans to build a new store soon.

March, 1889

Messrs. James Lee and John Harris, blacksmiths and wood workers, have a new shop at Laneburg.

Laneburg continues booming. Her merchants are selling lots of goods at unheard of prices. If we had a railroad, no telling what a burg we might have someday.

April, 1889

Laneburg has the big Farmers Trade Union store and two others—Lane and Hudson and Evans and East which is a new store.

Laneburg has no school at this time and we have more kids of school age than any town except Prescott. We need a school.

June, 1889

W. C. Halbert has opened a school at Laneburg.

January, 1890

A Missionary Baptist church has been constituted here with 13 members. It will be known as Laneburg Church. The top floor of the two-story building will be used by the Masons.

April, 1890

B. T. Lane is again our postmaster.

June, 1890

James Hill is our new teacher.

October, 1890

Dr. W. A. Hitt will locate here.

Laneburg has a newspaper called the Laneburg News by W. E. Sutton. It is a two-column paper six by nine inches. It has no subscription price.

May, 1891

Herbert Bulloch offers his services at a tonsorial artist on Saturday evenings.

July, 1891

Prof. P. M. Honea is the principal of our school. He had 30 pupils the first day.

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September, 1891

A baseball club has been organized here.

December, 1891

J. P. Jones has bought the Farmer's Trade Union store

February, 1892

The young men of Laneburg have organized a literary club which will meet each Saturday night.

There were many complaints during these years about the condition of the road across the Terre Rouge creek bottom which made it difficult for the people of Laneburg to get to Prescott. A petition was circulated to move the county seat to the center of the county, but this effort failed.

ELECTRIC PROSTRATION

A peculiar disease appeared in 1888 known as electric prostration. Electric lighting was new at that time. Several workers at a plant in France spent long hours working under bright lights and several came down with this affliction. The first symptom was a painful sensation in the throat and their skin had a copper-red color and began to peel off in a few days. Those affected often were awakened at night with a severe pain around their eyes which produced large amounts of tears which lasted about 48 hours. This condition was called photo electric ophtalmia. This condition known as electric prostration also appeared in other countries about that time.

The only known remedy for it was for workers to wear shades over their eyes which helped protect the eyes but didn't prevent the other symptoms.

As you might expect, reports like this were very concerning to people in 1888. One article has this to say—"Some claim electric light is destined ultimately to supersede gas as a lighting power, and a malady springing from contact with the new power would be a grave matter".

Well, electric lights did replace gas lighting and is still with us today. I think the lesson to be learned from this is to do things in moderation. Being constantly exposed to

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extremely bright light is not a good thing. That's why we are warned about looking directly at a welder's torch because doing so could damage our eyes.

CRAZES

Every generation has certain crazes or fads. Some only last a few months and others last for years. It could be a new hair style, a new clothing fad, a new toy, a new game, and countless others things. Here are a few crazes from our past, some of which I had never heard about.

1882—turbans to wear on the head made from the feathers of eight different birds. Using feathers on hats was the trend from about 1890 to 1912. Feathers from male birds were especially popular because they were more colorful. It is said that when the Titanic sank in 1912, the most valuable cargo on board was a shipment of feathers insured for 2.3 million dollars. Some species of birds became almost extinct because so many were being killed for their feathers. Groups like the Audubon Society spoke out against the practice of using feathers on hats and laws were passed such as the Migratory Bird Act which ended the hunting of birds like egrets, swans, eagles, and hummingbirds.

1882—hairpin pilfering—young men would collect hairpins from girls. As first they asked for them, but later it became popular to pilfer a hairpin from a girl's hair without her knowing it. The men would place the hairpins in an album or scrapbook with information such as the date, the girl's name, and a description of the girl.

1890s—engraved divorce cards—for a time, it became popular to announce a divorce by sending out engraved divorce cards to friends.

1920—back painting—many of the dresses that women wore had low backs. Artists would paint pictures of such things as animals, birds, and sailing ships on the woman's back between her shoulder blades.

Late 1800s – Ouija boards—also called a “talking board”. Some claimed they could communicate with the dead or foretell the future by asking questions and the Ouija board would spell out the answer. It was especially popular after major wars such as World War

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I when many families lost a loved one in wartime. Ouija boards were frowned upon by many Christian people who said they were a tool of the devil. They quoted several Bible verses which prohibit such things as sorcery, divinations, omens, witchcraft, and mediums.

1923—dance marathons—contestants danced until they dropped. The couple who lasted the longest won a prize.

1939--swallowing live goldfish—started when someone bet a Harvard college student that he wouldn't swallow a live goldfish. He won the bet and it soon became a fad spreading across college campuses. Everyone tried to break a previous record. The record was 89 goldfish by a college student in 1939.

1920s--flagpole sitting—A record was set in 1930 of 51 days and 20 hours. That record was broken in 1984 when someone stayed on top of a flagpole for 439 days, 11 hours, and 6 minutes protesting gas prices.

1950s—stuffing phone booths—see how many people would fit in a phone booth; a popular fad on college campuses.

1974—streaking--- running naked through a public event; a popular fad on college campuses, usually at sporting events.

Hair and clothing styles change often. A theory was developed in the 1920s called "The Hemline Index" which says you can predict how well the economy is doing by the hemline of women's dresses. In good economic times, the hemline rises and during recessions or bad economic times, the hemline falls. Dresses were usually floor length until the late 1800s and then gradually began to rise to knee length or beyond. Many of these changes resulted from young girls and women following the examples of movie stars or as a way of expressing their freedom from male domination. The mini-skirt became popular in the 1960s among teenagers and young women and hot pants was a new fashion craze for a short time in the 1970s.

Hair styles or fads for males – duck tails, flat tops, sideburns, mohawks, etc.

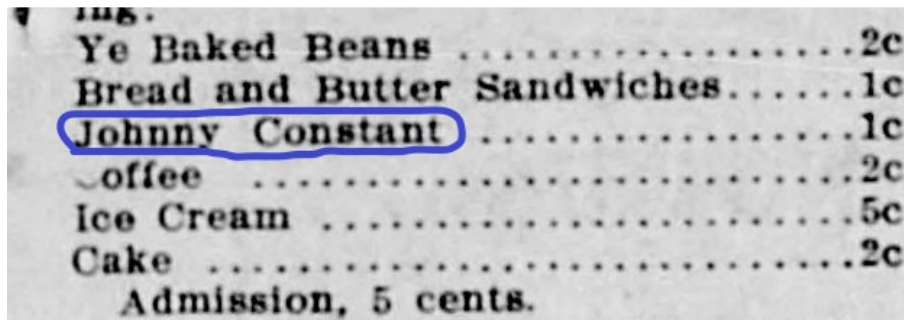
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Hair styles for females—poodle cuts, pony tails, pixie cut, bobbed hair, and many others. Bobbed hair was condemned by many because of the verses in the Bible which says long hair on a man is a disgrace, and long hair on a woman is her glory (See I Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 14 and 15)

Ways of wearing clothing—I remember back in school when boys bought blue jeans a few inches too long so they could make a cuff at the bottom. Bell bottom pants were popular for a while. Wearing caps backwards is still with us. Low riding pants with underwear exposed is another disgusting fad that is still with us.

It's interesting to look at old pictures to see what the fashions were at the time the picture was taken. I wonder what our grandparents and great grandparents would say if they could see the fashions of today.

JOHNNY CONSTANT AND BILLY SELDOM



Ye Baked Beans	2c
Bread and Butter Sandwiches.....	1c
Johnny Constant	1c
Coffee	2c
Ice Cream	5c
Cake	2c
Admission, 5 cents.	

If you happened to be in a restaurant or café back about 1900, you might have found “Johnny Constant” listed on the menu. This was the name given to cornbread. Early emigrants to the Mississippi Valley had what they called “Johnny cake” which was a corruption of the name “journey cake” they made to serve with meals while traveling and camping out. The name “Johnny Constant” was used by some because cornbread was served so frequently. Biscuits were given the name “Billy Seldom” or “William Seldom” because they were made less frequently than cornbread.

The ad above appeared in a 1912 newspaper advertising food for a Leap Year Festival.

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Grandparent's Day is September 10, 2023.



Don Mathis and his Grandma, Alice Hearnberger Mathis, at Camden in 1973

Breakfast at Grandma's -- by Don Mathis

The best part about breakfast at Grandma's was waking up to the kitchen noises, and then it only got better.

As kids, we would bounce into a high wooden chair, feet swaying in the air, not reaching the floor, we were that little.

It was a good thing our feet didn't reach, lion's paw/eagle claw feet were on the legs of that massive wood table.

But Grandma would move about in sunlight, chattering as spoons and bowls were clattering, making biscuits, making memories.

She would add four tablespoons of baking powder

two cups of flour, and a pinch of salt together, then stir in three tablespoons of shortening,

She would amaze us by making a well in the mix and fill up the volcano with a cup of milk, and stirring the mixture, stirring recollections.

The dough would be soft as her smile as she dropped great spoonfulls on a greased pan to cook ten minutes at 450°.

We would sit, happy in anticipation, sipping a cup of milk with a spoon of coffee, not a care in the world, love all around.

What would I give for another morning, another down-home, larruping treat, another breakfast at Grandma's.