

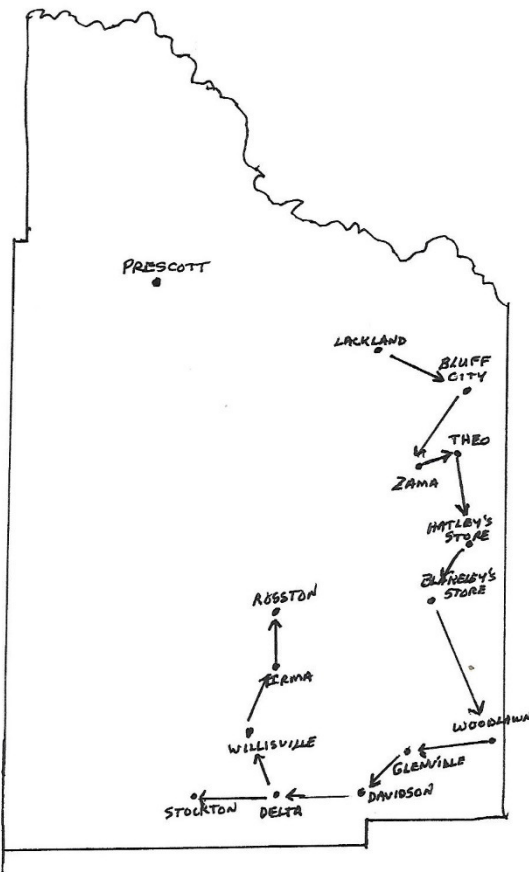
Jerry McKeelvy's
WAY BACK WHEN

December, 2023

Email ---- sandman43@att.net

A TOUR OF EAST NEVADA COUNTY IN 1909

Back in the old days, the county sheriff traveled to all the rural communities each year to collect taxes, saving farmers a trip to town. On this trip, Sheriff Ed Hood was accompanied by Charles Shankle and James Snodgrass who took subscriptions to the county newspapers along with Mr. Warmack, and Mr. Murrah. All these men were members of the Honorable Sons of Rest. The following article was written by James Snodgrass. The map shows the direction of travel for this tour.



The first day we were at Lackland. It was no place for newspaper men. They neither write not get any mail at Lackland, there being no mail facilities.

We left there for Bluff City. I stopped at Bro. Tom Barlow's. Bro. Barlow lives at home with an abundance of everything to make a farm comfortable. Next morning, we arrived at Bluff City. We received a hearty welcome by Henry Brothers and the good people around the city. Henry Brothers are prominent merchants of Bluff City, enjoying a fine trade. They handle everything in the mercantile line. We stopped all night with them and were royally entertained by them and their good wives who are ladies of the first type.

After enjoying every comfort of life, we left for Zama where we met Bro. Purifoy and the good people of that community. We took dinner with Bro. Purifoy where we got another good meal.

WAY BACK WHEN

We then went to Theo. All stayed overnight except myself. I went back to Bro. John Orwell's where I enjoyed another good night.

Next day we met at Bro. Hatley's store where we were cordially entertained. We took dinner with Bro. Hatley and wife and got one more good meal. We dropped down the road to J. H. Blakely's. I stopped overnight with Bro. Tom Potter and family and I never enjoyed myself better than while with them. Next morning, we went to Blakely's store. By noon we were through and took dinner with Bro. Blakely and family. We then went to Woodlawn where I stayed with Bros. Z. M. Hodge and Arrington, two more good men.

We left there and went to Glenville. We had another good dinner with Bro. Blake and mother and from there, we went to Davidson and Stockton where I had the pleasure of staying with my friend, H. I. Butcher from Saturday eve to Monday morning. Bro. Butcher and wife are old acquaintances of mine. Bro. Butcher owns considerable property—a good farm, grist mill, and gin and is a good liver.

We met at Delta on Monday. Delta is one of the finest settlements in the county. Bro. Ed Hood and I went to A. T. Mitchell's for dinner where we received another good meal. After dinner, Bro. Mitchell showed us some stock and chickens. He has the finest Jersey male I ever saw, cows and hogs and especially his fine chickens known as Minorca. He says he set 18 eggs under a hen and she hatched 18 chickens.

We left there for Willisville. I stayed overnight with Bro. Herring and family. He and wife are citizens of the highest type. Bro. Herring is a good farmer, gin, and mill man. Next night, Bro. Shankle and I went to visit Bro. Arl Wamack. No pleasanter place could be found. Mr. Wamack and family treated us like lords.

Next, we met at Irma for half a day. Bro. Hood and I had another good meal with W. A. J. Waters and we then went to Rosston. I went to Bro. Tom Lucks, president of the Farmer's County Union and a prominent farmer and cattle raiser. I don't believe I enjoyed myself better. Bro. Luck and wife have every comfort of life. Their children are the most industrious I ever saw. They are model workers and they all can sing like larks and know how to handle the organ.

WAY BACK WHEN

LONG HANDLES

When the first real cold spell comes in the wintertime, you might hear someone say “Cold weather is coming. You’d better get you long handles out”. It’s been a long time since I’ve heard anyone call them that, but it was a common expression when I was growing up. I think that is pretty much a Southern expression. In some parts of the country, they called them “long hannels”.

If you ever work out in the cold, you appreciate having thermal underwear. Back in the 1800s, they were usually called “union suits” which were made in one piece and covered everything from the neck down. They had a row of buttons on the front from the neck down to the groin and a button-up flap in the back. Gradually, they came to be known as “long johns”. They say that name came from a man named John L. Sullivan, a heavyweight boxer who wore something similar in the boxing ring. The one-piece suit gradually was replaced by a two-piece suit. The top was like a T-shirt except it had long sleeves and the bottom covered the body from the waist down.

So, this type underwear can be called union suits, long handles, long johns, drawers, or thermal-knit underwear. In extremely cold weather, they are very much appreciated no matter what name you use.

THE TIN LIZZIE

Henry Ford’s Model T automobile revolutionized life in America. He first offered the Model T for sale to the public in 1908 after personally testing it himself. His aim was to produce an automobile that was simple to operate, durable, and inexpensive. His use of assembly-line production cut down on costs and allowed for the mass production of vehicles. At first the automobile cost about \$850, but soon he was able to reduce the cost to \$350 in 1925. That made it possible for many of the middle-class people and rural people to be able to afford one.

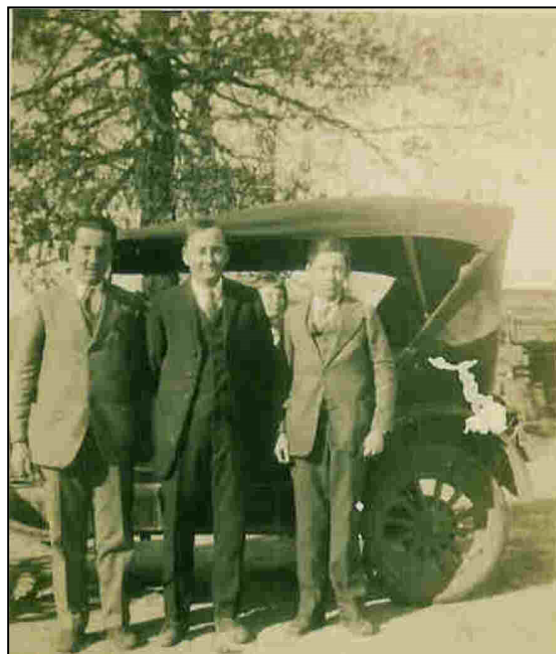
Henry Ford once said you could get a Model T in any color you wanted as long as it was black and black was the only color available from 1913 to 1925. Before and after those years, it was offered in other colors such as gray, green, blue, and red.

WAY BACK WHEN

The Model T was advertised as being very durable and many stunts were performed to demonstrate how durable the vehicle was. One of these stunts involved driving a Model T up the stairs at the Tennessee state capital in 1911. Another was showing that the Model T could reach the top of Pike's Peak in Colorado.

There are several stories about how the Model T came to be known as a "Tin Lizzie". Some think the name came from a race in 1922 when a man named Noel Bullock drove his Model T which he had nicknamed "Old Liz". His car was unpainted and didn't even have a hood. Some said it looked like a tin can and began to call it a "tin Lizzie". He won the race against more expensive cars. Newspapers across the country reported on the race and the name "Tin Lizzie" caught on to describe the Model T Ford.

There were other nicknames also. Many called them "flivvers". Other names were "Leaping Lena", "Lady Bug", "Black Beauty", and "T-Model Ford". The Model T was produced until 1927. Most of our ancestors probably owned a Model T Ford. My grandparents who lived in the Rocky Hill community of Nevada County purchased a 1927 Model T and they were one of the first in their community to buy one. Pictured left to right are my uncle, Lee Roy McKelvy, my grandfather, James Columbus "Gee" McKelvy, my father, Ruel McKelvy, and inside the vehicle is my aunt, Myrtie McKelvy.



WAY BACK WHEN

There are many family stories passed down about this vehicle. My grandmother was a little afraid to ride in it. She especially didn't like it when the vehicle was in reverse. My grandfather was used to handling teams of horses, but learning to drive a vehicle was a difficult challenge for him. The boys did most of the driving according to what I was told.

One of the hazards of owning a Model T involved cranking the engine. It was started by used a hand crank at the front of the vehicle. Sometimes, the crank would kick back in the opposite direction when the vehicle started which caused thousands of broken arms across the country. Another danger was cranking the car while it was in gear which could cause the car to run over the person cranking it. This happened to a preacher in Nevada County as he was leaving church services one Sunday in 1922. He was pinned against a tree and died as a result.

About 15,000,000 Model T's were produced in America. It was the best-selling car in America until 1972 when it was surpassed by the Volkswagen "Beetle". Several body styles were produced, but they all had the same type engine. It was a very dependable automobile and was able to perform well on the terrible roads at that time.

There were some problems at first as the horses and wagons had to share the roads with automobiles. Traffic laws soon had to be passed to regulate the traffic, and of course, the state and local governments soon began to assess taxes and fees for owners of automobiles with the money going to improve the roads. These early Model T's had a top speed of about 45 miles per hour, but even at that speed, traffic accidents happened resulting in deaths and injuries.

Several newspapers printed this poem in 1922:

THE WAY OF A MAN WITH TWO MAIDS

When Jimmie takes his sister out
A-riding in his flivver,
He uses both his arms to steer
And drives without a quiver.

But when he has his favorite gal
Beside him in his Lizzie,
One arm is on the steering wheel
The other one is busy.

WAY BACK WHEN

1963: A Pivotal Year – By Don Mathis

America started waking up six decades ago. 1963 celebrated a lot of firsts.

African American students began to be admitted to universities like the University of Alabama and Clemson in South Carolina. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote his letter from a Birmingham jail and later spoke at the Lincoln Memorial of his dream. President Kennedy asked Congress to enact the Civil Rights Act. America woke up to race relations.

Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*. She didn't believe women were satisfied with the role of housewife or mother. The Presidential Commission on the Status of Women issued its final report to Kennedy. The Equal Pay Act was passed by Congress. The country began to be aware of women's rights.

The first James Bond movie opened in the U.S. The Beatles sang "Please Please Me," and the British Invasion changed the future of pop music. Travel to Cuba was restricted. John F. Kennedy visited West Germany and declared "Ich bin ein Berliner". President Johnson confirmed that the United States would continue to support South Vietnam. A new generation of Americans became mindful of international affairs.

The U.S., the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union signed the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. They hoped to limit the effect of nuclear testing on the Earth and atmosphere. Silent Spring author, Rachel Carson, testified before a Senate subcommittee on pesticides. The Clean Air Act of 1963 was the first federal legislation regarding air pollution. America began to be conscious about the environment.

Cambridge, Md., erupted in rioting after several white-owned businesses were vandalized. The Ku Klux Klan bombed a church in Birmingham, killing four black girls. Medgar Evers, a pioneer in the Civil Rights movement, was murdered. President Kennedy was assassinated. America woke up to the idea that violence is the solution.

Our country still struggles with the notion of violence. We still have a long way to go to stop the destruction of the environment. We are still waking up.