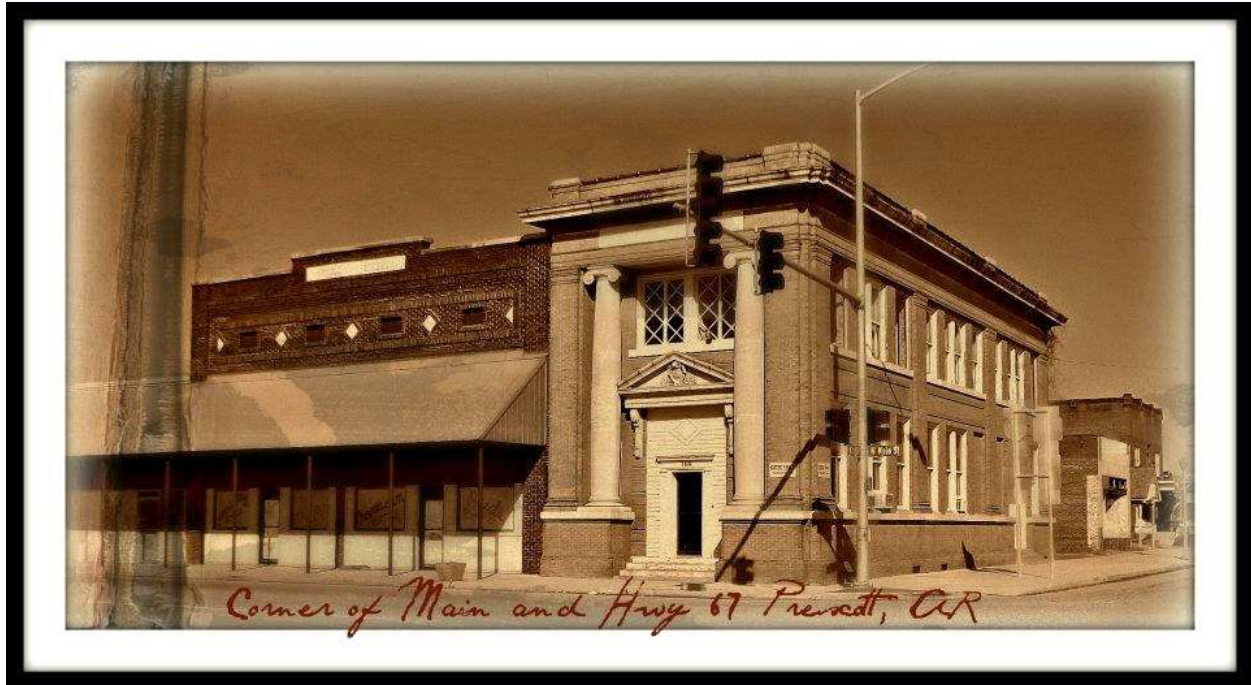


Jerry McKelvy's
WAY BACK WHEN
December, 2024



THE NEVADA COUNTY BANK

Motorists traveling through Prescott, Arkansas can't help but notice this building located on the corner of Main Street and Front Street (old Hwy. 67). The Nevada County Bank was the oldest financial institution in Prescott. It was chartered in 1890, but I have found newspaper ads for it as far back as 1885. In 1912, it was announced that the bank would be erecting a new modern building at the same location. The old building would be razed to make place for the new structure. During construction, banking business would be done in the grocery department of the H. A. Hamilton store across the street. When the announcement was made in May of 1912, it was reported that it would take about 60 days for construction to be completed and that the total cost would be \$10,000.

It only took a little over one day to demolish the old structure. Workers began early one morning and by 6 p.m. the next day, the only thing left standing was the vault. Everything seemed to be going according to the plan, but as is usual with construction projects of this type, construction could be delayed for one reason or another. In this

WAY BACK WHEN

case, the contractor had trouble getting some of the stone which caused a delay of several weeks. Work resumed in August and by the end of the month, the brick work had been completed up to the second floor.

The exterior of the building consisted of hydraulic pressed gray brick with Batesville limestone trimming. The two massive columns at the front of the building weighed twelve tons each. The foundation was made with reinforced concrete. On the inside of the building, there was a beautiful tile floor and wainscoting of Georgia gray marble. The first floor was used for the bank and the second floor had nine offices which were to be rented out. Attorney, W. F. Denman and Dr. Harry Fowler, an osteopathic physician occupied two of the offices soon after construction.

Construction was completed in about seven months and an announcement was made that the bank was open for business on December 18, 1912. The newspaper reported that "it was one of the prettiest in the state. The design is modern in every detail and interior furnishings are as good as could be made".

I don't know when the Nevada County Bank went out of business. The building has been used in recent years as the law offices of attorney Gene Hale. I've never been inside the building. I assume the second floor has been vacant for many years. After all was said and done, the final cost of the building was reported to be \$15,000 which is \$5,000 more than originally expected. Imagine what a building like that would cost today! I wish the newspaper had given more information more about the two columns at the front of the building. I wish I could have been there to watch them being installed. At twelve tons each, that would have been quite an undertaking back in 1912.

The building in the photo next to the Nevada County Bank is the Arnold-Greenson building which was completed in June, 1913.

DEATHS IN PRESCOTT IN 1912

While going through records from Cornish Funeral Home of Prescott, I found a page where they had listed deaths in the city of Prescott for the year 1912 with cause of death. The deaths were listed by month and were separated according to race.

WAY BACK WHEN

WHITE

January—1 death (blood poisoning)
February – 7 deaths --pneumonia (2); meningitis (3); apoplexy (1); la grippe (1)
March –4 deaths --congestion (1); appendicitis (1); meningitis (2)
April –3 deaths --bowel disease (1); heart failure (1); pneumonia (1)
May –4 deaths -- meningitis (1); ptomaine poisoning (2); uriac poison (1)
June –0 deaths
July –2 deaths--congestion (1); cholera (1)
Aug –1 death--stomach disease (1)
Sep. –3 deaths -- B. R. accident (1); cirrhosis of liver (1); congestion (1)
Oct. --2 deaths -- cancer/cirrhosis of liver (1); tuberculosis (1)
Nov. –5 deaths -- tuberculosis (1); old age (1); malaria (2); bronchial pneumonia (1)
Dec.—2 deaths -- heart failure (1); don't know (1)

COLORED

Jan.—4 deaths--whooping cough (1); accidental gunshot (1); pneumonia (1); head severed (1)
Feb.—3 deaths-- tuberculosis (1); meningitis (1); ptomaine poisoning (1)
Mar. –3 deaths -- don't know (1); meningitis (1); pneumonia (1)
Apr. – 6 deaths -- meningitis (2); dropsy (2); consumption (1); heart failure (1)
May – 2 deaths -- slow fever (1); dropsy (1)
June—3 deaths -- dropsy (1); old age (1); operation for tumor (1)
July –2 deaths -- mill accident (1); tonsillitis (1)
Aug. –3 deaths -- dropsy (2); nephritis (1)
Sep.—4 deaths -- stricture of rectum (1); enteritis (2); dropsy from nephritis (1)
Oct. –2 deaths -- dropsy (1); don't know (1)
Nov. –2 deaths -- fever (1); old age (1)
Dec.—2 deaths -- dysentery (1); don't know (1)

TOTAL DEATHS BY MONTH

Jan.—5; Feb. – 10; Mar.—7; Apr. –9; May –6; June—3; July –4; Aug. –4; Sep. –7;
Oct.—4; Nov.—6; Dec. 4

TOTAL DEATHS FOR YEAR

69

Ptomaine poisoning usually meant some type of food poisoning, apoplexy was another name for stroke, consumption was another name for tuberculosis, la grippe was another name for influenza, dropsy meant fluid retention, nephritis was kidney disease, dysentery was an infection of the intestines, enteritis was infection of small intestines, and slow fever was probably typhoid fever. I have no idea what they meant by B. R. accident.

WAY BACK WHEN

Don Mathis, who regularly submits material for *Way Back When*, sent me this article from a friend of his.

A Message from a Model T – by Hugh Hemphill

Well, apparently, I am now 100 years old. My engine, my beating heart, was stamped with my number, my name I suppose, my identity, on October 24, 1924. I am one of the luckier survivors. Only 5% or so are still around. At least half of these are either too far gone to be saved, wasting away in the elements. Almost as many more are stuck in barns and sheds, neglected, deep in dust. I'm still out and about, and I get to spend time with a lot of other lucky survivors. I'm neither abandoned nor neglected. It's all about luck, I suppose.

My current owner ain't so bad. I've had better. Many have had worse. My favorite was my third, when I was about 10 or so, a dangerous time for any automobile. Many are deemed too old to keep going, or are transformed into something else or rendered for parts. The third was a man who got me for \$5, when times for humans were very hard, the Great Depression they called it. This guy was struggling to feed his family and needed transportation to get to work, and he was so happy to have me, and I felt the same. Together we survived the hard times. He looked after me well. I was never so clean and polished.

He passed me on to his daughter in due course, so she could go to school. She had a nice young man in tow and he looked after me until a thing called a world war took him away. I was put away in a shed. I soon found myself with flat tires, full of boxes and stray stuff inside out and on my poor old hood. After what seemed like a long time, the young man returned, much changed. He and the girl married but he was suffering from the awful things he had seen and done. He would hide in my shed, shivering and weeping, trying to keep body and soul together. He'd pat my fender, thinking back to better times. As time passed, maybe to give him a reason to spend some time alone, he removed all the piled-up junk, put air back in my tires and pushed me outside. The sun felt so good. Little by little, often with the help of his father-in-law, who cared deeply about us both, he restored me and, it seemed to me, himself. We'd go out for evening drives. He said he

WAY BACK WHEN

was going fishing but he'd just drive me to secluded spots overlooking the river and just sit a while, enjoying the peace and quiet.

The needs of his family required a newer, faster car and with what seemed to me great reluctance, he sold me and I found myself in a fairly large collection of cars and tractors on a farm. It wasn't so bad. The farmer would take me out once in a while, to give rides to his grandchildren or the occasional parade. His sons ignored me for other zippier vehicles, and that was a blessing seeing how roughly they were treated. But one of his grandsons was very attracted to me, and he and his grandpa worked on my aging mechanicals and got me going again. In due course, the young man also went off to yet another horrible war. He too returned, much changed, and, in an odd way, just as before, he gravitated towards me, as a way of holding onto the best part of himself. Grandpa, as old as myself, willingly gave me to him. He stayed in uniform, however, and I found myself on a series of air force bases, finally arriving in San Antonio where he retired. He kept me to the end.

It's an odd thing to be in an estate sale and not attract any bids. A late arrival, who missed most of the action, saw me and asked about me. The auctioneers were keen to get rid of me and this guy got what he thought was a bargain. But I was in poor shape. Driven too much with too little care and attention and my poor old engine was not running well at all. And try as he might, he couldn't figure me out. He had several other cars, hot things from the 60s and 70s and I was something of an embarrassment. So, he decided to pass me on, which is where I encountered the man who owns me now. He has been kind. My engine has been completely rebuilt. He likes to drive me a lot. He's the one who calls me Blackbird. I've been called worse. He isn't big on cleaning and polishing but it could be worse. When something goes wrong, as it will with any almost 100-year-old vehicle, he gets me taken care of. He's an OK fellow but the real hero of my story is his friend, the owner of a Model T repair shop. He's the guy who really understands me.

WAY BACK WHEN

So here I am, now actually 100 years old. Just recently I was driven to a major gathering of Model Ts and it was a wonderful way to mark the occasion. It was like the old days, when just about every car on the road was another Model T. I held my own with the best of them. Running up long sweeping hills, sometimes with a full load of passengers. Rattling over cattle guards and negotiating tight curves on winding roads. I had a couple of mechanical issues but the humans went above and beyond to keep me going. Took a long detour on the way back because my owner has a thing for railroad history evidently.

Against the odds I've made it this far. I'm not sure what the future holds. My owner will, in due course, also let me go. They all do. Humans age worse than cars, it seems. My experiences tell me I will probably be OK. I'm not, fortunately, the kind of car that will end up in a museum. I'm just a plain little Model T, manufactured and sold as cheaply as possible, made not to shine but to serve, and serve I have. If fate continues to go my way, maybe I'll still be romping around the back roads for decades to come, making my future owners as happy as the ones in the past. I can only hope.

CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

1. In the song "Jingle Bells", who was seated by my side?
2. What was Scrooge's first name?
3. In the song "Silver Bells", what is dressed in holiday style?
4. Name the three reindeer with names beginning with the letter "D".
5. Which reindeer's name is also the name of a kitchen cleanser?
6. What country is credited with creating egg nog?
7. In what ocean is Christmas Island located?
8. Which president discouraged the use of Christmas trees in the White House?

Answers: 1. Miss Fannie Bright; 2. Ebenezer; 3. City sidewalks; 4. Dancer, Donner, and Dasher; 5. Comet; 6. England; 7. Indian Ocean; 8. Theodore Roosevelt