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Comments, Questions, Suggestions—Email sandman43@att.net

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Several newspapers reported in 1884 a story about a murder near Prescott in Nevada County. It was reported that a 19-year-old son of a widow who lived near Union church west of Rosston was brutally murdered by a man named Robert Harris. There were some witnesses to the murder and Harris got them to help him hide the body and warned them not to tell anyone. He then made his escape.

Several days later, the body was discovered and was partially decomposed almost beyond recognition, but was identified as Calvin Forrest who was away from home at the time of the murder. Calvin's mother was notified and she mourned for her dead son and had the remains buried at the cemetery next to the grave of another son. A reward of \$200 was offered for the apprehension of Robert Harris.

It turned out that Calvin Forrest was not the man who was murdered. When he learned what had happened, he hurried home to set the record straight. He arrived in Rosston on February 20, 1884, and it just so happened that his mother happened to be in Rosston that day. Imagine her reaction when she discovered that her son was alive and well.

Mrs. Forrest was very happy to find her son alive, but then everyone wondered about the identity of the man buried in the cemetery. He was thought to be a railroad laborer named Woods, but no first name was known. Several people mentioned that the man killed looked very much like Calvin Forrest. The condition of the body probably contributed to the mistaken identity

It was believed that Robert Harris, the killer, escaped to Illinois which was his home. He was described as six feet tall, weighing 180 pounds, and having the little finger of his left hand missing and a scar on his forehead.

I checked the cemetery records of Nevada County trying to find the name of the cemetery where the man was buried, but there are no listings for anyone with the last name of Forrest. Since the woman lived near Union church, the nearest cemetery would be Union Cemetery which has a lot of unmarked graves in the old part of the cemetery.

I could find no further information about whether Robert Harris was ever brought to justice and no information about the burial places of Calvin Forrest, his parents, or his brother. I could not find the Forrest family listed in any of the census records.

Evidently, based on this news story, somewhere in Nevada County is the unmarked grave of an unidentified man mistakenly identified as Calvin Forrest. That man's family probably wondered what happened to him. (*Information for this story came from The Nevada County Picayune, The Columbia Banner, and The Searcy Beacon.*)

THE VALUE OF A WOMAN'S HAIR

An unusual accident that happened to a young woman from New Jersey resulted in a three-hour debate in the United States Senate of the value of a woman's hair.

Miss Alice Haughton worked at the census office and was involved in a freak accident in the office when her hair became entangled in a tabulating machine resulting in her being scalped. Since she worked for the government, the senator from her home state brought up a bill in the United State Senate in 1912 which would compensate Miss Haughton for the loss of her hair.

The bill he introduced proposed to pay Miss Haughton \$4,800 to be paid in monthly installments of \$50 per month. Some senators wanted to increase the amount to \$7500, but that was narrowly defeated. Some senators thought the proposed amount was excessive for a woman whose regular pay was \$840 per year.

The senator from her home state said "Not all the wealth in the United States treasury would compensate a woman for the loss of her crowning glory, her beautiful hair". After

debating the issue for three hours, the U. S. Senate passed the bill which would pay Miss Haughton \$4,800 for the loss of her hair.

Note: This was a very serious accident according to reports in other newspapers. Miss Haughton lost her hair and most of the skin on her forehead and her eyebrows. Over 100 stitches were required and she had four skin graft operations over the next year following the accident. A bill was introduced in the Senate to raise her award to \$7500, but that bill was defeated.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

If God Went on Strike **By Walt Huntley**

It is a good thing that God above
Has never gone on strike,
Because He wasn't treated fair
On things He didn't like.

If He had ever once sat down
And said, "That's it, I'm through,
I've had enough of those on earth
So this is what I'll do:

I'll give my orders to the sun
To cut off your heat supply,
And to the moon to give no more light,
And run those oceans dry.

Then, just to make things really tough
And put the pressure on,
Turn off the air and oxygen
Till every breath is gone.

You know that He'd be justified
If fairness was the game,
For no one has been more abused
Or treated with disdain.

Than God, and yet He carries on,
Supplying you and me
With all the favors of His grace,
And everything for free!

Men say they want a better deal,
And so, on strike they go.
But what a deal we've given God
To whom all things we owe!

We don't care whom we hurt or harm
To gain the things we like.
But what a mess we'd all be in
If God went on strike!

A THRILLING RIDE BY AIRPLANE IN 1919

Many residents of Prescott, Arkansas had a thrilling experience in September, 1919. A pilot named C. F. Terry was traveling to towns in Arkansas offering airplane rides for one dollar per minute. A fifteen-minute ride over the city of Prescott cost \$15 and those who participated said it was well worth it. He spent a few days in Prescott and also did daredevil stunts and flew low over housetops.

Most residents of Prescott had never seen an airplane up close before 1918. This was only a few years since Orville and Wilbur Wright made their first airplane flight in 1908. Government officials had asked the people of Prescott to select a place for an aviation landing station in October, 1918 so planes could land during training flights. M. W. Greeson donated a plot of land one-quarter of a mile wide and one-half mile long for the landing station. The land was located one mile east of town on the Wildcat Rd. The land was prepared and the first planes landed in Prescott in January, 1919.

Some former pilots who flew planes in World War I traveled over Arkansas in 1919 using surplus airplanes and offering open-cockpit plane rides for money. They were called barnstormers. These airplanes, called "Jennys", were used in World War I to train pilots. They were mass produced and cost about \$5000, but when the war was over, the government sold many of them as surplus for as little as \$200 each. Many of the pilots who had been trained to fly these planes purchased them and went into business doing stunts and offering plane rides for a fee. These were double-winged aircraft with an open cockpit. This was a new experience for some of the brave citizens of Prescott who had never ridden in an airplane.

While in town, they found another use for the airplane. A U. S. marshal from Little Rock was a passenger on a flight north of Prescott to locate moonshine stills. They found three stills, but by the time they checked them out on the ground, the moonshiners had moved their operation.

After spending a few days in Prescott, the pilot planned to spend a few days at Hope offering plane rides to people in that town.

Many Hope residents took advantage of the 15-minute airplane rides. Everything was going well until one Sunday morning just as church services were starting. The aviators, C. F. Terry and R. I. Tarbell, were circling low over the city at about 1000 feet doing stunts with the plane. As the plane made a loop, the pilot lost control of the plane and worked to regain control without much success. The plane was headed directly toward the Methodist church at Second and Pine streets. The plane struck the top of an oak tree near the church and a guy wire from a light pole which helped to cushion the plane. The plane ended up in the street right side up barely missing a number of parked automobiles. The propellor was broken off the plane, the wings were bent, and the landing gear was

broken. There were no serious injuries. One of the aviators had a small scratch on his nose. Many Hope residents who had taken advantage of the 15-minute airplane flights had second thoughts after seeing the results of the plane crash. The incident could have been much worse if the plane had hit the roof of the church with people inside. *(Information for this story from The Prescott Daily News and The Little River News)*

The Day I Shook LBJ's Hand – by Don Mathis

On a sunny day in 1966, Lyndon B. Johnson visited former President Eisenhower, Senator Dirksen, and wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

I was at the hospital clinic getting my weekly allergy shot, just shy of my 15th birthday. Dad worked at Walter Reed (in a building that had been converted from stables) so the area was as familiar as home.

Mom heard that LBJ was going to depart by car rather than helicopter so we went to see. Johnson's black limousine was parked on the street, flags by the antenna, secret servicemen all around.

I dared my little brother to touch the car. He stretched out to tap it and the secret service sprang to life. When they found it was only a little kid leaving fingerprints on the Lincoln, they relaxed.

Then President Johnson came out and the secret service stiffened again. LBJ wanted to greet the public and, I guess since it was a small crowd, one on a military post, the advisors acquiesced.

Johnson's idea of pressing the flesh was to drag his fingers over everybody's outstretched hands.

When he touched my hand, there was a spark. That spark lives as a memory; a flashback of Johnson's smiling face, the shiny car, the bright spring sun, and a boy about to become a man.



TRIAL HELD IN CITY PARK

One of the most interesting trials ever held in Nevada County took place in July, 1910. A young man named Will Hendrix was on trial for murdering his younger brother, Henry Hendrix, in the store they operated with their father on West Main St. in Prescott. Will claimed self-defense saying that his brother came at him with a hatchet so he shot him. There were no witnesses to the murder. Henry Hendrix was to be married the next day and had just purchased a new suit for the wedding. He ended up being buried in the new suit at Mt. Moriah Cemetery.

The Nevada County court house in 1910 was in bad shape and it was decided it was too dangerous to hold the trial there plus it was expected that a large crowd would be attending the trial. The decision was made to move the trial to the city park. The trial lasted all day in the hot July weather and the jury deliberated late into the night. They were finally allowed to go to a hotel for the night and resume deliberations the next morning. The jury reached a verdict at 8:30 the next morning. The verdict was NOT GUILTY.

STREET DUTY ORDINANCE IN PRESCOTT

The city of Prescott passed a city ordinance in 1915 requiring all able-bodied male residents of the city between the ages of 18 and 45 to work on the streets, alleys, sidewalks, and public grounds for six days each year.

If a person was unable to work, he could pay the city marshal one dollar per day or provide a substitute worker to take his place.

Those exempt from this street duty included anyone who was attending school, officers of the city, and members of the fire department.

If some on street duty would not work or hindered other workers they could be fined between \$10 and \$25.

Sometimes street duty was required for someone as punishment. I read of one case of a worker escaping from his street duty assignment. He was captured and a 20-pound ball was attached to his leg while he worked to prevent further escapes.