

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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ROCKY HILL METHODIST CHURCH

An interview conducted by Phena Fincher in October, 1984. She is speaking with Mr. and Mrs. Earl Johnson of Camden, Mrs. Mae Parker Norman of Bluff City, and Mrs. Jessie Tunnell Morrow of Camden. The original copy of the interview is at the Prescott Depot Museum and is posted on their web site.

Phena: Mr. Johnson, could you tell me where Rocky Hill is located?

Mr. J.: Four miles southwest of Bluff City

Phena: Do you know when the church was founded? What year?

Mr. J.: 1908, as far as I know. It's what I've heard.

Phena: What you have heard may be as good as we have. Do you know how the land was acquired?

Mr. J.: Fletcher McKelvy donated 2 acres of land for the church they built there.

Mrs. J.: And he was Earl's grandfather.

Editor's Note: Alexander Fletcher McKelvy donated the land for the church in 1907.

Phena: Your grandfather (to Mr. Johnson) donated the land for the church. Was the church erected by people just pitching in and coming together and doing the work?

Mr. J.: It sure was.

Phena: I went out there this afternoon, the first time I've ever seen it, and I was amazed at the beauty. It is nestled in the trees out there, and this time of the year, the colors were just beautiful. But I felt, when I left the main highway, that I had kind of gone away from civilization. I suppose that is a change from the days when the church was erected. Am I right?

Mae: You are right about that.

Phena: It was more densely populated back then?

Mae: Yes, there was a house just a little piece- Mrs. McKelvy's house was just.....

Mrs. J.: We put that siding on there when Bro. Lee was on the circuit. What year was that?

Mr. J.: Well, it was 195?. Well, you know the siding that covers the church, recovered it in 1958, then the siding went up probably a year later.

Phena: What did it look like before the siding was on it? The original building? This is still the original building?

Mr. J.: Well, it was just rough lumber, not even planed lumber.

Mrs. J.: What they always called box planks.

Phena: Well, it has served its purpose over the years. During what years would you say its membership was the greatest?

Mr. J.: In the mid 30's, along 30-40.

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Phena: And then the decline began. Was the community still well populated during those years? When did they start to move away from there?

Mr. J.: During World War II in the 40's.

Mae: When these depots, you know the one at Camden, one at Hope.

Phena: The defense plants.....

Mae: Yes, and the government came in and bought up all this poor land, people had to get out, you know. That was the beginning of the decline. There were houses just on this side of Rocky Hill and all down the other side in those hills. Uncle Willie and Uncle Henry and Aunt Della; they all lived down there close, and me and Dunn-a lot of people around there. Earl's daddy and them lived just a little piece....

Phena: What was the main source of livelihood for the people?

Mae: Farming. They raised all their stuff, you know.

Phena: Do you know who some of the early pastors were?

Mae: I can't remember any myself.

Mr. J.: George Mauser was the first one I remember.

Mae: And Mr. Sam Adams, you know, he pastored there twice.

Phena: And the pastor you have now is Bro. Dale McKinney who lives at Hope. How have the services changed over the years? As far back as you can remember, how often were services held?

Mae: Once a month.

Mr. J.: Sunday school every Sunday and Christian Endeavor Society every Sunday night. Young people was what it was.

Mae: They had Sunday school until, I know it has been 10 or 15 years ago when they quit, because we lived over there close and we went every Sunday. We'd go by and take up Mrs. Hardley Johnny(?) (Editor's note: probably Miss Johnnie Hardwick) and go to the Endeavor and Sunday school. Then Mr. Beddle (Bevill) preached over there a long time.

Mae: Mr. Bevill was a teacher, and then after he quit teaching, he began to preach.

Phena: Can you remember, or have you heard any interesting stories about the early days of the church at Rocky Hill? Mrs. Morrow, you were telling me how the church got its name.

Jessie: Well, it's them big old rocks down there; so big I bet they weigh a thousand pounds or more, all down in there. Just a little while back, I picked up one and carried it home. Of course, it wasn't very big. I'd love to have one of them, just a piece of Rocky Hill.

Jessie: I can tell you one thing that used to happen there at Rocky Hill, and it would give you a good feeling. I've seen Aunt Deller, Aunt Minnie and Nonie Richardson get up there and shout all over the church.

Mr. J.: Her mother, don't forget her, too. Mrs. Molly Parker.

Jessie: That's right, but Mrs. Parker and Ma didn't seem like they got up and shouted like them. And Mrs. McKelvy, she was always quiet. But Aunt Deller and Nonie Richardson would nearly always fall right backwards, nearly always, every time she'd get up there and go to shouting.

Phena: And you said that gave you a good feeling.

Jessie: Yeah, and that was Alma Eagle's mother that lived there in Prescott.

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Phena: What would you think if you saw somebody shouting today?

Jessie: Well, I believe I'd think more of it. Churches are so cold, sometimes you don't even have any feeling in the church. I guess it's me, but it's sure not like it used to be. I'd want to get up and shout.

Mae: I don't know what year it was, and the only time I remember that any denomination was barred from using the church for service, was when this lady preacher by the name of Smith, and her character wasn't above board, so they refused to let her use the church, but it has been used as a community church for other people to worship in, too.

Phena: It was a Methodist/Protestant church, wasn't it?

Mae: Well, it was Methodist, but they welcomed other people in to worship.

Phena: How was your attendance in those days?

Mae: It was good.

Phena: The church was filled for revivals and things like that?

Mae: Sure was.

Phena: And today?

Mae: We have 4 members, believe it or not. There's 3 of them right here, and 1 up here.

Phena: And you think you are going to be able to keep holding on?

Mae: We're going to hold on just as long as we can.

Mrs. J.: We would have to because of our parents, 'cause they were dedicated, and we can't close the door as long as we're able to carry on.

Editor's Note: Update—The old Rocky Hill Methodist Church still stands, but has not been used in many years. All four of the people interviewed are now deceased—Jessie Tunnell Morrow in 1988, Mae Parker Norman in 1992, Myrtie McBride Johnson in 1994, and Earl Johnson in 2000.

SEVERE STORMS HIT NEVADA COUNTY (THE NEVADA NEWS—MARCH 9, 1909)

Weaver, Ark- The most disastrous wind and rain that had ever visited Georgia Township struck here yesterday afternoon and wrought much damage to land and timber. The rain fell in torrents and the wind destroyed fully 25 percent of the pine timber in this section. Farmers lost heavily by washing of the soil, especially where it had been freshly plowed. All streams are higher than ever before known and many cattle were drowned by overflows in pastures.

East of here in Bluff City, the wind was even heavier with several dwelling houses demolished and one person, a Negro, badly crippled. The oldest inhabitant cannot remember a more destructive storm.

Editor's note: Weaver was an old community a few miles north of Morris. This same storm system caused damage all over the state. The town of Brinkley was completely destroyed from a tornado and fires that erupted after the storm. A telegraph message was received at Little Rock saying that all buildings in the town were damaged or destroyed. Early reports said 33 were dead and 150 injured with the list growing.

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THE POETRY PAGE

I FOLLOW A FAMOUS FATHER
(Camden Evening News-April 23, 1923)

I follow a famous father;
His honor is mine to wear.
He gave me a name that is free from shame,
A name he was proud to bear.
He lived in the morning sunlight;
And marched in the ranks of right,
He was always true to the best he knew,
And the shield he wore was bright.

I follow a famous father,
And never a day goes by
But I feel that he looks down to me
To carry the standard high.
He stood to the sternest trials,
As only a brave man can
Though the way be long; I must never wrong
The name of so good a man.

I follow a famous father,
And him I must keep in mind,
Though his form is gone, I must carry on
The name that he left behind.
It was mine on the day he gave it,
It shone as a monarch's crown,
And as fair to see as it came to me
It must be when I pass it down.

During the "Roaring Twenties", a new hair style became popular for women called "shingle bobs". This poem is from the March 18, 1926 issue of The Nevada News

THE '26 MODELS

Ten years or so today
A crime we thought it then
To go into a barber shop
Where there were only men.

But now the girls and ladies
All give the barber's jobs
And almost fight to get a chair
To get their shingle bobs.

They climb up in a chair
And hold their heads just so,
"I want it not too short
And a shingle bob, you know."
There's a short one and a tall one
There's a plump one known as Rob
But they all swarm to the barber shop
To get their shingle bobs.

To get a shingle bob,
Shingle bob, shingle bob
Shingle all the way
All the barber shops are full
It's all the rage today.

Shingle bob, shingle bob,
Right up to the dome,
Ain't it grand?, the more you cut
The less you have to comb.

A FARMER'S LETTER

My razorback strolled down your
track a week ago today.
Your #29 came down the line,
And snuffed his life away.
You can't blame me; the hog you see
Slipped through a cattle gate;
So kindly pen a check for ten,
The debt to liquidate.

He was surprised a few days later to
receive the following:

Old #29 came down the line,
And killed your hog, we know;
But razorbacks on railroad tracks,
Quite often meet with woe.
Therefore, my friend, we cannot send
The check for which you pine,
Just plant the dead; place o'er his
head;
'Here lies a foolish swine.' "

PHOTOS FROM THE PAST
(from Mrs. Clara Harvey)



Identity of this lady is
unknown—photo was
not labeled.

Children of Walter and Julia Moore

- Arlis Moore (1905-)
- Elsie Moore Beaver (1908-1998)
- Mildred Moore Starnes (1906-1986)



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THIS MONTH'S RECIPES

HONEY BUN CAKE Submitted by Kay Nelson

Cake--

1 box yellow cake mix
4 eggs
1 cup sour cream
2/3 cup oil

Mix and pour into greased 9 X 13 pan. Set aside.

Filling--

1 cup brown sugar
3 tablespoons cinnamon

Mix sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle over top of cake. Swirl the filling into the batter with a knife. Bake at 325 degrees for 50 minutes. When done, remove from oven and poke holes in the cake.

Topping--

3 or 4 cups powdered sugar
1/2 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix powdered sugar, milk, and vanilla. Pour over hot cake. Serve hot or cold. It's best when warm.

Meet the cook—Kay and her husband James live on a farm near Bluff City. They raise cattle and also have two large chicken houses. Sometimes they gather over 20,000 eggs per day (chickens do not take weekends and holidays off). They have two sons and four grandchildren. The Nelson family was chosen Nevada County Farm Family of the Year in 1998.

RECIPE FOR PRESERVING A HUSBAND

Be careful of your selection. Do not choose too young. When once selected, give your entire thought to preparation for domestic use. Some insist on keeping them in a pickle, others are constantly getting them in hot water. This makes them sour, hard, and sometimes bitter. Even poor varieties may be made sweet, tender, and good by garnishing them with patience, well sweetened with love, and seasoned with kisses. Wrap them in a mantle of charity. Keep warm with a steady fire of domestic decoration and serve with peaches and cream. Thus prepared, they will keep for years.