

# THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Jerry McKelvy, Editor

Vol. 5 – No. 4

April, 2005

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## BLUFF SPRINGS AT THEO

By Jerry McKelvy

Most of the older folks around Bluff City have heard of the old community of Theo a few miles south of Bluff City. Theo was one of the old communities in Nevada County that no longer exists except in the minds of a few of our older citizens.

Theo was named for Theodore Lewis Gulley, son of John Gulley and Sarah Moreland and the grandson of the John Gulley (1788-1865) who started the famous Gulley plantation. When his father died in 1880, “Thee” and his three brothers continued to operate the huge family farm for their mother. The other brothers soon moved elsewhere, but Theodore remained at this location.

From public records we know that a post office was at Theo from 1904 until 1939 and the place was still shown on county maps at late as 1950. Older residents tell me they remember visiting Theo in their younger days. They tell of the post office and store, a Methodist church, a school, and several homes. There was also a grist mill nearby. The school was consolidated with Bluff City about 1930. One newspaper item I found mentions the school enrollment at Theo in 1930 was 18 students. Dr. E. E. Shell was the local physician at Theo. I’ve often heard my family mention Dr. Shell treating them for various illnesses.

Most of the old Gulley plantation is now owned by International Paper Company. The company opened a pine tree seedling nursery there in 1979. The old farm fields and sandy soil with good drainage are perfect for this type operation. The nursery recently expanded and now reaches from the old Gulley family cemetery on the north to County Road 422 on the south which was the location of Theo. No evidence remains today of this old community except for maybe a piece of broken glass or metal and the remains of a few old oak trees that have fallen in recent years due to high winds or old age.

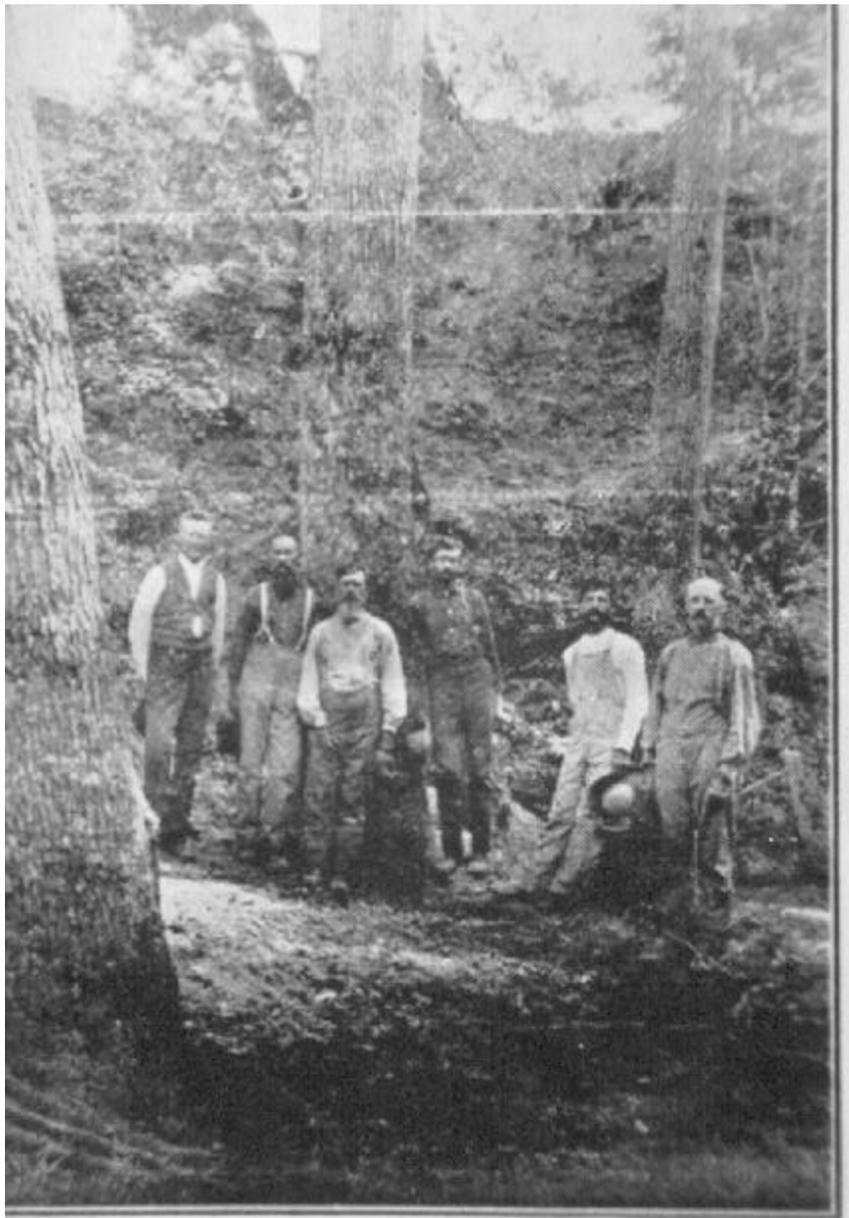
Some family names once found at or near Theo include Gulley, Knight, Kirk, McAteer, Creech, DeLaney, and Mooty.

In an article published in The Nevada News in 1906 about Union Township we find this small description of Theo: “T. L. Gulley is the postmaster at Theo and runs a big plantation. Besides raising all staple products, Mr. Gulley devotes considerable attention to fruit and has last week marketed some of the finest peaches we have seen this season. Dr. E. E. Shell is the physician at Theo and bears the reputation of a splendid gentleman and fine doctor.” Other postmasters who served at Theo include Pinkney Creech and Mary C. Henry Gulley, who along with her husband John M. Gulley, had a general store and farm at Theo.

The 1906 article also mentions a local landmark at Theo called Bluff Springs—“There is much beautiful scenery around Theo. One point of interest is Bluff Springs, where the clear sparkling water bubbles out of the base of a 60 foot hill and causes a deep ravine to join the

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waters of the sea.” A picture was included with the article showing six men of the Theo area posing at Bluff Springs.



Bluff Springs, near Theo Postoffice—G. R. Blake, J. T. Knight, E. A. Bevers, J. R. McAteer, T. L. Gulley and J. N. Kirk.

I always wondered where this Bluff Springs was located, so a few days ago I went to Theo to look for it. Using topo maps which show the location of creeks, I stopped at the spot where Theo once existed at the south end of the IP nursery. I hiked about a quarter mile north to the head of a hardwood drain which is now surrounded by the level fields prepared for growing pine seedlings. I'm almost certain this must be Bluff Springs because I found a deep ravine that fits the description in the 1906 newspaper article. The walls of the ravine

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are at least 60 feet high and surround the springs on three sides. The water still gushes forth from the base of the hill and is perfectly clear. I'm sure back in 1906 this place was used as a water supply for the folks at Theo and the spring was maintained at that time. I carefully made my way down the steep hillside for a closer look, knowing that I would have to climb back up later. I noticed that some large hardwood trees had fallen from the steep hillside covering the source of the springs. This probably happened in the summer of 2004 when a severe windstorm hit this area. This prevented me from doing a close inspection at the source of the springs, but I agree with the writer of the article that it is a point of interest and somewhat unique to that area.

Who are these men pictured at Bluff Springs? With the help of other researchers, I have been able to find some information about them.

**Green R. Blake**, a prominent planter, was born in South Carolina in 1850. His family moved to Arkansas in 1859, settling in what is now Nevada County. The children numbered ten—seven sons and three daughters. The parents were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Green Blake's father died in 1875 and his mother in 1888. Green married Della Hill in 1877. She was born in South Carolina in 1849, the daughter of Moses and Elizabeth Wesson Hill. Mr. Blake is an exceedingly prosperous man, and ranks high, both in business and social circles. He owns some valuable land and takes pride in cultivating the same. He and his wife are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (*from Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*)

Green R. Blake died in 1921 at age 70 and is buried in an unmarked grave at Ebenezer Cemetery along with Della Hill Blake who died in 1901.

**John Thomas Knight** was the son of Calvin Knight and Therelda Gandy Knight. He was born in 1855 in Tallapoosa County, Alabama and came to Ouachita County about 1870. He married Amanda Hays in 1878 and they had 10 children. He had quite a bit of land, cattle, and farm equipment. He developed cancer on his face and went to Mayo Clinic in 1915. He died Feb. 25, 1917 and is buried at Holleman Cemetery in Ouachita County. (*This information comes from Debbie Knight Phillips of Bluff City who is the great granddaughter of John Thomas Knight*)

**Ellison Asbury Beaver** (spelled Bevers in photo) was born in 1850 in Tallapoosa County, Alabama, the son of Hezekiah and Annie Laney Beaver. He married Johnnie Eliza Gillespie in 1875 and they had several children. One of his daughters, Maude Eron, married Robert E. Knight. She died when she was about 24 or 25 years old when her clothing caught fire while burning off a garden spot. She was pregnant at the time. She left a little girl 18 months old, Beatrice, who was the mother of Dr. Bill Livingston. Ellison Beaver died in 1919 of Bright's disease and is buried at Holleman Cemetery. (*This information from The Holleman Family Cemetery—A History of the Cemetery and the People Buried There by Hellice Burton and Polly Beaver*)

**J. R. McAteer**—I'm not positive who this is. In checking the 1910 census records, I find a James McAteer (age 44 with a wife named Margaret and several children). I can't be certain that he is the one in the picture.

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**Theodore Lewis Gulley** has already been mentioned in this article. The community of Theo was supposedly named after him and he was the postmaster in 1906. He was born in 1859 and married Ida M. Lee in 1893. The 1900 census shows Theodore L. Gulley (age 41), his wife, Ida M. (age 26) and one child named Jodie (age 2). I have been unable to find his burial place. (*some information from John Gulley Genealogy by Paul John*)

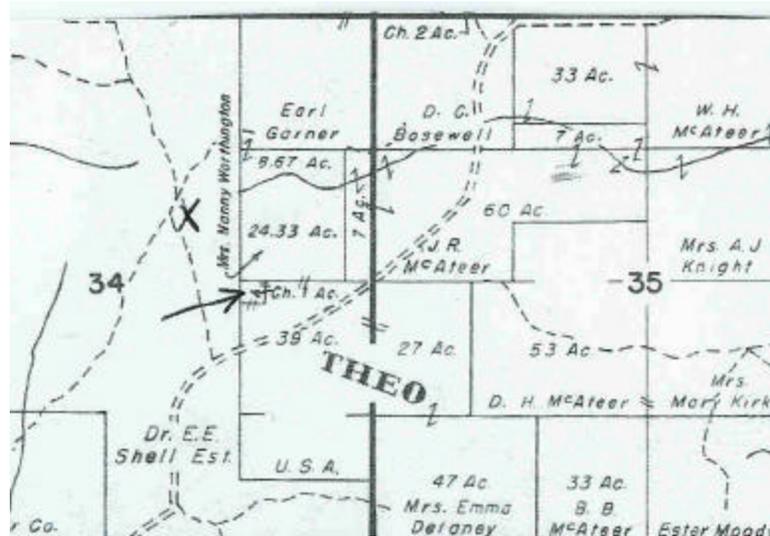
**Jasper Newton Kirk** was my great grandfather. He was born in 1853 in Georgia. He married Nancy Ann Honea in 1874. Their children were James Thomas, Amanda, Walter Newton, John Marion, Cora Alice, Laura Belle, Henry Jefferson, William Marvin, Monroe Edward, Katie May, Bessie Iler, and Mary Mabel. The family lived about one mile west of Theo and one of his descendants, Betty Kirk Thomas, still owns the old home place. (*information from Betty Kirk Thomas*)

Theo has joined the ranks of so many other small communities that once existed in Nevada County. By writing these articles, maybe some of the local history will be preserved for future generations.

## 1948 Ownership Map

Notice the small parcel identified as “Ch - 1 ac.” marked by the arrow. I assume this was the location of the church at Theo. I have marked what I believe to be Bluff Springs with an “X”.

The “Ch-2 acres” at top of map is the old location of St. John’s Church and cemetery (black).



The property identified as the Dr. E. E. Shell Estate is now part of the International Paper Co. nursery.

If anyone reading this article has any old pictures taken at Theo that might show some of the buildings such as the church, the store/post office, or people who lived there, please contact me.

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## LYNCHING AT EMMET Nevada County Picayune—12-17-1891

News came to Prescott Sunday morning of a man with a rope around his neck permanently breathing his last breath while looking up a tree for hickory nuts near Emmet. Later it was learned a dark-skinned foreigner, or half breed Indian had been lynched about

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9:00 Saturday night by a mob of infuriated men who wreaked vengeance upon a fiend incarnate.

The inhuman wretch had made an assault of two of Emmet's most estimable young ladies, Misses Hattie McFarland and Bettie McGough late Thursday afternoon, the 8<sup>th</sup> instant, while returning from school and on the way to Mrs. Roseberry's to spend the night when a short distance from Mrs. Roseberry's, the young ladies heard the fiend coming rapidly on tip-toe behind them and they ran and began screaming.

Miss Bettie McGough tripped on some brush and was caught by the assailant as she was arising. She fought him off desperately and Mr. Roseberry came to her rescue, but the deep-eyed devil made his escape. The neighborhood was aroused and went out in every direction. Several tramps were caught, but not proving the right one, they were turned loose. Friday afternoon, Mr. Dave C. Nichols of Falcon was on the way to visit his father at Spring Hill and overtook a tramp that tallied with the description of the Emmet criminal and he arrested him and on Saturday night when he was brought to Emmet, both young ladies and young Mr. Roseberry positively identified him as the gristly man. He tried to play off as dumb and refused to say a word or give his name, but as he had spoken when Dr. Nichols first met him, his 'possuming had no effect.

As stated before, he was lynched that night. On Monday, W. A. Snell, Justice of the Peace (the coroner being over 20 miles away) summoned a jury and held an inquest. A verdict was rendered "killed at the hand of unknown parties".

While we deplore mob law, and are violently opposed to it in most cases, yet we can but say in this instance, it seems to be justified. It will serve as a warning.

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### IS THAT IN THE BIBLE?

All of the following statements are found in the King James Version of the Old Testament **except ten**. Circle the numbers of the ten not found in the Bible. Check your answers on page 7.

1. Buy the truth and sell it not.
2. A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.
3. It is not good to eat much honey.
4. Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out.
5. All that glitters is not gold.
6. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein.
7. Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.
8. Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.
9. Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.
10. The chameleon may change its color, but it is the chameleon still.
11. The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.
12. It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman.
13. The glory of young men is their strength; and the beauty of old men is their grey head.
14. Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow.

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15. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty.
16. Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.
17. Open rebuke is better than secret love.
18. A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.
19. The venom of a female viper is more poisonous than that of a male viper.
20. Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter.
21. There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceedingly wise.
22. Iron sharpeneth iron.
23. Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing.
24. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.
25. Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.
26. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full.
27. For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.
28. That which is crooked cannot be made straight.
29. The eyes of man are never satisfied.
30. Cleanliness is next to godliness.
31. A man's pride shall bring him low.
32. He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread.
33. The sleep of a laboring man is sweet.
34. To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven.
35. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it.
36. Two are better than one.
37. Be not rash with thy mouth and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.
38. Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.
39. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.
40. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.
41. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.
42. Spare the rod and spoil the child.
43. A wise son maketh a glad father.
44. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
45. Is there any taste in the white of an egg?
46. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
47. None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing.
48. A small leak will sink a great ship.

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### EARLY PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS AT BLUFF CITY (from ledger in County Clerk's Office- Prescott)

Dr. A. Harris – 1881

Dr. Charles M. Norwood – 1881

Dr. G. N. Gill – 1892

Dr. J. L. Hesterly – 1895

Dr. E. L. Beck – 1895

Dr. J. W. Green – 1896

Dr. E. S. Whaley had an office in Bluff City in 1916 (this from a local news column)

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I sometimes come across some unusual things at work like this pine tree I found near Bluff City with a piece of iron pipe through the center. It was some hunter's way of blocking access to his hunting territory. A cable with a chain attached was inserted through the pipe and locked. The hunters have now constructed a permanent gate, but left this tree standing with the iron pipe inside. If the tree doesn't die, the bark could eventually cover the pipe. Imagine what could happen someday if a saw hit the iron pipe.

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### Answers to quiz:

**1.** (Proverbs 23:23); **2.** (Proverbs 25:11); **3.** (Proverbs 25:27); **4.** Proverbs 26:20); **5.** (Shakespeare); **6.** Proverbs 26:27); **7.** (Proverbs 27:1); **8.** (Proverbs 22:28); **9.** (Proverbs 22:6); **10.** (Shakespeare); **11.** (Proverbs 22:2); **12.** (Proverbs 21:19); **13.** (Proverbs 20:29); **14.** (Helen Keller); **15.** (Proverbs 20:13); **16.** (Proverbs 20:1); **17.** (Proverbs 27:5); **18.** (Proverbs 27:15); **19.** (Ben Butler); **20.** (Proverbs 30:33); **21.** (Proverbs 30:24); **22.** (Proverbs 27:17); **23.** (Proverbs 18:22); **24.** (Proverbs 22:1); **25.** Ecclesiastes 12:13); **26.** (Ecclesiastes 1:7); **27.** (Ecclesiastes 7:20); **28.** (Ecclesiastes 1:15); **29.** (Proverbs 27:20); **30.** (John Wesley); **31.** (Proverbs 29:23); **32.** (Proverbs 28:19); **33.** (Ecclesiastes 5:12); **34.** (Ecclesiastes 3:1); **35.** (Ecclesiastes 5:4); **36.** (Ecclesiastes 4:9); **37.** (Ecclesiastes 5:2); **38.** (Shakespeare); **39.** (Proverbs 14:12); **40.** (Proverbs 18:8); **41.** (Proverbs 15:3); **42.** Unknown—see Proverbs 13:24 and Proverbs 23:13); **43.** (Proverbs 10:1); **44.** (Ben Franklin); **45.** (Job 6:6); **46.** (Psalms 121:1); **47.** (Ben Franklin); **48.** (Unknown)

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## PEANUT BUTTER CREAM PIE

2 Tbsp. flour  
2 Tbsp. cornstarch  
½ tsp. salt  
2/3 cup sugar  
2 cups milk  
3 eggs, separated  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 Tbsp. butter  
½ cup peanut butter

9 inch baked pie shell

### MUST FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FOR THIS TO COME OUT RIGHT

Blend first four ingredients in saucepan. Add milk and cook over low heat until thickened, stirring often. Stir in a little of hot mixture into beaten egg yolks and add to saucepan. Cook while stirring over low heat for two minutes. Remove from heat and blend in vanilla, butter, and peanut butter. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Pour cream mixture into pie shell. Serve cold.

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## LEMON COOKIES

1 Pkg. Duncan Hines Lemon Supreme Cake Mix  
1 egg, slightly beaten  
1 8 oz. carton Cool Whip  
Powdered sugar

Mix cake mix, egg, and Cool Whip together. Coat hands with powdered sugar. Spoon mixture and roll in a ball. Press with wet fork coated with sugar. Bake approximately 10 minutes on a greased cookie sheet at 350 degrees.

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## YOU ARE A LOUSY COOK IF .....

- Your son goes outside to make mud pies and the rest of the family grabs their forks and follow him.
- Your kid's favorite drink is Alka-Seltzer.
- Your kids get even with the neighborhood bully by inviting him over for dinner.
- Your husband refers to the smoke detector as the oven timer.
- Your kids know what "peas porridge in a pot nine days old" tastes like.

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"No man is lonely while eating spaghetti—it requires so much attention." *Christopher Morley*