

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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FAMILY FEUD ACCOUNTS FOR FATAL DUEL

COUSINS KILL EACH OTHER

(from the Dec. 7, 1933 issue of The Nevada News)

Hope, Dec. 2, 1922 – A family feud is believed to account for the pistol duel enacted at Fulton, Hempstead County, shortly after midnight Saturday morning, which resulted in the death of both combatants who were cousins, and the arrest of the father of one of the men suspected of having a part in the encounter. One of the duelists was killed instantly. The other lived several hours and though conscious, steadfastly refused to make a statement.

The shooting occurred about 1 a. m. following a quarrel at a dance which the cousins had attended earlier in the night. Elbert Seymour, aged 40, a farmer and Hanan (Jack) Turner, aged 30, a laborer, killed each other.

Seymour was shot one time, the bullet piercing his heart and killing him instantly. Turner was hit three times. One bullet entered his breast just below his heart and the other two entered both thighs.

A young hitch-hiker, who was standing near the station when the two men met, is said to have been the only person who witnessed the shooting. He said he turned his back to them when they began shooting at each other and was unable to give any definite information.

Turner was brought to the Julia Chester hospital here, where he remained unconscious up to the time of his death a few hours later. It is said he made no statement.

Deputy Sheriff Ed Van Sickle and Ellen Shipp arrested B. A. Turner, father of Hanan Turner, about noon today on a warrant charging him with accessory to murder. He is being held. The finding of squirrel shot in Seymour's body caused a suspicion that Turner's father had discharged a shotgun at the duelists. After an investigation, Dr. J. H. Weaver, coroner, held that no inquest was necessary.

The cousins and their families have resided in Fulton for more than 20 years. The shooting is said to have been the sequel to a feud which has existed between the two families for several years.

THE ODD COUPLE

(from the Nevada News in 1931)

The largest and smallest men at the University of Arkansas are roommates. They are W. H. "Fatty" Clark, a 352 pound youth from Pawhuska, Oklahoma and little Maurice Finn, 100 pounds, from El Dorado.

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Clark is claimed to be the largest football player in the world. He earned a letter as tackle on the Razorback Eleven last season. The two have been eating at the same table and sleeping in the same room for the past four months. They are buddies in every sense of the word.

Neither seems to mind the size of the other. Clark's massive arm is much larger than Finn's leg. "Fatty", who is six feet one inch is nearly two feet taller than Finn. The big fellow's size 17 collar will easily slip over Finn's head. The smaller member of the partnership can lap Clark's trousers about his waist twice. Finn's overcoat would not even cover Clark's back and his shirt would hardly make a good patch on the one worn by Clark. Both students wear tailor made clothing through necessity.

PETS

By Jerry McKelvy

I think every kid needs some type of pet to call his or her own. Besides being a good companion, having a pet to take care of teaches a kid valuable lessons on responsibility. The first real pet I remember was my dog, Smokey. I was looking through some old pictures the other day and came across a couple that show Smokey and me back when I was a kid. The main thing I remember about Smokey was that he liked to ride on my wagon. We had lots of fun together as I was growing up. I'm not sure just how long Smokey lived. I know that in his later years he got one of his back legs tangled up in a fence which resulted in the loss of the leg. He recovered just fine and learned to get around with three legs.



Smokey and Me - 1949



Smokey with me and my younger brother, Billy – 1952

I can remember several other dogs we had around the farm. We loved all of them—some more than others. Sometimes dogs have some undesirable habits like chasing the chickens or chasing cars. Either one of these habits could result in bad luck for the dog. Most dogs will bark when someone drives up which is a good thing, but some like to bark at night while everyone is trying to sleep. This gets to be a problem sometimes. I can remember getting up at night and shutting the dogs up in the smokehouse just so I could get some sleep.

For some reason dogs like to ride in trucks. Once they get used to doing that, they want to jump in anytime someone decides to go somewhere. The dog will usually stick his head

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out and let the wind blow in his face or pace from one side of the truck to the other to make sure he doesn't miss something.

Some people like a large dog like a German shepherd. They make good watch dogs and most people will respect a dog that size. Some like Dobermans or one of the various breeds of bulldogs. Others like more gentle breeds like a black Lab. If small children will be around the dog, it is important to pick a suitable breed for a pet. We have all heard some of the horror stories involving dogs that attack people causing severe injuries or even death. Many people want a small house dog for a pet or a companion. These are especially good for elderly people who live alone. They provide companionship and some studies show that petting a dog will lower a person's blood pressure. Some folks take their dogs with them just about everywhere they go. Some people will absolutely refuse to allow a dog inside the house. Some will let the dog only in certain parts of the house. All this has to be worked out to everyone's satisfaction to have peace and harmony in the home.

Dogs are expensive if taken care of properly. A pure-bred dog is expensive to buy and then there are the expenses for food, medications, shots, flea and tick control, etc. Once a person gets attached to a pet, they usually don't mind the expenses and will treat the pet almost like one of the family. Most of the dogs we had were just mixed-breed dogs or maybe one that showed up one day and decided to stay. Once you feed a stray dog, you will be pretty much stuck with it.

We had many dogs over the years. I remember Shep, Lady Ann, Missy, Brandy, Kit, Prince, Max, Rusty, Pluto, Ben, Jake, Docky, Caesar, and Uno. Our Boxer named Brandy was known for burying things. She would dig a hole and bury live terrapins and quart Coke bottles. Ben was just a regular old dog, but unlike most dogs, he got along well with the cats. Sometimes we would find him and a kitten sleeping together. Prince and Max were German shepherds and were the biggest cowards. I've seen them being chased around the yard by a little Chihuahua yapping at their heels. Finally they would lie down and hold the little dog down with one of their paws. It was just a game to them. Some of our dogs were good squirrel dogs and some just passed the time eating, sleeping, and barking. I remember one time we sold one of our good squirrel dogs and then wished we had him back.

Dogs get old just like we do and sometimes get a little grouchy in their old age. They pretty much want to be left alone. When our pets passed on, we buried them in a special place on the farm. It was always a sad occasion and was like losing a member of the family. Some got killed by automobiles and others just died from old age. We have pictures of almost all of them and every time we see one, it brings back memories of our experiences with that particular dog.

Since I am writing about dogs, I am going to reprint a poem I used in an earlier issue. This poem was in the March 13, 1923 issue of *The Camden Evening News* and was written by Edmund Leamy.

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ANY BOY'S DOG

He's black and he's brown, and he's no breed at all,
But he comes at my whistle, he leaps to my call.
He's clumsy, ungainly, and huge as to size,
But his gentle dog-heart shines from out of his eyes.

He's useless for hunting, for tricks, and the like,
But finest of pals when we're out on a hike.
He runs far ahead in mad, rollicking play,
Then waits till I join him there, perky and gay.

When I'm sad and unhappy, he snuggles my hand,
And he does all he can to say, "I understand".
And oft when we sit where the fire shadows fall,
I forget he's a mongrel and no breed at all.

For his heart which is big as the rest of his size
Is bursting with love, and shines out from his eyes.
And pal of my hikes, with his nose moist and cold,
I'd not trade my dog for his weight in pure gold.

THINGS YOU CAN LEARN FROM A DOG!

1. When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
2. Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
3. Take naps often and stretch before rising.
4. Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.
5. If you want what lies buried, dig until you find it.
6. Be loyal.
7. When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently.
8. On hot days, drink lots of water and lay under a shady tree.
9. Every once in a while, put your head out the window and feel the air on your face and hair.
10. Have a favorite toy.
11. Don't hold a grudge.
12. Let others know when they invade your territory.

If you had a special pet when you were a child or if you have one now, send me an email or letter and tell me about your pet. Include the pet's name and mention anything unusual about it. It doesn't have to be a long story—just a sentence or two will do. Maybe you have an unusual or exotic pet or one with an unusual name. Maybe your dog is named Fido, but you spell it Phydeaux. That would make it even more interesting.

I'll publish the responses I get in a future issue, but don't wait too long. I'm counting on you to come through. I'd like to have as many responses as possible. You can sign your message with your first name, your full name, or just your initials. I'll print it however you

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prefer along with the state you live in. That's the way it will appear in the paper. This will also let me know who might be reading this paper on the Internet and can be a way for you to preserve the memory of your favorite pet. My email address is: jmckelvy@cei.net or you can send it by snail mail.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GORDON H. IRVIN (PART ONE)

You may remember reading in a past issue (June, 2004) of the story of the Fielding Irvins, a pioneer family that settled about four miles west of Bluff City. Joseph Lonnor Irvin wrote a touching story of all the hardships his family faced during the early days. Gordon H. Irvin was a nephew of Joe Irvin and he continues the story by including in his autobiography some of his memories of his childhood in the Rocky Hill community of Nevada County. Gordon was born May 30, 1908 and wrote this autobiography in 1963. He is now deceased.

In this year 1963, it must indeed be difficult for our children to imagine all the hardships and privations suffered by those of the late nineteenth century and even yet by my own brothers and sisters but perhaps to a lesser degree.

Let us not forget that the way of life is to remember mostly the good things and happy times and to almost forget those long years of hard labor and all the forlorn moments when there was not much to hope for.

The span of years covered in the following pages is not more than ten or twelve or from the year 1914 to about 1926. Since it is from memory that I write, it follows that the events set forth are only as a child saw and remembered them. Furthermore, any speculations made or conclusions arrived at are just my own and would not necessarily be the same for instance, as those of my brothers and sisters.

At best it is only part of the story on one generation's productive years, those of my parents and the beginning of life for another, my brothers', sister's, and mine. These are the details of a few things that happened to us which might otherwise, and still may be, forgotten. In a sense, it may seem like a tragic story incorporating the futile efforts of a man, my father, who, born in the wilderness, tried for a spell to wrestle away from God that which was His and lost. He came away from the battle at last weary and beaten and old. The silent wilderness is still there with maybe a few broken stones and abandoned hut as mute ashes of evidence that once he labored there. Now, soon shall vanish from the earth all trace of his toil to be resolved again to the primeval. My father's was the dark portion of the journey along the rugged trail of civilization. Only his ax and shovel had finally turned from stone to steel in four thousand years. He wandered through the valley of doubt and indecision of primitive man. The trail was marked where it left the valley but he was too old and missed the turn. He never gazed upward around the next bend to glimpse the lofty peaks or high plateaus that loomed near at hand.

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Listen to the song your heart is singing. Come with me now and let us find a refuge from the world of strife and turmoil, a rendezvous safe from the mad frenzy and confusion of life. Let us forget for a spell, if we can, the sounds outside--the meshing of gears, the screaming of tires, and the wail of sirens wild. The march of time--nay the racing years-- fly by down the track of memory. Let us pick its path and tread its way back through the years like the restless raindrop on a green oak leaf that disdains all comfort save on the broad bosom of the deep.

There in the quiet cool of the evening, and the sparkling white sands flecked where the lengthening shadows fall and a crumbling cottage reposes snug in the arms of venerable oaks, there shall the spirit find a sheltered home and welcome rest. Let nature have its way, cease vain struggling, nestle with me softly in the cradle of long ago. Listen to life's pensive melody.

Walk slowly with me and listen to the whispering pines or sit by the babbling brook and watch the tiny red horse hold its own against the current. Follow along the fresh plowed furrow and feel the cool soft loam between your bare toes. Spy the timid field mouse as she gathers courage to steal the grain of corn and make a skid in the row. Let us call the bob-white forth from the hedges when the evening sun is low and see how foolish he looks when he finds there is no waiting mate. And when autumn leaves have turned to red and gold, we'll take a trip through the hills to gather chinky-pins and hickory nuts and not return until we have gone on down into the bottoms where the scaly-barks grow. Perhaps we'll pause by the cypress banks on Caney Creek and catch a glimpse of the lazy catfish sleeping there. See the collie, Bess on the trail ahead, the friendly dog who hopes to scare a cottontail before we are home as the shadows fall.

Shall we stop and listen while nature sings, for soon that song shall end. Her voice, once so soft and clear, shall soon fade away to dwell in silence forevermore deep only in the hearts of those who were there, a haunting refrain in this, our restless world.

Our community was little different from many others etched into the white sand and red clay hills of southwest Arkansas. Four or five of these settlements might be served by one rural mail route. Ours, along with several others, was Route No. 1, Cale. No visible signs other than maybe a creek or small river marked their boundaries. They all had names, however, as most things do, and were well known to people living as far as thirty miles away. Their names are not recorded in history as far as I know. I mention this because, as will be noted, there was or is some controversy over their nomenclature. Generally the one room school and church or churches were located near the center of a community.

In the early days the nearest church to us was Ebenezer. As the population grew, there was a need for a church closer than four miles away. My father, being a religious man, collaborated with God, put up the money, and with help from a few of the neighbors, built a church about one mile from our home. He named it Rocky Hill because it was located on top of the highest, rockiest hill in the area. Many of the surrounding communities had unusual names such as Bad Cow, Possum Trot, Terrapin Neck, and as everyone knows, Walnut and Pine Ridge. I doubt if anyone really knows from whence these names came but they were

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very odd. Now, the younger set in our neighborhood didn't want to live and die in such a mediocre place as Rocky Hill and so they called it Goose Ankle. And to this day, if you are inside the church, you call it Rocky Hill, but if you are outside, you are from Goose Ankle.

It is not always so easy to pin down the origin or genesis of a name. For instance, I only recently learned that if you cross a billy goat with an owl, you get a hoot-en-nanny and I still don't know where the hooky-bushes came from.

Long ago, before my time, a young man and woman walked into the dark wilderness with an ax and a hope and started to clear away the underbrush. At length there was enough room and a cabin with clapboard walls and a rough pine floor was raised in the small clearing. Its shelter was on hand-riven boards and it stood on piers of flat sandstones stacked two feet high so that you could see right through underneath except where the clay-covered stick chimney stood. As the seasons came and went a lean-to for a kitchen, a back bedroom, and a front porch were added while one by one every two or three years we children came into that home and claimed it and it claimed us and the clearing in the woods widened.

Scattered at random but not far away were the typical small farm structures—the horse barn, cow barn, goat house, chicken houses, and well sheds. A single building with lean-tos on three sides stood close to the back door. This was our smokehouse, potato shed, work shop, and wash shelter. The walls of all these buildings were made of pine logs either whole or split in half and their roofs were covered with split cypress boards. After sixty years some of these shacks are still standing though they were never painted and little or no repair has ever been made to them. When the timber and small brush was cleared away for the home site, a number of large white oaks were left standing spaced about one hundred feet apart. In summer this beautiful oak grove all but conceals the brown moss-covered buildings that nestle beneath their boughs.

I don't know how much land was owned or controlled by my paternal grandfather, but our 120 acre tract was, at one time, a part of the old Fielding Irvin homestead. Our house, mentioned above, stood in the northeast corner of our eastern most forty, the west forty joined directly in back of this and the south forty acres was adjacent to the west or back forty. Thus it, the three forties, formed an ell shaped tract extending considerably more than one half mile from our house to the far corner of our land. Not all this land was ever cultivated at one time. Indeed, some of it never has been and never will be tilled. As will be explained later, it is a heartbreaking job to clear timber land for farming, moreover some of it is too hilly, rocky, or poor to struggle with. Still, about eighty percent of our tract had at one time or another been cleared and cultivated. What we call the "Pine Field" was not really a field at all but a dense pine forest covering perhaps thirty acres of the west forty. My father had cleared and plowed this land when he was a boy, but now the pines are from two to three feet in diameter growing tall and straight. It seemed to me then, and it still does, that our greatest problem was, first to clear the land, and second, to keep it cleared and I don't know which was the greater task. In summer our woods relentlessly encroached upon us and infiltrated our cleared areas and in winter we struck back as best we could. It was a life of the seasons.

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This was my home, my country, my wide world as far as a boy could see and more than he could explore in a day or in a week. He knew where the bluebirds built in the spring and where the slate clay lay hidden in the banks, what trees he could climb and why. He remembered the hill from whence the summer thunder storms came and which side of the house was warm when the cold winter winds came down upon us. All these things and many more filled his mind by day and his dreams by night with never a care of what lay beyond these sandy hills.

(to be continued in the next issue)



BETHEL CHURCH

Bethel Church, also known as the Westmoreland Church, was located about two and one half miles north of Morris in Nevada County near the Westmoreland Cemetery. Bethel School was at the same location. I was told that the buildings were identical except for the steeple. This style of building with the door at the corner of the structure is not very common.

This church was built about 1914 by Brycen (Bryce) Barham, a preacher who had lost his right hand in a sawmill accident. His wife, Ethel Hardwick Barham was also a preacher. I have no information about what happened to this building.