

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Jerry McKelvy, Editor

Vol. 6 – No. 3

March, 2006

*****<http://sandyland.nevada.ar.us/>*****



This picture of the Nevada County court house is from a post card. This was the court house previous to the present one.

From The Nevada News – May 5, 1912

The new courthouse for Nevada County has been completed. It is a handsome and imposing structure. It cost about \$60,000 which appears to be money well spent. It is nicely furnished with durable and elegant fixtures and is absolutely fireproof. It was opened to the public on May 17, 1912. The public congratulated County Judge Denman and the contractor from Little Rock for their part in getting this accomplished.

From The Nevada News – 1963

County Judge Mack Hillery informs county residents that the courthouse has been declared unsafe to public health and safety. The building is unsafe and can not be repaired. He asks voters to approve a tax increase to match a \$159,500 grant to build a new courthouse.

From The Nevada News – March 12, 1964

The new courthouse is under construction. County Judge was Mack Hillery said the county received a \$159,000 grant matched dollar for dollar. The total cost was \$300,000; Voters approved a tax increase by a margin of four to one to build the new courthouse.

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

VISIT OF FRENCH PRINCE TO CAMDEN IS RECALLED **(from the Jan. 17, 1934 issue of The Camden News)**

Injury of Princess de Polignac of Paris and her brother, Jacques Dupuy, French publisher when their airplane plunged into Biscayne Bay waters near Miami, Florida Tuesday recalled the Civil War activities of Prince de Polignac who was stationed in Camden for several years when he fought on the side of the Confederacy.

Mrs. Dora T. Sifford, state historian of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and an authority on Southern history for Camden and Arkansas, said today that this princess is a lineal descendant of the Prince that fought on the side of the South in the war between the states. Mrs. Sifford didn't know the exact relationship because the age of the princess was not given.

Prince de Polignac came to this section shortly before the start of the Civil War. He called himself the "New Napoleon" according to Mrs. Sifford, who collected historical data of this period and corresponded with his daughter, Princess de Polignac for many years. He spent a great deal of his time in New Orleans and he espoused the cause of the South at the outbreak of the war.

Because of his distinguished service at the Battle of Mansfield, Louisiana, he was given the rank of general and presented with a sword. Because of this honor, the Prince later named his only son, Mansfield de Polignac, Mrs. Sifford recalled. Later his daughter, Princess de Polignac came to America after her father's death and presented this sword to the Confederate museum at Richmond, Virginia where it remains today. She said it was her father's dying wish that the sword be returned to the South. This was in 1914 or 1915, Mrs. Sifford believes.

The princess was a musician of note and composed a piece of music dedicated to the Battle of Mansfield. She sent a copy of this to Mrs. Sifford. The two corresponded for many years although Mrs. Sifford did not have the pleasure of meeting the princess.

During the war Prince de Polignac was stationed here and spent much of his time at the old Bragg place west of Camden. He was very popular and won the hearts of the Camden citizens, especially the members of the fair sex. A grand ball was given in his honor and the Camden belles looked forward to getting a dance with the prince. They attired themselves in their best gowns, but were doomed to bitter disappointment. The prince sat in his chair throughout the entire proceedings and did not dance at all during the entire evening.

At the close of the war, he left Camden and later returned to his native France. He always retained a fond memory of the South, according to his daughter and Mrs. Sifford.

I had never heard of this Confederate general, so I decided to do a little research on the Internet. Here is what I learned from various web sites.

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

His full name was Camille Armand Jules Marie de Polignac

He was born in France in 1832.

He was chief of staff for Generals. P. G. T. Beauregard and Braxton Bragg.

He had the nickname “Prince Polecat” by his men which was a nickname of respect—not derision. His soldiers could not cope with his long French name and gave him the nickname. Speaking of the battle of Mansfield, a Union soldier said Polignac’s Confederates were “charging like demons” and moving forward “like a cyclone”.

“Polignac was a true type of a Frenchman. He was about forty-five years of age, medium size with a long sharp nose, and he resembled Napoleon Bonaparte's portraits. He spoke the French and English languages fluently, and when in camp, was no better dressed than one of his orderlies. Those not knowing him would take him for a common soldier.

“Polignac was every inch a soldier, and although a (French) volunteer on the Southern side, he went at it with a vim, and throughout that memorable campaign, displayed great heroism and great soldierly qualities. Before the troops became acquainted with him, they daily ridiculed him; but when they saw his skill as an officer, commanding in the field, admiration of (Gen.) Polignac soon followed. If the leaders of the Confederacy had placed a few similar men in command of its armies, the lives of 10,000 brave men would not have been sacrificed by unskilled generalship.”

He went to France in March, 1865 to try to get help for the Confederacy from Napoleon III, but learned of Lee’s surrender and decided to retire to his estate in France.

He married Marie Adolphine Longerberger in 1874 who died at the birth of their daughter; he then married Elizabeth Margaret Knight in 1883 and they had two daughters and one son.

He died in 1913 and was the last surviving Confederate major general. He was buried in Germany

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GORDON H. IRVIN (PART 11) **The story of the Irvin family near Bluff City in the 1920's**

OIL AND STUFF

Most people’s hind sights are a lot better than their foresights anyway and, I reckon, my Father was no different than most in this respect. But, he was a man who could get by on less than any man I ever saw. It has already been noted that cotton was our cash crop and

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

that we produced on an average of three or four bales per year—not per acre. The cash return on this varied from year to year depending on the buyers Jake Suckle and Joe Boswell and the market place, usually two or three hundred dollars. Some years we did not make even one bale of cotton due to floods and boll weevils. It has also been noted that we tend to remember the good and happy times, and while the above hardships are true, I cannot recall that the lean years were much different from the rest.

It was during one of these rainy years that the oil boom hit this part of Arkansas. Our farm of 120 acres was thirty miles west of Smackover, Louann, and Snow Hill discoveries. No one had ever heard of so much oil, money, or evil as flowed from these cesspools of iniquity. There was robbing and killing every night. Several of our neighbors lost their lives in gun fights. Fabulous fortunes were made in a day and lost just as quickly. There was no oil conservation and I have seen wells so close together that their derricks interlaced at the bottom. Leases and royalties were bought for \$100.00 per acre and sold for ten times that much. With the spreading of the fields and the mushrooming of new discoveries, it soon became evident to prophesiers and soothsayers that oil was everywhere, even as far away as our farm. Furthermore, we learned that no one should take what was offered, but always ask for more no matter what the offer. Papa thought he had the best saying of all and he did say it loud. He said that if a three year lease and 1/8 royalty was worth \$100.00 per acre to a lease hound, then it was worth that much to him. I didn't get the meaning of this, but that is what he said. He stood to his word, resisted mightily, and was able to countervail any and all offers. When the going got hot, a few of the weak-kneed neighbors succumbed and sold. They paid off their mortgages and had a fine time. Our farm was not mortgaged and Papa thought we were happy enough and I guess we were too.

Anyhow, the money we might have received would have amounted to more than all the cotton we could have raised in fifty years. Now, I wonder just what we would have done with fifteen or twenty thousand dollars.

HUNTING

Occasionally, we were able to make a few dollars for Christmas spending. The girls picked, cleaned, and sold peanuts and the boys went possum hunting and sold the pelts. A good pelt might bring as much as \$2.00 and it was possible to catch four or five by midnight for the first few nights.

There is something to be said about a good old possum hunt on a cold moonlit night, but maybe the less said the better. Still, to stand on a lonely hill and look across the quiet frosty valleys all around gives one a feeling of smallness and solitude. When we reached the hunting ground, the dogs were sent out on their mission while we built a fire and roasted peanuts and potatoes. Soon you might hear the trail bark and before long the intent tree bark, and then it was time to go. The opossum is either the oldest or has been able to survive the longest of any other animal on earth. Yet, he is considered one of the silliest. He will climb the smallest tree he can find and only a little higher than the dog can jump as if he is hoping you will put him out by the tail rather than shake him out.

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

The dogs were not prone to take undue interest in polecats, but one time they did bay one that holed up in a clay root. They soon lost interest, however, and went away vomiting. Knowing the value of the pelt, Hollie and Victor were not about to go away or give up. They sent Edward back to the house to get a grubbing hoe and dug the rascal out. As it turned out, there was no profit in the operation because Mama had to burn Hollie's clothes and threatened to burn him also.

My father enjoyed hunting and often went with us at night in lieu of squirrel hunt which he dearly loved. He loved to train a pup to hunt squirrels and was a crack shot with a good gun. He would deliberately aim to cripple a squirrel so that it would bite the playful pup and thereby instill into his mind an abiding hate for that animal. As conservative as my father was, he never complained about the money we spent on shotgun shells nor the time spent in the woods hunting squirrels.

MAMA'S VOICE

Some reference has already been made as to the size of the old farm and that it is almost a mile from the dwelling to the farthest field. Ours was perhaps a little larger than average for the community. With this in mind, it follows that as one jogged along the eroded, winding wagon roads, he was apt to pass a farm house about every half mile. If it was at night or early morning, the sound of an approaching rig could be heard from afar giving the children and grownups too, I expect, ample time to preempt vantage points to their liking in anticipation of his passing.

How poignantly revealing each sound was to our sensitive ears. The whistle of a far off train, the howl of a dog in the evening, the hoot of an owl in the hills at night, the sound of distant voices like Mr. Lum Johnson hollering along the rail fence and down the trail to his back field—each had a story it told bringing with it, to the mind's eye, a picture of the place from whence it came.

We knew nothing of the laws that govern the propagation and speed of sound. Yet have I wondered as I watched our neighbor chop wood and waited for the sound of his axe to cross the valley between or stood on the hill and yelled into the dark pine forest to hear the echo come bounding back. As the days lengthened and summer wore on, the heat at noon subdued all sounds and seemed to drop them softly in the dust at one's feet. At this time of day the good housewives were wont to call their families in from the fields for dinner. Various signals were employed and if you would listen, you could tell from the sound what family was being called in. One might beat an old plow hung from a rafter, Aunt Deller rang a huge bell, Mag Johnson blew a conk shell. My mother considered all these devices as just so much claptrap or useless paraphernalia. I see her now as she would step out of the kitchen door, dust her apron, take a wide stance, belly forward, shoulders back and hands on hips and simply call out WILLLLL-IEEEEE. If the air was clear you could hear her from two or three miles away and in the dead heat at noon, we had no trouble catching her voice from the fathermost fields. Of course, we were listening—in fact that was all we were doing at that time of day and would all join in a loud chorus answering her, not that she heard or cared one way or the other. The real purpose of our enthusiasm was to make sure that Papa knew we had

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

heard and that we knew he had also heard. He was the kind of person who would have you finish a row if he could get away with it.

Since we are on the subject of Mama's voice, it might be well to tell you a little about the advent of the telephone as the two are somewhat related. You can't imagine how excited everyone was, especially the women, all over the neighborhood. Some of the men were skeptical, but most of them went along. Instead of having a phone number, you had a ring or combination or rings which were cranked out like a long or a short. Aunt Dellers' ring was "short-long-short", Aunt Lizer's was "long-short-long", and ours was "short-long-short-short", or as we said, "short long and two shorts". You got to sort of thinking about families by sound brands and picturing certain households by the number of rings coming in on the phone. I think of Mama's voice when I think of the old phone and especially the crank. The wire coming in to our house was bent at the end and this bend was simply hooked into a wire loop at the corner of the porch. During a thunderstorm, the phone was unhooked and thrown into the yard because they said it might set the house on fire or maybe ruin the phone. When the storm had passed, we re-hooked the wire. In view of the fact the wire was always covered with sand and grit, I expect the connection was not too good. There were two generally accepted methods of overcoming or trying to overcome this slight obstacle. One which Mama did not favor was to jiggle the receiver hook up and down incessantly throughout the conversation. Her favorite and the one she always used was the so-called crank and yell technique. It is accomplished by yelling two words and spinning the crank twice around. She was very adept at this and invariably got her message through. But like Papa, she would have done better by coming out on the porch and forgetting about the phone. During any one of the important message sessions—and they were nearly all that kind—Papa would be the first to quit the house and us kids would follow one by one as the terrible din increased. She stood out in the community as a great message relay and would not hesitate to volunteer her services at a moments hesitation or to explain the meaning of any word that was not clearly understood right off. Even today when I hear static on the radio, I think of the grit on the phone line, the crank, and Mama's voice. She never quite got over the day they put the switchboard in Aunt Lizer's house instead of ours although Aunt Lizer was in the logical place for it. After this happened she would still listen in but would not relay except by request. You could tell by her voice that her heart was not in it. The timber had died out and gone was the resonance. The system had its heyday, but its peak has passed. Interest declined generally, the lines were not maintained, and soon the whole service was abandoned.

(to be continued)

SWEET SMELLING JAIL

(from the 3-18-1940 issue of *The Camden News*)

The city of Hot Springs claims to have the sweetest smelling jail in America, but from all reports, the basis for that claim is soon to be removed.

An odor very strongly reminiscent of five and ten cent store perfume simulating orange blossoms now pervades the city Bastille. It comes from a new perfumed disinfectant that is

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

being used in place of creosote, kerosene, and carbolic acid that formerly kept the cells sanitary.

The prison's fragrance, however, is not proving popular. Much of the complaint is coming from the married members of the police department who say they are having a tough time explaining to their wives the scent clinging to their clothing when they go home at night.

Commissioner Rasberry expressed the fear that crooks from distant points might be lured to the local jail to escape the odors in their hometown jugs.

In all likelihood, the jail will again have its accustomed smell of creosote and unwashed prisoners within a few days.

The Handwriting On The Wall

A weary mother returned from the store,
Lugging groceries through the kitchen door.
Awaiting her arrival was her 8 year old son,
Anxious to relate what his younger brother had done.

"While I was out playing and Dad was on a call,
T.J. took his crayons and wrote on the wall!
It's on the new paper you just hung in the den.
I told him you'd be mad at having to do it again."

She let out a moan and furrowed her brow,
"Where is your little brother right now?"
She emptied her arms and with a purposeful stride,
She marched to his closet where he had gone to hide.

She called his full name as she entered his room.
He trembled with fear--he knew that meant doom!
For the next ten minutes, she ranted and raved
About the expensive wallpaper and how she had saved.

Lamenting all the work it would take to repair,
She condemned his actions and total lack of care.
The more she scolded, the madder she got,
Then stomped from his room, totally distraught!

She headed for the den to confirm her fears.
When she saw the wall, her eyes flooded with tears.
The message she read pierced her soul with a dart.
It said, "I love Mommy," surrounded by a heart.

Well, the wallpaper remained, just as she found it,
With an empty picture frame hung to surround it.
A reminder to her, and indeed to all,
Take time to read the handwriting on the wall.

~Author Unknown~

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

BLUFF CITY NEWS

JANUARY- FEBRUARY, 2006--

A baby shower was held in January for Kelley Carman, wife of Britt Carman. Many attended and she received a good selection of gifts. Britt and Kelley are presently at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri where Britt is stationed.

The extreme drought seems to be over. Bluff City received over four inches of rain in January. That's more than we got in the last three months of 2005.

Mrs. Venita Graham Kendrick passed away Jan. 3. Burial was at Bluff City.

Mrs. Mabel Hawley, sister of Margie Knight, passed away on Feb. 6. Burial was at Bluff City Cemetery.

Dwight Beavers of Camden died Feb. 19 in an auto accident. Burial was at Bluff City.

10 TEN YEARS AGO—

Several from Bluff City went to Ashdown to see Stacy Hildebrand perform at the Ashdown Jamboree. He is the son of Rex and Sandra Hildebrand.

BLUFF CITY IN 1966—

White Oak Lake State Park was dedicated Dec. 7, 1966. Gov. Faubus delivered an address to a large crowd and music was provided by the Prescott High School Band.

BLUFF CITY IN 1948—

The Prescott Hour, a radio program, will feature Paul Adams of the Forestry Commission nursery and the Bluff City Quartet—Mrs. Wilma Knight, Miss Bernell Kirk, Glen Barham, and Leon Neal. Also featured will be the Bluff City String Band—Elmer Meador, his young

son, Billy, and Glen Barham. Mr. Adams will give a talk on the nursery.

BLUFF CITY IN 1929—

There are 170 students enrolled at Bluff City with 8 teachers. Senior class president is Bill Nichols. There are two societies—the Hubs and the Spartans.

BLUFF CITY IN 1912—

Land is very cheap here, but very productive. It is easily cultivated and responds well to cultivation. Our schools are excellent, and a more healthful community cannot be found.

BLUFF CITY IN 1907—

Bluff City is one of the oldest places in Nevada County and is bustling more than ever before. We hope to have a good high school in the near future.

BLUFF CITY IN 1892—

There has been an epidemic of la grippe in Bluff City. Several have died.

SNICKERS CAKE

1 package German chocolate cake mix.

1 small package caramels

½ cup butter

1/3 cup milk

6 ounces chocolate chips

1 cup nuts, chopped

1. Mix cake mix as directed

2. Pour half of batter into greased 9 x 13 pan

3. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 15-20 minutes.

4. Melt caramels, butter, and milk together.

5. Pour over baked mixture

6. Sprinkle chocolate chips and nuts over caramel mixture.

7. Pour remaining cake batter over top of all and bake 20 minutes at 250

degrees; then 10 minutes at 350 degrees.