

Jerry McKelvy's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Vol. 17 – No. 11

sandman43@att.net

November, 2017

TRAVELING IN STYLE

Everyone remembers their first car or truck. My first car was a 1966 Ford Fairlane 500 purchased new from Prescott Motor Co. for \$2800. It was blue in color and was just a basic car with no frills. It served me well for the next three years when I was teaching school in Missouri.



But before that when I was growing up, the basic transportation in our family was a pickup truck. A car was really not needed much in those days. We didn't go on any long trips and the pickup truck would get us to town when we needed to go. Finally, I guess my Dad decided we needed a car also, but he felt a used one would do just fine.

I think the first car my family had was a black 1950 DeSoto my Dad purchased from Carl Greer. It was black and had lot of chrome on it—a pretty fancy car in its day. It had what was called a fluid drive transmission—sort of a semi-automatic transmission. The main thing I remember about that car was the hood ornament. It was a replica of the head of Hernando DeSoto, the Spanish explorer the car was named after, and when the lights were on, the hood ornament would light up. I thought that was pretty cool to have a hood ornament that shined in the dark. I found these pictures on the Internet of a 1950 DeSoto similar to the one we had.



Lighted hood ornament

One time my Dad considered buying a Nash car from a salesman he knew who worked for a car dealer in Hope. He let my Dad take the car home and drive it for a few days to decide if he liked it. That was one ugly car and I was glad my Dad decided not to buy it.

I don't remember anyone who had a Nash automobile, and I knew it would stand out like a sore thumb if my Dad purchased it. I was excited about having a different car, but I didn't want to be seen riding around in that old Nash.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE



The car we had when I first started driving was this 1952 Studebaker. The color was some shade of light green—about the color of tree pollen. This is the only picture I have of it and it doesn't show what the front looked like. The picture was made in 1956. It was a pretty good car and got good gas mileage for cars at that time. This was the car I

drove when I took my driver's test in Prescott when I was fourteen years old. I could barely see over the steering wheel. Driver's tests at that time were more thorough. The trooper had me drive from the testing site near the court house in Prescott across the railroad tracks to the other side of town. I was afraid he might ask me to parallel park which was difficult for new drivers to do correctly. I had been driving a tractor on the farm since I was a small boy and driving the truck in the hay field, but I didn't have any experience in parallel parking in town. He did ask me to park on the side of a street with a curb and told me to pretend I was parking on a steep hill and he checked to make sure I had my front wheels turned in the right direction when I finished parking. The test probably took at least fifteen or twenty minutes. Driver's tests in later years mostly involved just driving around the block.



The car I remember most from those days was our 1946 Buick. It was green in color and looked just like the picture at the left. It was a fancy car for that time, but was already completely out of style in the early 1960s. The car had been sitting up for a long time and only had 27,000 miles on it when my Dad bought it. Our family used that car for several years and when I left for college in 1961, I was allowed to use it for transportation to school and back home on weekends. During the week, it usually sat in the parking lot of the dormitory where I lived. I was even a little

embarrassed to have such an old car on campus when other guys had more modern vehicles. It was not my idea of a suitable car for a college student.

That old Buick had some really soft seats that were more comfortable than most living room couches. It was equipped with an AM radio with an antenna mounted on the center of the roof just above the windshield. The antenna could even be turned by using a knob inside the car. This was in the days before tape players, but with the AM radio, I could pick up stations as far away as Camden, Magnolia, and Prescott.

The hood of the car opened from either side instead of from the front and could be propped up with a metal rod for that purpose. It was a "straight eight" meaning it had eight spark plugs in a row on the side of the engine.

Starting the car was a bit unusual. The starter was underneath the accelerator. To start the car, you had to push the accelerator pedal all the way to the floor. The dimmer switch for the

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

lights was located in the floor operated by your left foot. The car even had turn signals. Buick was the first U. S. automaker to offer blinking turn signals in 1939, but they only worked on the rear of the car. The next year, they expanded them to include the front of the car. I suspect most young drivers these days do not even know the proper hand signals to use in making a turn. I wonder if they still ask questions about that on driver's tests.

The old Buick had very large tires which probably helped make the ride smooth. It had fender skirts at the rear wheels which had to be removed when changing a rear tire. As you can tell from the picture, it was a very heavy car and the gas mileage was not too good—maybe 15 miles per gallon on the highway. Of course, gas in those days only cost about 30 cents per gallon.

One day when I was in college, my roommate and I decided to take a ride out in the country in the old Buick. It was on this trip that I was involved in an accident at an unmarked intersection. I was almost through the intersection when another vehicle hit the right rear of the old Buick. According to the police report, the other driver should have yielded to me since I was already in the unmarked intersection. We only had liability insurance and the other driver had no insurance at all, so it was up to us to have it repaired. Getting body parts for a car that old was difficult, so we continued to drive it without getting the car repaired. It was never quite the same after that.

By that time, we had about 40,000 miles on the car and it had started using quite a bit of oil. It needed some engine work, but we never had that done. We finally just quit driving it. We took the front seat out and took it to a camp house we had to use as a couch. The car was finally towed over into the woods behind our house and left with other assorted things we had discarded. Not too many years ago, my brother pulled it out of the woods and sold it to a recycling place and that was the end of our 1946 Buick Roadmaster.



All I have left is the Buick emblem from the hood of that old car (pictured here).

I think our next car was a used 1960 Chevrolet Bel-air. It was a pretty good car, but had come from Ohio and had some rusty spots caused by the salt used on the roads in the winter. I drove that car one summer when I worked for the ASCS office in Prescott. I had to visit farmers all over Nevada County to verify the crops they were planting in their fields after they had signed up for various government programs offered at the time. I don't remember anything special about that car. It served its purpose and I can't even remember whether we sold it or traded it for another vehicle.

I try to keep a picture of all the vehicles I have owned. I wish I had good pictures of the older cars we had, but in those days we didn't waste film taking pictures of such things. A camera was pretty much a luxury item. Sometimes I look at the pictures I have and wonder why I ever bought such an ugly vehicle. Styles change over the years. The old cars had a lot more

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

“personality” than our modern cars. The cars from years past, especially the 1950s, had plenty of chrome, fins, and white-wall tires. Cars of today have a lot of plastic and very little chrome. I always thought white-wall tires added a bit of elegance to a vehicle, but those have also disappeared.

I still enjoy looking at old vehicles from the past at car shows and those restored by car enthusiasts. Our cars today are safer and more fuel efficient, but the cars of yesteryear are still beautiful to some of us who grew up in those days and have some pleasant memories from that time.

There has been much advancement in automotive technology in the last hundred plus years. Our ancestors lived through the change from horse and buggy to automobiles. Henry Ford and his assembly line production made it possible to turn out affordable automobiles even though they were very simple and came in only one color—black. We are now accustomed to power windows, power door locks, cruise control, air conditioning, rear cameras, warning alerts, seat belts, air bags, etc. All kinds of options are offered if we are willing to pay for them. I suppose the next thing will be driverless vehicles and I’m not sure if I’m ready for that.

OLD HOME PLACES

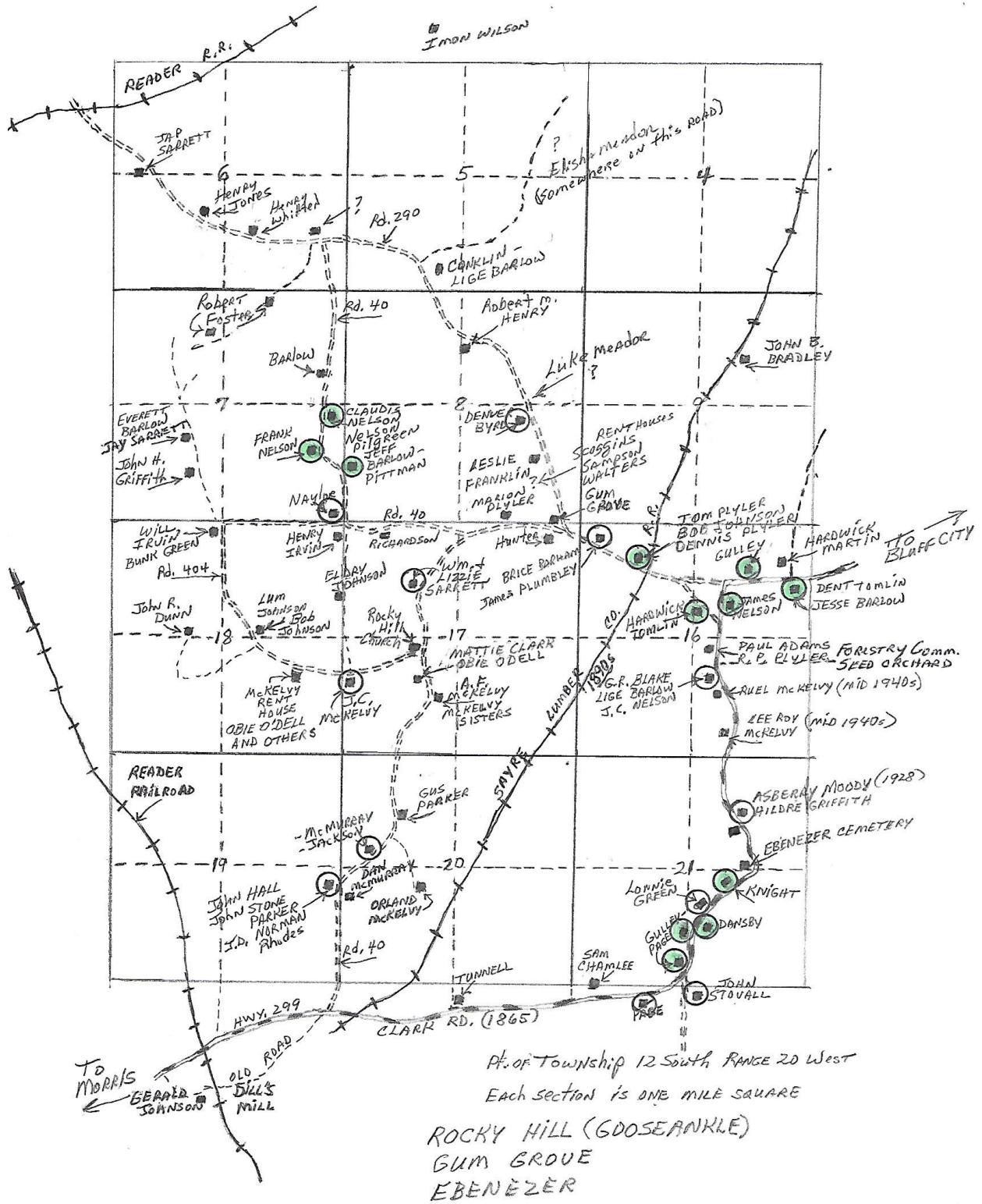
On the next page is a hand-drawn map showing some of the old home places in the Rocky Hill-Gum Grove-Ebenezer area of Nevada County. I remember many of them, but some were before my time. I learned about some of those around Gum Grove from the writings of J. L. Franklin who lived in that area. Other places were mentioned by some of the older folks who once lived in those communities.

People moved around a lot back in the Depression days. Some families lived in old houses that were vacant probably paying a small amount of rent or working for the landowner in exchange for a place to live.

I think I have most of them in the right place, but there are some I wasn’t sure about. As you can see, this area was once well populated. The children attended school at Gum Grove until 1929 when that school was consolidated with Bluff City. There was a church at Rocky Hill and later another church at Gum Grove after the school consolidation.

Today, there are only a few people living on the county roads shown on this map. The old home places can usually be located by old shade trees still standing. Each little dark square on the map was a home place. Most of the old houses are gone now. I drew a circle around those home places where some type of building (house, barn, hunting camp) still stands. Those colored blue are currently occupied. In some cases, the buildings there today were constructed by hunting camps in the same place where an old home once stood and are vacant except during hunting season. Some of the homes still standing were moved from another location at some time in the past.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE



SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

How to Cook a Husband Recipe from the 1800's

A good many husbands are utterly spoiled by mismanagement in cooking and are so not tender and good. Some women keep them constantly in hot water; others let them freeze by their carelessness and indifference. Some keep them in a stew with irritating ways and words. Some wives keep them pickled, while others waste them shamefully. It cannot be supposed that any husband will be tender and good when so managed, but they are really delicious when prepared properly.

In selecting a husband, you should be guided by the silvery appearance as in buying a mackerel; not by the golden tint as if you wanted salmon. Do not go to the market for him as the best ones are always brought to the door. Be sure to select him yourself as tastes differ. It is far better to have none unless you will patiently learn how to cook him.

Of course, a preserving kettle of the finest porcelain is best, but if you have nothing better than an earthenware pippin, it will do---with care. Like crabs and lobsters, husbands are cooked alive. They sometimes fly out of the kettle and become burned and crusty on the edges, so it is wise to secure him in the kettle with a strong silken cord called Comfort, as the once called Duty is apt to be weak. Make a clear, steady flame of love, warmth and cheerfulness. Set him as near this as seems to agree with him.

If he sputters, do not be anxious, for some husbands do this until they are quite done. Add a little sugar in the form of what confectioners call kisses, but use no pepper or vinegar on any account. Season to taste with spices, good humor and gaiety preferred, but seasoning must always be with great discretion and caution. Avoid sharpness in testing him for tenderness. Stir him gently, lest he lie too flat and close to the kettle and so become useless. You cannot fail to know when he is done. If so treated, you will find him very digestible, agreeing with you perfectly; and he will keep as long as you choose, unless you become careless and slow the home fires to grow cold. Thus prepared, he will serve a lifetime of happiness!

Author and date unknown, but from the early 1800's

RAINFALL RECORD

I only received .7 of an inch of rain at my house in September. This was a very wet year up until September. The total rainfall through September is 47.8 inches. The wettest month was so far was April when we got 9 inches of rain.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE



WHAT IS IT?

Can you identify this object? As you can see, it has a handle on one side. Send me your answers if you know what it is or just take a guess.

FIRST LOCAL NEWS COLUMN

This is the very first local news column I found preserved on microfilm from *The Nevada County Picayune*. It was entitled "Albany News", getting that name from Albany Township which includes the area around Sutton and Harmony in the central part of the county.

Health is excellent. No one is sick in the bounds of my knowledge.

Farmers are building and improving their farms in various ways.

The roads are in bad fix for want of work, and no overseers.

It is hoped more corn and pork will be raised in the future and less cotton, and not until then will farmers be on the road to prosperity.

Parker Township can boast of a wonderful fortune teller. For one dollar she will tell you of all the mean tricks you have ever been guilty of, with the good and bad you will do in the future.

I say Hurrah for Jas. K. Jones for the U. S. Senate. He is very good where he is, but would be better in the Senate because of more power and less opposition. Jones' weight is above his eyes, Elmore's is below.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Prof. M. M. Cody is teaching penmanship and phrenologizing heads at Harmony church. He has a good class at the Tan Yard schoolhouse in the forenoon and at Harmony church at night. I knew Mr. Cody thirteen years ago. He is a good clever gentleman.

The matrimonial mania still rages. I never saw the like as the boys begin to pinfeather a mustache, they give it a few twists, then a wedding is next in order. I think an Emigration Bureau by the state superfluous, as our lads and lasses are determined to take up the surplus lands and occupy them.

We live in hopes that 1885 will be a good crop year, that the postmasters that have been taken from us will be of the deadbeat order, that nothing will be lost from the farming interests of the country, and that the farmers will all plant at least $2/3^{\text{rds}}$ of their crop in the present year in corn, sugar cane, potatoes, turnips, etc.

Come, brother farmers of Nevada County, let us work by this rule one year as an experiment and keep out of debt as much as possible.

Signed J. W. G.
January 29, 1885

SEND IN YOUR RECIPE

It's been a while since I published recipes which many of you seem to enjoy. Since the next issue will come out around the end of November, I thought I would include a couple of holiday recipes in the next issue. I could just pick out some, but I thought it would be more interesting to have you submit a good tested recipe from your collection. I'm sure you have some family favorite recipes you use for your holiday meal.

Send me your recipe by Nov. 10. I will give each one a number and use a number generator to pick two from those I receive to publish in the December issue. I hope to receive several good recipes. My email address is at the top of page one.

Be sure to proofread your recipe to make sure everything is correct.

If you would like to receive all the recipes sent to me, let me know when you send in your recipe and I will email them to you. I will only send them to those who submitted a recipe.

I'm always looking for material, so if you have a family story that you think others might enjoy, feel free to submit it or any old pictures you have such as buildings, stores, automobiles, churches, school pictures, early settlers, etc.

If you don't want your descendants to put a twisted spin on your life story, write it yourself!