

Jerry McKelvy's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Vol. 19 – No. 4

sandman43@att.net

April, 2019

LACKLAND SPRINGS

This month our focus is on Lackland Springs, a popular health resort in Nevada County for many years. It dates back to at least 1859. At that time, it was on the western edge of Ouachita County, but became part of Nevada County in 1871 when Nevada County was created. It was a popular destination for residents of the area for several decades.

The oldest references I can find about Lackland Springs are some entries in the diary of Robert Kellam, a prominent businessman from Camden.

June 1859

Tuesday 21 – **Bro. George to Lackland Springs for his better health.**

July 1859

Monday 11 – **Sent my horse Henry to Bro. George at Lackland Springs by Edward. E. Nat Hill arrived in town. Little Ella visits us.** Weather cool and cloudy. Rain wanting. E. Hill & Co. store still closed. Picnics and dancing parties still continue.

Monday 25 – **Bro. George goes to Lackland Springs.** Health of our town good or tolerable good. Hot and soon to be dry.

Friday 29 – Myself and my bookkeeper Mr. G. W. Bachelder all alone in our store. Green in Dallas, Hodnett on tour. **Bro. George rustivating at Lackland Springs.** Water Melons, peaches by numerous wagon loads selling cheap.

Monday-September 17, 1860 – Accompany Mr. White of New Orleans today to Irvin's Store, Lone Grove 25 miles. Pleasant trip. (*Note: Lone Grove was the early name for Gum Grove near Lackland*)

February 1861

Thursday 14 – Attend Dr. Macon Green & Miss Bettie Tony's wedding this P.M. at her fathers, Mr. James Tony. Ceremony by Rev. M. Morris. Nice little gathering of friends and Kin folks & quite a pleasant time. **Green just retd from Lackland Springs, bot a lot & will build a summer family residence.**

March 1861

Monday 11 – Planted potatoes last Saturday in the dark of the moon, great thing "they say" to plant in the Dark Nights. Dull to Day. Hear of the sudden death of old Mr. Elias Proctor, died yesterday. Everyone gardening or preparing to do so. **Green goes on a visit to Lackland Springs.** We get a ticket to Day to Dr. R.M. Green & Miss Bettie Tony's wedding. Cotton selling at 10 cents. River rising.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

June 1861

14 June Friday – Dry & Hot

15 Saturday – No news. **Green & Bullock visit Lackland Springs yesterday. Bullock will remain up there to recruit his health.**

July 1861

9 Tuesday – Today Capt. Logan's comp. Camden Knights Letter B. preparing to leave. Tomorrow receive a number, say some 30 or 40 additional from the West part of our County. Rain today, nice little season. The Great & Good Lord is blessing us with good crops and good health. **Green family left for Lackland Springs.**

Saturday, August 3, 1861 – No news. We talk of a trip to **Lackland Springs.**

6 Tuesday – This A.M. at 3 ½ we start to **Lackland Springs.** All hands but Mary & Ellie. My horse & Wilson's mule to a Hack. Green's gray horse to my buggy. Awful hot and dry & heavy sandy road, take us all day get there safe and all well at 5 P.M. Friend Green's family in the best of Health. Has built him a large fine log cabin- 3 rooms, passage & piazza. Several families there from our city.

7 Wednesday – In company today with several of the **Lackland visitors** we cut a bee tree. Col. Porter's. Bee trees get a fine quantity of honey. Many accounts have been rec. in the newspapers about the Big Va. Battle, was fought at Manassas Gap Sunday, July 21. All concur both north & Southern report that we gave them the worst defeat that was ever read of.

8 Thursday – Visit about today. Go a fishing in Little Caney. Fine fun catching Jack fish. Report killed on our side 1000 to 1500, of the Yankees 3,000 to 5,000. Was engaged 15,000 on our side, 30 to 45,000 on the North.

9 Friday – Go a fishing again today. Good string of big Jacks. Have a big rain this P.M. a seasonal rain, and very welcome, as many localities were suffering. The talk is big battles will soon be fought in Mo. Say 20 to 30 thousand on a side.

10 Saturday – **Having quite a pleasant visit at the Springs.** Have an abundance of watermelons and peaches.

11 Sunday – Come Home today. Green in Company. Much pleasanter than going up as the rain extended all the way—**leave my family at the Springs.**

18 Sunday – **Go up to Lackland Springs today after my family.** Drive my horse and Wilson mule. Get there 12. Rain all day. Find all well at the Springs.

19 Monday – Rain all day. **Remain at the Springs.** Crop of early corn good. Later corn cut off by the drought. Potatoes & pea crop will be great. News yesterday of a big battle in Missouri near

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Springfield, in which our loss was heavy, killing many Arkansas men. Still we routed them and put the enemy to flight. Killed Gen'l Lyon.

20 Tuesday – **At Lacklands. Go Fishing.** Catch none, then go to Mr. Price's & get fine lot of firm peaches and water melons. Pleasant time today. **Lackland Springs owned by Mr. Martin** too poor to put them in good fix. With the proper management this watering place will some day be of considerable note.

21 Wednesday – Come home and bring my family absent two weeks. Home safe in the P.M. Had delightful day for traveling. A letter from Pa dated 7th inst. with the sad news of the death of my dear Brother Thomas, died on the 6th with congestive chill. Sad, sad news for our family. Thank God he died in the hope of heaven.

From these diary entries, we can see that Lackland Springs was already known as a health resort as far back as 1859 and that many residents of Camden visited the springs. At that time, Prescott did not even exist. Mr. Kellam mentions some of the battles being fought in other parts of the country in 1861. By 1864 the fighting reached this part of Arkansas with battles at Prairie D'Anne, a skirmish at Moscow, and the battle of Poison Springs. Troops would be marching by Lackland Springs on their way to Camden and I'm sure they took advantage of the springs for a water source during that march.

The railroad was constructed through southwest Arkansas in the 1870s and the city of Prescott was incorporated. As the population of Prescott increased, residents soon took advantage of Lackland Springs which was only about 12 miles from town.

The next reference I found about Lackland Springs was the establishment of a postal route in 1889 running from Prescott to Carouse, Lackland, Bluff City, Zama, Caney, Honeaville, and back to Prescott. The same year, an item in the paper stated that Lackland was getting to be quite a summer resort and that a weary man could find comfort in using the chalybeate water. The paper mentioned a "twistification party" to be held at Lackland. I have no idea what that was.

A turn-of-the-century guide book called "Scenes in Nevada County" has this information about Lackland Springs: "Nevada County possesses many points of interest As a health resort, Lackland Springs probably leads. Here in a beautiful hollow is situated five or six large springs, the waters of which have a far-famed reputation for curing many diseases. The springs are in Redland Township about twelve miles east of Prescott. They are a quite popular pleasure resort during the summer months, the waters of Caney Creek abounding in fish and game. Boating, bathing, hunting, and fishing form the principal amusements of the crowds that visit each summer. They are on the property of J. L. Eagle. W. H. Parker is the postmaster, the office being served twice a week from Sayre. Jno. G. Benton operates a store that is liberally patronized and also runs a sawmill which gives employment to a number of hands and does a considerable business. Agricultural pursuits are followed by a people to a successful extent, and the lands around Lackland are considered very productive. The range is fine and stock raising is a profitable pursuit."

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE



An article in the July 7, 1906 issue of *The Nevada News* included the above picture of the area around Lackland Springs with this article: “Lackland Springs is Nevada County’s health and pleasure resort. A half dozen springs bubble out from a series of hills in Redland Township and form a cluster that is not only of rare natural beauty, but also contains properties proven beneficial in more than one disease.

For years, each summer has found scores of people camping on the hills above the springs and receiving wonderful benefit from the water and climate.

The springs have lost some of their attraction in the last few years. One scarcely mentions going there now. Yet the same water still flows from the same hillsides in the same way it did fifteen years ago. One even imagines the same spotted cow with the same bell, grazing in the same meadow, in the same lazy way as of yore. And there is the same barefoot boy, swinging the same tin bucket, whistling the same tune, but there is not the same jolly crowd every July and August that made matters merry in the late 1890s.

There is but one reason—accommodations lacking. Let someone build a few cottages, rid the grounds of underbrush, burn up the ticks and redbugs, keep out the hogs, and clean up around the springs, and there will be a maddening rush for Nevada County’s most beautiful resort.”

Still another article appeared in the July 16, 1908 issue of *The Nevada News* describes a Sunday spent at Lackland. It is reprinted below:

“Did you ever spend a Sunday at Lackland? Of course, you have been there, but it has been on special occasions when you could hitch up “Old Baldy” and with the necessary tackle and bait, hie yourself off to the waters of Caney Creek, and while away the time

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

pulling from the stream a good string of wary trout (?) or sneaking from the side of an old cypress tree a fine string of goggle-eyed perch. Or perhaps with a trusty rifle bring down from the heights of some fine old oak or hickory, a tempting mess of squirrels. Or perhaps you spent the time in an enchanting game of dominoes, or tripped the light fantastic on an improvised platform while an erratic orchestra attempted a mazy waltz. But did you spend a day there? A day devoted to quiet rest? Yesterday was the ideal occasion for such an experience. A day when bright sunshine cast sufficient pools of light on seared leaves as to dispel the gloom, and southern breezes brought a happy relief from summer heat. There was a most congenial crowd of Prescott people there and they enjoyed the day. The portly Dr. Guthrie, comfortably garbed, stretched himself on an easy cot, and for once forsook the temptation of any heated conversation, but he talked some and was always awake when the lemonade was passed. Sam White busied himself with anything necessary for comfort or pleasure of the crowd, and never hesitated, when called upon by his good wife, to go to the spring for water. Dan Pittman was moving around in a general way, always ready to listen to an interesting anecdote or raise his head at the slightest neigh from "Old Prince". Sam Logan seemed to be the special guardian of the commissary department and held more than one battle with the insistent hogs. In the absence of other weapons, he did some telling work on the enemy with a good-sized hatchet. Dr. Hesterly didn't make much of a record in anything particular until he reached the dinner table, and then for thirty minutes he was the busiest man there. Meanwhile, Adam Guthrie, Jr. slowly moved about the grounds in a manner calculated to keep down perspiration. The good ladies, Mesdames Logan Pittman, Guthrie, and White, with an ease and grace that was surely admired, moved about the culinary department in a way that resulted in a most excellent dinner. Nor were the little folks idle. Little Lula White seated on a camp stool made love to her Teddy bear, while her younger sister threatened to baptize her doll baby in the sparkling waters of the center spring. Fred Guthrie lay stretched out before a late magazine and occasionally queried the crowd with such questions as "What is the longest word in the English language?", while Master Green wanted to know if a man had twenty sick sheep and one should die, how many were left? And that's how you spend a Sunday at Lackland."

A Sunday school was mentioned in 1914 at the Lackland school house each Sunday at 2:30 and the article stated a number of tents could be seen on the hillside near the springs. A revival meeting was held at Lackland in 1925 and it was called "one of the prettiest places in Nevada County". A committee was cleaning the springs and grounds for the revival meeting.

A school existed at Lackland as late as 1928. I have a teacher's contract that belonged to Mrs. Elsie Moore Beaver of Bluff City. She taught there and was paid fifty dollars per month. The contract specified that she agreed to keep the school open eight hours per day. The contract was signed by Sam Pratt, W. E. Barlow, and Joe Elmore, directors of the Lackland School District No. 88.

Even though fewer people visited Lackland Springs than in the past, it was still a popular place for such things as revival meetings and a camping spot for the Boy Scouts. The

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Arkansas State Fox Hunters Association met at Lackland Springs in November, 1940 for a four-day hunt. There were about 300 men with 500 hounds from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, and other states. The Prescott Band provided music for the opening festivities. The featured speaker was governor-elect Homer Atkins. Prizes were awarded for the best dogs in several categories. The visitors were well pleased with the location and called Lackland Springs a Fox Hunter's Paradise.

Several years ago, I received a letter from Mrs. Zettie Griffith Link who once lived near Lackland Springs. She was born in 1919. This is what she had to say about her memories of Lackland Springs:

"I spent the first nine years of my life less than a mile from Lackland Springs. I think there was three springs (could have been more). One spring had an awful odor (Sulphur) and I believe one spring was called the iron spring. Each one had a different taste.

I attended my first school at Lackland in 1925. My teacher was Ida Byrd and second teacher was Elsie Nichols Cox (from Reader). They stayed at our house. My mother and dad gave them free room and board to walk me through the woods to school.

Not having brothers or sisters, I didn't know that children played games. The first game we played was called "stealing sticks".

My dad would take me fishing on Caney Creek. I remember one spot in the creek that had some unusual fish about six inches long with red, white, and blue bands going around them. A few years ago, there was an article in the Gazette about a rare fish near Eureka Springs. It fit the description of the fish in Caney Creek. I could never get one to bite my hook. I wonder if they are still there. That was 78 years ago."

I also received a letter from Mrs. Mavis Griffith Belisle who lived about two or three miles southeast of Lackland Springs. She was born in 1915.

"I remember visiting Zettie in their home at Lackland Springs. Also visited the springs with family and neighbors. The women took trunks full of food and the men seined for fish. I watched them lift the net to take the fish out. My dad brought out an eel (I thought it was a snake). He drove a nail in a tree, skinned it, and prepared it for frying as the women were preparing the other fish.

There was a low water crossing on the creek for wagons to go through. Our parents would let us kids wade there. I fell while in the water and it scared my mother. I've never cared too much about getting in running streams since.

I also remember going to a camp shed there with a sawdust floor for a revival. We went at night and took Vera Johnson (Starnes) and Clara Richardson with us. They were teenagers. Mildred Munn (my sister) was a baby then. Mother took a quilt and placed her on it. I was to watch her. During the service, a small frog jumped on her while she

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

was asleep. I began yelling "There's a frog on Mildred". Someone came to the rescue and took the frog away.

Uncle Hildre Griffith had a beautiful home near there with a white picket fence around the house and garden. I have a picture of Zettie, Mildred, and myself somewhere in the yard or garden.

I'm sure some of the men killed squirrels to fry on these fishing and hunting trips. I can't remember too much about the springs. I was too small to look into them. I was four years older than Mildred."

Another source of information about these old communities is old newspapers. Lackland, like most communities, had their own local news column. Here are a few items I wrote down as I scanned these old newspapers:

1889—We have a large school at Lackland. Mail days are on Wednesday and Saturday.

1907---The post office at Lackland has been discontinued and all mail to that place is now stopped at Lyda.

1907—The water of the springs is so cold that ice tea is often made by letting a bucket of the beverage to the bottom of the spring for a few hours. Lackland Springs is 12 miles from Prescott—far enough to appear secluded but near enough you can be home in two hours. One can see tents dotting every knoll on the broad hillsides approaching the springs in three directions.

1914—There will be a Sunday school at Lackland school house each Sunday at 2:30

1914—A New Holiness church is mentioned in the Lackland news column.

1914—A number of tenters can be seen on the hillsides near the springs.

April, 1917—T. B. Henery (Henry ?) is one of the progressive merchants of Lackland.

1925—Bro. Glaze preaches here every fourth Sunday.

1925—A revival is in progress at Lackland Springs—one of the prettiest places in Nevada County. A committee is cleaning the springs and grounds for the meeting.

1947—All Nevada County scout troops will converge on Lackland Springs for the opening of a four-day camporee.

Betty Meeks wrote an article about Lackland Springs for the *Nevada County Picayune* in the 1970s which gives a little more information. According to that article, John Lackland was the first to claim the land where the springs are located. Whether he actually owned

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

the land is not known due to lack of records. J. L. Eagle purchased the land from the state of Arkansas in 1884. Population of the area was growing by that time and a community developed near the springs with two general stores and two schools. One of the first cotton gins in the county was located there.

According to this article, there were six or seven different springs ten to fifteen feet apart and each one had a different type of mineral water. Among those was a sulphur spring, a salt spring, an iron spring, and a clear spring. In the days before modern medicines, people sought relief from their various ailments and believed these springs to be of benefit. Mothers with children who had chickenpox would bathe the infected skin with water from the sulphur spring and those suffering from rheumatism would bathe in the salt spring. Iron was good for the body, so they would drink water from the iron spring and the clear spring provided excellent drinking water. People came from long distances to take advantage of these natural springs and would camp there for days at a time. Preachers took advantage of the large crowds and began conducting revival meetings at the springs. Brush arbors were constructed for these revival meetings.

After the death of Mr. J. L. Eagle, the land was sold at public auction and was purchased by two brothers, W. T. DeWoody and G. W. DeWoody. Brad DeWoody, son of G. W. DeWoody and his daughter and son-in-law were the owners of the land when this article was written in the 1970s. Brad DeWoody, is now deceased.

Lackland Springs made the news in September, 1923, when law officers raided a moonshine still about a mile and a half southeast of the springs. Prescott city marshal, Fred Murrah, was killed in the raid and Sheriff Parker and Deputy Steele McLelland were wounded as the still operators fired on the law enforcement officers. Fred Murrah was very popular in Prescott and his funeral drew one of the largest crowds ever. Rev. J. A. Sage gave an eloquent address at the funeral which was printed in its entirety in the *Nevada County Picayune*. He also gave a sermon at the Methodist church entitled "Lest We Forget—The Moral Lessons of the Tragedy of Lackland Springs". This was also printed in the November 15, 1923 issue of the *Picayune*.

That's about all the information I have collected about Lackland Springs. I'm pretty sure I know the approximate location of the springs. A hunting club camps there during deer season. Several years ago, I walked along the drain looking for signs of the springs. I did find some old well tiles which may have been used in years past. I think the springs have all been filled in from years of neglect. As one of the writers said, the same water still flows there. They just need to be cleaned out and maintained. Lackland Springs has a long history dating back as far as 1859 and lasting up to 1947 when the Boy Scouts camped there for four days. The Reader Railroad was constructed during the 1920s and those camping at the springs could hear the whistle of the steam engine as the train made its way from Reader to Waterloo. Few people travel these days on the Lackland Springs road (County Rd. 290) and nobody lives close to the springs. Lackland joins the list of many other old communities which no longer exist.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

When you sort through all the fake news and other stuff posted on Facebook, you can occasionally find something worth reading. The author of the following poem was not given, but I thought it was exceptionally good and might even be applied to some of the current views expressed by some in our country.

TROUBLE IN THE FOREST

There is unrest in the forest
There is trouble with the trees
For the maples want more sunlight
And the oaks ignore their pleas
The trouble with the maples
And they're quite convinced they're right
They say the oaks are just too lofty
And they grab up all the light
But the oaks can't help their feelings
They like the way they're made
And they wonder why the maples
Can't be happy in their shade?

There is trouble in the forest
And the creatures all have fled
As the maples scream 'oppression!'
And the oaks, just shake their heads
So the maples formed a union
And demanded equal rights
'The oaks are just too greedy
We will make them give us light'
Now there's no more oak oppression
For they passed a noble law
And the trees are all kept equal
By hatchet, axe, and saw.

RAINFALL RECORD

January – 5.9 inches

February – 5.0 inches

Two boll weevils grew up in South Carolina. One went to Hollywood and became a famous actor. The other stayed behind in the cotton fields and never amounted to much. The second one, naturally became known as the lesser of two weevils.

WORD OF THE MONTH

RUSTICATE / RUSTICATING– to go to the country; to live or sojourn in the country.
(used by Mr. Kellam in his diary (see page 1))

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

COMMENTS FROM READERS ABOUT SOFT DRINKS

This may be a repeat of an earlier post of mine. But it is to do with Grapette. Back in late 1942 my dad was told to leave Nevada County Ar and go to Fort Worth Tx--to work in the aircraft plant there--hundreds of country folk did that without question. This was because he failed his draft physical because he was born nearly blind in one eye. Of course, he did so without question. And married my Mama--so it was off to the west for them. The stories of Ft Worth --well I was born there--but have nothing to do with this story. Daddy loved his home town of Prescott. His last job there in 1948 was driving a Grapette truck all over the local counties. But as it happened, he hit a wooden bridge on a rural road over Goodsen Creek --turned it over and lost his load of Grapette, Orangette and Lemonette. The poor blacks and whites in the area had great fishing that day on that creek for soda pop. Dad was very down when he was recovered--and made it home that night. Mama had a letter from Consolidated Aircraft in Fort Worth waiting for him. It was an offer to return to Fort Worth to a machinist job. He didn't want to go back out there -- but his family came first-- so--in the coldest winter I have ever known --in late 1948 we were back in Texas to stay. ---*D. Westmoreland*

I remember Grapette very well. I recall wanting a Coca-Cola one time instead because it "was bigger". Some adult finally convinced me that the volume of the two bottles was the same. I was amazed. There were always drink bottles rattling around in the floor of the back seat of the car so that the bottles could be swapped out when we stopped for a "coke" and like you mentioned, it might be anything in the drink box with the ice in the water keeping them good and cold--they just don't taste the same anymore! We used to play "Twenty Questions" guessing the cities named on the bottom of the Coca-Cola bottles and delighted in getting a bottle from out of Arkansas. I didn't hunt bottles to "cash in" but my sons did. When we moved to the country in 1964, they rode their bikes all over the place and would pick up bottles to turn in to buy drinks and snacks. I would not let them do that today!!—*B. Thomas*

I just had a conversation with my granddaughter about "the old days". She is a typical 17+ who knows everything and is becoming brainwashed by liberal ideas. They have plenty of ideas and opinions, but no real solutions.

She was expounding on how plastic bottles have ruined the environment. I told her we did not have plastic bottles when we were kids; that we bought such things as soda pop in glass bottles and after they were used, we'd rinse them out, save them in an apple crate, and then return them to the store in exchange for a few cents each. Sometimes that is how I put gas in my car! She said "What a GREAT idea! Why don't they do it now?" Shaking my head! Why, indeed? --- *G. Patterson*