

Jerry McKelvy's  
**SANDYLAND CHRONICLE**

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**VIGILANTE JUSTICE**

Crime has existed ever since Cain slew his brother, Abel. When someone commits a crime, we expect the legal system to carry out a reasonable punishment for the perpetrator. That involves law enforcement officers, lawyers, and judges. Even though the Bill of Rights in our constitution guarantees a speedy and public trial, the process these days is very slow. We have hundreds of people sitting on death row for years after being sentenced to be executed. Lawyers can drag out the process through endless appeals. Even the person accused of a crime has rights that must be protected. The basic foundation of our legal system is that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

In the old days (a hundred years ago or so), judgement was carried out much more quickly than it is today. Punishment was usually carried out within a few months from the time the crime was committed. Capital punishment in those days was usually by hanging which was usually done in a public place with a crowd of people watching.

In some cases, certain people took the law into their own hands and carried out what they considered to be proper punishment. They couldn't wait for the proper legal process to be carried out. The old newspapers are full of such cases when mobs of men overpowered the sheriff or jailer and took a prisoner out and carried out their own brand of justice. In most cases, these vigilantes were never caught. They sometimes wore masks to hide their identity.

Most crimes which triggered such vigilante justice usually involved an attack on a woman, especially a white woman being attacked by a black man. If a positive identification could be obtained that the person was guilty, some saw no need to wait for a trial to be carried out. They took matters into their own hands.

Even our part of Arkansas was not exempt from such behavior. Here are four examples of vigilante justice in our part of Arkansas as reported in the local newspapers.

At Hope, Arkansas in January, 1909, a highly esteemed white lady was walking along Front Street at 5:30 p. m. when she was confronted by a burly young Negro man who made improper advances toward her. He caught her by the arm and her natural reaction was to scream which caused the man to run away. He was seen by another man who wondered why he was running so fast. The man then saw the lady in a hysterical state and assisted her. The attack was reported and a search was begun to locate the suspect. Bloodhounds were brought in, but they failed to find his trail.

Two young black men were arrested but later released after the lady and the other man said they were not the man who had attacked her. Early the next morning, another man named Dillard was arrested and this time, the lady and the man who assisted her both

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identified him as being the man who had attacked her. He was then placed in jail.

Two days later at 5 a.m., the body of the suspected attacker was found hanging from a telegraph pole at the train depot with his body riddled with bullets. Train passengers on the early morning train could see the body hanging as the train passed by.

Another case in 1912 happened in Parker Township of Nevada County in the community of Azor. That's located a few miles northwest of Bodcaw. A lady was at home with two other ladies who were visiting when she was attacked by a black man. The other ladies could offer no assistance and the lady's husband was not at home. After the attack, the man left the home and headed into the woods. A posse was quickly formed and the man was found in the woods about two miles from where the lady lived. He was identified as Abraham Denson and was arrested by Constable Tom Phillips and taken before squire Mitchell who I assume was the justice of the peace in that township. The trial was delayed one day because of the absence of a witness. Constable Phillips took the man home with him and kept him in a room of his house to await the trial. While his family was eating supper, about fifteen men, names unknown, came to his house and demanded the prisoner. Phillips refused to turn him over but was overpowered by the mob. They took the man to the home of the lady who was attacked and she identified him as being the man who had attacked her. The man was then taken a short distance from the home, strung to a tree, and his body was riddled with bullets. The crowd then dispersed. The general feeling was that the man had gotten what he deserved. The sheriff was on his way to Azor, but did not arrive in time to prevent the lynching.

Another case happened at Hope in 1921. A middle-aged white lady had come to Hope to visit her daughter who lived a short distance out of town. Due to the late arrival of the train, she decided to spend the night at a hotel. She had talked with a Negro named Browning Tuggle who was a jitney driver who offered to take her to her daughter's home. She woman refused his offer because she didn't feel safe riding alone with the man after dark. She decided to spend the night at the hotel and walk to her daughter's home the next morning. About two miles out of town, she was accosted by the man named Tuggle who threatened her with a knife to keep silent. He then dragged her into the underbrush and assaulted her and then told her to stay there until he was gone.

She then ran toward a home which was about a quarter mile away. On the way, she met a man who helped her. She was brought to the nearby home and the crime was reported and a physician was called for her.

Tuggle was arrested and taken before the lady who at first thought he was not the man. Another man was brought to her, but she said he was not the one who attacked her. They brought Tuggle before her again and she said she thought he might be the man, but he was dressed differently and she couldn't be sure. She said he was wearing a pair of coveralls when he attacked her. A search of Tuggle's home revealed a pair of coveralls like the ones she described with blood on them. They placed him in jail to await trial. He claimed he was innocent. A mob came to the jail and battered down the door of the jail

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and took the prisoner from the jailer. Tuggle's body was found hanging from the water tank tower and was riddled with bullets. A crowd of about 2,000 people viewed the body before it was cut down.

Another case happened in 1919. Sheriff B. E. Greer of Columbia County went to the home of a Negro named Jordan Jameson near Waldo to arrest him on a charge of wife beating. When the sheriff entered the home, Jameson shot him with a 30-30 rifle. The sheriff returned fire, but a second shot by Jameson was fatal.

A posse of about ten men from Waldo was formed who captured Jameson. While on the way to Magnolia with the prisoner, the posse was met by a mob which managed to take the prisoner from them. They took Jameson to the public square in Magnolia and burned him at the stake in front of a large crowd which had gathered.

Burning at the stake as punishment for especially heinous crimes was a common practice all over the country in those days. A family in New Mexico (husband, wife, and three children) were burned to death by some Negro men in 1904. The men were tried for the crime and were sentenced to death, but a mob decided to take matters into their own hands. They took two of the men and chained them to a 12-foot high stump. A wagon load of pine wood was brought and piled around them. The men were saturated with kerosene and the fire was ignited. It was a gruesome sight witnessed by a large group of people. There was even a photographer present to take pictures.

These are just a few examples of vigilante justice in America. Hanging was the usual method of execution during that time period. There were many legal hangings but there were also many illegal hangings (lynchings) carried out by mobs of men. In practically all of these cases, the men responsible were never brought to justice. I suspect that many people knew who they were, but kept silent. It was probably done to be a deterrent to others not to commit these type crimes or else they might face the same fate. In those days, it took the sheriff a long time to reach the rural communities and communication was poor. Most cases were first brought before the local justice of the peace who could pronounce sentence, or if the case was serious, decide to turn the prisoner over to the county sheriff who would keep the prisoner in jail until their trial.

Even though the wheels of justice sometimes grind slowly, we rarely hear of anything like this happening these days. Maybe we have become more civilized or have better law enforcement now. The same type crimes still happen now. Many innocent people (men, women, and children) are assaulted or killed by criminals. Law abiding citizens will not take the law into their own hands but will leave it to law enforcement and the legal process to carry out the punishment for any crimes which might be committed.

If the current movement to defund or abolish police departments is successful, vigilante justice might once again raise its ugly head. We can learn valuable lessons from our past history.

<b>RAINFALL IN AUG. – 7.0 INCHES</b>	<b>TOTAL FOR YR. – 56.4 INCHES</b>	<b>NORMAL FOR YR. – 52 INCHES</b>
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## THE CENSUS TAKER (author unknown)

It was the first day of census, and all through the land;  
The pollster was ready --- a black book in hand.  
He mounted his horse for a long dusty ride;  
His book and some quills were tucked close by his side.  
A long winding ride down a road barely there;  
Toward the smell of fresh bread wafting up through the air.  
The woman was tired, with lines on her face;  
And wisps of brown hair she tucked back into place.  
She gave him some water as they sat at the table;  
And she answered his questions the best she was able.  
He asked of her children—Yes, she had quite a few;  
The oldest was 20, the youngest not two.  
She noted each person who lived there with pride;  
And she felt the faint stirrings of the wee one inside.  
He noted the sex, the color, the age...  
The marks from the quill soon filled up the page.  
At the number of children, she nodded her head;  
And he saw her lips quiver for the three that were dead.  
The places of birth she “never forgot”,  
Was it Kansas? Or Utah? Or Oregon... or not?  
They came first from Scotland; of that she was clear;  
But she wasn't quite sure just how long they'd been here.  
They spoke of employment, of schooling, and such;  
They could read some and write some...though really not much.  
When the questions were answered, his job there was done,  
So he mounted his horse and he rode toward the sun.  
We can imagine his voice loud and clear;  
“May God bless you all for another ten years.”

Now picture a time warp... it's now you and me;  
As we search for the people on our family tree.  
We squint at the census and scroll down so slow;  
As we search for that entry from long, long ago.  
Could they only imagine on that long-ago day;  
That the entries they made would affect us this way?  
If they knew, would they wonder at the yearning we feel;  
And the searching that makes them so increasingly real?  
We can hear if we listen the words they impart;  
Through their blood in our veins and their voice in our heart.

**SOCK SOCIAL FOR  
PUBLIC SCHOOL PIANO**

The pupils of the Public school are going to give a "Sock Social" Wednesday afternoon, November 26th, from 3 to 4 o'clock p. m., to raise funds to apply on payment of a piano which they recently purchased. Following is the invitation being sent out by them—

**SOCK SOCIAL;  
WHAT IS YOUR SIZE?**

Benefit Public School Piano.

Prescott, Ark., Wednesday, Nov. 26,  
1913—2:00 to 4:00 P. M.

(Please keep pinned on left shoulder)

This little sock we give to you,  
'Tis not for you to wear;  
Please multiply your size by two  
And place therein with care,  
In pennies or in cents,  
Just twice the number you wear.  
(We hope it is immense)

So if you wear a number 10,  
You owe us 20, see?  
Which dropped in this little sock  
Will fill our hearts with glee.  
'Tis all we ask, it isn't much,  
And hardly any trouble,  
But if you have only one foot,  
We'll surely charge you double.

Now, if you have a friend quite dear  
That you'd like to bring with you,  
Or, if you know of one who'll come  
We'll gladly give you two.  
So don't forget the place and date,  
We'll answer when you knock,  
And welcome you with open arms  
—But don't forget your sock.

But if the distance seems too great  
Our social to attend,  
Or care or sickness does prevent,  
Just send by some good friend;  
Or good "Uncle Sam" will bring  
The dimes we so much need,  
And many thanks we'll vote you,  
Who are a friend indeed.

**SOCK SOCIAL**

(from The Prescott Daily News -- Nov. 14, 1913)

The students at the Prescott school came up with this idea to raise money to help pay for the school piano.

Sock socials were commonly used in the early 1900s to raise money for a cause. Miniature socks were given out to put the money in. Sometimes, the idea was to put twice the number of your age instead of your sock size. The ladies of a church in one town used this method to raise money to buy carpet for the church.

**NAMES**

While doing cemetery records, I come across some unusual names, especially on the older graves. I also find some names for women that sound like men such as Willie and Johnnie and also names for men that sound like women such as Connie, Ruby, Jewel, and Shirley. I recently found a man named Eve and another man named Lois.

Sometimes the name is pronounced the same, but the spelling is different such as Francis (male) and Frances (female), Tony (male) and Toni (female), or Bobby (male) and Bobbie or Bobbi (female).

Some people vary the usual spelling of a name such as Jaxon instead of Jackson or Sherrin instead of Sharon.

It is common now to give boys a first name that is usually used as a last name such as Hunter, Bennett, Garrett, and Jackson,

Different names and different spellings make things more interesting. I'm still trying to figure out why Lloyd needs two l's in it. Some people spell it Loyd, but most people spell it Lloyd.

I found a new one last week—a woman named Sametta.

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## **TO CATCH A THIEF**

One of my jobs when I was working for International Paper Co. was to help make sure timber from the company's land was not being stolen. Not all loggers and pulpwood haulers are honest.

We used several different methods to do this. We did what were called destination checks. That means we went to where timber was being cut and observed a load of wood (pulpwood or logs) being loaded or about ready to leave the woods. We documented the time and description of the truck and later that day, we checked with the mill or woodyard to make sure that load arrived. We got the scale ticket number from the mill for our report. Sometimes we even actually followed a load of wood to the mill instead of calling for the information. We also did undercover work to do this without the logger knowing we were checking on him. We set up a hidden camera somewhere on the logging road leading to the timber sale that was triggered when a vehicle went by. Each load of wood hauled off the timber sale was caught on camera with the time. That way we could check several loads each day to make sure all were accounted for. The logger would have some explaining to do if a load was seen on the camera leaving the woods but never arrived at the proper destination.

I remember one day I decided to do a little undercover work checking on a pulpwood sale in Nevada County. In those days, many people had pulpwood trucks and cut and hauled pulpwood (or billets) to the paper mill in Camden or to a company woodyard. On the job I was checking that day, the pulpwood hauler, his wife, and two daughters all showed up on the job. They were supposed to haul the wood to the woodyard at Rosston. I got there early that day and parked my truck on a woods road (or trail) directly across the highway from where they were going into the woods. This was a small operation and they only hauled one load per day. My truck at that time was a green color that blended in with the leaves and could not be easily seen. I intended to watch them go into the woods and then come back in a few hours and wait for them to bring the load out. That way, I could check with the woodyard to make sure the load I saw leaving the woods made it to the woodyard. My plan backfired that day. The man's wife and daughters drove their car that day and pulled into the road I was parked on and left their car there and rode into the woods in the pulpwood truck. There I was—blocked in by their car. I could not leave because there was not room to drive around their car. There was nothing to do but wait. I sat there in my truck for about five hours waiting on them to come out of the woods with a load of pulpwood. I wished I had brought a book to read because it was a long, boring day for me.

Finally, I heard the truck coming out and documented the time. The day was not completely wasted though, because later when I checked with the woodyard, I discovered that the wood had been turned in as belonging to the hauler instead of the timber company. In other words, they had stolen that load of pulpwood. That pulpwood hauler was barred from cutting any more timber on company land.

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- **National Food Day October 24**

National Food Day, October 24, focuses on healthy and nutritious food. One of the day's themes is to help people to "Eat Real." In other words, cutting back on sugar drinks, overly salted foods and fatty meats in favor of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Don Mathis celebrates Food Day with some micro-fiction. A six-word story allows a reader to consume an entire narrative in just a moment's time. Feast your eyes on his creations:

## **Feast and Famine in Six Words -- by Don Mathis**

I've got champagne appetite, beer budget.  
Haven't had caviar for so long.  
Don't eat sushi at bait stand.  
All you can eat. He pays.  
Ten cent beer, can't afford foam.  
Holiday hamburger, eat like a king!  
Homemade ice cream, poor man's riches.  
Back yard bar-b-que, food stamp feast!  
California produce truck, dollar a bag.  
Stole a tip, bought a pie.  
So hungry I ate dried peppers.  
Expelled from the Garden of Eatin'.  
Ate five pounds of Louisiana crawfish.  
Squeeze the tail, suck the head.  
What is "Doggie Bag" in Italian?  
Hondo Game Dinner, five dollar feast.  
Simple meal, loving hands, I'm rich.  
So hungry, could eat a horse.  
Everything tastes better when you're camping.  
Spent all I had, still hungry.  
Pockets are empty, belly is too.  
Meat and potatoes guy; cracker income.  
Have my cake, eat it too.  
A dessert, heading for a waistland.  
Famished, until I finished second helping.  
Don't criticize service until food arrives.  
Meal was lousy, and not enough.  
Bum eats well, then he runs.  
Eat to live, love to eat.  
Once was starving, now I feast.  
O 0 4 I 8 0 (Owe zero, for I ate nothing).  
Wanted a steak, got a burger.  
Chicken fried steak, dollar sixty eight.  
One taco, but looks like two.  
Big plate of food just evaporated.  
Beggars' Banquet causes a Salvation Army.  
Read the menu and I drooled.

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So sad, Happy Meal is fattening.  
Hungry eyes big as the plate.  
Couldn't even afford a small appetizer.  
So malnourished, couldn't eat at all.  
Hungry for everything, I've got indigestion.  
Not in a hurry to fast.  
Fishes and loaves won't be enough.  
Pay you tomorrow for hamburger today.  
Ate it all, pass the Tums.

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