

Jerry McKelvy's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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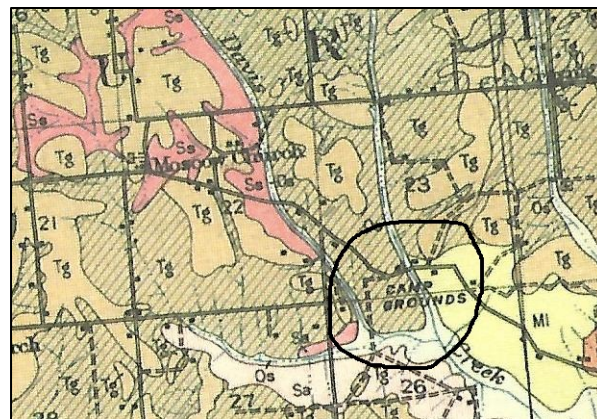
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MAIN SPRING CAMPGROUND

One of the well-known landmarks of Nevada County was the Main Spring Campground located near Prescott on the Cale Rd. about two miles from the old Moscow church and cemetery. This campground was organized in 1897 as part of the Holiness movement that was popular at that time. Ten acres of land were purchased from the Davis heirs. The deed was made by H. G. Steele, B. B. Garland, and L. B. Hannah with the stipulation that the land was to be used for religious purposes; otherwise, it would be returned to the original owners. The first annual meeting was held in September, 1898.

I have not been to the court house to look up that deed to find the exact location, but I do have a 1925 soil map of Nevada County that shows the location.



You can see Moscow church on the map and I have circled the area labeled “camp buildings”, so we know it was on the south side of Cale Rd. Each square on the map is one mile, so it looks to be about a mile and a half from Moscow church before the intersection with County Rd. 32.

Annual camp meetings were held at Main Spring for many years with large crowds of people attending. The meetings were usually held in late August or early September when the crops had been “laid by” and harvesting crops had not yet begun. The meetings usually lasted ten days. Each year just before the meeting, a work day was scheduled to clean off the grounds and repair the buildings.

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Mrs. Marzelle Kirk contributed an article to the Picayune in 1980 in which she tells of her memories of attending the meetings at Main Spring. She says her dad and the boys usually stayed home to look after the cows, hogs, mules, and chickens, but the rest of the family loaded up supplies for camping out at Main Spring. She said they took bedding, an old wood-burning cook stove, kerosene lamp, pots, pans, dishes, clothing, the wash tub to be used as a bath tub, and food to eat.

People had constructed cabins at the camp ground to use while the meeting was going on. Of course, the main building was the camp shed located about in the center of the ten acres with cabins in a semi-circle around it. There was a water well with a pitcher pump that everyone used to get water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. There was a restaurant where the preacher, singers, and other workers ate their meals and which also sold snacks. The electric lights for the camp shed were powered by a dynamo. The bathroom was in the woods at the back.

She said their cabin had two rooms and a kitchen and had a sawdust floor. Doors and windows were made of wood. The dresser was a plank nailed to the wall with a mirror hanging from a nail. There were shelves for dishes.

She said the camp shed had six or eight sections of hand-made wooden benches with a wide board to sit on and another wide board for the back. The floor was sawdust, but a platform was built where the piano sat and where the pulpit was. A large bell was rung at service time. They had a sunrise service, another service at 9:00 a. m., and the main service at 11:00 a. m. followed by lunch. After lunch, the adults took a nap or visited while the children played around the grounds (except for the camp shed). The night service brought people from all around. Pallets were made for the sleeping babies and small children.

Mr. Perry Westmoreland remembers going to the meetings in the 1930s. He mentioned that the shed had a metal roof and when it rained, it was hard to hear the speakers. He says it was inter-denominational, but most of the speakers were Nazarene. The singers were accompanied by instruments such as guitars, accordions, and violins. Perry says occasionally a dog would wander through the shed during the services. He

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remembers the snacks such as candy, soda water, and sometimes ice cream. He said all the kids would save their nickels to spend at the Main Spring Camp Ground meetings.

I'm glad Mr. Westmoreland and Mrs. Kirk shared their memories of the camp ground. Their descriptions give us a good idea of what it was like. I scanned through the old newspapers and found some more information about the Main Spring camp ground.

Before automobiles, people had to travel to the camp meeting in wagons. In 1906, it was advertised that the camp restaurant would have plenty of provisions and horse feed. In later years, when automobiles were common, there were many ads in the papers from individuals offering taxi service from Prescott to the camp ground. A one-way fare was 25 cents.

Members of the Main Spring Camp Ground Association were assessed annual dues of \$1.00 in 1909. This money was used to help defray the costs associated with the annual camp meetings.

Main Spring must have been a nice place to have picnics. One article mentioned the over-flowing wells at the camp ground. Almost every year, the papers reported various groups having picnics at the camp ground. Sometimes it was a group of small children, but there were also many picnics enjoyed by young couples from Prescott with their chaperones. Many of these picnics were "moonlight picnics" with an occasional "sunrise breakfast birthday party". In 1916, about fifteen young ladies and gentlemen from Prescott and their chaperones enjoyed "camping out" overnight at Main Spring.

The annual Main Spring Camp Meeting always drew large crowds. The Prescott and Northwestern Railroad ran a special train to bring people into Prescott for the camp meeting in 1907. In 1912, the crowd was estimated to be 3,000 people with an even larger crowd in 1913. The paper reported that Prescott was almost de-populated because most people were attending the camp meeting. The cabins were all full and many people were camping in tents.

In 1919, Mrs. W. T. Woodul wrote a letter to the newspaper in which she said she had heard that some people were living at the camp ground, feeding their livestock on the grounds, and taking things that didn't belong to them. She said the land had been deeded

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to the Holiness people for religious purposes and these people which she called "trespassers and intruders" had no right to be using the grounds.

A dispute arose concerning the camp ground in 1919. Some of the committee members had offered the camp ground as a site for the up-coming Fourth of July picnic in which there would be speeches promoting better roads for the county.

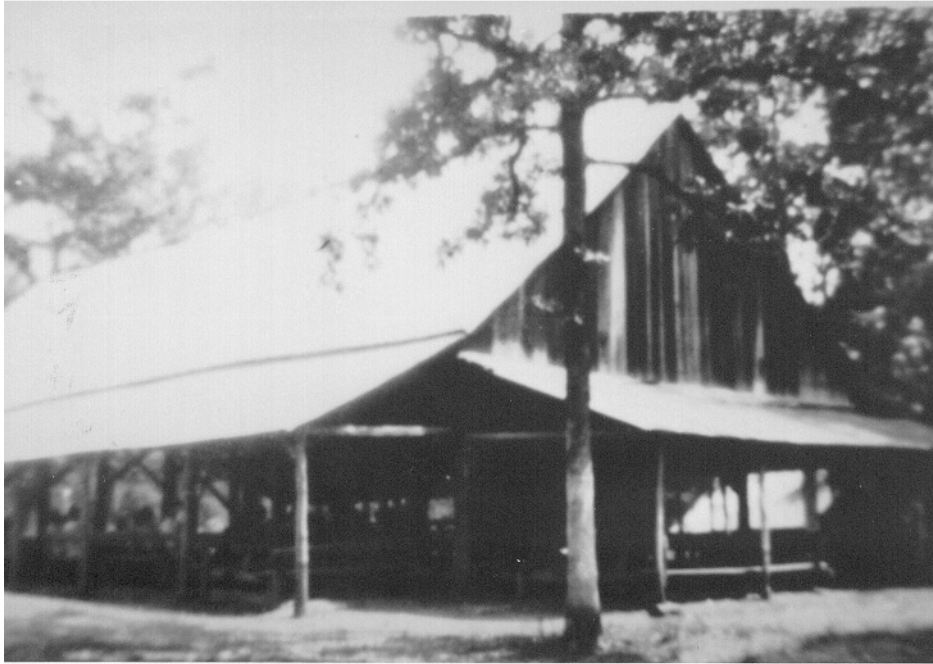
After the camp meeting concluded in 1919, Sam Westmoreland, who was secretary of the Main Spring Campground Association, wrote a letter to the paper explaining his position regarding the Fourth of July picnic. He said he did not know that some members of the committee had given permission to the promoters of the Fourth of July picnic to use the camp ground. He said the men had claimed it was done with his consent, but said that was a false statement. He explained again that it was a violation of the rules of the association because of the stipulation in the deed that no meetings of any kind could be held there unless they were of a religious nature. If such as meeting were held, the land would go back to the original owners. In his letter to the paper, he stated that he had fulfilled his duty in the matter and could no longer be associated with such an organization and tendered his resignation as secretary. Evidently, the problems were worked out because the annual Main Spring camp meetings continued to be held there for many more years.

Many of the preachers who came to Main Spring were from out-of-state, usually a husband-wife team along with singers and musicians and sometimes a woman evangelist was the main speaker. In 1922, the paper mentioned that about 15 members of the Ku Klux Klan came to the meeting dressed in full garb and presented the preacher, Mrs. Bessie Williams, with a check for \$25. Mrs. Williams thanked them for their contribution and praised them for the good work they were doing. The KKK at that time often visited churches to make donations and to inform the people of the organization's support for law and order. A few weeks later, the KKK visited the Methodist church in Prescott during their service and gave the preacher a donation and a week or so later, the KKK captured a moonshine still and warned bootleggers that they were coming for them.

I don't know when the Main Spring camp ground closed. It was still going in 1937. According to Ms. Kirk's article, some hunters let a fire get out of control and the Main

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Springs camp shed was burned to the ground and then people tore down their cabins. Today, it is a heavily wooded area. The bell was put up at the old Nazarene church in Prescott. When they tore that church down to build a new church, the bell was then taken to the Serepta Spring camp shed. The ten-acre plot of land deeded to the Main Spring Campground Association has reverted back to the Davis family according to the terms of the original deed and current tax records.



Main Spring Camp Shed (1930s)
(from Prescott Depot Museum web site)
Picture donated to museum by Glenda Westmoreland

RAINFALL RECORD

I received 2.3 inches of rain in September making a total of 54.9 inches for the first nine months of the year. The old saying that if it rains on the first day of the month, it will rain 15 days that month didn't work this time. It did rain on the first day of September, but the month was mostly dry. Half of my rainfall came on the last day of the month.

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OLD DISEASES

Match the old disease name on the left with the modern name or condition

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Ague | A. pneumonia |
| ___ 2. Apoplexy | B. tonsillitis |
| ___ 3. Bone shave | C. rheumatism |
| ___ 4. Bule | D. paralysis due to a stroke |
| ___ 5. Consumption | E. a cold |
| ___ 6. Coryza | F. cough |
| ___ 7. Decrepitude | G. hay fever |
| ___ 8. Erysipelas | H. writer's cramp |
| ___ 9. Gravel | I. sciatica |
| ___ 10. Grippe or La grippe | J. tetanus |
| ___ 11. Grocer's itch | K. feebleness due to old age |
| ___ 12. Lockjaw | L. back pain |
| ___ 13. Lumbago | M. boil, tumor, or swelling |
| ___ 14. Lung fever | N. measles |
| ___ 15. Quinsy | O. kidney stones or gallstones |
| ___ 16. Rose Cold | P. malarial fever |
| ___ 17. Rubeola | Q. inflammation of the kidneys |
| ___ 18. Scrivener's palsy | R. contagious skin disease due to streptococci |
| ___ 19. Screws | S. influenza like symptoms |
| ___ 20. St. Vitus dance | T. tuberculosis |
| ___ 21. Summer complaint | U. skin disease caused by mites in sugar or flour |
| ___ 22. Tissick | V. involuntary jerking movements |
| ___ 23. Nephritis | W. diarrhea, usually caused by spoiled milk |

Answers: 1- P; 2-D; 3-I; 4-M; 5- T; 6- E; 7- K; 8-R; 9-O; 10-S; 11-U; 12-J; 13-L; 14-A; 15-B; 16-G; 17-N; 18-H; 19-C; 20-V; 21-W; 22-F; 23-Q



Kirk's store and post office at Cale, AR

Owned by W. S. and Frances Kirk

The building still stands, but is in very poor condition..

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Join the Great American Smokeout November 18

The American Cancer Society sponsors the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of each November to encourage Americans to stop tobacco use. In 1970, Arthur P. Mullaney of Massachusetts asked people to give up cigarettes for their health. Half a century later, his suggestion still resonates.

If a lower heart rate, reduced blood pressure, and a diminished risk of stroke is not enough to convince you to lay down that smoke, perhaps this parable will help.

Moon Is Beautiful This Time of Year – by Don Mathis

I asked her not to smoke cigarettes. She did anyway. And what upset me, more than the hazards to her health (I mean, I wanted her to outlive me so I wouldn't have to live alone), was the fact that she had to be secretive.

She used to make up trips to the store so she could smoke along the way. But of course, I could smell the tell-tale odor in the car. Visiting the neighbor didn't work either. Short smoke breaks turned into an hour-long chat and I'd have to go get her for dinner.

So, she started smoking behind the old barn. I knew exactly where she was, close by, close enough for me to catch an occasional whiff of burning tobacco floating toward the kitchen window. Eww.

I can forgive her, like I say, for wanting to smoke. I smoked for years, off and on (mostly on) from age 16 to 40.

At times, the traces of smoke that would drift to the back door would smell good, like a memory of a memory that foreshadowed better times. But most of the time, it was malodorous, a stale reminder that she was 'cheating' on me.

She loved those cigarettes — more than me, more than life itself — and she didn't want to admit they would kill her. I always told her they were bad for her health.

Finally, the worst happened. How did I know? How could she have known? She should have known!

The live ember slipped off as she was 'field-stripping' her last cigarette. And the live leaves of tobacco ignited the leaves from the live oak, which ignited the dried lumber of the barn. Which went up amazingly fast.

Her yelling and screaming brought me out at a run to help her put out the flames. But it was a goner, I could tell. The barn, I mean. More than a pile of lumber was destroyed that day. The west wall fell. And when it did, it landed on top of her.

I lost more than the barn. I lost my future with the love of my life. I told her a hundred times those coffin nails were bad for her. Now she's as much as a pile of ashes in the ash tray I wish she'd used. It's hard to see the good side in any of this.

Ah well... Barn's burnt down. Now I can see the moon.