

Jerry McKelvy's
WAY BACK WHEN

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THE EARLY DAYS AT ROSSTON

Rosston was the county seat of Nevada County for a short period of time just after Nevada County was formed. They had big plans for the town at that time. They even laid out streets and named them (on paper, at least). The streets running north and south were named for presidents (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, and Van Buren) and those running east and west were named after species of trees (Pine, Olive, Beech, Spruce, Vine, and Oak). I found a plat at the court house showing the layout of these streets. But when the railroad came through the northern part of the county, the town of Prescott grew rapidly and soon became the largest town in the county. Voters decided to move the county seat to Prescott in 1877.

Rosston is mentioned in some of the old newspapers that have been preserved. One event in 1877 was mentioned in several newspapers.

5-2-1877

Albert Trammel, a Negro preacher, was hanged at Rosston, Nevada County, Ark. on the 27th for the murder of his wife five years ago. Trammel confessed his guilt. It was reported that 3,000 people witnessed the hanging.

Some old Nevada County newspapers are preserved for the years 1884 to 1892. Below are a few items taken from those old newspapers.

December 3, 1885

A new local news column was started called "Rosston Racket" and the name was changed later to "Rosston Reports".

March 7, 1886

Madison Fincher has moved into town and taken charge of his father's mercantile business.

April 28, 1886

Dr. J. C. Parrish is the physician at Rosston

4-20-1887

A. R. Jarvis recently sold some land for \$5.00 per acre.

5-18-1887

Prof. Miller just closed an arithmetic class. His school was small, but all were satisfied with the knowledge gained.

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8-28-1889

W. T. Hendrix has a sawmill, gin, and grist mill located two miles south of Rosston.

11-6-1889

Dr. Parrish is leaving the county and has his place up for sale.

7-9-1890

Daily mail service from Prescott was started.

1-1-1891

The store house and entire stock of goods of W. H. Hendrix was destroyed by fire. The origin of the fire is unknown. It was only by hard work that the stores of W. T. Fincher and W. S. Marlar were saved.

5-14-1891

Dr. J. W. Warren is the physician and surgeon at Rosston.

9-1-1891

A cutting affray on the porch of Fincher's store between Thomas Holleman and Robert Martin resulted in Mr. Martin being seriously injured.

10-15-1891

E. T. McDaniel's gin was destroyed by fire caused by a lantern falling.

THINGS YOU MIGHT FIND IN OLD NEWSPAPERS

When doing research in old newspapers and records, you are likely to come across some words used that are unfamiliar to you. Here are some examples:

1. **Instant** (sometimes abbreviated as "inst.")—From the Nevada County Picayune in 1906—

"Born to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Caulder on Thursday night, the 15th inst., a girl."

Instant means the current month, so in this case, the child was born on the 15th day of the current month when this appeared in the newspaper.

2. **Ultimo** (sometimes abbreviated as "ult." – From the Picayune in 1908---

"Miss Marion Waller entertained at her home on the evening of the 26th ult."

Ultimo means the previous month, so in this case, Miss Waller entertained on the 26th day of the previous month.

3. **Proximo**—sometimes abbreviated as "prox." –From the Picayune in January, 1910—

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“Commencing February 15, proximo, rural mail carriers will not be required to collect loose coins from rural mail boxes”

Proximo means next month, so in this case, beginning on the 15th of next month, this would go into effect.

4. **Relict**—I came across this word when I was recording the names from grave markers at the historic Watts Cemetery in Nevada County. Inscribed on the marker of Mary Johnson Thompson were the words “born in South Carolina; relict of James Thompson”

Relict means a surviving spouse. She had been married to James Thompson, but he had died earlier.

5. **Hymeneal**—You are likely to find this word in newspapers before 1900 used as a headline announcing a marriage.

6. **Kine**—In reading old wills, you might find that the person is leaving all his kine to a relative. That means he is leaving all his cows to the relative.

6. **Name abbreviations**—It was common in the old days to abbreviate the spelling of some male first names such as—

Chas. for Charles; Wm. for William; Geo. for George, Jno. for John; Jas. for James, and Thos. for Thomas.

CORNBREAD AND MILK

I’m from the South and am well acquainted with the delicacy known as cornbread and milk. Some people had other names for it such as crumblin’ or crumble-in, but we never had any other name for it other than cornbread and milk.

It’s just crumbled up cornbread in a tall glass or a bowl covered with milk. Some people prefer buttermilk, but we always used “sweet milk”. When I was growing up on the farm, we had milk cows. Today at our house, it’s usually cornbread from a box of Jiffy cornbread mix and some 2% milk from the grocery store.

Some people insist that cornbread and milk should be served in a glass rather than a bowl, but I guess that’s just a matter of personal taste. You have to eat it with a spoon, so if you have a tall glass, you might need a long spoon. Some say it’s better using day-old cornbread rather than freshly-baked cornbread, but I don’t think that makes much of a difference. I guess is your cornbread is getting a little stale, the milk might help soften it up a bit. These days you can freeze any leftover cornbread and then heat it up in the microwave for your cornbread and milk.

I’ve read that some people like to sprinkle black pepper over their cornbread and milk. I might try that sometime just before I finish mine. I wouldn’t want to waste a whole glass of cornbread and milk if I didn’t like it with the pepper. Some people put a little sugar in

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their cornbread and milk, but we never did that. I guess that might depend on whether the cornbread had sugar in it. That's another debatable topic—whether cornbread should have sugar in it or not.

I've heard some of my ancestors say that cornbread and milk was often served as a supper meal during the Great Depression when times were hard.

I think cornbread and milk is more of a southern thing. People in other parts of the country think we are a little odd anyway. They can't believe we eat such things as grits, poke salad, salted peanuts in a Coke, and some even think purple hull peas should be food for cows instead of people. All I can say is don't knock it until you have tried it.

READER'S COMMENTS

Enjoyed both your January and February issues of Way Back When. Your January Stock Law info was interesting too because I have a letter to a Nevada County official that was handwritten by my grandfather Tom Hildebrand where he stressed how much he did NOT want the Stock Law to pass and that others in his community did not want it either. Your article showed the outcome matched their desire to have this law fail. And I had presumed it had passed, so I learned something new. And I had also presumed it included cattle. I know cows were allowed to roam free back in those days, as my father said many people would put calves in the barn lot during the day, but the mama cows would sometimes travel 3 or 4 miles on their own to take advantage of the best grazing prairies. They would come back home in the evening all on their own to nurse their calves. Of course, that stopped when fences were eventually required.

Your Stock Law article also brought back a memory that once my father and I were looking at an old photo of a family standing in front of their house in our community in the early 1900s. I had noticed that all house photos in that era seemed to include a tall, rough picketed fence, or a board and rabbit wire fence, around the yard with a gate right at the front steps onto the porch. So, I asked my father what was usually being kept inside those fenced yards? He laughed and said nothing was being kept inside the yards... the fences were to keep things OUT. He said if you didn't have a fence, hogs that ran free would root around under your house making grunting and squealing noises and bumping the floor all night long when everybody was trying to sleep. That painted such a vivid picture that I never forgot it. Now I can't see a family photo in front of a house without thinking about hogs underneath the house!

My father also said that a good picket fence was good for catching a snake that was frequenting the hen house to steal eggs from the chicken nests. The trick was to put an egg on the ground on each side of the picket fence at night. The snake would swallow one egg whole and then go through the fence to eat the second one. After swallowing it too, the two big egg bulges inside the snake's body would actually act as a trap between the pickets and hold the snake there long enough for daylight to come, and the homeowner could come out and destroy the culprit. Good ole' country wisdom!!

That was definitely "Way Back When"!
Cathy Straley

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This picture of George Henry's station at Bluff City was in the last issue. I had previously posted it on the Bluff City Facebook page. Here are some of the comments from members of that Facebook group. A store was connected to the station but can't be seen from this view. The store portion of the building was run by Mr. Con Harvey and in later years by George's wife, Eva Dell Henry. The building was torn down in 1983.

1. I remember going to George Henry's with my granddad - Lige Barlow. He had a dark colored International truck. He would buy me a chocolate soldier and I was always so curious about the store down below the station! Loved the smell of grease and oil and gas. Still remember so many cars and people around that place! Everyone knew Granddad and he always spoke to them. Of course, James Tomlin was there...and THAT is a whole nuther story!! – *Phyllis Haynes*
2. I remember how James Tomlin would always make his hat move up and down. He called me "Dude" .. – *Stephanie Gulley Moore*.
3. Yep, James Tomlin and his tricks! lol. I guess he had a nickname for all of us. Mine was "Cottontop" -- *Kathy Barlow Thompson*
4. After my grandfather, Millard Cummings retired, he walked to "George's," as he called it, about every day for a visit and/or to get something from the store for my grandmother. – *David Brown*
5. The grease rack was to the left in picture, u just drove on it and walked under your vehicle, inside was cold drinks, candy, crackers, oil, etc. All things a gas station. needed, plus friendly service, can't find that much anymore – *Dennis Plyler*
6. I remember it well. My grandparents lived across the road and just east of it. – *Charlotte Woody*
7. The first place I stopped when we moved to Bluff City. George was one of the first people I met. His service station reminded me a lot of my dad's station – *Janice Horton*
8. This was the place to be. – *Sharon Ingram*
9. I loved going to the station with my Daddy. We would talk to George, James and Mr. Troy Byrd. I would get a Pop Kola and buy candy and Daddy would buy cigars! Also Mr. Walter Moore would come in and they would tease him. Daddy quit smoking cigars while I was little. Never liked the smell of them! – *Linda Carman*

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10. My uncle was Wallace Robinson. He was a permanent figure outside the store. – *Jane Hoffman*

11. I remember sitting on a bench inside the station, pouring a bag of Tom's peanuts into a Pop Kola, waiting on the bus to drop off the Arkansas Democrat. Lyndale "Wimpy" Walker was the paper boy for Bluff City, and I would help him deliver the papers in the summers when I'd spend time at my grandmother's.

George was always there. James Tomlin was almost always there. Sometimes there would be a baseball game on the radio. I was a Cardinals fan. George liked the Dodgers. Can't remember what team James liked. Pretty sure it intentionally wasn't the Cardinals or Dodgers though, enabling livelier bantering sessions between James and anyone within earshot.

I think Tom's Peanuts and Pop Kolas were 5¢. (There was some mild displeasure when the price for a Pop Kola increased 20% . . . to 6¢.)

Some customers would buy a drink and a BC Powder packet and pour the BC into the drink. Others would buy a drink and a "BOB's", a cellophane-wrapped stack of 4-5 peanut butter crackers. Bob's was apparently a generic reference to any brand of peanut butter crackers George was selling.

Pop Kola is still the best cola I've ever had. I still pour peanuts into bottled colas on occasion and wait for the inevitable "Oooh, gross!" from any witnesses.

I don't recall ever being concerned that a log truck, sidwinding billet truck or car speeding toward Prescott would fail to make the curve, plow through the station and obliterate that bench and me.

Apparently, Pop Kola and Tom's peanuts reduced anxiety. – *Doug McBride*

12. Getting ice cream in the hot summer time—*Sandra Cross*

13. This goes way back. I remember Mr. Sam Chamlee, our bus driver, stopping there on his evening trip after most of the kids had got off the bus and buying a big sack of chicken pellets and loading it into the back door of the school bus. I guess he figured it would save him a trip back to the store. – *Jerry McKelvy*

14. The two things that stand out for me is getting Yoo-hoo's and listening to James Tomlin. – *Vince Nelson*

15. Great memories of great people! I will always remember my great times there with Trish, Bonita, Sandra and of course James Tomlin! Those times and friendships so precious. I loved riding the Bluff City bus while visiting Trish and others! – *Janie Franklin*

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16. Went with my dad and brother and drank grape ne-hi and watched Mr. George wiggle his ears. – *Christie Arsenis*
17. I remember this from childhood. Love that coca cola sign on top! – *Nelda Harper Calley*
18. We used to stop there on way to gravel pits to fish, and Mr Tomlin was usually there and he'd wrinkle his forehead at my kids, so he became the man who wrinkles his forehead till this day and they are all grown, they still think of him as that. – *Maxine Glass*
19. Going in and begging my daddy to buy me something. – *Sandra Kirk*
20. Loved going there. Many good memories! Between James Tomlin and George, it was always a hoot! – *Sandra Beaver*
21. I was fascinated with Mr Henry and his split-level store. – *Patsy Kirk Littrell*
22. I wish I could find some of that good bologna we used to get at the stores once upon a time – *Geneva Smith*
23. Another landmark gone, Sad to see. I remember George Henry, Ms. Eva Dell, James Tomlin, the Harvey's – *Adrian Hunter*
24. I can remember being around 11 or so, sitting inside drinking an orange crush soda, listening to all the good natured "lies" being told and feeling the summer heat and the smell of grease and gasoline coming from outside. – *Jason Tomlin*
25. Man! There is not much of my childhood that I really remember—but going to George Henry's gas station and down the steps to the store are some of the best. – *Phyllis Haynes*
26. Jerry, I really enjoy all the pictures and history of Bluff City that you post. We are no longer there, but BC is where our children grew up and we have many sweet memories and friends there. George Henry was the first person I met there...he and his family became very special to us, as did many others. – *Janice Horton*
27. Ain't it funny how the world seems so big when you are young and how small as we get older. – *Jason Tomlin*
28. I remember going with my dad and getting a grape ne-hi in a bottle from the lift-top cooler – *Christie Arsenis*
29. Remember that station well. – *Barbara Kirk Owens*

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And I was in Heaven – by Don Mathis

Mother was a church lady; she attended worship three times a week (more if you count Ladies Bible Class and Vacation Bible School). So, I have a million memories of services with her.

But I have a few strong recollections of sitting with Grandmother back in the 1950s. Rose Walker attended the Church of Christ in Camden, not far from her home at 701 Maul Road. She was so big sitting next to little me; my legs not reaching the floor, kicking the empty air.

And Grandmother would be wearing that old lady perfume. She would see me all antsy and impatient. And she would slip me a piece of Clove gum. And I was in heaven!

Sometimes, she'd give me Juicy Fruit but she was the only one in the world who would give me Clove gum. I don't think Adams chewing gum was sold anywhere but Arkansas!

And I would be satiated and satisfied for ten whole minutes. And then, before the gum had lost its flavor, it was time to stand and sing the invitational hymn. And I would stand next to Grandmother's knees and rejoice at her singing; her voice quavering the falsetto notes.

It was a spiritual experience. And then came the typical Sunday dinner. Mom would always want to stay and talk to her church lady friends, but Grandmother knew what little boys wanted; fried chicken and mashed potatoes. Yum!

Back at Grandmother's house, the maid would have Sunday dinner waiting for us; another spiritual experience. And I was in heaven!



Rose Dumas Walker