

Jerry McKeelvy's
WAY BACK WHEN

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EVERYBODY LOVES A PARADE

Nothing brings in a crowd better than a good parade. Huge parades were common in the big cities in the old days, but little towns like Prescott also had their share of good parades.

The first mention of a parade in Prescott in the newspapers which have been preserved was in 1885. It was a parade put on by a circus that had come to town. These traveling shows were common in towns along the railroads and usually every show that came to town started off with a free street parade to advertise their show.

One of the largest parades was in 1889 put on by a large traveling show. The theme of the parade was "Children's Dreams of Fairy Land". The parade featured golden chariots with characters such as Robison Crusoe, Old Mother Goose, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Santa Claus, and the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe. There were fifty cages of wild animals, two droves of camels, two herds of elephants, and several bands. It was reported that it took ten rail cars each 65 feet long to hold all the things in the show and required four locomotives to pull the cars. Some of these parades were advertised as being two miles in length.

There is a gap in news coverage from 1892 to 1906, but in October, 1907, the Farmer's Union had a parade in Prescott with 100 members dressed in work clothes and overalls. Several traveling shows such as circuses, minstrel shows, and wild west shows also had parades in town from 1907 to 1912. Some of these were outdoor shows and others used the opera house for their shows. A Wild West show in 1911 featured a parade two miles long with horses, cages of animals, two bands, clowns, cowboys and Indians.

In 1908, there was a parade celebrating the laying of the cornerstone for the colored school in Prescott.

One of the largest events ever in Prescott was the Old Settlers Picnic and Barbecue

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in 1915. All stores in town closed for the parade which included the Prescott Brass Band, over 700 school children from grades one through six, each carrying a small U. S. flag, followed by the high school students, the football teams, citizens in carriages, citizens on horseback, and citizens in automobiles. This was the first parade in town that included automobiles. The event took place at the city park following the parade. Prizes were given for the oldest man, the oldest woman, the oldest married couple, the oldest person born in Nevada County, the largest family, the heaviest man, and the shortest man over the age of 21. It was reported that over 5,000 people attended.

Then in 1917, the United States found itself in World War I. There were several patriotic parades about that time. June 5, 1917 was declared a national holiday called Registration Day where men could register for military service. Cities across the nation were encouraged to participate. A parade was organized in Prescott with bands, automobiles, the Boy Scouts, the Prescott Rifle Club and floats depicting the Allied nations each pulled by four gray horses.

October 24, 1917 was designated as Liberty Day. There was a parade that included bands and the Boys Corn and Pig Club and Girl's Canning Club, each member carrying a brand-new garden hoe.

There was another circus parade in 1917 featuring four bands, herds of elephants, and wild animals in cages.

In 1918, there was a Red Cross parade and a Liberty Loan parade. This was a nationwide effort to encourage people to buy Liberty bonds to help support the war effort. Stores were closed for two hours so everyone could go to the parade. Any merchant who didn't close for the parade was called a slacker and his name was published in the newspaper for all to see. It was considered your patriotic duty to buy Liberty bonds if at all possible. Names of those who purchased the bonds were published in the papers.

The Prescott Daily News had a full-page ad in their paper with the word "SLACKER" in big letters at the top. One paragraph in the ad said, "Any man or woman in this town—I don't care whether the man or woman is rich or poor—who does not take all the Liberty Bonds that he or she possibly can is in the same class with those wretched creatures of

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feeble brain and feeble spine, those cowards we call slackers. Such a man or woman isn't worthy to blacken the shoes of an American soldier who goes across to give his life on the blood-soaked fields of France". There was a strong feeling of patriotism throughout the country in 1917 and 1918 and people responded generously by buying Liberty Bonds to help support the war effort. Those who didn't have the cash to buy a Liberty Bond were encouraged to take out a loan from the bank to buy a Liberty Bond.

One unforeseen result of all the huge patriotic parades throughout the county in 1918 was that large numbers of people congregating to watch parades, etc. helped to spread the influenza epidemic that was just getting started resulting in thousands of deaths.

I'm sure there were other parades in Prescott besides these I mentioned. Later, when the county began to have a county fair each year, it was always kicked off with a parade. About fifty years ago when there were several small schools in the county, each school entered a nice float in the parade and competed with the other schools and organizations that also had floats. Creating a float for a parade involved a lot of hard work, but floats were one of the most popular parts of the parades. There were also bands, fire trucks, police cars and usually people on horseback at the end of the parade.

For many years, all the smaller schools in the county brought students to Prescott in buses to see the parade and go to the fair. Any special occasion was excuse enough to have a parade. Some holidays such as the Fourth of July or Christmas were celebrated with a parade.

The parades of the old days brought many people from the rural areas of the county to Prescott to see the excitement. It was a welcome break from the drudgery of normal farm life to be able to take a day off and see things you normally did not see. Parades were enjoyed by everyone—young and old, farm people and city folks.

I learned a new word this week—**avoirdupois** which means personal weight. The doctor told his patient that he needed to do something about his unhealthy **avoirdupois** and that exercising would be a good place to start.

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BIG FIRE AT HOPE

Several businesses at Hope were destroyed by fire in April, 1922, including the Alice Theater which was said to be the finest theater between Little Rock and Dallas. It was only about one year old. (from *The Nevada County Picayune*)

I BET THIS DREW A LARGE CROWD

The E. A. Page & Co. store in Prescott came up with a novel way to advertise their huge sale in April, 1922. A pig would be turned loose in front of the store at 11 a.m. The person who was able to catch the pig and bring it back to the store would receive ten dollars or could keep the pig. (from *The Nevada County Picayune*)

THINGS YOU MIGHT HEAR IN THE SOUTH

1. Bless your heart
 2. I'm fixin' to
 3. Don't amount to a hill of beans
 3. More than Carter's got little pills
 4. Madder than a wet hen
 5. 'Til the cows come home
 6. If I had my druthers
 7. She's as pretty as a peach
 8. Full as a tick
 9. If the Good Lord's willing and the creeks don't rise
 10. Hold your horses
 11. Went out like Lottie's eye
 12. Well, I declare
 13. He was funny as all get out
 14. Heavens to Betsy
 15. Too big for his britches
 16. Well, I Swanee
 17. Scarce as hen's teeth
 18. Finer than frog's hair
 19. Carry me to the store or carry my car to the shop
 20. He's all stove up.
 21. Get shed of something
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A Little Tidbit of Local History

Pavement of Hwy. 53 from the Little Missouri River bridge to Hwy. 24 (Terrapin Neck) was completed in August, 1949. The only section of Hwy. 24 left to be paved is the part from Bluff City to Terrapin Neck which is scheduled for completion in the fall of 1949. When this is done, there will be paved highways from Camden to Hot Springs and to Hwy. 67 at Prescott. (from *The Hope Star*)

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THE FAMOUS TREE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

Arkansas state highway No. 4 (now U. S. Hwy. 278) extends across southern Arkansas and is one of the oldest highways in the state. Back in the mid-1930s, the road from Camden to the Nevada County line and from Rosston to Hope was graveled. That left a gap of about 12 miles from the Ouachita-Nevada county line to Rosston that was nothing more than a winding country lane that was impassable in bad weather. A large oak tree stood in the middle of the road at the Ouachita-Nevada county line which vehicles had to drive around. This tree in the middle of the road became sort of a famous landmark for many years.

Getting road projects approved in those days usually involved politics. Those who had lot of political pull could persuade lawmakers to approve money for road construction projects. Having a good road to a town was of great benefit to the merchants and residents. Because of the situation with the condition of Hwy. 4, people in the Rosston area would usually go to Hope to do their business rather than Camden because of the unimproved section of the highway east of Rosston.

The Greening family and others who lived near Camden on this highway finally persuaded the state to make improvements to Hwy. 4, and in 1937, it was announced that this final segment of Hwy. 4 would be completed. A dump had to be built across the Caney Creek bottom and the road straightened. The large oak tree was removed using a cross-cut saw and the event was witnessed by a delegation of Camden citizens included former governor Ben Laney. The cutting of the famous tree in the middle of the road was captured by a photographer showing the cut tree surrounded by the delegation of citizens from Camden. The tree in the photo looks to be at least three feet in diameter. A few years later, Hwy. 4 was paved all across south Arkansas.

ACCIDENTAL BOMB DROP NEAR READER IN WORLD WAR II—??

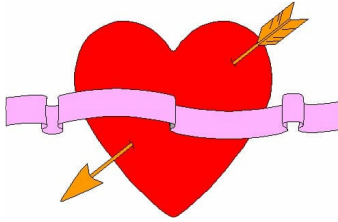
In October, 1976, some fishermen on the Little Missouri river north of Reader noticed an object in the river that had been exposed due to the low water level. The object looked like a bomb. They notified the Camden fire department who notified the Nevada County sheriff because the location was in the extreme northeast corner of Nevada County on the Nevada County side of the river.

Nevada County sheriff Clyde Covington, game warden Abb Morman, and Camden Fire Department personnel made their way through the woods to the location and detonated the bomb. The bomb was said to be about 16 inches in diameter and about four and a half feet long.

The detonation was successful and the experts who detonated it said they believed it was a "live" bomb because of the way it exploded. They said it was probably accidentally dropped from a World War II plane flying over the area.

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<https://www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/april/loversday.htm>



[Moreholidays April Lover's Day](#)

Lover's Day, April 20 holidays. When is Lovers Day?

Spring is a time of love. Daily calendar holiday facts, fun, trivia.

www.holidayinsights.com

<https://poets.org/national-poetry-month>

[National Poetry Month | Academy of American Poets](#)

- National Poetry Month - National Poetry Month was inaugurated by the Academy of American Poets in April 1996. Over the years, it has become the...
- poets.org
April is National Poetry Month. April 23 is Lover's Day. Celebrate the love of your life with a poem!

How Did You Get This Beautiful Woman to Accompany You? – Don Mathis

I beamed out loud with happiness
before I answered, "Just lucky, I guess."
Five hours later, I digress;
was that answer really best?
"She appreciates my charm," I could have said,
or offered a smile and just nodded my head.
Or, "I appreciate her charm and she appreciates that.
And the kindness she gives; I give it right back."
Or, "It's the look in my eyes or the set of my chin.
It's my ability to voice my opinion."
Why did she decide to accompany me?
You'll have to ask her why I'm so lucky.
I can't respond accurately to that query.
Why do I prefer her? That, I can answer.
She's bright and charming; my defenses, disarming.
She's interesting; active listening.
Respectful. Wonderful. Very Desirable.
The word 'care' is there. What's love without that?
Champagne without bubbles tastes terribly flat.
She's got a lot upstairs - and a great staircase.
Trim, fit body; lovely face.
The problems she owns are less than my own.
I chose her and she chose me.
Maybe not for eternity,
but we enjoy it temporarily.