

Jerry McKeelvy's  
**WAY BACK WHEN**

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**CHEWING GUM**

Gum chewing has been around for a long time. People once chewed sap from certain species of trees such as the sweet gum tree. The first flavored chewing gum dates back to the 1860s. The best-known manufacturer of chewing gum was William Wrigley who started his company in 1891 with a flavor called Spearmint. Wrigley has previously been a salesman for baking powder and he would offer a few sticks of his gum as a premium when a customer bought his baking powder.

Wrigley was a salesman and knew how to get customers interested in certain products. He introduced his Juicy Fruit gum in 1893. Some other dates in chewing gum history include Chiclets introduced in 1890, Dentyne in 1899, and Doublemint in 1914. There was a gum called Black Jack which was a licorice flavored gum. Gumball machines were introduced in 1907 and bubble gum became popular in the 1940s.



Young girls of high school age seemed to be the first who started chewing gum and most adults considered it to be a fad. Soon articles began to be published in the newspapers about the evil effects of chewing gum such as this article from 1886—

*A popular craze that is daily growing is that of chewing gum.... The popularity of the gum chewing habit is due to the fallacy that some health journal promulgated a while ago that gum chewing preserves the teeth and develops the gums and should be encouraged.*

*The fact is that gum-chewing stimulates the salivary glands to a degree that is draining and exhaustive, and when the increased secretions of these glands are swallowed, it has an injurious effect on the stomach ..... It excites the glands of the stomach, the liver, the pancreas--in fact the entire glandular system connected with alimentation. It wastes the products of these glands, or diverts them from their proper use, and by so doing injures the system. So you see gum-chewing is not only a ridiculous and a vulgar habit, but it is hurtful to health and should be stopped.—Dr. W. G. Priest*

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One article penned by a medical professional would boost the benefits of gum chewing and that would be followed by another article from another medical professional condemning the practice. This was confusing to consumers, but most did not care. They liked their chewing gum.

An article in 1884 stated “It’s bad enough for a girl to indulge in this disgusting practice, but when a person who regards himself as a man contracts such a habit, it is a crime deserving of the severest punishment”.

An article in 1888 warned that chewing gum has a bad effect on the nerves of the eye. The article ended by saying “Throw away your gum, young girls, and preserve your health, dignity, and eyesight”.

This poem appeared in the early papers

### THE GUM-CHEWING GIRL Frances S. Record

The gum-chewing girl  
And the gum-chewing cow  
Are somewhat alike,  
Yet different somehow.  
What difference?  
Oh yes, I see it now  
It’s the thoughtful look  
On the face of the cow.

An article in 1888 mentioned that gum chewing had made it to the halls of Congress. It mentioned that gum chewing stimulates the salivary glands and aids digestion. Good digestion leads to clear thinking and wise legislation.

Gum chewing was popular among the troops in World War II and chewing gum was supplied to the soldiers during the war. As time passed, gum chewing began to be accepted by most people. Most felt it was much better than the habit of chewing tobacco.

Chewing gum in school could get a student in trouble with the teacher when I was in school. I remember one teacher, Mrs. Haltom, who would tell a student caught chewing gum in class to come up to her desk and deposit it in “File 13” which was her name for the wastebasket.

Instead of disposing of the gum properly, some students would stick their gum on the underside of their desks which was a pretty disgusting thing to do. And nobody likes to step on a wad of chewing gum in a parking lot or on a sidewalk.

Lonnie Donegan’s hit song Does Your Chewing Gum Lose its Flavor on the Bedpost Overnight? was his greatest hit, reaching number five on the Billboard Top 100 in 1961.

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Recent studies seem to suggest that gum chewing is beneficial. According to one study, it relieves stress, improves performance for workers, improves cognitive performance, reduces appetite which helps with weight control, and increases blood flow to the brain which improves memory.

Sales of chewing gum have fallen about ten percent in recent years. Part of the decline is blamed on the Covid pandemic when more people stayed home and bought products online rather than stand in line at the stores. Gum is usually displayed near the check-outs so that impulse buyers will see it. Others are avoiding gum because of the sugar content.

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### **NEWS ITEMS FROM 100 YEARS AGO (AUGUST, 1922) (From Nevada County newspapers)**

A tragic accident happened at Nubbin Hill church. Rev. E. DeLaughter had just attended services and was leaving to go home. He was in front of his car using the hand crank to start it, but the car was in gear. He was pinned against a tree and died almost instantly.

Roy Nelson announced that he had purchased the Cooke and Ellis grocery store on East Elm St. in Prescott.

One of the shows advertised at the Gem Theater was Strongheart—The Wonder Dog which was half wolf and half dog.

Medicines advertised included Gypsy Foot Relief, Hughes Chill Tonic, Gautsche Mineral Water, Fletcher's Castoria, Thedford's Black Draught, and Hesterly's Little Liver Pills (The Pill That Will).

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### **THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE CRAZE**

The decade of the 1920s, sometimes called "The Roaring Twenties", brought many fads to America. Most were short-lived, but some remain with us even today. Most fads or crazes in the past began in Europe and spread to America, but crossword puzzles began in America and then spread to Europe and other parts of the world.

It is said the man responsible for the crossword puzzle craze of the 1920s was Arthur Wynn who created crossword puzzles for his children and relatives. They were very popular and the idea spread quickly.

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The puzzles became so popular in the 1920s that there was a shortage of dictionaries. The Los Angeles public library put a five-minute limit on the use of their dictionaries because so many people were using them to solve their crossword puzzles.

Psychologists tried to determine why people were so attracted to the crossword puzzles. Some so-called experts said it was harmful while others claimed the puzzles were educational and helped people increase their vocabulary.

Soon most newspapers included a crossword puzzle in their papers. One hold-out was The New York Times. The editors of that paper thought the crossword puzzle was just a passing fad and would soon disappear. It was not until after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 that the New York Times decided to publish a crossword puzzle. The first puzzle in that paper appeared on February 15, 1942. Today, the New York Times crossword puzzle is one of the most popular and one of the hardest to solve.

Today, over 90 percent of newspapers contain a crossword puzzle and it is estimated that about 25 percent of those who buy papers try to solve the puzzles. Many people today still love crossword puzzles which you can find in just about any newspaper or on your electronic device. The latest puzzle craze seems to be one called Wordle in which players have six tries to guess a certain five letter word each day. I haven't tried that one yet.

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### A DEATHBED CONFESSION

I was doing a search online in old newspapers for things relating to Ouachita County, Arkansas and I got a hit from a newspaper called *The Wells Journal* in England. The story printed in the newspaper in 1877 was entitled "A Remarkable Story". I didn't expect to see Ouachita County mentioned in a newspaper from Somerset, England.

The article told of a strange white man in Fairview, Alaska named George Wakes who had taken ill. A doctor was called who said there was nothing he could do for him. The man called from his bed for a man named Adams and asked to speak to him alone.

The man then said, "My time has come to die, and I want you to see that what I have to tell you will be made public. My name is not George Wakes, but Lee Simmons. I was born in Dallas, Texas and am now 27 years of age. My father, whose name was William Simmons, is dead and is buried in Evergreen, Texas. My mother's maiden name was Lanford. When I last heard of her, she was living at Ouachita Station, Ouachita County, Ark. After my father died, and I was but 13 years of age, my mother sent me to school. There, a cousin of mine of the same name was my companion. One day, on returning

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home, I got mad with him. I went home, got my father's shot gun, watched for my cousin, and shot him dead. That night, I staid (sic) out till the family went to bed and I stole in for my clothes, and since that night, I haven't looked upon the face of my mother. My people are all wealthy, and when they hear that I am buried here, they will send for my body."

He then told how that from age 13 to 27, he had never stayed in one place over a month. He went to California and north up the Pacific Coast ending up in Alaska. He said he then returned to the States and traveled over all of them. He said he had always been haunted by the memory of his crime and felt remorse for abandoning his mother.

Those who were attending to the sick man had attempted to remove the bed covers but he refused to let them. After his death, the covers were removed and those present observed 17 gashes from knife wounds from one and a half to nine inches long. These scars were on both sides of his body. There were two gashes on his back—one three inches long and one nine inches long. There was also a scar from a bullet wound on his right arm. Evidently, the man had a hard life and had been involved in many fights during his short life.

His body was buried in the graveyard at Pope's church and over 200 people attended his burial.

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### **LOUANN'S HISTORY: ROWDY, NOW QUIET** **Published in the 2-13-1958 issue of *The Ouachita Citizen***

Back in 1922 Louann had only two general stores, and they were owned by R. L. Shirey and R. J. LaGrone. The town had been named "Louann" for Mrs. Shirey, who was Louann Wells before her marriage.

Louann was a quiet little country community in those days. Nobody felt much need for hurrying; farmers came to town to stock up on flour, sugar, shoes, calico, and other essentials, and to swap bits of news from their neighborhoods for news of the outside world; the tempo in that part of the county was slow and things moved along in undisturbed contentment.

Then one morning, Louann opened its eyes and found itself the center of feverish excitement. Oil had been discovered, and the first well, the Burton Gusher, was pouring out 75,000 barrels of liquid black gold every day. A boom was born and the town mushroomed overnight.

By 1924, Louann was a city of second class with a population of 2,800. By 1928 the 40 acre town site had a 3,500 population. Buildings, a few two stories among them, lined the streets. Soon there were a dozen hotels, three moving picture shows, a bank, and several wholesale houses. Oil field structures and "shot-gun" houses sprang up overnight.

Today, children and adults alike are fascinated by wild frontier life portrayed in movies and TV. In the oil boom days such scenes were acted out day and night on the streets

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of Louann. Killings, high-jacking, robbery, drunkenness, and general lawlessness prevailed in spite of guns bulging from holsters worn by most of the male citizens, and in spite of untiring efforts by a marshal, his deputies, and a deputy sheriff. Murder became commonplace. A wild element had moved in, and they had to be reckoned with.

On one particular occasion, one of the residents of Louann was walking down the main street after supper and suddenly a man came hurtling down from the roof of a “barrel” house, falling across the walk at his feet. He stopped and looked closely at the man and saw that his throat had been slit from one ear to the other. Sudden death is shocking and terrible, and yet, remembering those hectic fear-ridden days, some know that things worse than death went on in dimly lighted dens of iniquity.

Fire almost destroyed the town twice, but not long after the second fire, the “shot-gun” houses began to be replaced by buildings of brick and other substantial materials. Transient oil drillers began moving out and settled families began moving in. Five churches were built and became an important factor in the life of the community. They were the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and Assembly of God. With the exception of the Presbyterian, all these churches remain today thriving and well supported.

Louann, now free of the lawless hordes of unknown wanderers, put its shoulder to the wheel and shaped itself into a town that has been progressive, attractive, and respected by its neighbors.

A fine school was built, which at one time was second to none in the county and offered more credits than even the Camden schools.

Then came the depression—the boom slowly evaporated. The bank failed. Many people moved away. Today the population is 291. Only six stores remain in Louann.

Some of the original settlers in and around Louann were these: L. H. Hicks, the W. A. Smiths, the A. B. Allens, the R. J. Smiths and W. F. Patton.

Leo D. Perdue, who is one of Louann’s oldest settlers, came there in 1922. He established an army surplus store when the boom started and within two months, he had paid for it completely and enlarged the store to include groceries and feed.

Mr. Perdue was the second mayor of Louann. He served two terms in this office and later became city treasurer. He was president of the school board and was largely responsible for the building of the school. In 1933, he became Postmaster of Louann in which capacity he still serves. He is also owner of a hardware and furniture store.

We would not like to give the impression that Louann has gone back to its days of “sleeping in the sun”. It is a small community of loyal people who believe in the future. Mr. Perdue voices the attitude of its people as he says, “The residents of Louann have faith in a promising future for their town. We will be a city again in the near future.”

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## U.S. in the 70s (by Don Mathis)

Janis, Jimi, and Morrison died.  
It was the end of Woodstock Nation.

First Watergate, then Agnew quit,  
then Nixon's resignation.

The U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam  
was war machine humiliation.

And white male power took a fall;  
Welcome to Women's Liberation.

Fuel costs soared;  
lines were at every gas station.

And prices skyrocketed;  
there was uncontrolled inflation.

Everyone observed in their own way  
the bicentennial celebration.

And who can forget the president's walk  
at Carter's inauguration?

A different drum, a different march,  
was to protest gay discrimination.

And North can't point at South anymore  
after Boston riots against desegregation.

America watched helplessly  
at the Iran hostage situation.

A nuclear spill and protests mushroomed  
after Three Mile Island radiation.

And deadly toxins were revealed  
at Love Canal's contamination.

Self-love is OK, but it can be too much  
as proved by the 'me' generation.