

Jerry McKelvy's
WAY BACK WHEN

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FILLING IN THE GAPS – PART TWO
More newspaper items about the city of Prescott

November 21, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Thirty-six hours of almost constant rainfall.

November 26, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Our usually healthy city seems to be afflicted with an epidemic of yellow jaundice. I have heard of at least twenty cases.

West Main Street is being paved with gravel.

December 6, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

The erection of Prescott's \$20,000 court house is drawing much attention.

A new disease affecting children has physicians puzzled. It attacks the spinal cord and is hard to manage.

December 13, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Eggs are now 30 cents per dozen and are scarce.

The public schools are closed due to the death of Prof. Hay's infant daughter.

Business of all kinds continues to boom.

December 20, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Considerable sickness in town.

Mesdames Norman and Burns have opened a notion and toy store on West Main.

There are no empty business houses and very few unoccupied homes in town

December 21, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

All roads into Prescott are lined with wagons bringing in cotton.

December 24, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

General health is better than ever with little or no sickness in town. This has been one of the busiest weeks of the year. The streets are jammed with cotton wagons. It is almost impossible to pass through them.

December 29, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette

There is an uprising of the colored population at Hope who are threatening to kill the entire

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white population. Everybody is armed. Officers are patrolling the streets at Hope. Prescott is in flames, the work of colored “outbreakers”. Other reports say the fire was accidental.

December 30, 1882—The Arkansas Gazette

A disastrous fire at Prescott. The fire jumped West Main St. and destroyed the stores of Thad Gill, J. Kershaw, the Pagan building, and many others. Due to the extreme cold, water was hard to get. There was some looting by both whites and colored. Some colored men helped put out the fire. Some say the fire was accidental and others think it was set by the colored people due to the uprising at Hope. Over forty business houses were destroyed. An ordinance is needed requiring all new construction to be brick.

January 3, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

During the recent fire, help was sent from Hope to save the depot here. The engine and caboose made the run in 14 minutes, a distance of 16 miles.

January 23, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Trustees of the Christian church will begin work on their new church immediately. When completed, Prescott will have eight churches.

January 25, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

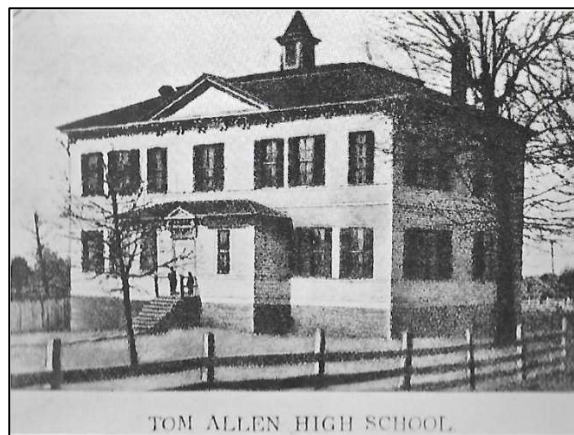
Much building is going on in the burnt district.

January 27, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Our hotels are crowded with drummers and land seekers. Our streets are in very good condition.

January 28, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

An article entitled “Prescott’s Pride” about the new Tom Allen High School named for the late Thomas Allen who donated the land. It is a frame two-story building with seven rooms. *Note: This building was destroyed by fire in 1900 and was rebuilt.*



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January 31, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Five two-story brick buildings are to be built on Elm Street near the court house.

February 28, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Mrs. Winter will build a big hotel in the burnt district.

March 21, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

The post office will be in the Pat Cassidy building now known as Moore's opera house. Lee Clow is the postmaster.

March 27, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

Hoodlums blew up the boys preparatory building connected to the high school with dynamite.

April 13, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Paragraphs

We had a hail storm. Some stones were as big as guinea eggs. Our farmers are growing much German millet this year.

April 15, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette

A full-page article about Prescott entitled "A Live Arkansas Town"

June 12, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette

Mrs. Sara Winter has opened her grand new hotel called The New Southern Hotel. It is two-story 50 x 100 feet with a hall ten feet wide and has a double gallery in front. It has the finest furnishings, a stove in each room, nice oil paintings on the walls, a reading room, and a dining room serving the best foods.

June 26, 1883—The Arkansas Gazette

An article entitled "Prescott-A Prosperous Iron Mountain Town"—only ten years old with a population of 1800. Article has detailed information on the main businesses in town.

August 4, 1883—The Arkansas Mansion

Editor E. A. Warren has moved his paper, The Prescott Dispatch, to Hope. Will now be called The Arkansas Dispatch.

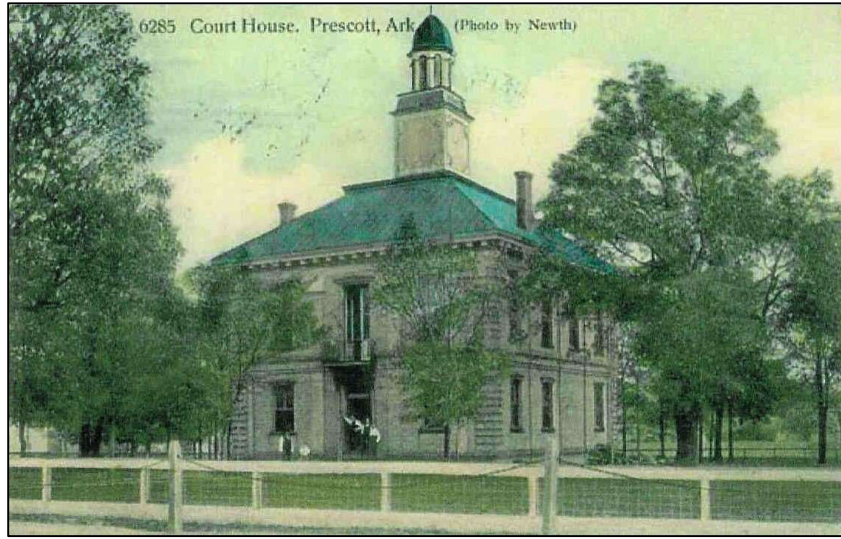
August 22, 1884—The Fort Smith Elevator

Last Saturday, two cowboys from Texas took charge of the city of Prescott. They drove everybody indoors while firing pistols. They made a pedestrian dance while holding a gun on him. As they were leaving town that night, one robbed and killed the other. He was arrested.

August 28, 1884—The Arkansas Gazette

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The brick work on the new court house has been completed.



August 29, 1884—The Fort Smith Elevator

The two cowboys who took over Prescott were found to be horse thieves from Texas on the run from the law. One of them is dead and the other is in jail. The stolen stock has been recovered.

August 31, 1884—The Arkansas Gazette—Prescott Pickings

A party of Turks with three bears are camping in town. They are causing much excitement and considerable curiosity.

October 5, 1884—The Arkansas Gazette

Some bad boys in Prescott are hanging out around churches and taking wheels off buggies for fun.

ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A FIFTH GRADER?

Do you remember the TV show a few years back called “Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader” hosted by Jeff Foxworthy? Adult contestants tried to answer questions on subjects like history, math, science, music, geography, grammar, and others. The grade level of the questions ranged from the first grade to the fifth grade and they had a few fifth graders there to help the contestants. I have been watching some re-runs of that show and I jotted down a few questions they asked. Here are 20 questions I wrote down from the show. See how you would do answering these questions. The answers can be found on page 7. Sorry, I don’t have any prizes to award if you answer them all correctly. Give yourself five points for each correct answer. Good luck!

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History

1. What is the most common first name of the U. S. presidents?
2. Who was president of the Confederate states in the American civil war?
3. What is the name of former president George Washington's home in Virginia?

Geography

4. What is the most southern U. S. state
5. What mountain range includes Mt. Everest?
6. What is the largest U. S. state?

Math

7. How many feet are in a mile?
8. How many cups are in five and one-half gallons?
9. If a square is five inches on each side, what is the perimeter of the square?

Science

10. What is the world's longest poisonous snake?
11. How many legs does a spider have?
12. What unit of measurement is abbreviated "oz."?

Social Studies

13. What are the three branches of the U. S. government?
14. In the patriotic song, what four words follow the lyrics "My country 'tis of thee"?
15. The 13 stripes on the United State flag represent what?

Grammar

16. What is the plural form of the word "deer"?
17. In the sentence "Sally is a very good person", what part of speech is the word "very"?
18. How many nouns are in this sentence: "The teacher went to the cafeteria and ate a big salad"?

Health

19. What organ of the human body produces and secretes bile?
20. A pulmonary doctor is mainly concerned with what organ of the body?

THE FEDERAL OCCUPATION OF CAMDEN IN 1864

I recently came across a very long letter published in the Washington Telegraph newspaper from a Camden resident who described what it was like when the Federal army under Gen. Steele occupied Camden in 1864. Here are some excerpts from that letter:

The Federal army has been here and gone. It went out Saturday night after staying for eleven days. It seems to us like a dream of a year long..... The Federal army, under Gen. Steele in person entered Camden after a running fight all day beginning at the crossroads about fifteen miles west on the Washington road and ending in the streets of the city. The heaviest fighting appeared to be around the graveyard, indicating that Gen. Steele knew the weak point in the works which is back of the graveyard....

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The privates swarmed into our kitchens and Negro houses, snatching the food from the children. Servants were tampered with to betray the hiding places and almost every one was plundered. Some were ruined.....milk cows and calves were killed in common with the beef cattle.... Of course, pigs and hen roosts were contraband. The clothes of women and children were taken by the men and torn into rags....

The Federals got here on the 15th in a famishing condition.... The rations of a private soldier for the last four days consisted of eight hard bread crackers (two per day) and a piece of meat the size of your hand.... On the morning of the 18th, there was heavy fighting in the west. In the evening, soldiers were in the streets in a solemn silence to hear the story of the fight at Poison Springs that day.

On the night of the evacuation, Col. Adams and his men informed Mr. _____ that his life and premises would all be destroyed unless he gave up his gold and silver. He gave it up.. Then they took his wife, a man had one hand over her mouth, saying that if she made any outcry, he would cut her throat. They stripped off her clothes and took from her person \$3,000 in Confederate money which she had concealed.... I heard of but two attempts to fire houses in all their doings. At my house, I had a barrel of water expecting to have fire to extinguish...

The evacuation was very silent. They left fires burning. They took up the pontoon bridge so quickly that several prisoners were left on this side... The next day was a bright day in Camden and for the first time in eleven days, ladies appeared on the streets. The flower gardens were stripped and perhaps a thousand bouquets were placed in the hats of our calvary men as they rode in yelling with excitement. Bright ribbons and feathers were hunted up by the ladies and tied in the hats of the Indians who went off on their ponies, yelling like the rest, only more so, and a general shaking of hands took place all day long.

Here ends my story of the Federal occupation of Camden. May it be her last!

Childhood Treasures – By Don Mathis

When you were four or five, we made you a treasure chest.
You looked at all your playthings for the ones you liked the best.
You picked a toy car like one you'd have someday.
I did it for making memories; you did it just for play.
You chose a plastic doggie that you liked so much –
and other items, a jumble of knickknacks and such,
a marble that if you held it to the light contained the universe,
a basketball card featuring the San Antonio Spurs.
Into the treasure trove went hopes, desires, and dreams.
I smiled out loud when you chose father/son figurines.
I don't know why you wanted to include an old battery.

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Maybe it could symbolize youth's everlasting energy.
A tiny book was added – like one I would read to you at night.
And other novelties went in, each one selected with delight.
I don't know how all the stuff you picked could possibly fit in.
It was only a little lunch box made of colorful tin.
But each object you selected was full of happiness.
We filled the box, we filled the day, we fulfilled this joyful quest.
We wrapped the box with foil to be safe from any mouse,
then hid the valuable collection far beneath the house.
The days went by, and you'd talk about the time capsule.
Then weeks and years went by, and then you entered school.
Did you forget these treasures? Do you remember anymore?
I'd see it now and then while doing some plumbing chore.
Twenty years have gone by and I wonder when
we should uncover the trove and see the treasure again.
Should I peek inside secretly and on my own,
or leave it for you to discover when you are all alone?
Would it be as magic as the memories in this gray head of mine?
Maybe I should leave it there, locked safely in my mind.

Answers to quiz

1. James (James Madison, James Monroe, James Polk, James Buchanan, James Garfield, James Earl Carter)
2. Jefferson Davis
3. Mount Vernon
4. Hawaii
5. Himalayas
6. Alaska
7. 5,280 feet
8. 88 cups
9. 20 inches
10. king cobra
11. 8 legs
12. ounce
13. legislative, executive, judicial
14. sweet land of liberty
15. original 13 colonies
16. deer
17. adverb
18. three nouns (teacher, cafeteria, salad)
19. liver
20. lungs

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Cupid Versus the Grim Reaper – by Don Mathis

Mom and her parents, back before I was around,
needed a place to stay when they came into town.

The found a room to rent at the Camden Funeral Home;
a 'Roger Miller' Special – No pets, please, no phone.

Future dad, home from the war, was staying with his brother,
Uncle George – mortician and Ouachita County coroner.

Dan met Bernadine in the hallway and on the step.
Romance in a mortuary? The story gets stranger yet.

Cupid's arrows will defeat the Grim Reaper's scythe.
Death's no match for Love! That's no idle myth.

Dan and Dean made a date for the Friday evening show.
The both got gussied up. It was almost time to go.

Then Uncle George got a call. A corpse had just come in.
Daniel couldn't leave; Uncle George needed all his men.

Future Dad explained his best, "The movie will have to wait."
But future Mom said, "Oh well, let's not break our date."

So they got back in their work clothes, rolled up their sleeves,
and spent their first date together dressing up a body.

They say that love is blind, but I didn't know its smell had died,
for in this case, love overpowered the odor of formaldehyde.

1947 - Bernadine Walker & Daniel Mathis

