

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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SCHOOL DAYS REMEMBERED

Back in the 1950s when I started to high school in Prescott, it was the custom that all freshmen entering high school must be initiated. If my memory serves me correctly, each member of the senior class was “assigned” a freshman, and for one day, the freshman was subject to whatever humiliation the senior wished to inflict upon him or her. This involved such things as carrying the senior’s books or more humiliating things like being forced to roll a peanut down the hallway with your nose or pulling the senior around campus in a little red wagon. The senior would also tell the freshman how to dress for Initiation Day.

My manner of dress for the occasion was captured on film just before I left for school on Initiation Day in 1957. I am looking at that picture as I write this. I was wearing a long sleeve shirt with a bow-tie and an old floppy hat. Over the shirt I wore a long dress. I had the word “Freshman” written across my forehead with lipstick and there is a string of something around my neck, but I can’t remember what it was. My brother is also in the picture, laughing at how I was dressed.

The first hurdle was getting on the school bus before someone driving by saw me. Then I had to endure the giggles of the other students on the bus. I felt better when another freshman got on board and the attention was focused on them for awhile.

I don’t think there was much school work accomplished that day. It was one of those days we wished would soon be over. Some kids enjoyed it and others just endured it. I believe that after lunch an assembly was called and the freshmen had to get up on stage and do a talent number of some sort, either individually or as a group. I can’t remember what I did, but I’m sure it was something appropriate for the occasion.

You would think that one of these initiation experiences would be enough, but it was not to be. I also belonged to the Future Farmers of America and they had their own initiation ceremony. The ones who were candidates for the FFA were called Green Hands. Since this was an all-male group, the ceremony was quite a bit different from the regular high school initiation.

The first order of business was for the candidate for membership to be blind-folded. Then we were led by those who were already members to the first station. There it was explained to us that we must be branded on our chest or abdomen. Our shirt was pulled up and the blind-fold was taken off so that we could see a fellow with a hot soldering iron, which was to be the branding tool. The blind-fold was replaced and after a few words were spoken, it was time to be branded. At the moment when we were expecting to feel the hot branding iron, a cube of ice was slapped against our body.

The next station was the tank which held some water with green dye in it. We had to place our hand in the tank and our hand would be colored green, since we were called Green Hands. Our blind-fold was put in place and we placed one hand in the tank. They had a little

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crank-type generator hooked up to the tank which delivered a small tingling shock to the one having his hand in the water.

We were then taken to a station, our blindfold removed, and we were shown a can full of earthworms. We were told we would have to eat some of these earthworms to become a member of the FFA. Our blindfold was put on and we heard the others say that earthworms didn't taste all that bad or something similar. We were then given some plain cooked spaghetti instead of the worms. I believe there was also a similar station where cooked oatmeal was substituted for cow manure. I remember some of the boys had to be held by two or three other boys as they submitted to this part of the initiation.

The next station I remember was a table on which the FFA manual was placed. We were instructed to kiss the manual three times, standing up after each kiss. This was also done while blind-folded. After the second kiss, the manual was exchanged for one with a pile of flour on it, so the third time we kissed the manual, we got a face full of flour.

Later when I started to college, I had to submit to a three week period of initiation. The freshmen were required to wear "beanies" on their heads as they walked over campus. If an upperclassman requested it, we would have to place our finger on the button of top of the beanie and tell our name and where we were from.

Almost every night at suppertime, a group of upperclassmen would be waiting for the freshmen as they came out of the cafeteria. The freshmen were subjected to all sorts of humiliating things like having to scrub the sidewalk with a toothbrush. I can remember missing some meals at the cafeteria to avoid all this type foolishness.

There was sort of an understanding that if a freshman wanted to avoid all the harassment by the upperclassmen, he could submit to having his hair cut and his initiation would be over. He could choose whatever hair design he wanted—either having all his hair cut off or having some sort of design cut in it. If you check out the school yearbooks, you can see the results of turning an unprofessional hair cutter loose with your hair. You will see some with shaved heads, some with Mohawk haircuts, and some with their beanies on to cover their bald heads. I chose to have the initials SSC carved in my hair which stood for Southern State College.

I can only speak from my experiences at college. I don't know what type of initiation the girls had to endure, if any.

I suppose most of these hazing practices have been eliminated by now. Occasionally we hear of some of these getting out of hand and someone getting injured. I suppose it was all done in fun, but I'm not sure it has a place in our educational system. Can you imagine the lawsuits that could be filed these days by students and their parents against the schools if these initiation or hazing practices were still used?

If you have had similar experiences with initiations or hazing in your life that you would be willing to share, send your memories to me and I'll include them in a future issue. I would be interested in knowing if these traditions existed back in the days of the one and two-room country school houses of Nevada and Ouachita counties.

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A CURE FOR WHAT AILS YOU

Old newspapers are filled with advertisements for all sorts of concoctions and elixirs guaranteed to cure just about anything. One of my favorites is a cream for rheumatism called Rub-My-Tism. Below are a few ads I found in the old Nevada County papers. This is for informational purposes only. Try these remedies at your own risk.

1910

Tutt's Pills—for dyspepsia, constipation, sick headache, biliousness, and all diseases arising from a torpid liver and bad digestion.

Carter's Little Liver Pills—nine times in ten when the liver is right, the stomach and bowels are right-gently, but firmly compels a lazy liver to do its duty

Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna—for constipation

Hunt's Lightning Oil—accidents will happen and when they do, they hurt. Hunt's Lightning Oil is an instantaneous relief and cure-all for all wounds, bruises, sores, cuts, sprains, and abrasions of the skin

A homemade remedy for colds—will break up a cold in 24 hours; mix together in a large bottle, 2 ounces of glycerin, ½ ounce of Virgin Oil of Pine compound, and 8 ounces of pure whiskey. This mixture will cure any cough that is curable and is not expensive and will last the average family an entire year

Fletcher's Castoria—promotes digestion, cheerfulness, and rest; contains neither aspirin or morphine; the recipe of old Dr. Samuel Pitcher; contains pumpkin seed, senna, Rochelle salts, peppermint, bicarbonate of soda, worm seed, clarified sugar, and wintergreen flavor

For rheumatism—1 ounce syrup of sarsaparilla compound and one ounce of Toris compound. Add to ½ pint of good whiskey. Take a tablespoon before each meal and at bedtime. Shake bottle well.

Sloan's Liniment—for neuralgic pains caused by excitement of the nerves and sciatica

1914

Chamberlain's Tablets—for a torpid liver

Foley's Honey and Tar—for coughs and colds

1928

Sickly, peevish children infested with intestinal worms cause cross, restless, unhealthy children. If the child is pale, with dark rings around the eyes, and has no interest in playing, it is almost certain that the child has worms. Use White's Cream Vermifuge for positive destruction of worms and it is harmless to children.

If you're tired, out or sorts, and have no appetite, it means your liver is clogged up. Get Carter's Pills.

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Mrs. Bettie McKelvy and Mrs. Mollie Parker

These two ladies lived in the Goose Ankle community about five miles southwest of Bluff City. My guess is that they were at some sort of community gathering where food was to be served because of the aprons they are wearing, but farm women in those days commonly wore aprons as they did their work. I don't know the year except that it was prior to 1947.

Elizabeth Ann "Bettie" McLelland McKelvy, known affectionately as "Little Grannie" was my great grandmother. She married Alexander Fletcher McKelvy in 1881. She was born Nov. 22, 1862 and died March 31, 1947, twenty three years after her husband. She and her husband are buried at Ebenezer Cemetery.

Mrs. Mary R. Parker, known as Mollie, and her husband, James A. Parker, known as "Gus", lived on a farm next to the McKelvys. Mollie Parker and Bettie McKelvy were the best of friends. Mrs. Parker was known for her shouting at the Rocky Hill Methodist Church near her home. She was born Dec. 22, 1867 and died July 4, 1951 on the day the Orland McKelvy family was having a family reunion at their place nearby. Their son, Harland McKelvy from Seattle was home and many of the family were there to visit with him. James A. Parker had died in 1931. The Parkers are also buried at Ebenezer Cemetery.

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MEMORIES FROM GOOSE ANKLE AND GUM GROVE SCHOOL

Editor's Note: I recently received a letter from Mrs. Mavis Giffith Belisle who grew up in the Goose Ankle community. She tells of her early school days at Gum Grove, the neighbors who lived close by, and some of her early childhood memories Mrs. Belisle left the area in 1934, went to Memphis, and became a registered nurse. She now lives in Austin, Texas. Some of the information below was furnished by Mrs. Belisle's sister, Mrs. Mildred Munn who now lives in Hope, Arkansas. (letter was edited for publication)

I was born in 1915. I am the first grandchild of John Henry Griffith. My father was William "Will" Griffith and mother was Gillie (Hall) Griffith. We had a home near Goose Ankle and attended the Methodist church there. Our home was on the Jeff Barlow place. Dad sold the place to Jeff Barlow. We were neighbors to the Moores, Nelsons, Irvins, Plylers, Otwells, Henrys, Walters, and Meadors. Our closest neighbors were Verna and Frank Nelson.

I attended my first school at Gum Grove until I was nine years old. We then moved to Caney (Morris) and I went to school there until the schools were consolidated and I finished at Cale. I remember walking to school at Gum Grove. I walked with Foy, Earl, Ardle, Lois, and Ester (Nelson) up to Henry Irvin's. We were joined there by Ellis and Grace Tallmadge, Nellie and Geneva Irvin, Maxine and Ollie. Then on by the Obe Richardson place, where we were joined by Alma Johnson (Eagle), Vera Johnson, Clara Richardson, and Arlis Richardson and then on to Gum Grove School.

Coming down the hill from Rocky Hill church (very steep), was the Jenkins Hall place where my grandfather John Henry Hall had a country store. He died with pneumonia during World War I. The road continued on by Marion Plyler's and on to Gum Grove School.

It was about a mile and a half walk for me to my first school, but we all had fun with our lunch pails and we ate icicles from the trail that hung on the barb wire fences. Uncle Talmadge (Griffith) would give me ribbon cane joints to chew on the way home and always looked after me. The others had brothers and sisters with them. I had it alone, but the Nelson's looked after me from where the divide was at the Henry Irvin place.

We had a lot of fun, but sometimes got to school with wet feet and frozen mittens to thaw out by the pot-bellied stove. We took turns sitting by the stove to warm up. We took our lunch in buckets- sweet potatoes, fried pies, ham or sausage in biscuits, and sometimes apples, etc.

The road by the Henry place (in sight of Gum Grove) went on by the Munn's, Walters, Luke and Henry Meador, Conklins, and Neals, I believe. I just turned 88, so it's hard for me to remember (ha).

Henry Irvin married Liza Johnson, who had two children, Eldry and May Johnson. They had Ruth, Ollie, and Maxine.

Obe Richardson married Nona Johnson who had Alma and Vera Johnson. He had Homer, Clara, and Arlis Richardson. There was a Mrs. Moore there also who went to the women having babies to assist the doctors. She came to our house and helped on May 23, 1919 to help deliver my sister. I had been sent to the Richardson's to spend the night. I was four years and three months old at the time, but I remember the event. There were five babies born in Goose Ankle that year—my sister, Mildred, Zettie Griffith, Lonnie Hall, Claudis Nelson, and a Johnson, I think Earl.

A huge mulberry tree stood at the old home place and Obe had to build other rooms to accommodate the three girls who were having dates from Bluff City. Alma went to college at Monroe, LA, which was also impressing to me.

I have all my report cards until I finished high school. I walked to school while living at Cale until the schools were consolidated. Then we went by bus to Cale. We always had fun going to or coming from school- riding or walking.

These were the teachers at Gum Grove (from my report cards):

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Gum Grove (1921-1922)- Mrs. Ruth Irvin Barlow (my first teacher); Miss Alma Johnson (Eagle), Principal.

Gum Grove (1922-1923)- Miss Elsie Beaty (?); Mr. Joe Bevill, Principal

Gum Grove (1923-1924)- Mrs. Belle Morgan; Mrs. Beulah Johnson, Principal

I remember my first toothbrush (Colgate) and we used a mixture of salt and baking soda to brush with (a black gum limb mop before that). I also remember my first airplane ride in 1919 about the time World War I ended. I was four years old and very excited. I also remember our first automobile. I can remember having to jump out of the wagon and throw blindfolds over the team to keep them from running away with us. I remember Mother making kraut, lye soap, and hominy and all the fruits and vegetables we canned and the pickles and relish she made. I remember the first radio with earphones to listen with. We could only get two or three stations. If company came in the earphones were divided so each party could hold one piece up to the ear.

FRESH STRAWBERRY PIE

These recipes come from Barbara Ray, a subscriber from Texas who grew up in Chidester.

1 cup sugar	red food coloring
Pinch of salt	2 cups fresh strawberries (more if desired)
4 tablespoons cornstarch	1 (9 inch) baked pie shell or Graham cracker shell
1 cup water	½ pint whipping cream (or whipped topping)

Combine sugar, salt, and cornstarch. Mix well. Add water. Cook over direct heat, stirring constantly until thickened. Add a few drops of red food coloring. Cool. Wash and drain strawberries, halve them, and place in pie shell. Pour filling over the top of strawberries. Refrigerate until firm. Top with whipping cream or whipped topping. Serves 6 to 8.

ANNIE'S LEMON ICE BOX PIE

Mrs. Ray says, "Our babysitter/cook/housekeeper, Annie Sims made this pie for us when we were growing up in Chidester. She was probably the best cook I have ever known."

Filling

Vanilla wafers
1 can Eagle Brand condensed milk
3 eggs, separated into whites and yolks
Pinch salt
1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring
3 lemons (or 1/2 cup lemon juice)

Topping

1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring
1 teaspoon water
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
3 teaspoons of sugar
Pinch salt
3 egg whites

To make filling, add egg yolks to Eagle Brand. Add lemon juice, other ingredients last. Pour into pie plate lined with vanilla wafers—crumbs on the bottom of the plate and whole cookies around the sides.

For topping, mix all ingredients except sugar. Start beating with a mixer on medium to high speed, and then begin adding sugar. Continue to beat until peaks are formed. Put on top of filling and bake at 350 degrees until the top is browned.