

# **THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE**

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## **THE BIG CAT SCARE OF 1909**

The spring of 1909 was a tense time in Nevada County as reports began to come in of a great cat or some type of animal prowling the woods. It was seen by several people at various times. Below are several news stories that appeared in the county newspaper. I never found a story about the animal being killed, so what it actually was remains a mystery.

### **Prescott Daily News (4-28-1909)**

There was consternation again last evening caused by the presence of the mountain lion, wolf, or whatever that is causing a strong condition of nervousness in certain sections of this vicinity. The last disturbance took place in Sunset when a Negro woman raised an alarm stating she had seen a big animal the color of sawdust with a large head and a long body and massive legs creeping through B. J. Daniel's pasture. A posse looked for the beast, but darkness prevented an extensive hunt. The tracks, measured by Marshal Murrah, appear to be the same as those in Kirk Cummings pasture. The woman who claimed to have seen the beast is staying behind locked doors today and has not yet recovered from her fright.

### **The Nevada News -(4-29-1909)**

The mountain lion, big dog, wolf, or what not was the sensation again today. At 6:30 this morning, Jim Young, a Negro was run out of the pasture of Kirk Cummings by the animal and breathlessly came to town with the news. The Negro claimed to have come upon the beast quite suddenly in a thicket. It was of large size, brown in color, and showed fight. Soon after the news reached town, a posse was formed and securing the dogs of Henry Slaughter, a rush was made for the scene and while the tracks of the animal were plainly visible, the dogs refused to follow them. Their actions clearly indicated that whatever it was, they were afraid of it and after bristling up and barking a time or two, they abandoned the hunt. The track was measured and revealed to be nearly five inches across and it is the opinion of those who saw it, that the beast is a big wolf.

### **The Nevada News -(5-13-1909)**

There is renewed excitement here today on account of the movements of the mountain lion which has been seen at several different times during the past month. The most recent actions of the panther-like animal was its appearance Friday night among the cattle of Loomis and Denman a few miles south of town which caused a stampede and the cattle in their fright broke through the fences of the pasture and tore them down like they were made of straw. A night or two before the same thing happened among the cattle of S. S. Brooks, a farmer living near the Loomis place. A small calf was run over in the stampede and killed.

Yesterday afternoon, Luke Steele and his wife, while out driving, came upon the animal near the railroad tracks two miles south of town and were able to view it carefully. Mr. Steele says it was not a wolf and the tail was too short for a panther. From what he has heard of the Mexican lion, he is confident that is what it is. Mr. Steele did not have a gun with him and was forced to watch as the varmit disappeared into the woods.

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B. G. Murrah, father of county clerk Murrah, saw the animal Friday afternoon in a pasture south of town.

So far, all dogs placed upon its tracks have refused to run the animal and without exception have turned back frightened.

Ex-Senator George R. Haynie sent word to his father and brothers in Gurdon who own a pack of fine dogs, to come tomorrow and he believes these dogs will enable a posse to kill the varmit.

The presence of the animal has caused consternation among the Negroes and farmers in the section south of town and they are having great difficulty in getting them to work in the fields.

### **Prescott Daily News – (6-29-1909)**

For months past, rumors have been rife of a jaguar or Mexican lion in the vicinity of Boto and Bills. It has been reported to be seen by a number of people, but no one has succeeded in killing the animal. Report is now made that last week while Mr. Hoover and his sons were working on their farm a rain came up and they went to their camp place for shelter. Their dog came into the camp as if something was after him. After being urged, the dog ran in pursuit and was soon heard giving vent to his pain in exclamations of anguish. On investigation, the dog was torn and crushed by some ferocious animal supposed to be the jaguar which escaped.

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### **SOME PROBLEMS FROM A 1909 GRAMMAR SCHOOL ARITHMETIC BOOK (these are some of the easier ones---see page 4 for some of the answers)**

1. A box containing oranges weighs 55 pounds; the empty box weighs 7 pounds; and the oranges, 3 pounds per dozen. How many oranges are there in the box?
2. A father had 30 apples and gave one fifth of them to his daughter, one fourth of the remainder to his son, and the balance to his wife. How many did each receive?
3. There are 15,129 peaches in an orchard. How many trees are there if the number of trees is equal to the number of peaches on each tree?
4. A boy paid 55 cents for apples and oranges. The apples cost 3 cents and the oranges five cents each. If there were 8 oranges, how many apples were there?
5. A lady, on being asked her age, said: "2 years is 8% of my age." How old is she?
6. John can dig a ditch in 12 hours and Jim in 15 hours. How long will it take both together to dig it?

**NEVADA COUNTY'S TALLEST GRAVE MARKERS**



The size of a person's grave marker does not always indicate the worth of the person. There have been many good people whose graves are marked by a small native stone or maybe not even be marked at all. But we assume that a very large stone like the one to the left marks the grave of an important person or at least one whose family was wealthy enough to purchase such a stone.

This is the tallest grave marker in Nevada County. It marks the grave of Brad Scott in the old part of De Ann Cemetery in Prescott. He was born Sept. 19, 1847 and died May 2, 1895. The base of the stone is five feet square and the height is 20 feet.

Can you imagine what such a stone would cost today? Think of the work it took to install this stone back in 1895. A stone such as this was probably ordered and shipped to Prescott by train and then manually carried to the cemetery by horses and wagon.

I know that there is a Brad Scott Addition to the city of Prescott, so evidently he donated or sold some of his land to the city in its early years. He served as an alderman of the city of Prescott in the first election in 1876. Other officers were W. L. Webb, mayor; M. J. Saxon, marshal; J. J. Whitesides, recorder; E. E. White, treasurer; Brad Scott, W. B. Waller, W. A. Bright, D. M. Wadley, and Guy Nelson, aldermen.



The second tallest grave marker in Nevada County is that of R. S. Briant in Forest Hill Cemetery. Mr. Briant was born March 20, 1859 and died July 10, 1903.

The base of his stone is 38 inches square and the height is 15 feet. The large stone next to his is that of his mother, Nancy J. Briant. On her stone is engraved "wife of Robert N. Briant. Mother of R. S. Briant, W. H. Briant, and R. M. Briant". She was born March 9, 1840 and died March 25, 1911.

I have no information about these people other than what is written on their grave markers.

## A COUNTY SEAT CREATED

Nevada County was created in March, 1871 from parts of Hempstead, Ouachita, and Columbia counties. The first seat of justice for the county was at Mt. Moriah, but lasted only six months when Rosston was designated to be the county seat.

Henry Ross and his wife, Martha E. Ross donated forty acres of land to Nevada County on September 15, 1871 “for the purpose of locating the county seat thereon”. This is recorded in Deed Book A, page 124 and 125. It was decided to name the new town after Henry Ross who donated land for the county seat. Henry Ross also had other lands in the same area in a partnership with James Torrains of Lafayette County.

The actual city of Rosston was laid out by surveyors commissioned by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas in late 1871 and the land was divided up into blocks and lots and street names were assigned for the city. These survey plats are recorded in Book A, page 126, 137, and 139. The streets running north and south were named after the presidents—Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, and Van Buren. The streets running east and west were named after trees—Pine, Olive, Beech (spelled Beach on plat), Spruce, Vine, Oak, and Holly. Each city block and lot had a number assigned to it. Practically all the town was owned by Henry Ross and James Torrains. They agreed to divide up the town with each one getting certain lots. I’m sure they felt that this would put them in a good position when the town began to grow.

In a deed dated November 10, 1871 (Book A- page 128), Henry Ross and James Torrains donated Block No. 28 in the newly surveyed town of Rosston to Nevada County. This block was in the center of town just north of the intersection of present-day Hwys. 278 and 200 (the sharp curve in Rosston). As the town developed, I believe this was probably where the county offices were located to do the business of Nevada County. No courthouse was ever built at Rosston because the county seat was not to remain there for very long.

When the railroad was completed through southwest Arkansas about 1873, stores were built along the railroad and people began to settle close by. Prescott, located on the railroad and named after a railroad surveyor, was laid out in 1873, soon became the center of business in the area and the town grew rapidly. An election was held in 1877 and the people voted to move the county seat of Nevada County from Rosston to Prescott, even though Rosston was located in almost the exact center of the county and Prescott was in the north end of the county. Prescott received 1107 votes and Rosston 392 votes. Some thought the election was unfair, but it was not contested.

The old street names assigned to the city of Rosston were never used as far as I know. The dreams of Henry Ross and James Torrains never materialized as far as Rosston was concerned.

Rosston today is an incorporated town in Nevada County with a population of 262. It has two stores, a fire department, post office, and one church. The Nevada Public School was located there in 1988 (a result of the consolidation of schools in Bodcaw, Cale, Laneburg, Willisville, and Oak Grove). A new school was constructed and today most of the students in the south half of Nevada County attend school at Rosston.

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This poster, written by Meiji Stewart, is displayed in the office where I work. It has some good thoughts to help us as we go about our daily lives.

### When Life Gets You Down – Don't Quit!

- A. Anything can happen
- B. Bend—Don't break
- C. Challenge Your potential
- D. Destiny is a choice
- E. Effort creates opportunities
- F. Follow your intuition
- G. Get back up and try again
- H. Hold on to your vision
- I. Improve yourself
- J. Just dig a little deeper
- K. Keep knocking on doors
- L. Learn from mistakes
- M. Motivate with compassion
- N. Nothing worthwhile ever comes easy
- O. Own a positive attitude
- P. Problems hold messages
- Q. Question what's not working
- R. Re-group when you need to
- S. Stand up for your principles
- T. Think outside the box
- U. Unite perseverance with resolve
- V. Value knowing when to walk away
- W. Work smarter; not just harder
- X. –haust all possibilities
- Y. You can if you think you can
- Z. zzz's; take naps as needed



Pictured here are Mrs. Etta Carter Meador and Mrs. Katie Bradley Moore of Bluff City.

Etta Ethel Carter was born Nov. 10, 1882 and died March 17, 1980. She was the daughter of Jiles Marion Carter and Mary Catherine Walker. She married Julius Andrew Meador in 1902. Children born to this couple were: Mildred Meador, Elmer Lee Meador, Stell Meador, and an infant son.

Mrs. Katie Moore was born June 8, 1882 and died June 8, 1974. She was the daughter of Elizabeth Jane "Betty" Carter and John B. Bradley. She married William Edwin Moore in 1895. Children born to this couple were: Wilkie Edwin Moore, Lillie Belle Moore, George Garland Moore, Joseph Clyde Moore, Elsie Mae Moore, Hillery Herbert Moore, Pearl Louise Moore, and Merle Elloene Moore.

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Answers to math quiz on page: (1)-192; (2)-??; (3)- 123; (4)- 5; (5)- ??; (6)- 6 hrs. and 40 minutes

**MAYBE THERE IS STILL HOPE FOR THE OLDER FOLKS**

I found an article in the Nov. 25, 1915 issue of *The Nevada News* that I thought was interesting. According to the article, it was an accepted belief in 1915 that little could be accomplished in life after the age of fifty. Some even thought that a man that was 60 years old might as well be chloroformed since he was on longer of any value.

A Dr. Dorland, a prominent physician of that time, decided to do some research on this subject. He made a list of 400 of the most noted and illustrious men of all time in the history of the world including statesmen, painters, poets, writers, and warriors. Next to each name he wrote down the single greatest achievement of that man during his lifetime. Then he wrote down the age of the man when he accomplished his greatest achievement.

The results were startling and dispelled some of the myths of that time. He found that 35% of the great achievements were accomplished when the man was in 60-70 year age range. The group aged 70-80 were responsible for 23% of the greatest achievements. Those over age 80 were responsible for 6% of the great achievements.

That meant that 64% of the world's greatest achievements were accomplished by men over age 60. The group aged 50-60 had 25% of the great achievements, so that meant that 89% of the world's greatest achievements were by men over the age of 50.

Of the remaining 11%, only 1% of the great achievements were by men less than 40 years old.

His conclusion was that man came into his intellectual prime when he reaches age 50 and has a better chance of doing an important deed after age 60. The many years of experience combined with plenty of gray matter and making good use of opportunities will enable older people to make great accomplishments in their lives.

So, maybe there is still hope for us older folks. Just because you retire from work doesn't mean you have to retire your mind. Many elderly Americans are learning how to operate computers and doing all types of volunteer work to keep active. And you can always write your memoirs.

It's not too late to get started on some dream you have. Anna Mary Robertson, known as Grandma Moses, didn't start painting until her late 70's and she lived to be 101. During that time she painted over 1600 works of art and painted her last painting when she was over 100 years old. Ex-President Bush parachuted out of an airplane at age 75. John Glenn made his second space flight at age 77. Sam Walton was 44 when he opened his first Wal-Mart and spent the last thirty years of his life making Wal-Mart the country's largest retailer with over 1700 stores at the time of his death.

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“An archaeologist is the best husband any woman can have: the older she gets, the more interested he is in her.”—Agatha Christi

“Whatever a man's age, he can reduce it several years by putting a bright-colored flower in his button-hole.”—Mark Twain