

# THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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## TRAGEDY IN PRESCOTT MAN KILLS HIS BROTHER ON WEDDING DAY (Reported in The Nevada News- December 29, 1910)

One of the worst tragedies ever enacted in southwest Arkansas occurred at mid-afternoon yesterday. Will W. Hendrix shot and killed his brother, George Henry Hendrix, at their father's store on West Main Street. Will is the bookkeeper for the firm and Henry was a salesman.

About 3:30 news flashed over town that Will had killed Henry. On arriving at the store, reporters for the press found the body of Henry on a cot where it has been placed by friends and surgeons. Two bullet holes, one through the heart, had done the work and Henry Hendrix, who that evening at 7:00 was to have wed Miss Bettie Brown of this city, lay lifeless unable except for a few feeble words as he lay dying, to testify on his own behalf.

Upon calling at the jail to see Will, the man who did the shooting, the press agent got the following story:

"I was sitting at the desk. Henry approached the office with a raised hatchet and said, 'You slapped Pearl, why don't you slap me?' I said I did not have cause to slap him and with that he started at me with the hatchet saying, 'I'll scatter your brains all over this store.' I then fired, emptying my revolver which was a six-shooter."

Will was 39 years of age on Sunday, Christmas Day. Henry was 22 last March. Both brothers were prominent in Prescott in business and socially. The young lady, Pearl is a sister to the brothers about 20 years of age.

Charles Lancaster of Prescott Hardware Co., Dr. Buchanan, and Mr. Hornbeck arrived in time to hear the last words of the dying man. Reports of the words uttered by both Will and Henry after the shooting are naturally a little conflicting. As people entered the store, Henry was found lying on the floor about six feet from the office. Will was standing inside the office railing with a 38 Smith and Wesson Special revolver in his hand. Near where Henry lay was a hatchet. Henry is said to have exclaimed, "He has killed me, he has killed me." Will replied, "You made me do it." One report states the dying man denied the statements from Will. The dying man recognized Dr. Buchanan and said, "Raise me up". The doctor, not realizing that death was near, began to remove his overcoat and gloves, but before the same could be accomplished, Henry's life had gone out, killed by his brother.

The fiancé of the deceased is said to be crazed with grief. The sympathy of hundreds of friends goes out to her in this dark time in her young life.

The father of the boys, an aged man, had started for the city marshal when the altercation started, but before he could get further than the street, shots were fired which told him too plainly of the awful heart-rending tragedy. The father is in the peculiar position of being a witness in the case. There was not an eye witness to the actual shooting.

Following an investigation that lasted over two hours, the coroner's jury at 8:25 last night brought in a verdict that they did not find the shooting justified and the prisoner was bound over to await the action of the Grand Jury.

### THE VERDICT OF THE JURY

The case came to trial in late July, 1911. The charge against Will W. Hendrix was first degree murder. There were no eye witnesses to the shooting. The trial lasted a full day with the jury getting the case at 6:30 p.m. They met until 11:00 p.m. when they were allowed to go to bed. They resumed deliberation early the next morning and reached a verdict at 8:30 a.m. The decision of the jury was "Not Guilty". (*reported in the 7-22-1911 issue of The Nevada News*)

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### THE FIFTEEN-CENT HAIRCUT (from the 3-14-1931 issue of The Nevada News)

The three Stitt brothers, J. W., J. R. and S. D., lived 40 years ago at a country crossroads known as Dobbyville. It was many miles from the nearest railroad and the bright lights of any town. A trip to town in those days was a day's journey.

One of the problems of rural life in those days that had to be solved was getting a haircut. The younger fellows learned to perform tonsorial services for each other.

One Saturday afternoon, a group gathered at the general store and S. D. Stitt gave George Clark a haircut. The temperature that day was not conducive to bodily activity, so the group of young boys began to speculate about their future. It was agreed that forty years from that day they would report to each other regarding their life experiences during those forty years.

With the approach of evening, the group broke up and George Clark discovered that he didn't have the 15 cents which was the price they had agreed upon for a haircut. He jokingly promised that when he made his 40 year report, he would pay for the haircut with 10% interest compounded annually.

The years passed and a few days ago, S. D. Stitt received from George Clark, a millionaire lumberman from Beirne, Arkansas, a check for \$5.35 to settle the old account.

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### AN OLD OBITUARY-NEVADA COUNTY PICAYUNE (AUG. 6, 1885)

We announce the death of Squire William Marsh which occurred at his home at Caney in Jackson Township on the 21<sup>st</sup> ultimo. Mr. Marsh lived in this county for a great many years and was one of the most honorable and useful citizens and his death is lamented by the entire community. He was a successful farmer and merchant and made liberal contributions of both time and means to every enterprise for the promotion of society and general welfare of the community. He will be greatly missed. He leaves a wife and several children, most if not all, are grown to mourn his death. John, Ed, and Oscar Marsh of Jackson Township are his sons. (*Note: Caney was an old community in east Nevada Co. near White Church Cemetery*)

**THE TUNNELL FAMILY**

*Note: Information for this article submitted by Joanne Westmoreland.*

The Tunnell family was well known in northeastern Nevada County and many members of the family are buried at Ebenezer Cemetery. As you drive out Hwy. 299 from Bluff City past Ebenezer Cemetery, you will also notice a small creek identified as Tunnell Branch, so named because it flowed through Ike Tunnel's farm.

One of the early Tunnells in America was Rev. John Tunnell, who was one of the first twelve elected elders of the Methodist Church in America. He was a circuit rider who traveled and preached in eight of the original 13 states. He was a very prominent preacher in those days. His ministry was cut short due to contracting tuberculosis which caused his death in 1790 at age 35. His life is a story in itself.

The Tunnell family is a family of preachers. Stephen Tunnell, Sr. had five sons, all of them ministers and there were at least 15 ministers within four generations of his descendants.

Stephen Tunnell, Jr. (1790-1870) married Sarah A. Hamilton. Stephen was born in Greene Co., Tennessee and died in Lowndes Co, Mississippi. They had 12 children—Nancy Tunnell, Elijah Tunnell, John Tunnell, Polly Tunnell, Betsy Tunnell, Sarah Ann Tunnell, Stephen Money Tunnell, Payton Graves Tunnell, Jane Catherine Tunnell, David Parker Tunnell, Martha Kezia Tunnell, and Thomas Lloyd Tunnell.

Most of these children remained in Mississippi, but Payton Graves Tunnell made his way to Arkansas and to the area near Bluff City. In this article we will focus on Payton Graves Tunnell and one of his sons, Isaac Newton Tunnell. Payton was born 11 June 1826 near Columbus, MS and died in 1876 near Bluff City, Arkansas. He married Vina Fortune, also born in Mississippi. She died 10 Jan. 1910 near Bluff City, AR. and is buried at Ebenezer Cemetery.

Payton and Vina Tunnell had 10 children—Reuben Tunnell, William Thomas Tunnell, John Payton Tunnell, Sarah A. Tunnell, Isaac Newton Tunnell, Timothy G. Tunnell, Mary Malinda Tunnell, Nancy L. Tunnell, Nathan P. Tunnell, and Julia Tunnell.

There is something about Payton Tunnell that few people know. Payton Tunnell's grave marker is at Ebenezer Cemetery, but actually he is not buried there. His daughter, Mary Malinda Tunnell married Elijah William Barlow and they lived on what is now Hwy. 24 just west of Caney Creek about three miles west of Bluff City. Many of you will remember where Aubrey and Leila Barlow lived—now the home of R. L. Cummings. When Payton died, he was buried in the family plot in front of this old home place. When Hwy. 24 was constructed through this area about fifty years after his death, the highway went right over the top of Payton's grave which was only marked with a rock. Older members of the family remember other graves being there as well.

It seems strange that the highway construction had to disrupt so many cemeteries. In a distance of about ten miles, this highway went through three different cemeteries. One is near the road to Lower White Oak Lake in Ouachita County. The second is this old cemetery where Payton is buried, and the third one is about a half mile west of the intersection of Hwy. 24 and Hwy. 53.

About 1940, Payton's granddaughter, Drue Tunnell Westmoreland, applied for and received a stone marker for Payton Graves Tunnell from the U. S. government. Since the grave was covered by the highway, she couldn't decide where to place it. The grave marker was left in their garage for about a year. Drue then decided to place the marker on her grandmother's (Vina Fortune Tunnell) grave since it was only marked with a rock. With the help of her son, Perry (then about 12 years old), the marker was placed on Vina's grave in Ebenezer Cemetery.



One of Payton Tunnell's sons also raised a large family in this area. Isaac Newton Tunnell was born 18 Sep. 1861 in Mississippi and died 10 Jun 1929 near Bluff City, Arkansas. He married Laura Enola Irvin, daughter of Fielding and Margaret Caroline Moores Irvin. They had 15 children—Arthur C. Tunnell, Ruby Tunnell, Bessie Tunnell, Ada Tunnell, Edna Jane Tunnell, Viola Tunnell, Marcia Marvin Tunnell, Drue Essie Tunnell, Ernest Moores Tunnell, Jessie Clae Tunnell, Herbert Oliver Tunnell, Verda Sallye Tunnell, Cecil Calvin Tunnell, Olga Eudara Tunnell, and Warden Isaac Tunnell.

Here is a family picture taken about 1908 of the Isaac Newton Tunnell family.



Back row, left to right: Ruby, Viola, Ada, Edna, and Marcia; Ernest (in front of Ruby); Drue (between Viola and Ada); Jessie in center between Isaac and Enola; Cecil (held by Enola); Verda (in front of Isaac); Herbert (in front of Marcia);  
Not pictured: Arthur (age 21); Bessie (died age 1); Olga (born 1909; Warden (born 1911)

**AN ARKANSAS GAZETTE REPORTER TRAVELS THROUGH SOUTHERN  
NEVADA COUNTY—Reported in Nevada County Picayune Oct. 8, 1885**

From here I went to Falcon, some ten miles north, which is one of those “has been” places killed by the building of the Iron Mountain road. It was once a flourishing town, home of a number of reputable businessmen whose energy and enterprise were utilized in building up other places including Messers. Bayless, J. R. Giles, Dr. Royce and the Bryants of Hope, Samuel Carson and W. R. White of Prescott, and Col. Hardy and Sons of Camden. A post office and one or two business houses remain here which seems to fill the place of sentinels to keep the owls away.

Thence I wended my way by Bodcaw post office into the Bright neighborhood some ten miles southeast of Prescott. All the intelligent and thrifty people occupy this neck of the woods. Here I found Mr. Basset Bright and Jas. W. Brooks erecting a fine steam mill and gin. A new post office has been established near the mill called Lanesville. It is quite convenient to people who have been in need of better mail facilities.

As space forbids further minute details, I must leap over ground more rapidly. From Mt. Moriah I directed my course to old Rosston known as Bourland’s Store. It is a good business point notwithstanding the many disadvantages with which it has to contend. Messers. Fincher, Tidwell, McClure, and Bourland, merchants and businessmen of the place joined in the assertion that more cotton is bought here than any place its size in the state.

From here I went east ten miles to Young’s Store. Mr. Young is located in a prosperous neighborhood and is doing well as merchant. Much complaint about the mail facilities here. From this place I stuck southwest to Pipkin’s Store. A new post office has just been established and the place will henceforth be known as Glenville. Mr. W. L. Pipkin, postmaster, is a good man and affable gentleman.

A ride of eight or ten miles brought me to Watt’s Store. The Watts Brothers do a good merchantile business at this place without opposition, yet their trade is injured to some extent by the close proximity to McNeil on the railroad.

Thence I proceeded as far south in Columbia County as Killafore’s Landing, then direct to this place.

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**LITTLE WILLIE’S POEM**

The teacher was trying to teach her class how to write a poem that rhymed. Little Willie wrote:

I saw a pretty maiden  
with blue eyes and red lips.  
She slipped into a puddle  
that reached to her ankles.

“Why”, the teacher asked Willie, “that last line doesn’t rhyme at all.”

“I know”, said Willie, “but the puddle wasn’t deep enough for it to rhyme.”

### AN OLD-TIMER'S PRAYER

Lord, I've been just a sittin' here thinkin' about how much my life is like my old car out there in the shed that sometimes needs a master mechanic to pull it into the garage and give it an overhauling.

Lord, I want the headlights of my body and soul to keep pointin' out the clear road; and if they get dirty, I want you to take out your big hankerchief and wipe 'em off, so I can get back on the right road.

Help those things called the oil and air filters to keep the particles of bad thoughts out of my system and keep my ideas clean and pure, so I won't have any little specks that keep me from workin' smoothly.

I need oil to wash everything and keep it lubricated, so I can function just like you'd want. Keep the Holy Spirit a-givin' me help all the time.

Then Lord, there seems to be trouble of sometimes a-blowin' my horn at the wrong time. I sure could use a control button on this.

Keep the preacher a-pourin' in the high octane; and even though I don't like the price of the gasoline, keep me a-chuggin' along and pullin' into the station.

And you know, Lord, some of my Christian friends seem to have lost that Cadillac smile you've given them, and they look like the front of my old Nash. The world's just a-waitin' for that little bit-o-sunshine in a smile. Help us all to share it.

And Lord, when my fuel pump finally wears out and I've gone as far as I can on the one set of spark plugs You have given me, let me be willin' to turn in my old model for the new one I'll be gettin' on the other side.

I'm gonna let YOU do the shifting, Lord. the days are plumb too fast for me. Amen!

### HOMEMADE BISCUITS FOR TWO

¾ cup cold milk

1 ½ tablespoons Crisco oil

Self-rising flour

Mix cold milk and oil in small mixing bowl. Stir in self-rising flour, adding a small amount at a time, until batter is a very stiff consistency, but still not dry on surface. Pour out on well-floured waxed paper and knead in small amount of flour until surface is dry. Pat out to about ½ inch thickness and cut with a biscuit cutter. Grease both sides of biscuits by dipping in pre-oiled loaf pan and turning upside down. Bake at 450 degrees for about 25 minutes or until biscuits are golden brown. Yield: 8 small biscuits

"I have no yesterday. Time took it away. Tomorrow may not be—but I have today." *Pearl McGinnis*