

# THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Jerry McKelvy, Editor

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## THE STORY OF THE FIELDING IRVINS—PART TWO

By Joseph Lonner Irvin—1958

*Editor's note: Part One of this family's story was in the last issue. Part One ended in May of 1887 with the death of Fielding Irvin. The story continues...*

We children were subject to chills and fevers and frequently little Jessie had one or two pretty hard chills. Dr. Charles Norwood, a distant cousin, was our doctor. He had one wooden leg. He lived several miles away. Anyway, mother was pretty good in taking care of her children in sickness. But she didn't know that our little sister had suffered with a congestive chill. She and I were out playing one morning beside the house when she was seized with a chill. Ma, who was out at the well doing the family wash, came and put her to bed and then went back to her washing. Adella was in bed in the same room with her baby of a few days old, Ester Baker. Mr. Baker, Adella's husband, had died a few weeks prior while they were living in Hot Springs. She had come home to live with us. Well, in just a few minutes, Adella suddenly told me to go quickly and call Ma. She came hurrying. When she reached the bedside, she saw that our dear little sister whom we all loved so much, was already passing out of this life. It was almost more than we could stand. So we had another sad funeral, just a week after Father's death. It seemed tragedy had struck us rather hard. Had we known and had proper medical care, Jessie might be living today.

At this particular time, we were in desperate circumstances—poor and in debt with a mortgage on our land. The neighbors were kind and helpful. Ike Tunnell, who had married our oldest sister Enola a year or two before, advised and helped all he was able. Also John Otwell and Fletch McKelvy, as well as others, were sympathetic and helpful. Time was hard. Everyone was struggling to make a decent living.

Willie, who was 12 now, took the lead and a good part of the responsibility of management. Of course, Mother was chief advisor and manager. Rather than go in debt for anything, unless it was absolutely necessary, we simply did without. I can recall at one time, we had to eat cornbread for breakfast for about three weeks, as well as for the other meals.

Henry was now 9 and at that young age made a regular loyal hand in the field and at anything else that was needed to be done. Willie was shrewd and conservative, a tireless worker and a good planner. As time went on, Ma would talk matters over with him and usually followed his advice.

Our oldest brother, Johnny, who had been gone from home several years before Father's death, came back home from Washington Territory a year or so after his father's death. He worked hard, helped Ma on the mortgage, and did all he could to better conditions, but left the farm management mostly up to Willie. He had never married and was a friendly, sober, and well-liked man. His training by godly parents proved an asset in molding his character into a good, honest, and upright man. He returned to Washington Territory in 1891, hoping

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to be able to bring our family out there later on. But Ma was never much impressed in such a move. Johnny was instrumental in getting several families to sell out and move to that new country. Two of Ma's brothers, Uncles John and Willie, and one sister, Aunt Mary, moved out there. They went in the fall of the year. The winters are rainy and damp. Uncle John took sick and died the first winter, caused by exposure to bad weather conditions. Aunt Mary made her home with her daughter, Georgia Dunlap, suffered many privations, dying at an advanced age and was buried at Elma, Washington. Gardie and I visited the grave some 18 years ago. Uncle Willie made Washington his home for life and passed away some ten years ago. Johnny never returned home. We heard he made two trips to the Alaskan gold fields, from one of which he did not return, probably losing his life searching for gold as so many others did in those times.

By good management, my mother finally paid off the mortgage to Mr. Felsenthal of Camden except a small amount against about 120 acres that laid along the south side of our home place. When Willie was grown, he told Ma he would pay the debt on that tract if she would give him a deed to it. She was glad to do this. Willie paid the mortgage and so this piece of land became the W. B. Irvin estate and remains so to this day, title of course having passed to his heirs on the decease of both parents.

In order to accomplish what we did it was necessary that we save and work hard and long hours. Ma helped in the field all she could. Sister Adella, who was born in 1869, three years after Enola's birth, was always a faithful and hard worker in the field. She and I worked together and did the hoeing and brush cleaning, which was some job in those days. In the spring of the year, we usually worked from early sun-up till sundown. Oftentimes, I noticed Adella seemed so tired she could hardly walk from the field to the house. Those were days of labor, turmoil, and lots of sorrow.

In 1899, Esther (Adella's little girl), passed away with a congestive chill. Her death nearly broke her mother's heart. She was such a sweet Christian girl of 12 years. Everybody loved her. It seemed our cup of sorrow was more than full. My own heart was sorely pained for I loved her dearly. Her mother's grief was more than words can describe. Someone said she was needed to be with the angels of heaven, but I always thought her mother needed her more.

In December of 1900, Adella married John Griffith from Texas. Our home was fast being broken up. I had gone to Texas to school in September of that year. While I was packing my few clothes in my trunk, Ma came into the room and sat on the bedside. There were tears in her eyes. It seemed her heart was ready to burst. She said, "Joe, I want you to get an education, but it will never be the same again here at home. You will not come back to live here again." I tried to console her, but it did no good. Her premonition came true.

I think it was the next year after Adella married that Willie married Minnie Ridling, and soon Henry married Eliza Johnson. Now we were all gone but Ma. Adella and her husband came back from Texas to live with Ma on the old home place. Willie built a two room box house on his newly acquired land an eighth of a mile from our house and Henry had settled about one half mile away.

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John and Adella offered to give Ma a lifetime home with them if Ma and her heirs would deed the place to them. So with a small payment to each of us, we deeded our interests in the Fielding Irvin homestead, some 320 acres, to John Griffith. Thus the estate passed out and away from the Irvin name for all time.

Our dear old mother fell and broke one of her hip bones about 3 years before she died. She suffered pain and misery with this hip to the day of her death in 1922. I was living on a homestead in Colorado at this time and did not get to be at her funeral. She was always a conscientious Christian; her Bible was her daily companion. She believed its message and waited patiently to be taken home to her eternal rest. Thus was finished the earthly career of two Irvin pioneers and ancestors of their present descendants.

It might be in order at this time to briefly mention each one of the Fielding Irvin descendants in the order of their decease. John Franklin has already been mentioned. Laura Enola was born in 1866 and married Ike Tunnell about 1885. She gave birth to 15 children. The first one died in infancy; 2 others died after they were married, Uola and Herbert. The other 12 are living and all apparently in good health. The oldest, Arthur Tunnell, has been a Nazarene minister for nearly 50 years. Ike passed away before Enola, who died about 1932, I think it was. Willie, born in 1875, departed this life in July of 1947. I was by his bedside, holding his hand when he drew his last breath. Then he was so silent and eternally still. His dear wife, Minnie, passed on to the great beyond just a few months ago. We all loved her very much. She died with faith in her God. Little Jessie, who died in 1887, I have already mentioned. Adella, born in 1869, died in 1953 in our home 3 miles from Prescott. My wife, Gardie, and I were at her bedside as she peacefully went to sleep in death. Her husband passed away many years before. She was a devoted and loved Christian all her life. She left 4 children, all married and well. I forgot to say that Willie and Minnie had 8 children, the eldest dying in infancy, raising 7 to adulthood, all married and doing well.

There are yet two living sons of Fielding and Margaret Irvin. Henry, born in 1877, lives in Prescott. He and Eliza who will soon be 84, raised 3 girls, all married, but two of them are now widows. Henry has had a hard life. Some 35 years ago, he had the misfortune to loose his right arm in a sawmill accident. But he had proved himself master of so great a misfortune, made a good living for his family, and prospered due to his staunch faith in God and his ingenuity and strength to go forward and do things.

The other living descendant is Joe, the writer of this sketch, who was born in 1881 and has lived in Prescott the last five years. His wife, Gardie (Warren) Irvin and he have 3 children, 2 boys and one girl. The youngest, a boy named Ray, died at one week old on a homestead in Colorado and is buried on a mountain overlooking a beautiful valley. The two living are doing well.

Of the Fielding Irvin descendants now living, there are 2 sons, 28 grandchildren, and 60 or more great grandchildren. I am not about to determine the number of great-great grandchildren. They are widely scattered, the most of whom I have never seen. There are just 10 male descendants living. We hope the Irvin name may continue on and on as long as time shall last.

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All the buildings on the Fielding Irvin homestead are gone and nature is fast taking over their places and before long even the house ground can't be found. Just a reminder of what time and nature will eventually do to all things of man's creation.

The W. B. Irvin homestead, which is part of the Fielding Irvin estate, is still intact. The buildings which Willie put up with his own hands are standing there still, even the first one, an old log smoke house. But they all must soon give way and go back to Mother Nature. We hope the land may ever remain in the Irvin name.

And now as our minds revert to the lives and sweet relationships of those once so near and dear, but now having gone from us, it seems we are almost overcome with sad reflections. They once were here with us, but now they are gone. While they were a part of our life, we could scarcely conceive how it could ever be otherwise. But nature had her way. Her laws must be obeyed and fulfilled. Some, for many long years, have lain in their dark and silent resting places, their bodies slowly disintegrating and returning to the dust of the earth from whence they came. Shall we see them again? Oh, that we might know the mystery of the limitless future. We have an abiding hope, and that hope forever consoles our deep sadness and sorrow.

E. H. Chapin once wrote, "To me there is something thrilling and exalting in the thought that we are drifting forward into a splendid mystery---into something that no mortal eye hath yet seen, and no intelligence has yet declared." And N. P. Willis said, "We believe that we shall know each other's forms hereafter and in the bright fields of the better land, shall call the last dead to us." And Saint John reports that Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And so may it be.

May heaven's blessings forever rest and abide with each and all of the Fielding and Margaret Irvin descendants.

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*Editor's note: The Fielding Irvin homestead was located in the sharp curve on Rd. 404 one half mile west of Rd. 40 (see map in last issue). I always knew it as the Griffith place (explained in the story). The W. B. Irvin homestead, part of the original estate, has also gone back to nature. No buildings remain, but several large oak trees mark the spot. Much of the original homestead is now owned by International Paper Co. Since I work for that company, I'm sure at some time in the last 30 years, I have probably walked on the exact spot where old Grandmother Irvin sat in her chair smoking her corn-cob pipe. While others just see it as another tract of land for growing pine trees, I look at the land as described in this story and think of all the hardships the Irvin family went through when they lived there.*

*If any readers of this paper have similar stories to share about your family, write them down and send them to me. I'm sure the Irvin family descendants are glad Joseph Lonner Irvin took time to write these things down. As your children and grandchildren get older, they also will be very glad to read stories about their ancestors.*

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## HIGH EGG PRICES

Egg prices have been high the last few months, but this is not the first time. Way back in August, 1908, the city of Prescott had an egg famine. According to a newspaper article, hotel boarders had to forego their omelets, *straight-ups*, and soft-boiled eggs and eat grape nuts or oatmeal instead. Few eggs came to market and those that did were quickly taken at **20 cents per egg**. The situation was the same in Hope. The article stated, "If the hens don't get busy soon, we will witness the novel procedure of shipping eggs into Prescott which is worse than shipping coal to Newcastle." *Editor's note: Anybody know what a straight-up is?*

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Bluff City Café (the flat-topped building) was located on the corner at the intersection of Hwy. 24 and Hwy. 299. It was built by Dick Harvey, probably in the early 1960s, but I'm not sure about that. It was later operated by R. P. and Hazel Plyler and Lawrence and Lottie Purifoy. Don and Carolyn Byrd operated it as Don's Mr. Catfish until 1980 when it was sold to Cephaz Stinnett who operated it for a short time and called it The Oasis. A used car lot was here in 1989.

In 1993, Eddie Allen constructed a new store building at this location and moved his business here from across the highway. The buildings shown in this picture were removed to make way for the new store. Allen's Grocery was sold in 2002 and the business is now known as Willie's. It is used mainly for a restaurant and gas station. The price of gas today is considerably more than the \$1.23 per gallon in the picture above.

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## BASEBALL IN THE BIBLE (from the Nevada News - July 1, 1920)

Baseball in the Bible is as follows: The devil was the first coach. He coached Eve when she stole first. Adam stole second. When Isaac met Rebecca at the well, she was walking with a pitcher. Samson was struck out when he beat the Philistines. Moses made his first run when he slew the Egyptian. Cain made a base hit when he killed Abel. Abraham made a sacrifice. David was a long distance thrower. Moses stuck out the Egyptians at the Red Sea. And we might mention the home run made by the prodigal son.

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Bible Trivia: Who set fire to the tails of 300 foxes? (see Judges 15: 4, 5)

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## THIS MONTH'S RECIPES

### PORCUPINE MEATBALLS

Mix:

¾ lb. ground beef

¼ cup uncooked rice

¾ teaspoon salt

1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1 egg

¼ cup milk

Mix separate from meat:

1 can tomato soup

1 can water

¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

Form meat mixture into balls. Place in large flat baking dish and pour soup and water mixture over balls. Cover baking dish and let simmer 1 ½ hours in 350 degree oven. Makes about 16 to 19 walnut size meatballs.

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## SUMMER DELIGHT

from Sheila Nall

Published in "Tastes From the Country" by the Puxico, Missouri Young Farm Wives

½ lb. vanilla wafers, crushed

½ cup chopped nuts

1 medium can crushed pineapple, drained

1 small Cool Whip

Place a layer of wafer crumbs in buttered dish. Cover with half the pineapple and sprinkle with half of the nuts. Top with half the Cool Whip. Repeat one more layer. Top with crumbs. Refrigerate for 2 hours.

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