

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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This article about the old cemetery in Camden was copied from microfilm and was published sometime around 1910. This may be boring to those of you who don't live in Ouachita County, but it contains much information on the early settlers of Camden. I have highlighted the names of people mentioned in the article. Sometime when you are in Camden, stop by the old cemetery to see some of the oldest grave markers in this area. The cemetery is a tourist stop during the Daffodil Days festival along with tours of the ante-bellum homes. The slogan of the city is "Camden, Arkansas—Where History Lives"

A PLEA FOR THE OLD CEMETERY

Written for the Daughters of the Confederacy by Mrs. J. W. Meek

Some time since, an honored guest was entertained in one of Camdens hospitable homes. He enjoyed its rare courtesy and had the pleasure of being driven through the well kept streets of our little city. He admired our magnificent houses and cozy cottages, and noted all the modern progress, his only criticism being: "Your old cemetery, which is the basis of your local history, is sadly neglected".

It is because we, the U. D. C. recognize this to be a fact, that we desire to present this plea. This especial "God's Acres" has never possessed any real designation beyond "the cemetery" in former days, and "the old cemetery" in these latter ones. An annex, "Forest Grove" has been added to it, and within the last few years a beautiful "Greenwood" has been enclosed. It is around the old cemetery that the early history of Camden, and to a certain extent, that of Arkansas centers. Major **W. L. Bradley** was one of the earliest settlers in this portion of the state and was the owner of wide territory. At some time between 1840 and 1850, he donated this site to the settlement to be used as a burial ground. In thus providing for the dead, he did not fail to foresee and care for the future lives of the community. At the same time, he gave the site of the Mr. **Eustace Newton's** home for a school house and a log hut was erected upon it. He also gave the site of **Bry's** store for a court house. At the time Mr. Bradley made his purchase of land, small allotments were not at a premium. It is said that the site of Mr. **Geo. Ritchie's** store and others cost him eighteen cents each, but he sold them for much more.

The first deaths in the settlement were in the **Nunn** family and these were previously interred on a high point of land in back of the present site where they can still be distinguished. This tract of land that held the dead of Camdens first citizens, generations later received the Southern soldiers gathered here under the control of **Gen'l's Marmaduke and Price**. The same site, since known as Point Lookout, was afterwards the base of operations for Union soldiers under the command of **Gen. Steele**. The long line of trenches still show the handiwork of these men.

The first grave made in the cemetery is now enclosed with iron chains, supported by cedar posts. This is said to be the grave of a babe born to a white woman whose home was in

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the north. The first tombstone to be placed there was in memory of **Thomas Stone**, a slave holder from Autauga County, Alabama. He was the father of Mrs. **Ora Newton** and located in Camden in 1843 where he died two years later. While on a return trip from New Orleans he contracted cholera which proved fatal. The obelisk which still surmounts his grave was brought from New Orleans by steamboat. It attracted wide attention at the time, people driving in from remote neighborhoods to see it. The markings for the graves of these Camden pioneers were crude, but later they were laid down beneath marble mausoleums or within strong vaults of brick masonry. Prominent among these are the family vaults erected by **J. D. Hill** in 1856 and **Dr. Williams**. A gruesome pastime has been afforded many who loitered in the grounds by peering into their gloomy, untenanted apertures. Two old enclosures are those which contain the descendants of the **Elliott** and **Scales** families. The handsome marble mausoleums, contrasted with the green of the cedars and purple iris blooms, would compare well with early tombs of larger cities. There are many handsome enclosures, but most of them are neglected through the absence of relatives. Miss **Octavia Elliott** was chosen Queen of May in 1847. Her attendants were **Miss Woodward**, another belle of the old regime and **Misses Medley and Stone**. They graced the day and times with their beauty and wit, but have lain silent for many years. Miss Elliott was afterwards the wife of **Col. J. M. Brooks**.

The grave of **W. P. Ratcliffe** lies near the lots alluded to. It was he that first blazed the way for Methodism in this portion of the state. His monument was erected within the last few years by an affectionate granddaughter, Mrs. **Eva Whitthorne Trezevant** of Dallas, Texas and an additional inscription that he was "bold, faithful, and true" accurately described his character. The Eva Whitthorne chapter of the Masonic Order of the Eastern Star was named in her honor.

In the year of 1850, the cemetery received the body of a good man whose name shines to us mostly through the reflectant light of his great brother, **Henry Clay**. He died in Camden at the close of mission work down the Mississippi, terminating with a revival at this place. He was a Baptist minister and people of that denomination erected to his memory a tablet eight by eighteen inches with the name of **Porter Clay** engraved upon it. Few people know it is in the cemetery and fewer still can find where it is placed.

Legal talent is honored in the tomb of **Lawyer Case**. The inscription tells us that "he lived, loved, and died regretted." An unusual feature of this stone is that it was placed there by five faithful friends who obtained permission from his wife to do so, and who were sincere in their expressions. These were **Stephen McHugh, Roland Smith, John Ramey, John Daly, and Edward Woodland**. The stone is now broken and lies aslant upon the earth. Nearby lies **Stephen McHugh**, who was born in Letrum, Ireland in 1799. We wonder, as we stand under an overshadowing magnolia tree, if this warmhearted Irishman, whose name leads the list, did not perfect this friendly plan. When we are told that he was the first Episcopal Rector at this place, we are sure of it. An old letter states this concerning him: "He was greatly loved by Camden people of all denominations." He lived on the road that turns to Two Bayou. There was good fellowship between the travelers in "Preacher's Row" Rev. **McHugh, Rev. Ratcliffe, and Dr. Winfield** (Methodist Divine) living close together on the road that turns to go to Two Bayou. He was a product of Trinity College, Dublin; was highly educated and is said to have taught a boy's school. In 1850 he held services in the Masonic

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lodge, then located where Mrs. **Ella Gordon** now lives. This was said to have been a two story structure, the upper part used for Masonic purposes. **Dr. McHugh** was the first stationed pastor of this church. He died in 1857 or 1858. The church was previously established by a missionary in 1848. St. John's Parish was officially organized under the supervision of **Bishop Freeman**, whose diocese was an extensive western territory. From **Mrs. Tuft's** history of the Parish we find that services were held in the old Female Academy (the site of Mr. **E. Newton's** house) or the so-called City Hall, but in the spring of 1871 the lot and building known as "the old Episcopal church" was purchased by the vestry. It was bought by Messrs. **John Matlock, Rainey and Daly** and **Mrs. Case**, afterwards **Mrs. Ellis**. The clay hill, dotted with evergreens, holds the dust of these people. "They rest from their labors and their works do follow them."

The name of **Mrs. Elizabeth Nunn** marks the early history of Presbyterianism. **A. R. Banks** of South Carolina, a stationed pastor at Tulip, Ark., stated that he organized the church of that name at his home. It is probable that the Articles of Agreement of 1852, looking to that result, were made there and that the call to Presbytery which convened at Mt. Holly on April 1, 1853, was made at the same time. Five names were signed to this petition—**Judge Isaac Strain, Mrs. Elizabeth Simmons, Mrs. Nunn, Peter K. Rounsaville, and** his sister, **Adelaide Rounsaville**. Most of these rest upon the rugged old hill of the dead. The first meeting of the church members was held in the home of Mrs. Simmons and there **Peter K. Rounsaville** was elected the first ruling elder. **Col. Bunn**, who knew him well, writes this: "A purer man never lived." Finely educated, reared in the best society, he was unfitted for the surroundings of pioneer life." He was a graduate of the University of North Carolina and a lawyer by profession. He and his wife were earnest helpers, not only in the gathering of the church from Mt. Pisgah (now Champion Hill), into a Camden church, but also in the erection of a new building. The first place of worship used by the Presbyterians was a school house erected at the corner of Harrison and Van Buren streets on the lots now occupied by Mr. **J. H. Morgan's** residence. The quaint, two-story structure was erected in 1858. The tombs of the **Rounsaville** and **Simmons** family are familiar features of the old graveyard. "She lived a wife and died a Christian" is the comprehensive epitaph found on the tombstone of **Peter K. Rounsaville's wife**. **Mrs. Woodland's** quiet tomb reveals no disclosure of the fact that, although her later years were spent in retirement, it was she alone who prepared the sacramental service in the sixties. She was also a liberal contributor to the erection of the old church which was but lately destroyed. The stone marked **Elizabeth B. Hartwell** marks the wife of a well beloved pioneer Baptist minister. His son, **J. B. Hartwell, Jr., D. D.**, served as missionary to China for fifty years. **Thos. Malone** and **Mike Wilson** were also early Baptists, but it was left to **Rev. T. G. Freeman** to mark an epoch when he built the old brick structure in 1859.

A large granite stone stands at the head of the grave of **William Bross**. He was a liberal contributor to the Catholic church which was established in Camden directly after the war. **Bishop Fitzgerald** was in control and **Father Garrety** was the first stationed priest. A building was erected upon a site donated by **Mr. Henry Clifford** who, with his wife, sleeps within the old cemetery.

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Near the center of the lot stands a broken shaft erected to the memory of **E. H. Whitfield**, notable as being the founder of Masonry in South Arkansas. He was an elective officer of the Grand Lodge of Arkansas in 1850 and 1852, and is supposed to have organized the Blue Lodge at this place in 1844. An old newspaper issued a Masonic call for an approaching "anniversary of St. John the Baptist" to be held May, 1847, signed by **N. Clifton** and others. **Mr. Clifton's** grave is near the **Elliott** enclosure.

In the first edition of the *Ouachita Herald*, published in May, 1847, we find an advertisement inserted by **Jas. Vaughn**, postmaster. The notice states that the eastern mails by Little Rock arrive every Thursday and Monday by 5 p.m.; from Washington and Texas, arrive every Wednesday by 7 p.m., leaves every Thursday at 5 a.m. In regard to either the weekly or bi-weekly mail, he announces it must be put in the office by nine o'clock, otherwise it will not go. **Mr. Vaughn's** elegant tomb is found near the entrance of the old graveyard. In connection with this postal history it is very interesting to know that **Mr. J. R. Young** was the first postmaster after the Civil War. He served in the building now occupied by **Charley Randall**. Some of our mature citizen entrusted their earliest epistolary confidences to a slit which can still be seen in the door, where a candle box received them. The progress of the age is in no way better exemplified than by the contrast of the old and new post office buildings which stand opposite each other.

In 1828 Camden rejoiced over the birth of its first white boy babe, but lately her citizens followed in sad procession the boy and man, **Rowland B. Smith** (of honored memory) to his last rest under the trees of the sacred hill. The old cemetery marks for us the first of things; **Dr. James H. Ponder**, who died in 1855, aged 67, was Camdens first and honored physician. **Drs. Williams and McElrath**, both cultured gentlemen, succeeded him, both of whom claimed as wife, the same lovely woman, **Miss Eliza Young**. **Robert Ives**, the first blacksmith and wagon shop owner, whose rest after a tiresome journey from Virginia, was in a little house on the site now reserved for the Catholic church. **Mr. Augustus Stapp**, of the first bakery and candy store; **Mr. Simmons**, of tin-shop memory; **James Jennings**, whose name as marble cutter is in the corner of so many headstones that we are surprised to walk abreast of one erected to his own memory.

In the extreme northern end of the cemetery is found a stone to the memory of **John Works**, familiarly known during his life as Uncle Johnny Works. He was Camdens first tailor, a diminutive specimen of mankind. He was said to have been the wonder of all small boys as blood-curdling stories were whispered of his previous life. The generally accepted theory was that he had been a soldier in the Texas war, an active participant in the battle of San Jacinto, and afterwards an avid gambler and horse racer. He bore the reputation of having been a splendid fighter who always carried a bowie knife down the back of his neck. In Camden he led a singularly quiet life; was a consistent member of the Methodist church and died leaving a fortune (\$3200) to the Southern church.

A contemporary of his was **H. A. Poole**, a reserved, quiet man and Shakespearian scholar, who lived beyond his time and more and more unto himself. During his last illness a devoted wife leaned to him and whispered "How do you feel, George?" "I feel like one who treads

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alone a banquet hall deserted”, he answered, and with these words upon his lips he passed into eternity. His grave at the extreme point of Forest Grove, still accentuates this loneliness.

The monument to the memory of **Dan W. Fellows** recalls a strong personality; a home of rare courtesy and hospitality, from whence cultured women have gone to fill prominent and useful places in the world. **Mr. Fellows** came to Camden from Mechanicsville, N. Y. in 1857, and died in 1881. **Mr. Chamberlain**, of the same family enclosure, came in 1857. They were prominent merchants of their time. In our wanderings there we will find the names of **Seales, Seay, Daly, Graham, Graves, Kellam, Morgan, Pope, Rainey**, and other honored citizens of the past. Our Southern soldiers, numbering about 250, are enclosed near their monument. The gallant **Grinstead** and **McCollum** here find their last peace, and many other soldiers, numbering possibly 75, who lived through the war to finish life under various circumstances.

We find here many “sermons in stones” and if one cares for sentiment, the old place is rich with it. See the tall slab at the head of a grave near which a mimosa seed has germinated and produced a tree. It is to the memory of **Jane**, aged 15 years, 20 days; a child asleep, but wife to **Len Green**. There is a touching testimony to another wife, who is some older, and lies within a square brick mound covered with a long marble slab. There are many of the square mausoleums with the flat slab on top. They bear long, closely written testimonials to the virtues of the dead. They are impressing, recalling us from an undignified age to one in which every wife is memorialized as a “consort” and to a time in which there was no leisure for thinking noble thoughts. The thought expressed on this particular stone to **Mrs. Haislipp**, causes us to pause and wonder, if there was not mixed with the husband’s grief, the more bitter feelings of remorse. A broken bit of marble was found flat upon the earth. When overturned, it revealed the words, “Our Little **Leo**.” No one knows where it belongs as it has been found in different parts of the cemetery. A tiny grave tells of Little **Ebon**, who lived and died within a year. It tells an old truth that “God gave us love, but something to love He lends me.” An inscription concerning a young woman who died in 1865 says, “Death lies upon her like an untimely frost upon the sweetest flower in all the field.” When another was called, we are told, “And she answered, all is well.” A gravestone bears Aldrich’s tender lines, “Her little heart was ---ed in ours, and how we loved her God can tell.” Another one reads, “My boy”. The sweetness, the pathos of that word.” That was an old stone, for the cemetery holds all the dead from 1843 to later years, but we know how these children were beloved, for love is eternal. One stone is marked, “In Heaven—Our little baby. Born and died August, 1849.” From the pure earth of this little child that folded its white hands in death, has sprung a giant oak. Its broad girth crowds the little stone, but its towering limbs typify once more the fact, though death be the same yesterday and today, there is forever the hope of resurrection for man.

Some time ago, the writer stood on the dividing line between Forest Grove Cemetery and the old one. Without moving, seventy-five trees were counted, which were either dead or dying as the result of fires which have devastated the grounds. Rare cape jessamines and crepe myrtles, which beautify with age, are killed; magnolias, of which a Southern city should boast, are badly damaged; the blossoms of the blue and white iris, which grow in such profusion are dwarfed and will soon fail because of burnt foliage. The iron chain around the

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first grave now limps on three supports instead of four, and many private enclosures are badly burned. Cows meander peacefully among the grasses and with a few exceptions, the trail of neglect is over it all.

What shall we do with it? That is a question which our people only can decide. **The Daughters of the Confederacy.**

DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN? (published in the March 3, 1917 issue of The Prescott Daily News)

The following letter was received by Nevada Co. clerk R. D. Martin: (printed as written)

blossom, lamar, county texas
march, 1, th, 1917

MR, Martin

clerk of nevada county

dear, sir in reply to yours of the 28th I am glad to know that i have found my man he has been juestes of the peace for over forty years and he had a son that was a doctor his name was curk he was county jug of hemstid county and his weif was my mothers sister her name was jane and he has a dorter her name is munt if this is john burshers he is my unchel so i am so glad i have found him i don't know what to do my reason for trying to find him is to try to get my fathers pention my fother was a U.C.W. solger and was in the army with him and he can help me to get his pention i all so have a unkel in pike county by the name of gum maborn i am a son of henrey CUMMONS so will be evry so much ablige to you if uou will fiend out all about him and let me know.

yours trully

my name is RUPHES CUMMONS

my nick name was tute

yours trully

R. G. CUMMONS

Blossom, Texas Box 261

Barney Stapert, an expert typist, appeared at Prescott High School in 1924. He was with the Underwood Typewriter Co. and typed 149 words per minute with no mistakes.

On the following page is an old photo of a group of students at Gum Grove School in Nevada County. Gum Grove was located about 3 miles southwest of Bluff City. The school was consolidated with Bluff City School in 1929. If you study the notes on the photo, you should be able to identify most of the students. You may need a magnifying glass to help read the names. Thanks to Mrs. Mavis Belisle for sharing the photo.

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Gum Grove School Group
1923-24 -- Submitted by
Mavis Griffith Belisle

Mavis Griffith Belisle
Gum Grove, Ark. 3rd School year 4th Grade 1923-24
Belle Morgan teacher

L-R - ~~Bottom Row~~ - Annie Stewart, Christine Bradley, Mavis Griffith, Kay Moxley
Harold Nelson, Mabel Griffith, Mavis Griffith, Kay Moxley
Eunice Phillips, Dorothy Moxley, Aline Moxley

? - Horace Stone, Ethel Parker, Belle Morgan, E.A. Johnson, Fred Parker
? - Mattie Stone

Top Row
Art Moody, Budah Stone, Jay Nelson, Mavis Griffith, Kay Moxley
Muriel Hall, Joe Plyler, Bonnie Hall, Elmer - (Walter & third)



Art Moody place said to child Griffith

Art Moody

Budah Stone

Jay Nelson

Mavis Griffith

Kay Moxley

Mabel Griffith

Mavis Griffith

Belle Morgan

E.A. Johnson

Fred Parker

Eunice Phillips

Dorothy Moxley

Aline Moxley

Horace Stone

Ethel Parker

Belle Morgan

E.A. Johnson

Fred Parker

Mattie Stone

Art Moody

Budah Stone

Jay Nelson

Christine Bradley

Mavis Griffith

Kay Moxley

Mabel Griffith

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ONE OF CAMDEN'S FIRST HOMES DESTROYED BY FIRE (copied from microfilm)

The Smead home in Camden was destroyed by fire of unknown origin (date unknown). The only people at home at the time were Mrs. Smead and her daughter, Mrs. Harry Stewart. When they discovered the fire, it was so far gone that there was no chance of saving it, yet without a thought of her own interests, Mrs. Smead dragged out the two trunks which contained the clothing of Mrs. Hibbard, an aged lady who was making her home at the Smead residence.

The home was valued at \$6000 and was insured for \$4000. Mrs. Smead's household effects were valued at \$3500. Mr. Stewart's personal property was valued at \$1250. Mrs. Stewart lost all of her wedding presents, the value of which could not be figured.

The fire was one of the worst in Camden in a number of years, removing an old landmark. The present owners had made extensive improvements on the building in the last decade. The home had been standing for over half a century, having been one of the first residences erected in Camden.

A PECULIAR INCIDENT CONCERNING THE FIRE

A peculiar incident of the fire which destroyed Mrs. H. P. Smead's home some weeks ago was brought to light when Mrs. Smead looked over the ruins a few days ago. She found her wedding ring and a massive gold ring worn by Colonel Smead during his lifetime, which he highly prized and which had been preserved for the children, firmly welded together by the heat.

At the time of the fire Mr. Smead's ring was in a jewel case on the dressing table, while Mrs. Smead's ring was lying on the dressing table near the box. As the flames destroyed the table and box, the two rings happened to fall together in some way and were joined by the great heat into a double ring.

Mrs. Smead will have the rings made into three plain gold rings for her daughters.

ANGEL PIE

3 egg whites
1 cup sugar
1 cup Ritz cracker crumbs
1 cup ground nuts
1 can cherry pie filling
Cool Whip

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat egg whites until fluffy. Add sugar and beat until stiff. Fold in cracker crumbs and nuts until well mixed. Pour into pie plate. With spoon, press to form sides. Bake in 350 degree oven for 30 minutes or until dry. Add 1 can cherry pie filling. Top with Cool Whip and sprinkled pecans. Refrigerate.