

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Jerry McKelvy, Editor

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***** <http://sandyland.nevada.ar.us/> *****



ANOTHER GRAVE MARKER DESTROYED

Pictured above is what is left of a grave marker deep in the woods near Falcon, Arkansas. I found this grave back in January, 1998 while updating the cemetery records of Nevada County. A deer hunter had told me of the approximate location and a local resident was able to give me good directions to the spot. At that time, the marker was intact and was in good shape. There is only one marked grave at this spot which was probably near the old family homestead. The area is now covered by mature pine timber. I checked the grave this year and found the marker had been destroyed. I don't know if the damage was from vandalism or from timber harvesting in the area. As you can see this grave will probably soon be lost forever. I marked the location a few weeks ago with a six foot iron pipe painted white in hopes that the site will be protected for at least a while longer. The inscription on the marker from my survey in 1998 is as follows:

Mrs. Martha Wilbun
Born October 4, 1864
Died August 23, 1908
"Asleep in Jesus"

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A History of Hoo-Hoo International

Perhaps you have driven through our neighboring town of Gurdon, Arkansas and noticed a monument near the railroad tracks dedicated to the Hoo-Hoo International organization. You may have wondered what this organization with the unusual name is, so here is a brief history of it condensed from information available on their website.

It all started back on January 21, 1892 at Gurdon. Five men who were interested in the timber industry had just reached Gurdon from attending a meeting in Camden and were due to catch a train at Gurdon. Due to some delays, they were forced to wait several hours at the Hall Hotel near the railroad tracks in Gurdon.

Two of these men, Bolling Arthur Johnson and George K. Smith began to discuss the need for a fraternity of lumbermen whereby all lumbermen and trade associations could join together and hold their meetings at one place rather than in various cities. One of them suggested the name "Ancient Order of Camp Followers". From these discussions which lasted about seven hours, the framework for a lumbermen's fraternity was put in place. They agreed that lumbermen meeting in good fellowship would help the timber industry and the benefits would trickle down into all aspects of business and social relationships.

The discussion led to what manner of organization this fraternity should have so as not to resemble the other fraternities of the day. It was agreed that there would be no lodge rooms with forced attendance; no marching in the streets in protest; no "bothering" anybody; no uniforms or flashy regalia. There would be one single aim: to foster the health, happiness, and long life of its members. It was further proposed that this new order should devise a secret means of communication so that any member could correspond with any other member on matters of interest to one another without revealing their identity to those persons outside the fraternity.

Recognizing that the name "Ancient Order of Camp Followers" did not accomplish their objectives, the group wasted no time agreeing with the suggestion by Johnson that "Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo" was the perfect name. The word "Hoo-Hoo" had been coined by Johnson himself only one month earlier at Kansas City in describing a most peculiar tuft of hair, greased and twisted to a point, atop the otherwise bald head of Charles McCarer, of Northwestern "Lumberman", Chicago. The name Hoo-Hoo became a catch phrase among the lumbermen in various areas to describe anything unusual or out of the ordinary. A good poker hand was a "Hoo-Hoo hand." A strange hat was a "Hoo-Hoo hat". A good breakfast might be called a "Hoo-Hoo breakfast". Thus, Hoo-Hoo well described this new order, and since the word "concatenate" means "to unite", it was decided the two words made a perfect marriage.

The organization was to be non-superstitious in nature, and when the discussion led to choosing a mascot, the black cat was chosen due to its association with bad luck. In honor of the legendary nine lives of the cat, Johnson suggested that the number nine assume a high

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and lofty position within the makeup of Hoo-Hoo. There would be nine men on the Board of Directors. The order would hold its annual meeting on the ninth day of the ninth month beginning at nine minutes after nine. Annual dues would be 99 cents, and the initiation fee would be \$9.99. The membership would never consist of more than 9,999 men.

W. E. Barns, one of the men who helped organize the fraternity, had just completed reading Lewis Carroll's "Hunting of the Snark" and suggested that the directors be given names of an "eerie and peculiar" nature like those used in the book. Hence, the names "snark", "bojum", "Sr. High Hoo-Hoo", "Jr. High Hoo-Hoo", and "bandersnatch" were chosen, although "jabberwock" later replaced "bandersnatch". The other names which are now affixed to officers (e.g. Scrivenoter, Arcanoper, Custocatian, and Gurdon) were the products of Johnson's imagination some days or weeks later.



The group could not get away from words like "grand" and "sublime", and things that were "high". Therefore, the Grand Snark was born that day, but he later assumed the "universe" as his kingdom. The bojum became the Holy Bojum to serve in the capacity as chaplain. The name "scrivenoter" sounded like a "note scribe" and was assigned the duties of secretary. The "arcanoper" was to stand within the garden and be the "opener" of the gates to those requesting admittance into the realm of Hoo-Hoo. The name "Gurdon" had the faraway hint of "guard" to it and was therefore assigned to the sergeant-at-arms, and was also an obvious compliment to the place of the order's birth. It was decided at Gurdon that the board of directors would consist of nine men to be called the "Supreme Nine".

Hoo-Hoo prospered during the twenties, but with the Great Depression, Hoo-Hoo fell upon hard times. Unable to meet the financial obligations of its insurance program, its membership dropping and burdened with apparent embezzlement, the International Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo almost slipped into obscurity as only one club in Spokane, Washington continued to meet on a regular basis during the time.

Efforts were made to increase the membership and it had increased to over 13,000 during the fifties. The promotion of wood became one of the objectives of Hoo-Hoo. The next decade saw expansion into Australia and later into other areas of the South Pacific. Today, more than 100,000 individuals have availed themselves of membership in the order. The United States and Canada are divided into nine jurisdictions. A map is available on the website showing the divisions and locations of local clubs and contact information.

Dedicated primarily to the principles of true fraternalism and fellowship, the International Order of Hoo-Hoo continues to make many serious, effective contributions to the timber industry and to the communities from which its members come. The Hoo-Hoo International office and Hoo-Hoo Museum share a log cabin which was built by the WPA in the early 1930's. The building is located on Main Street in Gurdon, Arkansas, one block from the site where Hoo-Hoo was founded in 1892. The Hoo-Hoo Museum which was formally dedicated

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on April 11, 1981, is a tax exempt organization and all contributions to the Museum are tax deductible.

So now you have learned something about Hoo-Hoo International which had its beginnings in the small town of Gurdon, Arkansas back in 1892.

I found the following item in The Nevada News issue dated 9-16-1909. I wonder if the members of Hoo-Hoo are aware of the sealed box mentioned in the article.

*Gurdon, Arkansas--*About 3000 people gathered to watch the unveiling of a tablet erected on the spot where the order was started Jan. 21, 1892. The tablet is Egyptian is symbolism and represents the entrance to an Egyptian temple. Within the tablet is placed a sealed box that contains the minutes of the first meeting of the Hoo-Hoo, a photo of the tablet, letter heads of the House of the Ancients, a photo of the old Hall Hotel, portions of Hoo-Hoo history, and souvenirs of former annual conventions.

Jerry,

This is a poem I wrote about my much cherished cat, Kristal a few months after she was put to sleep while I held her. It was published online a couple of years ago at Poetry.com .

KristalCat

Even on a late Spring evening,
she enjoys cuddling
a few feet from the brick edge
of the backyard fire pit.

Birds and small paper ashes
soar/float/drift around her
with no notice; the dead branches spit and snap
their orange angers of giving up.

Budding quiet trees of several sorts,
all well grown,
shadow silently 'gainst the
housetops/sides and
the cloudy blue sun setting sky.

My friend listens.

Duncan Michael McKelvey (Georgia)

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ASPEN

Every once in a while
Something good comes along;
Ours had four little legs
And a little bark so strong.

She loved to go to work
And ride in Grandpa's truck;
She was there to help him
If ever he got stuck.

You could see her at midnight
With her coat of snow white fur;
She was there to protect you
In case someone was to stir.

If we all had the love
That Aspen showed to us;
This world would be a better place
And we would never fuss.

June Nicholas (Arkansas)

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GORDON H. IRVIN (PART THREE)

A family history about the Irvin family near Bluff City, Arkansas about 1920

ROTATION

We knew that the world was round and probably very large and that the land portions were populated by different kinds of people, but we had no conception and little concern about how they lived or what they thought. Our intelligence was relegated by the perimeter of our community. Each year was very much the same as any other year with farming and associated activities. This was true in spite of Mama's arguments that we should try something new or better yet—move off and leave it to grow up in thickets. But no, it was without variation—the same amount of cotton and corn, the principal crops--one for the money and the other for food and feed. The remainder of the arable land was given over to patches of potatoes, peas, peanuts, hay of one kind or another, sorghum for molasses, watermelons, and a large fruit orchard and a vegetable garden. In addition to the above there were the hog, cow, and horse lots.

There was the cleared pasture land and the wooded pasture land. Most of the crops were rotated from year to year and about every two years, the cleared pasture land was exchanged for the cultivated areas. Also, it was feasible to use certain portions of the tilled land as pasture during the winter months but not other portions. Now, from all this it follows that the whole farm was a complicated maze of fences, gates, hedges, and ditches with the gates and fences forever rotting down and falling apart and the predominating ditches and hedges becoming gullies and briar patches. We had every type of fence you could have—net wire, barb wire, plank, picket, split rail, and pole fences and just about as many different kinds of gates. I hated gates—all manner of gates—but especially wire gates. One cannot subdue a wire gate nor intimidate it in any way. It stands, or rather it sags and coils like a cobra ready to strike the unsuspecting passerby. I cannot nor do I wish to try to explain how one of the evil

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things is concocted. Building fences was necessary like breathing or sleeping, but cutting bushes and briars and filling up ravines was imperative or soon you wouldn't have room to sleep, breathe, or build fences. Our patchy farm was like a small wound in the great woods that irrevocably closed in and healed around the edges. Day in and day out, we fought the losing fight to keep the wound irritated and open.

Papa was the proud sire of all our gates and he reveled in his prowess. To get from our house to the bottom field, you had to open and close five gates. A good example was the small cow pen which was joined on one side by the cow barn, on two sides by the cow pasture, and on the other side by the fruit orchard. There were all told seven gates good and strong to this cow pen. Four opened into stalls, one led to the orchard, and not one but two opened out into the same cow pasture. Mama watched him build the latter two gates saying not a word until he had finished, then she asked him which gate he preferred her to use. For a long time after that she would win most any argument just by mentioning the two gates whereupon Papa would swell up, shut up, and just gaze far off into the woods.

Now as the cleared and cultivated land became depleted and eroded, it was abandoned to grow up in briars and bushes again, so that to maintain farm ground, new patches had to be cleared of timber to replace it. This required much hard labor and was usually begun in late fall after the harvest was in and weather was cool. All trees exceeding one foot in diameter at the base would be deadened by chopping a deep ring around the trunk. The smaller trees and underbrush were cleared away and piled in heaps to be burned in early spring. These brush heaps made fine sanctuaries for small animals and birds during the cold winter months. It occurs to me now that the SPCA would never have sanctioned what we called bird thrashings, but then there is a lot they didn't know and still don't. We literally did just what the word implies on cold dark nights, the colder the better to numb and slow the birds down in flight. About six or ten men and boys with a thick brush in the right hand and a long pine torch in the left would surround the brush heap and shake it until the frightened birds would come fluttering out half frozen and blinded by the flaming torches to be threshed good and proper. Then, when all the birds had been collected, we would build a roaring fire, gather around it and poach them on long sharp sticks. If I neglected to mention that we ate them, it is probably because we did not.

From the foregoing, it follows that not much, in any, of the land was ever completely free of natural growth in one form or another for any great length of time. It has been said that a tree has as many roots below the ground as there are branches above and as far as I am concerned, they can stay there. Fortunately one never sees all the roots of a tree, but it has been established that they are quite numerous and tough. New ground plowing calls for considerable strength and an abundance of courage on the part of both the mule and the boy. A cutting tool will hang up on large roots and stumps stopping the whole rig with such a suddenness that one is likely to be knocked to the ground by the rebounding plow stock and then trampled upon by the poor mule who has been jerked off his feet at the same time.

As has been noted, all the larger trees were deadened and left standing in the fields. Someday, perchance, they would fall but one could not rush into it nor postpone the associated disaster. They were just waiting for a good chance when our backs might be turned. You

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could not trust them. I have seen tall trees with all their limbs still standing that had been dead for fifteen years while others might come crashing down within a few short months. You had to watch out especially during the spring thunder and wind storms. Papa felt that the sporting thing to do was just stay in the field and defy the storm until such time when the wind had reached its full fury, then one must jump lively to dodge all the falling timber and flying debris. After this, of course, the logs and dead limbs had to be cut, piled, and burned.

A great many people have either heard or read about log rollings in pioneer days, but not as many of us are left who have been a guest at one. I don't suppose a person should crow too loudly about this dubious honor, like as if he had gone to the opera or spent a day at the races. Still, there must be something to say about it, if I can just think what it is. Most everyone in the neighborhood was invited to a log rolling, but it was hoped that the old men would stay home. A good crowd of men and young women (the younger the better) would gather in the morning at the farm house that had a new ground. The men would cut and roll the logs into piles so they could be easily burned while the women (the older ones) cooked and prepared their dinner. The older men enjoyed all the wonderful food which was furnished by the owner in return for their work while the young men enjoyed the young women for no good reason at all. A fine time was had by everyone. To me, it was a fascinating sight to see how strong the men were and to hear their songs and witty stories as they worked. At noon-time, they would play games of skill such as pitching silver dollars, horseshoes and woo, and would not have gone back to work at all unless or until the owner pitched a few good strong hints about the time of the evening.

LIP SERVICE

There is little doubt that Mama loved the farm very much. Still, she knew that at best, it was a hard life. She hoped and believed that somewhere there must be a better way of making a living. As far as Papa was concerned, the world ended at one day's round trip from home. It is true that sometimes on winter nights, he would talk idly to Mama about moving away to some other place. Actually he never entertained any fear of doing so. It was not that he held any illusions about the easy life or getting rich on our farm. It was simply all he knew or wanted to know. It was his life. He often complained, as farmers do, about the poor crops or the weather, but in reality he loved every minute of his life there. Mama had dreams of being nearer to market and also to schools that taught higher than the eighth grade. Papa gave lip service to her arguments, but never allowed any concrete plans to materialize. He often talked of moving in vague terms of some far distant time, so much so that even we children paid little attention to it. He had a point. The truth was and we knew it—our farm was better than most of those surrounding us. It lay in the rich foothills and bottom lands. We could grow most any kind of crop. Even so, Mama knew that our land must soon erode away like so many of the others had already done. One spring she was so persistent about moving that Papa figured it would be worthwhile to spend a little time—but just time, because he had plenty of that—in order to once more have peace and quiet in the home. So, he led a young-- very young--real estate broker to believe he was ready to trade his farm for property in the mountains near Glenwood. It would be necessary to see the property first of course. Actually, he had no desire to be near the place, but he did want me to see it to bear witness that we had tried. One warm spring day, the young man thinking to make a shrewd deal, but actually very gullible,

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took Papa and me to Glenwood in his Model T and bought our dinner there. This village had no more than 400 population, but I was all excited over the prospects of moving there, for truly it was beautiful little mountain hamlet. After lunch, we got in the Ford and started to locate the tract of land to be traded for. Then it developed that the real estate man had never seen it either. He did have a map however, and so we drove away—far, far away—into the mountains. Through wagon roads and finally over mere trails we went. Finally we had to ditch the car and walk the last mile or so along the side of a mountain until we came upon a two room abandoned log cabin darkly seen through the persimmon sprouts, briars, and underbrush. The only thing of interest was a cool, clear creek that ran nearby. There was no cleared land and none worth clearing. I reported to Mama and she knew I was telling the truth about the place because she understood how glad I too would be to move away. He had dealt us a cruel blow and we remained subdued for some time to come. Still, Mama never gave up all hope. I think we children knew that at worse, with us, it was not a lifetime proposition.

The human being is a creature of desire, prone to looking over the fence, of seeing green pastures afar off, generally that is, but my father was a wise, contented man—a happy, pleasant person. As time goes by, we come to appreciate more and more the wisdom of accepting one's station, of being critical of innovations and radical changes. Looking back, I know that our childhood was no bed of roses, but we could not have been happier no matter where we might have lived.

(to be continued)

SQUASH PATTIES – 1

2 cups grated yellow squash
¼ cup self rising flour
1/3 cup self rising cornmeal
1 small onion, chopped
1 egg, beaten
pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients together. Spoon out into a hot greased frying pan. Brown both sides. Drain on paper towel.

SQUASH PATTIES – 2

2 cups peeled and grated zucchini or yellow squash
1 teaspoon salt
2 Tbsp. sugar
1 egg
½ cup flour
1 small onion, grated

Mix all ingredients well and drop by teaspoon into hot oil. Fry until golden brown.