

# THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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

## **HORACE ERASTUS BEMIS ONE OF PRESCOTT'S MOST PROMINENT CITIZENS**

The Nevada News  
April 30, 1914

Little Rock, April 14—

Horace Erastus Bemis died at his home in Prescott, Ark. on the morning of April 1, following a month's illness, and with his passing, Arkansas lost one of its most distinguished citizens. Residing in the vicinity of Prescott for twenty years, Horace Bemis did probably more than any other man to develop and advertise Arkansas over the world. He did not only what all captains of the lumber industry have done, but he made possible the great orchards of the Highland Planting Co., which is now shipping hundreds of bushels of fancy Elberta peaches over the world annually, and so encouraged the diamond mining in Pike Co. that it has been proven that Arkansas contains one of the greatest of all diamond fields.

Large in stature, big in heart, and above all, he was a plain man among his men. He met them all on an equal plane, associated with the families of his workmen, and no employer ever had a more contented set of employees than did Mr. Bemis. This was demonstrated by the grief of the workmen at the death of their employer. The employees of diamond mines, orchards, railroads, and mills from all sections of the state journeyed to Prescott to attend the funeral and to them it was like the parting with a member of their own family. The pallbearers at the funeral were selected from employees of the various companies, and business associates in these concerns were honorary pallbearers.

Horace Bemis came to Arkansas in 1894 with his parents and four brothers and entered the lumber business. The start was small, but from this small beginning great mills have grown and the timber possessions of the Bemis brothers include many thousands of the best pine and hardwood timberlands of Arkansas. At the time of his death, Mr. Bemis was the general manager of the Ozan Lumber Co., the largest of the Bemis concerns, as well as general manager of the Prescott and Northwestern Railway, another Bemis concern. He was the head of the Highland Orchard Planting Co. which has thousands of acres in fruit in Pike Co.

The deceased was born in Clinton, Iowa November 30, 1868, but has spent the greater portion of his life in the South. He graduated from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN in 1891 with a B. S. degree. At the time of his death, Mr. Bemis was president of the Vanderbilt Alumni Association. He entered Vanderbilt after an academic education in a northern school, and was the first coach of a Vanderbilt football team in 1890. He played halfback of the university team and later led the baseball team, and at one time was considered the best college tennis player in the South. Mr. Bemis annually returned to Nashville to attend the alumni meetings and to attend the Thanksgiving football game between Vanderbilt and Sewanee. Mr. Bemis was never deserted by his love for athletics

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and he greatly encouraged the spirit in the schools of Prescott as well as among his employees. He was an annual visitor to the high school athletic contests in Little Rock, and always accompanied Prescott high school teams when they went out of town.

After graduating from Vanderbilt, Mr. Bemis was associated with college chums in Texas for several years, but finally went to Prescott to settle down to real business. He was married here Nov. 14, 1900 to Miss Ethel Norvelle McRae, daughter of Hon. Thomas C. McRae, a prominent banker of southern Arkansas and at that time, Congressman from that district.

He is survived by his wife and seven children: Thomas McRae Bemis, Douglas Knox Bemis, James Hervey Bemis, Horace E. Bemis, Jr., Norvelle Bemis, Amelia Bemis, and Mildred Bemis and his parents, James Hervey Bemis and Mrs. Hannah Bemis; two brothers, W. N. Bemis and J. W. Bemis all of St. Louis.

The remains were interred in De Ann Cemetery in Prescott with Rev. James Thomas of Pine Bluff and Rev. J. C. Williams of Prescott officiating. All business houses in Prescott were closed during the hours of the funeral, and practically every man, woman, and child in the town attended the services.

Besides the companies mentioned, Mr. Bemis was a director in other orchard companies of Pike Co. as well as the Bank of Prescott and the Caddo River Lumber Co. He was among the first to realize the possibilities of the ridges of that section for fruit growing, and the success of the extensive orchards is largely attributed to his untiring energy—*The St. Louis Lumberman*

*The following comments were published in The Nevada News:*

Horace Erastus Bemis died this morning at his home in Prescott at 8:30 o'clock. The cause of his death was an aortic aneurysm and he had been in critical condition for the past month. Prescott citizens were shocked this morning to learn of his death.

He was and had been a member of the city council for the past several years and on this body and in many other ways, he was instrumental in the advancement of our city. There probably has never been another man in Prescott who held the high respect and friendship of the entire citizenry as has Mr. Bemis.

Prescott and this country generally suffers a distinct loss in the death of H. E. Bemis. He was an enterprising citizen, able and willing to give assistance to all worthy projects. It is not easy to estimate the value to a country of a man who is liberal in his efforts to promote all lines of industry and who had faith in the future development of the country. Mr. Bemis was one of the most central figures in the Ozan Lumber Co. and the Prescott and Northwestern Railway and in these circles he will be missed most. Among the employees and attaches of these companies, he was universally loved and held in the highest regard.

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## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GORDON H. IRVIN (PART 6) The Story of the Irvin Family near Bluff City, Arkansas about 1920

### A continuation of the section entitled “Religion and Thunder”

The same could not be said of a great revival meeting. There is, perhaps, no single event, no fantasy of glory nor dream of destruction and no messenger of peace that carries with it the multitude of emotions that may be engendered at one good protracted meeting. They were held at a time when crop working was laid by until harvest time and all the people were otherwise idle. We had two church services per day. The one at 10:00 or 11:00 A. M. was attended only by church members and other good Christian folk. They made up the planning board as it were. If one had a practiced ear, as I had, he might deduce from not too subtle hints in the prayers and clues in the testimonials and pep sermon just which sinner or sinners the main attack would be directed against in that night's service. It was something like a private caucus with God Almighty to plot strategy.

In the evening, just before sundown, toward the church from all directions the people came—both saint and sinner. They converged singly and in pairs, on foot from near and on horseback, by buggy, and wagons, from afar. By good dark, horses, wagon, and buggies would be hitched all around the church and for some distance back into the woods. This was a revival for religion and served as such, but not for that alone. It was a time for many things. The gay blades in silk shirts and the farm girls in starched dresses eyed each other across the aisles. The less faint heart or more compelled, depending on how you look at it, sat beside her, walked her to the wagon, and soon they got engaged. The hellions came just to stand outside and look in through the window and steal watermelons on the way home. I belonged to neither group officially at this time of year, but was more or less an associate or non-participating member in all of them. The church assessed a somewhat dubious claim on me by way of infant baptism, but I couldn't remember about that. I was too young to join openly in the courting group, but getting old enough to play a little pocket pool. I was too well guarded to defect to the hellion gang, but knew where all the best melon patches were. And there I sat so miserably alone in the midst of everyone. I did not want, or rather, I feared to be saved.

There never was a time when any of us did not believe in God. Even those of us who stole watermelons believed in Jesus Christ, but that was not sufficient. One had to be saved to be a Christian and he should join the church. I hoped I was a Christian and had no objections to joining the church. But no, this was not the way. The sporting thing to do was to get saved and every time I got to this point, I'd balk. Everyone who had ever joined the church had at one time or another been saved or at least he had said he had been saved, and he had said it in public. I thought it might be better for me to say in public that I had been saved than to get saved in public. All this was passing through my mind and making me uneasy. Also, it didn't take a fool to see that Mama had her sights set on me. She knew I needed it (getting saved, that is) most and there was nothing to deter her. And so, I sat as small as possible all alone in a crowded church knowing I should be saved, but hoping to postpone it yet a while.

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Our evangelists were always specialists in their field, brought in from some mysterious place no one ever knew where. He was not a man like you have ever seen before, nor one you could picture wearing overalls and a blue jumper. He holds himself aloof even from the humble circuit rider who is allowed to make the introduction, but must soon bow out and stay out of the picture. To us, the evangelist was the mystic man of God come riding high through the rolling hills; enshrouded as it were, by a ethereal gown, set apart and looking down on the rustic farm folk. He disdains to join in trivial conversation, speaking only in lofty phrases. He it is who will mount the pulpit and come roaring through when the time is right. So, be not misled for, up to now, he has fooled no one with his quiet reservations.

Now, the house is packed. The pulpit is flanked on the right by first the elders and then the choir. On the left sit first the older women and close behind, the mothers with babies in their arms and children on pallets between the pews. Directly in front and below the pulpit rests the altar or mourner's bench in a small cleared area. Further out front and all the way to the back of the house is jammed a heterogeneous assemblage of both saint and sinner with the latter predominating, especially toward the back. Here lurks the enemy or waits the harvest, depending on the preacher's attitude. The spearhead of the attack will be launched in this direction where the hard core of resistance is entrenched, with here and there a few side skirmishes along the way. I was always a sucker for a side skirmish.

Before the service starts, there is always a general hubbub and babble of voices on all sides, but this is the custom and beneath it all, one senses an air of general expectation preoccupying the whole congregation. The stage is set.

The house lights are dim (they always have been), but now the curtains go up, as it were. The choir and as many of those who will, lead off with the most beautiful hymns one ever heard. Prayers are intermingled with the songs and at this time, only the best are called upon to pray—those with a gift of tongue to wring your heart. When the last plaintive note is barely a whisper on the night wind, the master of the captive crowd mounts the pulpit. Actually, most of his work has already been done by the choir. The lost await like sitting ducks. Still, he has a reputation and must back it up, else there are, no doubt, many extra hard hearts and souls as black as midnight to be saved this night. Such an outpouring of words and actions as one never saw or heard, warnings, accusations, threats, and supplications, his voice now modulated and articulated. He speaks of sudden death, hell, and damnation to the wicked while the Lamb of God waits for the righteous in the Garden of Eden. In a compassionate tone, he retells the story of the crucifixion and couples the end with the altar call.

All those who were not filled before, are now ready to overflow and just at this point, the top is knocked off by the choir as it levels off on "Oh, Why Not Tonight?" Why not, indeed? They have hit the nail on the head.

Without further adieu, the meek and lowly push their way through the spellbound crowd weeping. They fall prostrate at the mourner's bench. Soon they are joined by one or more whose morning service prayers had, by this very act, been fulfilled. But these are the sitting ducks mentioned, the easily wounded, the very young, and the backsliders who get saved

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nearly every summer. Why pray for something so easily attained? Those who had the faith of mustard seed have lowered their sights on larger game. Their reward will be great for they are the Lord's shock troops who will hit the line guarding old Satan's GHQ. For a year now, the devil has been making inroads and it is time for the counter attack-- the big push is on. They must go out and wrestle with the old reprobates, the hard-hearted, and those like me who are just plain scared. The prayers for these are seldom answered right off and that is why they must go out and give God a hand by singling out their subjects and engaging them in hand to hand combats, as it were. They approached one who has been weakened and weep on his shoulder and plead with him and practically carry him to the altar. Now, all the while the choir has continued to chant in a low wailing under tone like the sad melody of muted strings. The evangelist now has forsaken his perch, his plaintive voice is heard overriding all, as, with arms outstretched, he moves to and fro along the aisles. Should a hardened sinner here break and bolt for the altar, a chorus of shouts will go up leading one to suspect they did not anticipate such an easy victory.

Now, when it is evident that Satan's ranks have been thoroughly purged and all the ripened grain garnered in, there will follow a time of threshing. The saints will gather at the mourner's bench to pray for and pound on the poor lost soul, kneeling there. There will be no slacking of the threshing nor postponing of the purging until such time as the erstwhile sinner admits that he has been saved, and the sooner the better for him. Each admission of salvation is punctuated by a chorus of shouts and when finally the last one has come through, there will follow a general finale of rejoicing by all.

One of the worst things that could happen at the altar, and one that discouraged the saints the most, was to get hung up on an ignorant sinner who appeared to be trying as hard as he could to get saved, but nothing happened at all. This can be very exasperating and I have seen it occur a few times. They stay and pray and pray and stay, and finally, when the east is gray with the coming day, they get slowly up and wander off to their respective farm houses. And right there lays the crux of my obstinacy on getting saved. It was said that one who ever sinned against the Holy Ghost could not be saved and was damned to hell without hope. But no one seemed to be able to tell me exactly what that was. Now, what if I, unknowingly, had already committed this sin? Wouldn't it be better not to know, than to live a long miserable life aware that such a terrible doom was hanging over my head? Either way, I was hooked and tormented as long as the revival lasted, but soon forgot all about it once it was over with.

After the close of the protracted meeting, everyone would begin to relax and cool off. Theories about the Bible would be expounded by the old folks. Stories in the Old Testament were remembered in a lackadaisical manner and family prayers continued for a spell. But, by the middle of October, crop gathering would have drained off most of the surplus religion, leaving us with the bare Ten Commandments. These we never broke in our home. Sunday was always a day of rest and worship—no games, sports, hunting, or fishing. Mama was the only one allowed to work on this day (I use the work "allow" in rather loose sense). I suspect that Mama might have been a worse saint or better sinner if Papa would have permitted, and her pleasures were so few that I look back with regret now that she was not.

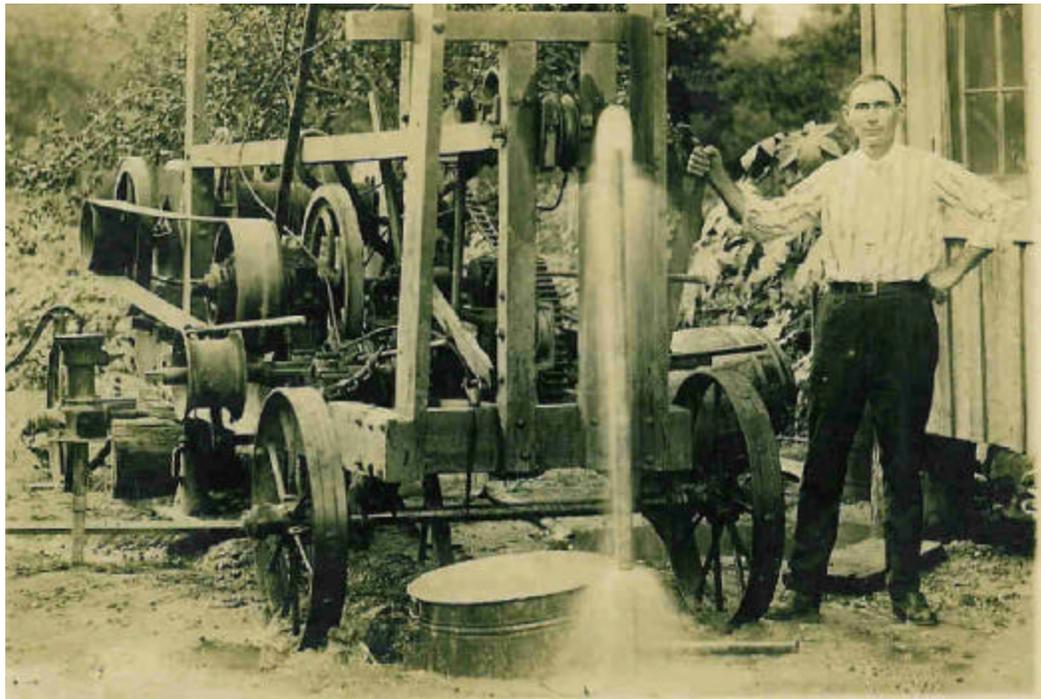
**(to be continued)**

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## TV TRIVIA

Match the characters on the right with the setting for the TV show on the left

- |                              |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ___ 1. 1313 Mockingbird Lane | A. Ben, "Hoss", Adam, and Little Joe |
| ___ 2. New York City         | B. Archie and Edith Bunker           |
| ___ 3. the Ponderosa         | C. the Munsters                      |
| ___ 4. 704 Howser Street     | D. Ward, June, Wally, and Beaver     |
| ___ 5. Fantasy Island        | E. Andy, Barney, and Aunt Bee        |
| ___ 6. Bed Rock              | F. Matt, Kitty, Chester, and Festus  |
| ___ 7. Walton's Mountain     | G. J. R. and Bobby Ewing             |
| ___ 8. Falcon Crest          | H. Superman                          |
| ___ 9. Metropolis            | I. Mr. Roarke and Tatoo              |
| ___ 10. Walnut Grove         | J. Sgt. Joe Friday                   |
| ___ 11. Los Angeles          | K. Jed Clampett                      |
| ___ 12. Beverly Hills        | L. Chase Gioberti                    |
| ___ 13. Dallas               | M. Nellie Oleson and "Half-Pint"     |
| ___ 14. Mayberry             | N. John Boy and the Baldwin ladies   |
| ___ 15. Dodge City           | O. Fred Flintstone                   |
| ___ 16. Mayfield             | P. Ralph Kramden and Norton          |
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**Written on back of picture: "This well made by G. B. Wells of Prescott, Ark. for P. H. Gullick—Sayre, Arkansas; RFD #1, Box 15"**

(Editor's note: There was no date on the picture, but P. H. Gullick died November 13, 1929)

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## PROPOSED ARKANSAS HUNTING RULES FOR 1915

Open season for hunting, chasing, and killing deer, turkey, and bear will be Nov. 10 to January 10 of the following year, except that turkey may be hunted April 15 to May 31. December and January will be open season for quail.

No person may kill more than two deer, four turkeys, and one bear in any one year. Bag limit on quail is 15 in one day and for wild ducks is 25 in one day.

A special license will be needed to hunt deer which will cost \$1.00 each. All hunting dogs will be taxed at \$1.00 per year.

All hunters must have written permission from the owners to hunt on any fenced property.

No provision is made for non-residents to obtain a hunting license.

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### MAN GIVES WIFE UNWANTED HAIRCUT (published in the January 10, 1950 issue of The Camden News)

Phoenix, Arizona—Benton Verkay, 40 gave his 27 year old wife an unwanted haircut. She wound up in the hospital and he in the county jail.

His wife, Dorothy Louise, says her husband cut off her waist length red tresses with barber shears and clippers for “revenge”. She was admitted to the hospital suffering from hysteria.

Verkay told reporters, “I sheared her hair to keep her from flaunting her tresses. It gave her too much power”.

Verkay was charged with assault with a deadly weapon. The Verkays were married on Christmas Day. He said this marriage was his fifth and her third.

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### FIRST FRONT WHEEL DRIVE CAR IN CAMDEN (from the 3-16-1930 issue of The Camden News)

The first front wheel drive car to be shown in Camden was seen here yesterday afternoon when Red Robbins, a salesman for Midland Motor Co. of Little Rock exhibited a Cord cabriolet here.

The car was a low-slung convertible cabriolet. The new car is a departure from the standard wheel machine in that all power transmission equipment is attached to the front wheels of the car.

The car is powered by a 125 HP Lycoming motor and the top speed is 110 miles per hour. It is manufactured by the Auburn Automobile Co.

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## DOG

When God made the earth and sky,  
The flowers and the trees.  
He then made all the animals,  
The fish, the birds, and bees.  
And when at last He'd finished  
Not one was quite the same.  
He said, "I'll walk this world of mine,  
And give each one a name."  
And so He traveled far and wide  
And everywhere He went,  
A little creature followed Him  
Until its strength was spent.  
When all were named upon the earth  
And in the sky and sea,  
The little creature said, "Dear Lord,  
There's not one left for me."  
Kindly the Father said to him,  
"I've left you to the end.  
I've turned my name back to front  
And called you dog, my friend.

Author Unknown

*Editor's Note: Nice poem, but according to Genesis 2: 19-20, God gave Adam the job of naming the animals.*

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## SLAB TATER PIE

A recipe from Mrs. Oleta Nelson

Peel and slice about three cups of sweet potatoes. Put them in about a quart of water and add one teaspoon of salt. Cook until well done. Add two cups of sugar and one teaspoon of vanilla. Mix well. Put in a baking dish. Roll out two crusts large enough to cover the baking dish. Spread one crust on top of potatoes and juice. Put in a 350 degree oven and brown. Press down first crust and put on next crust. Add half stick oleo and sprinkle two tablespoons of sugar over all and brown in oven. Be sure to add enough water for the potatoes to be real moist.

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## WIFE'S COOKING

Wife: "The two things I cook best are meat loaf and apple pie."  
Husband: "Which is this?"

**Answers to TV quiz:** 1-C; 2-P; 3-A;  
4-B; 5-I; 6-O; 7-N; 8-L; 9-H; 10-M;  
11-J; 12-K; 13-G; 14-E; 15-F; 16-D