

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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MRS. ROSE GARNETT

I never met Mrs. Rose Garnett, but wish now that I had tried to visit with her before she died. I think she would have been an interesting person to talk to. She lived in Camden for about 40 years looking after the holdings of the old Camden Coal and Clay Company northwest of the city in the area known as Lester Hills. Her later years were spent in the old Hotel Camden across the street from the courthouse. She died November 18, 1979 at the age of 97.

The Camden Coal and Clay Co. was founded by her father-in-law, Dr. Algernon S. Garnett over 100 years ago, and the story of that company is an important part of the history of Ouachita County. Some of the clay mined there was used to make brick and some was shipped out and used in the manufacture of Camark pottery and fine dinnerware. I was still able to find the site of the old brick factory when I visited the area a few years ago. Some of the vats and concrete structures were still there at that time and the area was being protected from logging by International Paper Co. which at that time owned the land. The timber company had included the brick factory site in its “Special Places in the Forest” program.

The coal and clay mining had pretty much ceased by the time of World War I, partly due to the shortage of rail cars. Some of the old-timers in the area around Lester remembered the days when hundreds of men worked in the mines and sawmills in this area. Mrs. Garnett ended up with the land holdings of the coal and clay company which included thousands of acres of timberland. She was often seen driving around Camden in her Jeep which she used to look after and manage her timberlands.

Lester Hills is appropriately named because the area contains some of the steepest hills in Ouachita County. I know this because I have climbed many of them in my career with International Paper Co. which bought these timberlands from Mrs. Garnett in 1963. The area abounds with wildlife and there are very few houses. Much of the area still does not have electricity because nobody lives there except on the fringes. It is near the Ouachita River and is a favorite place for hunters and those who enjoy river recreation. The area is accessed by a couple of main paved county roads with logging roads branching off into the wilderness.

Mrs. Garnett cared deeply for these hills and enjoyed the wildlife and plants. A friend of mine who sometimes worked for her says she was very particular about the land she owned and tried her best to protect the trees and wildlife.

Mrs. Garnett was a very private person, but was known to provide money for young medical students from Ouachita County in hopes that they would return to the county to set up their medical practice. She would sometimes make contributions to public officials such as writing out a check to provide a meal for members of the police force and expected no favors in return. It has been reported that at her death she left \$1,200,000 to the University of

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Arkansas Medical Center to endow the Dr. Algernon S. Garnett Professorship of Family Practice.

When Mrs. Garnett sold her lands to International Paper Co., she reserved 72.6 acres which she later gave to Ouachita County as a wildlife sanctuary. In the deed to the county, she reserved a 70 foot x 70 foot plot of ground to be used as her burial site and gave explicit instructions in her will regarding her burial:

It is my wish and desire that I have a very inexpensive funeral with an unpretentious casket. I do not want my casket opened at the funeral service and desire that my family nor others not view my body after death as it is my wish that they remember me as I was in good health. I would like for my body to be cremated, and I direct my Executor or attorney personally verify that it is my body that is placed in the crematorium.

I direct that my Executor bury my ashes in a memorial plot of approximately seventy feet by seventy feet, which is located across the road from the present cemetery near the Boiling Pot area and which I have designated as said memorial plot.

I further direct that a suitable granite monument not over five feet high be erected in said plot with the following inscription:

*Mrs. E. S. Garnett
Formerly
Rose Marie Blewitt Kirkpatrick-Howat
of
Anne Arundel County, Maryland*

Her deed for the land she gave to the county also contained some restrictions and reservations. It is recorded in Record Book 403-Page 280. The following is a portion of that deed:

This gift is made, however, subject to the following reservations and restrictions in that it is understood that the premises shall always be used and maintained by Ouachita County as a Wildlife Refuge and Bird Sanctuary. Further conditioned that no roads be made or built on this land other than those existing at the time of this gift, and that the existing roads be maintained in their present condition and shall not be enlarged or widened in any way, nor shall any trails be cut or made in or upon the property, or any other improvements made upon the property such as damming of streams or impounding of water. The gift is further conditioned that Ouachita County will not sell this land or use the property for any purpose other than a Wildlife Refuge and Bird Sanctuary. There shall not be allowed any drilling or digging for any oil, gas, coal, or other minerals in or upon any of the property and no permanent structures are to be built or placed on this property and none of the timber on the said property shall be cut or harvested for any commercial purposes. No trailers, tents, or any type of campers are to be placed on this property. These restrictions, conditions, and covenants are intended to run with the land and upon any breach thereof of Ouachita County,

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

this conveyance shall become null and void and the title to the property shall revert to the Grantor, her heirs, and assigns.

I visited Mrs. Garnett's memorial plot recently and found it to be inside a chain link fenced area of about 30 feet by 40 feet. Inside the fenced area is the granite marker with the exact wording as shown above. Her death date of November 18, 1979 is displayed on a marker embedded in a concrete slab in front of the granite marker. Along the road approaching the cemetery, I noticed a concrete monument and several small signs marking the area as a wildlife sanctuary. I think Mrs. Rose Garnett would probably agree with the following statement made by President John F. Kennedy:

"It is our task in our time and in our generation, to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours."

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GORDON H. IRVIN (PART 7) The Story of the Irvin Family near Bluff City, Arkansas in the 1920's

CATFISH AND CONGER EELS

Had Papa permitted, Mama might have gone fishing on Sunday as well did she enjoy this one thing. In the spring of the year, she and I would escape from the crops as often as Papa would allow and go cat-fishing in Caney Creek which ran about a mile in back of our farm. On this day she would not go to the fields, but would pack us a lunch to eat and an early dinner for us to eat that night. Then at noon we would gather up our tackle and a grubbing hoe and head for the creek. It was hard work digging bait with the hoe and cutting poles for the lines but, in our excitement, we did not notice. By four o'clock we might have maybe fifty or a hundred hooks baited and set out on poles in the bank. Then we built our camp fire and ate our lunch for soon it would be sundown and time to start running the lines. Sometimes, by the light of the pine torch you could see four or five poles shaking at one time. The catch consisted of catfish, turtles, water dogs, and eels. We ate the catfish and eels that had no legs, but it was not easy to see their tiny legs by the flickering light of the torch and so we waited until next morning to check for legs. By ten or eleven at night we were too tired to take up our hooks and so would leave them until the next day and drag ourselves up the long hill home and fall into bed. Papa did not care to knock himself out with this type of fishing nor permit us to go too often on account of we might lose the crop or not make enough to feed a billy goat. However, we did enjoy bream fishing occasionally and were not averse to an all day fish fry with several families participating.

SCHOOL

Editor's Note: The school described here was the Gum Grove School. It was located about three miles southwest of Bluff City at the intersection of County Roads 290 and 403 (just past the big power line). The school existed until 1929 when it was consolidated with Bluff City. This site was also the location of the Gum Grove Church of Christ until 1980.

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Neither our parents, grandparents, nor in fact any of the neighbors were illiterates and that is quite amazing in retrospect, when one considers that they did not spend more than nine months in a school room in all their lives. I know my father taught us how to borrow when subtracting, but somehow or other, he always paid back what he borrowed. A farm newspaper came by mail to our house once a week and *The Herald*, a religious paper, came once a month. I never saw my parents use a dictionary. I don't think we had one. Still, they discussed and seemed to understand most of what they read.

Our school house was located in the center of a forty family community. Most families were large in those days and it is quite likely that more than one hundred children were in attendance there. The one room building was perhaps thirty feet wide by forty feet long. It sat in the shadows of many large gum trees and was called Gum Grove. The furniture was hand made of rough lumber. We had a few desks but mostly it consisted of long benches packed as close together as possible. A black board extended across one end of the room.

It seems to me that our teachers must have been near geniuses, for there were eight grades with as many as six subjects per grade, though not in all grades. In some subjects like science, geography, hygiene, etc., he lumped two or three grades together, but even then, he or she could not allow more than ten or fifteen minutes per class.

Text books are not what they used to be. I remember our geography books were real snazzy with pictures of foreign lands and people of all races. The photographer was probably one of the Sarrett boys from Terrapin Neck; he tried to let the pictures tell a story and sure enough they did. One that impressed me was of a sheep herder in Australia or Scotland or somewhere. He was looking after his flock and looking over the rolling hills perched on top of a pair of stilts a good six feet tall. This gave me an idea of how to undo my cousin, Ellis Griffith. His stilts were no more than ten or twelve inches high. If an ignorant sheepherder could chase sheep over rocky hills on stilts six feet high, it should be no trick for me to walk to Aunt Della's on a pair ten feet tall. I selected two long slender pine poles and made the steps up even with the smoke house roof. It was just before noon the day I first tried them out. Papa was washing his face and gazing, as usual, towards John Griffy's (sp.) house between handfuls of water. I had advanced from my launching platform, the smoke house roof, to a point between and somewhat above his eyes and whatever it was he was looking at. But I was too high to see him and he was too low to see me. What he saw as he slowly lowered his wet hands was two pine poles moving unsteadily towards the front of the house. For a moment, he became rigid and his disbelief in the supernatural kept him from bolting. When he could gather himself together, he jumped out in the yard, looked up the poles and saw me. Realizing there was nothing he could do momentarily, he left it up to me as how to get down. This I did by simply stepping off onto the porch roof and climbing down the ladder. What lesson is taught here I don't know, but it does point up the old saying that the pen is mightier than the sword and a good razor strap will beat either one.

Our school ground, as I recall, was covered with deep, white sand and fairly level for a short distance around. Its limits were vaguely defined as covering about three acres. No one cared about the limits; we roamed as far away and sometimes farther than we could hear the small hand bell marking the end of recess and lunch hour. At the edge of the deep, white sand,

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

the terrain abruptly plunged down steep hillsides or looked out across deep red-walled ravines. Beyond the gullies and at the foot of the hills, there was the spring where cold, sparkling, clear water made the sands appear to boil. At the end of each play period, we converged here and tussled for a place in the line. The school furnished only one cup and when it became evident that the bell would ring soon, the boys surrendered their places to the girls, lay on the ground, and drank from the small brook that hurried away from the spring. It was a stout climb back up the hill to the school house.

The winter school term lasted from three to five months and the summer term from one to two months. It depended upon how much money was in the treasury. We loved school which seemed more like a holiday or picnic. It was an escape from the drudgery of the farm and a wonderful vacation. It did not concern us that Gum Grove was a place of learning and we were sad always at the end of the few short weeks. Yet, those who went away to enter high school had no trouble in jumping to the eighth grade.

From our house to school was about two miles due east, up hill and down with no level ground in between. We never missed a day, but were glad to walk the distance there and back in sunshine, rain, sleet, or snow. Our clothes were thick and heavy but they were not water resistant and so we were often very cold and soaked to the bone on rainy winter mornings. Many of the children would be huddled near the large wood-burning stove crying softly from the pain in their hands as the circulation and warmth re-entered. The opposite, of course, was true in summer when most of the children were barefoot. Then on the way home, it was a race through the white, hot sand from the shade of one bush to the shade of another. The parents thought not of these conditions as hardships, but considered it a privilege to send us to school.

Mama and Papa, after much pleading and begging, usually allowed us to join in the program of school plays once or twice a year although it meant a few night trips for rehearsal or practice, as we called it. They did not approve of these trips because we did or vice versa. Anyway, it was the most fun we ever had just to run and carouse more or less on our own for a few hours at night. If anything, the program was incidental.

We came to know our teachers well and the memory of them is dear to all of us, notwithstanding the few well deserved shellackings we caught from some of them.

“CAMDEN ABLAZE” IN 1890

“Camden Ablaze” was the black headline underneath a large picture of a crowing rooster on the front page of *The Camden Beacon* on March 22, 1890. It was the occasion of the first electric lights in Camden. A sub-headline read “The City Lighted Up by Electricity—Citizens Jubilant”.

According to the article, the power company invited the city council and other prominent citizens to the Brooks House for refreshments. The menu consisted of oysters, champagne, and fruit. Over half of the *Beacon's* four pages were devoted to the big event.

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

CLASSIC ADVERTISING SLOGANS

Identify the product or company associated with the following advertising slogans:

- _____ 1. Breakfast of Champions
- _____ 2. "Where's the beef?"
- _____ 3. We bring good things to life.
- _____ 4. Plop, plop, fizz, fiz z; oh, what a relief it is!
- _____ 5. Don't leave home without it.
- _____ 6. A little dab'll do ya!
- _____ 7. Good to the last drop.
- _____ 8. Things go better with _____.
- _____ 9. Double your pleasure, double your fun
- _____ 10. It takes a licking and keeps on ticking.
- _____ 11. "Look Mom, no cavities!"
- _____ 12. Melts in your mouth, not in your hands.
- _____ 13. 99.44% pure
- _____ 14. Sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don't
- _____ 15. Please don't squeeze the _____.
- _____ 16. When it rains, it pours.
- _____ 17. It costs a little more, but it's darn well worth it.
- _____ 18. Betcha can't eat just one
- _____ 19. Relieves gas pains

THE COMMUNITY OF DOTSON IN HEMPSTEAD COUNTY (Published in July 27, 1911 issue of The Nevada News)

Dotson is half way between Blevins and Belton and is surrounded by good upland farmland. We never had a crop failure. Our land has a red clay foundation and stands drought well. It is adapted well for growing fruit. The land is fine for strawberries. One farmer sold \$30 worth from one-sixth of an acre besides what the family used.

Dotson has one good store owned by Messers. Wardlow and Harris. We have a blacksmith shop and mill owned by Mr. Mann. Dotson needs a depot. More passengers get on and off the train at Dotson than at any other station on the way to Prescott except Blevins.

Dotson is near the extreme west boundary of School District No. 48. The voting precinct is at Friendship, one mile northeast of Dotson and we can poll 100 votes.

Most of the men live east and northeast of Dotson and a depot here would be a big help to them. So give us a depot and our people will build a packing house and go extensively into the fruit, berry, and melon business. It is only a question of time until Dotson will be a flourishing town.

Answers to quiz above: 1. Wheaties cereal; 2. Wendy's; 3. General Electric; 4. Alka Seltzer; 5. American Express; 6. Brylcreem; 7. Folger's coffee; 8. Coke; 9. Doublemint gum; 10. Timex watches; 11. Crest toothpaste; 12. M & M's candy; 13. Ivory soap; 14. Mounds/Almond Joy candy; 15. Charmin tissue; 16. Morton salt; 17. Curtis-Mathis TV; 18. Lays potato chips; 19. Volkswagen

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE



A BAPTISM AT THE BLUFF CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST The preacher is Warren E. Starnes (1880-1963)

This church was located in Bluff City about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile west of the intersection of Hwy. 24 and Hwy. 299 on the south side of Hwy. 24. The date of this picture is not known, but you can make a guess judging the preacher's age and considering the years of his life shown above. Let me know if you can identify any of the people in the picture.

RURAL MAIL SERVICE STARTED AT PRESCOTT IN 1903 (from the April 4, 1929 issue of *The Nevada News*)

Through the efforts of former Congressman Thomas C. McRae, six rural routes were established at Prescott, the service becoming effective April 1, 1903. The six routes combined consist of 171 miles of travel daily at the present time (1929). The distance traveled on the six routes in the past 26 years is approximately 1,209,312 miles and the number of pieces of mail delivered during this period is near 11,000,000. These routes have been served by different methods of travel—walking, horseback, cart, buggy, motorcycle, and automobile.

John W. Mitchell and Clinton H. McCuller, carriers on rural route one and four, have been in continuous service since the establishment of those routes. Neither of these carriers have been absent for a very long period on account of sickness or other causes. Rural route one served by Mr. Mitchell is 21 miles in length. During his 26 years of service, he has traveled

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

nearly 158,886 miles or little more than six times around the world and has delivered and collected approximately 1,800,000 pieces of mail. Rural route four served by Mr. McCuller, is 28 miles in length. He has traveled about 211,848 miles or about 8 ½ times around the world, and has collected and delivered nearly 2,000,000 pieces of mail during his 26 years of service.

Saxon P. McGuire, rural route carrier on route 2, will complete 30 years of service on May 31st, having served in the railway service and later transferring to his present position on route 2.

James B. Bramlette was appointed rural carrier on route five when the service was first established, transferred to the city service in Little Rock, and later transferred to rural carrier on Route six at this office. He retired Aug. 31, 1927, having reached the age of 65 years and is now residing in Little Rock.

The service of the six rural routes at Prescott covered an area of about 12 miles in every direction from the office, serving approximately 6000 people.

WYOMING COWBOY COOKIES (from Taste of Home magazine—April/May, 1993)

Editor's Note: We have tried this recipe and found it to be a good one.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 CUP FLAKED COCONUT | 2 CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR |
| ¾ CUP CHOPPED PECANS | 1 TEASPOON BAKING POWDER |
| 1 CUP BUTTER OR MARGARINE, SOFTENED | ½ TEASPOON SALT |
| ½ CUP SUGAR | 1 ½ TEASPOONS VANILLA EXTRACT |
| 1 ½ CUPS PACKED BROWN SUGAR | 2 CUPS ROLLED OATS |
| 2 EGGS | 2 CUPS (12 OZ.) CHOCOLATE CHIPS |

PLACE COCONUT AND PECANS ON A JELLY ROLL PAN. PLACE IN 350 DEGREE OVEN FOR 6 TO 8 MINUTES UNTIL TOASTED BROWN, STIRRING EVERY TWO MINUTES. SET ASIDE TO COOL.

IN A LARGE MIXING BOWL, CREAM BUTTER AND SUGARS. ADD EGGS AND BEAT WELL.

ADD DRY INGREDIENTS AND VANILLA. STIR IN OATS, CHOCOLATE CHIPS, AND TOASTED COCONUT AND PECANS.

DROP BY ROUNDED TEASPOONFULS ONTO GREASED COOKIE SHEETS. BAKE AT 350 DEGREES FOR ABOUT 12 MINUTES OR UNTIL BROWNEED.

(MAKES 6 DOZEN)—YOU MAY WANT TO HALF RECIPE