

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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The Doctor, The Disobedient Daughter, and The Preacher's Son-- The Rest of the Story about William Graham Hayes and Libbie Lucille Brownlee Hayes

Editor's Note: The grave marker of William Graham Hayes and Libbie Lucille Hayes at DeAnn Cemetery in Prescott is an unusual one. I had mentioned it in a previous article about DeAnn Cemetery in the January, 2007 issue and recently received some more information from Suzanne Hayes, great grand-daughter in law of Will and Libbie Hayes.



William Graham Hayes and Libbie Lucille Brownlee Hayes were married against the wishes of her father, Dr. John Samuel Brownlee. Dr. Brownlee was a prominent physician in the Burnet, Texas area in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He threatened to disown Libbie if she married William Graham Hayes as he found him to be an “unsuitable match” for his oldest daughter. Libbie Lucille Brownlee did marry William Graham Hayes, and accordingly, Dr. Brownlee *did* disinherit her. A granddaughter, Libbie Lu, who currently resides in Texas, purportedly has a copy of Dr. Brownlee’s Last Will & Testament. Libbie Lu reports that her grandmother Libbie Lucille Brownlee Hayes received only \$1.00 at Dr. Brownlee’s death in 1909; and, apparently, more than her fair share of grief from her father in his Last Will & Testament, for her poor choice in a mate. The Brownlee family was very prominent both in social and political circles in Burnet, Texas. The newspaper in Burnet reported that the entire town shut down for Dr. Brownlee’s funeral in February of 1909, including the US Post Office.

Libbie’s mother was Mary Olivia McDonald, and she died giving birth to Libbie on April 20, 1882, approximately one year after marrying Dr. Brownlee. Libby’s father remarried several years later, and Libbie had two half brothers and two half-sisters in Burnet, Texas. Her half brother Houghton became a state senator, as well as Attorney General of Texas. Her other half-brother, Hansford (Dr. “Happy” Brownlee) was a doctor. The later President Lyndon Baines Johnson and Houghton Brownlee were good friends, and interestingly enough, at LBJ’s insistence, Dr. Happy Brownlee assisted LBJ’s surgeon in performing his appendectomy.

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

As to the relationship that formed between Will and Libbie Hayes, the simple fact of the matter was that Will Hayes absolutely adored Libbie Lucille and vice versa. By all family accounts they were very devoted to one another. Libbie and Will Hayes had four sons: William Marcellus Hayes (Bill) in 1900; John Harry Hayes, M. D., in 1904; James McDonald Hayes, M. D., in 1907; and finally, Candler Kilgo Hayes, M. D., in 1913. Ironically, just as Libbie's mother had died giving birth to her, she died just 8 days after giving birth to her youngest son, Candler. Libbie's obituary states that she had been afflicted with heart trouble for years. Her last pregnancy probably contributed to her early death at age 32. Baby Candler was initially sent to live with his aging grandparents, Elder William Marcellus Hayes and his wife Elizabeth Hebbard Hayes in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Elder Hayes was a one-armed, Southern Methodist Preacher who had fought in and lost his right arm in the Civil War. Over the years, however, little Candler was bounced around from grandparents to aunts and uncles, and then ultimately returned to his father. In a cruel twist of fate, all four of Libbie and Will's sons achieved adulthood and success, only to die of heart complications at relatively young ages: Harry died in 1963, Candler in 1965, Bill in 1967, and Donald in 1969.



LIBBIE BROWNLEE HAYES



WILLIAM GRAHAM HAYES

While three of Libbie's four sons became well-known doctors in the Little Rock, Arkansas area, the oldest son, Bill Hayes, was a hard-working man who moved to North Carolina to make his own way in the world and never looked back to Arkansas. Bill Hayes worked for a time for the railroad and then ultimately made a career in the insurance business, throwing newspapers for an additional income. Bill Hayes had two children and was a beloved father and grandfather to many. It is the wife of one of these grandsons, who

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

discovered this information while researching genealogy for a Hayes Family Gift Book to be provided to the other grandsons of Bill Hayes for Christmas this year.

When Libbie died, Will Hayes was terribly distraught. In time, he sent a photograph of himself and Libbie, in an embrace, to a sculptor in Italy and he commissioned the headstone you see today in the DeAnn Cemetery. At the time of Libbie's death, Will owned and operated the Prescott Steam Laundry; however, it may be that the photograph Will Hayes sent to the sculptor was one which he, himself took as he is shown in census records to have also been a photographer by trade. The headstone is a lovely replica of their images, and it reportedly cost him a small fortune to have it made and imported back to Prescott from Italy in 1913.



Will Hayes later married Lela Waul Andrews. Lela was a teacher and Prescott native, and she loved and was a devoted mother to Will's three youngest boys who remained at home, raising them as her own. Family reports indicate that Lela was not well treated by Will Hayes during their marriage. The family suspects that Will's marriage to Lela was one of necessity in helping to rear his three young sons. It appeared to his family that even though Lela was a kind and precious soul, that Will had no genuine or deep affection for her. After Will's boys had graduated from medical school and had set up their practices in Little Rock, Lela finally divorced Will in 1935. Lela Andrews Hayes died in 1965, and was always beloved by her sons and her grandchildren. She is also buried at DeAnn Cemetery.

After the divorce, William Graham Hayes once again married -- a woman named "Emma" from a small town in Arkansas. All we know about this marriage is that he was still married to her in 1949, one of the last times his grandson, Billy, ever got to see him in Arkansas. Later in his life, it would seem that William Graham Hayes returned to his religious roots and had a much closer walk with the Lord. The last years of his life, he worked selling Bibles door to door in Arkansas. Will died in 1952 and is buried at DeAnn next to his first wife, Libbie Lucille Hayes.

FAMILY REUNIONS ARE NOT WHAT THEY USED TO BE

It seems as though families do not have family reunions nearly as often these days. I guess everyone is too busy or the families are so scattered. Almost every issue of the newspapers in the summer months mentioned various family get-togethers. They usually listed those who attended and some gave a short history of the pioneer ancestors of the family.

I came across the following account of the reunion of the T. B. Starnes family of Bluff City in 1940. Evidently, that family knew how to put on a good family reunion.

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

The article mentions that this was the annual reunion of the Starnes family, so this family got together every year. It wasn't just a one day affair as most reunions are. On Monday, the family gathered at the Loyce Starnes home for the day; Tuesday they were at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Henry; on Wednesday with Mr. and Mrs. Julius Bradley at Prescott; on Thursday with Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Robinson. On Friday, there was a fish fry at the Boiling Pot on the Ouachita River. Saturday, they were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. John Starnes in Chidester and Saturday climaxed the week when the family gathered at the old home place on the Bluff City and Old Water Mill road.

Dinner consisted of fried chicken, summer vegetables, pickles, cakes, pies, ice cream, etc and was served picnic style under the shade trees in the yard planted by Mr. and Mrs. Starnes 62 years before.

In the afternoon those attending enjoyed various forms of amusement including a swim in the "ole swimming hole" on the Starnes farm. Late in the afternoon sandy land watermelons were served after which an old fashioned singing led by Garland Starnes was enjoyed. Several impromptu numbers were introduced including a duet by Mary Louise and Patsy Ruth Starnes; a solo by Martha Helen Robinson and several numbers by a mixed quartet composed of Mrs. C. C. Harvey, Mrs. Dale Denman, Cross Epperson, and Arthur Starnes.

A list of those attending was included in the newspaper article.



UNIDENTIFIED STORE IN NEVADA COUNTY

This picture of a store was sent to me by a reader. She thinks this picture belonged to the Warmack or McCargo families who lived in the Willisville-Mt. Olive area of Nevada County. She is wondering if anyone recognizes this store or the people in the picture. Let me know if you have any information and I will forward it on to her.

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

By Jerry McKelvy

Arkansas has been given the nick-name “The Natural State” and I can testify that I have seen part of it in its most natural state.

I worked for many years as a forest technician for a large timber company. It was a job that required a person to work in some of the most remote areas far off the beaten path where most folks never go. We worked in all kinds of areas ranging from beautiful mature forests to briar thickets and swamps. If you liked variety, it was the perfect job because each day brought new challenges. The good days outnumbered the bad and there was a mixture of field work, office work, and a lot of driving.

I guess the worst week of my career with the timber company was the time we had to cruise timber in the White Oak Creek bottom in Ouachita County between Chidester and Bluff City. For those who don't know, “cruising timber” means to estimate the amount of timber in an area by taken sample plots scattered over the area in a specified manner.

The area I'm talking about was several hundred acres located between Hwy. 24 and Hwy. 368 (the area from Gulley's liquor store on Hwy. 24 north to Hwy. 368). White Oak Creek flows right through the middle of this block of land.

It was August (I forget which year) when the company decided they needed this tract of land cruised. The water levels were at their lowest at this time which helped us since we would have to cross White Oak Creek many times. We had three two-man crews doing the work which took us about a week to complete.

This particular tract of land was covered with many different species of hardwood timber and unusual plants. There were some small elevated areas scattered about where some giant pine trees grew. The reason they were so large is that nobody could figure out how to harvest them due to the extremely wet conditions. They just grow larger and larger and many of them will finally die from disease or get hit by lightning.

There was no use wearing rubber boots to keep our feet dry, because we were wading water from one foot deep to chest deep in places. The creek had no definite banks, but was spread out all over the bottom. The water was running near the creek, but elsewhere it was just standing water and was a rusty brown color.

I have never seen as many water moccasins in my life. They were everywhere you looked. We carried long sticks to help us walk and also for defense against the snakes. Our company policy did not allow us to carry firearms. After the first day, I decided to carry along a cheap camera to take a few pictures, but keeping it and our papers dry was a major chore. About the only good thing about this work was that we stayed cool in the hottest part of the summer because we were wading water most of the time.

After the first day, we realized this was going to be a week we would remember. It was hard to go to work each day knowing that we would soon be back in the swamp battling

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

snakes and mosquitoes.

The second day, we came upon a blue heron rookery. A rookery is a nesting area for a colony of herons. You will see many nests, usually in a tall dead tree surrounded by water. The large amount of acidic droppings from these rookeries will soon kill the tree containing the nests. I had never been this close to these birds before and knew very little about them. The birds catch small fish, frogs, etc. and fly back to their nests with their catch. They keep a close watch from their tree for predators such as raccoons. One of their defense mechanisms when they sense danger is to throw up or regurgitate food from the top of the tree. Our compass line took us within about 200 feet from the tree, so the birds considered us as predators. When we witnessed this phenomenon, we began to wonder if there wasn't a better way of making a living. Thank goodness we were far enough away to not be attacked. I have read that these birds will attack an invader if they feel threatened. We had no desire to get any closer to this rookery than necessary due to the unsanitary conditions.

In an area such as this, there could also be alligators although we didn't encounter one. Our hearts did beat faster one time when a deer jumped into the water from one of the elevated knolls very close to us. It's hard to run when you are waist deep in water. We just hoped it was a deer and not a wild hog or an alligator.

At the end of the day, our clothes and old leather work boots were soaked. When the boots dried, they became so hard it was almost impossible to get our feet in them the next day. I probably went through four or five pairs of old work boots that week. Our white work socks were completely brown at the end of the day. We just discarded them figuring they could never be made white again.

This was one project we were glad to see completed. I heard one of the guys say he would quit work before he ever cruised this timber again. We all figured the information we collected would never be used anyway because the land was 90 percent swamp and not valuable for logging purposes. The information might be useful if the company ever decided to sell the land, although we couldn't conceive of any rational person or company who would be interested in it. I doubt if our measurements were very accurate because it was hard to concentrate on measuring a tree while keeping an eye out for snakes and other creatures.

The timber company sold all their land in this area a few years ago. The last I heard, the White Oak swamp was to be sold or donated to the state of Arkansas as a wildlife refuge. I'm not sure if that ever happened. I'm just glad that I retired before someone decided to cruise this tract again.

If you ever want to see the Natural State first hand, get yourself a big stick or maybe a gun and a compass to keep from getting lost, and set off on an expedition into White Oak swamp. Don't go alone, because you will appreciate another human voice when you find yourself waist deep in water and surrounded by water moccasins and many other types of wildlife. This is one area I would definitely say belongs to the wildlife. It is a beautiful area in a strange sort of way. There are strange birds and interesting species of timber and plants. There may even be some endangered species living there, but I would say that man might be

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

considered “an endangered species” if he decides to venture too far into this swamp. I have been there and once was enough.

TWO PRESCOTT BOYS BUILD A MOTORBOAT (from the 3-19-1928 issue of the Prescott Daily News)

The Pittman-Johnson Motorboat Co. (John Marshall Pittman and Archie Johnson) has completed its first boat and they are well satisfied with the way it “took to the water” on the first try-out. Several spectators watched the boat and the two boys as they raced up and down the lake. They have no way of determining the speed, but think that it reached speeds of at least 20 miles per hour. They expect it to do thirty when they get the engine tuned up right.

The boat is made of one-inch pine lumber and is equipped with a Ford motor. They have been working on it two or three nights a week for the last three months. They started out determined to build a boat, but had no idea of how to start. They worked out all the problems and have come up with a boat that any 22 year old boys would be proud to own.

The workshop was in the rear of the Prescott Hardware Co. Many who came by at first thought it was some sort of automobile or maybe an airplane. They expect to take the boat to the mouth of the Little Missouri River and go from there to Camden. If that is successful, they will go further down the Ouachita, and if everything goes right and they don't sink the boat and get drowned, they will try a trip to New Orleans.

MULE VERSUS AUTO (from the 9-7-1911 issue of *The Nevada News*)

An amusing incident in which a farmer and a mule were the principal performers occurred on East Elm St. yesterday. The farmer desired to ride past an automobile standing near W. T. Hart's store, but his mount, not being accustomed to motor cars, had other inclinations. No amount of persuasion, either vocal or applied vigorously with a whip, was sufficient to make Mr. Mule change his mind. As a last resort, the Hamby car which was standing in front of Hamby & Haynie's office was brought into service. It was run up behind the obstinate animal and brought the desired results immediately. The last seen of the mule and rider, they were disappearing at full speed down the street.

RECIPES

During the Depression days, people had to use substitutions and the fruit from naturally growing plants like blackberries, muscadines, and persimmons. The following persimmon recipes were published in the 10-1-1936 issue of *The Nevada County Picayune*. The article states that these recipes should be tried by every Nevada county woman who could secure ripe persimmons. You are welcome to try these recipes, but I included them mainly for their historical value. There is a good chance many of our ancestors picked ripe persimmons in

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

the fall of the year to use in such recipes as these. Be sure the persimmons are ripe. Most of us can remember eating a persimmon that was not quite ready to be picked. If you meet someone who never smiles, it may be that he or she once ate a green persimmon and it left a lasting impression.

PERSIMMON GRIDDLE CAKES

1 cup persimmon pulp
1 egg
1 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
Milk to make thin batter

Bake and serve with butter or syrup

PERSIMMON PEANUT MUFFINS

½ cup persimmon pulp
1 teaspoon peanut butter
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 cup flour

Press or cut into pats ½ inch thick and bake in a quick oven.

PERSIMMON CAKE

1 cup persimmon pulp
½ cup sugar
1 egg
Butter the size of a walnut
1 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda

Mix and bake 40 minutes in a moderate oven. For a soft pudding, leave out the flour and baking powder.

PERSIMMON LEATHER

Spread a thin layer of ripe persimmon pulp on a waxed paper or platter. Dry in the sun, in a fruit evaporator, or in a slow oven leaving the doors open. Remove the seeds. Add another layer of pulp and repeat until the leather is the thickness to handle easily. This may be diced or minced and used instead of raisins or citron in fruit cakes, cookies, or puddings.