

Jerry McKeiv's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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TOKIO, ARKANSAS

The Prescott and Northwestern Railroad ran northwest from the main line at Prescott into Hempstead and Pike counties. This map from the Internet (not to scale) shows some of the communities along the route, most of which no longer exist. The railroad was known locally as the “Pea-vine Railroad” and was not as straight as it appears on the map. In fact, a local news writer from Drab, an old community southeast of Blevins, said “the railroad is so crooked if you miss the train at the station, all you have to do is run through the woods to the next curve and wait for the train to come by”.

As you can see from the map, it connected to the main line at Prescott and provided access to the peach orchards around Nashville and Highland, the diamond mine at Murfreesboro, and various lumber mills in the area. This was once an important vegetable growing region for such crops as radishes, cantaloupes, strawberries, melons, and other crops. Packing sheds developed all along the railroad and train-car loads of produce were shipped to the main line at Prescott and then to market in the larger cities.

One community shown on the map is Tokio which was located in northern Hempstead County just south of the Hempstead-Pike county line. Since this place is shown on the map in larger print, it must have been a more prominent place than many of the other communities shown. An ad in the 1910 newspaper encourages the traveling public to use the P & NW railroad. Trains left Prescott at 10:55 and arrived at Nashville at 2:30, or one could leave Nashville at 12:30 and arrive in Prescott at 3:35. The ad mentions good connections at Tokio.

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I found in the May 7, 1910 issue of the *Nevada County Picayune* the following poem written by someone from Tokio. It was signed "Tokioite".

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The town of Tokio is a beautiful place,
Where the women cook grub that is good to your taste.

The air is fine and the water is good.
You can keep your house warm for there is plenty of wood.

The Tokio people all wear a smile on their face,
For everyone there is running at his own pace.

Nobody is kicking and nobody is mad,
Everybody looks just like they are glad.

Tokio is coming and she isn't a bit slow,
Everybody who comes is bringing the dough.

The trains all stop here as they come and go,
You can ride anywhere if you've got enough dough.

Tokio is strictly a cash place,
Everybody has a smile on their face.

We would like to have you join the band,
If you can't stay, remain as long as you can.

THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN (from *The Prescott Daily News* –1937)

Imagine the excitement in Prescott, Arkansas in 1937 when the Tom Mix Circus came to town.

According to the newspaper, the circus consisted of herds of elephants, hundreds of horses, yaks, camels, zebras, and cage after cage of wild animals. There were over 200 acts. Erma Ward did 100 one-arm plunges from the dome of the canvas. Other acts were the Hanneford family of riders, Frank Shepard, the daring young man of the flying trapeze performed without a net, the Great May Goode performing on the Silver Wire, the Flying Arbaughs, the Flying Wards, the Dazzling Cliffords, the Arley Troupe, ten European clowns, Max Grube, the famous animal trainer, and of course, Tom Mix and his famous horse, Warrior.

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THE PRESCOTT HOMECOMING IN 1936 A Part of the Arkansas Centennial Celebration

The newspaper reported perfect weather and a crowd of 12,000 people attending the Prescott Homecoming, a part of the Arkansas Centennial.

Senator Hattie Caraway was the principal speaker of the morning, reminding the audience that the parents of her secretary, Garrett Whiteside, were early citizens of Nevada County. Many other prominent people also spoke.

Edmond Leake, a Negro, age 115, spoke briefly and Miss Mattie Cantley, Prescott's oldest citizen, was introduced to the audience by the centennial chairman.

Dwight Blake of Minden, Louisiana led the Prescott High School band. Mr. Blake, a Nevada County native, directed his first band at Prescott 53 years before when he was only 14.

Store windows displayed photographs of early business and professional men and women of the city and county, as well as articles of historical value from needlework 100 years old to cannon balls left on Prairie de Anne during the Civil War.

The largest crowd in Prescott's history witnessed the parade that afternoon which included five bands and 150 floats. Many depicted the early days of the county and city. One was a replica of the Garland Hotel erected in 1874 and destroyed by fire in 1882. Cake walks and dances on the pavement were held that night.

GERMAN PRISONERS CUT WOOD NEAR PRESCOTT (from the 6-21-1945 issue of *The Nevada News*)

Fifty-three German prisoners from a prisoner of war camp near Murfreesboro started work near here Monday cutting gum timber on the W. F. Denman place. The timber was bought by Olen Hendrix of Delight for the Bastrop Paper Company at Bastrop, LA. The prisoners, brought here daily from the POW camp by truck, eat their noon meal at work. Their favorite beverage being tea, they are allowed to bring a keg of unsweetened, undiluted tea.

The fifty three men, all of whom were captured in North Africa by one of the two guards who come here each day with them, average about 20 years of age. One boy is only 15. They are paired off as partners, and each two are supposed to cut a cord and a half a day. If a pair finishes at two o'clock, or earlier or later, they can knock off for the day. If a prisoner fails to cut his quota of wood, he is put in the brig and kept on bread and water for fourteen days. Their pay, amounting to 80 cents a day, can either be taken in tobacco, paper, etc. or can be put back for them to be accumulated. They are paid 10 cents every Sunday.

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The prisoners, tanned and muscular from their work in the sun and woods, look for the most part like our own American boys. Some are tall and lanky, some are short and stocky. Most of them have learned to speak broken English. One of the guards stated that the boys say they're "not Nazis now". They talk of going home, just as our boys who are prisoners must do. Their worst trait seems to be gold-bricking, or trying to shirk work. In the camp at Murfreesboro, a German doctor treats the sick, but at the work here near Prescott, a young boy with a red cross painted on his arm attends to their medical needs. All of the men have the letters PW printed in huge letters on the backs of their shirts.

WORLD WAR II ENDS Reaction to News in Prescott (from the 8-16-1945 issue of The Nevada News)

Tears, prayer, laughter, and hysteria intermingled Tuesday and for a long while Tuesday night, after the most momentous announcement in history came by radio to citizens of Prescott. Immediately after the announcement at 6 p.m., a look of either awe or inability to grasp the news was seen on faces downtown. Then--pandemonium. People cried, people laughed, 'twas said that stranger kissed stranger. Employees, for the most part high school students, of the Nevada and Gem theaters ran out and unofficially directed traffic in front of the Nevada Theater. The city siren and fire truck sirens, as well as all the mill whistles blew for quite a long while. Automobile horns shrieked. Every man, woman, and child felt the intense relief and excitement that was felt over the nation

WASHINGTON AND HOPE IN NEAR-WAR (Prescott Daily News—January 9, 1917)

Background: An election had been held in 1914 in which voters approved moving the Hempstead Co. seat from Washington to Hope. Some thought the election was unfair.

The county records, furniture, books, and other county items had been stored in the warehouse of Hope Hardware Co., but on January 8, 1917 the items were loaded into wagons and automobiles and carried back to Washington. This was after County Judge Robert Byers declared that the county seat should be at Washington and not Hope and ordered the sheriff, Robert Keel to take them there. The order was quickly carried out. Perhaps 100 or more people from Washington were in the courtroom and outside wagons and automobiles were waiting. The books were removed from the warehouse and hurriedly loaded and started on their way. There was no resistance since the Hope people were taken by surprise.

But then the people of Hope moved rapidly and sought legal aid. There was no court to which they could appeal, so officers were rushed to Prescott for Circuit Judge Geo. R. Haynie who returned with them and heard the case. The matter was argued by

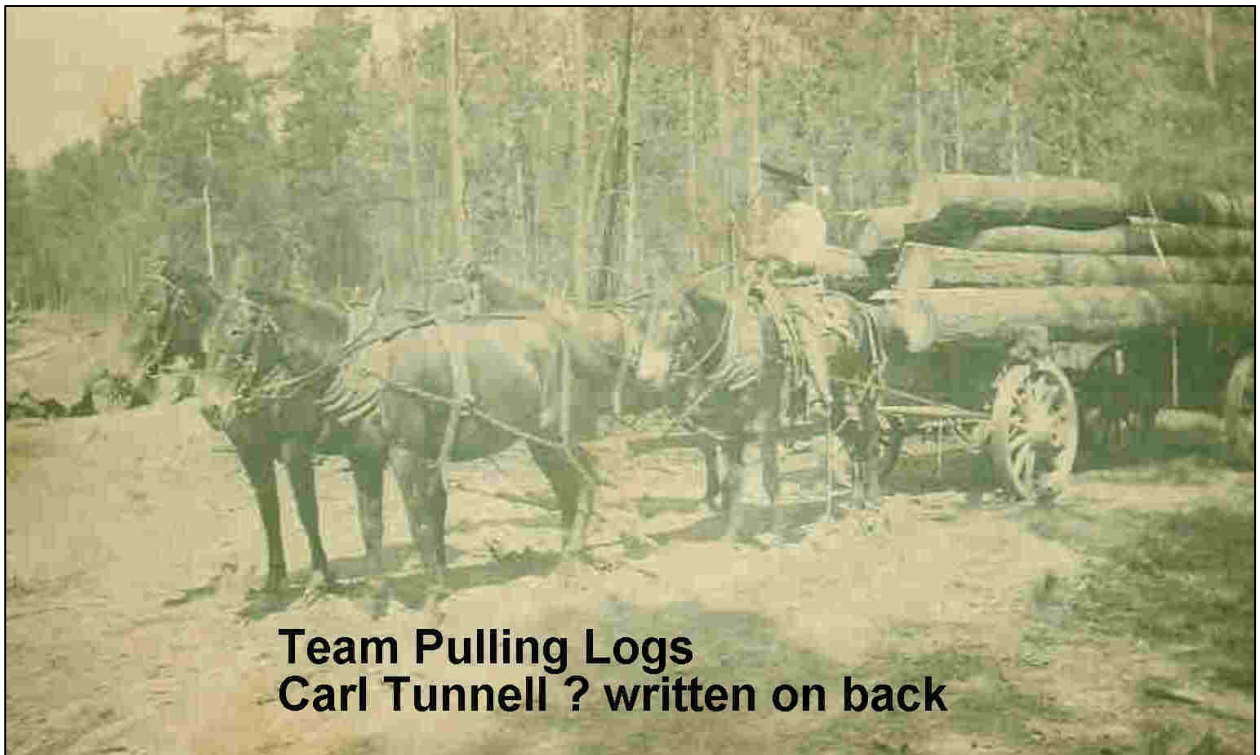
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attorneys on both sides and at the conclusion Judge Haynie handed down a decision that the county seat should be Hope. He issued an injunction restraining Judge Byers from holding either county or probate court in Washington and decided that Judge Byers didn't have jurisdiction to order the records moved back to Washington.

The injunction was obtained from Judge Haynie at 3 p.m., but the records had long been in the courthouse at Washington and were being guarded by a force of men against a possible attempt by Hope to recover them by force or otherwise. Attorneys representing Washington will go to Little Rock tomorrow to carry the matter to the Supreme Court, and until that body decides which is the county seat, Washington will resist any attempt to take the books back to Hope.

Judge Byers announced that he would ignore the order by Judge Haynie and would hold his county court at Washington tomorrow. The sum of \$135 was collected at a mass meeting in Washington to help defray the expense of hiring attorneys.

Excitement runs high in both towns. Following the meeting the guards took their place around the court house. The city of Hope was quiet on the surface, but there were many rumors afloat and threats of reprisal were freely uttered.



An old Bluff City photo.

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Sometimes newspapers used humorous stories to convince people to subscribe to the local paper. Here is one such story.

Here is the latest story of the man who is too stingy to take his home paper:

A man who was too economical to take this paper sent his little boy to borrow the copy taken by his neighbor. In his haste the boy ran over a \$4 stand of bees, and in ten minutes looked like a warty summer squash. His cries reached his father, who ran to his assistance, and failing to notice the barbed wire fence, ran into that, breaking it down, cutting a handful of flesh from his anatomy, and ruining a \$4 pair of pants. The old cow took advantage of the gap and got into the corn field and killed herself eating green corn. Hearing the racket, the wife ran, upset a four gallon churn full of rich cream into a basket of kittens, drowning the whole flock. In the hurry, she dropped a \$7 set of false teeth. The baby, left alone, crawled through the spilled milk and into the parlor, ruining a brand new \$20 carpet. During the excitement, the oldest daughter ran away with the hired man; the dog broke up 11 setting hens, and the calves got out and chewed the tails off four fine shirts.

THE PAPER FROM THE OLD HOME TOWN (author unknown)

Talk about the literature
And papers up to date,
All about the legislature
And doings through the state;
To me they ain't comparin'
Though look the world around,
To the little newsy paper
From the old home town.

There's something brewing in the air
The day the paper comes;
Ma, she goes about her work
And either sings or hums.
But I jest get so restless
Till the postman brings it down,
And I'm the first to grab the paper
From the old home town.

Ma comes into the settin' room
And lets the dishes go,
And listens while I read about
The folks we usta know.
For births and deaths and land deals
And weddin's too abound;
All are mighty interesting
From the old home town.

I know it ain't so classical
As the big dailies are
That tell about the prize fights
And the latest movie star.
But jest for my enjoyment
There's nothing I have found,
Like the little newsy paper
From the old home town.

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SEARCHING

Does anyone recognize this man or can you tell me what type uniform he is wearing? This picture was in a photo collection I scanned. Other photos in the collection included members of the Epperson and Robinson families of Bluff City.

It helps to try and figure out the approximate date of an old photo. Look at the clothes being worn, the furniture, or anything else that might give a clue. If this is a military uniform, it would help to know when this type uniform was used by the military.

Respond to Jerry if you have any information about this photo.



TV TRIVIA (answers on page 8)

1. On *Green Acres*, what brand of tractor did Oliver own?
2. Glenn Strange played Sam, the bartender, on *Gunsmoke*. He was also known for what other famous role in the movies?
3. The names of the pets on *The Waltons* were ___ the mule, ___ the cow, ___ the dog, ___ the peacock, ___ the deer, and ___ the goat.
4. A line in the opening song on *All in the Family* was "Gee, our old _____ ran great."

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WHAT IS A BOY?

Between the innocence of babyhood and the dignity of manhood we find a delightful creature called a boy. Boys come in assorted sizes, weights, and colors, but all boys have the same creed: To enjoy every second of every hour of every day and to protest with noise (their only weapon) when their last minute is finished and the adult males pack them off to bed at night.

Boys are found everywhere—on top of, underneath, inside of, climbing on, swinging from, running around, or jumping to. Mothers love them, little girls hate them, older sisters and brothers tolerate them, adults ignore them, and Heaven protects them. A boy is Truth with dirt on its face, and Beauty with a cut on its finger, Wisdom with bubble gum in its hair, and the Hope of the future with a frog in its pocket.

When you are busy, a boy is an inconsiderate, bothersome, intruding bundle of noise. When you want him to make a good impression, his brain turns to jelly or else he becomes a savage, sadistic jungle creature bent on destroying the world and himself with it.

A boy is a composite—he has the appetite of a horse, the digestion of a sword swallower, the energy of a pocket-size atomic bomb, the curiosity of a cat, the lungs of a dictator, the imagination of a Paul Bunyan, the shyness of a violet, the audacity of a steel trap, the enthusiasm of a firecracker, and when he makes something he has five thumbs on each hand.

Nobody else is so early to rise, or so late to supper. Nobody else gets so much fun out of trees, dogs, and breezes. Nobody else can cram into one pocket a rusty knife, a half-eaten apple, 3 feet of string, an empty Bull Durham sack, 2 gum drops, 6 cents, a sling shot, a chunk of unknown substance, and a genuine supersonic code ring with a secret compartment.

A boy is a magical creature—you can lock him out of your workshop, but you can't lock him out of your heart. You can get him out of your study, but you can't get him out of your mind. Might as well give up—he's your captor, your jailor, your boss, and your master—a freckle-faced, pint-size, cat chasing bundle of noise. But when you come home at night with only shattered pieces of your hopes and dreams, he can mend them like new with the two magic words—"Hi Dad!"

This article appeared in the January 25, 1951 issue of The Nevada News in a column called "Snoopin' Around". The author is unknown, but was said to be "contributed by a Prescott "Dad".

Answers to Trivia:

1. Hoyt-Clagwell
2. Frankenstein's monster
3. Blue the mule, Chance the cow, Reckless the dog, Rover the peacock, Lance, the deer, and Myrtle, the goat.
4. LaSalle (an automobile)