

Jerry McKeiv's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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SPECIAL GRANDPARENTS' DAY ISSUE

Grandparents' Day is celebrated on September 13th this year. Marian McQuade of Oak Hill, West Virginia, has been credited as being the founder of this holiday which began to be celebrated in the United States in 1978. Her goal was to educate the youth about the important contributions seniors have made. Congress passed legislation designating the first Sunday after Labor Day of each year to be National Grandparents' Day and President Jimmy Carter signed the legislation on August 3, 1978. I invited readers to send in a little write-up about their grandparents. Thanks to all those who responded to my request.

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William Madison Morgan was a carpenter. He built many of the houses in Bluff City, Chidester, and the surrounding area. Most of them are still standing because he built them to last. He built the gym at Chidester and later he and his son-in-law, Horace Kirk constructed the Chidester High School Building. Much of the construction was done before he owned a power saw, which would have been of no benefit in most places because there was no electricity to power it. His tool box was one he had designed and constructed himself and the tools in it were: handsaws, hammers, brace and various bits, screwdrivers, chalk line, and other tools he felt essential for building a house and little girls were to stay out of it. In the early days before indoor plumbing and electric power, he did everything from laying the foundation to the painting and wall-papering. He even built the kitchen cabinets.

Grandpa was a farmer. He raised the vegetables for his family's table and the best watermelons anywhere ever. He kept a mule for plowing his garden and for pulling the sled for hauling the watermelons. I remember the watermelons piled high in the front yard with a jar for purchasing them under the honor system. I recall visiting my grandparents one summer when I wasn't old enough to make change and at the beginning of WWII, when a convoy of Army trucks stopped. I ran to get my grandpa and watched. The soldiers asked for "red-meated" watermelons and Grandpa didn't have any. They were about to leave when he sliced open one of the yellow-meated and offered them "tastes". They left with all the melons under the trees.

Pa "Willum" as one of his grandsons called him, was a hunter and fisherman. He hunted for the table. I have seen him "call up" a bob-white quail while sitting in his porch swing. My cousin remembers his telling her the whippoorwill says, "chip fell out of the white oak." He trapped furs when I was young which supplemented his income. I can recall his making his own ball out of lead for his very old rifle during WWII when ammunition was difficult to obtain. When he lived on his farm, he kept hunting dogs. There were hounds for each type of hunting he did: fox hounds, 'coon hounds, pointers, etc. and they were "working" dogs, not house pets according

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to Pa. I was short enough that I could walk under the house where the dogs chose to sleep and I loved to pet them. At first he tried to steer me away by telling me they might bite, then finally, in desperation, I remember his saying, "Lucy, you're ruining my dogs."

Pa loved to fish and he didn't make an "event" of it. He would get his tackle and a cane pole and head out for a creek, pond, or river. If someone wanted to tag along, that was okay as long as she could bait her own hook. I recall his frying fish in his old cast iron round bottom pot that he would suspend from a tree limb with a long wire. He would build a fire under it, fill it with lard, when it was roiling hot, he would drop in the meal battered fish. After the fish came the potatoes cut into pieces, then we feasted.

He was a quiet man that kept his own counsel. He enjoyed being around people, he just didn't have much to say publically. I never heard him say anything negative about anyone. I never heard him use foul language. The only time he ever came close to disciplining me was when he found my cousin and me cutting out paper dolls on Sunday. We determined that we were playing, not working, and moved our operation to an area where he would not see us.

The man had a whimsical streak. My cousin recalls his cutting the top off a blooming yucca and telling her she had a parasol. He liked to please us. I remember a swing he built for us with ropes on an oak limb way up in the tree. When I swung on it I felt that I was going half-way to Heaven. My cousin remembers treats of Grapette soda and peanut patties. I recall his picking me up from school and telling me that he had bought us some cheese, which we both loved. I remember it because it was the worst cheese I ever ate. It was during WWII and it had not been aged at all. It was like chewing rubber. We were both disappointed.

We were always welcome at our grandparents' house and we frequently conspired to arrive there at the same time, unexpected. We were the only two grandchildren for many years and then the boys arrived and we were all welcomed en masse!

During WWII my cousin remembers living with our grandparents while her father Ashley Dewoody and our uncle Foy Nelson were in the armed services. She said that Grandpa always listened to Gabriel Heater each evening to hear the news of the day. Since she was a very little girl, she would have liked to hear something more entertaining. As she matured she realized he was very much concerned about his sons-in-law and the other young men from the community.

We agree that the mold was broken after our grandpa was made. He was a talented hard-working man with high principles. They don't make them like him anymore.

William Morgan's two granddaughters Charlotte Woody and Betty Thomas collaborated to write this.

Answers to quiz on page 9: 1. (I); 2. D; 3 (J); 4 (G); 5 (K); 6, (B); 7. (C); 8. (F); 9. (A); 10. (H); 11. (E)

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This poem was written by my son, Thomas Charlie Mathis, grandson of **Bernadine Walker Mathis Gillespie** and **General Gillespie** (both of Southwest Arkansas).



Bernadine Walker Mathis
Gillespie



General Foy Gillespie

Grandparents' Poem – by Thomas Charlie Mathis

As the sun sets in Owasso,
the geese fly overhead,
quacking for our arrival.
Grandpa G is lying back
in his easy chair.
Grandma is getting ready
for the ten o'clock news.
The nurses are coming
down the hall.
They are coming in, saying,
"How are you doing, G?"
And they say,
"Do you want orange juice or water?"
He says, "Orange juice."
We are talking to Grandma.
She is talking on the phone
to one of my dad's brothers.
The ten o'clock news comes on.
My dad is making the bed.
Grandpa G is talking about the news.
We give them kisses and hugs
and tell them, "Good Night!"
We close our eyes and dream
of the very next day.

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My poem honors my mother's father, **Thomas Jefferson Walker** (Born in Bluff City on 4 Jul 1879, husband of **Rose Myrtle [Dumas] Walker**. He passed away 2 Feb 1968 in Camden).

Granddaddy's Knife - by Don Mathis

To wood, to whetstone,
to pocket, to his death.
Then to grandson,
to use, to lose,
to memory.



Tom Walker - Date Unkown - Raised chickens to take to ElDorado, Arkansas oil field.



From Jerry McKelvy---

My grandfather, **James Columbus McKelvy**, was born in 1882 and died in 1959. He was a lifelong resident of Nevada County, Arkansas. He was a young man when the automobile was invented, but was not able to purchase one until about 1925. I can only imagine how the automobile changed the lives of people in those days.

He married **Katie May Kirk**, daughter of Jasper Newton Kirk and Nancy Honea Kirk, in 1908. They made their home in a community called Rocky Hill but known as Goose Ankle by the locals. They had three children—two boys and a girl.

Grandpa was a farmer. Sorghum was one of his main crops and he had a sorghum mill to make sorghum syrup for his family and his neighbors. He also liked to grow sweet potatoes each year and had a potato shed where he cured them. Like most farms, he had a small blacksmith shop to repair his farm implements. A small orchard provided

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fresh fruit for the family. His farm also had timber, so he was also involved in timber and sawmills work. Grandma took care of the housework, milked the cows, cooked the meals, made quilts, helped in the garden, canned vegetables, did the sewing, washed the clothes, and many more chores that women did in those days.

They lived in a large wooden home with high ceilings and a long front porch with a porch swing. Christmas was a special time when the whole family gathered at the old home place for a wonderful meal and a few hours of quality family time.

My grandfather was nicknamed "Gee" and I never bothered to ask anyone how he got that name. He also had lost some sight in his right eye due to some sort of accident and I never learned what caused that.

I have memories of his old International pickup truck, him filling his pipe with tobacco he carried in a small sack in the bib of his overalls, his horses named George and Lou, and the old Victrola record player in the spare bedroom of their home.

My grandparents died when I was a teenager. What I wouldn't give now to be able to go back and ask them some questions.

From Adrian Hunter---

My mother passed away before I was 4 months old. Her parents [my grandparents] **Thomas Franklin and Ibra Allender House Plyler** took me in and raised me until I went into the Army. Like most country people, they did not have a lot of cash money to spend, but we always had plenty to eat. We had a garden, raised chickens, and hogs. I must have changed their lives; my grandmother was 52 years old when I was born. Last but not least, I do not believe anyone else could have loved me any more than my grandparents did. I consider myself very lucky having great grandparents.

From Barbara Ray---

My paternal grandparents, **John Thomas Walker, Sr.** and **Autna Eunice Dennis Walker**, were an integral part of my life when I was growing up in southern Arkansas. Granddaddy owned a farm outside of the small town where we lived, and almost every evening after supper, Daddy would take us for the short drive out to their farm. After my grandfather passed away when I was twelve, my grandmother moved into "town," and her house was a short block from ours. I would often walk to her house after school and those were the times when she began to tell me about our family history. I loved to write, and I would record all the stories she told me and all the names of our relatives, back to her great grandparents. She had many stories that she had heard from her own grandparents, who had experienced both the Civil War and Reconstruction afterwards, in Georgia and in Arkansas. I learned of her three uncles who died in that war, and if she had not told me about them, their stories would be lost to all of us. One

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disappeared and her grandparents never knew what happened to him, and his twin brothers both died of measles soon after they enlisted. There is no official record of them, as this was late in the war. My grandmother and I had a very special relationship, and I know it was hard for her when I went away to college. I have many letters that she wrote me then and over the years, many wonderful memories of our times together, and I would venture to say that we were probably as close to best friends as a grandmother and granddaughter could be.

From Paulette Weaver---

My Grandfather : Elijah McLendon O'Keefe



Lije O'Keefe was born November 20, 1887 near Rosston, Nevada County, Arkansas to Mary Elizabeth Redfearn from North Carolina and John Daniel O'Keefe Ireland. He attended school at Cale and attended Mt. Moriah Methodist/Presbyterian Church He was raised as a middle child of six brothers and one sister. He attended Henderson State Teachers College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

In March of 1908 he was licensed by the State of Arkansas to teach in Nevada County. He taught for one year at Siloam School.

In 1909 he traveled with his father and brothers, Jesse and Paul, to New Mexico Territory. He received permission from the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction to teach in a dugout school in Judson, New Mexico Territory.

By 1910 they have moved from New Mexico Territory to Leon County, Texas where they all bought land. He decided that he liked Arkansas better and sometime about 1911 he rode back by horse to Arkansas. He began teaching at Red Hill School in November of 1911 to 1921.

In 1920 he married Roxie Lee Holleman, daughter of William Robert Michael Holleman and Mary Helen Hindman. They had one daughter, Mary Helen born in 1921 in the Red Hill area.

In 1922 they moved to Rosston, Nevada County and Lije taught school there until 1925. While there they had a second daughter Ila Lee born in 1923.

By 1925 they had moved back to the Red Hill area where they had a son Harland Holleman O'Keefe. They lived there till about 1952 when they again moved to Rosston where they remained until their deaths.

Lije taught school At Red Hill School from 1925 to 1941. He served as Superintendent at Reader School 1942-43 (Hazel Beaird was Principal).

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My grandfather was an avid reader and when I spent the weekends while in college at Magnolia in 1966-1968 he would read my textbooks the whole weekend. He never stopped learning! He felt that a good education was the most important gift that a parent could give their child. He was always interested in new inventions and all for progress. I think he would have found computers fascinating and would have been one of the first to try them.

He was known as a good business man and a good friend with a dry sense of humor. At his funeral many people came to pay their respects and told us how important he had been to give them a good start on life.

From Dan Westmoreland---



I was born 72 years ago on Papaws 50th Birthday. He was a simple farmer in the Caney area of Nevada County Ar. He lived and died on the land his father and grandfather, who were Confederate veterans, settled in 1870 after leaving Georgia after the War Between The States. My earliest memories of him include him picking me up and placing me on the wooden seat of his T Model Truck and letting me ride with him while he peddled his vegetables and melons around Prescott. He drove his old T Model until about 1950 and hated the new fangled 1947 Chevy pickup with the shifter as he called it. He ground the gears nearly every time he shifted and could back up traffic in US 67 for miles at his top speed of 35. He smoked Prince Albert roll your owns and always wore his bib 'overhauls'. He was about 125 lb and short and spoke softly. He always explained how every job should be done and done right. He was a well known fiddler who played all over the county. His cantaloupes and watermelons were the best and widely praised. Until he passed away when I was nearly 12 I treasured

every moment with him and would do almost anything to be with him. We moved to Texas when I was 6, but I was able to get to spend summers and other long stays on the farm. He taught me to fish in Little and Big Caney Creeks. I learned how he trapped mink. He taught me how to shoot a gun and hunt squirrels. I learned how to hitch up his mule for his plows and implements. He had plenty of other kids and grand kids but as all good grandparents do he made you feel special. By watching him work and sweat and I learned how hard life could be. I remember when they first got electricity in 1948. They never had running water. He never in his life lived in a house with indoor plumbing. Water was dipped by bucket and rope pulley from a hand dug well about 30 yards from the house. When he died suddenly in 1955, it was my first experience with losing someone I loved. I remember that they brought his casket to his house and trying to stay awake all night with the old men who sat up with the body and told stories about him. I remember walking in his apple orchard and looking at his footprint in the sand and

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thinking he was here just a day or so ago. When I hear the country song by Randy Travis that he sang about his grandfather-- "I Thought He Walked on Water" it always reminds me of him.

THE GRANNIE ANNIE WEB SITE

I recommend that you check out this web site: <http://thegrannieannie.org/> Scroll down to the bottom and click on "The Grannie Annie Stories". These are hundreds of stories written by young people about an older member of their family. I've only read a few of them, but they are very interesting and well written.

Young people from age 9 through 14 are encouraged to interview older members of their family and write about something they learn from their family history. I'm sure many of us wish we had done something like this when we were that age.

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LETTER FROM AN OLD CONFEDERATE SOLDIER

Published in the 1-21-1926 issue of *The Nevada County Picayune*

I am an old Confederate soldier. I served in Price's army. Belonged to the Thirty-third Arkansas Regiment, Tappen's Brigade, Churchill's Division, Company G. My regiment was made up in Camden, Ark. in the spring of 1862, but I didn't join till February, 1863 at Little Rock. I served till May, 1865.

We did a lot of marching and drilling, but were in but few battles. The battles we took part in were Jenkin's Ferry, Ark. and Pleasant Hill, Louisiana. We were in the Mansfield, Louisiana battle but were not engaged. General Taylor fought this battle on April 8, 1864, Pleasant Hill on April 9th, and Jenkin's Ferry April 30th. We fought Gen. Banks at Mansfield and Pleasant Hill and Gen. Steele at Jenkin's Ferry. Our little regiment went into battle at Jenkin's Ferry with 225 men and had 92 killed and wounded.

We had a little skirmish at Millican's Bend near Delhi, Louisiana. We were disbanded at Marshall, Texas on May 19, 1865. I then married Miss Sarah Yeager, daughter of Rev. John R. Yeager, near Camden, Arkansas. To our union were born five girls and four boys. All are married and I have 60 grandchildren and 36 great grandchildren. I was 81 years old on May 19, 1925.

I was a drummer of the fife and drum band. The fifers were Nesbitt, Emerson, and Ballou; snare drummers, Bateman, Bridges, and Staggs. Our band played for the torchlight procession at Marshall, Texas a few days before we disbanded. Our last march played was "The Girl I Left Behind Me".

I would be glad to hear from all comrades. I am now living west of Old Union church. I lived in Nevada County one mile east of Willisville about twelve years. I am well known throughout Nevada County and would be very glad to hear from any of my old Nevada

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County friends. I have resided in Columbia County for the last twelve years near Waldo. I attended the Old Soldier's Reunion regular until the last few years. My health has failed me so that I haven't been able to go.

B. F. Morris
Rosston, Route 2

Bennett Franklin Morris died in 1928. He and his wife, Sarah Yeager Morris, are buried in the large Shiloh Cemetery at Lamartine in Columbia County.

RAINFALL RECORD

RAINFALL RECORD (at my house)—January—5.4 inches; February—3.6 inches plus 5 inches snow and ice; March—10.7 inches plus 2 inches sleet; April—7.7 inches; May—6.0 inches; June—5.7 inches; July—6.2 inches

PRODUCTS POPULAR IN 1941

A friend recently let me look at his copy of an old *Life* magazine dated November 17, 1941. The cover price back then was ten cents. As I was looking through the magazine I noticed several advertisements for products that were popular at that time. See if you can match the product in the left column with the description in the right column. Answers on Page 2.

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| ___ 1. Ipana | A. Electric clocks |
| ___ 2. Brer Rabbit | B. Cigarettes |
| ___ 3. Nucoa | C. Laxative |
| ___ 4. DeSoto | D. Molasses |
| ___ 5. Hamilton | E. Lotion |
| ___ 6. Chelsea | F. Antiseptic |
| ___ 7. Sal Hepatica | G. Fluid Drive |
| ___ 8. Ungentine | H. 99 and 44/100 th Percent Pure |
| ___ 9. Telechron | I. Toothpaste |
| ___ 10. Ivory Snow | J. Oleomargarine |
| ___ 11. Toushay | K. Wrist Watches |

Nevada County Picayune—March, 1930

Henry Burnett, age 44, died from tonsillitis. He had been a carnival worker and traveled with many shows. He weighed between 500 and 600 pounds. He is survived by his parents, four brothers, and one sister. He was buried at Pleasant Ridge Cem. in Nevada County. (Note: This grave was not found when we surveyed this cemetery).