

Jerry McKelvy's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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I'm always happy to receive more information about the area where I grew up as it was back in the days before I was born. J. L. Franklin, Jr., was my second cousin once removed. His son recently sent me about twenty pages J. L. had written about some of his memories when he was growing up in the Gum Grove community of Nevada County.

I wish more people would take the time to write down some of their childhood memories. Information like this would be treasured by their children and grandchildren many years after they are gone.

Thanks to Yancy Franklin for sharing this writing from his father. I divided it up into three parts due to the length, so be sure and read the next two issues to get the complete story.

Foreword

The following was written by the late James L. Franklin Jr. After his passing in July 2016, a spiral notebook was discovered where he had meticulously written his personal memories from his early childhood days in the Gum Grove Community, near Gooseankle and after moving to the 'big' city of Prescott, Arkansas. He stated that his writing was inspired by Jerry McKelvy's book "Have You Ever Been to Goosesankle". Apparently reading this book kicked his brain into gear and brought back numerous memories of his own. He includes many of the people living in the area, how his family arrived there and countless other stories and personal experiences. I started to read his story and found it quite intriguing. I felt it my personal responsibility to record this, just as it was written so it could be shared and enjoyed by others. I always knew my dad was talented at writing. He had an amazing vocabulary, I assumed from all the hours he spent working crossword puzzles. I feel blessed that we found his writing and I am equally honored to share it in 'loving' memory of my dad. I can only hope you enjoy this as much as I did.

James "Yancy" Franklin

September 22, 2016

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February 28, 1998

I just acquired a copy of **"Have You Ever Been to Gooseankle"** by Jerry McKelvy and could not put it down until I read every word. Jerry did a fine job and I want to commend him on doing a great service for us old timers who had roots in this area. Let me say, I'm not trying to outdo Jerry or even equal him in his accomplishment, but being a few years older, I remember some happenings and people that he might not and will try to insert these as I can remember them.

I was born April 5, 1928 in what was known as the Henry Walters house in the community of Gum Grove. It actually was one of the rent houses on my grandfather, R.M. "Bob" Henry's place as he acquired it after the Walters family had owned it. Dr. E.E. Shell delivered me at home and I remember mother telling me there was a big snow on the ground while she was in bed with me. We got our mail on a Cale route at that time. I'll never forget when I enlisted in the U.S. Navy in May 1948 they put down on my records that I was born in Cole, AR. On my birth certificate, Dr. Shell's A looked like an O and I could never convince those people that it was Cale instead of Cole. I may be the only guy ever born at Cole, AR as I don't know another town by that name in our state.

Let us go back a few years and kind of set the stage as to how I came about. My great grandfather James Harvey Henry came to Arkansas along with a couple of his brothers around 1858-59 from near Wilmington, NC. I have an article that states there were three Henry families living in the Turkey Creek area of North Carolina and none of them claimed relationship with each other, or with the Patrick Henry family of Virginia. Seems strange, but, anyway James Henry and his wife came over from Glencoe, Scotland and settled there. Then William Henry from New York came to claim a grant he had been awarded for his service during the revolution. His son married one of the girls from the Scottish clan and were the parents of James Harvey or "Harve" as he was known. My grandfather "Bob" was just a tad when they came to Camden on a houseboat. He was born in North Carolina in 1857 so he couldn't have been but one or two when they

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arrived. In the early 80's I found Harve's youngest daughter "Anna" Mrs. Jim Lusby was living in Camden. My wife and I took mother and Dad to visit her one Sunday. When we pulled up in front of her house, she came out on the porch wiping her hands on her apron and when she saw mother, she said, "Glory be, if it's not Brother Bob's baby girl Gladys". She was almost ninety at the time and still doing everything, in fact one of her brothers, Oscar was sick in bed and she was taking care of him. She had some amazing stories to tell us. It seems when Harve and his family were on the houseboat in route to Camden, everyone on board including seven or eight slaves, got the whooping cough. She said, "Can you imagine what a mess that must have been?" She also told us that after the boat tied up it caught fire and burned everything they had except what they had on. She said brother Bob had nothing but the "hippins" he was wearing. My wife could hardly wait until we left to ask me what "hippins" were. She also said that Harve was crippled or walked with a limp. She had no idea what from but said he couldn't fight in the Civil War so they put him in charge of a distillery making whiskey for medicinal purposes. In later research at the state historical records, my wife found the reason. He was indeed in the Army but caught a bullet through the foot that left him unable to march or fight, so they put him in the distillery.

Harve settled in Glenville, which at the time was in Columbia County but later became the southern part of Nevada County. Years later my aunt Denver visited his old homeplace. She said she stood on the front porch and counted twelve or fifteen oil wells pumping. This is in the Waterloo Field, in southern Nevada County. At the time of this visit a black family named Moss was living there. They were descendants of one of Harve's slaves to whom Harve had deeded it to. Aunt Anna had told us that after "Dad" got old he lost the rest of his land because he couldn't pay the taxes on it and that the Groves Chill- tonic people had gotten it by paying the delinquent taxes.

Harve was the father of 21 children – by three wives. Henrys, Henrys, everything. You think it wasn't a job in trying to locate and research all 21. Due to my wife's patience and stubbornness we finally located all of them, from here to California.

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My grandfather Robert Murphy "Bob" Henry was one of the first set. When he was 21, "Harve" gave him a team and plow and he migrated to Nevada County, four miles west of Bluff City in Union Township. All my life the area has been known as Gum Grove Community. I have a copy of an 1865 military map of Ouachita County and at that time it was called Lone Grove. When "Bob" came here there was a mule-drawn cotton gin and a split log one room cabin. He put in a crop and added a room on the cabin and then went out and found a wife. He married Ida Jewell Walthall and by that union two children were born. Denver D. and Hugh B. Henry. Denver married Lucas M. Byrd, son of J.N. "Neely" Byrd an early store owner in Bluff City. They moved to Little Rock and raised a family of three daughters and a son. Uncle Lucas was a railway mail clerk and made the run to Fort Worth regularly and after I got my first bicycle (which was a used, small tired girl's bike) I would ride over to the depot at Prescott just to wave at him as the train passed. Of course at times his train would stop in Prescott and I would get a chance to visit with him a short time. He never knew if I would be there or not but nearly always made a point to be at the door or the window in case I was there. If I didn't see him, I would worry and think he might be sick.

Hugh B. married Ethel Dahl and they lived at several locations in the country while I was growing up. It was always at a place that had a Veteran's hospital as Uncle Hugh was a doctor with the V.A. and Aunt Dahl was an R.N. Aunt Dahl had a daughter Betty Lou, when they married and this was the only child that Uncle Hugh ever knew. Being occupied as they were, they seldom had a chance to visit "Papa Bob" but when they did, it was an occasion. He always drove a big Packard automobile that was so long I thought it should have hinges in the middle to negotiate the sharp curves on the country roads. It always took a while for the dust to settle to see what color his car was and if it was a new one, it usually was a new one. He was my favorite "rich Uncle" as he always had presents for me when he came to visit and at Christmas time. He retired at Biloxi, Mississippi and had a big pecan orchard. It was never Christmas until we received the 50# bag of pecans from him. An Aunt Dahl made the best pralines I have ever eaten. Uncle Hugh wanted me to be a doctor and said he would pay for my education and

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training to become same. I never could agree to it, so then he offered to get me into one of the military academies. This too didn't interest me that much. I think he was disappointed in me, but he didn't let it show, if he was. I have a custom made over and under trap gun that he gave me out of his collection that I value just under my wife and kids. When I was a kid, I always had at least one hole in my pants and he'd always pinch me on that hole and say he got my "meat patch". From back to the 1930's he and Aunt Dahl recycled the National Geographic Magazine through me. At least this had an impression on me, and I've been a member since 1960.

When Ida Jewel died, grandpa married Nancy Jane Greer McDaniel. She had a son Thurman, when they married and then my mother Gladys Nancy was born June 28, 1900. Nancy Jane was the daughter of Alexander Pringle Greer who was sheriff of Nevada County in 1898 when he had to hang a man named Cliburn, for killing a deputy in Pike or Clark County. Pringle had been a sergeant in the 19th Arkansas Infantry C.S.A. He was a nurse while there. His brother-in-law Captain W.C. Thompson was his commanding officer. Capt. Thompson's wife Martha died in 1948 at the age of 102. They are both buried at Ebenezer Cemetery. Pringle is buried at Whites Church Cemetery. As yet, I have not found the burial place of Pringle's wife.

When Gladys was only eighteen months old, Nancy Jane burned to death. She had been outside washing and when she came in to check on Gladys, she backed up to the fireplace to get warm. Her long dress caught fire and then her hair. She panicked and ran outside screaming. There was a rain barrel full of water at the edge of the porch, but she never thought of it. The school at Gum Grove was in session and they heard her screams and came running, but it was too late. Denver and Hugh were both in the school at that time. Aunt Denver was twelve at the time and was mother to Gladys until grandpa married again.

His third wife was Maxie Jewell Starnes Pearce. Maxie was a widow with three children when they married. Johnnie, who married Henry Meadow and they lived in Prescott.

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They had three boys; Roy, Roland, and Herbert. Many of you will remember Roland as he worked at R.T. Murray Service Station for many years. Nettie, who married Arthur Munn and lived in the Caney Community for many years. They had two sons and a daughter. Bernice married Mineola Langston. Bernard (Jack) married Virgie Sorrels. Wanda Lee married a soldier she met during World War II and they settled in west Texas.

W.C. "Clint" Pearce married Ira Turnage and they had three daughters. Ruby married Lee Upchurch. Helen, married Vernon Logue. Mildred (Mitchie) married Glen Henson. When we were young, Uncle Clint and Aunt Ira lived in a house just across the road from Gum Grove Church. They had a radio (a Big Philco) battery operated of course as we didn't get R.E.A. until the late 40's. Uncle Clint had been in the navy and received a pension from some kind of nerve damage he had sustained. He was quite a sportsman and dearly loved boxing. When Joe Louis was fighting, he was going to hear it, even if he had to take the battery out of his '26 Ford with the greyhound hood ornament on it. I can remember when Joe fought Max Schmelling, Primo Canero, and Jethro Bodine's father Max Baer Sr. We didn't miss any of them, but these are the only names I remember. He also loved Amos and Andy and the Grand Ole Opry. I can remember several Saturday nights when there would hardly be room for anybody else to find room to sit on the floor. When the solemn old judge announced that the Opry was on, you got quiet. Uncle Dave Macon, Roy Acuff, and Minnie Pearl were some of his favorites.

My sister, Virginia was right between Ruby and Helen and Mitchie and I were a few years younger. Needless to say, with all these girls, I had to play dolls and jacks more than cowboys and Indians. Now and then they would feel sorry enough for me, to play my game. Even though these were step cousins, they seemed more like the real thing, because for many years we lived close enough to be together much of the time.

As my true grandmother died before my mother even knew her, Aunt Maxie, as she was called by everyone in the community, was the only grandmother I ever knew on this side

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of the family. Bob was quite successful at about anything he tried. At about the turn of the century, he planted several acres in fruit trees. He had several different varieties of peaches, apples, plums, pears and grapes. He had raspberries, blackberries and the biggest mulberries I had ever seen. They were an acid free variety he had imported from Japan and almost as big as your index finger. Bigger than mine was at the time. He had scuppernongs and muscadines (some the size of quarters) and Japanese persimmons the size of baseballs. He had a special lemon tree that had huge fruit on it. Several of the old timers, when I was just a kid, have told me the lemons were so large they wouldn't fit in a half-gallon lard bucket far enough to touch the bottom of the bucket. To me, that is some big lemon. He had to build a house around it to keep it from freezing. I understand it was double walled with sawdust filling and more or less pre-fab as it was in sections where he could erect or take down when needed. I never have been able to find out what happened to that tree. Mother didn't remember, so it must have been when she was pretty young. She remembered the lemons but didn't know what or when the tree died.

Bob had a thriving business for a number of years. He had a packing shed as well as his own cannery. It is my understanding he shipped canned and fresh fruit all around the country. When my wife and I tore down the old cannery building in the late 50's, we found some of his basket toppers that had been folded over in the bottom of a bushel basket that looked as if they had just been printed. No fading or cracking, just fresh and crisp. The only thing that was different was the date line. It just read 19__, instead of 190_, or 191_. As late as 1916, an article in the county paper said R.M. Henry had the largest peach orchard in Nevada County and was still canning and shipping. To this day, I have a Kiefer Pear, Summer Pear and two peach trees from his old orchard that still produce in good years when they don't get killed by cold weather. I can remember as a kid following grandpa as he plowed corn, cotton, and sugar cane. Some times after a rain, I would find arrowheads and some mini balls. I could kick myself now for breaking or losing most of my best points. I would peel and dry holly shoots for my

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shafts and affix the points to them. It didn't matter if I broke or lost one as there were plenty more, then. I made bows out of hickory or Bois D'Arc and they were pretty tough.

(To be continued)



This is a picture of J. L. Franklin's grandfather, Robert Murphy "Bob" Henry and possibly his third wife, Maxie Starnes Pearce Henry who are mentioned in the above story. This picture was sent to me by a descendant of the Foster family who lived about a mile down the road from the Henrys.

DEATH

Mark Meador, age 55, of Bluff City passed away October 7, 2016. Our sympathy is extended to the Meador family.

RAINFALL RECORD

I only received .6 inch of rain at my house in September. This is the driest month of the year so far.

HE MADE IT ALL

By Jerry McKelvy

The seasons come and the seasons go
The flowers of spring and the pure white snow,
The flowers that bloom and the birds that sing
I see God's hand in everything.

I walk outside on a moonlit night
And up above is a beautiful sight,
The stars that shine and the moon aglow
And I know that God made it so.

The air we breathe and the seed that grows
A pretty sunset and a bright rainbow,
The oceans wide and the forest trees
A beautiful waterfall and the honey bees.

He made it all. It's part of His plan
From the mountains high to the desert sand,
All living things, both great and small
Yes, I believe He made it all.

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100 YEARS AGO (NOVEMBER, 1916)

(From The Nevada County Picayune)

A medicine was advertised called The Texas Wonder which was said to cure kidney and bladder trouble, dissolve gravel, and cure diabetes. It was also said to help weak and lame backs and rheumatism. It cost \$1.00 for a bottle which was enough for a two-month treatment.

Boswell & Higgason clothing store advertised men's suits for \$8.25 to \$25.00.

Goodman & Jean had a poultry car in Prescott and offered to buy all types of live poultry. Hens – 12 cents per pound; old roosters—25 cents each; full feathered geese—8 cents per pound; full feathered ducks—10 cents per pound; turkeys—17 cents per pound; and guineas—20 cents each. The poultry was not to be fed on the day they were brought to town for sale.

An ad for Prince Albert tobacco said it “puts new joy into the sport of smoking”.

An ad for Fletcher's Castoria said “Children cry for Castoria”.

(From The Nevada News)

The Ed C. Nutt Comedy Players had a tent show in Prescott for one week. The opening play was titled “On the Mexican Border”. Admission was children—10 cents; adults—20 cents.

Lon Simpson did horseshoeing and buggy and plow repairs at his shop on West Second Street.

Hesterly Drug Store advertised Eatonic which was for belching, heartburn, and indigestion.

The Gem Theater was showing the 19th episode of The Iron Claw, a silent serial adventure series.

50 YEARS AGO (NOVEMBER, 1966)

(From The Nevada County Picayune)

The Prescott Hardware was celebrating its 75th anniversary. R. P. Hamby wrote an article about the history of the store including pictures of some of the Pittman family who were connected with the hardware. At the time the store was founded, Prescott had no paved streets, no water works system, no concrete sidewalks, no sanitation system. There were no radios, no airplanes, and no automobiles. Wells were located in the city streets—one on East First Street, one on West First Street, and one on West Second Street.

Ford Motor Co. advertised a 2-door Falcon for \$2196 and a 2-door Mustang for \$2547. They also advertised a lay-a-way plan for new and used cars.

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Winthrop Rockefeller received the most votes in Nevada County for governor. He was the first Republican governor of Arkansas since 1874.

The Nevada Theater showed the movie "This Property is Condemned" starring Natalie Wood. This was the first movie to feature the Reader Railroad steam train (The Possum Trot Line).

Nevada County recorded a record deer kill for the first season in 1966. A total of 510 deer were checked. Names of all those who killed a deer were printed in the paper with the number of points from the antlers.

(From The Nevada News)

R. P. Hamby resigned as weather observer after 21 years of doing that job.

Liberty Valu-Mart advertised three pounds of ground beef for \$1.39.

Arkla Chemical Corp. had completed their new plywood plant at Gurdon and was advertising for workers.

20 YEARS AGO (NOVEMBER, 1996)

The Camden Hotel in Camden was imploded on a Sunday afternoon. The vacant building was 44 years old.

The Emmet school gym burned. Arson was suspected.

This is the first recipe I've found in *The Nevada County Picayune*. It was in the August 4, 1886 issue.

FRIED TOMATOES (A RECIPE FROM 1886)

Select smooth, hard tomatoes. Wash and wipe, but do not pare them, cut in half crossways, and lay the cut side in flour. Have some butter heating in a cup on the back of the range where it will not be hot enough to boil. After it has stood fifteen minutes, there will be a clear oil on top and a sediment at the bottom. Use this oil to fry the tomatoes being careful not to pour in the sediment which is the part of the butter that burns most readily. Let the butter get hot in the pan, then lay in the tomatoes, the floured side down, and watch closely that they do not burn; turn with a cake turner as soon as they are brown. The skin side will not burn much. When all are done and removed to a platter, put a small cup of milk in the pan with a little salt and thicken with a level teaspoonful of corn starch. Let it boil up and pour it over the tomatoes. Some people prefer theirs without the sauce.