

Jerry McKeiv's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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THIS OLD HOUSE



The oldest house still standing in the area around Bluff City is the one pictured above. As you can see from the photos, it has been restored thanks to Jody Nelson. His grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. "Lige" Barlow, lived in the home for many years. Mr. Barlow was once a justice of the peace and several couples started on their voyage on the sea of matrimony from this old house.

Jody Nelson has done a fantastic job of restoring the old house and the family meets there on special occasions such as family reunions. His graduating class has also had class reunions at the house recently. They call it Sycamore Place because of the huge sycamore trees around the house.

The house is over 100 years old. I spent some time at the court house recently searching the deed records to see who all might have once owned this fine old home. Searching deed records is sort of like hunting for a needle in a haystack. It takes time to do a complete search. Too bad they didn't have computers back in those early days. They have large index books, but it is easy to miss a particular deed. My search is not a complete history of all the former owners of this property, but I did find several deeds that provided some information.

The earliest deed I found (Book M – Page 547) was dated October 19, 1881. Harriett J. Blake deeded the property to Della Hill Blake. Harriett J. Blake was the wife of John W. Blake who had died in 1875. Her maiden name was McClure. The couple's oldest son was Green R. Blake who married Della Hill in 1877. So, by this deed, Harriett J. Blake deeded the property to her daughter-in-law. It seems strange to me that she would deed the land to her daughter-in-law instead of her son. Harriett J. Blake died in 1888.

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She and her husband are buried in Glenville Cemetery in a remote area southeast of Willisville in Nevada County.

The next deed (Book 39 – Page 547) was dated July 14, 1889. Della H. Blake deeded the property to her husband, Green R. Blake. Green and Della Blake were living in Leake Township (Glenville area) in the 1880 census. The 1890 census records were lost in a fire, but I suspect the couple moved to the Bluff City area soon after Green got the deed to the land in 1889. They were living on the property with their six children (ages 7 to 21) in the 1900 census.

Della died in 1901 at the age of 51. It is my belief that Green R. Blake and his wife, Della Blake, probably had this old house constructed sometime in the 1890s. They married in 1877 and Green Blake got the deed to the land in 1889. It seems logical to assume that they would build a nice house on their new property soon after moving there. Green R. Blake was “an exceedingly prosperous man” as evidenced by the following sketch about him taken from *Goodspeed’s Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*).

“Green R. Blake, a prominent planter, was born in South Carolina Dec. 31, 1850, and is the son of John W. and Harriet J. McClure Blake. The father was born in South Carolina in 1817, the mother a native of the same state, born in 1822. The family moved from that state to Arkansas in the year 1859, settling in what is now Nevada Co. The children numbered ten—seven sons and three daughters—of whom five are now living, viz: John M., Charles T., Hattie J., Flora L. (wife of W. N. Godbold, a farmer of some note in Nevada Co.). The parents were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and on Aug. 10, 1875, the father died, and on Feb. 6, 1888, the mother passed to her heavenly home to join there the loved companion of her life. **Mr. Green Blake, he whose name heads this sketch, married Miss Della Hill on Oct. 16, 1877.** She is a dau. of Moses and Elizabeth Wesson Hill of South Carolina, being born there in 1849. Her parents were married in 1844, and had ten children, of whom five are at present living, viz: James G., George W., Susan E., Moses B., and Della (wife of the subject of this sketch). To Mr. and Mrs. Blake have been born four children, two sons and two daughters, viz: Richard G., Hattie M., John H., and Lizzie. **Mr. Blake is an exceedingly prosperous man, and ranks high, both in business and social circles. He owns some valuable land and takes pride in cultivating the same.** Politically he is a strong Democrat, and together with his wife, belong to the Methodist Episcopal church.” (from *Goodspeed’s Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*)

As I said, Della Blake died in 1901. She was buried at Ebenezer Cemetery, just down the road from the Blake farm. The next deed (Book 40 – Page 186) was dated April 19, 1904. By this deed, Green R. Blake deeded the property to his oldest son, Richard Glen Blake who was about 26 years old. The son was to pay his father yearly installments for the land beginning in 1904 and ending in 1908. According to a note in the margin of the deed, these payments were made as scheduled.

I wondered what happened to Green R. Blake. After some research, I found that he

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had remarried and was living in Prescott at the time of the 1910 census. He served as Nevada County tax assessor from 1903 until 1906. He died in 1921 at the age of 70.

The son, Richard Glen Blake, did not keep the property very long. The next deed (Book 51 – Page 82) shows that he deeded the property to L. A. Moody on January 15, 1906.

The next deed (Book 59 – Page 198) shows that L. A. Moody and his wife, Fannie, deeded the property to J. E. Horne and his wife on August 1, 1911. This J. E. Horne evidently was a big-time land speculator. I found many deed transactions involving him for property all over Nevada County.

Here is where I have a gap in my research. The next deed I found (Book 154 – Page 347) shows that Malinda Barlow was deeding the property to Jesse E. Barlow (Lige) on May 25, 1939. Sometime between 1911 and 1939, the property fell into the Barlow hands, but I was unable to find the deed or deeds for any transactions between 1911 and 1939. This Malinda Barlow was Mary Malinda Barlow, wife of Elijah William Barlow. Elijah was a well-known farmer whose farm was located across Caney Creek in Redland Township. Elijah died in 1910. How Malinda Barlow acquired the property in question is unknown without those missing deeds. More research is needed. Many around Bluff City remember William Aubrey Barlow who was a well known song leader. He was a son of Elijah William Barlow and Mary Malinda Barlow. Malinda died in 1942 and both she and her husband are buried at Bluff City Cemetery.

A few days ago, I happened to read a letter I had kept from Mrs. Aline McKelvy Claus, a cousin of mine. She was born in 1917 and is now deceased. She had sent me several letters about some of her memories about living in that area.

In a letter dated 2001, Cousin Aline wrote this: “A road went from our house due east and came out by the Blake house. I spent the night in that house when the Barksdales lived there. I slept upstairs where you can see the windows with Goldie and Merlene (*Murlee-?*)”. She didn’t give a date when she slept in the house but it was probably when they were young teenagers. Aline was born in 1917, Goldie was born in 1916, and Murlee was born in 1918. Notice that she referred to the house as “the Blake house”.

In another part of the letter she writes, “I remember the first time I saw you. It was by the Blake (or Barlow house). You were running along. I would say maybe five or six years old”. The reason she saw me at that location was because my family lived in a small house about fifty yards south of this old house until I was about four years old.

Mr. “Lige” Barlow and his wife, Elvie, were living in the old house when I was growing up, but now we know that several different people once owned the property and at least one other family lived in the house for a time (the Barksdales). We can’t prove who built the house or the exact date it was built, but I am pretty sure it was Green R. Blake and his wife, Della, who had the house constructed. I am basing my conclusion on the letter

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I received from my cousin back in 2001 in which she referred to the house as “the Blake house” plus the deeds showing the Blakes owning the property until 1906.



Green R. Blake and his wife Della are buried at Ebenezer Cemetery just down the road from the location of this old house. Della’s grave marker states that she was the wife of G. R. Blake. Her marker is badly broken as you can see from this picture. Mr. Blake is also buried there according to his obituary in the January 25, 1921 issue of *The Prescott Daily News*, although his grave is not marked. One of Della’s brothers (James G. Hill) died in 1902 and is also buried there next to Mary E. Hill, a sister, who died in 1888.

J. H. Blake, a son of Green and Della Blake, died in 1904 and is buried at Ebenezer. The oldest son, Richard Glen Blake, who also once owned the property, died in 1966 and was also buried at Ebenezer. His grave was marked with an old rusty metal funeral home marker when I first surveyed that cemetery in 1997. Part of the name was missing, but I was able to read all but the last name (Richard G. ???). The grave was next to the grave of J. H. Blake, his brother. I documented the location of the grave in my records. A few years later, I noticed the old metal marker was completely gone. I then placed a rock at the grave site so it would not be lost. As I was digging the hole for the rock, I hit part of the old rusty metal funeral home marker buried in the dirt.

I think we can agree that this old house was one of the finer homes in its day. The land in front of the house is level and would have been excellent farm land. The Goodspeed article published in 1890 describes Mr. Blake as an exceedingly prosperous man owning some valuable land. I can imagine Mr. and Mrs. Blake sitting on the porch of this old home looking out across the fields watching the crops grow. Later residents of this old house probably did the same.

In the mid-1940s, much of the original property was sold to the Arkansas Forestry Commission and for many years, pine seedlings were grown there. It was refreshing to drive by and see the seedlings being irrigated during the hot summer months. The nursery provided employment for many of the local residents who cared for the young seedlings and then packaged them in the winter months to be planted by timber companies and private individuals. Today, the property is used as a seed orchard by the Forestry Commission which also operates a seedling nursery near North Little Rock.

Hopefully, this old house which was once known as the Blake house, but more recently known as the Barlow house and now Sycamore Place, will continue to exist for a long time to come thanks to Jody Nelson and others who had a part in the restoration of this old home.

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Home Haiku -- by Don Mathis

Tires crunch dry gravel
announcing a friend's approach
I start for the door

Train, mile to the east,
calls for, and is answered by,
train, mile to the west

Chinaberry tree
blossoms so delicately
scents so fragrantly

Mountain Laurel blooms,
rich and sweet as grape clusters,
a four yard bouquet

Squirrel weighs down the branch
such that he cannot nibble
on figs out of reach

Tin roof amplifies,
yet muffles, the rains' patter,
causing deep slumber

Close to swimming pool
And expressway to the coast
Summer-time delight!

Neighborhood loquats
Have the sweetest meat around
The best spring treat yet

Solar clothes dryer
Gives exercise and sunlight
Organic yoga

Warmth of gas heater
Magnified by orange/blue light
Provides double heat

Wood panels, sheet rock
Wallpaper on canvas, shiplap
Who needs R 15?

Breezes from the Gulf
Squeezed by Monte Vista hills
Bring cooling moisture

ADVERTISING SLOGANS

See if you can guess the product or company connected with these popular advertising slogans. (Answers are on page 8)

1. Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is
2. You're in good hands with _____
3. Don't leave home without it
4. Reach out and touch someone
5. The quick picker upper
6. A litte dab'll do ya
7. Have it your way
8. I'd walk a mile for a _____
9. Please don't squeeze the _____
10. It's the real thing
11. Put a tiger in your tank

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12. Nothing runs like a _____
 13. Snap, crackle, and pop
 14. Finger lickin' good
 15. Betcha can't eat just one
 16. Melts in your mouth, not in your hand
 17. Good to the last drop
 18. When it rains, it pours
 19. Ask the man who owns one
 20. Sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don't
 21. Be all you can be
 22. Where's the beef?
 23. Let your fingers do the walking
 24. Double your pleasure, double your fun
 25. See the USA in your _____
 26. It takes a licking and keeps on ticking
 27. The most expensive television in America and darn well worth it
 28. The breakfast of champions
 29. With a name like _____ it has to be good
 30. Like a good neighbor _____ is there
 31. The Un-cola
 32. M'm!, M'm!, good
 33. Does she or doesn't she?
 34. You'll wonder where the yellow went when you brush your teeth with _____
 35. Look Ma, no cavities!
 36. The ultimate driving machine
 37. When you care enough to send the very best
 38. I'm stuck on _____ and _____ is stuck on me
 39. Wouldn't you rather have a _____?
 40. 99 and 44/100 percent pure
 41. They're GR-R-REAT!
 42. The loneliest man in town
-

RAINFALL RECORD

January – 3.1 inches

February – 6.6 inches

March – 3.0 inches

WORD OF THE MONTH

BIFURCATE (bi-fur-cate)

To divide into two branches or parts

“The stream bifurcates into two narrow channels”

“This road bifurcates up ahead”

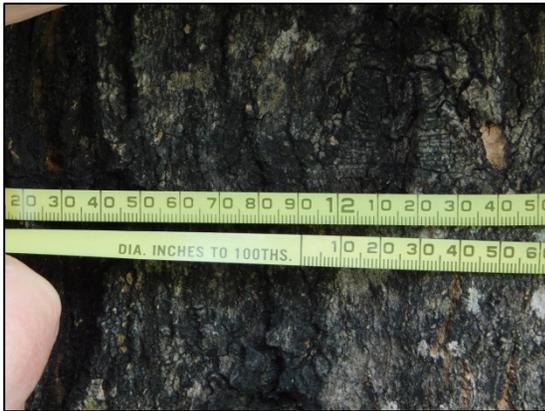
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WHAT IS IT?

Brenda Barham was the only one who came close to the correct answer from the last issue. She said it was a tape used to measure logs which is very close. Actually, it is a diameter tape used to measure the diameter of standing trees in the forest.



Here are two diameter tapes manufactured by different companies. As you can see, they are very small and easy to carry in a pocket. These tapes (called D-tapes), are used by foresters and technicians when cruising timber.



The tape is placed around a standing tree as shown in the picture. This tree is 11.9 inches in diameter. In most cases, the measurement is rounded off to two-inch classes, such as 10, 12, 14, 16, etc. This tree would be tallied as a 12 inch tree.

The measurement is taken at breast height which is a point 54 inches from the ground level. If the tree is on a hillside, you would measure the 54 inches from the uphill side of the tree. Diameter breast height is abbreviated as DBH. With practice, most foresters are able

to guess the diameter of a tree without measuring, but do measure those in question.

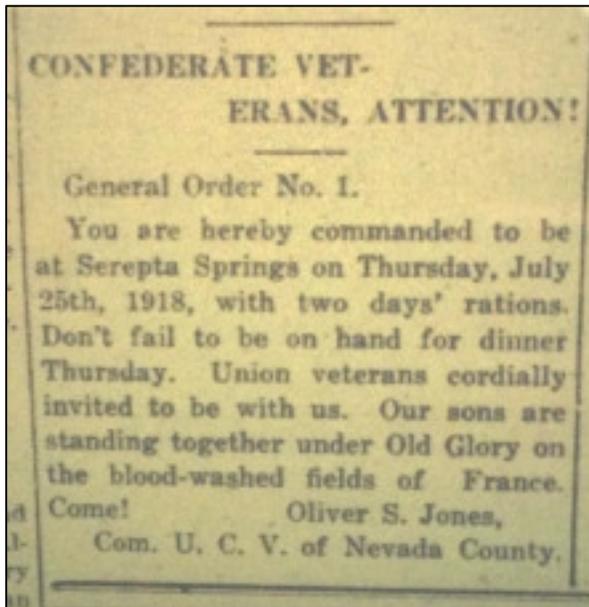


Here is the next object for you to identify. Some of the parts are missing. Here are some hints. This was called the "Junior" model by the company that manufactured it and it was made in Sweden.

The main part of the object is about 12 to 14 inches high and as you can see, it has a crank handle on the side. It weighs about 30 pounds. Send me your answer or guess and I will let you know what it is in the next issue.

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CONFEDERATE VETERANS REUNIONS



Serepta Springs in Nevada County was a favorite place for reunions of Confederate veterans for many years. It appears from this announcement that the reunion was to last two days. Notice that Union veterans were also cordially invited to attend.

I saw another article in 1919 about a planned event to decorate the graves of Confederate veterans buried at DeAnn Cemetery in Prescott. On that occasion, flowers were also placed on the graves of the few Union veterans buried there.

The 1922 Reunion

According to the newspaper, there were 18 present at the annual reunion of Confederate veterans (Camp Asa Morgan of Nevada County) at Serepta Springs that year. Those present were D. P. Hazzard, P. E. Bryson, T. P. Callicott, J. W. Hudson, G. M. Franks, J. W. Gann, H. C. Sampson, J. K. Waddle, Sam Cantley, R. N. Ledbetter, J. P. Odom, A. Norman, B. G. Murrah, J. B. Westrope, F. M. Brantley, W. M. Carruthers, J. K. Wicker, and C. M. Buchanan. Three were absent—J. B'Shers, Dr. W. E. Arnold, and John Ward.

Eight veterans had passed to their reward in 1921. Those were B. S. Almand, Oliver S. Jones, Marion Hart, D. W. Johnson, Jake Cross, John Stuart, Joe Walthall, and Walter Adams.

Answers to quiz on advertising slogans:

(1) Alka Seltzer; (2) Allstate; (3) American Express; (4) AT&T; (5) Bounty; (6) Brylcreem; (7) Burger King; (8) Camel; (9) Charmin; (10) Coca-Cola; (11) Esso; (12) John Deere; (13) Rice Krispies; (14) KFC; (15) Lay's; (16) M & M's; (17) Maxwell House; (18) Morton salt; (19) Packard; (20) Peter Paul Mounds; (21) U. S. Army; (22) Wendy's; (23) Yellow Pages; (24) Doublemint gum; (25) Chevrolet; (26) Timex; (27) Curtis Mathis; (28) Wheaties; (29) Smuckers; (30) State Farm; (31) Seven-Up; (32) Cambell's soup; (33) Clairol; (34) Pepsodent; (35) Crest; (36) BMW; (37) Hallmark; (38) Band-aid; (39) Buick; (40) Ivory Soap; (41) Kellogg's Frosted Flakes; (42) Maytag

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Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day. People cleaned up cemeteries and decorated the graves of those who had died while serving in the military. The holiday dates back to the days following the Civil War and was originally only celebrated in the Northern states. The states that were in the Confederacy honored their dead on separate days until after World War I when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died in any war.

I recently put together a booklet about the 75 men from Nevada County who died while serving their country in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The booklet is called "The Cost of Freedom". A copy of the booklet is in the Nevada County library in Prescott.

Memorial Day this year will be May 29th. The following poem submitted by Don Mathis is very appropriate for Memorial Day. We also remember those who didn't make it back home but are interred in foreign countries and those whose bodies were not recovered.

For the Soldiers Who Came Back Too Soon – Don Mathis

How does an American town
grieve for its native son?
Front-page news and letters
in the daily paper are run.
Friends call the soldier's family
to see what can be done.

Cards and expressions of sympathy
are sent to the next of kin.
People reach out to help
as they would do for a friend.
A realization is gained
of what it means to be an American.

Ribbons that say, "Support Our Troops,"
mean more in this part of the state
than Red, White, and Blue decals
or flags by the license plate.
It means we carry our brother
and not complain about the weight.

Water cannons shower the runway
as the special cargo touches down.
The deafening roar of jet engines
fills the air with sound.

Such is the tribute at the airport
in this proud but rural town.

Hundreds attend the funeral -
a motorcycle escort waits outside.
The Patriot Guard shows support,
saluting the soldier's last ride.
It's enough to make a downcast heart
beat fast and swell with pride.

The funeral cortege, two miles long,
glides on down the way.
Someday the county will make another
monument
to honor those passed away.
And future children will stop by
to see what the words in stone shall
say.

Today, the grave is flowered,
decorated and festooned.
But the grief is raw and red,
as an open wound.
And we recall this soldier -
and others - who returned too soon.