

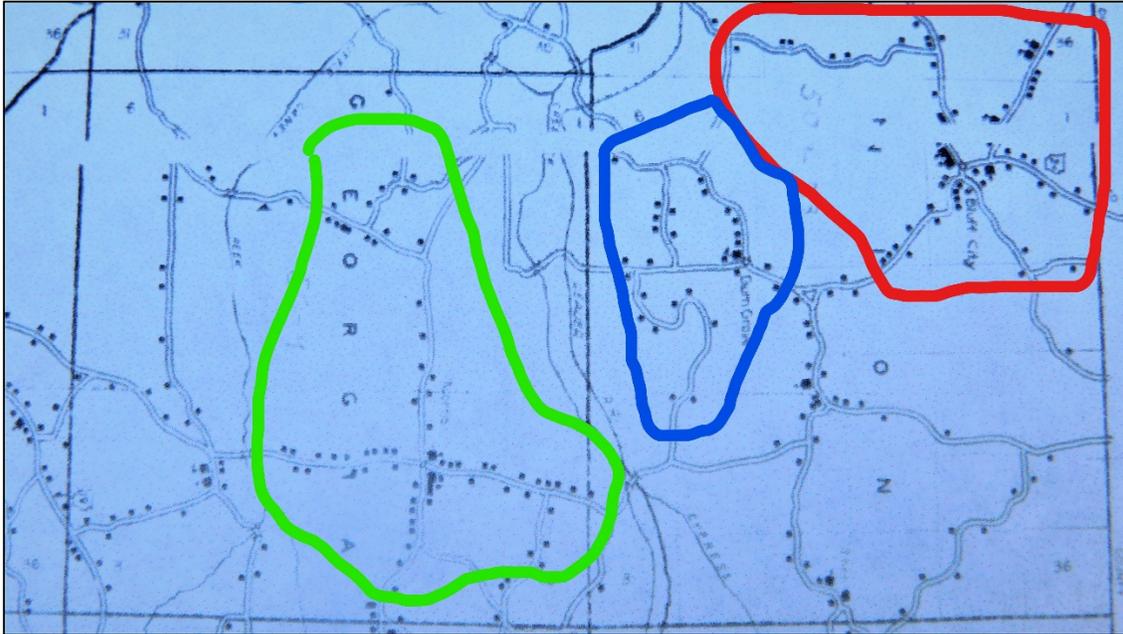
Jerry McKelvy's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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THEN AND NOW

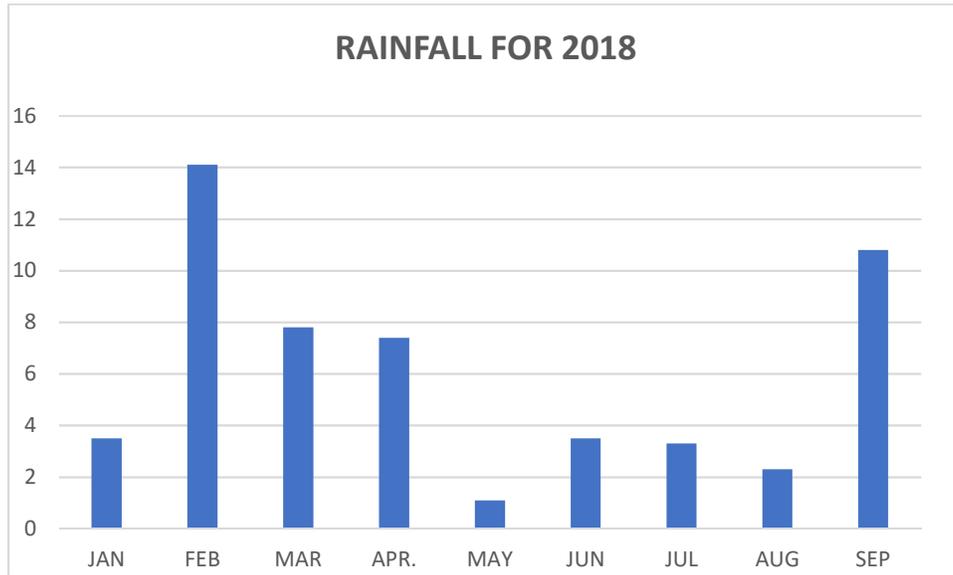


Just to show how things have changed over the years, check out this portion of the Nevada County map that was used by census enumerators during the 1940 census. Each of the little black dots represents a residence at that time, but not all homes are shown on this map.

The area enclosed by the red line is the Bluff City area. The area enclosed by the blue line is the Gum Grove/Goose Ankle/ Rocky Hill area. You will notice that the county road in the center of that circle is different from a modern map. The area enclosed by the green line is the Morris (Caney) area. You can see the intersection in the center which is where Morris Baptist church is today. The road running east and west is now Hwy. 299.

You can see from this map that there were many more houses back then than now. You can take the 1940 census records and see the order in which the enumerators recorded the names. If you know for sure where someone lived at that time, you might be able to figure out where people were living in 1940. It's not an exact science. People moved around a lot back then. They may show up on the 1940 census, but may have moved somewhere else soon after the census was completed. The population of Nevada County in 1940 was 19,869. In 2010, the population of the county was 8,997.

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We reached our normal annual rainfall in late September. Our normal annual rainfall is about 52 inches and at the end of September, we had already received 53.8 inches. The cool fall weather took its time getting here.

WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY

When we think of the term “wireless”, we think of being able to send a document to the printer from our computer without the two being connected by a cable or being able to make phone calls without a phone line. I came across an article in the March 30, 1922 issue of *The Nevada News* entitled “Wireless Age is Impending in Arkansas”. The subject of the article was about how radio broadcasts were about to become common throughout the United States. The article called it “the most marvelous invention of all time”.

Life was pretty dull in the days before the radio, especially in rural areas of the country. People had to work a lot harder back then, sometimes from daylight to dark. Entertainment took the form of outside games, hunting, fishing, or maybe some program at the local school house. There were fiddler contests, debates on controversial topics, church revival meetings, or political speeches to break the monotony. Those in or near towns might be able to see a moving picture show, see a play, or attend a traveling circus that happened to be in town.

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The article mentioned how those of middle age in 1922 had witnessed the moving picture, the wireless telegraph, the phonograph, electric lights, airplanes, automobiles, radium, and other inventions thought impossible just fifty years earlier.

Radio broadcasts had already made it to the larger towns in Arkansas in 1922, like Little Rock, Ft. Smith, and Pine Bluff, and it was expected that soon homes throughout the state would be able to tune in to hear the news, entertaining programs, or concerts broadcast from faraway places.

The article described how 200 members of the First Christian Church in Little Rock had assembled in the church basement and listened to concerts and speeches from thousands of miles away. A single 50-foot wire on top of the church intercepted the sound waves which were carried through the wire into the instrument in the basement and then was transmitted audibly by a phonograph horn. The audience sat spellbound as they listened to the broadcast.

The article stated the device was still at an incomplete state and more work was needed to amplify the sound and reduce the static to make the sound clearer for the listener. The article stated, "The possibilities of this invention are limitless. Within a short time, it will be possible for newspaper houses, public halls, business houses, or private residences to have their individual receiving sets which may be "tuned in" on a receiving apparatus in Little Rock and every play in a baseball game can be announced, a concert may be heard; an entire church service, included prayer, songs, and sermon may be reproduced; news of any kind may be disseminated."

The article stated radio enthusiasts were forming clubs all over Arkansas, both amateur and professional, to experiment with the new system of sound transmission.

Electricity didn't reach the rural areas in our part of Arkansas until about 1946, but even before that time, there were battery operated radios. I remember playing with one my aunt had in her living room when I was just a kid. The radio was in a nice cabinet and was about as large as a small television set.

The radio changed the way of life for our ancestors just like the television did later. Families could sit around the radio and tune in to all kinds of radio

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programs and let their imagination run wild. Performers read from their scripts and various sound effects made the program come to life. I'm sure people in those days wondered what else might come along later. They would be amazed by the inventions that were to come later like the television, the automatic clothes washer, the microwave oven, and computers.

It was only 94 years ago when this article was written about wireless radio broadcasts. Just think of all the advances made in the last 100 years and what might be coming in the next 50 to 100 years. All these things we call "modern" now will soon be antiques.

Along with all the good inventions, there are some that caused death and destruction. Nuclear weapons were unheard of back in 1922. Nobody back then would have thought it possible for men to travel to the moon on a spaceship. The world is constantly changing and those who refuse to accept some of these new inventions will soon find themselves left behind. Hopefully, scientists and entrepreneurs will develop things that will benefit mankind instead of making things that will cause destruction.

We are already hearing about driverless cars and what the latest smart phones can do. Things are changing very fast these days. I doubt if we would recognize America if we could come back and see it in the year 2100, if the world lasts that long.

"SILENT CAL"

There are all types of people in the world. Some are suited to be leaders and others could be classified as followers. Some are constantly talking and may even be called "loudmouths" while others are quiet. Someone made the statement that God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He must have expected us to listen twice as much as we talk. I suppose most people fall somewhere in between the two extremes.

I guess I was one of the quiet ones when I was growing up. Next to my picture in one of my high school yearbooks is the statement "Much could be said if we could only read his mind". I guess that's why I am intrigued by President Calvin Coolidge. He was a man of few words and was given the nickname "Silent Cal". He became president at age 51 after the sudden death of President Warren G. Harding in 1923.

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He served the rest of Harding's term and was elected by a landslide in 1924 even though he was very depressed because of the death of his 16-year-old son shortly after being nominated at the convention. The boy had died from blood poisoning from a blister he received while playing tennis. The slogan for the 1924 campaign was "Keep Cool with Coolidge".

Coolidge was born on a farm in Vermont. His father was a storekeeper and his mother died when he only 12 years old. He became a lawyer and held various political offices. His wife, Grace, had a very out-going personality in contrast to Calvin's quiet demeanor. To most observers, the couple seemed to be a mismatched pair. Both Mr. and Mrs. Coolidge loved animals. It is said that Mrs. Coolidge once found a family of mice living in their residence and became attached to them, even feeding them bits of crackers. Another story says that she kept the fish so well fed where her husband liked to fish that they wouldn't bite when Calvin went fishing.

Coolidge was a conservative who believed in lower taxes and limited government. He had the courage to make decisions he thought would benefit the country even though those decisions might cause him problems politically. I admire a politician who puts the good of the country above party affiliation. He was pro-business, lowered taxes, reduced regulations, and worked to help farmers. An immigration act was passed during his term which set quotas on the number of immigrants allowed into the country. He also did much to advance civil rights while in office. It was during his time in office that American Indians were granted U. S. citizenship. The country enjoyed a period of great prosperity while Coolidge was president. It was a time of many social changes and the decade of the 1920s was given the nickname "The Roaring Twenties".

Coolidge decided not to run for a second term. His critics thought he probably saw the hard times of the Great Depression coming and believed that was the reason he didn't run for another term. They claimed later that his policies helped bring on the depression. The country was divided between conservatives and liberals back then, but not to the extent it is today.

Here are some other things about Calvin Coolidge you may not know. He was nicknamed "Red" because of his red hair. He was the first president to have his State of the Union speech broadcast over the radio. He refused to use the

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telephone in the White House. He loved animals, especially his collie dog. One time the dog got sick and instead of taking him to a veterinarian, he took him to Walter Reed hospital for surgery, but the dog died anyway. He had a pet raccoon named Rebecca that he kept in the White House. President and Mrs. Coolidge were often seen carrying the raccoon around the White House. He liked horseback riding and even had a mechanical horse named Thunderbolt in the White House which he rode.

Calvin Coolidge was known for being a man of few words. He wrote his own speeches while in office and always kept them short. It is said that at a party, a woman told him she had made a bet with her friends that she could make him say three words. Coolidge answered and said "You lose". His last will and testament contained only 23 words—"Not unmindful of my son John, I give all my estate, both real and personal, to my wife Grace Coolidge, in fee simple".

Here are a few quotations attributed to President Calvin Coolidge:

"It takes a great man to be a good listener."

"I have found out in the course of a long public life that the things I did not say never hurt me."

"If you don't say anything, you won't be called on to repeat it."

"Never go out to meet trouble. If you will just sit still, nine cases out of ten, someone will intercept it before it reaches you."

Calvin Coolidge was very popular and almost certainly would have won reelection in 1928, and almost everyone was surprised when he announced he would not run for another term. This is how he explained his decision—"The presidential office takes a heavy toll on those who occupy it and on those who are dear to them. While we should not refuse to spend and be spent in the service to our country, it is hazardous to attempt what we feel is beyond our strength to accomplish. We draw our presidents from the people. It is a wholesome thing to return to the people. I came from them. I wish to be one of them again."

After he left office, he spent his time writing his autobiography and articles for newspapers. Calvin Coolidge died in 1933 at age 60. President Calvin Coolidge was also admired by President Ronald Reagan who ordered a portrait of President

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Calvin Coolidge to be placed in the Cabinet room when he was president.

WHAT IS IT?



This tool was once very common in south Arkansas. Send me your answer if you know what it is or want to take a guess (Hint: It's not a hay hook)

ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED COX'S ARMY

A common saying back when I was growing up was "There's enough food here to feed Cox's army". I always wondered who Cox was. Many years later in history class I learned about a man named Jacob Coxey who led an "army" of unemployed men on a protest march to Washington D. C. in 1894 trying to get the government to provide jobs during a period a depression. So, the expression should be "Coxey's army" instead of "Cox's army". It just means you have enough food prepared to feed a large number of people.

It's funny how some of these old sayings get started. Some of them just sort of become popular and nobody really thinks about how the saying first started.

I'm sure you have heard "What in the Sam Hill is going on?" or something similar. Who was Sam Hill? I think the name Sam Hill was substituted for another word. It was an attempt to make it more acceptable.

"Oh, for Pete's sake" is another expression. Who was Pete? This too, was just a way of substituting something to make it more acceptable. There are many other examples of how some mild epithet is used in place of an actual "curse word".

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This letter from my dad was published in The Nevada County Picayune June 24, 1943

June 14, 1943

Dear Mother and Dad:

I got your letter today; sure was glad to get it. I am o.k. except cold. I have got to go out in the field two nights this week, one tomorrow night.

We are going out plenty here lately. I am glad you all are having a good garden. I am sure getting plenty. I got Geneva's box. I sure didn't need it. I have eaten candy until I don't like it anymore. I don't want you to send me anything else to eat. I get everything there is to eat I guess, so don't worry about me being hungry, for I never get that way. I know I have more than you do. The only thing I need is something to keep me warm. I have more clothes than I need when I go to move and not enough when I'm out on the night problems. There is nothing I need. I will get by some way.

I feel sure I will be back to live with you again, so don't worry for I want everybody to be well when I do get back. I might as well stay on in here; other boys are here. All I hope is that I don't have to kill or be killed. You don't know what war is, and I don't want you to ever think about it.

If I stay in the kitchen, I will not have to wade as much mud as the rest. I think we will cook right in a truck. War is a living hell worse than anything you ever saw. As long as we are in camp, I make it easy, just work half the time and lay around and read the rest of the time. I have the best chance to read I ever had. I can go to bed at night and sleep until noon the next day; it matters not how much noise they make, I can sleep. They had a beer party in my room the other night and stayed up and carried on all night; had a fight and I slept through it all.

Say, I know and realize that both you and dad have done your part and given us all good advice and I shall always miss you. But I can tell you that you can always feel sure that there is one that shall always remember your kindness and sound advice, and I shall always abide by your teaching. I know there is no place where a man can be tempted any more than in here, but remember I have got what it takes to resist them, regardless of how great.

As far as spending money, I don't care what is done with my money; that is not what I want. Remember, don't worry for I want to live with you again and I want you to be in the best of health.

I will be back, I don't know when, but I feel sure I will, sooner or later. Write often; I really like to get mail like the rest, but never want to write. Love,

Pfc. Ruel McKelvy

Ft. Lewis, Washington

A year later, he was in the Pacific fighting the Japanese. He was discharged in December, 1945.