

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

PRESCOTT, ARKANSAS IN 1883

Prescott is the county seat of Nevada County, Arkansas. The town dates back to 1873 when the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern railroad was constructed through the area. Towns quickly sprung up along the railroad because that was where the business activity was. Investors, businessmen, and farmers were encouraged to move to these new towns along the railroads. It was a chance for someone to start over in a new place. As Horace Greeley said "Go west, young man, and grow up with the country".

We have very few local newspapers preserved from that far back, but I was able to find an article from 1883 published in the *Daily Arkansas Gazette* that gives us some idea of what Prescott was like at that time.

Prescott was only ten years old in 1883 and already had a population of 1800 people. The town was situated near a prairie eight miles long and five miles wide known as Prairie De'Anne. In 1883, Prescott had 500 buildings, 35 business houses, 3 hotels, 2 schools, 5 churches, 1 bank, 2 newspapers, a post office, and a brass band. A devastating fire in December, 1882 had destroyed one and a half blocks where the best buildings were located, but the town was quickly recovering from that loss.

Prescott was especially proud of their new school which had two stories and was said to have cost \$10,000. There was also a school for the colored population. Plans were in place to build a new elegant court house on the block where the jail was then located.

The best hotel in town was the Southern Hotel run by Mrs. Winters. It was said to be the finest hotel between Little Rock and Texarkana. It had eighteen rooms, two baths, and an elegant dining hall.

The two newspapers in town were the Nevada County Picayune and the Prescott Dispatch.

The railroad brought goods to the town along with the passengers and provided a way to ship goods out to markets. There were eight sawmills nearby including Col. Steele's large mill four miles from town. Shipments of lumber, cattle, hides, pelts, beeswax, fruits, and vegetables were sent from Prescott to other parts of the country. There were plans at that time to develop another railroad called the Ouachita and Choctaw Railroad which would run from Camden, Arkansas to a point eighty miles west of Prescott, but that railroad was never completed.

The article I found gave a listing of the main businesses in Prescott in 1883.

General stores – Brad Scott (everything from a needle to a two-horse wagon); Cassidy & White; E. S. Johnson; W. B. Waller; D. G. Falk; Burton & Duvall; New Cash House; N. T. Richmond; W. C. Hatley; S. Winters; S. B. Gee; Brooks & Miller

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Grocery stores – Rudolph & Bro.; J. H. Kershaw; Fred Allsopp; Frank Machen; L. J. B'Shers

Drug stores – Jordan & Sloan; J. A. Pipkin; J. C. Howard; W. E. & J. H. Arnold

Hotels/Boarding houses – Southern Hotel; M. A. White; Johnson Hotel

Hardware stores – Foster & Logan; J. M. Denman

Restaurant/Bakery – Joe Kershaw

Saloons/Billiard Parlors – Frank Cassidy; Daw Ward (The Brick Saloon); M. McIntyre; Guy Nelson; Gillan & Abarrow; Brooks & Owen

Furniture stores – Sam Scott (furniture, coffins, undertaking supplies, paint)

Carpenter – R. C. Moore

Milliners/dressmakers – Mrs. R. C. Moore; Mrs. A. E. Shankle

Barbers – Frederick & Kochler

Tailor – John Weber

Stable/livery – White Livery & Stable

Jeweler – Dio Lewis

Gunsmith – F. Schinier

Growing strawberries for market was common. Mr. T. W. Hayes had a three-acre patch of berries and had grown one that measured five inches in circumference.

Northern capitalists were invited to consider Prescott and the surrounding area for investments. Plenty of fertile land was available for farming, grasslands for cattle, and plenty of timber, especially yellow pine which was much in demand at the time. The article boosted Prescott as a healthy city with good drainage, well-kept streets, artesian wells at a depth of 185 feet, and cool breezes from the prairie in the summertime.

GOOSE ANKLE MENTIONED IN LITTLE ROCK PAPER

I never expected to find Goose Ankle mentioned in the Daily Arkansas Gazette, but that paper had a column entitled "All Over Arkansas" which included tidbits of local news from other papers all across the state. Here are some items I found from Goose Ankle and Ebenezer. Sometimes the editor put in a comment following an item and those comments are shown in italics.

March 20, 1916 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

J. E. Ward and family visited J. C. Barksdale at Smashup Sunday. *How far from Goose Ankle and Smashup is the lovely city of Bug Scuffle?*

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

July 3, 1916 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

Hogs ate some chickens for S. M. Thomas a few days ago and Sam says the worst of it all he has no words in his vocabulary to express his thoughts as he doesn't use any cuss words at all.

November 2, 1916 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

While sawing lumber at Mr. Bevill's mill a few days ago, the engine came uncoupled and knocked the cylinder head out and did quite a lot of other damage. All who were working there escaped injury, but Archie ran so fast he came near melting his ankles. A sawmill in such circumstances is no place for a nervous gentleman.

November 22, 1916 (from the editor of the "All Over Arkansas" column)

The Theo and Smashup correspondents of the Nevada County Picayune have been saying things in the paper about each other. Recently, the Theo correspondent shot this little pleasantry at the Smashup correspondent: "Believe me, Methusalah would be merely a youth before I'd take the chance your wife did when she married you". The response of the Smashup correspondent will be printed if the federal laws permit.

December 4, 1916 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

Frank Johnson is reported to be on the puny list. *The matter should be investigated.*

August 17, 1917 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

With the great war, high cost of living, torrid weather, seed ticks, chiggers, etc., who says there isn't lots of enjoyment in life. --- *With those things one may be busy even if one is not joyous.*

February 6, 1918 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

Whooping cough, German measles, white folks' measles, blues, and a few cases of insanity are about all the complaints I hear at the present. --- *Things seem to be dull down about the Ankle.*

April 18, 1918 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

Well, the rain came and the wind blew and Walter and family to the storm house flew. --- *A high wind will turn the Goose Ankle yet.*

September 2, 1921 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

Your humble scribe had the pleasure of tying the nuptial knot between Mr. Robert Johnson and Miss Winnie Helsel of near Cale at a late hour Saturday night.

September 13, 1921 (from the Goose Ankle correspondent to the Picayune)

As we pencil these few lines, the thunder rolls, the wind blows, and the rain descends upon our house top and it is utterly impossible for us to express our sincere thanks for it as we have been dry for so long that our teeth and toe nails are all loose.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

October 10, 1921 (from the Ebenezer correspondent to the Picayune)

Mr. Arthur Brooks filled his date with Miss Fannie Otwell this past Sunday. They went to Goose Ankle for preaching and he didn't get back until about 4 o'clock the next morning and wasn't able to work Monday.

TO SHAVE OR NOT TO SHAVE



I'm 75 years old now and I'm probably one of the few men who has never grown a beard. I did have sideburns at one time. I see many men these days with full beards or some variation of a beard. Why do men grow beards? There are probably many reasons. Some may think they look better with a beard. Maybe their wives or girlfriends prefer them to have a beard. Some men grow a beard every year during hunting season when the weather is cooler. Some men grow a beard after they begin losing the hair on top of their head. Some men shave their entire head except for their beard. Some men just grow a mustache instead of a full beard.

I notice that many of the men in old photos had beards. We must remember that shaving in the old days was a task that was much more involved than it is today. They didn't have safety razors. They used a straight-edge razor kept sharp with a few whisks on the razor strap. The razor strap had a dual purpose. If a boy misbehaved in those days, he might receive a few licks from the razor strap administered by his father.

Those straight-edge razors look pretty wicked even when used by a professional barber. Any sudden movement could spell disaster. A man in 1900 would need some warm water and soap for shaving. The water had to be heated on the wood stove and the soap was usually made into a lather in a cup and brushed on with a shaving brush. These days, we can purchase a pressurized can of shaving cream and just push a button to get some soap. Hot water comes directly from the faucet. We have a choice of many brands of razors—cheap disposable razors or some with five or more blades which are pretty expensive and supposedly give a smoother shave. Some may even use an electric razor.

Have you ever thought about how much time a man spends shaving? Say a man begins shaving at age 16 and lives to be 85. That means he shaves for 69 years.

69 years times 365 days per year equals 25,185 days

25,185 days times 10 minutes per day equals 251,850 minutes

251,850 minutes divided by 60 minutes per hour equals 41,975 hours

41,975 hours divided by 24 hours per day equals 175 days

So, a man may spend almost six months of his life doing nothing but standing in front of a mirror shaving. There's not much else you can do while you are shaving because you must pay careful attention to what you are doing. I suppose you could listen to the radio at the same time, but I wouldn't advise trying to watch TV while you are shaving.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

I came across the following article from 1890 in *The Nevada County Picayune* entitled “The Effects of Close Shaving”. Maybe some of the old-timers read this article and decided it was best not to shave their beards.

EFFECTS OF CLOSE SHAVING **(from the 1-29-1890 issue of *The Nevada County Picayune*)**

Do you know what a close shave means? I never did until I looked at a face the other day through a microscope, which had been treated to this luxurious process. Why, the entire skin resembled a piece of raw beef. To make the face perfectly smooth requires not only the removing of the hair, but also a portion of the cuticle, and a close shave means the removal of a layer of skin all around. The blood vessels thus exposed are not visible to the eye, but under a microscope each little quivering mouth holding a minute blood drop, protests against such treatment. The nerve tips are also uncovered, and the pores are left unprotected, which makes the skin tender and unhealthy. This sudden exposure of the inner layer of the skin renders a person liable to have colds, hoarseness, and sore throat. (end of article)

I found another article submitted to the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal by a dentist in 1855 in which he states his belief that shaving caused all manner of problems including neuralgia, bronchial infections, erysipelas, heart disease, coughs, consumption, physical deformities, and dental problems. He claimed he had studied Middle Eastern countries where almost all men have beards and found that they have much fewer medical problems than men in countries where shaving is practiced.

Beards are frequently mentioned in the Bible and it is assumed that Jesus and his apostles had beards. The first mention of shaving in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 41, verse 14 where Joseph shaved after being summoned to appear before Pharaoh. Egypt was a country where shaving was the norm.

So, it is our choice whether to shave or not to shave. I don't know if our modern science would agree that shaving causes all the problems mentioned by some of these early writers. The man who wrote in the Boston medical journal said he had given up shaving completely and had noticed a marked improvement in his health.

Only five of our 45 presidents have had a full beard while in office – Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, and Benjamin Harrison. Six others had some facial hair but not full beards – John Q. Adams, Chester A. Arthur, Martin Van Buren, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft.

If you are on Facebook, you might be interested in the group called “Bluff City, AR 71722”. It is a closed group so I will have to approve your request to join. Many Nevada County photos have been posted on this group page.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

HISTORICAL TIDBIT

The Arkansas Mail Co. advertised stagecoach travel by daylight from Camden to Prescott in 1874. Stages would leave Camden at 5 ½ a.m. and arrive at Prescott at 6 ½ p.m. They would leave Camden on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and leave Prescott on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The coaches were said to be first class coaches driven by careful and sober drivers.

UNLUCKY 13

The old Parker house located about four miles west of Camden on the Camden-Chidester road burned after being ignited by a spark from the chimney. The family was eating breakfast at the time and were unaware of the blaze until it was too late.

The house was two stories high with nine rooms. It was built by J. N. Parker, father of Sam and W. R. Parker and was one of the best country homes in this section. It was built of the most durable timber and took quite a long time to burn.

W. R. Parker said, "We often joked about 13 being an unlucky number for this house because 13 children were born there and the house was located in Section 13 of Township 13."

PIGGOTT, ARKANSAS-- "THE MARRYING TOWN"

While doing some genealogical research in Missouri, my wife and I noticed that many couples from that part of southeast Missouri got married in Piggott, Arkansas which is located in extreme northeast Arkansas not far from the Missouri state line. We figured that it must have been easier back then to get married in Arkansas instead of Missouri. The other day I happened to think about this and did a little googling on the Internet to see if I could find an answer.

It seems that Arkansas, like most other states surrounding it, had a three-day waiting period to get married after obtaining a marriage license, but Arkansas had a clause in their marriage rules that said a county judge could waive the three-day waiting period "for special circumstances or emergencies". Judge Thomas Arnold French felt that a wedding was a special circumstance and went ahead and married couples with no waiting. Couples flocked to Piggott, Arkansas from Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, California, Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, Wisconsin, and other states to get a quick wedding ceremony. Judge French was sometimes known as "the marrying judge".

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

This was in the years following World War II. Many of these couples had little money to spend on fancy weddings. All they wanted when the love bug struck was a quick, cheap ceremony and word had spread that Piggott, Arkansas was the place to go. From 1945-1953, over 28,000 couples were married at the courthouse in Piggott. In the year 1950 alone, there were 5,960 marriages in Piggott. The population of Piggott in 1950 was about 2,500.

Some couples were married in their work clothes. Some bought some wedding clothes from the stores in Piggott when they arrived. It is said that at times couples were lined up in the hallways, out the front door, and on to the sidewalk waiting in line to get married. The judge performed most of the weddings in the hallway, but a few were performed in his chambers, especially if the couple was well-dressed. Many were performed in the vault in the county clerk's office. Local florists sold bouquets and boutonnieres to those waiting in line. It was a favorite pastime of the local residents to watch for couples coming to Piggott to get married.

The Hemingway-Pfiefer Museum and Educational Center in Piggott planned a big reception in 2005 to honor all couples that were married at the courthouse in Piggott. The cost for the reception was \$25 per couple and \$2 for family members or friends. Most of the couples from far off places didn't hear about the reception and therefore did not attend. The museum still accepts wedding stories submitted by couples who were married at Piggott.

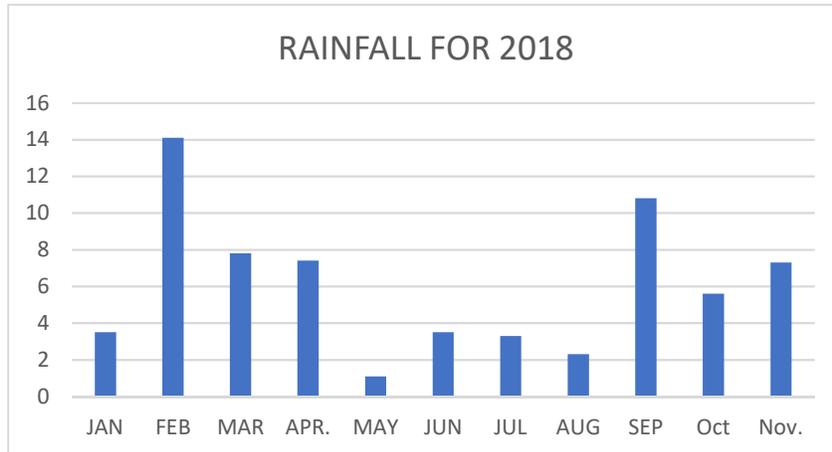
Besides being known as "The Marrying Capital of the Mid-South", Piggott is known for its connection to the famous author, Ernest Hemmingway. Hemmingway's second wife was Pauline Pfeiffer who was from Piggott. The marriage lasted thirteen years from 1927 to 1940. During that time, Hemmingway spent much time in that small town and did much of his writing there, including parts of "A Farewell to Arms". The Hemmingway-Pfeiffer museum is housed in the old Pfeiffer home.

Another local boy raised in Piggot was Leslie Biffle. He left Piggot as a young man and made a name for himself in Washington, D. C. holding various government jobs over the next forty years. In 1949, he was secretary of the U. S. Senate. The town of Piggot arranged a homecoming celebration for him on July 4, 1949. Thousands of people attended and a bronze bust of Les Biffle was unveiled which was placed in the town post office. Among those attending this event were Gov. Sid McMath of Arkansas, U. S. senator J. William Fulbright, U. S. senator John McClellan and former senator Hattie Caraway. Also attending was the vice-president of the United States, Alben Barkley who spoke and was to unveil the statue of Leslie Biffle. The bust was covered with a blue cloth and was to be unveiled at a certain point in the vice-president's speech, but a gust of wind blew the cloth off before the proper time. The vice-president said, "Well, the wind has jumped the gun on me". Someone put the cloth back on the bust and the vice-president then officially unveiled it.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Piggott also received national attention in 1957 when scenes of the movie “A Face in the Crowd” were filmed there. This was the film debut of actor Andy Griffith. Piggott was chosen for the film because of its small-town attractiveness.

I’m sure you are wondering how Piggott its name. It was named for an early settler, Dr. James A. Piggott.



66.7 inches through November --- Normal annual rainfall is 52 inches—one month to go

A young man from a farm family went off to college, the first in his family to get a college education. When he came home, he put his education to use by changing the spelling of the family dog’s name from Fido to Phydeaux.

His dad asked him to help with the plowing which was done with a horse. Instead of using the usual commands like “Giddy Up”, “Whoa”, “Gee”, and “Haw”, the young man decided to use words he had learned in school. When he came to the end of the row, he gave this command to the horse—“Halt, pivot, and proceed”. Needless to say, the horse didn’t understand the commands and kept going. The young man learned that in some situations, the old ways are still the best.



WHO IS THIS?

Let me know if you know who this man is.

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

Calendar World, 2018 – by Don Mathis (with apologies to *Calendar Girl* by Neil Sedaka)

Here's a list of events from the world
This is how the news unfurled

for each month of the calendar year
in locations above and around our sphere

January – Dream Act ends for kids of immigrants
February – Florida shooting of high school students

March – Northern white rhino becomes deceased
April – Castro brothers' Cuban reign has ceased

May – Lava floods in Hawaii cause evacuations
June – U.S./North Korea summit may spur relations

July – Scientists discover Mars has a subglacial lake
August – A Trillion Dollar earning is the Apple Inc. take

September – Fire destroys the National Museum of Brazil
October – Pittsburgh synagogue reports 11 are killed

November – California wildfires become the deadliest
December – Parisian protest riots by Yellow Vests

Yes, yes, our old world is in turmoil
tsunami in the sea and fire on the soil

Natural calamities may destroy Planet Earth
if despots and mass killers don't ruin it first.

Yes, yes, I love my calendar world
but its events keep my heart in a whirl

Every second, every hour, every day, I hold it dear
every week, every month, every moment of the year

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

THE DAY I MET SANTA CLAUS

A few years ago, in December, my wife and I decided to go to Hot Springs to do a little Christmas shopping. Hot Springs is about 90 miles from where we live and we don't go there very often. We stopped at a few stores, ate lunch at the Dixie Café, and probably stopped at Walmart. We usually stop at Kroger while we are there because that's the nearest Kroger store since they closed the store in our town. My wife likes Kroger because that store usually carries some products other grocery stores don't have.

The Hot Springs mall is in the same area as the Kroger store, so we decided to spend a little time there. The Christmas shopping season was in full swing and the stores were more crowded than usual.

As we were strolling through the mall checking out the stores, we came to the area where Santa Claus was set up to talk to the little kids. At the time we passed by, Santa was not too busy. All at once, I heard someone say loudly, "Hey Jerry, what do you want for Christmas?" It caught me off guard because we were nearly a hundred miles from home and didn't expect to see anyone we knew. I thought at first someone was talking to someone else named Jerry, but wondered why someone would say something like that so loudly with people all around. I looked around when my name was called. I soon determined that it was Santa Claus who had hollered at me and he was looking straight at me from his post about fifty feet away. I didn't know what to think. Why would Santa Claus be addressing me and how did he know my name?

After a few awkward moments, I decided that Santa looked a little like someone I knew. It turned out to be Bobby McAteer, a friend of mine who is also one of the board members of the Ebenezer Cemetery Association. I see him each year at our annual cemetery meetings, but it had been several months since I had last seen him. I knew that he had recently moved to Hot Springs, but had no idea he was working as Santa at the mall.

He told me he really enjoyed doing that type work and as far as I know he still does it. He told us they had flown him to the mall in a helicopter at the start of his tour of duty. He grows a beard each year which is naturally white and that makes him look just like Santa Claus when he dresses in his Santa suit. We visited a few minutes and went on our way. Bobby got a big kick out of fooling me that day and we still laugh about it.

**I hope you all have a
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**