

the Valley View

Cascabel ...hard to find....harder to leave.



Issue #2

An Occasional Cascabel, Arizona Newsletter

September 2014

In this issue...

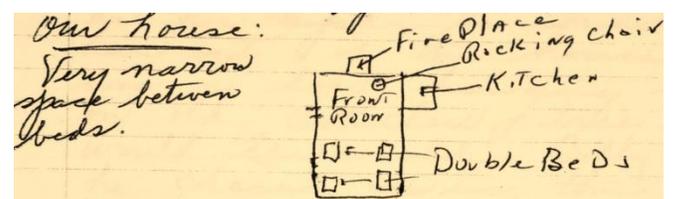
We continue with Lillie Bennett Finch's memories of living in Cascabel, several miles up Hot Springs Canyon when she was a child, early '30s. For the 1st part we've published, please see Cascabel.org under the newsletter tab. A hard copy is available at the Community Center library.

Old man Strickland was a widower who lived, I think, 3 or 4 miles by horseback from us. We went to his house only once. Older kids rode horses and burros through the hills. Papa and Mama and smaller kids rode in the open top car. I rode over on a burro but was too tired to make it home, so I rode in the car. "Old Strick" as we called him was our closest friend. When he got his little pension check, he brought us candy or a few pennies. He rode a mule and lived in a free cabin with kerosene lights. So all he paid for was kerosene and food. One time I had a 50 cent piece and threw it in the air when Strick was there. He may have given it to me, as I seldom saw a nickel. Anyhow we looked all over and couldn't find it. Strick went home on his mule, but he came back the next day, all the way to bring my 50 cent piece. It had fallen in the cuff of his bib overall. I loved that old man.

Building the house: Father gathered dry cactus spines for miles around and carried them to the home site on a donkey's back. Like a log house, he put these tiny sticks together with a mud mixture to form the walls. He made lumber doors and window shutters out of 1x6 boards like a barn door. Slats were vertical with an

X across them to hold them in place. He made a latch that slid sideways through a bar.

In one end of the house he built a rock fireplace. We had a dirt floor. It was one big room with a lean-to added on as a kitchen with a small wood cook stove. We sprinkled the dirt floor and it got as hard as brick.



The house had a tin roof. Ruby was handing a sheet of tin up to Papa and it slipped out of his hands and Ruby got a bad cut between her fingers.

When Papa decided to dig our well for house water he 'witched' it with crooked sticks. He walked all over the place. When the sticks turned downward against his strength, there was water to be had down there someplace. He started digging about a 4 ft. wide hole. As it got deeper, he put a windlass up so Marvin and Ruby could let him down in a bucket to dig deeper.

He would fill the bucket and they would turn the handles on each end of the windlass. It was a log in the middle with a wire cable on it to pull up the dirt. Metal handles on each end. Day after day, Papa filled the bucket and they pulled and dumped the dirt. He tried to lean back out of the way, just in case the bucket fell. It never did. One day after he struck water, he was down there and it started to fill and cave in on him so he yelled loud and clear and they pulled him to safety. There was a small ledge he was able to stand on. That never caved in. I have often wondered what would have happened had he not gotten out in time. God is good.

There were some large boulders behind the old house he built for us. Papa would cut venison in strips and we would lay the meat on big rocks and sun-dry it to jerky. We could store it in flour sacks. Mom would chop it up in a frying pan and make gravy for us. Sometimes she would put a can of tomatoes in the gravy. We survived on beans, venison and goat meat, macaroni and canned tomatoes, hot biscuits and more beans! We didn't know what fresh vegetables were. Once a year mom picked some wild leaves like spinach. (Amaranth?) One time Papa brought home a box of green pears. What a treat – we never had any fruit. We did get an apple or an orange at Christmas school programs. Once in a while we got 5 lb. boxes of dried fruit... prunes and raisins.

I can still see Grandma Lavinia Shirley sitting in the old rocking chair by the fireplace wearing a calico dress and an apron. She read to us kids.

She was a school teacher. She also chewed 'Red Mule' tobacco. She only visited us when she lived with Aunt Rosa and Uncle Jim at St. David where she died. Papa's dad lived with us for a while. Papa played the fiddle and Grandpa played guitar many times. Papa played for us by the old fireplace. I hear that the old fireplace is still there. We saw it in about 1960. There was some of the rock wall of a room Papa started behind the house but never finished.

Grandpa Bennett was good to us. One day Papa and Mama had to go to town on business and Grandpa

babysat us kids. We tore the house apart. We put the mattresses on the floor and made tent houses out of the quilts. We had us a 'time'. About time for our folks to come home, Grandpa said "you young uns get this house back in order, your Mammy will be home soon." We flew in and put it back together. Not one word from Grandpa about our behavior. This was probably about 1933. He went back to Texas to live with Uncle Buck, Papa's brother in 1934. We never saw him again. He died after we moved to Oregon about 1938. Papa never got to go back for his funeral.

When Grandpa Bennett went back to Texas, we moved down to Cascabel on Uncle Wiley Shirley's place to be closer to school. (Sue Newman's now) I think we lived there 2 school terms.

We only got one pair of school shoes. So we went barefoot all summer. The soles of our feet were so thick Mama had a hard time getting cactus thorns out. We lost quite a few toe nails from stumbling over stumps or rocks.

Ruby told me about an old car Papa bought. Ruby and Marvin could drive. One day Ruby and Marvin took Papa to work. He said if the car stalls, jack up one back wheel so you can crank it and it will start. The old Model T stalled up a hill on the way home. Marvin put a jack under the car and jacked up a wheel on that steep hill. The old car started rolling backward and caught Ruby near a bank. It drug her through a prickly pear patch. She had long thorns in her back and shoulders. A cousin was with them and picked out the thorns. Marvin started the car and took them home.

Ruby said one night Jewel and Alvin and she and her boyfriend were coming home from a school dance. Alvin didn't have any lights on his car, but the moonlight was fairly bright. Alvin drove right up on the back of a cow that was lying in the road. He got out and lifted the car up and the cow walked off.

One night after a dance the boys had to stay all night as it rained up Hot Springs Canyon and it flooded. If you noticed black storm clouds up canyon you better know to stay out of that creek bed. The road from San

Pedro River up Hot Springs Canyon crossed the canyon several times and much of it was in creek bed itself. So you had to watch the rains upstream.

The dances were held at the one room schoolhouse. You could only dance 2 sets of square dancers but it sure was fun. The kids had the floor until music really got started and then we cleared out. We slept in cloak closets. Sometimes Mama put us to bed in the car with no top, so she wouldn't have to load us half asleep to go home. Dances lasted until 2:00 in the morning. Papa played fiddle and guitar both. He could waltz too. Mama wasn't allowed to dance as a girl, so she just 'walked' on a little slow dance with Papa.

There was a bucket of water and a dipper on the porch. Everyone drank out of the same dipper – a metal cup with a long handle on it with a crook on the end to keep it from falling in to the water bucket. This was the same bucket and dipper we drank out of at school all week. One night a man came outside to cool off and fell dead.

I remember one night I rode with Ruby and her boyfriend down to a school house dance. I stood up on the floor and looked out the front glass and I can still see how beautiful the big cottonwood trees were in the car lights going by Uncle Wiley's place. This was the first place after crossing Hot Springs Canyon coming from the south to north. We seldom saw car lights at night as we never went any place at night except the dances. After we moved down to Uncle Wiley's place, there was a Christmas program given at night. Of course there was no electricity, so several cars turned their lights on to see the program. I was an angel with a white sheet robe and large wire wings with tinsel trim that sparkled in the car lights. I can still remember the excitement of it.

Up on the mesa above Uncle Wiley's place (now the airstrips) were mounds of rock and dirt, raised about 4-6 feet above ground. They were round, about the size of a small tipi, all flat and looked like they were designed to keep water out a tipi. We found lots of arrow heads up there. Sister Ruby had a large

collection. In fact, she used to gather the dry bones of rattlesnakes and painted the points with nail polish. She strung them on grocery twine and sold several to rich people for necklaces. She also set traps out for furs, dressed them out and sent them off to "The Fox Co". I still have a copy of one order dated July 24, 1929. With the money she made, Ruby bought hard candy in buckets from catalogs and a small movie camera. She would turn a handle for the film to move and would show pictures like Mickey Mouse on a sheet. She got us ready for school and sometimes drove us there, often bringing our lunch in buckets to us. I still remember her giving us our spelling words around the long table with wooden benches. Two words were opaque and translucent. Grades 4-8 had the same words. I was 8 or 9 years old.

When Mrs. Allen was our teacher, she had some older boy build a fire. She would make hot chocolate for our lunch...what a treat. Once an older boy put a few squares of Ex-Lax in her cup and she wasn't seen for 2 days!

On the 4th of July there was always a rodeo for just locals. The children never took part but what a day for all. Private family picnics all about and this was the only time we had ice cream. I think Papa paid .05 a cone. We had to eat it fast because of the heat.

When Uncle Wiley's homestead sold, it must have been in the late 30s, we went to Sams Valley, Oregon.

Cascabel Community Center

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Submissions/suggestions/corrections to

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Email: snewsy@rnsmtc.com

Printed copies available at the Community Center or by request

Lily married Francis Marion Bennett (born March 27, 1889) on November 27th, 1912 at Kerrville, Texas.

Names and birthdays of their children born to Frances and Lily

Jewell	August 27 th , 1913	died December 10 2000	born in Texas
Ruby	March 24, 1915	died April 2003	born in Texas
Marvin	October 10, 1916	died	born in Texas
Golden	August 23, 1918	died December 20, 1919	born in Texas
Ruth	March 31, 1920	died February 4, 2006	born in Texas
Lois	November 25, 1921	died February 1, 1999	born in Texas
Chester	February 22, 1923		born in Texas
Lillie	December 2, 1924		born in Texas
Jack	October 29, 1926		born in Texas
Marjorie	November 7, 1928	died march 21, 2007	born in Arizona
Everett	April 21, 1931		born in Arizona

We extend our deep gratitude to Lillie for taking so much time to share her hand written memories of Cascabel.



In Our Backyards
please submit your photos and sightings



Hooded Orioles nesting under porch eave at Sue Newman's



Raven harvesting Luna's winter fur at Sue's



Hummingbirds at Dave Parson's specially created feeder

From Anna Lands

Whether we stay up late or get up early, the night sky awaits us in all its glory and depth and wonder. And when there is cloud cover to obscure the stars, our attention is drawn closer to the desert's night sounds. Either way, our Cascabel nights are our delight.

This link <http://www.skymaps.com/downloads.html> has tools to bring us closer to the wonders of our night sky. This and other sites have maps and instructions on how to locate the September constellations..



The San Pedro at full flood behind River Ranch Photo Jason Hernandez

Got some prize winning photos of the monsoon activity? Check this website.
<https://wrrc.arizona.edu/node/12952>

Rainfall Totals for 2014

<u>Jarvi-Hall at 3Links Farm</u> (near 3Links Wash) Jan 0 Feb .032 March 1.23 April .03	May 0 June .01 July 3.1 August 4.91 YTD total is 9.312"
<u>Cascabel Clayworks</u> Jan 0 Feb .03 Mar .30 April - trace	May - trace June - trace July 3.38 August 4.08 YTD total is 7.71"
<u>Narrows</u> Jan 0.01 Feb 0.01 March 1.06 April 0.02	May 0.00 June 0.00 July 4.52 August 5.02 YTD 6 th highest monsoon in 36 yrs