



Cornville Historical Society

E-MAIL NEWS

P.O. Box 1200, Cornville, AZ 86325

CENTENNIAL COUNTDOWN EDITION

November 2011

The mission of the Cornville Historical Society is to gather, preserve and share information about the history of rural life within the Cornville postal area from 1860 to the present. This is the fifth in a series of "Centennial Countdown" articles leading to Arizona's 100th Birthday on February 14, 2012. It is the transcription of a Letter to the Editor of the Prescott Courier, dated Tuesday, October 26, 1937. It provides insights about James E. Page, one of Cornville's original pioneer homesteaders for whom Page Springs is named, his family, and their life on Lower Oak Creek.

Jim and Julia Page Anniversary

Editor of the Courier:

I guess maybe you have had a right smart o' troubel gittin' both sides o' the paper covered since I quit writin' to yuh; but the fact is I only like to rite by spells. My thumbs git sore and there was some chores aroun' home here just had to be done if I was to stay married.

But you know how I am; jest can't seem to confine myself to my own business fer long at a stretch; but this time I guess I have made one o' them there scoops I've heerd you rave about so much. Yessirree! I guess this time I've uncovered one o' the greatest pieces of new an' scandal that's ever filtered out o' this here Valley.

It's about them Page Folks. Jim an' Julia Page; lives right next to me yuh might say, here on Oak Creek. They have been married "FIFTY YEARS" com Wed. Yessirree a Golden Weddin' Anniversary right here on Oak Creek. Yuh can't beat that I guess, nowheres. Man Alive! I didn't think there was a woman on earth could stay with a man 50 years an' live. Not in these enlightened times anyways. But it's the truth, an' I got the whole story confidenshal like from Mrs. Page. Jim wouln't tell me a thing, Just grunted an' acted sheepish like. It's only nachural tho come to think of it. No man with any spunk is goin' to admit bein' pushed aroun' an' havin' his shins kicked blue fer 50 years without doin' somethin' about it. We kin all understan' that, but of course every case has two sides.

Well, anyway here's the truth o' the matter an' while I know it has been yure custom to make such entries in the Society Colum I guess this is one time when you better spread it all over the front page, cause as i sed before there aint many folks as kin live 50 years much less stay married that long an' then live to tell about it. Mrs. Page sez, "To be exact it's 50 years an' two days, but sometimes it seemed longer."

Yessirr! Fifty Years ago she landed on Oak Creek, a right smart of a bride, at what still is, the ole Page Homestead. Bein' a bride in them days was a lot different from what it is today. If they had any rice they et it and far as the Guvament knew there wasn't any Oak Creek an' even if there was nobody had ever heerd o' this thing they call "Relief."

The only relief they knew was after the kids had all been counted an' tucked in an' untill the alarm went off at four the next mornin'.

Mrs. Page said the only furnichure she had fer 12 years was a pine top table an' two chares. One o' the chares she won herself at a horse race. Seems like they always had one chare and Jim in a garulus moment had promised her another. Well, what with drouth an' grasshoppers and cholera an' Injuns an' broken legs, gittin holt of an honest to good-ess store bot chare wasn't so simple an' there was lots of times Jim wished he hadn't made her that fool promise. I guess you know how wimen are that way, yureself, persistent an' pesterin'. Every now an' then havin' company an' nothin' to sit 'em on was embarassin'. After a time she got plum desperate an' one day heerin' they was goin' to have some horse races close by she took the "family hoard" went



Jim & Julia Page on their 50th Anniversary

down, shut her eyes, crossed herself twice, an' put the hull wad (\$4.00 an' somethin') on a split eared horse that had a star in his forehead; an' durned if she didn't win. That's how she come to git the second chare. Sed "she was so happy she cried."

I guess that's all about Mrs. Jim except, she was born in Henry County Mizzouri, an' yuh can't beat that country fer wimen er mules. She didn't say how long ago an' I didn't like to git so pusnal; but soon as she had attained her reason and could spell out words in print she headed fer Arizona an' more partikly Yavapai county. She liked the name. Sez there may be better places but she aint never heerd about 'em an' except fer an' occashunal bad spell she's right glad she came.

One o' the bad spells was when she got skeered up about Injuns. She was alone except fer the kids an' the nearest white folks was across the Creek. Well, she rounded 'em all up an' somehow got 'em all floated across with only one mishap. Seems the water had washed one o' the younger ones clear out o' his trousers. This was purty serious. Gittin a youngster fitted with one pr. was a problem in itself an' goin' back was out o' the question, so the one o' 'em had to go pantsless untill they could git another flour sack emptied.

Now about Jim Page: As I sez before it was hard to git anything out o' him but I gathered a few facts. Seems like he will be 85 on Xmas day an' was born in Toronto Canada. But he sed he couldn't help that; an' come to this country as soon as he was purty sure which way was south. Soon as he learned to swear an' could tell Gee from Haw he got him a bullteam. (This was o' course long before any body ever heerd o' this felluh they call Ford, er prohibishun had got such a holt o' the county.)

He took loggin' contracts when he could get 'em and when he couldn't he worked fer a dollar a day er twenty-five cents or whatever the goin' wages o' the country happened to be at that time. Sometimes he et. Sometimes the bulls et an' sometimes nobody et. It was a free country an' the Guvament just didn't give a hang if a man et er not. Well in one way er another he prodded an' bullied them bulls clear into New Mexico. This he admits now was a great mistake because a bad winter an' a worse contract took the bulls an' he landed at Flagstaff that spring with the frayed bull whip an' a five dollar bill.

"But things," he said, wasn't so bad "if a man would work." A felluh by the name o' Santa Fe was bein' carried away with the fool idea ' buildin' a Rail Road clear across the continent. So he (Jim) got hisself a shovel an' a couple o' picks an' it wasn't long untill he had a better bull team than the one that died in the snowdrifts over in New Mexico.

I guess you know there aint nuthin' like a couple o' winters around Flagstaff to put the edge on a man's migratory habits. Jim was no different from most. One day somebody told him about Oak Creek. I don't know if he sed he walked down er rode one o' the bulls. Any way Jim aint no fool and one look into this land of "Golden Opportunity" was enough. Jim sez to hisself: "That's as near Heaven as I'll ever git, I reckon, an' right here's where I make camp."

But don't you make the mistake o' thinkin' that "everything's gold that glitters," Mr. Editor. Not by a jugful! An' that little beauty spot we know as the Page Spring Home ranch today, at that time, was just another cactus an' boulder strewn flat with a lot of mesquite brush that had been pre-empted by some of our best rattlesnake families. All this didn't disturb Jim one little bit 'cause besides being more or less ambitious he had vision too. So he traded some o' the bulls fer some flour and beans and more pick handles an' he went to work. Havin' to cook as well as grub was very slow business. But one day he got a break. He married Mrs. Page, an' after that he sed nothin' looked too tough. An' anyway two folks pullin' together kin do a lot in 50 years. If you don't believe it yuh better climb in yure gass buggy Wed. the 27th an' see fer yureself. Yuh kin have yure spirits refreshed with food an' liquids. Their goin' to be right where they been for 50 years to welcome you an' help yuh git rested after drivin so far over these turbel Mountain roads which aint even got tar on yet is some places.

It's just an ole fashioned sort o' reception, where everybody kin come an' bring their dog. Be sure an' tell 'em.

Oh yes, about the secret formula fer livin an' learin' so well about Life; Well, Jim sez, "sixteen hours work, 8 hours sleep an' 3 meals aday if you kin get 'em will keep a man out of a lot of mean-nesses."

Which aint quite right accordin to Mrs. Jim, who sez there aint nothin' will keep all the mean-nesses out o' a man, but wipin' his feet before he comes in the house an' tryin' to be reglar fer his meals will add ten years to the wifes figure. An' about the family: Well, there is four boys all livin an' a very fair average as humans go; Haydee an' Lindsey an' Johnny an' Edgar.

When they was little an' couldn't do much except git in the way an' was either hungry er cold er hurtin' er sleepy er drownin' er eaten', they was like most families, "just fine."

Soon as they got old enough to help around the ranch a little, they either run off er got married er went into business fer themselves. In either case they is havin' their own trobles now an' fer further information I suggest you rite 'em direct.

Your ireglar Cornville Correspondent.

F. A. GYBERG.

Cornville, October 25.

Frank A. Gyberg, was a leading citizen of Cornville. "He ran cattle with Dale Girdner and owned the biggest cattle ranch, as well as dabbled in politics", according to Girdner's son Bob. The Gyberg Ranch was on Loy Road. He also wrote "Gyberg's Gripes" in the Cattlemen's Association publication called *Cattle Log*. He always ended his articles, "Hope you're the same."