

# The Clay County MOsaic

*"Fitting the Pieces Together"*

Quarterly Newsletter of the Clay County Archives & Historical Library, Inc.

April-May-June 2010

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If you would like to receive your future newsletters online, we will need to have your e-mail address.

Please send it to:

[info@claycountyarchives.org](mailto:info@claycountyarchives.org)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I know gambling is, in some quarters, considered a vice. After all, until 1992 in Missouri it was technically illegal and still is in some forms and situations. It is easy to put all "chance taking" under the label of gambling. As true as that is, not all gambling can be dismissed as a vice. As we all know, taking chances in life is part of its very essence.

What chances do we take today? In our youth, didn't we have to chance rejection by trying out for school plays, band, sports, etc? As we got older and started to consider our future, didn't we take chances in choosing our professions? Our mates? Associations? And certainly the entrepreneurs among us do that; it can be quite risky to borrow money and climb out on a limb.

But how many people today take the bigger gamble by choosing to leave behind all they know to travel to a foreign land? For sure, there are millions who do but, really, just how "foreign" is foreign? In this small world of ours, much can be known about a potential destination. The journey may be perilous, leaving family behind may be hard and learning new customs and languages difficult, but at least, in general, they are not usually diving into the unknown.

But consider the same situation about 300 to 400 years ago. Not only do you have the same problems of transportation (and magnified by the dearth of technology) but, for the most part, you are traveling into a vague notion, hearsay, rumor.

It is one thing to gamble on a move from one city to another in 2010, but quite another to move from a civilized city on one continent to a wilderness on another in, say, 1620. Across a wide and unfriendly ocean. Uncertain of the actual destination. With no one to greet you. Only basic preparation. But at least with a purpose, a reason, a dream...and faith.

And maybe that's all we need to venture out and take a chance of such magnitude. That we have hope and faith of a better future elsewhere; regardless of the odds. It is also said that we imagine the pain

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday through Wednesday -- 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
First Wednesday of Month -- 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Closed on National Holidays

### MEMBERSHIP FOR CALENDAR YEAR

Individual & Family (one address) -- \$15.00  
(Memberships paid after October 1 will apply to next calendar year.)

### BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Unlimited *On-Site* Research  
Subscription to *The Clay County MOsaic*, our quarterly newsletter.

### RESEARCH POLICY & FEES

Non-members pay \$5.00 per day for on-site research. Member and non-member research requests by mail are accepted. Each request must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope and an initial research fee of \$10.00 per surname for one hour of research. Additional hours are \$10.00 per hour.

### COPY PRICES

Original records (such as probate material)	\$1/page
Other published material	15 cents per page
Microfilm printouts	25 cents per page
Computer printouts	5 cents per page
Outsize copies	50 cents per page
Photographs	
Standard Quality	50 cents
Archival Quality	\$5.00

Personal imaging will be charged at the above rates.

### SPECIAL GIFTS PROGRAM

*Benefactors -- \$1,000 & up (cumulative)*  
*Patrons -- \$500-\$999 (cumulative)*  
*Contributors -- \$100-\$499*  
*Friends -- \$25-\$99*

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#### 2010 PROGRAM

#### CONTRIBUTORS

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## ARCHIVES GIFT SHOP

CLAY CO., MISSOURI MARRIAGES 1821-1881  
CLAY CO., MISSOURI MARRIAGES 1881-1904  
Each Book, Softbound \$24.50 ppd  
(MO residents add \$1.80)  
Each book, Hardbound \$29.75 ppd  
(MO residents add \$2.19)

THE STORY OF LIBERTY...from settlement to suburb, a movie available in two formats:  
DVD -- \$15 each  
S-VHS -- \$10 each  
(add \$2 for shipping and handling)

The VHS version is available in two formats, for older model players & for the current model players. Specify which of the formats you desire.

### GREETING CARDS

Christmas cards – 12 for \$10  
Note cards 10 for \$5

**BLUE SKIES**, a newly published book. See page 2 for more information.

### DOCTOR ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

The Diaries of Dr. William Wallace Dougherty, 1854-1880 **CLOSEOUT—NEW PRICE**  
\$12.00 at the Archives  
\$17.00 if mailed

I KNEW FRANK...I WISH I HAD KNOWN JESSE  
Family, Friends and Neighbors in the Life and Times of the James Boys

Hardback: \$55.00 members  
\$60.00 non-members  
Soft cover: \$17.00 members  
\$22.00 non-members

### GUERRILLAS AND OTHER CURIOSITIES

Bud, Donnie and Me  
Soft cover: \$15 members  
\$17 non-members

### MISCELLANEOUS BOOKS (all postpaid):

1877 Historical Atlas of Clay County	15.00
Every-Name Index to 1877 Atlas	13.00
Clay County Births, 1883-84	7.00
Clay County Deaths, 1883-84	7.00
DAR Sesquicentennial Book	18.00
Every-name Index to DAR Book	11.00

Please make your check payable to:  
Clay County Archives

And mail to:  
P. O. Box 99  
Liberty MO 64069

## OF INTEREST TO GENEALOGISTS

Find articles about many varied aspects of Missouri history at the Missouri State Genealogical Association's blog at [Mosga.blogspot.com](http://Mosga.blogspot.com).

The Missouri State Archives web site has updated the available death certificates to include those for 1959. You can search for and print copies of all death certificates from 1910 through 1959 at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/deathcertificates/>.

*From the Ozarks Genealogical Society  
Newsletter, April 2010.*

Ever wish you could take a class at the FamilySearch Family History Library in Salt Lake City? Now you can and you don't have to travel to do it. Just visit [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) and click on Free Online Classes on the home page.

The classes vary in length from 6 to 58 minutes, with most lasting about 25 minutes. There are currently 23 classes available online, with subjects ranging from European research to United States military records. The most popular are the Beginning Research Series for Ireland and England and a class on descendency research.

The format of the classes varies, depending on the content being presented. One shows a video that alternates between the teacher and the PowerPoint slides. Several are interactive, such as the course on reading German handwriting. In these classes, the teacher is represented with still photographs and audio narration, and the student can actively participate in learning activities, such as matching English and German characters or transcribing selected words from a document. As the student types, the correct text appears in green and incorrect answers appear in red, providing immediate feedback.

FamilySearch is continually adding new online offerings.

A fun site is to be found at <http://www.hamrick.com/names/>. Just enter a surname, select a year (1850, 1880, 1920 or 1990) and you can see a map of the United States with a color-coded key that will tell you where the name was most prevalent. With this information, you can track the name's migration. You can also select "All years" and watch the progression of people with that surname.

At <http://books.google.com/> you can enter a subject and get a list of books about that subject. You can also get more information on the books and enter your zip code to find which nearby libraries have a copy. I tried "Clay County Missouri" as my subject and got a list of 699 books (some more relevant than others.)

**EXCERPTS FROM OUR LATEST  
PUBLICATION, "DOCTOR ON THE  
WESTERN FRONTIER: THE DIARIES  
OF DR. WILLIAM WALLACE  
DOUGHERTY,  
1854 – 1880"**

**Saturday, June 4, 1870**

The new school, or free school, will go into operation this fall, where I want to send John & Willie.

*Note: Dr. Dougherty was in favor of the free school, which the legislature had created. Each town had to provide a building and a teacher. The private schools continue for a few more years, but gradually the public schools won out over the competition.*

**Wednesday, June 8, 1870**

Willie Lane came today, he is looking very bad, consumption and indigestion. I would not have known him, he looks so emaciated & reduced in flesh & size; he weighs only 118 lbs.

**Thursday, June 9, 1870**

Willie Lane is quite poorly, he looks very badly indeed.

**Saturday, June 11, 1870**

Willie Lane is quite unwell and very feeble.

**Sunday, June 12, 1870**

Willie Lane joined to Reformed Church today. I took him to the church in buggy, and while in church, the mare Nanie got loose and run off to Bradfords corner. Put Willie Lane on cod liver oil, and a strict diet.

**Monday, June 13, 1870**

Willie Lane not so well tonight, coughs badly, and looks worse. Attended M. Association tonight. Presented Willie's case, and the impression that it might not be tubercle of lungs.

**Tuesday, June 14, 1870**

Willie Lane died about ½ past 8 o'clock this morning. Oh! how my heart has been moved to its deepest depth by this sad calamity Oh! What would I not have given to have restored him to health and friends. Poor fellow, how he hated to die, to go hence; but the Angel of death had come to do his work; and poor fellow. My friend Willie had to go. So will all of us. We too must go, and no telling how soon. I hope and pray he has gone home to heaven –

to his sainted Mother, and his generous father. He left 1264.00 in money.

I wrote to aunt Isabella Charles of the sad event and also telegraphed to her. Lewis B. Dougherty happened in just after his death, and kindly assisted in the last sad rites of dressing him. Charley Newlee, Stephen R. Schrader, Jas. Smithey and Mr. Rose kindly assisted. Heaven knows my heart is sore; yes sore to the quick, for Willie Lane was a true friend, loved me and mine. He had wandered up and down the earth, in search of ease, peace and health, and at last came home to me to die. God bless him for his immortal spirit, I hope he is now in heaven, where the weary are forever at rest, where sickness, sorrow, pain and death are felt and feared no more. Farewell, Willie – till we meet in that blessed clime, far, far, from Mortal sight, where we will be happy, world without end. Amen Telegraphed to Aunt Isabella at Canton to know what to do with the body. Got no answer today. Several set up with corpse.

*Note: William Lane was from Lewis County, Missouri and a cousin of the Doughertys. He died of consumption (tuberculosis) at the home of Dr. Dougherty at age 31. He was the son of William and Mary N. Lane.*

**Wednesday, June 15, 1870**

Got a dispatch from Aunt to bring the body to her immediately. Started to Canton with the corpse and took John with me. Started about 6 P.M., rode all night.

**Thursday, June 23, 1870**

Charter of Knight Templars arrested for not going to Columbia when ordered by G. Commander.

**Monday, July 4, 1870**

Memorable Day, Independence Day, but it has lost its prestige.

**Monday, July 18, 1870**

Went to see Sim Collins at night.

*Note: Sim Collins was a prominent landowner in the Little Shoal area. Four years before Dr. Dougherty's diary, Mr. Collins' son was tried for the murder of a young black girl and her baby son. It was rumored that \$20,000 exchanged hands, Mr. Collins managing to save his son. When Mr. Collins died, he mentioned that the son had already received his share of the father's estate, but the son sued and broke the will. Most of this family were buried in Little Shoal Cemetery.*

**MISCELLANEOUS GLEANINGS  
FROM MICROFILM  
OF EARLY CLAY COUNTY  
NEWSPAPERS**

**Articles from the *Liberty Tribune***

**May 7, 1875**

Susan B. Anthony lectured in Springfield, Mo. recently. She is said to be a lively old hen.

**May 21, 1875**

Mr. Elisha Benton, residing near Kearney, had two horses taken from his pasture on Tuesday night, and two jaded down horses left in their places. He says the horses left are as good or better than the ones taken, and if he could "read his title clear," he would make no fuss about the swap. He tracked them a few miles south of his home but the tracks disappeared.

The Kansas City Times says: Information was received here last evening from Robert James, nephew of Mrs. Samuels, who has been working on the James farm, that the old lady had been attacked with erysipelas in her wounded arm, and that she is not likely to recover. They telegraphed yesterday morning to her daughter, Mrs. Palmer, who resides at Sherman, Texas, requesting her to come home immediately. A reply was received, stating that she should reach Kearney to-day. Robert James' sister will also go over to-day to attend their aunt in her sickness. Mrs. Samuels has determined not to submit to another amputation even if it be necessary to save her life.

*Note: Mrs. (Zerelda) Samuels, the mother of Frank and Jesse James, lived until 1911. She lost part of her arm in an explosion directed at her sons in the James home the previous January. Erysipelas, also called "St. Anthony's Fire," is an acute disease of the skin caused by a streptococcus and marked by spreading inflammation.*

**September 5, 1890**

**A Foul Murder.**

Monday evening about dusk, when John Griffith, residing about three miles west of Kearney, returned from Liberty, he missed his old colored housekeeper, Aunt Elvira Owensby, who had been with him about 6 years. As she was never known to leave home during his absence, he became alarmed, and getting together some of the neighbors, he made search and found her body in a thicket about 100 yards from the house.

Her clothes were burned from her body and the flesh was crisp and charred in many places. Two

bullet holes in her head and her rifled pocketbook lying near, told the story of the murder. She was known to have considerable money about her, and the supposition is that while the home folks were at Liberty and the neighbors were attending the funeral of Dr. Yates, some villain took advantage of the occasion to murder her. She was a hard-working and kind old darkey of 70 years, and the community are aroused over the affair and will mete out summary justice to the scoundrel if identified, whoever he may be.

Coroner Rothwell held an inquest Tuesday, when it was found that the shots were fired from a 38-calibre revolver, one of the balls coming out at the left ear and the other near the same point – both having entered the right side of the head. The finding was that the shots were fired by a person unknown.

Lewis Griffith, a son of the murdered woman's employer, and a negro woman with whom he had been intimate and who lives in Kearney, were arrested on suspicion at this place, Tuesday. The young man's home is in Buchanan county, but he was seen about his father's place Monday, carrying a pistol, with which he said he was "going to kill dogs." A 38-calibre was found upon his person when arrested. He was drinking when taken, and talked rather loosely; and is reported to have made remarks that tend to increase the suspicion against him. The negro woman has confessed that young Griffith was in Kearney Monday night.

*Note: Lewis Griffith later confessed to the murder and was sentenced to 50 years in prison. This is rather refreshing, considering that had this crime occurred some 30 years previously, the charge would have been destruction of property.*

**September 23, 1943**

**A Barn Without Nails in County  
John Shouse Built Unique Barn  
In Early Days Of Clay**

(In another of his interesting stories of the early days in Clay county, T. R. Shouse tells of his grandfather's farm and of pioneer means of threshing grain.)

By T. R. Shouse

My grandfather, John Shouse, located six miles east of Liberty on the main highway of 1835. He built there a barn which was unique at that time and many persons came to see it. The barn was spoken of as "Shouse's barn."

The barn was a two story structure, 24 feet by 24 feet square. The upper story was for the storing of grain and the lower floor was for tramping. Part of the frame was still standing when I located there in 1876 and was intact when I began to tear it down.

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**MISCELLANEOUS GLEANINGS  
FROM MICROFILM  
OF EARLY CLAY COUNTY  
NEWSPAPERS**

(Continued from Page 5)

The frame was of heavy timber, hewn by hand and put together with mortise and tenon. A hole was bored in each tenon and a wooden peg driven in to hold it in place. It took a great amount of labor to construct a building like this at that time.

The floor was of hard wood, one and one-half inches thick, and it, too, was held in place with wooden pins. Holes were bored through then planks with a hand augur and down into the sleepers to a depth of about five inches. Wooden pins were driven in these holes and not a nail was used in the entire floor.

The grain was placed in the upper story. When the last load was brought in, a shuck was placed in the middle of the floor and bundles were set around it until the entire floor was filled. It was then ready for the horses, driven by a boy, to make the rounds, trampling over the grain until the grain was all trampled out.

A man with a wooden pitch fork was in attendance to keep the straw in place and whatever else was needed to be done. The straw was removed and the wheat run through the fan to separate the chaff from the wheat.

This trampling was done whenever necessary during the session. A flail was used when small quantities were needed.

**Articles from the *Smithville Democrat -- Herald***

**November 6, 1914**

**Killed a Dead Squirrel**

It was some joke on ye editor. He went squirrel hunting last Thursday with Martin Willis and Ernie Reeves, and while Ernie got lost, Martin and yours truly deployed in a skirmish line along a thickly wooded bluff. Suddenly Martin raised a cautioning hand and said: "There's one in that tree. I can just see his tail. Just slip up easy on that side and you can get him." We slipped up as easily as it is possible for a cow to blunder through a thicket, and there was Mr. Squirrel in plain sight. We took deliberate aim. Bang! Down he came and Martin said, "You sure got him." We went down to pick him up and he was dead all right. Judging from the smell he had been dead about three months.

**April 2, 1915**

Drag the Roads Today.  
Improve the Roads and Win a Cash Prize

Today, Friday, April 2, is "Drag the Road Day," so get out your team, brother, and try for the cash prizes. Ten dollars will be given to the man who drags the longest stretch of road into Smithville on this date and \$5 to the man who drags the next longest stretch of road. The committee on awards consists of John Morton, John Williams and O. J. Boggess, and contestants will submit their proofs to them. The winners will be announced Saturday, April 3. Now get busy, friends, and even if you shouldn't be a prize winner, you will win in the end by the improved condition of the roads you have to travel.

**April 9, 1915**

**Smithville's Claim to Fame**

News item: Jess Willard, the big Kansan, knocked Jack Johnson out in the 26<sup>th</sup> round, at Havana, Cuba Monday, winning the world's heavyweight championship.

Smithville's claim to fame is hardly in the "I knew him when" class, but one of her citizens used to run a pool hall in Wamego, Kansas (Willard's home county), while another is a native of Nemaha county, Kansas and once rode a bicycle past Jess Willard's home.

**THIS AND THAT**

We enjoyed the following announcement of a fundraiser put on recently by the Moniteau (MO) County Historical Society:

"The menu will be chili, hot dogs, dessert and drinks. We are having it at the Nutrition Center..."

From a case in our Circuit Court files, authorizing a wife to sell her real estate:

"Your petitioner, Sarah D. Austin, states that on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of December 1846, she was lawfully united in marriage to William Austin, that on or about the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March 1879, William Austin, her said husband, abandoned and left her your petitioner and the said William Austin has become worthless and drunken, and has failed to make sufficient provision for her support..."

## RECENT ACCESSIONS

Book "Images of America, Kearney", donated by Ken Neth.

Minutes, financial records, mailing lists, newspaper clippings, other memorabilia dating from 1933 to 2010, donated by the Clay County Protective Association. (See related article)

Dedication program Kearney 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church 1971, Kearney Trust Co. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brochure, Reading Circle Certificates -- 1943, 1944 and 1945, donated by Pete Kingery.

Miscellaneous information (photographs, newspaper clippings, etc.) about McCullough family, donated by Jane Elliott.

Book "Thomas and Callam Bailey of Albemarle County, Virginia" compiled by Donna Beers and donated by Robert and Linda Bailey.

These items are available for our patrons to use in their research. Thank you to these generous donors.

## CLAY COUNTY PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION (1933 – 2010)

Recently the Archives received a generous monetary and document donation from the Clay County Protective Association, which recently disbanded. The following information was included with their donation:

The association was organized by farmers and cattlemen for the purpose of stopping theft and crime on their farms.

Clay County was a leading cattle county in the nation, well known for finishing cattle with grain while being pastured. Times were hard for everyone and the loss of livestock and farm items could not be tolerated. The county's location next to Kansas City was a prime location for thieves to prey upon farmers.

Clay County law enforcement at that time was a sheriff and possibly a deputy. This was a task that was more than they could handle. Thus, a grass roots group of cattlemen and farmers concluded that help was needed and the Clay County Protective Association was formed. Dues to maintain the association were at first voluntary; later dues were assessed. Any illegal activity was reported to the sheriff. A road patrol was employed to help monitor the county and the participation of members was very successful in stopping the thieves. Not surprisingly, word was passed around that Clay County was not the place to steal livestock and goods.

The last meetings of the association would have been in the early 1980's and, due to lack of interest and need, the organization soon faded. However, there was a sizeable amount left in the Association and two of the trustees have faithfully preserved and grown this money.

Therefore the trustees and three former members who were located determined that the Association had served its purpose and something should be done with the money. It was decided the Liberty Hospital Foundation Tree House and the Clay County Archives would be the recipients.

The few items that are in the hands of the Secretary of the Association will be given to the Clay County Archives and so ends an organization that once was a colorful part of our past.

*Information provided by the Clay County Protective Association*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from Page 1)

of change being much less than the pain, of whatever nature, currently being endured.

After taking the gamble to come to this continent, their mettle was tested. Many people questioned whether the pain of survival was truly less than the pain they had left in Europe. But that wasn't all. Over the ensuing decades, they found that they couldn't escape the overbearing tentacles stretching across the Atlantic.

Eventually they decided to roll the dice and attempt to throw off the impositions of King George. It was, as you know, a very difficult struggle. Many times it looked as if the gamble would inevitable go bust.

But the "rebels" stood fast to their convictions and the path they chose. In doing so, they created a country that would stand as the beacon on a hill whereby other souls, from other lands and other times, could choose to flee from oppression and the situations in which they suffered. So they could have the opportunity to rise above the human condition as they had known it.

This country had a difficult birth and a difficult adolescence. It is still far from perfect. But I would hate to imagine the state of this world without it. It seems to me that the gamble paid off.

*Stuart E. Elliott*

## ANSWER TO QUESTION FROM BACK PAGE

They were all Eagle Scouts! Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Boy Scouts of America!



**100 YEARS AGO  
EXTRACTS FROM THE  
LIBERTY TRIBUNE**

**Friday, April 1, 1910**

Married on Her Birthday.

The many friends of the couple were given a surprise Monday in the news that Mr. George C. **Smith** of Kansas City and Miss Louise **Loos** were united in marriage at noon that day. The event was expected some time in the future, but the happy occasion came sooner than the principals had first planned.

Mr. Smith came on a visit to Liberty Saturday evening, and remained until Monday noon, as Monday was Miss Louise's birthday. It was then decided to celebrate the anniversary by having the wedding take place that day. The ceremony was performed by Elder F. V. Loos, father of the bride, in the presence of the family and a few friends.

The couple will make their home for the present with her parents, Mr. Smith going to the city daily to his business. He has a good and responsible position, that of credit man with the Smith-McCord wholesale dry goods house, which his father, the late George C. Smith, was a member of many years. George, Jr., like his brother, Irving, came to Liberty and stayed a few years, in the Frank **Hughes** store, to get good knowledge of the retail business. He is a very popular young man, well liked by the many friends he made here, and has fine business qualifications. Miss Louise is a very sweet and charming young woman and Mr. Smith has a jewel for a wife. The Tribune takes great pleasure in extending congratulations.

Studied Roads Abroad.

K.C. Star: Dr. O.C. **O'Kell** of Excelsior Springs returned Saturday morning from Vienna. While traveling in Austria, England and other countries Doctor O'Kell gave attention to systems of building and maintaining highways. He intends to use the information gathered to influence favorable action in Clay county for a road between the Springs and Kansas City. Dr. O'Kell is president of the Excelsior Springs Good Road association.

**Friday, May 13, 1910**

In Behalf of Public Health.

Several owners of property fronting on the public square and near it are to be notified by the city clerk to make connections with the city sewer system. The approach of summer and informal reports on sanitary conditions caused the council to make the order last Friday night.

Dr. J. M. **Allen** of Liberty was an important witness for the defense last Friday in trial in Kansas City of Dr. B. Clark **Hyde**, charged with the murder of Col. Thomas H. **Swope**. Dr. Allen testified as an expert. He said cyanide of potassium, the quick poison which Dr. Hyde is known to have bought, was sometimes used as medicine. He said he never had used it in 5-grain capsules – the form in which Dr. Hyde had purchased it. The cross examination of James A. **Reed**, state's attorney, failed to shake Dr. Allen's testimony. He was considered a valuable witness for the defense.

**Friday, June 17, 1910**

On tipping the Hat.

Ohio State Journal: It is reported that at Ellburn, Ill. the girls have notified the young men that hereafter they must tip their hats when they meet the young ladies or they will receive no return salutation. If they mumble a "good morning" or "howdy do," and refuse to lift the hat, they will get a cold stare. This may seem a heroic remedy, but if it necessary to teach the boys some manners, it is all right. Chivalry is a noble trait, and the recognition of it in life exalts a man. But chivalry, like all other virtues, possesses a modesty. A person who practices it should not be too loud or demonstrative. It becomes one when it is exercised with grace and gentility. We saw a young fellow salute a young lady the other day, by raising his hat and he did it with such a flourish and pretense as to surely make a sensible girl feel ridiculous. He raised the hat a foot from his head, then thrust it forward two feet, all the time executing some contortions of the body, such as one might practice in trying to stop a run-away horse.

To Fly Along Wabash.

The aeroplane race across Missouri has been fixed for July 18, but subject to change. The flight will be along the Wabash railroad from St. Louis to Kansas City and therefore across Clay county. Stops will be made at a few points in crossing the state, and one place close to Liberty may be selected, as ground south of town would afford a good place for lighting, before making the final spurt to Kansas City. A prize of \$10,000 is offered, which will be divided into three moneys.

A \$6,000 Fire at Barry.

The general store of John **Ellis**, and Cam **Simms'** two-story blacksmith shop, which adjoined it, burned Monday morning. Mr. Ellis's loss was about \$4,000. His insurance, placed with E. D. **Moore** of Liberty, was \$2,700. The building, a two-story frame structure, was owned by the Vigilants' association of that place. The loss was about \$800 and it was partly covered by insurance. Mr. Simms

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## STORY IN THE BACKGROUND

By Steve Olson

Recently the Clay County Museum came across a photograph of one of the Interurban RR cars and they made a copy for us here at the Archives. Though we often compete with them for resources like funding, volunteers and donations, we cooperate in preserving the history of the county. At the Archives we keep documents and papers. The Museum keeps artifacts and objects. That line gets blurred sometimes, but is the major difference between the two organizations.

Old photographs, this one was dated on the back as 1912, are always interesting. We have a lot of information in our files on the Interurban, or more formally, the Kansas City, Clay County and St. Joseph Railway. It was the electric rail from Kansas City to either Excelsior Springs or St. Joseph. This picture was one I hadn't seen before. It shows one of the big center-door cars and, though the picture is not in color, we know it was painted a deep red hue. It has fancy leaded glass windows on either side of the doors. And it also proclaims on its side that it runs on the Excelsior Springs Route. This is car #20 and it looks to be shiny and new.

But historians need to look beyond the main object of the picture to see what lies in the background and what stories that might yield. The car sits on the tracks in the center of a street. And behind is a building and on the building roof is a partially visible sign reading, "Withers Lum\_\_." Some research reveals that to be the Withers and White Lumber Company that was formed in 1906 by Webster Withers and Church A. White and it was on the southeast corner of East Mill Street and Missouri in Liberty.

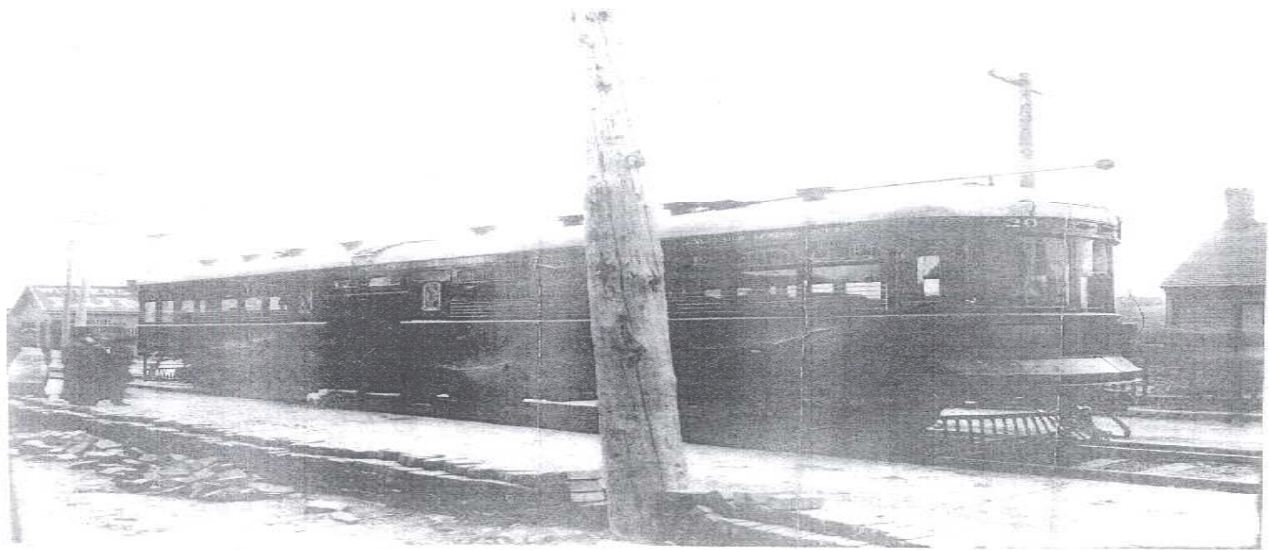
It was sold to H. R. Banks in 1915. An article in the Liberty Advance from August 13, 1909 states that the lumberyard was installing a picket fence "thus making it proof against fire bugs and other crooks." It must have worked, since it can still be seen in this picture more than three years later.

By referencing the 1913 Sandborn Map, we find that the street in the foreground is Mill Street and I think we are standing on Missouri Street looking toward the south and east. A portion of the lumber office or possibly a residence is seen with its broken picket fence and crumbling chimney in the near right background. Beyond that is a large house on higher ground. My guess is that this is the house at 134 South Leonard and above it we can see a bit of the roof peak of 140 South Leonard. But I can't be sure. The lumberyard is definitely a city parking lot today.

Tall wooden poles are prevalent and support the electric and telephone lines. A double row of stacked paving bricks extends all along the near side of Mill Street. My guess is that those are bricks removed from the street to make way for the tracks which must have been newly laid. Since the Interurban began early in 1913, that would make sense. Four men are seen walking along the street. Three are dressed in hats, one wears a suit and necktie, one wears a long coat with its collar turned up. It must be cold out. The fourth man is curly headed with a white cap of some sort and wears a white but soiled apron over his clothing. Is he perhaps a butcher?

At least two passengers can barely be seen inside the coach. From the trolley pole we can see the car is headed west. Were these folks headed into Kansas City to work or to shop? A small white dog, or possibly a young lamb, stands in the street inches from the tracks. Would he have survived long with the cars zipping along? Who are all these people? What other details did I fail to see?

*Thanks to Steve for this article. Steve is an Archives volunteer.*



## VOLUNTEER CORNER

We are excited to have two new volunteers at the Archives: Marcia Grimes and Roy Sparks, both native Clay Countians. Marcia, whose maiden name is McComas, is originally from Smithville and now lives in Liberty. She is working on Mondays, abstracting information. Roy is from the Nashua/Gashland area and is organizing the contents of files on Wednesdays.

Stop in and meet our new volunteers. And consider volunteering at the Archives, too. It's fun and you can learn so much about local history.

If you are interested, please contact Carol Olson at 816-781-3611 or 816-452-3540.

## CRAWLING THROUGH THE CEMETERIES WITH KEN

*By Ken Neth (Known around the Archives as Mr. Cemetery.)*

Another graveyard has been added to our list. We were contacted by a family who believed burial was at the Turnham-Claycrest House. About a month later we were contacted again with a new location in Avondale. We were able to verify the location from the husband's LDS biography. The location is east of the school between Cates and Walnut Streets and east of Jaudon Street. The only known burials are for a wife and child (in the same grave) in 1839.

Considerable damage was done to the Starks Graveyard when a pickup truck took out the south brick wall and iron fence. The truck was damaged so much it had to be towed away.

## 100 YEARS AGO EXTRACTS FROM THE *LIBERTY TRIBUNE*

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saved most of the contents of the building. The loss on that building was about \$600.

The fire was about 6 o'clock in the morning. The Gashland telephone operator notified neighboring farmers and many responded to help put out the blaze. They did good service in helping to save the homes of Mr. Ellis, Bud **Williams** and Leonard **Samples**, which were threatened. The origin of the fire is not known.

The Vigilants have not decided whether they will rebuild.

Mr. Ellis is son of W. C. Ellis of Liberty.

## DON'T EAT PLANTS YOU'RE NOT FAMILIAR WITH

"In Virginia, there is a plant called the Jamestown weed, whereof some having eaten plentifully became fools for several days, one would

blow up a feather in the air, another sit naked, like a monkey, grinning at the rest, or fondly kiss and paw his companions..."

Cotton Mather, 1720

The amusing story of the men who ate the hallucinogenic herb Jamestown weed, or jimsonweed, is often told as an example of what not to do: don't eat plants you're not familiar with. These unwise fellows recovered after eleven days, but they were lucky, for they had feasted on *Datura stramonium*, a psychoactive (chemical substance that acts primarily upon the central nervous system) member of the nightshade family.

Jimsonweed and other related plants contain a narcotic which has been used in many cultures as a poison, a medicine (chiefly as a pain-killer and wound healer) and as a ceremonial hallucinogenic (an aid to worship or to obtaining prophetic dreams or messages). And yes, it can kill you, if you eat enough of it.

*From aboutthyme.com*

## MUSINGS ON BAKING POWDER

The last time I sent my husband to the grocery store for baking powder, he came home with the Clabber Girl brand. I've used it and it does everything it's supposed to do, but to me if the can isn't red with Calumet's Indian chief on it, it's not really baking powder.

This got me to wondering about baking powder. How is it different from baking soda? They both make baked goods rise, don't they? Time to check in with my good friends at Google.

First, what is baking powder? It's a leavener that consists of a combination of baking soda, cream of tartar and a moisture absorber (like cornstarch). It has the action of yeast, but acts much more quickly.

The first modern version of baking powder was discovered and manufactured in 1843 by Alfred Bird, a British chemist, who was searching for a product that would allow him to make yeast-free bread for his wife, who was allergic to yeast and eggs.

Over the next nearly 50 years, many people went into the baking powder business, improving the product and advertising it as creatively as possible, since the public was catching on as to how to make it cheaply for themselves.

In 1889 William M. Wright and chemist George Campbell Rew developed a double-acting baking powder whose leavening action began in the dough and repeated in the oven. They marketed the product under the name Calumet Baking Powder, because Wright was the master of Calumet Farm, the single most successful racing stable in American history, with six Kentucky Derby winners. Wright was also the cousin of Orville and Wilbur Wright.

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## MUSINGS ON BAKING POWDER

(Continued from Page 10)

(In about 1907, he and three other men drove from Chicago to the Pacific coast in a promotion for F. B. Stearns of Cleveland, Ohio. In their Stearns model 30/60 Tourer, they were the first to travel west by car along the old Santa Fe Trail. To make better progress over rough terrain, they removed the tires and lifted the car onto the railroad tracks, thereby riding on the wheel rims. Although the trip was made entirely for pleasure and no night driving was attempted, the drive took only 19 days and set a record for daylight travel. One puncture was the only cause for stopping in the entire 2800 miles.)

As for Clabber Girl, it was the name given in 1923 to the Clabber brand of baking powder, made by Hulman & Company. The manufacturer began in Terre Haute, Indiana in early 1850. Originally a wholesale grocery store, the business expanded into manufacturing, and by 1879 was making a variety of products, including spices, coffees and, of course, baking powder.

Interestingly enough, given Calumet's association with horse racing, Clabber Girl's parent company, Hulman & Company, currently owns the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

And finally, what is the difference between baking powder and baking soda? Baking powder is used in batters where there is no acid present and baking soda is used in products that contain acids, such as cream of tartar or lemon juice.

*From [www.whatscookingamerica.net](http://www.whatscookingamerica.net),  
[www.armhammer.com](http://www.armhammer.com) and [myclabbergirl.com](http://myclabbergirl.com)*

## THE LIBERTY FIRE

Seventy-five years ago last August 10<sup>th</sup> (1934) a fire caused significant damage near the Liberty Square. The fire started in a mule barn and spread to the fire station (the station and both fire trucks were destroyed) and the buildings which housed Trimble's Hardware, Baker's Garage, Wymore and Son Feed Store, Wares Distribution Plant and the Liberty Laundry. Despite the efforts of Liberty firefighters and those of Kansas City, North Kansas City, Excelsior Springs and other cities, the fire continued along Kansas Street, and the Major Hotel and the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house burned completely. At least 13 other buildings were damaged by fire or smoke.

Flames soon attacked the telephone lines and cables and caused them to be broken, making telephone connections impossible. Through the emergency line, a call was placed to Kansas City and within 23 minutes a fire truck with 15 men were here. With all other lines disconnected, it was necessary to send the SOS signal to other towns over the railroad wires. Paul (Peanuts) Thompson was put into a car

and told to drive toward Excelsior Springs until he could get that exchange and he drove to Crescent Lake. Richmond and Independence were called through Kansas City.

Approximately 350,000 gallons of water were used fighting the fire. Farmers had to go to the old town spring for water until the tank had a chance to refill.

Tales and rumors traveled fast and furious after the fire. One story had E. B. Maltby refusing to leave his room and threatening the firemen who were trying to rescue him. The story grew so large and fast that in a short time it was being said that Mr. Maltby actually shot at the firemen. "How absurd," said Mr. Maltby when he heard it, "I helped Mr. Ritchie leave his room and went back to my room to get my own things when six men came rushing into the room, saying I was going to burn up. I knew where the fire was all the time and wanted to save a few things which I valued very highly and which cannot be replaced."

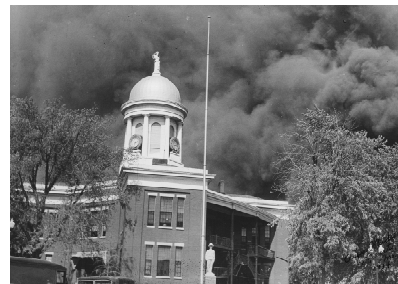
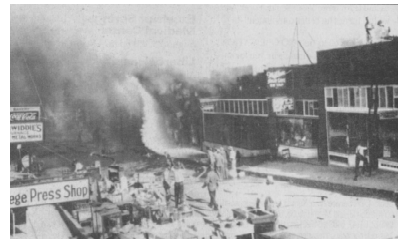
A radio report said that 80 homes were burning in Liberty. That was the tale that traveled the fastest and farthest. It helped to bring one of the biggest crowds to Liberty that night than ever before.

The fire recalled the time when the home of a Liberty merchant caught fire and he rushed home and began going through the house unscrewing all the electric light bulbs and throwing them out the window.

Harold Wymore was sitting in front of his new location in the Petty building the morning following the fire that destroyed his feed barn, when a passer-by remarked, "Did you move over here?"

"No, I just walked over here," Harold replied, "I had nothing left to move."

Coming as it did in the heart of the Depression, businesses could not rely on aid from the government. Some struggled to reopen; others had to close their doors.



## HEROES OF THE SKY

The Excelsior Springs Museum and Archives will present "Heroes of the Sky, Adventures in Early Flight, 1903 to 1939" from June 16 through August 24, 2010. Free to the public, it will feature national and local exhibits, guest speakers and children's activities, and will be open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Museum and Archives is located at 101 E. Broadway in Excelsior Springs. For more information call 816-630-0101 or visit [www.exsmo.com/museum](http://www.exsmo.com/museum).

President Gerald Ford; New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg; Tuskegee Airman Percy Sutton; jazz musician Wynton Marsalis; Astronaut Neil Armstrong; General William Westmoreland; Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr.; cartoonist Milton Caniff ("Terry and the Pirates," "Steve Canyon"); Secretary of Defense Robert Gates; and fewer than 2 million others. What do they have in common? (See page 7.)

### The Clay County MOsaic

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## COMING TO LIBERTY THIS SUMMER?

Stay at

*The Stone-Yancey  
House*



Are you planning to visit the Archives to research your family tree? You'll want to consider staying at the **Stone-Yancey House Bed and Breakfast**. Located just a few blocks from the Archives, the house is a lovely restored 1889 Victorian.

Each of the three guest rooms has its own bath, a queen or king-size bed, TV with DVD player, and high-speed Internet service. If all that weren't enough, owner Carolyn Hatcher will serve you a delicious 3-course breakfast each morning and sweets in the dining room each evening.

For more information, visit their website and book online at [www.stoneyanceyhouse.com](http://www.stoneyanceyhouse.com) or call 816-415-0066.