

The Clay County MOsaic

“Fitting the Pieces Together”

P R E S I D E N T ’ S M E S S A G E

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We would love to hear from you!

Is there a Clay County topic you’ve always wondered about?

Tell us what YOU want to see in the MOsaic!

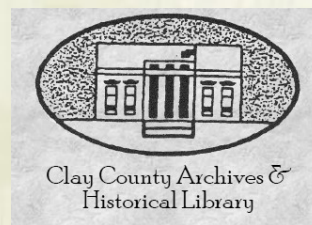
We are fortunate to have a summer volunteer from Staley High School. He is giving us 100 hours for his community service requirement for school and is filling in quite nicely. He is doing a variety of jobs so he is also getting a breadth of experience in archiving.

We received the Vernalee Tester collection which consists of family research, photographs and related documents. We are scanning the photos and organizing the paperwork.

Beverly Whitaker, a former volunteer, dropped in for a visit in April. She heard Tony Myers speak at a meeting recently and was so impressed that she felt compelled to come in and see us. Tony, Keith Nelson and Chris Harris all seem to be booked quite often for speaking engagements and are always well received.

CHARISMA, the association of Clay and Ray County historical organizations, had a Teachers Fair on July 30th in Glad-

stone. This was the second fair to reach out to local teachers and administrators so that they know how we can contribute to the education of our next generation.



Our Criminal Case project is moving along. The scanning is now complete (thanks to the Circuit Clerk) and we continue to organize, abstract and index. All of the pertinent information gleaned from the cases are noted so that they can become part of our Master Index. This includes all parties to the case, locations identified, the charges, etc. The Circuit Clerk is now scanning the Probate records since the original microfilm is of poor quality. And, in the same vein, we continue to abstract and index the Civil cases. By the way, the Circuit Clerk, Steve Haymes, has retired and we look forward to the

same great relationship with the new Circuit Clerk, Lee Bucksath.

There have been two newly discovered cemeteries in Clay County. Ken Neth reports that there is the Elliott Cemetery in Smithville (northeast of Paradise) and the Wilhoit Cemetery, which has yet to be located.

We are also working hard on our map collection. This ongoing project is organizing all of our maps (digitized and paper) to make them more accessible to us, patrons and researchers alike. We hope to integrate the maps with other documents (such as abstracts, probates, gazetteer, etc.) to gain a clearer understanding of our history.

The Clay County Museum and Historical Society celebrated their 50th anniversary in June at a gala held at a newly restored building on the south side of the square. We congratulate them on a half-century of service to our county!

~Stuart Elliott

2015 Executive Board

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President	Stuart Elliott
1st Vice President	Nancy George
2nd Vice President	Shirley Fansher
Corresponding Secretary	Ann Henning
Recording Secretary	Donna Root
Treasurer	Scott R. Cole

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<u>Through 2015</u>	<u>Through 2016</u>	<u>Through 2017</u>
Raymond Brock	Patricia Rendon	Keith Nelson
Bob Corum	Steve Olson	Joyce Schumacher

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Membership	Shirley Fansher
Properties	Bob Corum
Cemeteries	Ken Neth
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Clay County Parks	Emily Vandendaele
William C. Corum Chapter SAR	Frank McMillian
Clay Co. Patriots Chapter DAR	Lois Long
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City of Liberty	Jonna Wensel

Newsletter Staff

Keenan Glidewell Barker
Stuart Elliott

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 first 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	25 cents per page
Microfilm printouts	25 cents per page
Oversize copies	50 cents per page
Photographs	
Standard Quality	50 cents
Archival Quality	\$5.00

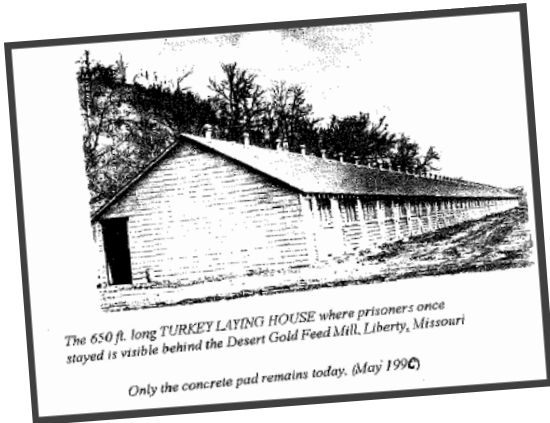
~ Personal imaging will be charged at the above rates ~

MOsaic by Internet

If you would like to receive your future newsletters via email, please forward your email address to: MOsaic@claycountyarchives.org

GERMAN PRISONERS ON OUR FARM BY MRS. HARRIET MILLER 1990

PART 2



The 650 ft. long TURKEY LAYING HOUSE where prisoners once stayed is visible behind the Desert Gold Feed Mill, Liberty, Missouri
Only the concrete pad remains today. (May 1990)

In the last issue of the MOsaic, Mrs. Miller introduced us to life on a Clay County, MO turkey farm that was built for production, but a year into production the War Labor Board approached the owners about the need for housing for German Prisoners. Feeling the need to fulfill their patriotic duty, the turkey laying house was converted to a war camp. The laying house was soon housing 600 prisoners of war, and guarded by personnel from Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Life on this Clay County farm suddenly changed.

Now the story continues....

World War II work prisoners had to be 6 feet tall and had to weigh at least 175 pounds and they were that size. (The prisoners had powerful arms and leg muscles.) They wore blue denim pants and shirts with 8-10 inch letters. "P. W." on the back of the shirt and seat of the pants. Shoes, too, were army issued.

The first group to arrive were Italians from a camp near Clarinda, Iowa. Another group of prisoners that came to our farm had belonged to Rommel's famous 5th North African Corps. They ALL carried wounds of "battle-scars."

What was once routine cars and trucks passing through our yard to the back of the farm, now became woven with truckloads of P.W.'s and guards moving out into early morning work duties. Our children would watch and wave to them as they passed through the yard. The prisoners eagerly watched for the children. You could see the longing in their eyes for their own young families. Many of them not knowing whether they were dead or alive.

The prisoners were not allowed to work any place that had anything pertaining to war in their business. They worked picking up potatoes for many people. The Mann Brothers Potatoes used many of them. Some were sent to Orrick, Missouri to work for W. J. Small Dehydrator Co., others to paper box companies in Kansas City, and to the Kansas City Stockyards. Apple picking near Independence, Missouri and many other places that were desperately needing help of any kind.

As mentioned they were taken by trucks and picked up by the same trucks at the end of the day. An American guard told us that one night they came to camp with one P.W. missing from work near Orrick. They went to try to find him and found him walking in the middle of the road trying to find his way back to camp. He had been lost and left behind. P.W. on their clothing identified them. He hadn't tried to escape. We read stories about some trying to leave but it was only "hearsay."

With 600 men in the work camp, it was surprising that things went so smoothly. One of the American guards told us that one of the P.W.'s had overslept when they were called for their routine morning roll call. The one that overslept came out in only his underwear and bare feet in the snow. Probably taught him to wake up fast!

One P.W. from Germany cut his hand on a power-saw and guards had to take him to the top floor of the Kansas

GERMAN PRISONERS ON OUR FARM (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 3)

City Medical Building for treatment. While there, the young prisoner looked out over Kansas City and bewilderedly said, "Oh, we were told Kansas City had been bombed."

The prisoners were all skilled craftsmen and had twenty different crafts represented in the camp. This made it easier to get work crews together.

We have told you about their work there, but they also had recreation. We let them have a two acre field by the camp to use for play. Every night after eating, the German prisoners of war would be on that field playing their favorite sport, soccer. We watched them from our home.

Some of the P.W.'s made gardens on the side of the hill and some made a cave in the side of the hill to keep potatoes for eating. They thought we were wasteful with so much land.

Where and how were the prisoner fed? The cooks (prisoners) used the center room of the turkey house. 50 x 35 feet for cooking and eating. Leon Jr., Phil, Frank and Jim went with their Dad to inspect the camp from time to time. They ate with camp cooks sometimes. They were most impressed with the German food, with the exception of one item, blood pudding.

Government rules allowed no girls or women near the camp, nor cameras or pictures of any kind taken of the camp or of the truck as they went to work.

Many of you have said, "Why didn't the newspapers write stories about the war prisoners being on the farm?" The answer is simple. It was wartime and there was so much **hate** in the hearts of Americans who had lost loved ones in battle in foreign countries or had been prisoners in other countries.

One young fellow visiting us said, "They should shoot everyone of those P.W.'s." It is hard for you to realize how emotional we can all be when blood is being shed on the battlefield. Almost every family was touched in some way during World War II. Planes were shot down over oceans and bodies never found.

War is never a pretty picture and we pray you will never experience what we have seen.

We were all rejoicing when the last battle was over and peace was declared at last. This meant we would all get back to our normal ways of living and prisoners would return to their homes from all over the world.

The morning the Prisoners of War Work Camp was to be vacated our 4 oldest sons, Leon Jr., Phil, Frank, and Jim went with their Dad to the camp for the last time to bid them "good bye." These two years had brought some strong friendships between the guards, prisoners, and our family. Our daughter, Marty and our youngest son, Jack, sat with me on our swing on the screened in porch, waving good bye to the men, many truckloads of prisoners and guards passing through our yard. They were on their way to their homes at last.

ABSTRACTS – ABSTRACTS – ABSTRACTS

Property Abstract – A property abstract is a collection of legal documents that chronicles activities with a particular parcel of land. Generally included are references to deeds, mortgages, wills, probate records, court litigations and tax sales. The abstract will also show the names of all property owners and how long a particular holder owned it, as well as showing the price the land was exchanged for when it changed owners. Property abstracts are considered good starting places for research on historical buildings. (source: wikipedia)

The Clay County Archives & Historical Library has literally thousands of Property Abstracts in its collection. They were acquired through donations from private individuals and also title companies. One of the most common requests the Archives gets is a property owner wanting to know how old the house or building is and/or the history of it that they own. Abstracts are also invaluable for family research.

Volunteer Chris Harris is the current “go-to” person for those wanting to learn more about abstracts. He follows in the footsteps of volunteers such as John Pasley, Rudena Mallory, Nancy Boland and Jenene Critcher who have previously clocked thousands of hours gleening important data for our index. Chris is now going through each abstract to add geographic information to our database. The information being gathered is:

- Abstract inventory number
- Township, Range, Section information
- Township information
- Lot and Block number (for property in subdivisions)
- Legal description
- Addition and/or Subdivision information
- Street Address
- City where property is located

Chris has been working on the indexing project for almost a year and is up to Abstract A-1512 out of 3,000 abstracts on the main level. More abstracts have recently been re-discovered in the basement and there are an addition 5,000 that have never been abstracted. Needless to say that this is an ongoing project. Volunteers are always needed to help.

In speaking with Chris about his work, he gives the following example of why Property Abstracts can be helpful.

“In 2004 I had been gathering information on a book that later would be published regarding the houses in Liberty built before 1900. Two houses had conflicting stories as to the date of construction. 450 E. Franklin Street and 660 N. Spring Street. Both houses were owned and supposedly built by Col. Henry L. Routt and his wife Catherine. Previous historical articles about the homes have supposed that the 660 N. Spring Street house was much older. In looking at the house today, you would think that would be the case. The more research I did came up with information that contradicted this long accepted history. Finally I located the property abstracts for both homes. Here is the result. In Property Abstract A-1466 on page 33 we find that Catherine Routt (wife of Col. Henry Routt) purchases Lot 6 in Wilson’s Addition (now Tracts A and F in Hessel’s Subdivision) from Samuel Hadley for \$1,500. Lot 6 is roughly one acre in size. The date of the purchase was April 21, 1860. The expense of the purchase indicates that improvements have been made to the property and most likely the house that is on this lot was already built.”

ABSTRACTS (CONTINUED)

In reading this same abstract we later find that Catherine Routt sells Lot 6 to Irene Litchfield, Widow of John Kerr Dougherty, and current wife of Abraham Litchfield on April 19, 1869. No price is listed.

Continuing my research I also found the Property Abstract for 660 N Spring Street. In reading through this Abstract we find that on June 20, 1870 Catherine Routt purchases Eight acres of land from Alexander J. Calhoun, a former law partner of her husband. The amount of the sale was \$800. Three days later a Mortgage is recorded for this same property for a considerable sum of money which suggests that the Routt's borrowed money to begin building the brick house that stands on this property today. With this information and with confirmations from other sources I was able to correctly date both houses which as a result changed long accepted history."



*~Christopher Harris
Archives Volunteer*

CEMETERY TOUR

On Friday, June 5, 2015, The Clay County Archives conducted its fourth cemetery tour. This tour was in the southwest quarter of the county and consisted of 95 cemeteries. We left at 9:30 and our first stop was Grace Episcopal Church on 291 Highway. Our next stop was the Arthur Graveyard. Next we stopped at the Minneville Cemetery and then Rogers and Crowley Cemeteries. We stopped for lunch at First Watch in North Kansas City. Our final stop was at Pence cemetery. We made walking stops at: Arthur, Minneville, Rogers and Pence. The remaining 24 cemeteries were drivebys. These were Atkins, Atkins Slave, Wilson, Roberts, Chandler, North Kansas City Bakersy, Minter, Klamm, Brown, Gash, Williams-Land, Barry, North Cross Columbarium, Darby, Gatty, Antioch Columbarium, Good Shepherd Columbarium, Morton, Younger, Presbyterian Columbarium, Davison and Little Davidson. Various points of interest were noted. Those attending were: Joyce Schumacher (our driver), Ann Henning, Jane Shepherd, Patty Rendon and Ken Neth. The weather was perfect, making for a good tour.

*~Ken Neth
Archives Volunteer*

RECENT DONATIONS

Donations of Material

John Assel — Utah: Clay County Surveyor Records of Harvey Evans (12203 120th St. Kansas City, Mo)

Franklyn Bridges — Quaker Gregg, by Kendall; 1946 CD-ROM, History of Gregg Family

Constance B. Carder — 1948 Life Magazines in a Life Binder

Clay County Archives (found in Sewer Box) — Bay Book and 2 Ledgers from unnamed business about 1888-1891; Case #3383, *Marcella Thompson v. Metropolitan Street Ry. Co.*; high button shoe of the 1890's

Ann and Dan Golden — Genealogical Notes From the Liberty Tribune 1-5, bound volume; Jackson Heights Add., photo; Drawing of Hester House; book, Distaff Side, by Georgia Bowman; Hergert's Bio. Of John Priest Greene; 1943 photo of homecoming day

Chris Harris — Assorted pictures of Liberty; (loan) 4 photos, Sign at Fountain Bluff

Steve Haymes — Bridge to the Past: A Personal History of North Kansas City

Michael McCall — 20 Suburban North Homes Buyers Guides about 1976-1978, each publication featuring a home in Clay or Platte County

Bobbi Roman — Lithograph of poster of Franklin School (won 3'd prize nationally in 2001)

Donations of Money

Kathleen Bird

Chapter IZ-PEO
c/o Patty Pence Evans

Nancy George

Dick and Ann Golden

Greater Kansas City Community Foundation
(Ray Brock matching Gift)
Irven E. & NeVada P. Linscomb Foundation Fund

Bill Matteson

Michael R. and Mary Wilson

Explore Liberty's Heritage

2015 Walking Tours

All guided tours are free and open to the public.
Tours begin at 10 a.m. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes.
For more information call 816-439-4537.

Saturday, May 2

William Jewell College
Tour meets at the back entrance to the Pryor Learning Center (Parking Lot side) on the WJC campus

Saturday, June 6

New Hope/ Fairview Cemetery
Tour meets at the stone arch entry to the cemetery on Shrader Street

Saturday, July 11

Dougherty Historic District
Tour meets at Rotary Park, corner of Franklin and Gallatin Streets

Saturday, August 1

An 1860s Tour of Liberty
Meet at the fountain in front of City Hall, 101 E. Kansas St.

Saturday, September 12

Jewell & Lightburne Historic Districts
Tour meets at the parking lot at the corner of Franklin and Lightburne Streets

Saturday, October 3

Mt. Memorial Cemetery
Tour meets at the entrance to the cemetery. (Enter William Jewell College campus from Miller Street and continue up the hill.)



THE CITY OF
Liberty
MISSOURI

Co-sponsored by the City of Liberty's Preservation Office (www.ci.liberty.mo.us)
and Historic Liberty, Inc. (www.HistoricLiberty.org).

**ARCHIVES
GIFT SHOP**

ATLAS

Reprint of the 1865 Clay County Historical Atlas, with features in color, just like the original! Includes an index. \$22

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 and for the current model players. Specify which of the formats you desire.

GREETING CARDS

Note Cards—10 \$7.50

DOCTOR ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

The Diaries of Dr. William Wallace Dougherty, 1854-1880 \$17

LOST VOICES ON THE MISSOURI

(Dougherty) \$64.95

**IKNEWFRANK...IWISHIHADKNOWN
JESSE**

Family, Friends and Neighbors in the Life and Times of the James Boys \$30

GUERRILLAS AND OTHER CURIOSITIES

Bud, Donnie and Me \$25

MISCELLANEOUS / BOOKS

1877 Historical Atlas of Clay County \$15
Every-Name Index to 1877 Atlas \$13
Clay County Births, 1883-84 \$9
Clay County Deaths, 1883-84 \$9
Divided Loyalties \$40
Clay County Historic Map \$15
(not available to be mailed)
Early Days in the West \$18
DAR Sesquicentennial Book \$30

DIVIDED LOYALTIES - Civil War Soldiers Buried in Clay County \$35

Biographical narratives and genealogical information for more than 800 soldiers and family members. Published to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

DISCOVERING HISTORIC CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI \$30

Information on more than 1,100 historic sites and points of interest throughout Clay County. Includes photos, descriptions and maps.

Please make your check payable to:

Clay County Archives

And mail to:

P.O. Box 99

Liberty, MO 64069

All prices include mailing fees. If you wish to pick up in person, please contact us for pricing and to ensure availability.

April—June 2015

WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.CLAYCOUNTYARCHIVES.ORG



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Mailing Address

PO Box 99, Liberty, MO 64069

Phone

816-781-3611

Our Mission

To procure, preserve, restore, maintain, study, and promote manuscripts, instruments, records, charters, evidence, and documents of a public or private nature which may have statistical, legal or historical significance to Clay County, Missouri, its government or residents, or such documents as might be desirable to the association and to encourage public interest therein.