

# 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 participated in the 2016 Charisma Teacher’s Fair at the Gladstone Community Center for teachers in school districts in Clay County. We displayed many of our publications and other material of interest to educators. We also donated a copy of Judge Thorp’s book as a door prize.

We’ve added to our collection of publications by reprinting the Clay County portion of the National Historical Company 1885 History of Clay and Platte Counties. It is available for \$30 in the merchandise section of our website.

We had many speaking engagements including at the Clay County Museum, the Liberty Methodist Church and the North Kansas City Kiwanis Club.



Continuing our desire to digitize our holdings, we purchased a high-definition camera for use on old films in our collection as well as for maps, plats, drawings, newspapers (when appropriate), etc.



We are beholden to our generous patrons who donated over \$900 this quarter. It is very much appreciated and will be used for various projects. Thank you all very much!

~Stuart Elliott

Did you know.....?

You can support the Clay County Archives and Historical Library when you shop on line via Amazon?

Consider using Amazon Smile, which contributes a tiny portion of the money from your eligible purchase to the Archives.

Every penny helps!

On your first visit to AmazonSmile ([smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)), you need to select Clay County Archives And Historical Library to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon Smile will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation.



**2016 Executive Board**

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 Stuart Elliott  
 Shirley Fansher

**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	15 cents per page
Microfilm printouts	25 cents per page
Computer print-outs	5 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](mailto:MOsaic@claycountyarchives.org)

## THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD TUNNEL

Some years ago, volunteers at the Clay County Archives compiled and published *Doctor on the Western Frontier – The Diaries of Dr. William Wallace Dougherty 1854-1880*. Recently, while browsing through the book, one of Dr. Dougherty’s entries caught my attention.

March 17, 1878

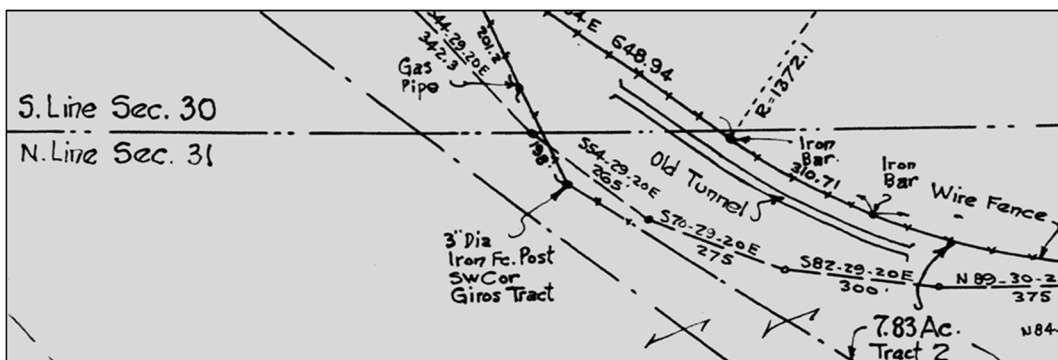
“... Took Mary riding after dinner. Dick (and) Charly (were with us) in (the) buggy. Went to Baxter’s Landing, hitched the horses, and walked up to the tunnel, (went) half way through it and then (came) back. Road seemed pretty dry and we had a good drive.”

I’ve always had a fascination for caves and tunnels so needless to say, Dr. Dougherty’s comments piqued my interest. Exactly where was this tunnel? When was it built and why? Does it still exist? So the hunt was on. I started by asking other volunteers at the Archives about the tunnel. Some had heard of it but no one seemed to know much about it. I started searching through the Archives’ newspaper collection for clues. I found a brief article in an 1867 edition of the *Liberty Tribune* indicating that “coal had been discovered in the tunnel.” Okay, so the tunnel was located near Baxter’s Landing (3 miles south of downtown Liberty) and was somehow associated with the railroad that was being built in that area.

**COAL DISCOVERED.—We learn that a vein of stone coal has been discovered in the tunnel on the survey of the North Mo. R. R. at Baxter's Landing in this county. The coal is said to be of superior quality, and the ledge of good thickness.**

My next step was to examine the Archives’ map collection. The older maps clearly documented that the original route of the railroad passed very near the bluff just to the west of where the river landings had once been located. Unfortunately, these maps don’t provide enough detail to confirm the existence of or the specific location of the tunnel.

Several weeks went by and no new information came to light. Just as I was starting to consider that I might have to let go without knowing the full story of the tunnel, a new clue surfaced. Included with a collection of several plats that had recently been donated to the Archives was a detailed survey that had been prepared in 1937 for the area west of the river bluff. Roads, railroad tracks, property lines, levees and fence lines were all shown. And there it was—straddling the line between Sections 30 and 31 in Township 51, Range 31—a unique structure clearly labeled as “Old Tunnel.”



(Continued on page 4)

## THE MYSTERY ... CONTINUES

(Continued from page 3)

Armed with the exact location of the tunnel, it was time to see if aerial photographs might provide some additional insight.



At first glance, a photo taken in 1940 (left) seemed to show what might have been an entrance to a tunnel. However, additional research suggested that the 1940 photo was most likely showing the early stages of limestone mining that was just get-



ting underway at that location. A second photo of the same area (right) shows that quarry work was in full swing by 1957. By the time the quarry was abandoned in the 1960's the area had been fully excavated and any evidence of the tunnel had been removed.

By this time, some key parts of the tunnel mystery had been solved, but many questions were unanswered. There was one more place to look... the Gazetteer folders. The "stacks" represent many years' of work by volunteers dating back to the formation of the Clay County Archives organization. Over the years, as information has been discovered about a particular subject, a folder has been created and a copy of pertinent documentation has been accumulated. A quick review of the railroad folders didn't yield any clues regarding the tunnel. However an article from the May 7, 1923 edition of the *Liberty Advance* that was filed in the Liberty Landing folder provided all the answers... and some new twists to the story. The article, which is reproduced below in its entirety, makes for an interesting read. As you browse the story, keep in mind that the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which prohibited the production and sale of alcohol, was the law of the land at that time.

### AN OLD TUNNEL MYSTERY

*The officers received a tip that a still had been in operation in the old Wabash railroad tunnel at Liberty Landing and the famous "portable judiciary" composed of Constable Willis Grimes, Prosecutor Cummins and Officers John Clark and John Kennedy left for the tunnel Friday to investigate.*

*When they reached the west end a big cave in of dirt had occurred about 20 feet from the entrance, that appeared to have just taken place.*

*Search of the tunnel was therefore impossible without removing an immense amount of dirt and stone, and the officers had no shovels or force enough even to make a beginning on the job,*

## THE MYSTERY ... SOLVED?

(Continued from page 4)

*so they returned home without finding a criminal or convening court. Cave-ins in past years had taken place at the other end and in places along.*

*It is thought the still is buried under tons of earth, and rumor has been that possibly three men are buried or imprisoned in the cavern.*

*The identity or whereabouts of the parties is not known if they are alive and out of the tunnel, and they do not care about letting the officers know if they escaped. It is thought one of them is known.*

*It is thought by some the bootleggers set off an explosion in the tunnel to hide their still and goods, and they may have engaged in the business there on a large scale.*

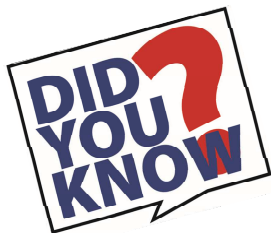
*The tunnel has not been used for perhaps 40 years or more. It was considered unsafe, and the river had changed some so that a track could be built around the hill, and this was done.*

*The tunnel, in the early days of railroads, when riding on trains was a novelty, afforded a thrill for passengers in going through it.*

So there it was... the complete and final story of the tunnel, all neatly bundled in a few paragraphs of an old Liberty newspaper. But wait. What about those guys who were operating the still. Did they escape or are they buried in the old tunnel? Hmmmm? Yet another mystery to be pursued.

~Tony Meyers  
Archives Volunteer

## TRIVIA



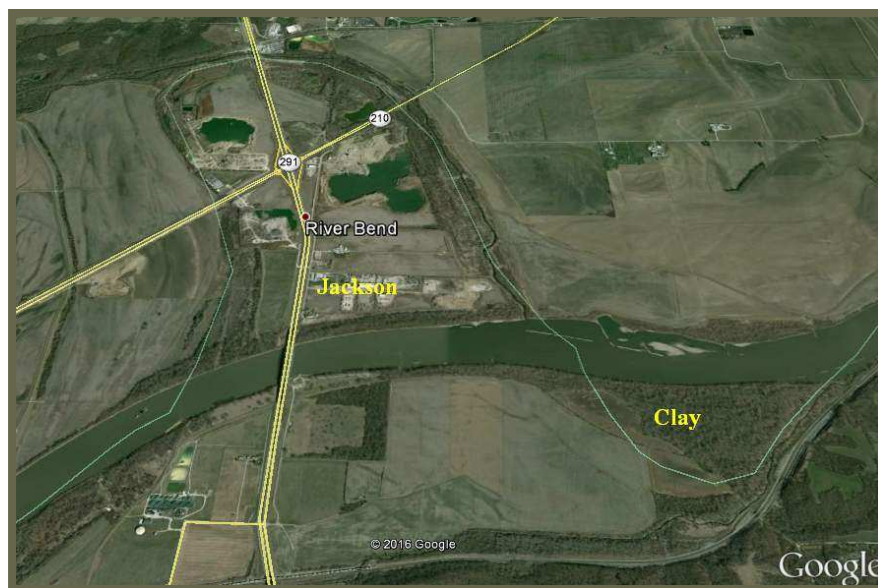
**Question:**

Where does Jackson County occur north of the River?

Where does Clay County occur south of the River?

**Answer:**

These geographical freaks of nature were both created when the river was “relocated” by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1949.





## RECENT DONATIONS



### Donations of Material

Gail Estes—Estes Trails, Vol. 1, family publication 1988 - 1997 in loose-leaf binder

Cheryl Diehl—Misc. office supplies

Bob Hazlett—Goss Cemetery Record Book and Administrative Materials

Chris Harris—Georgia Bowman papers

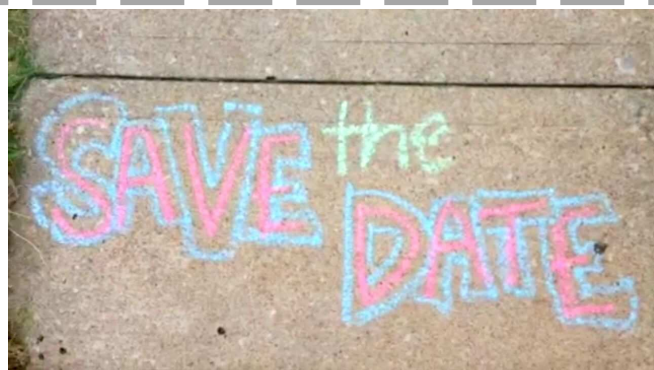
Jane Sharon—AniMap Plus County boundary historical atlas on a CD; five photos

### Loans of Materials

Meri Jane McNeece—Abstract of Title: T-51, R-31, S-8, Oscar Benson house, 1331 Richfield Road (returned)

### Donations of Money

Harold Brueseke



Annual Meeting of the Clay County Archives  
and Historical Library

November 5, 2016

Watch for more details to follow.

**ARCHIVES  
GIFT SHOP**

**ATLASES**

Reprint of the 1865 Clay County Historical Atlas, with features in color, just like the original!  
Includes an index. \$22  
1877 Historical Atlas of Clay County \$15  
Every-Name Index to 1877 Atlas \$13

***THE STORY OF LIBERTY***...from settlement to suburb, a movie available in two formats:  
DVD—\$17 each  
S-VHS—\$12 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

***IKNEWFRANK...IWISHIHADKNOWNJESSE***

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**

Civil War Monuments & Memorials  
In Western Missouri \$22  
Clay County Births, 1883-84 \$9  
Clay County Deaths, 1883-84 \$9  
Clay County Historic Map \$15  
(not available to be mailed)  
Clay Co. Sesquicentennial Souvenir \$30  
Doctor on the Western Frontier \$17  
Early Days in the West \$18  
Lost Voices on the Missouri \$64.95

***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.

***HISTORY OF CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI—NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMPANY, 1885*** \$30

Indexed and Reprinted by the Clay County Archives and Historical Library

***PORTRAITS OF A FRONTIER COMMUNITY*** \$25

The Jacob T. Hicks Glass Plate Photo Collection

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.

WE'RE ON THE WEB  
WWW.CLAYCOUNTYARCHIVES.ORG



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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.

Clay County Archives & Historical Library, Inc.  
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