

# The Clay County MOsaic

*"Fitting the Pieces Together"*

Quarterly Newsletter of the Clay County Archives & Historical Library, Inc.  
July – August - September 2005

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I was recently made aware of how fortunate we are to live in a community whose local economy is healthy and whose civic and political leaders plan and strive for success in the future. I was recently part of a work crew who spent a week in Mississippi repairing homes damaged by hurricane Katrina. We worked in a few small towns about 90 miles inland. It was not in an area of total destruction like that found along the coast, however there are thousands of homes damaged by fallen trees and flying debris. We were hosted by a church in Magnolia, MS., which is the county seat of Pike county. In many ways it reminded me of the older parts of Liberty, Smithville, Excelsior Springs and Kearney. Several of the big older homes have been restored and a few are on the National Register. Other homes display signs with names of the original owners and the dates they were built. It is a town proud of its history. However, many of the surrounding towns and rural areas look like descriptions I've heard of what this area looked like during the Great Depression of the 1930's. Like all small communities people there are moving to the cities to find employment. Clay County's location near Kansas City has helped to maintain a growing population in our small towns. This is a fact sometimes overlooked. The challenge of our small towns is to maintain their unique identity in the wake of encroaching suburbs and strip malls. And as we suffer from too much growth and prosperity, we should not forget the thousands of other communities that would love to have our problems.

*Kevin M. Fisher*

## MOsaic by Internet

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

Please send it to:

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

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday thru Wednesday – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
First Wednesday of Month . 6:30 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 print-outs—15 cents per page  
Outsize copies – 50 cents per page  
Photographs  
    Standard Quality – 50 cents  
    Archival Quality -- \$5.00

**Any personal imaging will be charged at the above rates.**

### ARCHIVES PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

(All prices, postage paid)

1877 Historical Atlas of Clay County.....13.00  
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  
"The Story of Liberty, Missouri" (Film)  
    DVD (including handling fee).....17.00  
    Cassette (including handling fee).....12.00  
    [See Page 4 for ordering info.]  
"Doctor on the Western Frontier".....27.50  
    [See Page 4 for ordering info.]  
Clay County Marriage Indexes.... (See Page 4)

## SPECIAL GIFTS PROGRAM

*Benefactors -- \$1,000 & up (cumulative)*

*Patrons - - \$500-\$999 (cumulative)*

*Contributors -- \$100-\$499*

*Friends -- \$25-\$99*

### BENEFACTORS

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## 2005 PROGRAM

### CONTRIBUTORS

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**Excerpts from our new publication, "Doctor on the Western Frontier: The Diaries of Dr. William Wallace Dougherty, 1854-1880"**

For the next several newsletter issues, we will be printing in this space excerpts from Dr. Dougherty's diaries. We will use spelling and punctuation as shown in the book.

**Sunday, August 6, 1854**

The Holy Sabbath day. Went to church to day to hear Br. Rice (Rich), and took little Ella with me. Bro. Rich exceeded my expectations; were it not for his peculiarity, such a contortion of the features when he commences, he would do very well. (Note: G.W. Rich was the pastor of Liberty Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1854.)

**Monday, August 7, 1854**

The election to day passed off very calm indeed, but I expect thee will be a rush tomorrow. Quite a calamity occurred to day in Smithland. Several people were killed in an affray. (Note: *Smithville was sometimes referred to as Smithland prior to its incorporation in 1867. A gang of thieves living near Smithville had been ordered to leave the area, but had not. On Aug. 7 they sent word to town (Smithville) that they were going to take revenge on those who had tied to get rid of them. Armed with pistols, bowie knives and dirks (daggers) they rode into town. Their leader, Samuel Shackelford, began an insulting conversation with John W. Douglas and William Ross, both decent citizens of the community. During the conversation William Shackelford, a cousin of Sam, walked between Sam and Mr. Ross. At that moment William Shackelford drew his pistol and shot William Ross twice, severely wounding him. Shackelford then shot John Douglas twice and then shot at, but missed, Michael Imhoff. John Douglas, lying wounded on the ground, shot Sam Shackelford twice, wounding him. However Shackelford then jumped on Douglas, taking his pistol and Bowie knife and proceeded to shoot and stab Douglas to death. Shackelford again shot three times at Michael Imhoff, but missed. People from the gathering crowd began to intervene. In the following moments Sam Shackelford stabbed to death Squire John Ross and wounded Ira Witt. Another member of Shackelford's gang, John W. Calloway, also shot at, but missed, Michael Imhoff. He then shot William Slater in the leg. By this time the crowd and the gang became engaged in a general brawl in which stones, clubs and anything else were used. The gang retreated to a drug store, attempting to kill anyone who got in their way. The gang locked themselves in the building; however due to the severity of Sam Shackelford's wounds and the fact the crowd was threatening to burn down the building, they surrendered. A crowd of several called for a lynching. The Authorities pleaded for the law to take its proper course, but their call fell on deaf ears. William Shackelford was hanged first, John W. Calloway was next, finally Sam*

*Shackelford was hanged by the neck, all three on the same limb.)*

**Tuesday, August 8, 1854**

The first thing when I went down in town this morning was the report of the awful proceedings yesterday at Smithland – three of the citizens were taken by force by an infuriated Mob, and hung viz – two Shackelfords and one Calaway (*Calloway*). The scene must have been awful in the extreme. One of the Shackelfords, the oldest Samuel, was already shot, a thought to be in a dying condition when they removed him to the place appointed for his execution, and before the(y) got him there, report says, he was dead. The wives and female relatives of the unfortunate men remained under the tree on which they were hung all night, bewailing their awful calamity at an awful, distressing rate. The election is over. My friend Talbott is beaten for County Judge. Hodges, Turnham, and Thorp are the successful candidates. T.T. Allen is the sheriff elect, Collier is the assessor, Dabney the coroner, and George Wymore the constable for this township. I suppose Hubble is the magistrate, as I heard of no opponent. Doniphan is the representative. Who is elected to Congress & the state senate, has not yet been heard.

**Wednesday, August 9, 1854**

Jack Mosby, who was stabbed yesterday by Marion Bivens, is thought to be in very critical. There was another fight to day between J. G. Adkins and John Purly, neither much hurt; it was about the tickets Purly I selling as prize tickets for jewelry, et. We have just finished applying corrosive sublimate to the bedstead, to remove the chinch, which have become almost insufferable. (Note: *A cinch bug, sometimes called a bed bug, is an insect that gives off a very disgusting odor.*)

**Friday, August 11, 1854**

Was called to see Uncle John in the fore noon, found him quite feeble, and in the bowels, prepared the following, teaspoon of rhubarb, the same of soda & peppermint leaves, poured boiling water over them and let stand till cool; then sweetened with loaf sugar and added teaspoonfuls of brandy, gave him half wine glass full every hour which soon gave ease.

**Saturday, August 12, 1854**

There has nothing occurred today of much importance; indeed the town seems duller than any previous time; and Temperance party are wont to refer it to the stringent laws adopted by the City council with regard to the liquor traffic, but I am of a different opinion, notwithstanding many of the staunch old farmers in the country are down on the city lawn – think their nights are awfully invaded, when they are not permitted to come to town and take there dram, when and where they please – but not withstanding all this I think it will tell well in the future, and will be a great blessing rather than disadvantage to our young City.

## MARRIAGE BOOKS AVAILABLE

CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI, MARRIAGES 1821-1881  
Register of Marriages, Recorder's Office  
Clay County Courthouse, Liberty  
Books A thru E, Colored (1865 -1891) and Unrecorded  
Compiled by Rudena Kramer Mallory

CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI, MARRIAGES, 1881-1904  
Register of Marriages, Recorder's Office  
Clay County Courthouse, Liberty  
Books F to I  
Compiled by Rudena Kramer Mallory

Each Book, Softbound (\$24.50 ppd, MO residents add \$1.80)  
Each book, Hardbound (\$29.75 ppd, MO residents add \$2.19)  
Make your check payable to Rudena Kramer Mallory and mail to:  
Rudena Kramer Mallory  
c/o Clay County Archives  
P.O. Box 99  
Liberty, MO 64069

## BRAGG-ing Got This Bunch Into Trouble

By Linda Smith

Alexander Doniphan, David Rice Atchison, John Harris, Amos Rees, James T.V. Thompson, William T. Wood, John Thornton, Hiram Rich: lawyers, laymen, landowners, court officials, the list reads like a "Who's Who" of early Clay County. But these men have something else in common: they were all criminals. Their crime: betting.

This is just one of the many fascinating stories in the Criminal Court records that our volunteers are currently abstracting. These early citizens, and many others, were convicted because they "with force and arms did bet a large amount of money to wit the sum of twenty-five (sometimes fifty) cents upon a game of chance then and there played by means of a pack of playing cards then and there being which said pack of playing cards was then and there a gambling device adapted devised and designed for the purpose of playing a game of chance for money and property and against the peace and dignity of the sate." Our legal dictionary defined "force and arms" as "a phrase used...to denote that the act complained of was done with violence." But it's hard to believe that these men were being forced at gunpoint to play cards.

The game most often played was called Bragg (sometimes spelled Brag), an unusual British card game similar to poker, but much older and different in betting style and hand rankings. The basic game is Three Card Bragg, but there are also four-card, five-card, six-card, seven-card, nine-card and 13-card versions.

Our founding fathers who were convicted of betting were generally fined \$5 plus the amount bet. Did his teach them a lesson? Oh, no; most were caught, convicted and fined multiple times.

For more information on how to play Bragg, visit the following internet sites:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/three card bragg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/three_card_bragg)

<http://www.pagat.com/vying/brag.html>

## The Story of Liberty from settlement to suburb

Footprints in Clay, a video history project of the Clay County Archives, announces the availability of the DVD of our production, "The Story of Liberty -- from settlement to suburb."

This one-hour documentary of Liberty's history spans the years from pre-settlement to present. It premiered on Mau 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004, at Liberty Cinema 12 to two full houses with a reception at the intermission.

The movie is 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.

To order your copy, submit your request in writing, indicating quantity and format.

Make your check payable to the Clay County Archives and mail to P.O. Box 99, Liberty, MO 64069.

## DOCTOR ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

### The Diaries of Dr. William Wallace Dougherty, 1854-1880

(See Excerpts on Page 3)

You can own your own copy of Dr. Dougherty's diary!

**Publication Price**  
**\$22.50 at the Archives**  
**\$27.50 if mailed**

Make your check payable to the Clay County Archives, P.O. Box 99, Liberty, MO 64069

**COUNTY AND PROBATE COURT  
ORDER BOOKS**

By Evelyn Petty

Thornton Strother of Clay County had been named representative of the *Missouri Intelligencer*, and would accept subscriptions from any Clay County people who wished to subscribe. Up to 1826 Clay did not have such a representative, and also up to 1826 had not found any advertisement for roads to be built, or any municipal or county building. Whenever a road was approved, the entry in the court order book would mention that the road must be put up for advertisement. An advertisement could not be printed in the county because there were no printing presses and an advertisement in longhand would be the only other possibility. The book did not have names of those who made the best bid for constructing a new road, unless the overseer was also the builder.

The circuit court order book for the first ten years of the county has already been abstracted and published in this newsletter. The county court order book provides additional information about the early days, although it ends in 1831 instead of 1832. The second volume of this combination county court/probate book is in a record book with part of the items written in a normal fashion and the other half of the book written upside down to the first part. Also, the book is much smaller than Volume 1, and while it continues with 1831, seems to have fewer items in it. W. L. Smith was a wonderful writer, but some of the other clerks lacked his skill in writing.

As Clay County did not have a newspaper for over ten years after its founding, these court records serve as the best source for determining whether an ancestor was in the area during these years. A few items of news can also be obtained from reading microfilm at Columbia or through interlibrary loan, newspapers from Franklin, Fayette, Boonville, and even St. Louis. And the St. Charles deed books at the Recorder of Deeds office at the County Administration Building here give additional information on the earliest days.

Judge Thorp's *Early Days in the West* is a fine source of everyday life. If only more pioneers had written their memoirs! [Note: the diaries of Dr. William Dougherty have since been published by the Clay County Archives.]

Apparently some of the early officeholders made efforts to have account books of extracted material from the general circuit and county court order books. For a time at least, attempts were made to list all the orphans and what we call today single-parent families whose children might be apprentice/indentured.

I have also seen a book which had most of the divorce cases up to about 1860 in it. Oddly enough, it was not called a divorce record but Cases in Chancery. I remember Dickens wrote about people in chancery, but our book had divorces. I remember several of them covered the period when the Mormons were in the county, when one could get a divorce if his/her spouse joined that church.

In the probate area, books for a time were kept of all sales of personal property and inventories of the estates. Also, guardians and their wards were kept track of in separate volumes. Most of these individual books were stored out at the old County Home. Perhaps the most ambitious area of separate entries from the courthouse was the will books. We have these books at the Archives, and every estate belonging to the county residents went there, although some years the clerk made no entries at all. Miss Hodges published her account of all the will books and noted that during the first years the wills were recorded, but then there would be a year or more in which no entries would be made. Also, since Clay County was made from Ray and the original Ray was made from Howard County, it is likely that there were some estate files in Fayette when the deceased legally filed in Howard but his land in 1822 was in Clay. However, Elisha Camron's father died in Howard County on land that was in Clay County by 1822. Since Elisha Camron lived in Clay until his death in the 1850s, he had a partial probate file for his father in Clay as well as in Howard. Elisha's own probate contains the bill from the company from which his administrator bought the tombstone, and even though a descendant moved Elisha's tombstone up to Cameron, Missouri, one can read the tombstone inscription in Elisha's probate packet.

The old record books show an emphasis on law and order from the beginning. While it took the county some time to build a courthouse, the officials took pains to have a specific building designated for the county court, probate court and circuit court to meet. Proper procedures to establish ferries, roads, places of business and to hold elections, schools, and even a kind of welfare, can be found in these books.

Near the end of 1831 the court had appointed a man to be a tobacco inspector, for a tobacco warehouse that was to be erected in a year. The editor of the paper at Fayette had earlier written an editorial hoping that the counties west of Howard, and Howard itself, would choose to raise tobacco instead of corn, for he felt that tobacco would make everyone rich. Sometimes I have heard horror stories about other counties who had fires and lost all their early records, or, what was even worse, counties which destroyed their old records without any microfilm copies or even indexes.

We are really lucky to have these old books.

**Miscellaneous Gleanings from Microfilm  
of the *Liberty Advance***

November 15, 1918

The forty-three Clay County men who were to leave Tuesday afternoon for Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas, were not allowed to proceed owing to orders received from the office of the War Department. Some of them were glad and others had a trace of disappointment for they had keyed themselves up to the idea of going. One young man has been ready for a week, even to the uniform. He was sadly disappointed, but the majority of the men are glad that they did not have to leave home.

The work of registering the registrants between the ages of 37 and 46 is still going on and will not be stopped unless orders to that effect are received from the War Department.

January 10, 1919

**THE TOLL OF THE COOTIE**

The louse, or "cootie" as he is familiarly called by the soldier, has taken his place alongside poison gas, machine gun bullets and shrapnel as one of the deadliest things in the great war. Statistics recently put out by an entomologist of the British Army show that the "cootie" is responsible for the death of at least a million people in the war zone. It is said that this rough estimate should probably be increased for in Siberia alone typhus caused by the louse infected nearly one million persons, and in the little town of Jassy alone 500 died each day. Two hundred of the 1,206 medical officers of the country died of the disease. The disease spread from Serbia over Russia, Austria, Germany and the Balkan States.

February 4, 1919

**BIRTHS AND DEATHS IN YEAR**

The vital statistics report, or, in other words, the reports made by the physicians of the county on deaths and births, for the year 1918, is now on file

in the office of the county clerk and presents some interesting figures.

The report shows that there were 33 more deaths in Clay county in 1918 than there were births. The total number of deaths was 418 as against 385 births. Excelsior Springs made the worst showing in this respect, as in that city there were 165 deaths and but 84 births. Liberty was well to the good as there were 14 more births than there were deaths. Smithville was next, with 13 more births than deaths.

**TROOPS HOME SOON**

General Pershing has announced that the 35<sup>th</sup> Division is ordered home at an early date and the time of sailing is fixed as March 1 or thereabouts. The 89<sup>th</sup> Division will probably be kept in the Army of Occupation for some time yet.

The Rainbow Division, the 42<sup>nd</sup>, will also be one of the first divisions to be sent home as the men of this famous fighting force have been in practically every important battle since the United States entered the war.

April 8, 1919

**WHAT SOLDIERS CAN KEEP**

There has been considerable inquiry from returned soldiers in this country as to whether or not they could keep their uniforms. This confusion has come about because of the fact that when the first soldiers were discharged, orders were issued for the return of all uniforms, but this plan has been changed.

The War Department announced last Saturday that every enlisted man will be allowed; to retain as his personal property the following articles of uniform equipment:

Overseas cap (for men with overseas service, hat for others); olive drab shirt; woolen coat and ornaments; woolen breeches; one pair of shoes; one pair of leggings, one waist belt, one slicker, and overcoat; two suits underwear, four pairs stockings, one pair gloves, one toilet set, one barracks bag; gas mask and helmet (for overseas men only).

**ABSTRACTS FROM THE  
LIBERTY TRIBUNE**

Archives volunteers Jane Milner and Beverly Whitaker are abstracting genealogical and historical information from the Liberty Tribune, a continuation of the Genealogical Notes by Hodges and Woodruff which ran prior to 1900.

**100 Years Ago This Quarter**

**October 6, 1905**

Providence: Louis DuBois and Nina Lee were married by Dr. T.P. Stafford at his residence in Liberty September 27 at high noon. A nice supper was given them that evening at his Aunt Bettie Leitch's where he has been living.

License to marry: Allen Albright and Delina Benton of Holt; John Wright and Annie L. Cox of Kearney; Willford Weathers and Lulu Neighbors of Smithville; Ira Duncan and Neola Duncan of Excelsior Springs; Ralph G. Moberly of Lawson and Josephine A. Miller of Kearney.

**October 13, 1905**

Richard Clevenger died at Excelsior Springs last Friday. He was born near Vibbard in 1836. He was a member of the old Baptist Church at New Garden where his remains were buried.

Fannie Hughes 83 years of age, a well-known old colored woman of Liberty, died last Friday.

*Kansas City Times:* Another chapter is about to be added to the matrimonial entanglements of Harry M. Lawson the hotel man of Sedalia who married Mrs. L.R. Milice "the youngest grandmother in Missouri" in Kansas City, September 26. Mrs. Milice had secured a divorce July 25, Lawson was given a divorce from his wife, Mrs. Scaggs-Lawson, also a divorcee, June 20, at Liberty, Missouri. It was his third effort to have the court untie the knot. Mrs. Scaggs-lawson spoiled the other attempts and has now retained lawyers to have the Liberty decree set aside. Her attorneys (sic) will share that Lawson in his petition filed at Liberty last May swore he was a resident of Clay County.

Missouri City: Mrs. W.J. Munkres was taken to a hospital in Kansas City to undergo an operation but died from the ordeal. The remains were brought here Wednesday, and the burial took place here.

**November 3, 1905**

William Jewell College has now reached the highest enrollment since its founding. The total attendance is 343 students.

A very pretty wedding took place last Sunday at the home of Frank Minter near Mosby when his

daughter, Miss Emma Minter, was married to Mr. Boude Crossett. Fred Zaiss prepared the sumptuous dinner which was spread for the 75 guests who were present.

**November 10, 1905**

A son was born Sunday to Ed Irminger and wife.

Mrs. Verdie A. Hedrick, 30 years of age, died Friday of last week and was buried at Nebo. Mr. Hedrick and family lived in the bottoms on a farm of Shubael Allen's and were found last week in very destitute circumstances. The four children are all small and Mr. Hedrick was down with pneumonia.

On November 8, a very pretty wedding occurred at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ludrick Summers of near Prathersville when their daughter, Miss Minnie, was united in marriage to Mr. Leslie McCrorey. Miss Maggie Hart played the wedding march.

**November 24, 1905**

A.B. Capps of Birmingham died at a hospital in Kansas City Tuesday night where he was operated upon several days before. He was ill about 3 weeks. Only a short time before he was taken ill, he flagged the two passenger trains just east of Birmingham and prevented a disastrous collision. Mr. Capps' body was taken to Birmingham Wednesday morning and from there to Little Shoal Thursday for burial. He would have been 34 years of age January 2. A wife and 9 children survive him. He was a brother of Ed T. Capps.

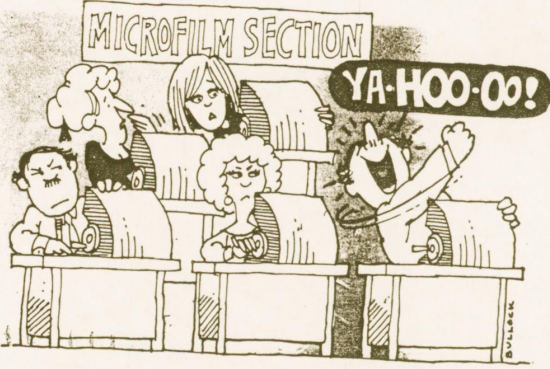
Mrs. James Bogart of Milondale neighborhood died last week of paralysis after being afflicted only a few days. She was a daughter of John Frakes and is survived by a husband and daughter.

**December 8, 1905**

The Confederate Veterans of Clay County held a meeting at the City Hall, December 4. They elected John Will Hall (Commander), Moses King (Vice Commander), Lewis G. Hopkins (Adjutant), L.B. Dougherty (Treasurer), John Moran (commissary), John M. Allen (Surgeon) and Rev. J. J. Hill (Chaplain).

**December 22, 1905**

The marriage of Mr. Robert Groom and Miss Annie Wymore will take place Tuesday evening, December 26, at the home of the bride's mother, Mrs. Van Wymore. The groom is a son of Porter Groom.



*"You can always tell when a genealogist finds his Pilgrim."*

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE**

The 2005 Annual Membership Meeting of the Clay County Archives & Historical Library will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, 5 November, at the Trail's Inn Restaurant, Liberty Drive and Hiway 291. Breakfast will be followed by a business meeting and program. All members in the Kansas City metropolitan area are invited to attend, as well as any out-of-area members who wish to come. Admission will be at breakfast prices set by the restaurant.

2006 dues (\$15.00) may be paid at the meeting, or mailed to P.O. Box 99, Liberty, MO 64069.

### **The Clay County Mosaic**

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