

The Clay County MOsaic

“Fitting the Pieces Together”

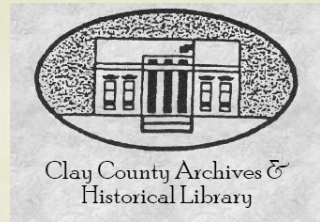
P R E S I D E N T ’ S M E S S A G E

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
Info	2
Feature Story	3
Donations	5
Resurrect the Ferry?	6
Historical Publications	7
Archives Info	8

Kevin Fisher, our Use and Preservation Chair, continues to transform our records storage. He is always learning more about what we have and how best to organize and shelve it. Speaking of shelves, he, Steve Olson, Tony Meyers and Keith Nelson have spent many hours in the last year getting our basement efficiently ship shape. New shelves have been erected and it is now better organized.

Nancy George is taking on the task of organizing our catalog and indexes. She is busy identifying each and every storage location in the building. This way we'll have a cat-

alog of every shelf & drawer in each room on each floor. Then we'll be able to identify the location of each individual piece of historical material in our index. Ann Henning, Nancy George and Stuart Elliott represented the Archives



vice requirements. A number of interested students volunteered for the semester. Please join the fun and help us in our projects. Come by any Monday through Wednesday from 9am to 4pm and fill out a volunteer application. We'll be happy if you can give us an hour or two a week or even a whole day or two a week. I'm sure you'll get excited about what you can contribute and what you can discover at the Archives.

~Stuart Elliott

at William Jewell's Non-Profit Volunteer Program in January. We spoke to many students and professors about volunteering at the Archives to fulfill ser-



ANNUAL MEETING

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES & HISTORICAL LIBRARY
 ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION
 Pot Luck Brunch
 November 4, 2017 10:00 A.M.—12:30 P.M.
 St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 205 N. Forest Ave., Liberty, MO 64068
 Paul Kirkman will present the program:
 Please call the Archives at 781-3611 to make your reservation.

2016 Executive Board

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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 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

ROBERT SALLEE JAMES

Clay County native Robert Salle James was one of the founders of William Jewell College, and the father of Frank and Jesse James.

Early life: a study in cruel ironies

Around 1811, John and Mary “Polly” James, along with their young daughter, left Virginia and settled along the Big Whippoorwill Creek in Logan County, Kentucky.ⁱ The union between John and “Polly” produced nine children; Robert, their fifth, was born July 17, 1818. In early 1827 John and Mary died — separately, suddenly, and apparently intestate. Robert, along with brothers William and Drury, became wards of John W. Mimms, their brother-in-law. An uncle, Drury W. Poor, served as guardian to the other James children and estate administrator.ⁱⁱ

Appraisers appointed by the Logan County Court valued John James’ estate at \$2,999, which accounted for household items, farm equipment, livestock, and slaves. James’ human property accounted for his greatest wealth: \$2,405 for 13 named individuals and one child.ⁱⁱⁱ An estate sale in December 1827 reaped just over \$445.00; a second sale added an additional \$9.00 to the James heirs’ coffer.^{iv} A court order issued in 1830 distributed the slaves through a simple mathematical formula: net value of chattel divided by number of heirs equaled inheritance. Robert received a male named Anderson plus \$31.25.^v Because the land had “gone to waste,” John’s children agreed to auction the Big Whippoorwill Creek property.^{vi}

An examination of estate documents filed for the years 1827 through 1832 offers a microscopic view of the James family that is strikingly similar to current times: mounting debt to feed, clothe, and educate their children. Proceeds from estate sales paid John’s creditors in full with little cash to spare. By renting out the Big Whippoorwill land and members of the slave family, the James estate generated a small income, covering the children’s basic needs, including education expenses for Thomas, John, Robert, Nancy, and Elizabeth. Also worth noting, as a Baptist minister, John may have not received monetary compensation for pastoral duties, further reducing his financial liquidity.^{vii} To gain insight of Robert’s otherwise undocumented early life, these documents are well worth viewing

A righteous path

Robert chose the ministry as his calling at an early age. Church leaders, as well as close relations, obviously agreed with this decision granting him a license to preach and providing the financial support to attend college.^{viii} The Georgetown College catalogue of students notes Robert enrolled on May 20, 1839 and graduated June 1843.^{ix} Other Georgetown records include the “Constitution and Records of the Adelphi Society” which lists Robert James as a member of the religious society “formed by ministerial students.”^x Preacher James completed his formal education in 1848 when the Curators of Georgetown College granted him a Master of Arts.^{xi}

~ Elizabeth Gilliam Beckett
Clay County Historic Site Manager &
Archives Member

Source Cites

ⁱ John James purchased 100 acres of land along the Big Whippoorwill Creek from Thomas Van Swearingen in 1812 and an additional 100 acres from Peter Ross in 1820. Other land transactions include land sold to John King in 1817 and to an individual named Leopard in 1824. Logan County, Kentucky Land Conveyances.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

ⁱⁱ Polly died soon after giving birth to her ninth child, Mary Elizabeth. A neighboring family named Hendricks raised the baby. Logan County Court records filed in 1831 and 1832 changed the guardianship of Elizabeth and Nancy from Drury W. Poor to John W. Mimms. This change placed Elizabeth and Nancy under the care of their eldest sibling, Mary James Mimms. Prior to the change in guardianship, Elizabeth and Nancy lived with Elizabeth Hodges, likely the girls' maternal grandmother. Only Thomas and John remained wards of Drury W. Poor.

ⁱⁱⁱ Inventory and Appraisalment of the Estate of John James, Deceased. Filed in Logan County, Kentucky, January 7, 1828. Will Book D and E. Logan County Archives, Russellville, Kentucky.

^{iv} Account of the sale and settlement for the estate of John James, deceased. Book D, p. 67-69, 387-395. Filed in Logan County, Kentucky, January 7, 1828. Logan County Archives, Russellville, Kentucky.

^v John James estate division filed April 5, 1830. Logan County, Kentucky. Book D, p. 289-90. Logan County Archives, Russellville, Kentucky.

^{vi} The land sold at auction to Thomas Bagby in 1832; the heirs taking a \$300.00 loss. Logan County, Kentucky Land Conveyances.

^{vii} Minutes from early Kentucky Baptist Associations discuss the morality of providing pastors an income.

^{viii} License to preach from the Baptist Church of Jesus Christ, Union meeting house, Logan County, Kentucky. Permanent Collection, James Farm and Museum, Kearney, Missouri. Financial assistance from the Kentucky Bethel Baptist Association allowed Robert to attend college in Georgetown, Kentucky. "... the Association appointed trustees for an education society, which had been previously organized by William Warder. The names of the trustees were ... D. W. Poor ..." "In 1839, it was ordered that the sum of \$55, then in the treasury, 'be appropriated to the benefit of brethren James and Gardner,' then at Georgetown college." J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists*, (1885) Volume II, 361, 362. Pence states Robert also borrowed money from Nimrod Long and George W. Norton to pay his education expenses. Both men were connected with the Russelville, Kentucky bank. Samuel Anderson Pence, *I Knew Frank I Wish I had Known Jesse* (Independence: Two Trails Publishing, 2007), 9.

^{ix} This same record notes the college dismissed him to preach, but does not state when the dismissal occurred; however, it is likely when Robert and Zerelda migrated to Missouri in 1842. Copy of Georgetown College records listing enrollment information. Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky.

^x Copy of Georgetown College records. Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky. Martin states Robert James also belonged to Tau Theta Kappa Society, a literary and debate society, referencing Hul-Cee M. Acton's 1918 publication "History of the Tau Theta Kappa Society of Georgetown College." Martin, 3.

^{xi} Georgetown College degree conferred June 1848. Permanent Collection, James Farm and Museum, Kearney, Missouri.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We love hearing from our members, and appreciate all feedback. Jerry Edde recently wrote us the following:

"I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed the story of the murder of Sydney Creek and other stories in your Newsletter. About a year ago your staff helped me find my 3rd great uncle's grave in the Little Shoal Cemetery in Liberty and subsequently did some great paid research for me. My uncle Andrew J Wilson was in the Clay County Rangers (Confederate) and after the war had his throat slit in a knife fight in Liberty, BUT LIVED many years thereafter. I only get to Missouri about once a year, but hope to stop in there sometime for some more genealogy research. I intend to keep my membership up so keep me on your mailing list. Thanks."

As any history buff and researcher would understand, we were intrigued by the reference to the "throat slit in a knife fight in Liberty." We followed up to get the rest of the story (and his permission to share the original letter and the follow up).

I learned of the knife fight incident in a newspaper article I found in the Union Record, Union, MO. Apparently a man named Pat Kearns insulted my uncle's wife in Liberty. When confronted, Kearns pulled a Bowie knife and cut uncle Andrew's throat. The newspaper predicted he would "probably die", but he lived another 18 years! The monument to Andrew J Wilson and his wife, and adopted son is one of the largest in the Little Shoal Cemetery in Liberty. That is about all I know about it now, but I figure there must have been a trial, or other articles in local papers. Maybe sometime I will come to the Clay County Archives and Library and investigate further. I have relatives who live in Marshall, and Trimble, MO.

Thanks, Jerry, for your comments and follow up.

Please let us know if you have something of interest, something of a mystery or just something!

VOLUNTEER ACCOLADES

Ken Neth was interviewed recently about his more than 40 years discovering and documenting the cemeteries in Clay County. Diane Davidson was also interviewed and, with other Archives' volunteers, now works with Ken to ensure his knowledge is preserved and that cemetery information continues to be added to this extensive collection.

Since its beginning, the Archives has relied on members of the Alexander Doniphan Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Pulled in by interests in local history and genealogy, DAR members work to ensure the preservation of all records related to Clay County. Recently five of the many Chapter members now volunteering were recognized by DAR for their combined 115 years in DAR. The Archives congratulates Jo-Jean Chamas, Shirley Fansher, Nancy George, Ann Henning and Jane Sharon on this recognition.

RECENT DONATIONS



Donations of Material

Historic Downtown Liberty - Loan of Standing sign

Margaret Clark Jesson—Our Journey to Our Ancestors:
Clark, Arnold and Yogel Families (indexed book)

Patricia Petty—Clay County, Missouri (We're a Crowd) poster

Smithville Herald, Amy Neal - Flood of 1965, A Pictorial History of Smithville, MO 1888-2013

Jim and Carole Tanner—Aladdin Viewer (Magnifier)

Donations of Money

Ray Brock
Robert Foreman
Ann Henning
Marianne and Stephen Hill
Michael and Meredith Klamm
Roger Kellermeyer
Daniel and Mary Pence
Joyce Schumacher
Michael Wilson

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Includes an index. \$22
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THE STORY OF LIBERTY...from settlement to
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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

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Early Days in the West \$18
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Stirring Up History \$22
The Covered Wagon \$15

You can order these and other material at:
[https://claycountyarchives.org/index.php/
merchandise/merchandise-submenu](https://claycountyarchives.org/index.php/merchandise/merchandise-submenu)

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

Biographical narratives and genealogical information for more than 800 soldiers and family mem-
bers. 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

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PORTRAITS OF A FRONTIER COMMUNITY \$25

The Jacob T. Hicks Glass Plate Photo Collection

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And mail to:

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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.

Jan—March 2017

WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.CLAYCOUNTYARCHIVES.ORG



Street Address

210 E. Franklin, Liberty, MO 64068

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.

Clay County Archives & Historical Library, Inc.
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