

# JAMES FARM JOURNAL

Newsletter of

"FRIENDS OF THE JAMES FARM"



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EDITOR - MILT PERRY

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## 1st Jesse James Film Discovered

We have recently made a most significant discovery regarding the history of Jesse James. It is an artifact, but not in the sense we usually regard that word, but it is indeed a true, historical artifact after all, and believe it or not, one you can obtain for your own collection!

Actually, though I knew of it and have been searching for it for a decade without success, I always hoped that it would turn up some day. It did last summer.

It is the first full-length motion picture about Jesse James.

In 1920, Jesse James, Jr., starred in "Jesse James Under the Black Flag", a full-length motion picture filmed in the Kansas City area by Mesco Pictures. It was produced, written and directed by Franklin Coates, a respected member of the film establishment and was shown across the country. Usually, Jesse, Jr., would accompany it, making personal appearances, signing autographs, and making speeches.

However, it failed financially and Jesse, Jr., members of the family, friends and others who invested in it lost much money.

And the film disappeared.

In past years, I had searches made in Washington, Hollywood, London and anyplace else I could think of that would have a print, but to no avail. I had about accepted the fact that it did not exist any longer.

When Judge James R. Ross, great-grandson of Jesse James and author of the new book, "I, Jesse James," was here to participate in the 1989 meeting of the Friends of the James Farm, he handed me a letter and said I could follow it up if I wanted.

Bob Babcock of Orange, California, wrote about a friend, Bob Roberts of San Francisco, whose father had recently died leaving a huge collection of carnival and theatre lobby displays. Among them are full-sized figures of Jesse James and Bob Ford and theatre posters of "Under the Black Flag."

I got in touch with Mr. Babcock, and then with Bob Roberts, whose father was the collector. He said that not only was there those items but a large can of old film. At my request he checked it out and to my utter astonishment it is indeed the movie Jesse, Jr., made in 1920!

Not only that but it appeared to be in excellent condition and is accompa-

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## Sculpture on Display at James Farm Museum

A bronze sculpture, the "Northfield Raid", was unveiled at the Clay County Commission Hearing on Thursday, October 5, 1989. The work is on display at the Jesse James Farm Museum and is on a long-term loan from the artist's family.

The sculpture depicts the James and Younger gang dashing down a road near Northfield, Minnesota, after robbing the bank. It is 13-1/2 inches wide, 14 inches tall and 35 inches long. The sculptor, L.E. (Gus) Shafer, was born in Western Kansas and is deceased. The loan of the artwork has been made possible by the artist's family.

Shafer went to great lengths to insure authenticity in this work.

"It is a very valuable piece," said Milt Perry, Clay County Curator. One of Shafer's larger pieces, "The Wagon Master," is near the Alameda Plaza Hotel, in Kansas City, and a number of others are displayed in museums throughout the Midwest.

"Frank and Jesse James have been the subject of paintings and sculptures by several well-known artists and we are very pleased to be able to display this work at the James Farm," added Perry. One of the works depicting the James brothers is the Thomas Hart Benton mural in the Missouri State Capital Building in Jefferson City. A replica of the scene depicting the James brothers is currently on display at the James Farm.

The Clay County Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites,

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## Jesse James Spurs Presented to Museum

"My mother and her brother R.W. James were first cousins to the James brothers. The Jesse in my name was taken from Jesse James. He paid some special attention to me when I was a small boy, and he made occasional visits to our house until the Law was in such hot pursuit of Frank and Jesse that they hardly dared to visit among their near kin. On one visit to Salt Springs, Jesse gave me a one dollar gold piece. I lost it playing in the dusty road. Had

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## Spurs Presented to Museum

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plenty voluntary helpers looking for it, but it was never found. Jesse told my mother that he was going to give me a horse, bridle and saddle when I became of age—his idea about the perfect gift for a boy. He gave my father a fine riding mare with a bullet wound in her neck. He also gave him a pair of spurs he was riding with, and father used them as long as he was riding horses. Father gave the spurs to me and I am passing them on to my son, a lover of horses, who wants the spurs as a keepsake. Shortly after Jesse's death in 1882, his wife, who was also a relative of my mother, and Uncle Bob James, came to our farm home at Shackelford, with her small son Jesse and daughter Mary, and spent several days with us. She was a sad and broken-hearted widow and I believe she was dressed in full mourning, as was the custom for widows in that day.

"After Frank James had been acquitted of all criminal charges for which he was tried, we saw or heard from him occasionally. We moved from Anthony, Kansas, to Butler, Missouri, in 1888, where father had a "Livery, Feed and Sale Stable" for several years. Frank James was in Butler one fall and was official starter for the horse races at the County Fair, a job he had performed at other race tracks over the country. He proved to be about as much attraction as any other feature of the fair. Again he was in Butler with Cole Younger, traveling with a big Circus as drawing cards. They rode together in the street parade and, of course, they drew lots of attention."— Jesse Edward Smith

Jesse Deets Smith, grandson of Jesse Edward Smith, generously donated the pair of spurs Jesse James had given to his grandfather to the James Farm Museum, September 18, 1989. They will be placed on exhibit in the Museum.

We are most grateful to Mr. Smith and his aunt, Mrs. Agnes Prudence Lusk of Butler, Missouri, for making this outstanding gift possible.

Not only are we fortunate in receiving the spurs but new information about the James family, especially that of John R. James, a brother of Frank and Jesse's father, Robert S. James.

Those with geneologies and family charts may want to make these addi-

tions:

- I. William James and Mary (Hines)
- II. John James and Mary "Polly" (Poor)
- III. John R. James and #1 Amanda Williams and #2 Mrs. Emily Bradley, D.D.S. (Brother of Robert Sallee James)
- IV. Generation
  1. Robert Woodson James m/d  
Mary Elizabeth Deal
  - \* 2. Susan Prudence James m/d  
John Wesley Smith  
(Susannah)
  3. John Frank James m/d  
#1 Jane (Hunter) m/d  
#2 Sally (Clark)
  4. Thomas M. James died age  
2 years
- V. Generation
  - \*2-IV Gen. Susan Prudence
    1. James Henry Smith
    2. John Richard Smith
    - \*3. Jesse Edward Smith m/d  
Sallie Levisay Arnold
    4. Lula Amanda Smith
    5. George Robert Smith
    6. Anna Myrtle Smith
- VI. Generation
  - \*3-1 Edwin Arnold Smith m/d  
Melba Deets
  - 3-2 Agnes Prudence Smith m/d #1  
Frank Cox m/d  
#2 Dr. Charles Lusk, Jr.
- VII Generation
  - \*3-1-1 Jesse Deets Smith

## Film Discovered

(Continued from page one)

nied by the projector.

I asked David Chambers, of Dragon Press, who published Judge Ross' book to make arrangements to examine the film. He entered into an agreement with Bob Roberts to have the film sent to Hollywood where it was carefully studied. To everyone's great surprise, it has a sound track! Now this was impossible for a film made in 1920, so what must have happened is that after Mr. Roberts' father obtained it, the sound track was added.

It turns out that it had been obtained from Jesse James, Jr., about 1925. This print seems to have been made in the earlier 1930's (a code on the print has been identified by Eastman Kodak as being made in 1931) and the sound track added for possible release as a "Talkie".

Chambers has made an agreement with Roberts to have the film copied on video cassettes for sale. In turn, certain proceeds will be used to help acquire the entire collection of artifacts

for the James Farm Museum.

The film is both *Under the Black Flag*, and *Jesse James the Outlaw* the sequel. A narrative with music was added, explaining the scenes. There are numerous frames printing dialogue that were so common in silent films, apparently were removed for the narrative.

Harvey Hoffman, a close friend of Jesse, Jr., played Cole Younger. Stella James, wife of Jesse, Jr., plays herself, as does Coates. Harry Younger Hall, played Quantrill.

It features Civil War battles, William C. Quantrill, "Bloody Bill" Anderson, the famous raid on the Farm, the bombing of the Farm by detectives, a train hold-up, Jesse's courtship and marriage, his death, and numerous other scenes. It is indeed a film all of us want to have, and to think it has lain on the floor of a barn for 60 years and is still in good enough condition to show, is remarkable.

You cannot only obtain it for your collection but help us get the other artifacts for the Museum. Dragon Books is marketing the VHS video at \$39.96 postage paid. If you act quickly you can have it by Christmas. The running time is one hour, the print is sharp and clear and the sound strong.

**BUT DON'T DELAY, SEND YOUR CHECKS TO: DRAGON PRESS, P.O. BOX 6039, THOUSAND OAKS, CA 91359 AND SAY YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS.**

I hope my excitement at this discovery has been transferred to you! I still have difficulty believing it!

## Jesse James Days

We were represented at two celebrations at James sites this year. On April 2, I was the featured speaker at the annual meeting of the Pony Express Association, a historical organization that has restored the James House in St. Joseph, Missouri, where Jesse James was killed, on April 3, 1882. They recently painted the exterior of the house which is adjacent to the Patee House Museum.

The Winston, Missouri, Historical Society invited me to be their speaker at their annual, "Jesse James Day," July 15, this year on the anniversary of the robbery of the train near Winston, by the James gang, July 15, 1881.

The railroad depot is being restored by the Historical Society, for it was near there that the train was stopped. Robbers boarded it when it stopped at Winston to pick up passengers. The exterior is completed and they are now restoring the interior.



## Curious Relationships

Historical research often uncovers fascinating pieces of information that is often as much of a surprise to the historian as the reader. Such is the case regarding the second marriage of Frank and Jesse's mother, Zerelda Cole James. It was not the marriage so much as the relationships it brought together.

Her first husband, Rev. Robert S. James, father of her sons, died in the California goldfields, August 18, 1850, leaving young Frank, 7, Jesse, 3 and Susan, an infant.

The widow, described as good looking and sprightly, married Benjamin Simms, September 30, 1852. He was about twice her age and a widower. He owned farms in Clay and Clinton County, Missouri. The marriage failed, and within a year they had separated and Simms had died.

But it is the geneology created by the marriage that is of interest to us.

One of Simms' nieces, Augusta Peters Inskeep, a widow, had married Coleman Purcell Younger in Clay County, Missouri, in 1851. Coleman was an uncle of the Younger boys, the outlaws. In fact, Cole (Coleman) was named for this uncle.

Mary, a sister of Augusta, married Martin Ringo in Clay County. One of their children was John Peters Ringo, the "Johnny Ringo" of Tombstone fame.

Adaline Younger, half-sister of Coleman Purcell, and an aunt of "the boys", married Lewis Dalton and among her several children were the outlaws, Frank, Bob, Grat and Emmett.

It also appears that Henrietta Younger, sister of "the boys", married A. Bledsoe Rawlins of Texas. They had no children, but among the descendants of his father, Robert Rawlins, may have been Sam Bass, the outlaw. (This came from Board Member, Marley Brant.)

Recently, Phillip Steele, one of our Board members, discovered that Bruce Younger, a half-brother of Coleman and an uncle of "the boys," married none other than Belle Starr on May 15, 1880. It was a brief marriage lasting only three months.

Belle Starr's other husbands, Jim Reed, Sam Starr and Blue Duck were outlaws. Henry Starr, nephew of Belle and Sam, was a member of the Oklahoma Cook Gang, that included Cherokee Bill.

So, this one short, failed marriage brought this curious relationship together. Perhaps there are more, both outlaws and lawmen, which we will discover as we search further.

## Corrections, Corrections, Corrections!

It's probably beyond the realm of human endeavor to always publish completely correct periodicals, much less books, no matter how often they are proofread. After the third reading the mind seems to accept errors without registering them, and so it goes.

Now is the time for you who save your Journals to make a few corrections:

Note the Number on the masthead of this issue. No, you are not seeing double, it really is number 4. What happened was number 2 was over-

looked, so go back and change number "3" to 2 and number "4" to 3.

In the last issue, we erred in Ron Beight's interesting article about Benarr Macfadden and the Gad's Hill robberies. Spell it Macfadden, with a small "f". (Curious but according to Ron, correct.) And make the following changes in the newspaper quote: "Friday night" should be "on Friday night" and "the barefaced robbery" should be "this barefaced robbery."

Our article entitled "New Museum Exhibits" has a couple of errors; on page four: it should read that Frank James wrote a letter to Governor of Missouri; and there were two pistols, one belonging to Allen Parmer and one to Arthur McCoy, given to the museum.

## Devil's Gulch

After the disastrous attempt to rob the bank at Northfield, Minnesota, September 7, 1876, the outlaws were pursued across Minnesota. Near Mankato, they split up, Jesse and Frank procuring horses and going west. The Youngers and Charlie Pitts, on foot, were captured near Madelia.

Near Garretson, South Dakota, is the Devil's Gulch, an amazing chasm on Split Rock Creek that runs several miles north and west of the town. Legend has it that Frank and Jesse, pursued by posses, split up, each riding along a bank of the creek. However, where it empties into the Gulch, they were separated. The posse put pressure on Jesse, and legend has it that to escape, he made a daring leap on horseback from lip to lip at a spot about fifteen feet apart. It would be difficult to do so today, for the surfaces are smooth granite and no horse could gain footing for such a leap. However, in 1876 it may be the walls were nearer and they were dirt.

It is a beautiful place. A footbridge spans the Gulch today and a path leads to the bottom, some fifty to eighty feet below. There is serenity; towering walls, vines, small trees and bushes, and the stream. A cave there is where they were supposed to have hidden for a few hours.

The little town of Garretson has done a magnificent job of preserving the canyon. There are two excellent parks on the creek, one at Devil's Gulch and the other by a small lake created by a dam. The latter has shelter houses, plantings, flowers and camp sites.

The City of Garretson deserves all the compliments one can muster for their care of these lovely parks.

A mile south of town is South Dakota State Palisades Park, another scenic wonder on this little creek. Surely few watercourses of equivalent size have such beauty! Here, among towering cliffs and spires, is another cave the Jameses might have used briefly.

Garretson celebrated its centennial this year. Among the events were a bank robbery and re-enactment of the chase, together with a play about the Jameses. There is talk of making this an annual event and I hope they do so. I will be in contact with them to encourage the preservation and celebration of their history.



## "Defeat of Jesse James Days"

I had the pleasure of visiting Northfield, Minnesota, and attending their annual "Defeat of Jesse James Days," September 8-10, 1989.

Northfield is about 45 miles south of Minneapolis-St. Paul and is on the Cannon River. It has preserved its appearance of the great robbery attempt by the James-Younger Gang on September 7, 1876. The bank they tried to rob has been restored by the Northfield Historical Society and is adjacent to a fine museum with a number of good artifacts about the Raid.

I was stunned to learn that they drew about 100,000 people for the weekend! A feature was the re-enactment of the robbery, which took place on Division Street in front of the bank. Bleachers had been set up for spectators, and the robbery was re-enacted four times on Saturday. Contrary to my expectations, the crowds grew larger with each re-enactment. I found out that people who go to such events visit a number of things; here it was the food vendors, a play, and booths of quality crafts in parks on both banks of the river, together with a carnival and rodeo.

Division Street on which the bank fronts, still has many of the buildings that were there in 1876 and from which townspeople fired on the robbers. Two of them, Clell Miller and Bill Chadwell were killed on the street in front of the bank and others, including Cole, Bob and Jim Younger were wounded. The

cashier, Joseph L. Heywood was killed. The robbers got little or no money as the aroused populace attacked them.

Heywood's grave can be seen in the cemetery and his house still stands west of the river. Guns dropped by the outlaws can be seen in the museum.

I would advise all of our members who are interested in an exciting, faithful recreation of the robbery, beautiful scenery and fine old buildings, to attend this event.

We then spent several days tracing the robber's retreat west, across mid-Minnesota. The former swamp where the Youngers were captured is about five miles west of Madelia. A small park with a shelter house and two monuments commemorating the event overlooks the actual site.

Madelia has a park and monument

to young Oscar Sorbel, the boy who tipped off the authorities the outlaws were in the vicinity.

## Sculpture -

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which operates the Jesse James Farm, is striving to have a well-rounded museum displaying both historical artifacts and artwork depicting the Jesse and Frank James era.

The "Northfield Raid" is on display at the Jesse James Farm Visitors Center near Kearney, Missouri.

The sculpture has been placed on loan to the museum by Patricia Shafer Rapp and Mrs. L.E. Shafer, daughter and widow of the artist.

## James Country in Kentucky

By Phillip W. Steele

I visited Kentucky, August 26-28, 1989, and looked up several James sites. Kentucky, perhaps better than most any other state, takes great pride in their history and the preservation of their historic sites.

Cole's Tavern, also known as Black-horse Tavern, on the old Frankfort to Lexington Pike, near Midway, Kentucky, has been completely restored. It was once operated by Richard Cole, Jr., and his son, James Cole. James Cole was the father of Zerelda Cole who was born in an upstairs room of the brick portion of the structure.

I then located a nearby resident, James Sames, III, who is a James family descendant, and he directed me to Jesse James great-grandparent's home. Amazingly,

the home built by Richard Cole, Sr., around 1795, still stands on a horse ranch some 4 miles from Cole's Tavern.

According to Sames, the old Cole graveyard was on the hill above the house. The markers for Ann Hubbard Cole, Jesse James' great-great-grandmother, was still identifiable. Since the graves were covered with the owners strawberry patch, however, I couldn't locate any other graves.

I then drove to Stamping Ground, Kentucky, and found the home of Mrs. Kelley Sprake. Once the home of James Lindsay; Robert James and Zerelda Cole were married there December 28, 1841.

I closed out the day by a quick drive through the Georgetown College campus, where Robert James graduated in 1843.

Kentucky is to be complimented for preserving such historical places, especially those involved with the James family.

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