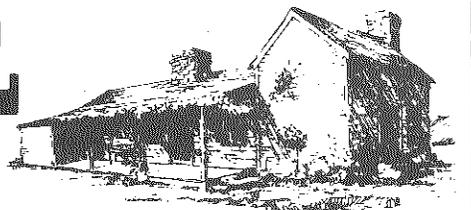


JAMES FARM JOURNAL

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EDITOR — Milt Perry

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Jesse James Bank Museum

The world's first successful daylight bank robbery occurred in Liberty, Missouri, at 2:00 p.m., February 13, 1866, when nearly a dozen young men, dressed in Union Army greycoats converged on the Clay County Savings Association, on the Northeast corner of the courthouse square.

Two of the men dismounted, entered the bank and warmed themselves by the stove. One approached the counter and asked the cashier, Greenup Bird, to change a bill. As he was doing so, both men pulled revolvers and announced that the bank was being held up. They forced Bird and his son, who was his assistant, into the vault and put coins, currency and bonds into a meal sack. Closing the vault door on them, the men ran out and mounted their horses. Bird, meanwhile, tested the door and found it was not locked, went to a window and opened it and yelled that the bank had been robbed. Standing on the opposite corner were two young men. One turned to probably call the sheriff whose office was in the courthouse. A robber, who had been adjusting his saddle, shouted to the young man, George Wymore, a seventeen-year-old student of William Jewell College, not to move, then fired. Wymore fell, mortally wounded.

The raiders dashed out of town and a posse, formed soon after, lost their tracks in a snowstorm. The money, about \$60,000, was never found nor were any of the robbers ever captured. One hapless young man was arrested and tried but it was soon discovered he had nothing to do with the robbery.

Though, the robbers were never actually identified, it appears certain that some of them had been former Confederate Bushwhackers and some had ridden with Frank and Jesse James. Mentioned as being recognized were Oliver Shepard, Bud Pence, Donny Pence, Frank Greg, James Wilkerson and Joab Perry, all former guerillas, also, Red Monkus, Ben Cooper and Bill Wilkerson. There are strong local assertions that Frank and Jesse were also included. Some scholars point out that Jesse, still suffering from a severe chest wound received in May, 1865, was not up to the physical exertion required, but Jack Wymore, who restored the bank, has discovered an account that indicates that while the other men crossed the Missouri River in a group that afternoon to escape, Frank did not cross until later that night, indicating he had taken Jesse back to the farm, beforehand.

The bank was purchased and restored by Jack Wymore, our vice president and his father 20 years ago and was operated as a museum by them. This year the City of Liberty and Clay County have joined to lease the bank and it has been incorporated with the Farm as another of our historical sites.

My plans are to develop a video which will explain to the visitors the importance of the bank to the community, give a short history of Liberty, and, of course, show a re-enactment of the robbery. Visitors will see it before visiting the restored portion. We have also contracted with Gisselle Fest to operate a crafts store, "James Country Crafts", there. We, also, have office space there, where my office is now located.

Site of Quantrill's Last Fight

I recently had a business meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, and was fortunate to have some extra time to drive down to Wakefield, Kentucky, where William Clarke Quantrill received his fatal wound on May 10, 1865.

As many of you know, Quantrill and about twenty other guerrillas were surprised and attacked on this farm by Captain Edwin Terrill and his Federal cavalry. It was a drizzly day and many of Quantrill's men were sleeping in a barn on Wakefield's farm. When Terrill attacked, Quantrill's men ran for their horses outside the barn and had a running battle with the Federals. During the fight, Quantrill's horse became unmanageable and he was unable to mount it. Two guerrillas came back to rescue Quantrill but both were killed and Quantrill mortally wounded. He was ultimately taken to Louisville where he died on June 6, 1865.

Upon entering the town of Wakefield, I noticed a road sign commemorating the battle and subsequent wound inflicted to Quantrill. Upon further investigation, I was informed that the Wakefield Farm still stood and was "over the ridge . . . through the cows and cow pies." It was a cold drizzly day and it seemed appropriate that it should be so. After following a narrow, muddy cow path to the top of the ridge, the farm was finally observed. Both the house and barn are in poor condition, being vacated and broken down. It doesn't appear as if anybody has any plans for the place and it most surely will continue to deteriorate if something isn't done soon. From my view, it would be nice if it could be preserved and marked as a historical site. It would be a shame to lose this farm as a result of apathy and neglect.

— by Chris Edwards

A REQUEST FOR ARTICLES

We would be pleased to consider for publication short articles about the history of the James family, outlaws, robberies, anecdotes and pieces about genealogy of these people. In addition, if any of you wish to publicize your search for your family history, send it to us.

The Robbery of Frank James

Not many persons know that Frank James was himself held up and robbed of his watch and some currency one night on Randolph Street in Chicago.

He chuckled . . . as he related the incident (to me) . . . "Yes," he began, "I got robbed, all right. Two fellows stepped out of an alley near my hotel — I was playing Chicago with the Frank James and Cole Younger Wild West Show at the time — and told me to stick up my hands. Did I? You bet I did, and did it mighty quick, too!"

Frank said he told Cole Younger about the hold-up when he reached their room, and the big, husky Cole nearly split his sides laughing. The hold-up occurred in 1907, Frank recalled.

"Well, sir," he remarked, laughing, "it did kind of 'put me out' to be robbed that slick on the street, but Cole kept on laughing, and I finally caught the spirit of the thing, and joined with him."

Cole Younger, according to Frank, said in the hotel room: "Well, Frank, I guess the hold-up boys would have broken their necks running and forgot to rob you if they'd known who you were. Here you come to Chicago and let some little two-by-four fellows take your stuff off you."

Quoted from *When Frank James Talked on Guns* by Henry G. Rhodes, *HARDING'S MAGAZINE* — *Fur — Fish — Game*, October, 1937, p.25.

Jesse James Would Have Died Laughing

SELSA, MO. — Frank and Jesse James must have turned over in their graves.

A bunch of amateur "outlaws" celebrating the last run of Gulf Mobile & Ohio's train No. 9 tried to hold it up James style at this Kansas City way station Thursday night.

By placing a tie across the tracks too soon, they almost derailed a freight train which preceded the passenger; there were so many passengers aboard the three-car No. 9 that "Jesse" and "Frank" couldn't get on to "rob" them, and had to order their victims outside.

In fact, the train was so crowded, the conductor never did get all of the tickets punched; there was trouble in the dark telling the costumed passengers from the spectators, so the "outlaws" wound up "robbing" everyone in sight.

Then "Frank" portrayed by Gordon Vandeveter, hollered, "Let's split up and meet back at the rendezvous," and the 15 members of the Jackson County Sheriff's posse galloped off into the night through a tangle of automobiles and 8000 onlookers.

The 97-car freight, running 30 minutes ahead of No. 9, which was en route from Bloomington, Ill., to Kansas City, struck the tie and ground it under its wheels. Crewmen said the tie would have derailed the lighter passenger train had it arrived first.

After the freight pulled out, No. 9's headlight appeared and it chugged to a stop. Firing their blanks, the "James boys" rode in.

At an earlier pretended holdup, in Marshall, Mo., the crowd was so thick outside the train that the James gang portrayers couldn't get their horses alongside. Mayor L. L. Lapp of Marshall was supposed to make a speech, but the crowd wouldn't let him.

— St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 16, 1960 (Selsa was the name given to Glendale after the famous robbery. This was the last reenactment, fortunately.)

Activities at the Farm

We are now heavily engaged in developing the Farm, especially the museum. In 1987, the building was erected and a portion of the interior was finished. Here, we now show a nine-minute audio-visual production that tells the story of the James Farm and family. I did all the research and the production was done by The Madison Group, a professional Kansas City firm. The production uses three slide projectors, stereo sound and strobe lights for special effects.

A craft shop has been installed in the museum, contracted by Grace Petty, a local crafts shop operator. It features many interesting crafts from this area.

We are now developing plans for the 1988 budget.

The museum was officially opened on September 20, 1987.

Donations Sought for the Museum

We have already had several outstanding items given to the James Farm Museum. When completed it will be the largest and best museum of its type anywhere. We have engaged a professional exhibits firm to design and install exhibits which will insure that it will be as fine a designed museum as any. It might not be as large (no other is, either) but the quality will be equivalent to the Smithsonian or any other major museum.

We are now looking for items associated with any of the members of the James or allied

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Man Who Once Chased Jesse James to See Film Portrayal of Bandit

LIBERTY, MO., January 25 — W. H. Thomason, who this week observed with Mrs. Thomason the sixty-first anniversary of their wedding, plans to attend the motion picture, "Jesse James", to see the portrayal of the man for whom he spent many hours hunting as a youth. He was a member of several posses that visited the James farm in search of the bandits, but never saw Jesse until after he was killed in 1882 and the body taken back to Kearney, Mo., for burial.

On one occasion Thomason lay hidden in a corner of the James home farm all night watching for the arrival of Jesse and Frank James, who were expected to visit their mother that night. A nephew of the bandit brothers had led Capt. John S. Groom, then sheriff, to believe he would tip him off when the boys were coming home. The tip was wrong, but would have failed anyway, Thomason said, because one of the posse mistook the nephew for one of the bandits and fired at him, sending buckshot into both of his uplifted arms.

Thomason's father, John S. Thomason, and his brother, Oscar Thomason, engaged in a gun battle with Frank and Jesse following the Gallatin, Mo., bank robbery, and the horse of the elder Thomason was killed.

Oscar Thomason later served as sheriff, 1886 to 1890, and W. H. Thomason was sheriff from 1906 to 1910. He was the last sheriff to succeed himself in Clay County, as the law prohibiting a sheriff from holding two consecutive terms was passed while he was serving his first two-year term and went into effect after he was re-elected.

— St. Louis Globe-Democrat, Jan. 26, 1939

Jesse James' Descendants Disappointed with Movie

Little History, Mostly Fiction, They Say After Attending Hollywood Preview of Picture Made in Missouri

(By the Associated Press)

HOLLYWOOD, Cal., Jan. 10 — Four granddaughters of Jesse James, the Missouri outlaw, saw him ride across a movie screen last night, pistols blazing and posses in pursuit.

When they left the theater after a two-hour preview, they were shaking their heads. "It may be entertainment, but it isn't Jesse James," they declared.

Jo Frances James, a Los Angeles bank executive, was credited by Twentieth Century-Fox studio with assisting in assembling the historical data for the color picture of her grandsire's bank-robbing career.

"I don't know what happened to the history part of it," she said. "It seemed to me the story was fiction from beginning to end."

Praise for Actors and Scenes

"Of course, Tyrone Power as Jesse James, and the other actors were fine, and the color effects, were beautiful and the scenes were well directed, but about the only connection it had with fact was that there once was a man named James and he did ride a horse."

Celebrities by the hundreds turned out for the special showing, applauding the production that was made last fall at Pineville, Mo., 1700 miles from Hollywood.

Jesse James Jr., retired Kansas City lawyer, who is shown in the picture as a five-year-old boy, was unable to attend because of illness. His wife, four daughters, and Miss Little Mimms niece of the outlaw, came and were almost lost in the throng.

To many in the audience, fact and fancy blended smoothly in the film's unfolding, but the James clan admitted "disappointment".

Some Disputed Points

"You see," said Jo Frances James, "they made a railroad the villain of the story, when it was really the hatreds engendered by the Civil War. They showed Jesse getting drunk and quarreling with his men, when that never happened. They had him surrendering and then breaking jail, though he never gave up his freedom in his whole life. They had him away from his wife

when his son was born, but, in fact, they were together in Tennessee.

"They showed his mother being killed by a railroad agent. Why, she actually outlived him by more than 20 years.

If I ever get rich, I'd like to produce a true picture of my grandfather. I think the truth's a lot more interesting than fiction."

— St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 10, 1939

Clell and Ed Miller

One of the interesting papers presented at the Friends / National Organization for Outlaws and Lawman History Conference last July, was given by Ruth Corder Fitzgerald, a member of the family of Clell and Ed Miller, both members of the outlaw gang. Ed simply disappeared. One theory is that he was shot by Jesse James, but no one seems to really know. (There is also a theory that he lived and died in Wyoming years later, using an assumed name.)

Clell participated in several robberies, but is best remembered for being at the disastrous

one at Northfield, Minnesota, in September, 1876, where he was killed. His body was evidently acquired by a doctor and used for medical research before his parents had it returned and buried in the family plot in Muddy Fork Cemetery just north of Kearney, Missouri.

Ruth will donate several items about the Millers, including a typed transcript of Clell's trial in Corydon, Iowa, where he was accused of having helped rob the bank there on June 3, 1871. Clell was acquitted but the trial testimony contains excellent descriptions of the robbery and a lot of details about it. She also, will present genealogical information which will help us expand our knowledge of the family and enlist their interest.

Harry Truman and the Jameses

"Jesse James was not actually a bad man at heart. I have studied his life carefully and I come from his part of the country. Jesse James was a modern day Robin Hood. He stole from the rich and gave to the poor, which, in general, is not a bad policy. I am convinced that Jesse would have been an asset to his community if he had not been diverted into a lawless life."

Mr. Truman had known Frank James, seeing and meeting him on the Square in Independence, when he, Truman, was a young man. He also used to comment that: "Missouri has had three notorious fellows: Mark Twain, Jesse James and myself — in that order!"

Donations —

(Continued from Front Page)

families, or any of the members of the "gang" for the museum. All gifts are tax deductible and full credit will be given to donors. We can use artifacts, letters, photographs, clothing, weapons, and any other such items.

We expect the museum to be visited by many thousands of persons from all over the world.

Yes, I wish to join the Friends of the James Farm

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

Individual	\$20.00 per year
Family	\$30.00 per year
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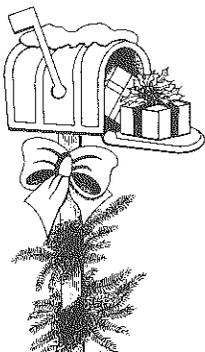
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