



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First, can I highlight a correction. **Our next shoot is not June 13th - it is June 20th.** We are hoping there won't be any restrictions by then but if there are, we can set the targets further apart. We may also need to look into providing more than the two tables for loading. One of our board members has suggested that instead of closing the back end of the range we leave it open and have some shooters back their pickups up so we can use their tailgates as loading benches. I think we can solve any problems.

I would like to use this opportunity to mention that many of our members have not yet sent in their membership fees for the year. Our financing relies on our memberships and our three yearly shoots and we have already had to cancel our first shoot.

As you know, the farm has been closed as part of Clay county's efforts to combat the spread of Covid-19. Beth tells me that the restoration work is coming along on the farmhouse though and we are all looking forward to seeing what it looks like after the reconstruction.

Beth Beckett, museum director of the Jesse James Birthplace Museum, tells us that David Rowland of Springfield, Illinois, has recently donated a selection of books and dime novels to the Jesse James Birthplace Museum library. We are very grateful for his generous contribution.

Our upcoming dates of importance are the shoots - June 20th and September 19th - and our reunion August 8th. **BI**



BY BRYAN IVLOW

## IN MEMORIAM



1941 - 2020

The name Robert G. McCubbin will be well known to our members.

A highly respected historian and collector of Old West items, McCubbin was a publisher of True West magazine and founder of the Wild West History Association.

His vast collection of items included several relating to the James family. Much of his collection was offered for auction in 2019; some regretting that the collection could not stay together.

Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

## This Issue

- Page 1 – President's Message
- Page 2 – Small But Mighty: The JJ Tie Tack
- Page 3 – Frank James Part 1: His First Guerrilla Act
- Page 9 – Mrs. Jesse James – A Biography
- Page 11 – Auctions and Autopsies
- Page 15 – Cole Younger Items: Lost and Found

## The Friends of the James Farm

### Executive Officers

President  
Bryan Ivlow

Vice President  
Kevin Makel

Secretary  
Vivie Tison

Treasurer  
Vivie Tison

Website Management  
Kevin Makel

Newsletter Editor  
Michelle Pollard

### Board Members

Pam Banner  
Scott Cole  
Laura Ganschow  
Marty McGrane  
Caleb Pooker  
Paul Weller

### Ex-Officio

Beth Beckett

### Honorary Board Members

Betty Barr  
Michelle Pollard  
David Smith

[www.jessejames.org](http://www.jessejames.org)

Friends of the James Farm  
c/o The Jesse James Birthplace  
21216 Jesse James Farm Road  
Kearney, Missouri, 64060

### Newsletter Proof Reading

Elizabeth Rains Johnson

### Additional Research

Linda Gay Mathis

## SMALL BUT MIGHTY - THE JJ TIE TACK



In the first gallery of the Jesse James Birthplace Museum, contained in a safe, is a tiny artifact that has caught my imagination since the very first time I saw it.

Fashioned out of a metal the color of gold, the tiny tie tack is finely decorated and contains the initials, J.W.J.

Jesse's great-granddaughter, Betty Barr, presented the tack to the Museum at a James Family Reunion and believes it may have been given by Jesse's daughter Mary, to her son, Betty's father.

At the same time, Betty also presented a pocket watch belonging to Rev. Robert James and a copper collar button, presented to J. E. Maret by Mary James Barr in 1932.

As I stand there staring at the tiny relic, I can't help but get caught up in the pure romance of it.

I wonder if the tack had been a gift. Did Jesse ever wear it? Did Zee? Was it meant as an item to be worn or as an item to be treasured as a keepsake? A memento.

Such a tiny thing.

If only it could talk!





## FRANK JAMES PART 1: HIS FIRST GUERRILLA ACT



BY ELIZABETH  
RAINS JOHNSON

At the age of just seven, a thin young boy watched his father ride away, not realizing it would be the last time he ever laid eyes on him again. I could imagine Robert James asking his son, Frank, to watch over the family. Telling him he was head of the household now ... look after your mother, brother and sister. Frank, probably stoic even back then, likely nodded to his father and bit back the tears threatening to flow. For life as he knew it was changing forever in that moment of the departure of his dad.

Robert James, a preacher of the Gospel, a farmer, a scholar and father of three, rode off to join a wagon train headed for the gold fields of California, not realizing that his decision to leave his family would set off a chain reaction of events that would send his family down a road no one could have envisioned in 1850. Robert James would die of fever

on August 18, 1850, after reaching Hangtown (now Placerville), California, leaving no will, consequently putting his family in a horrifying state.

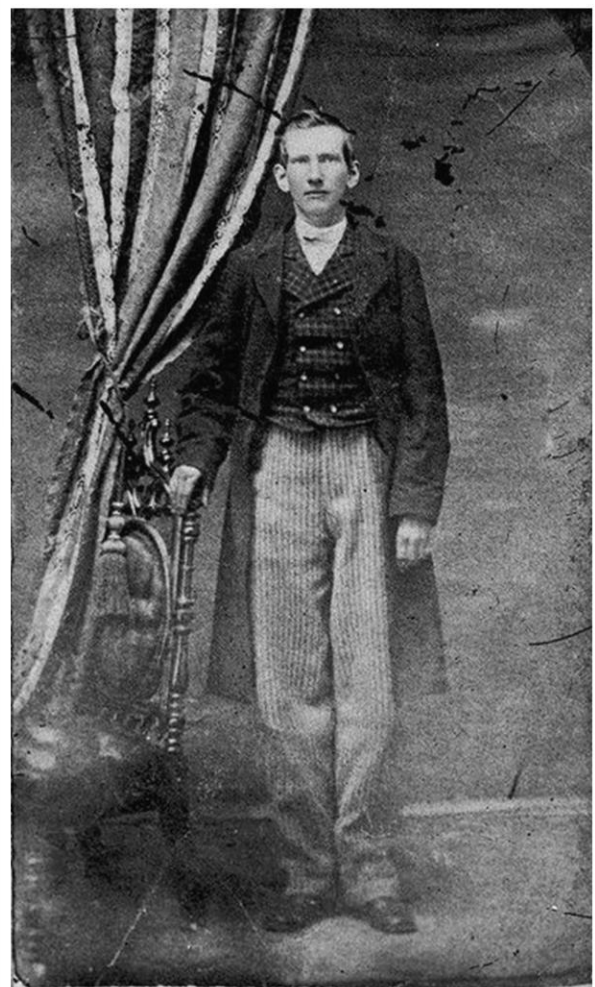
Little is known about Frank's early years except that there was some schooling, farming, play time, fishing and certainly time spent reading scripture. Once his father died, most of that went away as his mother was left with nothing due to the laws of the day. The only option for a widow in those days was to remarry and do it quickly.

It is believed that the children's first stepfather, Benjamin Simms, was hateful to Zerelda's three youngsters. He would die less than two years after marrying Zerelda. A year later, in 1855, she would marry Dr. Reuben Samuel, her third and final husband. He has been described as kind and easier on the boys. But by then, Frank was almost a teenager and Jesse was eight, and dysfunction had likely affected their lives irrevocably.

Add to the flawed family life the ongoing border wars between Missouri and Kansas, the closing in on 1861 when the Civil War would breakout, and you have a perfect storm of dysfunction pouring on the James/Samuel family.

### The Early War Years

Frank didn't begin his war career as a bushwhacker. In 1861, Frank James was recruited to the pro-Southern Missouri State Guard. He fought in his first battle at Wilson's Creek in August 1861. He fought for General Sterling Price in the three-day Battle of the Hemp Bales in September 1861 in Lexington, MO. When Price moved south toward Springfield following the battle in Lexington, Frank James followed with the State Guard. However, he allegedly contracted measles during the winter of 1861-62, was captured and paroled by the Union that occupied Springfield, MO. He was later



Frank James as he appeared at the  
time of the Civil War.

permitted to return to Clay County where he had to post a \$1,000 bond and take the Oath of Allegiance to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America.

But Frank was growing weary of the Union causes by now and had begun to rabble rouse. With conditions in Missouri quickly becoming difficult between the two sides and guerrilla forces being raised, Frank had a decision to make – which way would he turn? It was a definite dilemma for him. It was a dangerous time here and, having signed the Loyalty Oath, Frank was legally bound to support the Union. In addition, beginning in 1863, a type of draft had formed and Missouri men of military age – no matter where their loyalties lay – were required to sign up for the Enrolled Missouri Militia.

By now, Frank had fought in battles. He had experienced war, cold and hot temperatures, mud and rain, sleeping on the hard ground, the sound of cannon fire and guns, watching fellow soldiers die ... and he had experienced killing. He was barely 20 years old.

### Joining William Clarke Quantrill's Guerrillas

According to a September 29, 1901 account in the *Louisville Courier Journal* of Quantrill's Guerrillas' 1901 reunion in Blue Springs, MO, Frank James stated he joined the guerrillas in May of 1863. Frank described Quantrill from his first impression of the man, "This was in May 1863 ... He was nearly six feet in height, rather thin, his hair and mustache was sandy and he was full of life and a jolly fellow. He had none of the air of the bravado or the desperado about him ... he was a demon in battle."

Frank's likely first act as one of Quantrill's guerrillas was a small ambush in the town of Richland, now known as Missouri City (and heretofore referred to as Missouri City). It was a small and seemingly inconsequential raid that, in my opinion, was the impetus that set the stage for Frank and Jesse's involvement in the rest of the war, and their journey into outlawry.

In other words, it was a life-altering day.

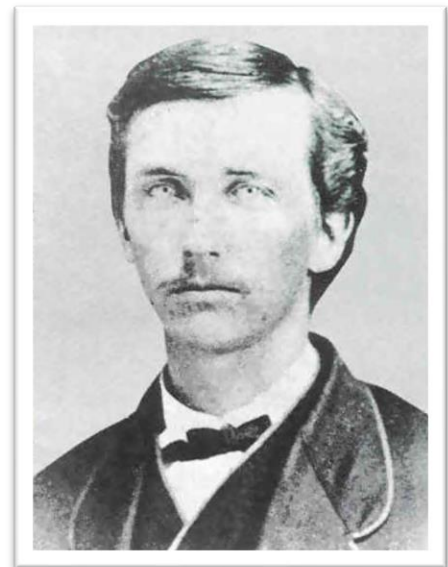
The story is somewhat complex, and I shall describe it from two versions – that of Lurena McCoy and the other from other historical remembrances. The story of Lurena McCoy, the person at the heart of the Missouri City ambush, is an interesting one.

### The arrest of Lurena "Lou" McCoy

To understand this story, one must know just who Lou McCoy was, her connection to Missouri City and the connection to Frank James.

Lou McCoy was just 20 years old at the time of the Missouri City raid. She had been married to Moses McCoy for five years. It was a terrifying time for the women and children left at home while the men went off to fight. It was up to the women to defend the home and their families. Wartime made strong women into strong warriors, and Lou McCoy was not just a warrior, she also wasn't afraid to speak her mind.

Lou lived on the outskirts of Missouri City with her 10-year-old brother, Matt, her 5-year-old stepson, and her 18-month-old child. Her husband,



Top – William Clarke Quantrill

Above - The Frank James Bank Museum in Missouri City, once the store owned by Brian and Sam Nowlin, that was "robbed" by the guerrillas after the raid on Darius Sessions and his men. The store is now owned by historian and re-enactor Jay Jackson. In a photo taken during a FOJF reunion tour in June of 2012, are from left: Jay Jackson's wife dressed as Lurena McCoy might have looked, Monte Griffey (Samuel family descendant), Tony Meyers (in guerrilla shirt), Betty Barr (Jesse's great-granddaughter), Jay Jackson and Scott Cole (Cole family descendant).

Photo by Liz Johnson

Moses, was a Confederate captain under General Jo Shelby in the Confederate Missouri Calvary. On the night of May 14, 1861, Union soldiers, using their guns, banged on the McCoy door in the middle of the night. A sleepy Lou was asked where her husband was.

"I don't know," she said. "And I would not tell you if I did."

"We hang men to make them tell what we want to know and we hanged one woman," the soldier replied, hoping to scare Lou into betraying her husband. Lou wrote years later that the deep-seated fear she felt at this moment made the hair rise on the back of her neck. Nevertheless, she had to be strong as she had her young brother, stepson and baby to look after.

So, she brusquely told the soldiers, "You all look brave enough to hang a woman!"

Lou later wrote that the soldiers left, but she knew they would return. She began packing with haste so she could send the three children to her mother's farm nearby where they would be safe. Before Lou could leave, the soldiers returned with a force of men and arrested her. "Consider yourself under arrest," said the arresting lieutenant. Without permitting Lou to even change her dress, he forced her to go with him. The three children had to find their own way to her mother's farm. Lou asked the lieutenant what she was being charged with. The lieutenant replied, "You are charged with having furnished food, shelter, and clothing to Rebel soldiers. If true, you will be held a prisoner until you take the Oath of Allegiance." She was literally being charged with feeding and sheltering her own husband – who in the minds of the Union soldiers – was the enemy.

Lou was escorted to the Liberty Landing Arsenal where she was put on a steamboat bound for St. Joseph. Upon arrival in St. Joe, she was taken before Colonel Hardy, who read the charges against Lou and asked her if they were true. Lou simply replied, "True." She tried to bargain with Hardy after reading the ironclad oath which forbade her to "exchange letters with husband, brother, etc., or to give food, shelter or clothing to any Confederate soldier." She said she would sign the oath if those two parts were marked out. Hardy declined to alter the oath, and Lou was taken away as a prisoner of war. In fact, Lou had made a Confederate uniform for one of her husband's recruits. She had also fed her husband while he was in the area of Missouri City. Learning of his wife's arrest, Moses appealed to Quantrill, who was in Jackson County, for help with the situation.

Darius Session, the mayor of Missouri City, was also a Union captain. He had been in the mercantile business in Missouri City for many years, Lou admitted she had often purchased goods at Sessions' store. He was also behind the arrest of Lou and currently part of a detachment sent to the area to search out guerrilla forces. "He knew everybody in that part of the county and was well known there," Lou said in the *Confederate Veteran Magazine* article of May 1912. "He no doubt thought he was doing his duty [by arresting Lou McCoy], but it cost him his life."

### **The Guerrilla Raid on Missouri City**

According to the *History of Ray County*, 1920 edition: "On the 19th of May, 1863, a body of armed men, under the command of one Fernando Scott, who crossed the river at Sibley several days before, made a raid into Missouri City." The following, also found in the *History of Ray County* but cited as previously being published in the *Liberty Tribune*, tells more of the Missouri City story:

"One of the residents of Missouri City came in and reported to Capt. Darius Sessions of the enrolled militia, or Lieutenant Grafenstein, of the Twenty-fifth Missouri Volunteers, that he noticed two or three suspicious characters lurking about a short distance below that place. The captain and lieutenant with not more than three or four men – all we suppose they could muster at the time for duty – went out on a scout and had not proceeded far before they were fired upon from the brush by a body of men at least three to four times their number.

"Finding their little force inadequate, they were compelled to beat a hasty retreat in a somewhat northerly direction. They were, however, hotly pursued by the bushwhackers.

"Captain Sessions was shot dead, several bullets, it is said, entering his body. Lieutenant Grafenstein, finding his pursuers gaining on him and escape about hopeless, turned and offered to surrender, but was killed on the spot without mercy.

"A private of the Twenty-fifth Missouri, who was wounded in the arm, found by a citizen and brought into Missouri City was cruelly fired upon by several of these outlaws as they came rushing into town – neither his



helpless condition nor the humane attentions of those around him dressing his wound, could save him. He was still alive when last heard from, but his recovery is deemed hopeless.

"The ruffians broke into James Reed's store, forced open his safe, took there some \$170 or \$180 in gold, destroyed all his valuable papers and other property. They also plundered and did considerable damage to Mr. B.W. Nowlin's store and, after charging about for some time in a threatening manner, departed to the woods below the city."

Fernando Scott is described as the leader of the raiding bushwhackers and a native of Ohio. He was formerly a saddler in Liberty years before but was then a resident of Jackson County. John Newman Edwards described Scott in his book, *"Noted Guerrillas"* as a man quite suited for life as a guerrilla. "Of a nervous and sensitive disposition, he slept little; it was not believed that he ever experienced an emotion of physical fear; under fire no soldier could be cooler; he won the love of his men first – [and] later their adoration. He didn't talk much, was gentle and he scarcely ever spoke harshly." He almost sounds like he had a similar disposition as that of Frank James ... quiet, a thinker, one who could be focused and deadly – yet one who rarely killed except on the battlefield.

The *Liberty Tribune* article estimated that there were about 16 guerrillas in Missouri City on that fateful day. The *History of Clay County* stated that one guerrilla, Vondivere, (likely this was actually Louis Vandiver, a documented member of Quantrill's Raiders), boasted in Missouri City that he was the one who killed Captain Sessions. The history also notes that Frank James was there as one of the raiders. According to the *History of Clay County*, Vandiver "Captain Darius Sessions (also the mayor of Missouri City), had filed a report on Louis Vandiver." This likely provided the motive behind Vandiver being the one to kill Sessions.

Vandiver was one of the first to volunteer his services for the raid in Missouri City. Quantrill hand-picked the men he sent that day, which included Vandiver, Fernando Scott, Laugh (Lafish) Easton of Clay County, Joe Hart of Andrew County, Charles "Fletch" Taylor, Frank James, William Gregg, John Jackson, James Little, Henry Coward and James Bernard.

It is not known what part Frank played in the raid. Having been a soldier before and involved in several large battles, he would have had a soldier's frame of mind and likely not shrunk from firing his gun and killing.

By this time, the families of the southern sympathizers were being harassed, some arrested, as in the case of Lou

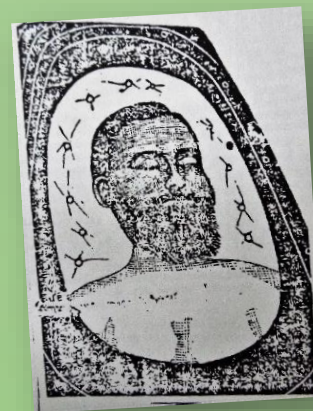
## JESSE JAMES ARTWORK



This amazing piece of artwork has been sent to us by Bill Isaac.

Mr. Isaac has a collection of interesting Jesse James related items but created this piece of artwork himself.

Mr. Isaac tells us it is an oil painting and we thought it an interesting and different image to reproduce.



The image used to create the oil painting proves more photos were taken of the outlaw than have been published.

McCoy, and were forced from their homes. Any guerrillas who were caught by the Union troops, were given no quarter and executed immediately.

#### Lou McCoy's Version of Events:

Lou McCoy's version of the raid on Missouri City wasn't revealed until almost 50 years after the event, when Lou McCoy wrote two articles about the raid that ran in the 1912 edition of *Confederate Veteran Magazine*. It was her arrest that sparked the guerrilla's involvement and the deaths of the Union soldiers in Missouri City.

Quantrill's squad went to the house of one of the McCoy's neighbors for breakfast. The neighbor was also a southern sympathizer. The man told Quantrill's men that he would have to report them, as he was required to do so or else be subject to arrest himself. However, that was just what the bushwhackers wanted. "You go straight into [Missouri City] and tell Sessions that Joe Hart is here with a handful of men and he can come right out and get them if he will be quick," said one of the men.

Apparently, Hart was not yet with the bushwhackers, but his name was dropped because Sessions would recognize him as a well-known guerrilla. It was a set-up. The Federals sent a group of men to meet at the mouth of the Fishing River and were to sweep north to force any guerrillas they encountered into their position. However, the guerrillas had hidden themselves on both sides of the road in a wooded area in which they knew the Federals would ride by.

"They had not long to wait," Lou McCoy said in her 1911 article to *Confederate Veteran Magazine*. "[Missouri City] was only about two miles away; and soon they came in a gallop, Sessions in the lead, Lieutenant Grafenstein next, with Rapp and others following. They were fired upon from both sides of the road."

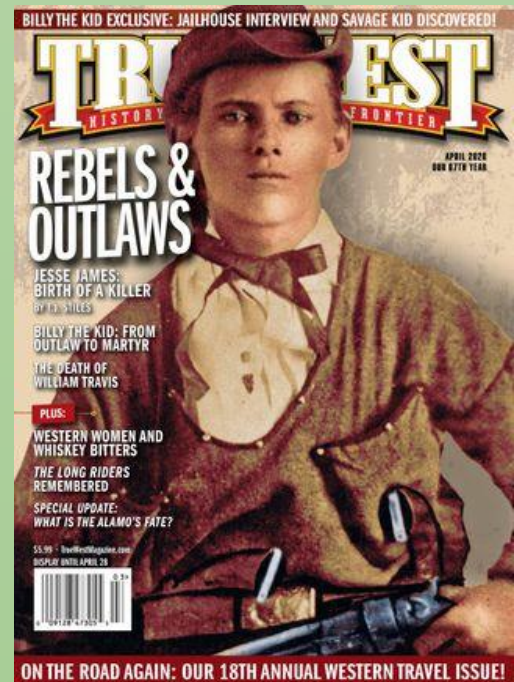
Frank James would have been one of those guerrilla recruits firing upon the Union men.

"Sessions fell, mortally wounded," McCoy wrote. "Grafenstein was hit, but went on for a hundred yards or more before he fell from his horse. Rapp (the private of the 25th Missouri Volunteers) was thought to have been killed outright, but he must have feigned death. The others ran away unhurt.

"Louis Vandiver went to Sessions as he lay in the road where he fell. He looked up and said, 'Louis, I am a dead man; don't shoot me anymore.' Louis turned to (Moses) McCoy and said, 'He's at war with you and yours – you can finish him.' When McCoy looked at Sessions, he saw he was dying."

A passerby with a wagon took Rapp, who was wounded, but believed to be dead and carried him to the Hardwick Hotel in Missouri City. However, when the guerrillas went

## LOOK WHO WAS FEATURED ON THE COVER OF THE APRIL 2020 TRUE WEST MAGAZINE!



Yes, the April edition of the True West Magazine contains quite a lot of interesting articles about Jesse James!

Under the overall heading of Brothers In Blood – Jesse James and Billy the Kid, the edition includes T.J. Stiles' article, *Jesse James: The Birth of a Killer*, as well as two articles by Johnny D. Boggs, *Birth of an Outlaw Hero: Jesse James in Pop Culture 1875-1903* and *Rebel Raider to Rebel Hero: How Jesse James Became One of Hollywood's Favorite Outlaws*.

Also included are details on how to purchase the commemorative Jesse James rifle, as well as reviews of Bill Markley's book, *Billy the Kid and Jesse James: Outlaws of the Legendary West* and the movie, *Long Riders*.

into the town following the ambush, they learned that Rapp was at the hotel and not dead. Fletch Taylor, who would later become a well-known guerrilla and friend of Frank and Jesse James, went into the hotel to finish Rapp off. After the war, Taylor would become a Missouri State Representative.

Lou McCoy told in her 1911 article of how the bushwhackers went into a store in Missouri City calling for tobacco and cigars. This store was owned by Brian and Sam Nowlin, a father and son. Nowlin reportedly told the guerrillas they were welcome in his store, but that he was not to give them anything, or he'd be arrested, so he told them to just "take what you want."

Sam Nowlin knew Frank James as they'd served in the Missouri State Guard together and fought side-by-side in the Battle of Lexington in September 1861. And in an interesting side note: Brian Nowlin participated in the start-up of Pisgah Baptist Church in 1850, alongside Frank's father, Rev. Robert James.

Following the "plundering" of Nowlin's store, the guerrillas proceeded to the store of James Reed and robbed him for real, taking money and goods, destroying all of Reed's papers in the process.

Upon leaving Missouri City, the guerrillas headed to Plattsburg in Clinton County where they took \$11,000 in cash and destroyed 100 military-grade muskets. On May 25, they crossed back over into Jackson County and rejoined Quantrill's group. However, the events that occurred between the May 15th raid on Missouri City and the May 25th rejoining of Quantrill's group, would so traumatize the James/Samuel family that, once again, life would alter the family's existence.

### The events of May 26, 1863

I believe the Missouri City/Richfield raid that took place May 19, 1863, was the impetus to the fateful events that took place at the James/Samuel farm on May 26, 1863. On that day, a 15-year-old Jesse was beaten and left for dead out in one of the fields by Union soldiers looking for Frank James and other guerrillas. Dr. Reuben Samuel was hung from the coffee bean tree near the house as a form of torture until he finally revealed where the guerrillas were. He would never be the same.

It was a horrifying and traumatizing chain of events that would forever change the lives of Jesse James, Frank, his mother and stepfather.

But that is a story for the next edition of The Journal.



A little background on Lurena "Lou" McCoy: Lurena was born Lurena Alder, daughter of David and Lydia (Wall) Alder. She and Moses would never truly be together again after the war. She would be forced to move to Texas under General Order Number 9, when her family was banished from Missouri to an area beyond enemy lines. She would have two more husbands: William P. Lucas, of Henderson County, Texas, and later Calvin B. Gentry. Lou would pen the Confederate Veteran articles under the name of Lou Gentry at the age of 69 – 49 years after her arrest on the outskirts of Missouri City. **ERJ**

### Sources:

The *Confederate Veteran Magazine*, 1912, By Lou (McCoy) Gentry, "Experience of a Missouri Woman," page 211.

*History of Clay County*, 1920: pages 63-64, 136, 183, 405-6.

"*Frank and Jesse James, The Story Behind the Legend*," by Ted. P. Yeatman, 2000. Pgs. 28-39.

The *Liberty Tribune*, May 22, 1863.

*Louisville Courier Journal*, September 29, 1901.

"*You All Look Brave Enough to Hang a Woman, The First Guerrilla Action of Frank James*," by Jay Jackson, 2013. This book has fascinating accounts of the Missouri City raid, the life of Lou McCoy and others whose lives were involved in the fateful raid.

Union Provost Marshal Papers, 1861-1866. Reel F119



## MRS. JESSE JAMES - A BIOGRAPHY



BY LINDA  
BROOKSHIER

Mrs. Jesse James. That very phrase speaks volumes. Trying to imagine what that would entail is mind boggling. Try as we might, no one could ever really know what those three words would mean to the lady that lived them.

Born July 21, 1845 in Logan County, Kentucky, Zerelda Amanda "Zee" Mimms was one of twelve children. Her parents were Rev. John W. and Mary James Mimms. Her cousin, Jesse James, would not be born until September 5, 1847. Zee was named after her aunt by marriage, Zerelda James, Jesse's mother. Zerelda would later become Zee's mother-in-law.

Nothing that has been written would indicate that Zerelda and her namesake were ever particularly close. We know that Zerelda was certainly with her daughter-in-law immediately after Jesse's assassination on April 3, 1882. It would appear that Zerelda was much closer to Frank's wife, Anna (Annie) but there is no way to really verify that.

1865 would prove to be a pivotal year in the life of young Zee Mimms. Her first cousin, Jesse, was wounded, allegedly trying to surrender, at Lexington, Missouri at the end of the Civil War. Badly injured and not sure if he would live, Jesse went to his aunt and uncle's house in Harlem, a small town on the northern portion of Kansas City, Missouri. Zee's parents ran a boarding house there. For those familiar with the Kansas City area, this is located just east of the Charles B. Wheeler, downtown airport, just east of Highway 169.

We will never know exactly what transpired during that time of recovery at his aunt and uncle's boarding house, but we can assume that romantic sparks flew as Zee cared for Cousin Jesse. Nine years later, on April 24, 1874 Jesse and Zee Mimms were married at the home of Zee's sister's in Kearney, Missouri by their uncle, the Reverend William James, an ordained Methodist minister. An interesting note is William was a Methodist minister, his brother, Jesse's father, the Reverend Robert James, was a Baptist minister and one of the founders of William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. One can only imagine the conversations of doctrine that would have taken place around the dinner table when those brothers got together!

Very likely under the cover of darkness, Jesse and Zee were married. At this point, Jesse was well into his "career" and there was a bounty on him. Also very likely was that Zee's family was not happy with her choice in a husband, hoping for someone with a more conventional way of making a living. (Her father, John Wilson Mimms, had already passed on April 9, 1870. He did not live to see his daughter marry her cousin/notorious outlaw.) Marry they did, however, and



Map of Harlem: An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Clay County, Missouri, Edwards Brothers, 1877.

honeymooned near the Gulf of Mexico near Galveston, Texas, at least for a period of time at his sister Susan's home. She had already married former guerrilla, accused gang member, Allen Parmer.

Sixteen months later, Jesse and Zee welcomed their son, Jesse Edwards James, into the world on August 31, 1875. The little boy would not go by his legal name, Jesse, until his father was killed. In order to maintain anonymity, he thought his name was Tim. Twins Gould and Montgomery, named after the doctors that delivered them, would be born and sadly died on February 28, 1878. Little sister, Mary Susan, would join the family on July 17, 1879. All of their children were born in the Nashville, Tennessee area.

Everyone, when they embark upon marriage, have hopes and dreams of a life, "happily ever after". Zee James undoubtedly had those same dreams. Jesse, by all accounts, and despite his reputation as a bank and train robber, was a very friendly and outgoing man with a sense of humor. The Jesse that Zee and the children knew was not the feared outlaw that would put a gun in your face and take your prized possessions. He was the love of her life and "Daddy".

Many stories have been written about the life of Zee James. We know that it was not an easy one for this young wife and mother. Often when she would just get settled in a home and make friends she would have to pack up in the middle of the night and move to a new location and start all over again. Her life must have been one of loneliness.

Fast forward to April 3, 1882. Zee, Jesse, Tim, and Mary were playing hosts in their St. Joseph, Missouri home to gang members, Bob and Charley Ford, referred to as "cousins" so as not to arouse suspicion among the neighbors with two grown men hanging around the house for an extended period of time. They had just finished breakfast, Zee and the children were in the house while Jesse, Bob, and Charley were in the living room. Jesse noticed that a picture on the wall wasn't straight and stood on a chair to straighten it. Knowing that this unarmed Jesse was likely their last opportunity to shoot their "friend", Bob and Charley took aim with Bob actually firing the fatal bullet. In a matter of seconds, Zee went from wife to widow with two young children. Bob and Charley Ford would become two of the most hated men in the world, Tim and Mary would be fatherless and Jesse would be dead. The same man that Zee had nursed back to health in 1865 would die in her arms on the floor of their home, his life blood flowing from his body as she watched, helplessly.

Zee would move back to Kansas City with her children and live with her brother for a period of time. Jesse Jr. would be forced to go to work at the age of 11 to help support his mother and sister. Zee would never remarry, would often wear black and died on November 13, 1900 at the age of 55.

Bob Ford's bullet may have physically killed only Jesse James on that fateful day but, in reality, he snuffed out the lives of six people - Jesse, his wife Zee, their two children, Bob himself and his brother Charley, not to mention the lives of all those surrounding them.

After Jesse's death, Zee was quoted as saying, "I am not in good circumstances and a little money would greatly assist me." Throughout the remainder of her life, Zee refused every opportunity to tell her side of the Jesse James story. Had she done this, she might have lived and died a very rich woman. She refused. Whatever your opinion on the life of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse James, it was a love story. **LB**

## Membership is due, Folks!

To continue supporting the Jesse James Birthplace please complete the form on the back of this issue and return it to the Friends of the James Farm.

**All correspondence to the Friends should be addressed as follows:**

**FRIENDS OF THE JAMES FARM  
C/O JESSE JAMES BIRTHPLACE  
21216 JESSE JAMES FARM ROAD  
KEARNEY, MISSOURI, 64060**

Thank you to those who have already renewed membership.  
We look forward to sharing more news, articles and  
Reunion details with you during the coming year.

---

## AUCTIONS AND AUTOPSIES

---



BY MICHELLE  
POLLARD

On 6 March 1901, Mary Susan James, daughter of Jesse and Zee James, married Henry Lafayette Barr at the home of Mary's aunt, Sallie Nicholson. The marriage came just four months after Zee's death, "too close for the wedding to be an altogether festive occasion."<sup>1</sup> The Nicholson farm, located close to the old James-Samuel homestead, provided Mary's brother, Jesse, and his wife, Stella, a convenient place to spend the night.

Once all the visitors had dispersed, Aunt Sallie called for her dog, banished to the barn for the proceedings, to be brought back into the house and, as she sat petting the animal, she informed Jesse that the dog was a descendant of the one she had given him twenty years earlier. "Do you mean the dog my father brought to me on horseback all the way from your house the night of his last visit home?" Jesse had asked and his aunt had nodded.

"He carried the pup under his coat to protect him from the snow," she remembered. "He'd been telling me how much you wanted a dog, and I said, well, why shouldn't he have one? Every boy should have a dog! And we picked out that pup for you. Of course, I knew your life wasn't like other little boy's," Sallie continued, "having to move all the time, not allowed to play with other children. But your Daddy was just sure things were going to be different from then on. He'd just brought you and your mother and sister to St. Joe, and he had big plans for you. Real nice plans."<sup>2</sup>

Those plans, which included the buying of a farm in Franklin county, Nebraska, never came to fruition as Jesse was killed at his home in St Joseph and the path he had envisaged for his family took a distinctly different turn.<sup>3</sup>

To make ends meet, Zee was forced to auction items that had once belonged to her husband. The auction took place on Monday 10 April 1882, exactly one week after Jesse's death at the hands of Bob Ford.

The famous poet, Oscar Wilde, was on a lecturing tour of America and stayed in a house just a quarter mile to the west of the House on the Hill. On 25 April 1882, he wrote to Miss Helena Sickert describing the scenes in St. Joseph. "The whole town was mourning over him and buying relics of his house," he marvelled, reasoning that the Americans were less hero-worshippers, more villain-worshippers. "His door-knocker and dust-bin went for fabulous prices, two spectators absolutely came to pistol-shots as to who was to have his hearth-brush, the unsuccessful one being, however, consoled by being allowed to purchase the water-butt for the income of an English bishop, while his sole work of art, a chromo-lithograph of the most dreadful kind, of course sold at a price which in Europe only a Mantegna or an undoubted Titian can command!"<sup>4</sup> Some of Wilde's words rang true – there was certainly a frenzy to acquire items from the house where the famed outlaw had lived and died. "While the sale was in progress," one report stated, "several persons who were anxious to have something belonging to Jesse cut splinters out of the floor upon which was a drop of blood from the wound, which will be kept by them as a bloody relic. Others cut things off the tree in the yard and the fence was almost whittled to pieces."

However, what Wilde perceived, intentionally or not, as Jesse's last great daylight robbery was in fact a disappointing and demeaning affair for his family. In stark contrast to Wilde's noted observations were those of the attending reporters. "A large crowd was present," one report conceded, "but the bidders were few." Mrs James, it was noted, did not appear before the crowds but remained in her room at the World's Hotel, preferring to leave the sale of her husband's effects to George P. Dixon, the auctioneer, and her attorney, R. J. Haire. She did not see her coffee pot sell for 10c, or the wash basin used by her husband minutes before he was killed sell for \$4.50. Jesse's pocket knife sold for \$8 and her baby's highchair for just 75 cents. Fifty dollars was offered for Jesse's gold watch, but this item was withheld. In total the fifty-nine items sold that day accrued "only \$117.65."<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps there were arguments that day but the only one noted by reporters involved a group of women who noticed that the little dog, belonging to Jesse's son, was going up for auction. The women knew what the dog meant to the child and recalled how his mother had reassured him that, although they had to be parted for a while, the dog would be reunited with him. Thinking the animal was being sold by mistake, the women protested only to find that Zee had agreed to the sale "as she is greatly in need of money."<sup>6</sup>



The man who successfully bid for Jesse's dog was newspaper editor, Frederick Franklin Schrader. He initially "felt very proud of his bargain," but soon became aware of the "attachment existing between the little boy and the dog." It was therefore thought that Schrader would either "sell it and send the money to the boy or he will send the dog to him." The mention of the sale in Jesse Jnr's book, *Jesse James My Father*, makes no mention of any kind-hearted effort on Schrader's part to make amends.<sup>7</sup>

At this same auction sale, after my father's death, we sold a little cur dog for \$15. I felt the loss of the dog very much. The dog was given to my father by his half-sister, Mrs. Nicholson, when my father last visited my grandmother's home a short time before his death, and father brought the dog to St. Joseph with him. He rode in his arms on horse-back.

Above: St. Joseph Weekly Herald, 13 April 1882. Left: An excerpt from *Jesse James, My Father*. Below: A depiction of the sale of Jesse's dog, National Police Gazette.

**Jesse James' Dog.**  
The ladies residing in the vicinity of the late Jesse James' home were very indignant when the dog was offered for sale at auction. It was known to be a great favorite not only with the murdered man, but was also the pet of the little boy. On leaving Kearney to return to St. Joseph the boy cried because he could not come with his mother and little sister, and Mrs. James pacified him with the assurance that she would bring his dog home with her. The ladies who recognized the dog in the auctioneer's arms, did not know that she had authorized him to dispose of it, and were consequently much offended. As a matter of fact, however, she did consent to the sale of the dog, as she is greatly in need of money. Mr. Schrader, city editor of the *Gazette*, was the purchaser, and felt very proud of his bargain until he heard of the attachment existing between the little boy and the dog. Now he will either sell it and send the money to the boy or he will send the dog to him. Ben Ullman never slaughtered a beef that had a larger heart than Fred Schrader's.



Schrader may well have had second thoughts. He was an accomplished playwright and at least one newspaper carried news that "Fred. Schrader... is going to write a drama, a special part in which will appear for the dog."<sup>8</sup> Such an appearance would not have gone unnoticed by the press, however a search of the newspaper archives has yet to prove that Schrader followed through with his plans. Instead, on 4 May 1882, less than a month after

the auction, the Kansas State [Topeka] Journal announced that "Jesse James' dog has been sold for \$50 to an Illinois man."

By the time this report was being read in Kansas, the little dog had already made its way to its new home and "can be seen at Myers' Wonder Stores."<sup>9</sup> The Daily Illinois State Register, keen perhaps to dispel any rumours that existed about the dog, reassured the public that it "is not the ferocious animal some might suppose, and ladies and children can see it without exposing themselves to any danger."<sup>10</sup>

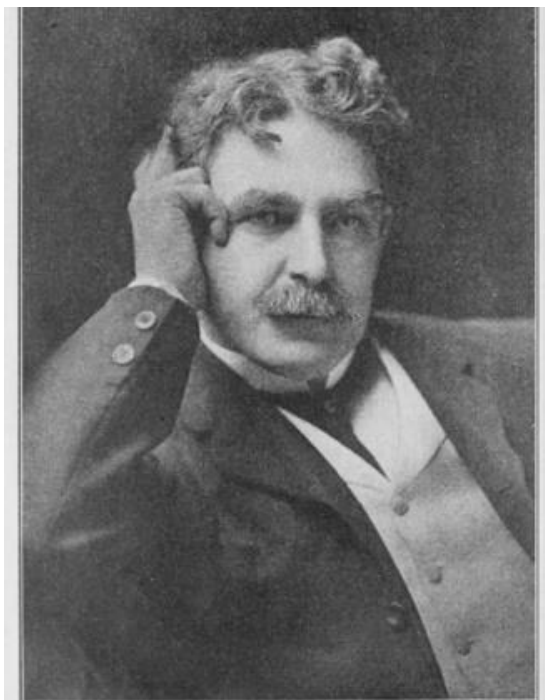
The purchase of Jesse James' dog was not the only time Schrader found himself connected to the outlaw's story. As a newspaper editor, he was in St Joseph when Jesse was killed.

At the time, I was living on North Third Street above Blacksnake Creek. It must have been around noon time, as I was on my way to the Gazette office (which was then on Fifth street opposite Tootle's Opera House) to start my day's routine, when at the corner of Francis Street I met Mike Moran, lawyer, popular character and one time member of the legislature. He halted me with the words: 'You'd better hurry around to the Gazette office, Schrader. They're getting out an extra. Jesse James has been killed.' I smiled. 'What again?' I said. Jesse had been so often reported killed that Mike's announcement left me cold. 'No, it's true,' he insisted. 'The two fellows who killed him are in the marshal's office right now.'

The Ford boys were taken to the county jail. My handling of the case was not to their liking, and since they might resent my frankness in regard to their method of repaying Jesse's hospitality, I decided to keep my connection with the Gazette a secret and accordingly interviewed them as a correspondent of the Chicago Times.

I had not mistaken their temper. Bob boasted to me that 'when we get out of here we'll spill some blood around the Gazette office'. For a souvenir they gave me a cartridge from the revolver with which Bob had fired his deadly shot.<sup>11</sup>

In 1891, and while serving as Washington correspondent to the St. Louis Globe Democrat, Schrader penned an article that appeared first in the St. Louis Globe Democrat and then in the St. Joseph Herald. The headline read -



*Frederick Franklin Schrader*

Frederick Franklin Schrader  
(1857 – 1943)

#### JESSE JAMES' BRAINS

-----  
They are in a Bottle in Possession of a  
Physician in This City.  
-----

After Ten Years a Strange Story is Given  
to the World for the First Time.  
-----

The article caused a sensation. It contained the recollections of a 'prominent citizen of Northwest Missouri' who had been in St Joseph at the time of Jesse's death. He claimed that the physicians in charge of Jesse's body, one of whom was a personal friend to the gentleman, had, during the autopsy, removed the outlaw's brain. With rumours of the extraction apparently circulating at the time, the informant asked the physician how he had managed such a feat, "he laughed slyly... [and] invited me to go with him to where Jesse lay dead in his coffin and as I looked at his face I endeavored to discover the marks of the scalpel, but in vain." The gentleman was told that "the scalp had been cut across the back part of the head and drawn over the brow, leaving the skull exposed to the action of the saw. The skull was then sawn through and the brain removed before returning the skull pieces and the scalp to it's



place. When Mrs Samuel next gazed upon the pale face of her son his appearance was not altered in the least, but his brain was in a glass jar.”

The gentleman assured the reporter that his friend never spoke of the matter again “nor has any other person ever spoken of it to me, which shows how jealously the secret has been kept.”<sup>12</sup>

Such high levels of maintained secrecy appear as an acknowledgement of wrong-doing and an understanding that no such tampering with the body had been approved by Jesse’s family. “The matter has been kept quiet during all the years that have intervened,” Schrader echoed, “because it was thought that trouble might ensue through Mrs. Samuels [sic], the mother, and other friends of the desperado.”<sup>13</sup> The timing of this revelation then, a decade after the event, suggested that Schrader relished in being the first to tell it; Mrs. Samuel, Mrs. James, Frank James, several of Jesse’s friends and three of the four attending physicians were still very much alive in 1891. Perhaps he hoped that time had healed any sores over Jesse’s taking off and he may have been right. No reports appear of the family taking any action against anyone for their part in the removal of Jesse’s brain. Some may have doubted the story was even true, so skilled were the physicians who performed the deceit.<sup>14</sup>

One man who did believe the story was Dr. Charles D. Humberd, a physician from Barnard, Missouri. In 1937, having thoroughly researched the story, he contacted Frederick Schrader about the article he had written 46 years earlier. “I am fairly sure that my authority was the younger Dr. (James W.) Heddens,” Schrader replied. “I think two or three of the leading physicians of the time knew all about it.” In fact, Humberd noted on his copy of Schrader’s article that “Dr. Chas. G. Geiger told me that he had seen this brain, in its jar, in the office of Dr. Jacob Geiger at the corner of 6th and Francis sts., St. Joseph, Mo.” Humberd made extensive efforts to locate the brain but was told that no such jar existed at the time of his asking and that it was very unlikely the brain had survived for such a long period of time.<sup>15</sup>

MP



James Weir Heddens  
(1857 – 1931)



The Geiger Residence, St. Joseph,  
Missouri.

1. In The Shadow of Jesse James, Stella F. James, The Revolver Press, 1989, p47.
2. Ibid, pp47-49.
3. Jesse’s plans to move to Nebraska were suggested in a letter he wrote to Mr. J. D. Calhoun, 2 March 1882.
4. The Letters of Oscar Wilde, Ed. Rupert Hart-Davis, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York, 1962, pp113, 115.
5. St. Joseph Western News, 14 April 1882.
6. St. Joseph Weekly Herald, 13 April 1882. With thanks to Linda Gay Mathis.
7. Ibid; Jesse James My Father, Jesse James Jnr., The Sentinel Printing Co, 1899, [reprint], p10.
8. St. Joseph Western News, 14 April 1882.
9. Daily [Springfield] Illinois Journal, 2 May 1882.
10. Daily Illinois State Register, 2 May 1882.
11. Missouri Historical Review, Vol. 38, Issue 1, October 1943, p40.
12. St. Joseph Herald, 14 November 1891.
13. Ibid.
14. The physicians who took part in the autopsy were doctors James W. Heddens, Frank C. Hoyt, George C. Catlett and Jacob Geiger.
15. Legend Has It That Jesse James May Be Buried Without His Brain, Gary Chilcote, St. Joseph News Press, 12 October 1992.

With many thanks to Linda Gay Mathis for sourcing details of the dog being sold in Illinois and for the image of Frederick Franklin Schrader.



## COLE YOUNGER ITEMS - LOST AND FOUND

In the last issue, we included news of items that had been stolen from the Jesse James Home in St. Joseph, Missouri. This issue, it's the unfortunate turn of the Lee's Summit Historical Society Museum.

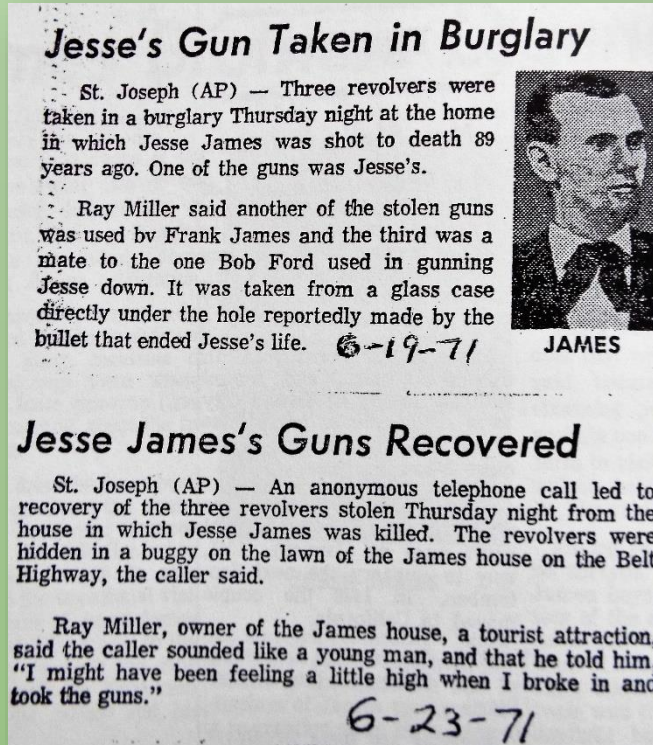
On 8 April, eight guns were stolen from the Museum, which was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of the guns "were from the Civil War era and belonged to outlaw Cole Younger."

The thief was caught on surveillance cameras and a clear image was quickly shown on local news stations and posted on social media. This proved so successful that on 13 April, the Lee's Summit Police Department could announce that the suspect had been identified, caught and "most of the stolen items have been recovered." The investigation continues as they search for the remaining items.

Sources: KMBC 9 and Lee's Summit Police Department Facebook page.



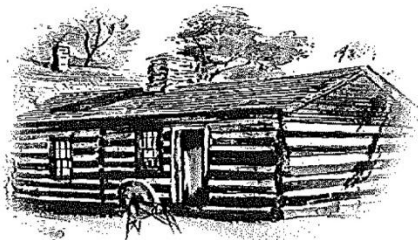
## OLD REPORTS OF RECOVERED ITEMS



From Jesse and Frank James Scrapbook, Volume Two, Donald R. Hale

**Friends of the James Farm**

c/o Jesse James Birthplace  
 21216 Jesse James Farm Road  
 Kearney, MO 64060  
 www.jessejames.org  
 816.736.8500



James homestead cabin —  
 Original art by Jim Hamill

**Return Service Requested**

**YES**, I want to renew my membership with the Friends of the James Farm or begin a new membership. I have checked my level of membership in the box and enclosed a check or money order for the amount indicated.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail membership form and payment to:*

**Friends of the James Farm**  
 c/o Jesse James Birthplace  
 21216 Jesse James Farm Road  
 Kearney, MO 64060



You can also scan  
 QR Code to visit our  
 website.  
 www.jessejames.org

**Membership Levels**

*(Mark One)*

- ☐ Bushwhacker . . . . . \$25  
☐ Clay County Irregular . . . \$50  
☐ Road Agent . . . . . \$100  
☐ Long Rider . . . . . \$250  
☐ Home Guard . . . . . \$500

Is this a renewal? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Outside the continental U.S.,  
 please add \$5 to your membership  
 contribution.