



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year has unfortunately started out with two pieces of bad news. Scott Cole, one of our long time members, has resigned from the board for health reasons, although he remains a member. Scott is a descendant of Jesse Richard Cole, brother of Zerelda James. His beautiful wife Ann is from the Wymore family whose ancestor, Jolly Wymore, was shot and killed during the robbery of the Liberty bank. Her family now owns the bank museum that the gang robbed on the Liberty square.

During the auction of the Wilber Zink James family collection, Scott and Jeanne Ralston generously donated funds so that the Friends were able to secure letters written by Reverend James to Zerelda during his fateful trip to California, for the Farm. Scott has offered financial help many times in the past and has promised to do so in the future if a need comes up.

Scott is one of three super historians we have had who showed us where the houses and cemeteries are, or where they were, on our bus tours. The three are Scott Cole, Harold Dellinger and Jim Baldwin. We thank Scott for his many contributions.

The other piece of bad news is that a review of our revolver range has shown that it does not currently meet NRA safety specifications, therefore we cannot have any shoots until we make upgrades that will take at least until next year. Also, the property behind the range has been sold and a house will be built there. It is a fair-sized property and I don't know where the house will be sited. I have contacted the NRA range adaptive program and after I get information on our range to them they may decide to send someone out to talk to us about their recommendations.

We hope to have the shoots up and going again as soon as possible at the Farm but in the meantime, two other possible locations have been suggested and are being discussed. More details will follow. We thank you for your patience – safety is paramount.

A final bit of bad news is that due to our continuing struggle with Covid, we may have to pass on our reunion this year.

Meanwhile, the Birthplace continues to offer superb tours of the old homestead and was recently awarded a Community Excellence Award. The Museum remains open to visitors as does the gift shop!

Please continue your support of the Farm and keep your membership up to date. We continue to look for ways to raise additional funds so that we can support and promote the James Farm, as we have always done. One idea is a themed raffle, with a replica civil war revolver from James Country Mercantile as the prize. Keep an eye out for more details.

If anyone has any other fundraising idea, please let us know. **Bryan**



BY BRYAN IVLOW

This Issue

- Page 1* – President's Message
- Page 2* – The Farm In The Snow
- Page 3* – Meet New Board Members
- Page 4* – New Artifacts at the Kearney Historic Museum
- Page 7* – The Columbia Bank Robbery
- Page 11* – News Items
- Page 12* – The Doctor Too Scared To Call!
- Page 15* – T. M. James: Successful Businessman

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
Gary Blackwell
Paul Carrington
Scott Cole
Laura Ganschow
Caleb Pooker

Ex-Officio

Beth Beckett

Honorary Board Members

Betty Barr
Michelle Pollard
David Smith

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

THE FARM IN THE SNOW



Who doesn't like seeing the James Farm in the snow?! Thank you to Beth for sharing these with us. The old place appears camouflaged against the trees and the snow, and gives some insight into how cold the family would have been through the winter. The Farm would have looked similar to this on the night the Pinkertons attacked in 1875.

Membership is Due, Folks!

We take this opportunity to remind you that membership fees are due. To continue supporting the Jesse James Birthplace please complete the form on the back of this issue and return.

**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 other updates with you during the coming year.

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Gary Blackwell



I was born and raised in Clay County, am a life-long area resident and a current member of the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

I have always been interested in American, Missouri, and Military history and am especially interested in Western and Civil War history. I have been to just about all the regional Civil War battlefield and small skirmish sights, to include various Civil War cemeteries and monuments.

I am dedicated to preserving Missouri historical sites.

I have family members that served on both sides of the Civil War and remain dedicated to preserving the authentic (non-redacted or adulterated) history of both America and Missouri.

I am the proud father of Justin, Gracen, and Caleb Blackwell. Caleb and I are avid shooters and historical firearm collectors. We shoot with/ against each other at every James Farm shoot that we can attend.

I remain dedicated to doing my part to ensure that the James Farm Museum and shoot continue to be a part of Clay County.

Paul Carrington



I was raised in upstate New York and moved to Missouri to attend Evangel University in 1974.

My interest in history developed during my high school history classes. This has turned into a life-long interest in American history, particularly the Civil War, Missouri and Western History since moving here.

I enjoy reading about historical events and people and travelling to sites and locations where they took place.

I first visited the Jesse James farm and other historical places with my boys when they were young. I have never done any re-enacting but have attended a few over the years.

I am interested in preserving the Jesse James farm as an historic site and promoting an awareness and understanding of the family's role in Missouri history. I am a regular competitor at the annual shoots.

I look forward to becoming involved with the Friends of James farm board and supporters.

AWARD WINNERS!

As mentioned in our President's message, the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum was named as a winner of a Town & Country Leader's Community Excellence Award for 2020! Their customers and readers selected the Birthplace as Best Tourist Attraction.

A huge congratulations to all the staff who work so tirelessly to provide high quality tours and a friendly face to those who visit from around the world.



NEW ARTIFACTS AT THE KEARNEY HISTORIC MUSEUM



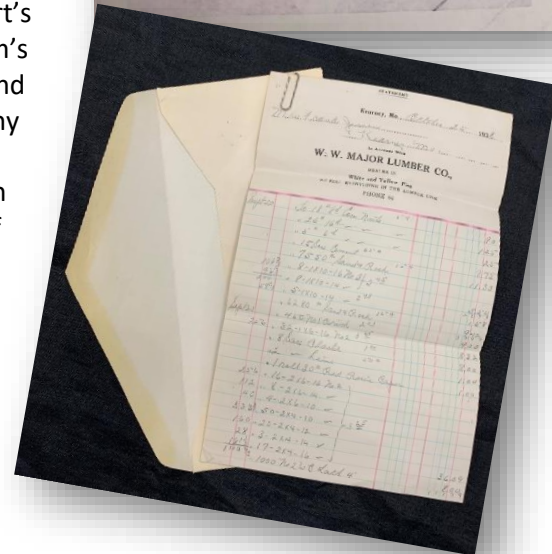
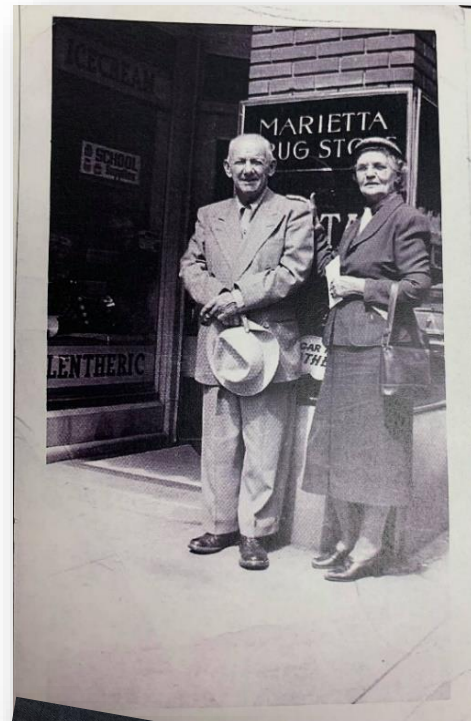
BY GERRI
SPENCER,
DIRECTOR

The Kearney Historic Museum is delighted to announce the acquisition of a group of interesting artifacts at the beginning of November last year. These artifacts were brought in by Pat Munkirs, wife of the late Jim Munkirs. All of the items are relevant to local Kearney history and some of the items are important to the James family history in particular. In order to establish some of the connection between the Munkirs and James families, I need to give you a bit of the background of the Munkirs family.

Hazel Mae 'Harmon' Munkirs was born on December 4, 1903, one of the oldest of eight siblings. She married Wallace Fred Munkirs on May 2, 1929. Hazel and Wallace, 'Wall', had one son in 1930, Jim Wallace Munkirs. Hazel started working at the James farm in the 1930s, helping out mainly in the house but also outside. She would often take her son, Jim, and one of her younger sisters with her, most often it was Geraldine Harmon. While she worked, both Jim and whichever sister, niece, or nephew had accompanied her, read to Annie James, especially in her later years. Jim had fond memories of these visits clear into his teens, when Annie passed in 1944. Annie always enjoyed having the young ones around! Jim's mother, Hazel, and Annie James's daughter-in-law, Mae A. [Sanboth] James, became very good friends during these years and it was a friendship that continued until Mae's death on April 18, 1974. According to Mae's funeral memorial record, the pallbearers were Robert Hall, Wilbert Ellington, Cecil Turnage, and Jim Munkirs. With Mae James being preceded in death by her husband, Robert 'Bob' Franklin James, and the couple having had no children of their own, Mae passed her and Robert's belongings on to Hazel, one of her best friends by then. Jim's mother, Hazel, passed on June 24, 2000. At that time, Jim and Pat Munkirs acquired not only Hazel's estate but also many items that had belonged to Robert and Mae James.

There are approximately fifty pieces in this group with quite a few being newspaper clippings. Besides a variety of clippings there were also documents, photographs, personal belongings, and even recordings. I have selected a few different pieces to focus on and share with you.

The first and probably the most historically important artifact is a seven-page hand-written statement from W. W. Major Lumber Co. here in Kearney. It is the statement of Mrs. Frank James' account with the lumber company dated October 25, 1938. The statement is for lumber and building supplies and starts on September 20, 1938 and runs through October 25, 1938. After much consideration, I firmly believe that this is the bill for the



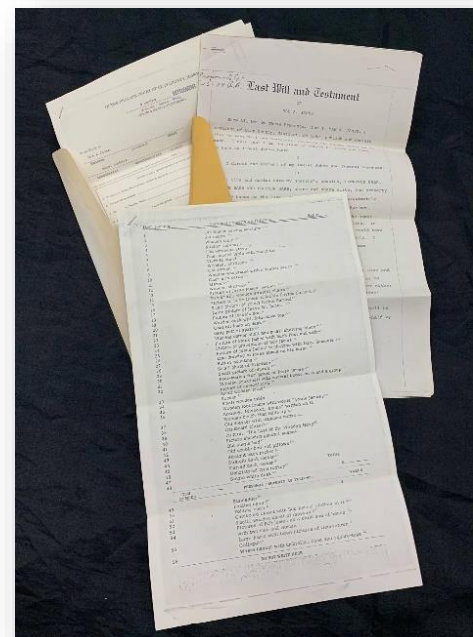
Bob and Mae James
Photo courtesy of the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum

addition to the James Farm. I worked for Clay County Historic Sites from 1992 to 2020 and as a historic interpreter there, we always just referred to the addition as the 1930s addition because there wasn't any conclusive evidence to give it an exact date. I now believe that it was built the fall of 1938, beginning in September. Some of the items on this statement include nails, cement, sand and rock, bricks, plaster, lime, red rosin paper, shingles, siding, sash weights, sash cords, corner beads, ridge rolls, No. 2 KC door, screen door, windows, door stops, and lots of lumber in both cypress and fir. The total bill for this addition came to \$315.57 but some unused items were returned for a credit which brought the final actual total due down to \$300.35. So now we not only know when this addition was added but also where the materials were purchased and exactly how much it cost!

Two small, brief hand-written notes by Hazel Munkirs were included in this group of items. One note mentions that typically, one day a week, while she was at the farm with Annie, both Bob and Mae would go play golf in Excelsior Springs about nine miles from Kearney. Most people know that Bob really enjoyed golf but so did Mae. Another note says that on the days she was there with Annie, that Annie preferred to read or listen to the Kansas City Star newspaper. She especially enjoyed the Orphan Annie comic strip series and the 'My Day' column by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, according to Hazel.

There were numerous photos in this group but a few in particular that I wanted to mention. One is a photo of Hazel Munkirs, by herself, at the James farm. She notes on the photo that she is in front of the remains of the original coffee bean tree that Dr. Samuel was hung from in 1863. There also were about a dozen coffee bean saplings circling it. Another photo taken the same day at the farm shows Hazel with her younger sister, Dorothy Harmon, and two nephews, Bob and Tom Smith. Something tells me that Annie enjoyed them visiting that day! And, last but not least, are several photos at the farm and Robert and Mae by the house.

The last of the paper items that I will talk about is Mae's Will, dated June 19, 1967, and the inventory list from the farm that was included in the envelope with it. Mae and Bob started their life together in 1903 and had a long but very tempestuous relationship. In her Will she leaves the James farm and its then current contents to her husband's cousins, Lawrence, Chester, and Forster Barr. Mae also appoints her longtime friend, Hazel, as executrix of the Will. Reading the personal property inventory was like mentally walking through the James farm today since a majority of the items are still there. According to the inventory list from 1974, the contents of the James farm were valued at \$1,812.50 at that time.

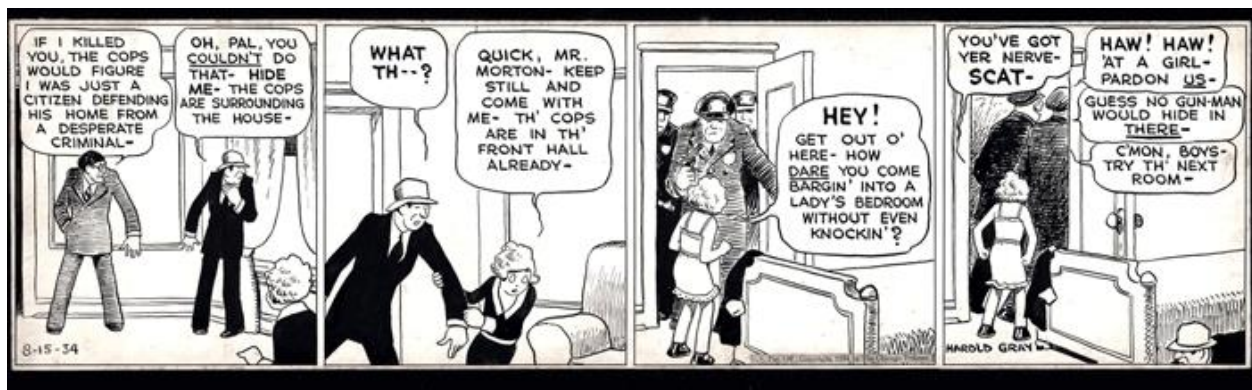


Two everyday woven hand fans and a pair of wonderful gray spats are also part of this group. The two fans are both about fourteen inches tall, and having tried them, they stir up a mighty nice little breeze that would have been nice on a hot Missouri summer day! The spats are labeled, 'Genuine Box Cloth, Standard Spats' and are in great shape with no staining and showing just a little wear. These items were supposedly personal belongings of Frank and Annie.

One of the most unusual and unique finds in this group was a large 10 ½ x 10 ½ inch envelope from a D. P. Caylor in Ringgold, PA to Robert James in 1947 that contained two vinyl records. These two records are from a July 3, 1947 radio interview that Robert James did. I have listened to them once in their entirety and was quite pleased to hear Robert's voice at the age of 69. It was a short interview, around ten minutes, give or take, mainly establishing who he was and who his father and even his grandfather were. Not really much new information there. Unfortunately, until both records are correctly and thoroughly cleaned and a new needle installed on our Victrola, I am unable to listen again as they just want to drag and stop playing this second time around. I have been told that these old needles are only good for one or two records so I should feel lucky to have listened to three sides without a problem!



I hope you have enjoyed peeking at and hearing about some of the items that we acquired in November of 2020 as much as I have enjoyed sharing them with you! If you ever find yourself in Kearney, Missouri be sure to not only visit the James Farm Museum but also stop by the Kearney Historic Museum. You may see not only the above items but also a beautiful woven chaise lounge that belonged to Annie James donated by Jim and Pat Munkirs in 2016 plus the safe from the Kearney Trust Bank that held Frank James ashes in the bottom compartment until 1944 when they were buried at the same time as Annie. I'll hope to see you in Kearney one day soon! **GS**



Orphan Annie - August 15, 1934

Kearney Historic Museum

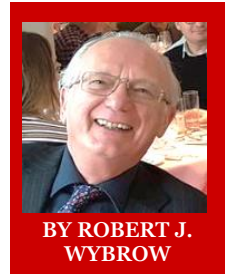
101 S Jefferson St Kearney, MO 64060
816-903-1856

First opened in 2006 to celebrate Kearney's sesquicentennial, the Kearney Historic Museum is home to numerous permanent and rotating displays. A guest favorite at the museum is their full timeline of Kearney's history, starting back in 1856 when it was known as Centerville.



THE COLUMBIA BANK ROBBERY: AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

Within six months after Jesse's assassination, and more than ten years after the event, a newspaper in Indiana – *The Evansville Journal* reprinted in *The Daily American* of Nashville, Tennessee of October 14, 1882 - carried a lengthy article on the robbery of the bank of Columbia, Kentucky on 29 April 1872. It was said that "the place was well chosen and the scheme nicely concocted," while the town was described as being "a quiet little town in Adair county, contained at that time about 700 inhabitants, and was fully forty miles removed from any railroad or telegraph station. It nestled in the midst of a good country, high and rolling, with wooded lands in abundance, and was something of a resort for stock traders. The bank there did a good business, and was in repute as resting on a solid foundation."



Judge G. C. Avritt was a resident of Columbia in 1872 who witnessed the robbery from his law office overlooking the public square, and gave his description of the town, saying it was built after the old-fashioned style of a western town, with the court house situated in the center of a square, and most of the business houses and offices fronting that way. The bank building, however, was situated some thirty or forty feet from the corner of one of the streets leading into court square, and therefore a little off the square. His account of the robbery was as follows:

There were only five men in the party, and the names of two of them were never discovered. Frank and Jesse James were there, and a third man was Cole Younger, it was confidently believed.¹ Every move showed careful preparation and shrewd contrivance. The men were in the county for more than a week before the time of the robbery, representing themselves to be stock dealers, and on the pretended errand of examining the best herds here and there, rode all over the county. In this way they made a careful study of the topography of the country and gathered together much else of important information, which they were afterwards enabled to put to their own valuable service. In this connection there were some pretty good stories rife about them after they were exposed and gone, showing the humorous side of their exploits. One of these, and the best one, was about Frank James. He stopped a few days at the house of a well-to-do farmer and made quite a favorable impression on the members of the family by his gentlemanly demeanor and the interest he manifested in their affairs. He played with the little children, frolicked with the larger boys, but of all things was especially polite to the old grandmother of the family. The old lady was exceedingly pious, and turned from her Bible only to take up 'Pilgrim's Progress,' a book which lovingly decanted on at all times and recommended to everybody. James was quick, of course, to discover the good woman's hobby, and assist her in riding [reading?] it. He not only heard her with great pleasure and marked attention at the outset of their acquaintance, but speedily followed it up by a request for the loan of the book. The old lady was delighted to put it in his hands, accompanying the favor with many observations on the work and the instruction it contained, and fervently expressing the hope that the young man might be as much benefited by reading it as she had been.

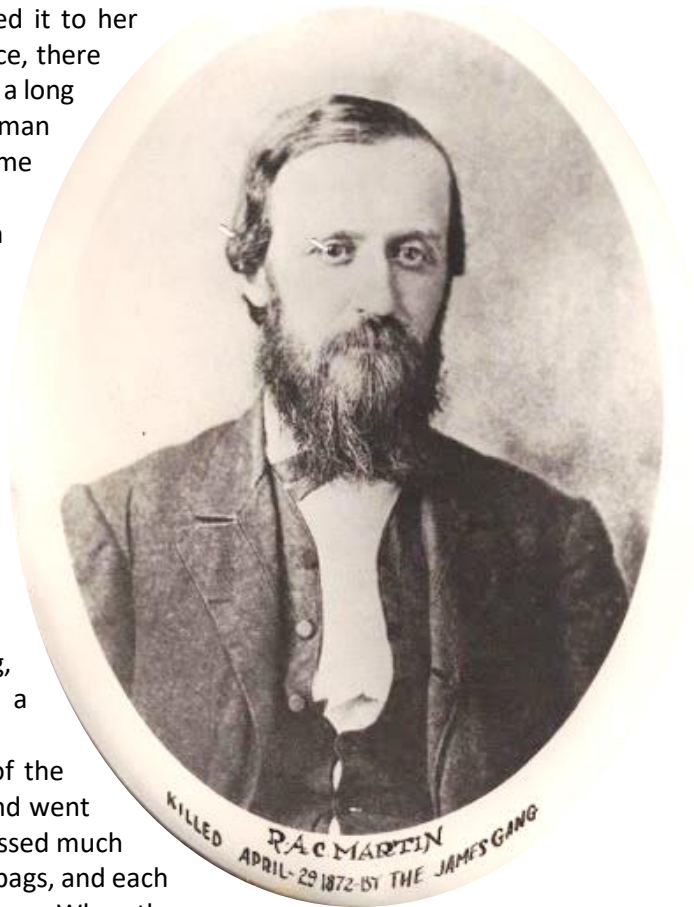
James apparently was soon absorbed in the book. He gave a good deal of his time to it, called for a good light to read by after retiring, and on one or two pleasant afternoons was seen to take a chair and go out into the yard and bury himself in his favorite new-found volume. His partners meanwhile were out looking at cattle and surveying the country. The party left the farm house as if only to be gone a few days, and Frank James, handing the old lady's book back to her, pointed out to her where his place was and charged her not to let the book-mark fall out. When the polite and pious young man and his companions failed to return, and it was afterwards reported that they were notorious men of the road and had robbed the bank at Columbia of all the money they could lay their hands on, the old lady positively refused to believe it. It was a base slander, she was sure. She was not particularly warm in the defense of the others,

but as to the young man who had read with such close attention the book she had loaned him, and had returned it to her charging her so especially about keeping his place, there could be no doubt as to him; and it is said that for a long time the confiding old lady expected the young man to return and put his slanderers to rout and resume his pious readings and reflections.

It was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon when the robbers rode into town. Three of them came first, riding ahead, and one of them stopped and turned in to an alley just before reaching the bank building, while the other two rode on past and took position in court square. They had thus both approaches to the bank covered. They attracted no particular attention, since they were thought to be stock dealers, and besides, the afternoon being an unusually warm one for April, there were very few people stirring on the streets. They were kitted in the costume of a Kentucky drover, and after halting, rested easily in their saddles and began a conversation with each other.

In a few minutes the two remaining men of the party came riding on from the same direction and went on to the bank and went in. These two were dressed much as the others were, only that they carried saddlebags, and each had a man's shawl thrown loosely over his left arm. When the two men entered the bank, Mr. Martin, the cashier, was found sitting around in front of the counter conversing with three friends who had dropped in to see him. Mr. Martin had his chair tilted back against the wall and was nursing a knee with both hands in that comfortable position one is apt to assume while enjoying a pleasant conversation. As the two strangers entered, Martin instinctively released his knee and sat a little straighter in his chair. He bowed to the two men, saying politely, 'Good day, gentlemen,' whereupon his company faced about so as to see the visitors. The two men returned Martin's salutation in equally as pleasant a voice, but did not stop, and, keeping their eyes steadily on the cashier and his friends moved with a quick step towards the small opening in the counter, which admitted one there and to the vault. The truth seemed to dawn upon Martin upon the instant. He sprang to his feet shouting 'Bank robbers!' But the next instant a ball from the pistol of the foremost robber had pierced his breast and brought him prone on the floor.

As Martin shouted and sprang to his feet, his three companions did likewise, and no sooner had Martin been shot down than the two robbers turned to attend to his friends. Two of them, however, sprang through a window and were gone in a flash. The third one, a large, powerful man, was not so fortunate; and, finding himself cornered, closed with his nearest adversary and succeeded in turning the man's pistol, aimed at him, away. He then held his adversary in front of him, pushing him from one side to the other to shield himself from the second robber, who now was endeavoring to draw a bead on him. In this position the man finally reached the front door, when, seizing the man he was holding from behind more firmly in his grasp, he sent him reeling backwards into the house, and then ran for his life. A couple of shots were fired at him, but fortunately neither hit him, and he got off with a whole skin.



This photo was thought to have hung in the building where Martin lost his life. Credit in finding it goes to the late, Paul Saeli.

In the meantime the situation on the streets had grown animated and dangerous. No sooner was the shot fired in the house than the three who were keeping watch on the streets opened fire. At first they aimed at nothing in particular, having the design only of intimidating the people.

In a moment though heads began popping out of the windows and people to appear in doorways to see what the matter was. They remained thus, though, but for a second, for, given a target, the robbers would shoot at it, and heads seemed their specialties. They began now, too, to ride back and forth and to manifest considerable uneasiness. 'What's the ----- the matter?' one of them was heard to ask the other, referring to their companions in the bank. 'Why don't they hurry up; we can't keep 'em off forever!' Their impatience though was short lived. At a sign from the bank, the two men commanding the approaches at court square spurred on then, when the two who were in there rushed out and sprang on their horses, and riding towards the fifth man, who remained at the mouth of the alley further down the street, the four were joined by him, and away they all went out the Burksville pike. They were splendidly mounted, and rode away at a terrific speed. As soon as it was discovered that the robbers had fled there was a rush for the bank, and I think I was the second man in the building. We saw a trail of blood leading from the chair where Martin had sat around to the entrance behind the counter and through that, and pushing our way through we found Martin lying on the floor at the vault door, with his head and shoulders raised up and resting against the closed door. His clothing was very dusty, showing that he had been dragged there, and blood still flowed from the wound in his breast, just above the heart. The keys of the inside door of the vault were lying on the floor by Martin's side. The cash drawer had been jerked out roughly and its contents carried off, but that was all the booty that the robbers had obtained. Martin was still alive, and we lifted him up and laid him in an easy position on the counter. The next moment, though, he gave a last, long gasp and was dead.

In a short time there were a dozen well-mounted, well-armed men riding in pursuit of the robbers. We found that at about a mile distance out on the Burksville road they had turned

EDIBLE HISTORY!



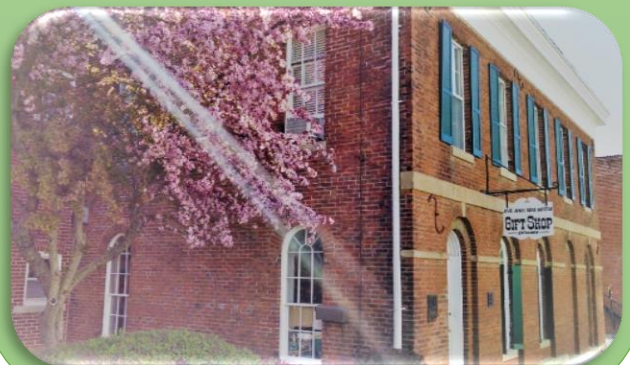
In December 2020, Downtown Historic Liberty hosted a gingerbread house contest.

Visitors were encouraged to walk around the Historic Square and then vote for their favorite.

Tour guides Bonnie and Donna, with the help of Donna's daughter, created this fabulous tiny gingerbread replica of the Jesse James Bank Museum! What an amazing job they did and I bet it tasted good too!

Don't forget

The Jesse James Bank Museum reopens on 1 March 2021 after its winter break.



abruptly to the left, taking a bridle-path leading into a black jack thicket. We, too, entered this, and discovered that the robbers were circling the town, but keeping only bridle-paths, and riding so as to confuse any pursuers. We rode hard, though, but were outwitted in the chase, and never caught up. The robbers continued their tactics and made almost a complete circle of the town, at a distance of only a few miles out, and before turning abruptly and riding away from it. We afterwards learned that they passed the next morning within sight of a small village not more than twenty miles from Columbia. It was never known positively, but the belief obtained that the party went to Nelson county, where the James brothers had friends and relatives, and where, it is said, they found refuge more than once.

‘And did matters just rest there?’

Not exactly, and yet there was little that was possible to do. Martin was an estimable man and very popular man, and the feeling at his bloody death was most intense. His murderers would have had no sort of a show, but there was no getting hands on them. Several months afterwards, at the Lexington races, a couple of citizens of Columbia felt certain that they recognized a horse there as one that had been ridden by one of the bank robbers. They were very certain of this, and the owner not being able to give any very clear account of himself was taken to Columbia on the strength of suspicion. He gave the name of Jas. A. Legge.²

He was put on trial and I defended him. He established an alibi, showing that at the time of the robbery he was laid up at some distant town in the State with a broken limb, sustained by the kick of a horse. This satisfied the people, who were aroused again at the recollection of Martin’s death, and would have made short work of any man who would have been connected with it. Legge, though released, found it advisable to take a hasty leave of the community, and I got the horse for my fee. There were those so certain that the animal had belonged to the bank robbers that to satisfy them and myself on this score I resolved on a test that was suggested. I mounted the horse and rode him out on the Burksville pike, and just before reaching the path in the thicket taken by the robbers, I drew him over on the opposite side of the pike and gave him his head. When he came to the path, without any movement on my part, he crossed the pike and turned into it as though he had been there before. This, of course, settled the matter in the minds of many, and I am free to confess, rather inclined me in the opinion that the horse had been ridden by one of the bank robbers that day at Columbia. **RJW**

Notes and sources

1. The judge’s memory was slightly at fault as five men were later indicted for the murder of Martin: John Warren, alias John James; John Younger, alias John Wilson; William Younger, alias William Wilson; Thomas Jenkins; and William Willoughby, alias Thomas Wilson.
2. Legge was not the only person to be arrested for possible participation in the robbery: James Festus Dickenson, alias Clarke, alias Marshall; deputy marshal B. R. Kirkpatrick; and Jack Foster – all being released. The mention of Legge, though, throws some doubt on the judge’s story of witnessing the robbery from his office window. *If* he saw all five robbers, and *if* they were not masked, why did Avritt defend Legge in court rather than appearing as a witness?

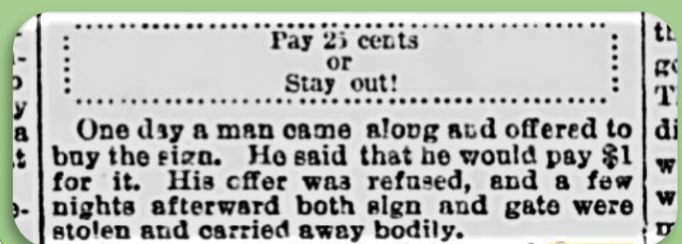
For English Liz, living in Scotland

LOOTERS AT THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

Whilst looking through some old newspapers about the House on the Hill in St. Joseph, I came across this amusing, and sad, anecdote.

Mrs. Emil Hahn occupied the house after Jesse had been killed “in order to save it from ruin by the hundreds of visitors who came to see it every day.”

In an effort to discourage some of those visitors, Mrs. Hahn charged 25 cents admittance and placed a simple sign in the yard...



St Joseph Herald, 3 February 1889

RECENT DONATIONS TO THE JESSE JAMES MUSEUM

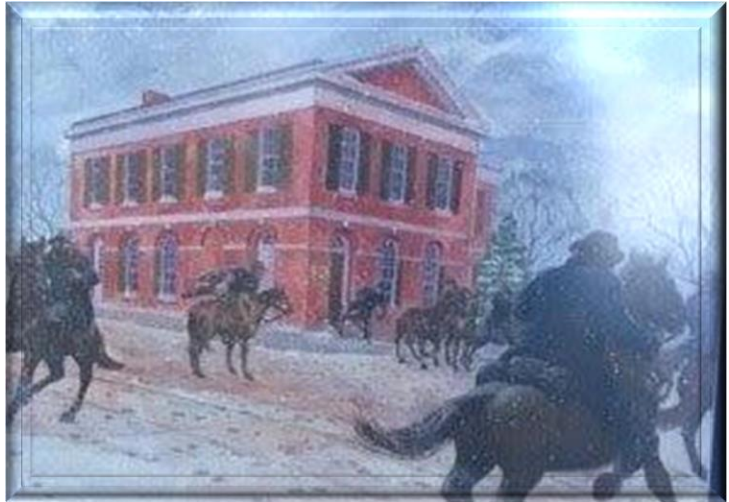
In recent editions, we have showcased some new items that can be viewed at the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum. The first was a February 1, 1875 New York Times newspaper, donated by Joe Hall, a Samuel descendant and the second, more recently, was a painting by John Paul Strain. For this edition, Museum Director, Beth Beckett, would like to share more exciting news about recent donations.

This amazing print has been very kindly donated by Ruth Ann Crossett. It depicts the Clay County Savings Association at the time of the robbery there on 13 February 1866. The print now hangs in the Jesse James Bank Museum in Liberty.

Barbara Lord has donated a collection of thirty books that belonged to her late husband.

And David Rowland has donated a collection of Jesse James books, dime novels, miscellaneous newspaper clippings and two letters to the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum.

Thank you so much to those who have so kindly donated items for us all to share.



STOLEN ITEMS RETURNED IN BIZARRE TWIST

On 31 January 2020, cameras at the Jesse James Home in St. Joseph, Missouri, caught someone breaking into the Home and stealing several items, including the “God Bless Our Home” plaque. The plaque was supposedly the last thing Jesse touched before he was killed by Bob Ford on 3 April 1882.

But then, on 7 December, local newspapers were reporting that the robber had had an unusual change of heart; he walked through the front door of the adjoining Patee House Museum, laid the plaque on the counter and said, “Don’t call the police.”

In a strange turn of events, museum director, Gary Chilcote realised he recognised the man. Before the robbery, the same man had met with Gary and his son on the front porch of the Patee House and shown off a large tattoo of Jesse James on his chest.

No charges were brought against the man and the insurance money was returned.



The plaque that was stolen and then returned.

Source: Online article, Kilee Thomas, 7 December 2020.

THE DOCTOR TOO SCARED TO CALL!

The Rev. Robert Sallee James and Zerelda Cole, both natives of Kentucky, married in 1841. That same year, the newly married couple visited Zerelda's family in Missouri and, having fallen equally in love with the state, rented and then purchased a 275 acre farm just west of Centreville, now Kearney, Clay county, Missouri.

The family grew and prospered as the Rev. James split his time between preaching and farming. With the discovery of gold in California, the Rev. James made a decision that would change the course of his entire family; he decided to accompany local prospectors out west and provide spiritual guidance during their journey. He sent regular letters home until August 1850 when all communication ceased. No doubt the lack of correspondence played on Zerelda's mind until her worst fears were realized – Robert had died shortly after reaching the west coast. He was buried at Placerville in a grave that, due to a terrible fire, has long since gone unmarked.

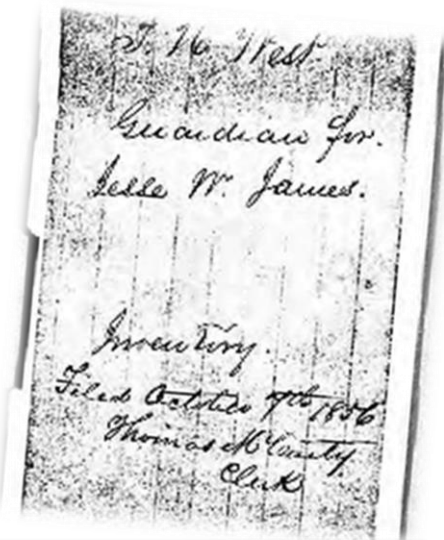
In the aftermath of this tragedy, Zerelda was forced to endure much hardship. Robert left no will and as the rules of the day dictated, Zerelda did not own the Farm he had purchased nor any of the items held within it. The slaves, her furniture and the agricultural equipment were all sold to settle debts and ongoing expenses on the estate, leaving her almost incapable of securing any kind of income. Guardianship of their three young children was also passed to their uncle-by-marriage, Tilman West, who lived in an area of Kansas City then known as Harlem. West, a merchant, had married Robert's sister, Elizabeth, and had five young children of his own.

In an attempt to secure her future, Zerelda married Benjamin Simms, a wealthy landowner, but he did not care for the burden of three young children and they remained under the care of their uncle. The marriage seemed to infuriate Zerelda's family who felt that she was putting herself before her children but, in 1852, Simms unexpectedly died after a fall from his horse. The inheritance Zerelda received served to provide some financial stability and with that came a desire to reunite herself with her children, whom she had far from abandoned.

Robert James' probate papers give insight into the ebb and flow of his estate. In October 1853, and while still living with his uncle, a six-year-old Jesse was taken sick with a high fever brought on by an abscess. The papers show that the attending physician, Dr. F. A. Rice, charged \$8.85 for his services, an amount oral history states sent his mother into a not entirely uncharacteristic rage!



BY MICHELLE POLLARD



Guardian claims the following credits.	
By Aunt paid Dr. F. A. Rice Oct 1st 1853 as per voucher 1.	7 50
Ans on Same to Oct 6th 1852	1 35

Excerpt from Robert James' Probate Papers, with thanks to Gay Mathis

Very little is known about Dr. Francis A. Rice. Born in Keysburg, Kentucky, he married Mary Emily Ellis on 6 March 1845 and they had several children. It is clear he became a Kansas City physician of some note as one newspaper included him in a list of nostalgic reminiscences – "There are not many living who took part in those days, fifty years ago, and of those few, none recognize in the Kansas City of today the village of 1840-47, when A.B. Canville ran the first general store; when Lattimore Bros. sold calico prints and other dry goods; when Charles Horning

sold wet goods, David Geer kept a variety store; when Dr. F. A. Rice put up pills and put down ills; when Thompson McDaniel ran a hotel, so called ... and Drs. Troost, Rice and Ridge were physicians."

Dr. Rice died, at the age of fifty, on 10 January 1862 and is buried at Elmwood Cemetery, Kansas City, alongside his wife.

Many years after Dr. Rice had 'put up pills and put down ills', celebrated Kansas City physician, Dr. Joseph Madison Wood, was interviewed regarding the occasions his services had been sought by the James family. He, of course, had treated Jesse after the War when he had been taken to a second uncle's house in Harlem suffering with a gunshot wound to the chest. Jesse publicly thanked the doctor in 1873, calling him "one of the noblest and best men God ever created," and credit was given for the physician being the motivation for Jesse's healing trip to California in 1868.

But in 1882, Dr. Wood recalled the time he had visited Jesse as a sick child in 1853. "About thirty years ago," Dr. Wood recalled, "I attended Jesse in Harlem. I was called into consultation with a physician, whose name I cannot remember, who was treating one of the children of Mrs Samuels [sic], or James as she was then. The doctor met me on the road and insisted that I should go with him to the James house and see the patient and I went. It seems that he was very much afraid of Mrs. James and that on the day before our coming he had neglected to call on her sick child, and after this omission dreaded to meet her. I was then the oldest practitioner in the county and to conciliate her he brought me along with him. We saw the patient, a small boy, sick with some disease incident of childhood."

Joseph Madison Wood was born on 27 March 1810 and, like Jesse's parents was a native of Kentucky. He completed his medical studies in 1832 and shortly thereafter moved to Clay county, Missouri, settling in the town of Liberty. He married Corinne E. Wood [nee Arthur] on 12 March 1840.

Often referred to as the 'Father of Surgery in the West', Dr. Wood arrived in Kansas City from Liberty in 1858 and "practised his profession, particularly surgery, with a success that gave him a wide reputation in the west. He was an unusually large man, being six feet four inches tall and weighed 250 pounds, a man of few words but quick to act when the occasion demand."

Dr. Wood was a United States army surgeon, stationed at Fort Leavenworth, and in that capacity often accompanied the army on dangerous trips across the plains. Shying away from public office, the only post he accepted was that of Kansas City physician.

Joseph Madison Wood died at his home on 19 September 1888 having been "unable to survive the shock of the amputation of his leg and never regained consciousness afterwards. He suffered no pain and his death was a peaceful and easy one." He left behind a wife and five children; three daughters and two sons, both of whom became doctors. He is buried at the Mount Washington Cemetery, Independence, Missouri. **MP**



From an obituary that appeared in the
Kansas City Times,
20 September 1888.

Sources: *Kansas City, Missouri, Its History and People, 1808 – 1908, Vol. 1*, by Carrie Westlake Whitney, The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago, 1908, pp473-4; *Kansas City Star*, 19 September 1888; *Kansas City Times*, 6 April 1882; Robert James' Probate Papers; *An Historical Analysis of Remains Found In Jesse James' Casket*, by Milton F. Perry; correspondence and assistance from Gay Mathis; Kentucky Marriages Index – online; grave of Dr. Francis A. Rice, Elmwood Cemetery, Kansas City; *Kansas City Daily Journal*, 26 February 1893; Clay county Marriage records;

COULD YOU PICK A FAVORITE?

We recently asked a fine bunch of James family enthusiasts which is their favorite artifact at the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum and why, and the diversity of their answers is testament to the wide variety of items on show at this award-winning historic site – not one person chose the same thing!

Linda Brookshier

I think my favorite artifact would be Frank's robe because that is something that he would have put on at the end of the day or the first thing in the morning. While he was relaxing, did he think about Annie and his mother and Jesse and little Archie? The human things that go through our minds.



Marie Longo McWhirter

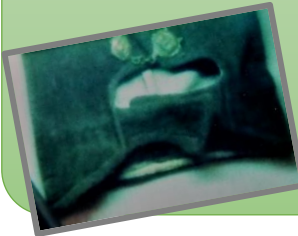
From a historical point of view, the bed Jesse was born in would be my favourite but my personal choice would be his collar button.

When I saw it, it affected me because it was such an everyday item that was next to him almost all the time and that he touched often. I like to imagine that it may have been a Christmas present from Zee when they were courting.



John Thomas

My favorite artifact at the farm is Jesse's neck warmer. The buttons always fascinate me. This winter has been brutally cold and I often wonder how they kept warm while on the "Journey" of life.



Dave Smith

The small, framed shaving mirror in the old cabin kitchen and the cast iron Dutch oven in the kitchen fireplace. Both items were brought to the farm by Rev. and Mrs. Robert James in 1845.



Scott Cole

My favorite artifact at the Farm is the original cabin itself. Almost certainly the oldest structure, it is also the lone surviving example of a first generation pioneer cabin in Clay County.

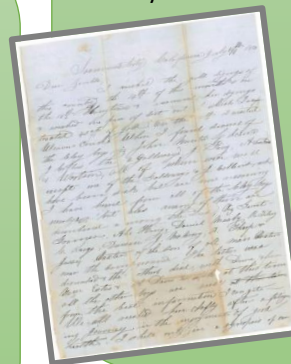
A majority of the early families were able to build finer second generation homes as they became more established and prosperous. Turns out the financial hardship of the James/Samuel family is our good fortune.



Elizabeth Rains Johnson

At first thought I thought maybe Jesse's boots, but actually, it's Rev. James' letters. I had a hand in transcribing them and they gave such insight to Rev. James, in the 1840s and in 1850 - his scholarly education. His essays were beautifully written. His love for Zerelda as he courted her and his love for his family as he traveled on such a dangerous trip to California - of course, then losing his life.

I've struggled with so many what ifs concerning Rev. James while researching the family.



How different would the boy's lives have been? Zerelda's? Then the idea of how many children would never have been born had Rev. James returned to Missouri and lived to be an old man. (thinking of people like Monte Griffey, for example).

Chuck Rabas

I like the lid from Jesse's original coffin. I think it's interesting that the coffin, which was apparently wood with a very thin galvanized metal covering, had that heavy [cast iron?] lid. I also like the footstone on Jesse's original grave. I would like to see it put in the museum. When I first visited the farm in the late 1960s or early 1970s, Frank's rattlesnake-skin necktie and a target that he had shot with his .36 cal. Remington were on display. They would be high on my list of interesting artifacts, as would Frank's .45 Colt and .32 auto pistol (both of which are presently in private collections).



To see these artifacts and more, visit the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum!

T. M. JAMES: SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN

Thomas Martin James was born in Russellville, Kentucky in 1823, son of a Baptist preacher. T. M. was orphaned at age 4 and reared by his sister, Mrs. Mary Mims. At the age of 20 he was teaching at a country school in Virginia when an uncle died and left him a sum of money that enabled him to quit teaching and travel west. He married Miss Sara Woodward in 1847 of Goochland County, Virginia. The couple traveled to Kentucky where his first business was a part ownership in a general store where he traded with Sac and Fox Indians. John and Sara had two sons, John W. (1848) and Luther T. (1850) both born in Kentucky.

His family arrived in Kansas City in 1854 on the steamer F. X. Oxberry. T.M. bought an interest in a saw and grist mill at the foot of Grand and later opened a general store on the west levee. In the 1860s he bought a stock of Queensware that Thomas Smart had rescued from a wrecked steamboat and established the wholesale and retail china store T. M. James Company, later T. M. James & Sons, first at 7th & Main, later 551-553 Delaware, and last removed to 1022 Walnut. In 1869 his sales amounted to \$75,000. He specialized in Haviland china. As a business man he was always characterized by the highest honor, and during a business career of forty years, always met every business obligation in full. His home at 927 Harrison anchored that beautiful neighborhood of 19th century mansions. T. M. And Sara sent both of their sons to Brown University and they became partners in the business when they returned.

The religious side of his life was ever first in importance. As a result, he gave tirelessly to the cause of Christ, in church and educational work during his lifetime. A constituent member of the First Baptist Church organized in the city, in 1855, and one of the endowers of Calvary Baptist Church. He donated land for the Olive Street Baptist Church in 1885. T. M.'s brother Robert James (b. 1818) was a Baptist missionary and organized three churches in Clay County. T. M. served on the Missouri Baptist Missionary Board along with John B. Wornall. He contributed upwards of \$7,000 to William Jewell College and served as a member of the board of trustees. On July 29, 1897, T. M. and Sara celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the home.

On December 23, 1901, he was struck by a street car at 9th & Grand and died a few days later. He was 78 years old and buried at Union Cemetery. Sons John and Luther carried on the company, and their sons followed them until 1950, when a grandson sold the business to the Hall Brothers.



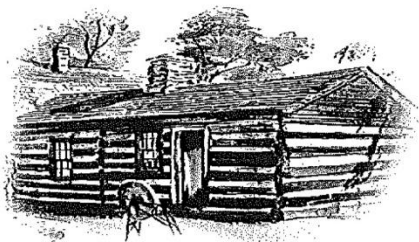
THOMAS M. JAMES.



Source: History of William Jewell College, Liberty, Clay County, Missouri by James G. Clark 1893 and the obituary of T.M. James.

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.