



## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Welcome to the first Journal of 2024!

As some of you will remember, back in the nineties a company promoted Winchester county themed rifles. They would contact a historical group in a county about designing historical embellishments on the wood and metal parts of a rifle and then sponsoring the sale of 10 of these rifles. An eleventh was made as a salesman's sample which when the 10 were sold would go to the sponsoring organization to use as a fundraiser in an auction or lottery.

The Friends designed and sponsored the Clay county rifle and the lottery we ran on our sample was the basis for our four CD'S totaling now over \$10,000. Our design was beautiful. It included many of Clay county's attributes.

We were recently offered number 1 of 10 in a beautiful display case for \$5000. Upon hearing that, Alan Tison, our secretary/treasurer's husband, offered his number 2 of 10 to us for \$1,200. There was no display case but it included the original Winchester box and the original shipping box. This was too good a deal for the board of directors, so the rifle now sits in the museum lobby along with the Jesse James commemorative rifle and the Thomas Hart Benton bowl all on loan to the farm from the Friends.

The next gift to the farm being researched at this time is a refresh of the 4ft x 5ft mural portraying a train robbery in the museum lobby that has become seriously sun faded.

Of course, these endeavors would not be possible without the contributions made by you as a Friend of the James Farm. Membership fees are due for this coming year and we hope you will once again support our efforts to preserve the history of the James family.

We should have some news on this year's revolver raffle and reunion soon. Shoot dates are included in this edition. Invitations to these are included in your membership. **Bryan Ivlow**

Reunion dates  
**COMING SOON**



BY BRYAN IVLOW

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# The Friends of the James Farm

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# NEWS FROM THE FARM

As you may recall, the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum recently received a generous donation from the James-Younger Gang and we have been given a very exciting insight into how the money will be spent.

“We have been working with our IT department to build a new interactive display that will go in the museum,” Bryan Shibley, Historic Sites Specialist at the Birthplace tells us. As museums move into the technological age, they are using more and more interactive equipment and now, the Jesse James Birthplace will be able to do the same!

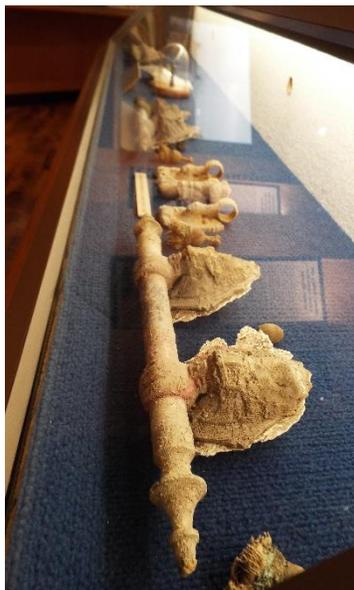
“With the gift given by the James Younger gang,” Bryan continues, “we have been able to acquire a large interactive touchscreen and a nice kiosk for it to stand on, plus a powerful minicomputer that can hide in the kiosk stand. We are hoping to be able to load it with documents and pictures from our collection. That way, if people want to look into a certain topic or even look up a name for genealogy purposes, they can locate it in the museum.”

For the first time, it will also be possible for visitors to the Birthplace to have access to a digital catalog of items not on display either due to lack of space or because the items are too fragile or awkward to display.

“It will be a work in progress,” Bryan explains, as it will no doubt take them time to catalog items and transfer files to the display, but it promises to be an exciting addition to an already award-winning museum experience.

“We will keep you posted,” Bryan promises, “and will send pictures as we make headway!”

# A GLIMPSE INTO THE MUSEUM



## “I KNOW YOU”... LEXINGTON OMNIBUS ROBBERY 1874 A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY?

It was nine years after the war ended and the times were tough for those who fought for the southern cause. This included Frank and Jesse James as well as the Younger brothers, who found themselves as outlaws instead of farmers after the war.

Frank and Jesse were quite familiar with the bustling city of Lexington, Mo., having ridden through the town numerous times. In fact, Frank fought in the Lexington Battle of the Hemp Bales during the three-day battle of September 1861 when he was with the Missouri State Guard. Jesse surrendered in Lexington while nursing a near fatal shot to his lung at the end of the war. It was rumored that the James-Younger gang had robbed the Alexander Mitchell Bank of around \$2,000 in 1866.

August 30, 1874, was the end of summer and likely hot and humid as the early evening progressed along the Missouri River. The stagecoach, also known as an omnibus, was on its regular run when it was stopped and robbed after it left the North Lexington Depot.

North Lexington was on the north side of the Missouri River, opposite the city of Lexington on the south side of the river. In 1874, North Lexington was a small village with railroad buildings and three or four houses that made up the tiny community. Only one of the houses was occupied at that time. The homes were built on the banks of the river right at the edge of the woods. The road from the depot ran westward along the timber line about 200 yards, then turned southward across a sandbar to the ferry landing that took passengers to the city of Lexington.

According to the *Andrew County Republican* of Friday, Sept. 4, 1874, some details of the day of the robbery were disclosed; the reporter stating that the “celebrated James boys ... had been in and about this city during the day. In the afternoon, Mr. Henry Turner saw two of them down on the river bank, near the soap factory. They had hitched their horses and were resting upon the ground.

“About the same time, a strange, heavily-armed man halted above town, at Smith & Hammer’s slaughter house, and stayed for half an hour or more. The omnibus goes over about half-past five in the evening. These three men rode upon the ferry boat with the omnibus and were carried to the other side of the river. The omnibus was driven to the depot in North Lexington, where it awaited the coming of the train.”

Once the train arrived, nine passengers boarded the omnibus and, on the return trip, when almost in front of a large house, the three men, who had been hiding behind the house, “rode out from behind the house with handkerchiefs over their faces and drawn revolvers.” They ordered the passengers on the



BY LIZ  
JOHNSON



1877 Plat map showing North Lexington at the bottom right corner.

omnibus to come out with their hands raised. The passengers did as told and were searched for any valuables.

After going through each man’s belongings, one robber expressed his disappointment by stating, “Damn it, he isn’t here.” It seems the robbers were looking for a specific person that day – Parson Jennings of Mayview, who had recently sold a large lot of hogs in St. Louis, receiving \$5,000 for them. Unfortunately for the robbers, Jennings had already returned home the previous night.

About this time, a group of leisurely walkers that included George Nance and Mattie Hamlett, as well as half a dozen other ladies, were seen along the river by the robbers. A horseman galloped up to the walkers and ordered them to walk up to the omnibus, which they did after being told to line up alongside the passengers. One of the walkers, Mollie Newbold, declared she would not line up with the others and started to run toward the ferry boat. One of the three robbers called out to Newbold and told her he would shoot if she did not stop, but she ran on anyway and sounded the alarm. Having done so, the ferry immediately steamed toward the other shore while the alarm spread, “all over the city like the cry of fire, and before the robbers were half through, there were in the neighborhood of a thousand people on the bluff looking at the operation.”

Meanwhile, Mattie Hamlett, it seems, knew the James brothers. Mattie’s brother, Jesse Hamlett, had fought with Jesse and Frank under William Clarke Quantrill, as well as Capt. William “Bloody Bill” Anderson. Hamlett reportedly participated in the massacre at Centralia in 1864. According to Ted Yeatman’s book, “Frank and Jesse James, The Story Behind the Legend”, it was alleged that Mattie knew Frank James and had nursed him after he was wounded at the end of the war, but Yeatman surmises that was a mistake as it was Jesse who had been wounded at the end of the war, not Frank.

“I know who you are in spite of that dirty veil over your face,” Mattie said to the masked man who ordered her to join the men lined up by the stagecoach.

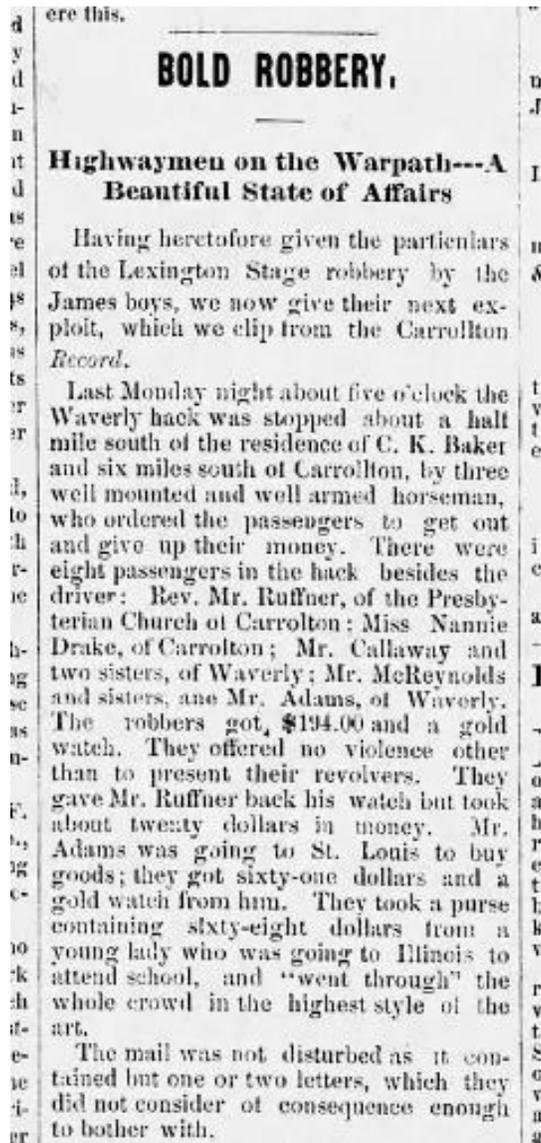
“Who am I then?” he replied.

“Why you are Will Younger, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself,” she said.

“Well, you are the same saucy girl you always were,” he said.

Other accounts indicate Mattie verbally acknowledged Jesse James, which made for an identification of the robber(s) to witnesses. Yeatman’s book also states that Mattie shamed Jesse into returning various personal items to the stagecoach passengers. Still, the losses were considerable for some. The passengers and what they lost in the robbery were: R.J. Holmes, of Kansas City, \$35 and a valuable watch; W.T. Singleton, a railroad agent at North Lexington, \$4.50 and a watch; Capt. L. Bergan, \$23 and a watch; D.B. Allen, \$50 (actually, this was Prof. W.J. Allen, who had come to Lexington from Kentucky to set up a male academy), a gold watch and his coat which was replaced with a dirty linen duster belonging to one of the robbers; William Brown, a black man, \$52 and a revolver; and an unknown employee of the railroad, \$5.

Originally, the robber had sought to simply relieve Allen of his coat, but offered his own as a replacement after Mattie Hamlett said, “Don’t take that man’s clothes. Your mother would be grieved to death if she knew what you were doing.” Allen was reportedly interested in the banter between Mattie and the



Daily State Journal [Jefferson City, Mo.],  
9 September 1874  
Newspapers.com

robbers and her identification of them as the James brothers. He later stated he was, “exceedingly glad ... that it was done by first class artists ... men of national reputation.”

As the robbers departed, they told the stagecoach passengers it was futile to pursue them as they would be gone quickly on “the finest horses in Missouri.” As they rode off, one called back, “Good-bye Miss Mattie. You’ll never see us again.” *The Lexington Caucasian* paper reported upon the incident as, “Taken altogether, it was an exploit which, in cool audacity, it was worthy of its distinguished perpetrators – the James boys and one of the immortal Youngers.”

Not everyone was thrilled, as the *Caucasian’s* rival paper, the *Lexington Register* reported on August 31, 1874 that its “editor has forwarded to Governor Woodson an account of the robbery and an offer to furnish ... the proper affidavit making the formal charge. The Governor can have a chance to show his zeal in the matter if he so desires to do.”

The robbery was fairly small scale since Jennings was not on the stagecoach with his \$5,000 in hog money and the robbers were chastised into not taking all the valuables of the passengers.

While on the campaign trail in Wellington after the robbery, Governor Silas Woodson stated he hadn’t had the James boys arrested because no one would come forward and file the proper affidavit.

A report surfaced following the robbery in an article from the *Cairo, Illinois Bulletin* on Friday, September 11, 1874 ... indicating that Frank and Jesse James couldn’t possibly have perpetrated the Lexington robbery.

The article was told from the point of view of a Mr. Robert James, a cousin of Frank and Jesse, who resided in Elmwood Township, 10 miles from the county seat of the county in which Brownsville, MO is located. Robert informed the reporter that, “the whole story of the robbery of the omnibus passengers at North Lexington, by the James boys and William Younger, is all a canard.” He said that Frank came to his house the Friday prior to the robbery and remained through Wednesday. Robert stated he would swear that, “at the time of the Lexington affair, Frank James was at his house 35 miles distant from Lexington and that he can prove this fact by several of his neighbors.” Robert also said that Frank had not been seriously wounded so as to require nursing care, since several reports had stated Mattie Hamlett had identified Frank as such. He also said there was no such person as William Younger. He went on to say that Jesse James had married the previous Spring and left the state right away.

The *Holt (Oregon, MO) County Sentinel*, Friday, September 11, 1874 paper wrote a flowing, glorious and fantastical article as if the author were composing a novel in describing the desperados of the James Gang, beginning with, “their fierce hand-to-hand encounters, under Bill Anderson, Thraikill and Quantrell (sic); their long and reckless scouts and forays; and their riotous jollity when satiated with slaughter and laden with booty.” The author continues, “since the end of the war, leaving them outlawed, they have borne themselves like men who know they have only to die, and having determined to do it without flinching.”

An interesting turn of events was the eventual memory problems of Mattie Hamlett. A September 12, 1874 article in the *St. Louis Dispatch* reported that Detective Stiles had returned home from “some official work in Lafayette and other counties of western Missouri.” While he was in Lexington, Stiles reportedly had a conversation with Mattie Hamlett, “who is the heroine of that part of the county just now. She is a very prepossessing young lady of 25, well educated and intelligent. They tell me that during the war she was almost



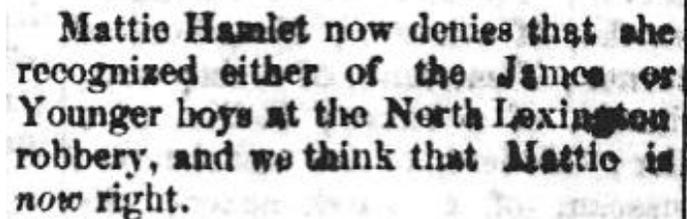
Governor Silas Woodson.

Pictorial and Biographical Publishing Company, Salisbury, Missouri - "Historical, Pictorial and Biographical Record, of Chariton County, Missouri", page 37 (1896)

constantly in the saddle doing scout duty and carrying ammunition and mail to the Confederates. She handles a horse and a pistol with the greatest of ease." Stiles continued by saying that Mattie "weakens on that story" of the James boys and the Lexington stage robbery. "She says she hasn't seen the James boys in four years," he added. He also told the Dispatch reporter that the Lafayette folks "don't any of them believe they were the James boys. Responsible parties say that Jesse James is married and has been in Texas all this time. There is other proof that Frank James was a hundred miles away from Lexington the day of the robbery."

Meanwhile, Zerelda James Samuel added her two cents. She wrote a letter to the editor of the *Kansas City Times* asking for space "in the columns of your paper to say a few words in defense of my sons, Jesse and Frank James." She said that Mattie, in her statement of recognizing the James brothers in the robbery, was false. "She never nursed either of my sons while they were wounded during the war, and neither of my sons was in the Lexington robbery," Zerelda said.

Mattie wrote to Zerelda, after receiving a letter from the boy's mother on September 2, 1874, that "after a hasty consideration of its contents, I have the privilege of replying as follows: I was accidentally in North Lexington on Sunday evening, at the time of the robbery of the stage, the subject matter of the article in the *Kansas City Times* referred to by you. The statement does not correspond with my recollection of the circumstances; but that is not material to the letter. When called upon, with my escort, to return to the stage, I thought I recognized the person who gave the order and I hastily gave expression to the belief. On arriving at the stage, I thought I recognized in one of the two persons who has it in possession as Frank James and on impulse of the moment, addressed him by name. The recognition, real or imagined, was acknowledged, and from this circumstance it was repeated on my authority that the James brothers were the perpetrators of the deed. After mature reflection on the subject I am prepared to doubt the accuracy of my recognition sufficiently to warrant me in refusing to make formal affidavits to the fact."



Sweet Springs [Mo.] Herald, 10 September 1874.  
Newspapers.com

What Zerelda wrote to Mattie in her letter of September 1, 1874 is unknown. Perhaps Mattie, a southern sympathizer with a brother who fought alongside the James brothers as a bushwhacker, had not forgotten where her sympathies lay. Maybe, the James brothers weren't at the robbery at all.

Interestingly, despite the identification of the James brothers by Mattie and the witnesses on the stagecoach and hundreds, if not a thousand, onlookers, no one was ever prosecuted for the Lexington Depot robbery of 1874.

#### Sources:

- Kansas City Times 1874
- Lexington News 2023
- The Lexington Caucasian 1874
- St. Louis Dispatch 1874
- Andrew County Republican 1874
- Holt County Sentinel 1874
- Cairo (Illinois) Bulletin 1874
- Frank and Jesse James, The Story Behind the Legend - by Ted Yeatman **LJ**



## VISITORS WELCOME

In 2023, staff at the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum welcomed visitors from all 50 states and 41 other countries, including China, Vietnam, Ukraine, Ireland and Mauritius!

## NEW JESSE JAMES POEM

Irene Harvey has kindly sent this poem to Beth Beckett and gives permission for us to include it in the Journal. Irene says that while researching the mid to late 1800s and the people of that time period, she became interested in outlaws. Although she read about several, it was the colorful Jesse James that caught her interest. She thinks Jesse had many good qualities and some good reasons for some of his bad. Irene admired his sharpshooting skills as well as his horsemanship. "In a strange and inexplainable way," she says, "I fell in love with this legendary outlaw."

### FOTJF SHOOT DATES 2024



*Here we go, folks!*

Details for this year's shoots are as follows –

**Location – Sugar Creek PD Range,  
1801 Courtney Rd, Sugar Creek, Mo**

\$25 entry fee

Sign up starts at 8am, shoot begins at 9am

**Saturday April 13, 2024  
(to include a standing rifle component)**

**Saturday June 1, 2024  
Saturday July 13, 2024**

**Saturday September 21, 2024  
(special event, details to follow)**

*We look forward to seeing you there!*

### The Outlaw Jesse James

By Irene Harvey

Women loved him; all men feared him  
As he rode 'cross the terrain  
He was a killer with a kind side  
The outlaw Jesse James

As Frank and Jesse robbed and killed  
It just increased their fame  
But some folks stood behind him  
The outlaw Jesse James

Now Jesse is a Legend  
And his story still remains  
The bloody trail won't be forgot  
Of the outlaw Jesse James

He wore the best attire  
His horse the fastest on the range  
You can't protest; he was the best  
The outlaw Jesse James

Now Jesse had a heart  
And Jesse had a brain  
He and Frank were close and quick  
The outlaw Jesse James

Now Bob Ford was a coward  
In our memories will remain  
That back stabbing hypocrite  
Put an end to Jesse James

If Jesse was here now  
Or I lived way back then  
Under stars above I'd fall in love  
With the outlaw Jesse James

And he will not be forgotten  
He's a hero that lives on  
The blue eyed Jesse James

There'll never be another  
Worthy of his name  
His ghost still gallops through the sky  
The outlaw Jesse James.

## THE FUNERAL OF ARCHIE PEYTON SAMUEL

Although the events of January 26, 1875 regularly appear in books, on social media and in movies, what happened to eight-year-old Archie Peyton Samuel, the half brother of the James' who died after the late night attack on his home by Pinkerton detectives, is rarely documented.

Details are scant but what exists provides the tiniest glimpse into a family's grief.

On January 26, 1875, Pinkerton detectives and local law enforcement, acting on intelligence obtained from operative, Jack Ladd, launched an attack on the James-Samuel Homestead in the hope of capturing the James brothers. Instead, the Greek fire bomb they used resulted in the wounding of several family members, the amputation of Mrs. Samuel's arm and the death of Archie.

"Obtaining a conveyance," a reporter for the Kansas City Times returned to the scene of the tragedy in daylight, "arriving there at 8.30am and remaining there until after 1pm. A large number of persons were at the house of Mr. Samuel, the stepfather of the Jameses, having assembled to attend the funeral services of Little Archie."

Despite the funeral taking place at the Farm, it appears burial was at the Mt Olivet cemetery in nearby Kearney. "The last sad rites were paid to the remains of the deceased lad yesterday at Kearney City, the funeral being numerously attended by the citizens of that locality," the Kansas City Daily Journal of Commerce reported on January 28, 1875. Elder Thomas H. Graves was the officiating clergyman. "At an inquest previously held on the body," the report continued, "surgeons testified that the death resulted from a gunshot wound, but qualified the use of the term by saying that covered all cases where firearms were used, and might include, as in this case, a torpedo. The finding of the jury was to the effect that death resulted from the explosion of a torpedo thrown through the window by person or persons to the jury unknown."

The man sent to investigate the affair was Adj. Gen. George Caleb Bingham who was reported to have ordered the exhumation of Archie's body for re-examination. If this did indeed go ahead, it was no doubt yet another traumatic event for Dr. and Mrs. Samuel to endure and suggests Archie, like his older half-brother, was buried more than once.



The child which was murdered at Kearney by the would-be capturers of the James boys, was taken from its grave by Adjutant General Bingham on Monday, so that the nature of the wounds which caused its death might be ascertained.—K. C. Times.

Photo, top right – Archie Peyton Samuel

Photo right – Archie's original grave marker in the Jesse James Birthplace Museum

Newspaper above - The State [Jefferson City] Journal, February 12, 1875.

Other sources – The Kansas City Times, January 28, 1875. Kansas City Daily Journal quote with thanks to Bryan Shibley.

## GENEROUS GIFT ADORNS THE MUSEUM THEATRE

This poster for the Jesse James Combination was recently gifted to the museum from the Jackson County (Missouri) Historical Society.

After Jesse was killed, two horses were found in his stable – a strawberry roan and a black mare. Both were stolen, their owners were found and the horses offered back to them. The owner of the black mare was glad to have the animal returned, but Captain Terhune, owner of the strawberry roan, had already replaced him and so agreed to sell him to St. Joseph liveryman, E. F. Mitchell. A keen businessman, Mitchell had also arranged to buy a second horse from Charles Alderman – a bay that had been purchased by Jesse James and returned as too feisty. Mitchell sold both horses for a reported \$1,200 to well-known actor, James H. Wallick.

Wallick trained the horses, along with several others, to perform in two plays, *The Bandit King* and *The Cattle King*. Originally named, *Jesse James – The Bandit King*, the play dropped Jesse's name after receiving scathing reviews that Wallick was making "a hero of one of the most consummate scoundrels in American criminal history."<sup>1</sup> Even after the name change, reporters seemed surprised that crowds poured in to watch, putting the success largely down to the appearance of the acting horses. "Bay Raider" and "Roan Charger", as they were then known, were billed as Jesse James' Acting Horses and were the stars of the show.

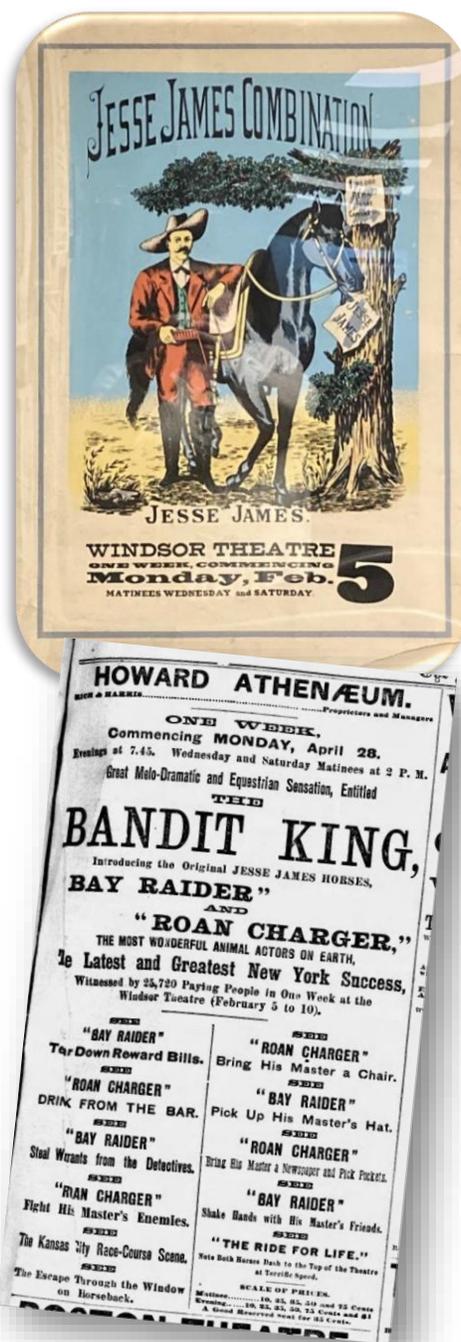
As the poster shows, they "would endear themselves to audiences by tearing down reward posters, descending down a staircase, and rescuing a damsel from a burning building."<sup>2</sup> They also pick-pocketed, drank beer and played the piano alongside other trained horses and a trick donkey.<sup>3</sup> One report noted how the "trained horses make the scenes of border life quite real", while another marvelled at "those complaisant quadrupeds apparently not being unnerved by the gun play and insane music."<sup>4</sup>

Roan Charger died in 1888 but Bay Raider continued performing, even travelling to Europe, before retiring.

The poster can be seen in the Museum Theatre.

1. *Critic and Amusement Gazette*, Vol. 2, June – November, Cleveland Ohio Publishing Co, 1896.
2. Jan L. Jones *Renegades, Showmen and Angels – A Theatrical History of Fort Worth from 1873-2001*, Texas Christian University Press, 2006, pp55-6.
3. Washington Times, May 5, 1895.
4. Daily Alta, California, July 26, 1888

Article above right: Boston Globe, April 27, 1884.



## JESSE JAMES: “THE PHANTOM HORSEMAN”

The following lengthy article comes from *The Capital Journal*, of Salem, Oregon, October 15, 1888, though the story probably began with Charley Ford in late April 1882 and the story eventually found its way into many other newspapers:

The James family, and particularly Jesse, had a peculiar banshee in the shape of a white horse and phantom horseman, who appeared to warn them of danger.

The story of the phantom horse which guarded Jesse on his way, warned him of impending danger, and finally foretold his death, so believed in by Mrs. Jesse James and Jesse James, Jr., the son of the deceased outlaw, who have more than once heard him speak of the visitation of the strange phantom. The last time the dead outlaw saw the phantom was just before his death, and it appeared in such a terrible shape, and with such evident warning in its mien, that even the nerves of the grim outlaw were shaken, and he was weighed down at once with a sense of his impending death.

Frank James' simple description of the appearance of the phantom horseman is as follows:

“One night we were riding along a lonely road in Tennessee. It doesn't matter just when it was or where. Jesse and I were riding along ahead, a little in advance of the remainder of the party. We emerged from under a heavy clouded overtopping foliage into a broad flood of moonlight. It had been very dark in the woods under the heavy trees, and the bright moonlight, lying thick and golden on the broad, dusky, new roads, fairly dazzled us for a moment. There, standing directly in front of us, as if to dispute our passage, clearly defined in the bright moonlight, was the figure of [a] horseman on a white horse. We drew rein and stood for a moment stock still. The figure in the road did not move. The moonlight shone directly on his dark coat, with bright, shiny buttons of some kind – brass or pearl – and glimmered on the silver trappings of the horse's bridle. Jesse was the first to recover himself, and, with lightning-like rapidity, he drew his gun with an oath.

“What do you want here?” he said.

“The figure did not move or speak.

“My God, don't shoot,” cried one of our party. ‘It's a ghost.’

“Jesse's revolver went off at the same moment.

“The figure raised one of its hands, pointing the index finger at Jesse, while at the same time the horse turned and horse and rider galloped off up the road.

“I have seen him before,” muttered Jesse, as he turned his horse in the other direction.”

It is said that the man who cried “don't shoot” was Bill Ryan, who is now doing time in the Missouri Penitentiary.

Frank James who was probably less superstitious than Jesse or most of the other companions of the James boys, never took as much stock in Jesse's ghost, as the boys called it, as the great head of the outlaws and his other roughriders did. He admits, however, that Jesse was haunted by a phantom horseman, or fancied he was, until the day of his death. Jesse was always furious if any one questioned the authority of his ghost.

Frank was once asked: “Do you think that was a ghost you saw that night or a man Jesse shot at and missed, or failed to kill?” “I don't know,” was the reply. “Jesse seldom missed at less than ten yards distance. Anyway, that was the first time I saw the phantom horseman.”

Jesse James, Jr., only heir of the great land pirate, is fifteen years of age, and strange irony of fate – works for T. T. Crittenden and his sons, for that very Governor of Missouri who hounded his father to his death and received his uncle Frank after the surrender of the latter. The story of the boy's engagement to work in Crittenden's real estate office is worth a short diversion. The boy, it appears, answered an advertisement for an office boy. Half a dozen other eager applicants were there before him.

Crittenden asked him what he could do.

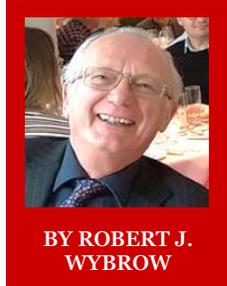
“I'll fight, run a foot race or write a letter with any of these kids for the job,” answered the brigand's son.

“Write a letter,” said Crittenden.

Jesse complied, and proved to write a better hand than any other applicant.

“What is your name?” asked the ex-Governor kindly.

“Jesse James, Jr.,” answered the boy.



BY ROBERT J. WYBROW

Doubtless ex-Governor Crittenden was surprised to find that he was about to hire the son of the notorious Jesse, whom he had hired the assassins to kill, as the boy and his mother were to learn that the former's employer was the ex-Governor.

But to return, as the novelist says. The boy was disposed to be quite communicative in regard to the phantom horseman.

"Dad first saw that horse in Kentucky," said the boy. "T'wa'n't in Tennessee, at all. I've heard my mother tell about it, and I've heard dad tell about it. One night the man on the phantom horse jumped up behind dad. The ghost left his horse and jumped up on dad's. Dad was with another man riding along in Kentucky. Dad rode as hard as he could and fired his pistol behind him, but he couldn't shake the ghost off until he had gone half a mile. The thing then dropped off.

"Another time, when we was all over at Kearney," continued the lad, "dad saw the ghost come in the yard on horseback and shot at it seven or eight times, but could not hit it."

This is the story of the phantom horseman as told by the family and companions of Jesse James.

At this point it is worth adding Charley Ford's account of the supernatural event from the *Liberty Tribune* of April 21, 1882:

Charley Ford states that one evening before the tragedy, he and Jesse James were riding but a short distance out of the city. Suddenly a ball of fire sailed beneath their horses' feet and disappeared at the roadside. Both of the men saw it, and Jesse remarked that it was a warning and he would soon have some trouble. Charley says he had since heard Jesse speak of a ball of fire coming to him and his visitations were always followed by serious trouble. He believed it to be a supernatural warning, and heretofore he had redoubled his vigilance as such uneasiness, but this time he was caught off his guard, and death was the penalty.

Other members of the gang, such as Bill Ryan and Dick Liddil, according to *The Kansas City Star* of August 16, 1888, were said to have seen the phantom. **RJW**

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## OFFUTT-COLE TAVERN

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The fully restored Offutt-Cole Tavern sits on a crossroads just outside Medway, Woodford county, Kentucky and is the birthplace of Zerelda Cole James Simms Samuel and her brother, Jesse Richard Cole. Their father, James Cole, was proprietor when it was known as the Black Horse Tavern, an early rival to their grandfather's far more bawdy, Cole's Tavern.

It was here, at the Black Horse Tavern, that, in 1827, Richard's brother, Amos, was murdered and also where the children apparently stayed even after their parent's separation.

The building is now divided into commercial units but is still well worth a visit - to wander the hallways and imagine what the old Tavern walls must have heard.

Editor's photos



## DID TYRONE POWER 'DIE' WITH JESSE'S BOOTS ON?

Many of us have watched the 1939 Twentieth Century Fox film, *Jesse James*, and likely more than once! Starring Tyrone Power as Jesse, Henry Fonda as Frank, Nancy Kelly as Zee, and Henry Hull as the brilliantly Edwards-esque Major Rufus Cobb, *Jesse James* was the third highest grossing film of 1939 (after *Gone With The Wind* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*) and paved the way for a sequel, *The Return of Frank James*, the following year. It streamed for a full fifteen years and remains a classic among the many films produced by Hollywood on one of America's most famous sons.

Far from historically accurate, the movie instead focussed on creating a romantic rendition, presenting "a Jesse James who was neither all bad, nor all good; who was bitter by cause, kind to those he loved and dangerous to those he hated, a man of gentleness and cruelty combined." Tyrone Power jumped at the chance to play the romantic lead saying he was "more thrilled at playing the role of this desperado than any other part he has done", believing that playing a man who lived, helped him as an actor to "give his characterization a sincerity which is not possible when playing a fictional role."

The film gained an unwanted measure of notoriety following the filming of a scene where a horse falls to its death off a cliff. Despite assertions that no animals were harmed during the filming, it was a scene, among others, often used by the American Humane Association in their campaign against animal cruelty in Hollywood.

Despite this, popularity for the movie grew and grew and theatres across the region invested in large newspaper advertisements to encourage moviegoers to attend opening nights.

On March 3, 1939, the Times-Call newspaper of Longmont, Colorado, publicized their opening night with news that, "to give the re-enacting of the historic murder a doubly authentic flavor," Tyrone Power would be 'killed' in the movie "by the very gun which barked out death to Jesse James at the hands of the traitorous Bob Ford in 1882." According to the newspaper, "the fatal gun, an antiquated Winchester percussion cap firearm, was loaned to the producers by members of Bob Ford's family."

Even more surprising was news that Power would also be wearing "the very same boots" Jesse James had been wearing on the morning of April 3. "The boots were obtained by Director Henry King with the aid of Jesse James' granddaughter, Jo Frances James, who acted as technical expert on the production."

Yep – I think we need to go watch that again!!



By Michelle Pollard



Advertisement at above right - Daily News [Los Angeles, California], January 18, 1939. Newspapers.com. Times-Call newspaper with thanks to Beth Beckett.



# Membership Fees Are 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 to -

**FRIENDS OF THE JAMES FARM  
C/O JESSE JAMES BIRTHPLACE AND MUSEUM  
21216 JESSE JAMES FARM ROAD  
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10% off any purchase made in the museum gift shop \* Four FOTJF Journals per year sent either to your email or home address \* An invitation to special events, including the shoots and the annual re-union. We offer a wide range of membership levels, offering you not only the chance to enjoy the membership rewards above but also to further support the valuable work being carried out to maintain the Jesse James Birthplace and Museum and the history of all those connected to it through kind donations.

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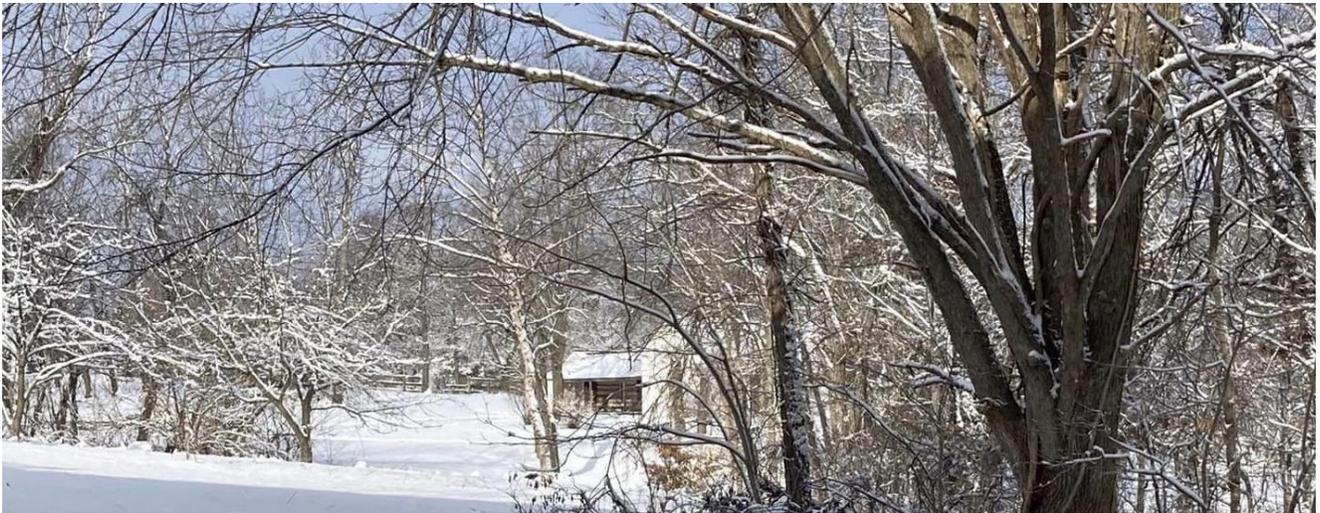
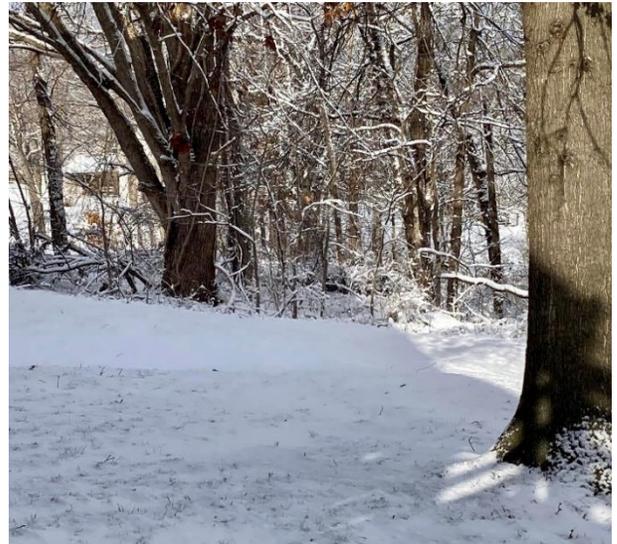
Thank you to those who have already renewed your membership. We look forward to sharing more news, articles and updates with you during the coming year.



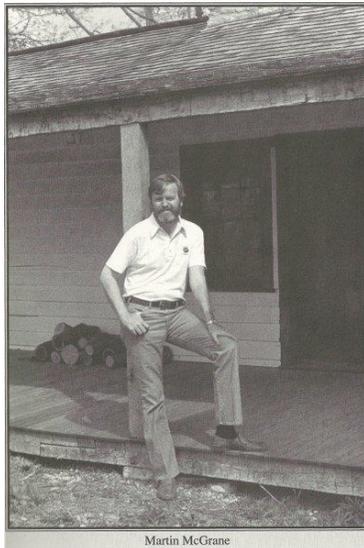
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# THE OLD HOMESTEAD IN THE SNOW

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## OBITUARY



**Martin McGrane**  
April 6, 1943 – December 2, 2023



It is with deepest sadness that we let you know of the passing of Marty McGrane.

Marty was a longtime member and board member of the Friends of the James Farm and also served as its President. Years ago, when the Friends held monthly meetings at the Archives in Liberty, current President Bryan Ivlow recalls how Marty would drive the nearly 200 miles from Des Moines to attend and contribute to them. He was a very dedicated board member, a lover of history and a lifelong learner.

Having graduated from Drake University and Iowa State with a master's degree in journalism, Marty became Professor of Photography and Mass Communications at the University of Idaho and, later, the University of South Dakota. He had a distinguished career in public relations where his writing and speaking talents earned him wide spread recognition and awards. His sense of humor, kind demeanor and gentle personality brought him many friends.

"A few years ago," Bryan says, "Marty donated his copyright on his book titled *The James Farm - Its People, Their Lives, Their Times* to The Friends. Liz Johnson updated the text and interior pictures and Beth Beckett updated the front and back cover pictures. The printer improved the binding and the Friends had 1000 of them printed. They are now for sale at the Farm, The Clay County archives and James Country Mercantile. These 1000 books will provide The Friends with income for years. It was just one example of his generous spirit and his dedication to the history of the James family."

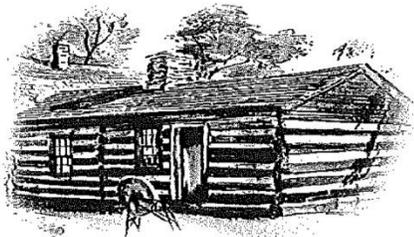
Linda Brookshier, historical interpreter and friend of Marty, sent this heartfelt message. "I was so sorry to hear of the passing of my friend Marty McGrane. Marty was always someone with a ready smile, a laugh, and a hug. He would often talk about when he would first come to the James cabin, when the county was working on it in 1978, and David Smith would be inside the cabin and Marty did not know he was in there until he would hear a deep voice say something to the effect - "who's there?" I can't say enough good things about this sweet man that I was honored to call my friend."

Our thoughts are with Marty's family and with all those who called him friend.

Additional information from Marty's online obituary at [caldwellparrish.com](http://caldwellparrish.com)

**Friends of the James Farm**

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



James homestead cabin —  
Original art by Jim Hamil

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