



Nevada Library and Bushwhacker Museum

Tri-County Genealogical Society  
(Vernon-Cedar-St. Clair Counties)  
c/o Nevada Public Library  
218 West Walnut Street  
Nevada, MO 64772  
[tricitygenealogy@centurytel.net](mailto:tricitygenealogy@centurytel.net)  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~motcogs/>



Vernon County Courthouse  
Nevada, Missouri

# NEWSLETTER

September 2008

## *My Family Came to Cedar County and We Lived in a Log Cabin*

Dale Goodman, Guest Speaker  
October 11, 2008, 10 a.m.

Church of Christ Fellowship Hall  
302 E. Hospital Rd., El Dorado Springs, MO

Dale Goodman is a local historian and author and also a member of the Cedar County Historical Society. *Life and Memories at My Missouri Ozark Home Place* is his autobiography of a Depression Era boy growing up in a hard but simpler world. Come and hear Dale tell the tale of his family and what they did to survive in those times. Reminiscence your own early childhood as he tells the stories of his family's adventures in moving to rural Cedar County in the 1930s and living in a tent and two cars until a log cabin was built. Books by Goodman will be available for purchase at the meeting.

The public is invited to the October 11 program, and there is no fee. Please email the Society if you have questions.

### Society Programs in 2008

The following programs have been arranged for the remainder of 2008:

**Nov 8, Nevada:** *What to Look for and Where to Look when the Research gets Difficult*, by Helen Lodge, noted local genealogist and speaker.

**Dec 13, El Do:** Election and Installation of Officers and Christmas Luncheon. Members are to bring a photo or historical item of

interest to show and share highlights of this year's genealogy research.

### Officers for 2009

As we approach the end of another great year of research, we ask our local members to consider volunteering for an officer position in the Society for next year. This year we had two Vice-Presidents, and this worked very well in that each was responsible for coordinating about half of the programs during the year. Please be thinking about this as your nominating committee begins its work in Oct.

### Balltown Cemetery Sunday, November 9, 2 p.m.

The rededication of the G.A.R. Civil War lot and dedication of a new military memorial at Balltown Cemetery have been rescheduled to Sunday, November 9 at 2 p.m. This will be a beautiful and moving ceremony which everyone is encouraged to attend. *A special invitation is extended to all Veterans from all branches of service.* More details will be provided as plans are finalized.

### Website

New information added to the website during September includes how to research children in the St. Francis Orphans' Home in Nevada which was in operation from 1896 until 1952. Additionally, a link to Lyndon Irwin's website page about the Moundville & Bronaugh ARMSTRONG family was added to our Biographies list.

The Tri-County Genealogical Society website continues to be the best source for learning how to research ancestors from this area. For those who like to see numbers and names, there have been 15,850 'hits' on our homepage to date. There were 257 searches on the website during Sep; the top five surnames searched were Caton (25 searches), Miller (18), Bell (12), Cunningham (11), and Hackney (9).

The Society's volunteer webmaster has noted that until the new Vernon County cemetery directory is completed, there will not be very much new information added to the website.

*"I just looked at your website and want to say Thank You for the wonderful work you are doing. Hope others get inspired by your work and will do the same where they live.*

*Leta from Texas"*

Thank you for your comments, Leta! We also hope other volunteers will work in their counties to help make their records more accessible.

### **Cedar County Probate Files Project**

Box 8 is being input and Box 9 is ready to input on the Cedar Co. Probate Project. If you want to help with this project, contact the society and you will be put in touch with one of our Cedar Co members to coordinate your volunteer work.

### **Who are YOU Researching?**

Members are invited to submit their name and contact information (email and/or mailing address) and surnames being researched in this region with details such as location, years, pictures, etc. Others may be researching the same family, and this will enable researchers to contact each other and share information if they desire to do so.

Dear Editor, I thought for sure that member Harry Boyd's information in the Aug 2008 newsletter would fit into my DAVIS genealogy. What are the chances that his two listed Commodore P. DAVIS men have

nothing to do with my gr-gr-grandfather Commodore Perry DAVIS b. 1822 and d. 1898 in Montevallo, or with his son and namesake b. 1846, d. 1931 in Montevallo? Both of my forbearers are buried in Virgil Cemetery, Montevallo, but I have never been able to see their graves because the cemetery is completely overgrown and impossible to drive in to. Linda Davis, 5 Barnet Ave., Waterville, ME.

Editor's note: Virgil City Cemetery is located on the west edge of Virgil City, MO and is generally kept maintained. Montevallo Cemetery, which is located west of Montevallo is perhaps mowed once a year around Memorial Day and is difficult to drive to. From the recent cemetery surveys, no gravestone was found in either cemetery for the elder C P Davis. The younger Davis is buried in Virgil City Cemetery. From the abstracted Nevada Daily Mail 1898 Index: C P Davis Sr died at home of his son A H Davis of Montevallo on eve [evening?] of Oct 17, 1898. Born Henry Co, KY Mar 12, 1822, came to Macon Co, MO then to Mercer, Harrison and to Vernon in 1877. Father of 12 children, 7 of whom are living, their mother died several yrs ago, most children came to Vernon Co and raised large families...

Continuing with letters provided by Luella Phipps and her brother Merl, who transcribed the following. (Spelling and punctuation were corrected in the transcription for readability.) See Aug 2008 newsletter for contact info.

March 7th, 1872, Vernon Co. Mo.

Dear Sister:

I take up my pen this evening to drop you a few lines in answer to your kind letter which I received a few days ago with pleasure to hear from you. This leaves us all well. I will tell you now about my trade. I bought 92 acres of land at one thousand dollars with house on it and forty acres fenced, about 15 acres broke ground and 5 acres in wheat. I got a good yoke of oxen and a good cow and a plow worth twenty dollars in the trade. I moved to it today. Also a good well of water. I got a letter from Newton and they was well except his

little boy has been sick but was mending. Write when you get this and direct your letter to Nevada. So farewell for the present.

Samuel Perrine to Lucinda  
Vickers and all the rest.

### **New Resources in Genealogy Department**

*An Historical Atlas of Kentucky and Her Counties*, by Wendell H. Rone, Sr. Mayfield, KY: Mayfield Printing Co., 1965. Softbound.

Church of the Nazarene, Nevada, Missouri, Pictorial Directories 1978, 1989, 1994.

### **Items of Interest from Area Newspapers**

[Each of the below newspaper articles was transcribed by society members.]

#### **EARLY DAY EVENTS**

##### **The "Duel" Between Mart Modrel and Pete McCool.**

"My God, men, I'm shot all to pieces!"

The above language was uttered by Mart Modrel after a load from a shotgun in the hands of Pete McCool struck him just above the belt.

Modrel gazed upon his crimson-bespattered form and dropped to the ground, doubtless feeling that his life's blood was rapidly flowing away.

Of all the stories told of incidents connected with the early history of southwest Missouri none is more entitled to the stamp of truthfulness than the one relative to the "duel" fought by Mart Modrel and Pete McCool at Pappinsville [now officially Papinville].

The "fight to death" occurred in the fall of 1860. Modrel was a resident of Balltown and McCool lived at Pappinsville. Both men were prominent in local affairs in their respective towns. Trouble arose between the two, but of what nature no one now remembers.

A fist fight was the most common method of settling disputes in those villages in those days, and occasionally difficulties terminated with a knife wound or a pistol shot. But for gentlemen of honor and dignity nothing short of a duel would suffice.

Both Modrel and McCool favored settling their trouble with a duel. Shotguns of the "muzzle loader" type of that day were the weapons chosen. Seconds were named and the main street of Pappinsville was the battle ground. Of course it was a public affair and a large crowd gathered at the village.

The two "Principals" were on hand at the hour named, and when the signal was given each stepped off twenty paces and turning fired with deadly aim. Modrel hesitated long enough to look himself over and then dropped to the ground.

The parties who made things ready for the "duel" loaded Modrel's gun with paper, while the one in the hands of McCool was loaded almost to the muzzle with pokeweed berries. The juice from the berries that bespattered Modrel's white linen suit could easily have been mistaken for blood.

It is said that Modrel and McCool made up later and for many years were warm personal friends.

Modrel served one term as circuit clerk of Vernon county and will be remembered by the old timers.

*The Metz Times, Metz, MO.*  
Friday, November 19, 1915, p. 1.

#### **MURDER**

The following particulars of a horrible murder committed in Bates [present-day Vernon] county, was communicated to us by a friend.

On Monday, the 19th of March, Isaac I. Jones, Esq., was seen passing a house between sun-set and dark, on his way from Fort Scott, towards his own residence. His horse came home that night, with bridle and saddle on, and was discovered to have received a heavy blow over the eyes, raising a knot to the size of a man's fist. Upon seeing the condition of the horse, Mr. Jones' brother proceeded early the next morning, in the direction of Fort Scott, and found the body of his brother in the road, cold in death. In was

in an open Prairie, about 3 miles from his own or any other house.

An inquest was held, and the verdict was supposed to be murdered by two men, from signs, tracks, &c. The prints of the horse knees were seen in the road, made when he fell, as was supposed, from the stroke, apparently with a club, above his eyes. Mr. Jones seemed to have received several strokes supposed to be with clubs, which broke the skull, and one rather under the cheek bone. There was no blood discovered from the fracture of the skin, all of which was found to be sound, with the exception of the fatal bruises inflicted, as was supposed, with large and unnatural clubs.

Mr. Jones was deservedly numbered among the best and most enterprising citizens of Bates county, a prosperous man in business, and useful in the community in which he lived. He was about 31 years of age, and has left an amiable and interesting wife and one child, with a numerous train of highly respected friends and relations to mourn the loss, which they with the community in general, have sustained in his untimely death. He was a highly respected member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and it may be truly said of him, that he lived respected, and died regreted (*sic*).

*The Springfield Advertiser, Springfield, MO  
April 7, 1849, page 2, col. 1.*

[Editor's note: Isaac Jones' wife was Frances Caton, daughter of Noah Caton.]

**AN IMPORTANT SUIT  
Fled by Mrs. J. Y. Buford  
Against Her Husband,  
Who Was a Bondsman of Ex-  
Treasurer F. A. Parker.**

Mrs. Hulda A. Buford, through her attorneys, Scott & Bowker have filed suit against her husband, John Y. Buford for title to certain bonds now in his possession. The suit is similar to the one filed by Thomas Webb vs John Webb.

Plaintiff states that she is the wife of the defendant; that they were married on the – day – 1876; that since her marriage to defendant she has inherited from the estate of her father personal property to the value of \$1,000; that the same has been reduced to the possession of her husband, the defendant, since her marriage, at different times, without her express written assent thereto—that said monies and property so reduced to possession by said defendant have been used by said defendant in the purchase of the following described real estate in Vernon county, Missouri, to-wit:

S E 1/4, Sec. 30, township 34, range 32 and improvements thereon; that the legal title to said premises is now in the defendant J. Y. Buford.

Plaintiff states that since the use of said money by the defendant, J. Y. Buford, as aforesaid, to-wit, at the July term 1899 of the Vernon county circuit court, the defendant Vernon county, obtained two judgements against the said J. Y. Buford in the cases of Vernon county vs F. A. Parker et al, wherefore the plaintiff prays the court that she be decreed to have a lien on the before mentioned estate for the amount of money belonging to the plaintiff used by the defendant as aforesaid in the purchase and improvement of said real estate, without her express written assent thereto, and that said lien be declared to have precedence over said judgements of Vernon county, and that said lien be foreclosed and the property ordered sold to satisfy the same, or that she be granted such other or different relief as the court may deem right and proper.

*Nevada Daily Mail, Nevada, MO.  
Wednesday, February 7, 1900.*

**COURT HOUSE BURNED.  
Building Was Struck By Light-  
ing And Was Partially  
Destroyed.**

During the severe rain and electric storm last Saturday night the El Dorado Springs



court house, situated at the corner of Broadway and Kirkpatrick streets, was struck by lightning and caught fire and was partially destroyed before the flames were brought under control.

The lightning struck and ignited the roof of the building at the northeast corner, and the flames quickly spread until the whole roof was ablaze and burning furiously. Owing to the severe storm which was raging, the alarm was not given promptly and the fire department was slow to show up. When the men arrived the roof was entirely ablaze and it soon fell in, but with its collapse the work of fighting the flames was greatly simplified, and with two streams of water playing upon them, they were soon thereafter brought under control.

The upper story of the building was completely gutted, and the ground floor was greatly damaged, although all the office rooms below were saved with their contents intact. The records of the circuit clerk's office, located in the southwest corner of the building, were all saved, being only slightly damaged by water, as were all the city records located in the council room in the northeast corner of the building.

Owing to the fact that the flames were quickly gotten under control, the walls of the building were only slightly damaged and were generally intact, which leaves the \_\_\_\_\_ open for the reconstruction of the building if the city council so desires. At a meeting of the council on \_\_\_sday night, W. F. Fowble was authorized to make estimates as to the probable cost of rebuilding, and the council's action will doubtless be governed to some extents intact. The records of the expense of replacement.

We are informed that the building was insured for \$6,500, but this would hardly be sufficient to replace the loss under the present conditions, when the cost of labor and material is so much higher than in normal times.

The court house was built in 1896 following an enactment of a statute by the State

Legislature transferring half of the sessions of the Cedar county circuit court from Stockton to El Dorado Springs, and was the fulfillment of the city's agreement to furnish a suitable building for the holding of court. The original cost of the building was \$8,000, and it was paid for by the issuance of bonds in that amount.

*The El Dorado Springs Sun, El Dorado Springs, MO  
Thursday, July 4, 1918.*

Editor's note: \_\_\_ indicates microfilm could not be read; grammar, spelling, etc. are as in the article. Thank you, Raymond, for locating this article in the microfilm.

**Follow-up from Aug. 2008 Newsletter  
Missouri Statesman Newspaper Articles**

**Wm. Fox,**

Was hung at Nevada, on Friday, December 28, 1883, for the murder of Thos. Howard on the 20th of May previously. The two men were acquaintances, and had known each other in Audrain county, where Fox was born in 1861. Fox had lived in Nevada a short time prior to the murder, and was regarded as an abandoned, vicious character. On the evening of May 19, Fox met Howard near the depot in Nevada and the two spent the greater portion of the night drinking and debauchery. Near morning Fox enticed Howard into a secluded locality in the southeastern part of town, shot him three times in the head and face, robbed the body, and then hid it.

The murder occurred near the railroad track. Later in the morning an engine became derailed and while some parties were gathered about the scene the body was found. Later in the day Fox was arrested and admitted his guilt. The Circuit Court was in session and he was brought before Judge Burton and offered to plead guilty. It is a custom in criminal courts, where a party accused of murder pleads guilty to the charge, to affix his punishment to a term of years in the penitentiary. It may have been that Judge Burton believed that Fox deserved the extreme penalty, death by hanging, or he may

have believed that the case ought to be thoroughly investigated according to the forms of law, but he refused to admit the plea, and ordered in its stead the plea of not guilty.

Fox was indicted, tried and easily convicted, and sentenced to be hung July 18. His attorneys appealed the case to the Supreme Court, but the judgment was affirmed and the execution came off as stated. The scaffold was erected near the railroad trestle. A large crowd of people witnessed the hanging, which came off at 12 o'clock. Among the spectators were the wife and father of Fox and the widow of Howard.

p. 366-367. *History of Vernon County, Missouri 1887.*  
St. Louis: Brown & Co.

### Vernon County Circuit Court Files First Case and Before & After the Civil War

Although county government began in 1855, the first circuit court case to be heard in Vernon Co. was the 1856 case of Charles H. Yeater plaintiff vs. Thomas H. Estes defendant; cause of action was Promissory Note, \$245 plus interest. The Sheriff at that time was Reuben H. Williams. Court Clerk was DeWitt C. Hunter who signed documents with the notation "affixed my private seal there being no seal of office yet prepared."

The Noah Caton cabin north of Nevada was the location where Vernon County government was first organized in 1855; however, no court cases were heard there. Until the first courthouse was built, cases were heard at the home of Court Clerk DeWitt C. Hunter in Nevada, and his smokehouse was used for the jury deliberation room.

In looking at Vernon County Missouri Circuit Court Record Book A, pages 460 and 461, the last term of court prior to the Civil War was **November 1860**. The first term of court following the Civil War was **April 1866**. Several cases such as gaming, selling liquor without a license, etc., were dismissed as first actions of the April 1866 court -- perhaps just to clear the lesser items from the docket in order to begin to take care of five years of no

functioning government or courts in the county.

### Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings of the Tri-County Genealogical Society (Vernon-Cedar-St. Clair Counties of Missouri) are held the second Saturday of each month and begin at 10 a.m. They are alternately held at Nevada and El Dorado Springs at the following locations:

**Nevada** Public Library Meeting Room, 212 West Walnut, Nevada (enter at South side of building). On Saturdays, there is not a 2-hr parking limit on the streets.

**El Dorado Springs** Church of Christ Fellowship Hall, 302 East Hospital Road, El Dorado Springs. Carpooling from the Nevada Library to the El Dorado Springs meeting is usually available; contact the society at [tricountygenealogy@centurytel.net](mailto:tricountygenealogy@centurytel.net).

### Tri-County Genealogical Society

Membership in the Society is currently at about 75, and we use nametags at monthly meetings to help everyone get acquainted. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in family history research. Annual dues are \$10 for an individual membership (+\$5 for each additional member within the same household up to \$25 maximum), \$5 for a Student, or \$100 Lifetime, per person. We would be pleased to have you join the local society if you are not already a member, and you can do so at our next meeting or by sending a check to Tri-County Genealogical Society, 218 West Walnut Street, Nevada, MO 64772.

2007 Society officers are:

President: Neoma F

V. Pres: Janet J & Nancy T

Recording Sec: position open

Treasurer: Ray L

Corresponding Sec: Darlene L

You received this monthly newsletter notice because you are a member of the Society, have indicated an interest in our organization,

or represent an area genealogy group. If you do not want to receive this email notice in the future, please contact the Society at [tricountygenealogy@centurytel.net](mailto:tricountygenealogy@centurytel.net) and

request that your name be removed from the email list.

*If you have enjoyed reading the Tri-County Genealogical Society's newsletter,  
You are cordially invited to support the work of the  
Society with an annual membership.*

*Dates to Mark on Your Calendar*

*Oct. 11, 10 a.m. Genealogy Meeting – El Dorado Springs, MO*

*Nov. 9, 2 p.m., Balltown Cemetery Military Memorial Dedication*