

Cedar & Vernon County Missouri Genealogical Society

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Website: <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~movernon/>

August 2023 Newsletter©

Society Meeting: Wednesday, 16 Aug 2023

The Cedar & Vernon Co MO Genealogical Society meeting will be held **Wed, 16 Aug 2023, beginning at 10 a.m. at the new El Dorado Springs, MO Library, 808 S. Main St., El Dorado Springs, MO.** (This is the same location as the old library.) Come explore the new library building and learn with Lynda's program!

Family History Research



***"Naming
Patterns
of our
Ancestors"***

**Free Program
By Lynda Bishop**

**Aug. 16
10:00 a.m.**

**El Dorado Springs Library
808 S. Main St., El Dorado Springs, MO**

Monthly meeting & program of the Cedar & Vernon Co MO Genealogical Society
Email: Cedar.VernonCoMO@centurytel.net
Website: <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~movernon/>
For more information call Lynda (417) 321-2542

Everyone Welcome!

Member Survey regarding Meeting Day. In follow up to the July 2023 newsletter article and meeting discussion regarding ways to increase membership and program attendance, it was unanimously agreed that a member survey be conducted. If you have not already responded to the Society email survey regarding the meeting day, please do

so as soon as possible to ensure your preferences can be considered. Thank you.

Comments from members

3rd Wednesday 10:00 conflicts with my church women's group and it's hard to make it after climbing out of the pool for water aerobics at 9:00. 10:30 or 11:00 would help.

Being retired, a meeting on Wednesday or Saturday does not matter either way. I do think reducing the number of meetings is something to consider since it is becoming more difficult to have a program each month.

Meeting during the week often conflicts with doctor and dentist appointments.

I'm in agreement with the rest of the group regarding meeting days, etc.

I most likely won't attend.

I'm retired so Saturday mornings would be fine.

Anything is alright with me, so go ahead and do whatever the majority wants.

Saturdays are the only time we can do things with the kids because they work, so would have to miss some meetings.

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The following books were purchased by the Society and are being cataloged for the Genealogy Dept:

- 2019 Vernon County Missouri Plat Book
- North Carolina Wills and Inventories
- Connecticut Town Meeting Records Vol 1 and 2

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21st Century Fund Grant Program. The Cedar & Vernon Co MO Genealogical Society and the Vernon Co Historical Society have received a \$1,000 grant from the MO State Genealogical Association's **21st Century Fund!** The grant was awarded for the publication of the 2023 Vernon Co MO Directory of Deaths and Burials. Nancy T.

attended the 5 Aug MO State Gen Assoc Conference and accepted the grant on behalf of the two Vernon Co organizations. Our thanks to member Will T. and the Historical Society for submitting the grant application for this joint project!

"I Do Not Get Around Very Lively But Keep A-Going" is the title of a collection of family letters that were written by Gertrude (Cremer) Foreman to her son, Clyde Cremer Foreman, 1939-1945. Member Teresa E. transcribed the family letters with minor edits for ease of reading and understandability. A copy of the collection was recently donated to the Nevada Library Genealogy Dept, and the family gives permission to share some of the letters in the Society's newsletter. (The transcription begins on page 3, following the letter images. The screen can be enlarged to read the original letter.)

White, Mo, Nov 12

My dear Clyde and Nita, was glad to hear from you this weeks all well I feel well and look well. But do not have very good use of my self I have to use a cane when I go out of the house and fall down very easy and can not get up by self. Nita and Gland stay with me this place is near and Reeps steak and farms. Little girls are married Virginia lives in Pattington and has two boys her husband is Raul's and electrician in Montgomery Ward he gets \$2.00 per mo. Dorothy was married to a Soldier in Sept. and lives in Nevada. he was in Panama for 14 mo. he had tropical fever as he was 38 yrs old. he was given dis charge subject to recall if needed. he is a mechanic and has a good job. There has been one fatality for this part Earl Yratio step son, a 2nd lieutenant was shot down flying over the old fields in Romania. There is no boy left in the road north. and always worked with Evelette and Bud Page who edits the news. His wife runs the paper now. Marvin Bergoff (mounded) 2 say for he will be Don's son-in-law when granddads and maizon becomes a graduate nurse. She has signed with the Gov. as a reservist subject to call. she gets uniform and 20 per mo. Now you and 30 next June. It may may get to come home this winter

Richard was in Norfolk Va, he received a medical discharg in Oct. Eye trouble he was sgt sergeant he graduated in Radio at Madison wis about was one of 5. Sent to Orlando Florida to take Radar. he was assistant instructor, then and over eye strain cause severe headache from thus he was sent to Norfolk. he went to K.C. where he got a good job. at 82 amb per hour at little work that he can do. I have not heard from Ben lately. Elton was in Okla and Ray in Okla at Deming New Mex Denver Stanley boy was in air corp at Kansas Col. Howard Jr. was in D. Pac. when I heard Howard Vaughn in Navy at 15 on brig. he is 20 and was married a few hours before getting home after last training in Va. in Chester and Oma was up in July in red. been dis charged after serving 4 mo. had stomach relief he was looking better. Everett has been working about 10 miles away after the harvest. his car was late and not fit to gather will come home now. we did not say post and a little snow but freezing a little at night. We had lots of Lomelia Corned 100 aft for us and about 50 for the girls and had 4 lbs of green peas. Don was over yesterday it is about 10 miles over on Kan. line his son-in-law is classed 1. A. he may have to go. he put a man on his farm last spring and bought a almost in Kentucky. He had better stayed on his farm that is essential and oil is not I will put Jerry to see the boys how to go

I have a letter from Fern since she got back to Ft Dodge her husband was sent to the front coast to day I send some pictures he is a very nice looking young soldier. Fern sent a fair from home near Joplin she said her dad seemed eyed so much while she was gone what of help he was working to hard

as my hand is getting shaky will stop. Vernie and Eunice are well Beverly is as big as Emma. David goes to school this yr Vernie baby boy is the biggest one in the family now he is 17 and wants to get in the army want them to bring home for him they do not want to as the war will get messy. hope this finds all well. Love to all
Mamma



Address on Envelope: Clyde Foreman
Monroe Iowa

Postmark on Envelope: Metz MO
NOV 15 1943 P.M.

Letter written by: Gertrude Foreman
Box 82, Metz MO

Letter:
Metz Mo, Nov 12

My dear Clyde and Nettie, was glad to hear from you. This leaves all well. I feel well and look well. But do not have very good use of my self. I have to use a cane when I go out of the house *as I fall down very easy and cannot get up by self.

Minnie and Claude stay with me. Their place is near and [they] keep stock and farm. Both [of their] girls are married. Virginia lives in Pittsburg Kan and has two boys. Her husband is Radio and Electrician [technician] in Montgomery Ward. He gets \$200 per mo. Dorothy was married to a soldier in Sept and lives in Nevada. He was in Panama for 16 months. He had tropical fever. As he was 38 years old he was given discharge, subject to a recall if needed. He is a mechanic and has a good job.

There has been one fatality from this part. Earl Yeates' stepson [Russell Michener], a 2nd Lieutenant was shot down flying over the oil fields in Romania. There is no boys left in Metz Township. Link Charles [has] 3 in service. Two Ragan boys, one is on duty, two Lyons, 2 Perry who lived across the road north and always worked with Everette, and Bud Baze who edits *The Metz Times*. His wife runs the paper now. Marvin Wycoff

(Maude's) youngest has been in Navy 3 years [and] is now in college. I suppose he will be Don's son-in-law when [he] graduates and Marjory becomes a graduate nurse. She has signed with the Government as a reserve subject to call. She gets uniforms and \$20 per month this year and \$30 next June.

*Horace may get to come home this winter. Richard was in Norfolk, Virginia. He received a medical discharge in October [because of] eye trouble. He was Staff Sergeant. He graduated in Radio at Madison, Wisconsin and was one of 5 sent to Orlando Florida to take Radar. He was assistant Instructor there and over eyestrain caused severe headaches. From there he was sent to Norfolk. He went to Kansas City where he got a good job at 82 cents per hour at light work that he can do. I have not heard from Ben lately. Elton was in Aleutians and Ray in Air Corps at Deming, New Mexico. Denver, Stanley's boy, was in Air Corps at Denver, Colorado. Howard Jr. was in South Pacific when I heard. *Howard Vaughn in Navy at San Diego. He is 20 and was married a few hours before going home after boot training in Vinita, Oklahoma. Chester and Oma was up in July. He had been discharged after serving 4 months, had stomach ulcers. He was looking better.

Everette has been working about 10 miles away after the harvest. His corn was late and not fit to gather. Will come home now. We did not [have] any frost until last of October. [It has] been freezing a little at night and a little snow just enough to see.

We had lots of tomatoes canned, 100 quart for us and about 50 for the girls and had 4 bushel of green ones. Don was over yesterday. [His farm] is about 10 miles over on Kansas line. His son-in-law [Solomon Longabaugh] is classed 1A. He may have to go. He put a man on his farm last spring and bought an oil route in Richards [Missouri]. He had better stayed on his farm. That is essential and oil is not. I sure feel sorry to see the Dads have to go [into service].

I have a letter from Fern [Foreman Hoyt] since she got back to Ft. Dodge [Iowa]. Her husband [Clarence] was sent to the West Coast today. I received their pictures. He is a very nice-looking young soldier. *John [Michael Foreman] rented a four room house near [his son] Jerald's. She said her dad seemed aged so much while she was gone. Short of help, he was working too hard.

As my hand is getting shaking, will stop. Vernice and Eunice are well. Beverly is as big as Eunice. David goes to school this yr. Vernice's baby boy [Donald] is the biggest one in the family now. He is 17 and wants to get in the Navy. [He] wants them to sign up for him. They do not want to as the war will get [him] next year. Hope this finds all well. Love to all,
Mother

* "My dad was already in the Navy when he married my mom 24 June 1943 in Vinita, OK. She said he left the next day, and I assumed to be shipped out."
Trudy Vaughn
22 May 2023

* "Uncle Everette would go help her up."

* "Horace fought in The Battel of the Bulge in Germany."

* "John lived the longest of any of the 12 Foreman children."
Beverly Weddle Pettus
20 May 2023

Key to boys mentioned in the letter, in military service from Metz Township, Vernon County, Missouri, supplied by society member Nancy.

Earl Yeates' step-son from Earl's marriage to Pearl Michener:
Russell Michener, 2nd Lieutenant.

Link (Washington Lincoln) Charles – 3 boys in service:

Ramon, Lt., Army Air Corps
Rex, Sgt, Army, POW
Roy, S/Sgt, Army Air Corps.

Two Lyons boys, sons of Paul & Roxie (Cary) Lyons:
Homer, Sgt, Army Air Corps
Howard, S/Sgt, Army Air Corps

Two Ragan boys:
Son of Louie & Blanche (Shafer) Ragan:
Ralph, Pvt, Army
Son of Egbert & Neville (Pettit) Ragan:
Lyle, Tech 3, Army

Two Perry boys, sons of Will & Lula (DeJarnette) Perry:
Everett, PFC, Army
Archie, PFC Army Air Corps

Bud (Clay Dryden) Baze, S1, Navy. Married Madge Lyons, sister of Homer & Howard Lyons.

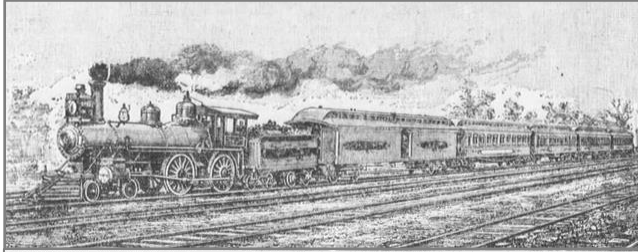
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HAND
Abandoned Place in Harrison Township,
Vernon County, Missouri
By Lyndon Irwin

The Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf Railroad, which went through far western Vernon County, was the idea of Kansas City developer Arthur Stillwell in the early 1890s. He first took the line from Kansas City to Hume in Bates County. Then he decided to extend the line on through western Vernon County and on to Pittsburg, Kansas, because of the extensive coal mining there. Once the line reached Pittsburg, it was decided to extend on to Joplin because of lead and zinc mining. The line reached Joplin by the fall of 1893. But before long it was decided to continue the line all the way to the Gulf at Port Arthur, Texas. That destination was reached in 1897.

The rail line passed through Clayton and Swartz in Vernon County but did not include stops at any of the more populated areas. The Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf Railroad was referred to by locals as the "Pee Gee," and continued to operate until financial difficulties forced it into foreclosure. A foreclosure auction was held in Joplin on March 19, 1900, and the line was purchased

by the Kansas City Southern railroad company. The Kansas City Southern was the only bidder, purchasing the property for \$12,500,000 which was a little more than half of the outstanding mortgage owed by the Pee Gee.



Kansas City Southern Notes.

The far southwestern portion of Vernon County was flat and prairie-like and was already an area of important grain crop farming along with extensive cattle operations. Farmers in that area needed ways of moving their crops and livestock to larger markets, so there was a need for a railroad stop in the area. The Kansas City Southern rail line passed through, but farmers had to take their grain and livestock north to Swartz or south into Barton County to have the option of moving them via train.

In the early 1900s, an Iowa farmer named George Washington Harris had moved into the area. Harris was a native of Illinois and had served in the Illinois Infantry during the Civil War. After the war he had married Electa McCallam and together they raised a large family in Illinois and Iowa. The 1900 federal census showed them living on their farm in Page County, Iowa. Shortly after that, they made the move south to a large ranch in southwest Vernon County. Harris was nearly 60 when they made this move.

The land that they moved to was adjacent to the Kansas City Southern tracks. Before long, Harris and perhaps other farmers had convinced the railroad to install a switch along the tracks. By November 1903, an Arcadia, Kansas newspaper noted that “thrifty farmers who have made use of the new Harris Switch this fall in shipping farm products by the carload were M. M. Hayes, D. T. Woodward,

G. W. Harris and Mr. Dumas.” It was also noted that G. W. Harris and sons were buying hogs to ship to Kansas City markets. At the same time, S. T. Tilleson, F. M. Polston and others had been loading hay at Harris Switch.

The specific location of Harris Switch is just northeast of the town of Arcadia, Kansas but definitely in Vernon County. By today’s roads, Harris Switch was at the west side of the intersection of Yater Road and the existing railroad tracks (which are still in use). Specifically, this puts it in [Sections 19 and 30 of Harrison Township](#).

The area was generally quiet, but the body of a man was found on April 23, 1907 at the Harris Switch in Harrison Township on the Kansas City Southern railroad. Coroner Truex came immediately to investigate, and he appointed a jury to assist with the investigation. It included G. S. Weathers, D. G. Swartz, J. H. Leist, J. C. Leist, W. G. Hueston and A. McCullough. The body was badly mangled from being run over by the train, but they found a letter in a pocket from the man’s sister. That allowed the coroner to identify the man as D. O. Weidener of Jasper County. He was about twenty-five years old and was said to have been built like an athlete. They located his sister at Purdy, but she did not know where their father was. The body was taken to the Turpin and Ingram undertaking parlor in Nevada. By Wednesday, the father had not been located, so Weidener was buried in Nevada. The jury determined that he had been riding in some dangerous position on the train. It had been raining that night and in order to shelter himself from the rain, he must have fallen and was run over. The body was so badly mangled that it was determined that death was instantaneous. His body was found by a track walker. The letter, a pocketknife and eighty cents were his only possessions.

G. W. Harris continued to reside in southwest Vernon County for several years. He was still listed in Vernon County in the 1910 Census. Harris was age 68 so may have been

considering retirement because in February 1911, the Miller Brothers purchased the Harris Ranch, which covered 640 acres. Before long, G. W. and Electa Harris moved to Colorado Springs, perhaps due to his ill health. He died there September 14, 1918.

From that time on, Harris Spur was generally referred to as Harris Spur. The Miller brothers continued to own the ranch for several years. In fact, it was announced that T. M. Clary and Anderson Klontz were building a hay shed for the Millers at the Harris Spur location during fall 1916. The next summer, the Miller Brothers were planning to sink a mine shaft on the Harris Spur ranch property on what had been known as the "Wellington" (Weldon) Darlington farm. They planned to move some houses there for the miners to live in. Weldon Darlington had owned a large farm in that area but in 1900 he had moved his large family to Texas, near Galveston.

Newspapers routinely started using the term Harris Spur almost immediately. For example, in January 1910, Mr. and Mrs. Al Ferguson and Miss Burrell Peterson from Harris Spur, visited friends at Eve. In December 1914 a Girard, Kansas newspaper noted that "little Mary Fisher," daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Ratliff, attempted climb into a wagon at Harris Spur. She slipped and fell under the wagon which ran over her leg causing a fracture. Dr. Tinder was called, and he dressed the wound.

Local news notes from years ago, also give information as to residents who lived in the vicinity of Harris Spur. For example, in January 1916, the birth of Jacob Yokley was announced to Mr. and Mrs. Roy Yokley who lived near Harris Spur. Then, in February 1916 the Ft. Scott newspaper said that Miss Bessie Caldwell of near Arcadia had been united in marriage to George Johnston, of near Harris Spur. In February 1917, Roy Yokley had put up sale bills announcing a farm auction at his place, one mile east of Harris Spur. He was disposing of everything—horses, cattle, implements,

harness, feed and household and kitchen furniture.

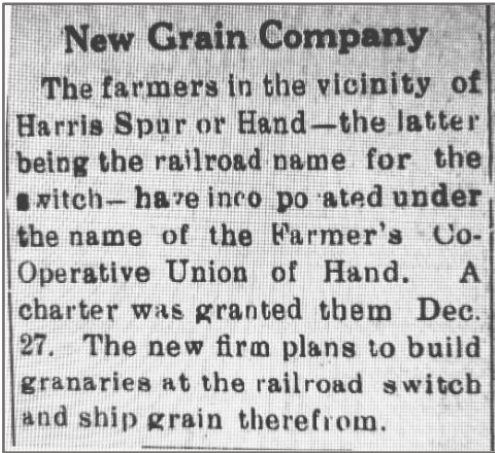
In August 1917, it was announced that the Kansas City Southern had changed the name of the Harris Spur. The new name was HAND. So, newspapers started using that name. For example, on August 3, "Mr. Tom Mayfield and son are loading a car of oats at Hand, formerly known as Harris Spur."

Somewhat like G. W. Harris had moved into the area and developed Harris Spur, another new resident came to the area about the time people were getting used to the name Hand. W. C. Hohn was a rancher out in western Kansas, near the town of Traver. He had moved there about 1908 after selling his large farm near Memphis, Missouri. Hohn bought his new Kansas ranch for \$16,000 which was quite a significant land deal in 1909. The Hohn's made their home there for the next ten years where most of their children grew up. He encouraged the Traver community to consider installing telephone lines. And just a year after having moved to Kansas, he was the main booster of a proposition for an artesian well for his county.

Hohn's Kansas landholdings were extensive. In June 1912, he advertised that he had ten quarters (about 1,600 acres) of Western Kansas Land for sale near Fowler, Kansas. The Hohn's were still in Kansas in July 1915 because they hosted the big Independence Day celebration at the grove on the ranch ten miles east of Traver. However, W. C. Hohn was preparing for another big move.

By October 1915, he had moved his wife and a daughter to their new Missouri farm about a mile east of Hand. One of the first things he did, was to erect two [Tulsa brand silos](#) on his new farm. He had 320 acres on both sides of the road, not too far west of Drywood Creek. W. C. Hohn was progressive farmer. In February 1917, the Dunton Store in Arcadia announced that W. C. Hohn had unloaded a farm tractor in Arcadia and the Dunton store sold him a John Deere three-bottom gang plow to go with it.

W. C. Hohn's next big project was to organize local farmers in the area. In January 1920, it was announced that the farmers had incorporated under the name of the "Farmer's Cooperative Union of Hand." The charter had



been granted to them on December 27, 1919. The new firm planned to build granaries at the railroad switch and ship grain from there.

The new cooperative also started running advertisements in local newspapers. The ads stated that the cooperative manager was W. C. Hohn. Their ad in the Arcadia newspaper told that they sold fine grade twine for \$15.20 per hundred. Their ad in the Bronaugh Journal told that the co-op had flour, feed and kaffir corn. They also were dealers for Massey Harris Machinery.



By the summer of 1920, the co-op had become a social center. The group that had formed the cooperative was called the "Belmont Local Union 1849 of Hand, Missouri". Just a year earlier they had started with twenty charter members. In the spring of 1920, they began a membership drive in which two teams competed to get more members. The team that got the most new members would be treated to homemade ice

cream by the losing team members. A big picnic was hosted on May 29 featuring food and entertainment. The glee club from Oskaloosa, a nearby town in Barton County, was featured in addition to recitations and speeches. During the day, manager W. C. Hohn took orders for several pieces of farm machinery that was on display. He also took orders for flour, feed and twine. The conclusion of festivities was thirty gallons of the finest ice cream, provided by the losing side.

The development of Hand continued for a short time with grain bins and other buildings being constructed on the west side of the railroad tracks, especially on the northwest side of the intersection of the tracks and the road (now Yater Rd.). Cattle pens were also built on the east side of the tracks.

The Hohn's continued to live and farm east of Hand. One of their properties bordered Drywood Creek. Thomas Mayfield was their neighbor across the creek east. Their neighbor to the west was Del Leist and to the south, M. A. Earl, John Heitz and Pierce Fonburg.

In August 1923. W. C. Hohn was in Nevada. A few days earlier, his son Elmer Hohn had gone to Arcadia to get some lumber for a porch on his home. He had been driving a Ford car. Elmer did not return home. Authorities in surrounding counties were contacted. He had been married the year before and there was no evidence that there were problems. His father's concern was that Elmer had served in World War I and had never recovered from being shell shocked. However, it was soon learned that when Elmer was in Arcadia that day, he had withdrawn \$150 from the bank. That is when he disappeared by automobile without a trace. Elmer did not return home and a few years later, his wife Ruby had divorced him. A few years after that, Elmer showed up in South Dakota where he lived a long life.

At the same time, things were not going well with the business. In September 1923, the Farmers Corporate Union of Hand, went to

the Vernon County Circuit Court asking the Circuit Court to dissolve the Union. In the October term, it was noted that the motion to dissolve was filed by the Union vs. W. C. Hohn. In February 1924, the circuit court ruled on the case. The judge granted dissolution, and the directors of the corporation were ordered to sell the assets of the corporation and distribute the proceeds among the stockholders.

This must have proven to be the end of HAND. Little mention of it occurs after that. Mr. and Mrs. Hohn continued to own their farm; however his health declined. W. C. Hohn died March 11, 1925. He was buried a few miles east at Worsley Cemetery. His grave is not far west of the Mayfield graves – just like his real life farm. His wife Emma retained their land in an estate for many years. She lived a very long life as a widow. She lived alone on the farm until after 1940 and then in Arcadia until her death in 1960.

No one knows why the railroad might have changed the name of Harris Spur to HAND. However, perhaps something that happened along the tracks just north of there years earlier caused railroad people to choose a name. The story that follows refers to a discovery just a short distance north of Hand. So until someone comes up with a better theory for the origin of the name HAND, perhaps this is why they chose it:

The headline in the July 26, 1901, Southwest Mail read “GRUESOME FIND.” G. S. Swart was the agent for the Kansas City Southern railroad at Swartz, a small station southwest of Nevada. Mr. Swart reported that he had found a human hand lying near the switch stand at the north end of the side track. There was a gold ring on one of the fingers. Swart removed the ring and sent the ring to the Pittsburg train office. The hand was buried at Swartz. It was soon learned that a brakeman had lost his hand there in an accident the night before.

Not much of Hand now remains and there are no signs. One barn remains that is believed

to be original, although covered with tin.



Portions of foundations are said to be in the trees to the north side of Yater Road and outlines of cattle pens can be seen east of the tracks. All are now on private property.

Lyndon's acknowledgements: Thanks to Robbie Lefevre and B. G. Wolfe for sharing information that they knew or discovered about this little-known place.

Who Are YOU Researching? Members are invited to submit articles about their research for publication in the newsletter.

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The newsletter is published by the Cedar & Vernon County Missouri Genealogical Society, a 501(c)(3) organization, and is a benefit of membership.

2023 Officers of the Society are
President, Valo J.
Recording Secretary, Lynda B.
Treasurer, Marty P.
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster, Nancy T.

2023 Society Dues are \$10 per person (\$15 per couple in the same household), and can be mailed to
Cedar & Vernon Co MO Gen Soc
Attn: Membership
218 W. Walnut St.
Nevada, MO 64772

The monthly emailed newsletter and free lookups in the new cemetery database are benefits of membership.

*Thank You for Your Membership in
Support of the Work of the
Genealogical Society*