



# JEFFERSON HERITAGE & LANDMARK SOCIETY

PRESIDENT - BETTY MUELLER  
V. PRESIDENT - JEAN O'BRIEN  
SECRETARY - CATHERINE CRAWFORD  
TREASURER - BETTY OLSON

126 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
DE SOTO, MISSOURI 63020

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## JEFFERSON COUNTY -- LOST OR GONE?

Jean O'Brien

I have just come back from a visit in northwestern New Jersey and have spent much time in the area 100 miles up the Delaware River, west of where it makes a bend to flow south into the Atlantic.

This area is very old and a historic section of our county going back to the early westward movement of people from the east coast. It is one of the areas that at one time was claimed by New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. This one facet of the history of this area is enough to make a dedicated genealogist give up research, especially when they begin to find documents for a person, giving his birthplace in all four states!

This part of the country, still has parts that are very isolated, but all seem to have very active though small historical societies. Some even smaller than ours. BUT, they are producing a regular flow of printed material about the area. This material is nicely printed, well prepared, well written and accurately documented. They are a blessing for those who are tracing family history.

I feel the history of Jefferson County is just as historic, just as important and would be just as interesting if it could be gotten into print. We have just as much history and historic sites to be preserved and perhaps more than the area I have visited.

At this time there is a group of people from the St. Louis Genealogical and Historical Society redoing some of the cemeteries in the north end of our county which we have already done. This will most likely be printed by them. We have birth, death and marriage records, including the book of black marriages that should be published. Jefferson County is considered a no-man's land or a lost county because there is nothing much available in print on its history.

Also, I am concerned about the fact that there is no protection of any kind for our historical sites and the following is just a partial list of places in Jefferson County that we have lost in the last 10 or 15 years.

1. Graham House, Adams Ave., Festus, Mo. 1832. This was the oldest existing site in town.
2. Blacksmith Shop and Koester's Mill, South Mill Street, Festus, Mo.
3. Hidden Valley, Festus, Mo. Prehistoric rock carvings and ice-age plants.
4. R.R. Station, Imperial, Mo. Probably the last of its type still standing in Missouri.
5. R.R. Station and Booster's Hall in De Soto. These were buildings along the old St. Louis & Iron Mountain R. R. to the lead fields.
6. Many of the old truss buildings are being replaced, Cedar Hill, Horine, Hematite and Victoria. Most of these had the builder's name plate and usually something distinctive about the construction.
7. Two story brick McCormack House, Plattin, Mo.
8. Old Flucom Log German Lutheran Church.
9. The old house with the white horses, near Highway VV in Arnold. It was a place where General Grant would come from Jefferson Barracks for a leave and rest time. Fortunately, the house is now in Kimmswick.

These are just a few that I have thought of. How many more can you add? Even a sign, such as Mine-a-Breton is using would be something. It would preserve the knowledge that history took place on that spot.

How can we in good faith call ourselves a historic society, and do nothing to foster the historic aspect of our county, especially when Jefferson County is considered one of the most important and historic counties in this part of Missouri?

## GENEALOGICAL HELPER

There are several bits of information that might be of assistance to those who are tracing families or for those just getting started on this addictive pasttime.

Sometimes there will be found after a marriage the letters "HF" which stand for the words "Hand Fast." This was a practice that came out of the remote areas of Scotland and England and was also found in the southern highlands of the United States and usually in other very isolated sections of our country.

Hand Fasting is a practice of couples wishing to be married, and not wanting to wait until the Circuit Riding Preacher came along. A couple would stand up before the congregation, and hold their clasped hands above their heads for all to see. This was a statement of their intention to have their union blessed when next the preacher came by. This was legal and binding for a year, or until the preacher blessed them. Any heirs of this union were considered legal and were able to inherit.

In many respects this was an economic solution especially for a widow or an unmarried single woman in the community.

The following will probably confuse you at first, but it is necessary to know, especially if you are having trouble making two dates jive.

**Regnal Years**

Dates in older records are often given in what is called the *regnal year*. For example, you may find a reference in a will to an ancestor having died "on the 15th day of July in the 10th year of the reign of our Gracious Queen, Anne". This does not tell you very much, unless you know the exact date of the commencement of each reign, and so here they are, set out below (for example, the reign of Queen Anne began on 8 March 1702. So, from 8 March 1702 to 7 March 1703 was the regnal year 1 Anne):

William I	25 Dec.	1066	Mary	6 July	1553
William II	26 Sept.	1087	Philip & Mary	25 July	1554
Henry I	5 Aug.	1100	Elizabeth I	17 Nov.	1558
Stephen	26 Dec.	1135	James II†	24 Mar.	1603
Henry II	19 Dec.	1154	Charles I	27 Mar.	1625
Richard I	3 Sept.	1189	Commonwealth‡		
John*	27 May	1199	Charles II	30 Jan.	1649
Henry III	28 Oct.	1216	James II	6 Feb.	1685
Edward I	20 Nov.	1272	(Interregnum	12 Dec.	1688
Edward II	8 July	1307		to 12 Feb.	1689)
Edward III	25 Jan.	1327	William III		
Richard II	22 June	1377	and Mary	13 Feb.	1689
Henry IV	30 Sept.	1399	William III	28 Dec.	1694
Henry V	21 Mar.	1413	Anne	8 Mar.	1702
Henry VI	1 Sept.	1422	George I	1 Aug.	1714
Edward IV	4 Mar.	1461	George II	11 June	1727
Edward V	9 Apr.	1483	George III	25 Oct.	1760
Richard III	26 June	1483	George IV	29 Jan.	1820
Henry VII	22 Aug	1485	William IV	26 June	1830
Henry VIII	22 Apr.	1509	Victoria	20 June	1837
Edward VI	28 Jan.	1547	(The Regnal Year discontinued)		

\*In the case of John, regnal years are calculated from Ascension Day each year.

†Also known as James VI of Scotland.

‡No regnal year was used during the Commonwealth, 30 Jan. 1649 to 9 May 1660. At the Restoration on that date, the years of the reign of Charles II were back-dated to the death of Charles I, on the principle that he had been king *de jure* since then.

**The Calendar**

In trying to pinpoint an exact date of birth, marriage, or death in searching British records, there are two traps for the unwary:

1. There was a major change in the calendar in 1752.
2. In addition, in that year, the New Year was changed from March 25 to January 1.

How all this came about is a little complicated, but, unless you understand what happened, you will make some mistakes in the dates you attribute to your ancestors.

Before 1582 the Julian Calendar was used throughout the Christian world. It had been originated by Julius Caesar, hence the name. The calendar divided the year into 365 days, plus an extra day every fourth year. This system was in operation until 1582, but astronomers discovered that it exceeded the solar year by eleven minutes, or three days every four hundred years. Between the date when the Julian Calendar was instituted in 325 and the year 1582, the difference amounted to 10 days. Since this affected the calculations for Easter, Pope Gregory XIII decreed that ten days be dropped from the calendar in order to bring Easter to the correct date. To prevent a recurrence of the variation, he also ordered that in every four hundred years, Leap Year's extra day should be omitted in a centennial year when the first two digits cannot be divided by four without a remainder.

Are you still with me? Well, it means it was omitted in 1700, 1800, and 1900, but will not be omitted in 2000. The Pope also changed the beginning of the New Year from March 25 to January 1, and this new system became known as the Gregorian Calendar. All Roman Catholic countries adopted the new system in 1582. Protestant nations did so later.

However, England was having a fight with the Pope at that time, and was suspicious of new ideas anyway, so she ignored the whole idea. She continued to ignore it for another hundred and seventy years. Never let it be said the English rush into newfangled systems! So, up until 1752 in Great Britain and her colonies, the New Year still started on March 25, while in the rest of the Christian world it started on January 1. To further complicate matters, many educated people thought the change should have been made immediately, and so you will occasionally find entries in church registers and other records dated, for example, 8 January 1686/7, thus showing that although it was officially 1686, they thought it should really be 1687.

Finally, in 1752, the British government changed from the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar and ordered that eleven days be dropped between September 2 and 14 in that year. This prompted riots in various parts of the country, with mobs of people waving banners and crying, "Give us back our eleven days!"

As a result, you will find entries like 11 June O.S. (Old Style), 22 June N.S. (New Style). In addition, the change of the New Year to January 1 meant that people born on 27 March 1692 (O.S.) had to change the date of their birth to 7 April 1691 (N.S.).

Once all this is clear to you, you will not be confused to find that an ancestress of yours had one child born in one year and a second born a few months later. It was the calendar which changed and not the nine-month gestation period!

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Baxter, Angus "In Search of Your British and Irish Roots" William Morrow publishers, N. Y. c1982, p. 18.

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Dear Friends:

Once again it is time for our Annual Meeting. The date for this year is MARCH 22, 2:00 P.M. AT THE FLETCHER HOUSE IN HILLSBORO.

Board members whose terms expire in 1987 are:

JEAN O'BRIEN, BLANCHE FALLET AND BETTY MUELLER. Elizabeth Golterman whose term does not expire until 1987 has asked to be replaced this year. She will be serving as Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

At this meeting we will cover the following items of business:

1. Election of Officers and board members. Nominations from the floor will be open.
2. Annual Treasurer's report.
3. Programs planned and also programs you might propose for consideration.
4. Projects for the coming year.

We need and urge your attendance at this meeting.

Betty Mueller, President

FAMILY TREE SEMINAR

MAY PROGRAM

Mrs. Karen Moore of Hillsboro will give a program for us on April 11 in Lecture Hall I, (Arts & Science Building) Jefferson College, Hillsboro, Missouri. Time: 1:30 P.M. til 4:30 P.M. There will be a lecture, discussion period and how-to-do it workshop. A packet of materials will be given to each participant. Fee is \$5.00. If you plan to attend fill out the reservation slip below and mail back in before April 8. This program is open to the general public.

Miss Gertrude Zimmer of Farmington will be with us in May to speak on the "Pilot Knob-Ste. Genevieve Plank Road." We will have further details available soon, so keep this in mind.

YEARLY DUES

Heritage and Landmark dues are payable in March of 1987. Send your \$10.00 check to our Treasurer, Mrs. Betty Olson, 126 South Main St. De Soto, Missouri, 63020, today!

HELP NEEDED!

We have received a call from Delta Junction Alaska asking for information about a hanging which the caller believes happened in Jefferson County at Hillsboro, on June 11, 1880. The name of the person hanged was "Knutsen." He is alleged to have been a "horse thief." Goodspeed's History (1888) gives several crimes that were committed in the county around that time, but none of them resulted in a hanging. If you know of any information about this please call Betty Olson, 586-3858.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR FAMILY TREE SEMINAR

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to Mrs. Betty Olson, 126 South Main Street  
De Soto, Missouri 63020

HERITAGE AND LANDMARK recently accepted 8 boxes of records from the Circuit Clerk's office, dealing with land tax suits from the time period of 1891 to 1931. Anyone interested in sorting, cataloging, etc. these records please call Mrs. Olson at 586-3858 (The De Soto Public Library.)

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE GENEALOGY COLLECTION AT THE DE SOTO PUBLIC LIBRARY. The cemetery records of Rock Township compiled by Glee Heiligtag and Nadine Garland have all been computerized and printed out in alphabetical order according to the name of the Cemetery they are in.

Books added:

Bell, James E.	History of Early Reynolds County
St. Louis Genealogical Society	1986 Surname Index
Hostetler, Rev. Harvey	Descendants of Barbara Hochstedler & Christian Stutzman
Langston, Aileen, et al.	Pedigrees of some of Emperor Charlemagne's Descendants
Brickey, Raymond Luther	The Brickey Heritage
Felldin, Jeanne Robey,	Index to the 1820 Census of Kentucky
Holcomb, Brent H.	North Carolina Land Grants in South Carolina
St. Louis Genealogical Society	St. Louis & St. Louis County Missouri Probate Records 1804-1849
Cottle, Basil	Dictionary of Surnames
Hook, J. N.	Family Names
Wideman, Darrell Lee	The Wideman Family in America

Many of these books were given to the library by people working on their family genealogies. We appreciate your willingness to share these items with the others working on their family history.

Betty Olson, Librarian

EARLY COUNTY NEWSPAPERS

THE JEFFERSON DEMOCRAT established in 1866 by C. A. Clark & C. D. Reppy  
(Original name was JEFFERSON COUNTY LEADER)

CRYSTAL MIRROR established at Festus in August 1885 by J. J. Wilson and  
Dr. T. B. Taylor.

THE DE SOTO HERALD established 1888 by G. Y. Dale

The CRYSTAL MIRROR became the New Era and later took the name of THE JEFFERSON COUNTY RECORD, published by the Schneider Printing Company.

The JEFFERSON DEMOCRAT was taken over by the FESTUS NEWS and renamed "THE NEWS DEMOCRAT" published by Wright.

(The above items appeared in an article written by Mrs. Kathryn Schneider and published in THE JEFFERSON COUNTY RECORD on August 31, 1967.)

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