



Jefferson Heritage and Landmark Corporation

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RED SMITH AND MARY SUSAN COLEMAN TIGERT

In the summer of 1935, the late great and nationally known Sports columnist, Red Smith, was a young reporter on the ST. LOUIS STAR-TIMES.

His boss, Frank Taylor, gave him an assignment for a story, "I want you to go out in the sticks and get some old broad, some old doll that's never been to a city, never seen an electric light and bring her to town as a guest." *

Smith had recently read an article about Old mines in Washington County and the fact that the town was going to join the rest of the world and have hard top roads. Smith went down to Old Mines and was pointed in the direction of Mrs. Mary Susan Coleman Tigert of Calico Creek Hollow, near Fletcher, Missouri.

As a result of his visit, he wrote a series of articles in the St. Louis Star-Times about his visit with Mrs. Tigert and her visit to St. Louis. Both the articles and her story charmed and interested the people of St. Louis. The 5 articles were only second to the stories about the rumored invasion of Ethopia by the Italians.

His first article on September 2, 1935, started thusly;

"FLETCHER, MO. IN THE DEEP QUIET OF CALICO CREEK HOLLOW, AT THE END OF A FLINTY OZARK TRAIL THAT MEANDERS THREE MILES THROUGH THE WOODS FROM THIS QUIET CROSS-ROADS POST OFFICE, THE WRITER OF THIS ARTICLE HAS DISCOVERED A WOMAN 73 YEARS OLD WHO IN HER ENTIRE LIFE HAS NEVER SEEN A RAILROAD TRAIN, A GAS STOVE, STREET CAR, MOVIE, TAXICAB, SEWING MACHINE AIRPLANE, HOTEL VACUUM SWEEPER, DEPARTMENT STORE, LAMP POST, TRAFFIC COP, APARTMENT HOUSE, BOAT OR DENTIST, NEVER HAS HEARD A RADIO, NEVER RIDDEN AN ELEVATOR! NEVER WORN STREET CLOTHES, CHEWED GUM, EATEN IN A RESTAURANT, OR TALKED OVER A TELEPHONE."

Smith brought her to St. Louis where she experienced many of the things she had never done before; saw the sites of the big city, sailed the Mississippi, went to the zoo where she saw bears such as roamed the woods near her home. She saw airplanes at Lambert but refused to try one out. She told many stories of her life in Calico Creek Hollow, the town of Fletcher and the only other "big city" she had ever seen; Potosi.

When she returned to her two room log cabin and her fairly new husband who was as old as she was, she wore a brand new silk dress and had many tales of the big city to regale her neighbors; tales of the railroad train, the big Lincoln in which they drove her around St. Louis, the ceiling fans in her room, and the electric lights that worked better than her lamp. She was glad to get back to her home where she could have a good night's sleep. It was so noisy in St. Louis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

*Berkow, Ira, RED, A BIOGRAPHY OF RED SMITH, New York, Times Books, c1986.
pp.63-4

ST. LOUIS STAR-TIMES, September 2-6, 1935

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TRAILS WEST SHOWING

In connection with the television showing of the mini-series about John C. Fremont and the mapping of the Oregon Trail, Jefferson Heritage had a reception and showing of some of the more historic documents of Jefferson County. In the Recorder of Deeds Office there is a 1859 copy of the mapping of the Oregon Trail, done in 7 panels.

Other documents on display were the first Circuit Court Docket Book, 1819-1821. The Judge at that time was Nathaniel Beverly Tucker. He was a very active politician and was mainly responsible for the establishment of Jefferson County.

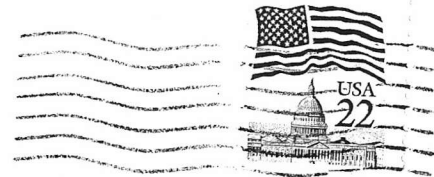
A companion book was the Minute Book of the County Court. Also there was the original plat, dated 1810, for Herculanum, a plat of Mine à Breton, plats for several developments whose name has either been changed or the whole settlement never got off the ground. There was the first Probate case, the first collector's records and a negro marriage book, dated 1867.

ROCK TOWNSHIP CEMETERY RECORDS

At this time the Rock Township Cemetery records covering 29 different cemeteries, have been entered into the computer at the De Soto Public Library and printed out for proof reading. After corrections have been made, we will consider ways and means of having these records printed and made available for sale.

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