

# **BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY**



## **ARCHITECTURAL GEM: THE THOMAS HICKMAN HOUSE**

**GRAY GHOSTS AND GHOST WAGONS**

**ARROW ROCK EPIDEMIC**

**VOL. 19 No. 2 — SUMMER 2020**

**BOONSLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERIODICAL**

## Historic Architecture, Gray Ghosts and Microbes

FREELANCE WRITER SYLVIA FORBES WROTE OUR lead article (pg. 4) about one of the Boonslick region's most significant 19th-century structures—the Thomas Hickman House. Missouri historian Jim Denny describes the Hickman House, circa 1818-19, in New Franklin (Howard County) as one of the area's oldest buildings and a classic example of the Georgian Cottage building type.

His comments are contained in the National Register of Historic Places Nomination that led to the house being placed on the Register in 2006. He notes that few intact examples of the Georgian Cottage exist in central Missouri. "As a result," he adds, "the Hickman House has been used over the years by historians in numerous publications as a premier Missouri example of this building type."

In an article he wrote about the Hickman House, the late historian Charles Van Ravenswaay declares it "the most remarkable home in the county and indeed in Central Missouri."

Gerald Foster, the author of *American Houses: A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home*, describes the Georgian style as "a pre-Revolutionary War style common in the English colonies, noted for its rigid symmetry of rectangular floor plans, central axial entry and hall passage, evenly sized and spaced windows, and dual, symmetrical chimneys." He notes that Georgian is one of the most long-lived architectural styles in American history. "The style first became popular in the American colonies around 1700 and it dominated American building for most of the 18th century."

In an article titled, "Early Southern Domestic Architecture in Missouri, 1810-1840: The 'Georgianization' of the trans-Mississippi West," Jim Denny traces development of the Georgian style and its migration into Missouri. He notes that the Georgian Cottage proliferated throughout the eastern and southern United States in the 18th century, but was especially popular in the Upper South. "Thus, it is not surprising," he adds, "that this house type appeared in the Boonslick region during the early wave of settlement. Migrants who made their way to the Missouri Territory from cultural hearths in the 'old states' of Virginia, Maryland or North Carolina, or from Kentucky or Tennessee, carried with them the unfolding traditions of their homeplaces in the Upper South."

Another authority on the history of the Hickman House is Ray Glendening, a former superintendent of the University of Missouri Horticulture and Agroforestry Research Center in New Franklin. The 665-acre facility is the location of the Hickman House, and Glendening was directly involved with its restoration. Writer Sylvia Forbes interviewed Glendening for her article on the Hickman House, and he also graciously agreed to review the edited copy and added pertinent information about Thomas Hickman and restoration of the house. Since retirement, he has been serving as president of the South Howard County Historical Society.

A historic church and the interesting mix of burials in its 19th-century graveyard near Auxvasse in Callaway County are the subject of freelance writer Tim Carson's article (pg. 7), "Gray Ghosts and Ghost Wagons." The Gray Ghosts, Tim notes, were the Confederate guerilla groups headed by "Bloody Bill" Anderson. "They rode those roads, ambushed Union detachments, hit and run all through what they referred to as 'the war between the states' or 'the war of northern aggression.' Or what we might more commonly call The Civil War." The church cemetery contains the graves of 20 Confederate soldiers. "And the story is told that during the war those women loyal to the Confederacy would come to church dressed in grey (sic) ... and sit on the south side of the sanctuary!"

Historian and author Michael Dickey reminds us in "The Cholera Epidemic of 1849 in Arrow Rock and the Boonslick" (pg. 9) that influenza and other communicable diseases such as cholera and typhoid fever were common in the Boonslick in the 19th century and could be as deadly, perhaps more so, than the current coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic sweeping countries around the world. This story reflects on my own family history. My grandfather, Dr. Grant Cullimore, a physician in Oklahoma City at the beginning of the 20th century, came down with typhoid fever and died while treating patients during an outbreak of the highly infectious disease in 1909, only two years after the territory became a state. Today, fortunately, typhoid fever and cholera, bacterial diseases, have largely been eliminated in this country and most other western industrial nations through modern sanitation methods, clean water, and effective medicines such as antibiotics.



This was a popular poster placed nationwide during the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918-19. Image from the National Archives

—Don B. Cullimore

*Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly* is published four times a year by the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233.

We encourage our members and others interested in history to contribute articles or other information of historical interest, including family histories, pertaining to the region. Please address all contributions and correspondence related to the periodical to the editor, Don B. Cullimore, 1 Lawrence Dr., Fayette, MO 65248, or email to: Don.cullimore40@gmail.com, phone: 660-888-3429. Editorial guidelines may be obtained from the editor. Publication deadlines are February 1 for the March (Spring) issue; May 1 for the June (Summer) issue; August 1 for the September (Fall) issue; and November 1 for the (Winter) December issue.

The Boonslick Historical Society was founded in 1937 and meets several times a year to enjoy programs about historical topics pertinent to the Boonslick area. Members of the Society have worked together over the years to publish historical books and brochures and to mark historic sites. They supported the founding of Boone's Lick State Historic Site, marked the sites of Cooper's Fort and Hanna Cole's Fort and have restored a George Caleb Bingham painting on loan to The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art at Central Methodist University, Fayette.

**Membership dues** are \$15-Individual, \$25-Family, \$50-Sponsor, \$250-Patron, \$500-Life. The dues year is January through December. Receive our publication, *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly*, and attend annual Society events highlighting the region's history. To become a member, send a check made out to the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233.

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# BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY

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<b>Editor's Page: Historic Architecture</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Thomas Hickman House</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Gray Ghosts and Ghost Wagons</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Arrow Rock 1849 Flu Epidemic</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>News in Brief</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>BHS Event Information</b>	<b>12</b>

#### Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly to Go Online Temporarily

The Boonslick Historical Society Board and editorial staff of Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly have made a decision to place the Quarterly online for the foreseeable future. This is being done in consideration of potential health problems related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic currently sweeping the United States.

Production of the magazine requires repeated exposure of the editorial staff and at least one board member for the following purposes: preparing mailing labels at a commercial print shop, digital printing of magazine at CMU, purchasing postage, hands-on labeling and application of postage on magazines, and, finally, delivering magazines to U.S. Post Office for mailing.

We consider it a prudent step to place the magazine online and reduce the potential for exposure to COVID-19 by persons associated with its production. When the pandemic has ceased to be a public health hazard, we will consider returning the magazine to a hard copy version. Until then, copies of future issues may be seen online at the BHS website: [www.boonslickhistoricalsociety.edu](http://www.boonslickhistoricalsociety.edu). Use the "Quarterly Journal" tab to access all issues published since 2012. You can download any issue to your computer or print it out. —The Editor



Cover Photo and image at left, taken in 1936: The Thomas Hickman House (1818-19), one of the oldest houses in Howard County and a classic example of Georgian Cottage-style architecture. The house has been restored and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is located on the 655-acre Horticulture and Agroforestry Research Center (HARC) operated by the University of Missouri in New Franklin. Tours of the house may be arranged by contacting HARC. Images courtesy of HARC and HABS.



# The House on the Hill

## *1819 home of early Boonslick pioneer Thomas Hickman still stands thanks to extensive restoration*

*By Sylvia Forbes*

THOMAS HICKMAN AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER James came to the Boonslick (Howard County area) in 1816 to scout for land to buy and for possible business opportunities since they were merchants. Thomas bought 40 acres of land close to Fort Hempstead from a neighbor through a pre-emption (After the War of 1812, Congress passed a series of laws reforming U.S. policy on acquiring public lands. These laws established a federal land policy of preemption, under which squatters on public land obtained legal title to it in exchange for payment of a minimum – and low – price per acre). The pre-emption was legal because Thomas established a homestead. He paid for the land, built a cabin, and planted a corn crop.

He also started a mercantile business with fellow Kentuckian James H. Benson. The business was called Hickman and Benson Mercantile. It was located on Hickman's land which was part of a little village called Warrington. Hickman and Benson would later move their business to Franklin and merge with Hickman's brother James and William Lamme to form William Lamme & Company Mercantile. This business helped outfit the Santa Fe traders on their first expedition.

In 1821, Thomas sold his part of this business and, later that year, established a new business as a tavern keeper.

When Thomas was established he brought his wife, Sarah, and four children to the area in 1818 (two more children would be born there). Thomas would eventually own 240 acres of land. That was the year a land office was established in Franklin. The History of Howard and Cooper Counties reports that thousands of people attended the first land sales on November 18, 1818. Many wanted to get wealthy through land speculation. Preserved documents show that Hickman was actively involved in buying and selling tracts of land in the area throughout the 1820s.

Evidently Thomas had been doing well in business all along, because in 1818 he started building his brick home on the hill, which was completed in 1819. The brick home was quite fancy

for this newly settled area of mid-Missouri. When members of the Long Expedition stopped in Franklin on July 16, 1819, on their way up the Missouri River, Stephen Long noted in his journal that there were 120 one-story log houses, several two-story framed homes, and only two brick houses in town. Brick homes were unusual, since making bricks involved extra work. They had to be made and fired, usually on site. An excavation near the house found an area with remnants of clay and partial bricks.

Thomas Hickman was well-connected in the area through his relatives. He was elected to the office of Colonel in the 14th regiment of the local militia in 1821. Later, in 1824, he ran for state Senator, but was defeated.

His brother-in-law, Moss Prewitt, was a hatter in Franklin, and later opened the first bank in Columbia. He served as treasurer of several colleges, as well as for the City of Columbia and for Boone County. Another brother-in-law, Joel Prewitt, was a minister in the area.

His brother, David M. Hickman, became a leading mule and horse breeder and was elected as a Missouri Representative in 1838 and 1840. He also started Bonne Femme Academy and contributed to getting the University of Missouri established in Columbia.

David M.'s son (Thomas' nephew), David H. Hickman, was important in the founding of Stephens College, and served as a curator at the University of Missouri. He served as a Missouri Representative in 1852. Columbia's Hickman High School is named after Hickman and was built on his estate in 1927.

Two of Thomas Hickman's sons, James P. and David W., also became traders on the Santa Fe Trail. James P. established a trading post in Westport, in partnership with James' brother-in-law (Jonas H. Flornoy) and John D. McCoy. Thomas' daughter, Clara, married Jonas H. Flornoy, who built one of the first brick homes in Independence. Jonas sold 63 acres in Independence to the Mormons, where they eventually built their large temple. Jonas later had a change of heart and served as secretary on a committee to chase out the Mormons.



**The rear view of the Thomas Hickman house with a recreation of the summer kitchen that was originally located just behind the house. The kitchen shown here was based on findings of an archeological dig behind the house.**

*Photo by Don Cullimore*

Thomas' sister, Margaret, married William Hutchison. Margaret's daughter, also named Margaret, eventually married Nathaniel Leonard, owner of Ravenswood, located across the Missouri River in Cooper County.

Another of Thomas' nieces, Mary Elizabeth (the daughter of his brother James), married James S. Rollins, who is important in Columbia's history. Rollins was elected Missouri Representative in 1838, 1840, and 1854, and elected Senator in 1846. Rollins helped establish the University of Missouri and served as one of the first curators.

## Restoring the Hickman Home

Visitors can see for themselves, up close and personal, the results of the \$1.25 million restoration of the Hickman House, in New Franklin. This historic home, built 201 years ago, is periodically open for tours during special events, and by calling ahead to the University of Missouri Horticulture & Agroforestry Research Center (HARC) for a tour.

The Hickman House was listed on the national register in 2006. The home is of significance because of its architecture, being one of the first brick homes built west of the Mississippi. The Georgian style, 1 1/2-story home has four rooms, with a large, eight-foot-wide central hall separating the house, and two rooms on each side, each room with its own fireplace and mantel. Three of the rooms have a floor to ceiling closet or cupboard next to the fireplace. At one end of the hallway is a staircase leading to an unfinished attic. Other features include wide windows and doors, with a fanlight transit over the front door.

The Hickman House is also considered significant due to being the home of Thomas Hickman, an important historical figure of the Boonslick area.

## Foundation Work

Much has been repaired on the 1 1/2-story, four room house, says Ray Glendening, a former farm manager and superintendent of HARC. Movement over the years caused cracks in the limestone foundation, and required taking a backhoe to dig two feet deep underneath the foundation. Workers then carefully hand-dug one four-foot section at a time, made a form, then added re-rod and concrete to strengthen it. They repeated this process about 70 times around the house, tying each section together with overlapped re-rod. Since each of the four rooms had a limestone foundation around the edges, they had to take up the floor



**There are two bedrooms with period four-corner beds and furniture that were gifts from area residents. Photo by Don Cullimore**

to get to some of it.

Next, they put in helical foundation piers every 5-6 feet, to halt future movement. Some went down 22 feet; the shallowest was 15 feet. Then they attached the foundation to them. After the foundation was stabilized, they started the rest of the repairs.

## Brick by Brick

Another big job was to repair the walls. The first step was cleaning the bricks which had been painted over the years. They used a lime solvent, four or five coats, then a high pressure washer, to remove the paint. Their goal was to remove 80% of the paint to get back to the original brick appearance.

Numerous cracks in the walls needed to be fixed. To obtain bricks for repairs, they found the remains of an old house of about the same period in the Davisdale Conservation Area, only a few miles away. The house had been demolished, and the bricks had been pushed into a pile, with dirt covering them. Since this part of the project took place during winter, they had to wait until the ground had thawed, to be able to dig the bricks out. Then they waited until the road refroze, to get a truck in to haul out the bricks. They made ten trips and recovered about 10,000 bricks, all which are now part of the Hickman House.

The bricks were also used to rebuild the chimneys. All four chimneys were unstable and needed to be rebuilt from below the roof-line.

One of the goals of the restoration was to put the windows and doors back in their original locations. Over the years, the house had been modified by the various occupants. The original entry was on the west side, but that doorway had been filled in. Two doors had been added, one on the south, the other on the northwest corner. Some original window openings were filled, while others windows had been created. The original locations were known because of the headers remaining in the wall. Only one original window existed on the north wall, but was in dire shape. Above this window was a big crack. The wall bulged badly and the top of the window sagged.

The bricks used as repairs were placed into the original patterns. The front of the Hickman House has a Flemish bond pattern, while the sides and back have a common bond pattern. Perhaps at the time, the Flemish bond was considered a "fancier" pattern, so was placed in front where it would be seen.

Many repairs were made on interior bricks, as well. When electricity was added, a groove was chipped in the bricks to allow cords to run through the-



**Dining room with a four-place seating and period chairs and table.**

*Photo by Don Cullimore*

house. All those bricks were replaced, and new outlets were put in the floor, rather than the walls. The interior walls had many cracks, needing work.

Once brick repairs were done, the house was tuckpointed.

### An Inside Job

Inside, many of the old logs serving as floor joists had weakened over the years due to termite damage. They added 2x10's on either side of each joist to strengthen them, but left all the original joists intact.

Almost 80% of the wood flooring in the 1,800-square-foot house was still usable, requiring them to find only a small number of matching planks. The two rooms on the south had elm floors and the northwest room had a white oak floor. The dining room's floor was of walnut, though the restoration experts think that this was added later. The 8-foot-wide hallway had an overlay of ash flooring, but experts think the original floor wore out, and this was a replacement.

Fortunately, almost all of the original door trim, chair rail and baseboard trim, made of walnut, was still in good shape. They took paint samples and found that originally most rooms were painted white, though one was painted black. Because the original windows had been filled in and frames removed, new window frames and sashes had to be made, to fit the original openings.

The interior walls had been plastered, with the original plaster containing horsehair, as was common at the time. Some plaster repairs were made.

The house originally faced west; many think this is because Fort Hempstead was located only a short distance to the northwest. A road ran from Old Franklin to Fort Hempstead.

### Summer Kitchen

At one time, located just east of the main house was a summer kitchen. An archaeological excavation was done of the summer kitchen back in 1997. Students found a variety of ceramic pieces and other kitchen-related artifacts. All that was left of the actual building was a few limestone foundation stones. Because no bricks were found, nor any pieces of a fireplace or chimney, archaeologists think that the summer kitchen was a frame structure.

The summer kitchen has recently been reconstructed, using limestone foundation stones from the same house site at Davisdale. They put in a concrete foundation, using the limestone stones as a façade to cover it, and built a frame structure, adding cedar siding. The new summer kitchen has two windows and one door.

### Furnishings

The hallway of the restored home is now used as exhibit space, to interpret the history of the Hickman family. Display cases show old photos before restoration, artifacts collected during the process, and articles about the house and Hickman family. The four rooms of the house are furnished in the style of the 1819 period when the house was built, as a showcase of the early pioneer period in mid-Missouri.

Dr. Gene Garrett, a former superintendent, was given the enviable job of furnishing the home with period antiques. Some of these notable furnishings include many walnut pieces such as chairs, tables and an ornate settee. One of his prized finds included a wooden tea box with drawers for the tea leaves, along with a key to lock it. He also found a chest made of American Chestnut, which is situated in the parlor. Two embroidered samplers hang on the wall in the children's room, one over a rope bed.

On loan are two portraits. One located in the parlor is of Thomas Hickman's oldest sister, and another in the adult's bedroom is of Thomas Hickman's niece, Margaret Hutchison Leonard.

In the dining room, part of the floor has been cut away and glass placed over it, so visitors can see the massive floor joists used in the construction of the house.

### Still More to Do

"Although we haven't added period gardens, we have added landscaping around the house. Another plan was to restore the family cemetery [still] in its original location. In the 1950's the cemetery fence had been removed and the headstones taken down to make room for apple orchards. Fortunately the original headstones of Thomas and Sarah and two great grandsons had been securely stored away. They headstones were reset in the original cemetery location. Wrought iron fence was purchased and installed [around the cemetery]. There are still plans to locate outbuildings and possibly recreate one or more.

"We also need restrooms – we'd like to build them as a log cabin, visually in keeping with the period." Glendening adds that while no outbuildings survive, there must have been several, since the Hickmans had slaves. He hopes that additional archaeological excavations will find some of these locations.

### A Hickman Legacy

This home on the hill stands as a lasting legacy to the Hickman family, who represent the hundreds of pioneers who came to this area during the early years of Missouri's history, looking for a place where they could own fertile land and live a prosperous life.

*Freelance writer Sylvia Forbes, a longtime resident of Fayette, now resides in Round Rock, Texas. Members of her family have lived in Missouri and the Boonslick Country since the 1820s. Her last contribution to the Quarterly, "Howard County Residents Recall Christmas During WWII," appeared in the Winter 2019 issue.*



# Gray Ghosts and Ghost Wagons

By Timothy L. Carson

IF YOU TRAVEL FAR ENOUGH OFF THE PAVEMENT in Callaway County, east of Kingdom City where CR 156 turns to gravel, and then follow it until it intersects with St. Charles Road, you find the Old Auxvasse-Nine Mile Presbyterian Church. And right beside the white frame church sits a cemetery that holds headstones from the early 1800s to the Civil War to today.

On the way to the church you may notice some very subtle historical signs, markers for the Gray Ghosts. When I first saw them, I guessed to what they referred and ended up being right: The Gray Ghosts were the Confederate guerilla groups headed by “Bloody Bill” Anderson. They rode those roads, ambushed Union detachments, “hit and run” all through what they referred to as “the war between the states” or “the war of northern aggression.” Or what we might more commonly call “The Civil War.”

For many in these parts that lore and history is often as fresh as just yesterday, especially when repre-

sented by historical reenactors from the area and the Gray Ghosts come riding again. As one of the Auxvasse long-time church members and local keeper of history, Sharon Pierson, puts it, “There are over twenty graves of Confederate soldiers right here in our Cemetery. And the story is told that during the war those women loyal to the Confederacy would come to church dressed in grey (sic) ... and sit on the south side of the sanctuary!”

Why they held such an identification with the Confederacy is no mystery. Callaway County and much of the Missouri River Valley – “Little Dixie” – contained agriculturally based towns populated by slave owners who grew cash crops. Slaves arrived with their owner-settlers when they moved into the Missouri territory after the Louisiana Purchase, surging at the close of the War of 1812 and again following the arrival of Missouri statehood (1821) and the Missouri Compromise in (1820). And where did those settlers come from? [Many] came from the northern tier of southern states – Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Carolinas.

It doesn't take long to notice that pattern when you study the history of those settlers and the places from which they came.<sup>1</sup> Just a sample: “James Tate of Augusta Country, Virginia ... settled in Callaway in 1823; Samuel Grant and his wife Sally Ann Grant, moved from Kentucky in 1818 and settled on the land which is now known as the Samuel Grant farm; Isaac Tate moved from

Green County, Kentucky to Callaway county in 1829; John Henderson moved from Augusta county, Virginia, to Callaway in 1823; Thomas Harrison came from Montgomery county, Virginia, in 1819 and settled in Callaway in what is now called Harrison's Branch.” The list goes on. It is comprised of those with southern identification and appreciation for what would become the Confederacy. The Gray Ghosts would have their support as well as capture the imaginations of their descendants.

The road that the Gray Ghosts travelled lies immediately beside the Auxvasse Church and Cemetery and is one in the same as the Boone's Lick Road. To be exact, it is on the Beta, or second trace of the Boone's Lick Road through Callaway. The Alpha, original, trace veered northwest, angling up toward present day Auxvasse. And the Gamma, or last iteration of the road, left Williamsburg heading southwest through a newly formed Fulton.

According to Sharon Pierson, the church was known as a “burying place” for those who lost family members while in transit on the Boone's Lick Road and preferred to wait to bury their loved ones in a Christian cemetery rather than hastily burying them by the side of the road. A number of unmarked graves and indecipherable headstones of the first quarter of the 19th century reside in the Auxvasse cemetery and bring physical testimony to that story.

In 1823, the above-mentioned James Tate hosted neighbors in his home to form plans for what would become the Auxvasse Presbyterian Church. It was organized on June 1, 1828 and served as the “mother ship” of all Presbyterian churches in the area.

On the 13th of February, 1826, the neighbors met to cut logs to build a church and it was erected on the following day, February 14th. The original log church was a 20' x 26' building. In the middle of the long side was a door. On the opposite long wall was the pulpit with a window behind. There was a window at both of the shorter ends of the building.

An entourage of ministers came to preside during those early years. Echoing the practice of other churches scattered across the country during “the second great awakening” the church hosted a camp meeting in 1832 and a second one in 1833. Services were held three times a day for many days and hundreds came from all the surrounding areas.

The log church was replaced by a brick church in 1840. The



Old Auxvasse-Nine Mile Presbyterian Church. Photo by Timothy Carson

third and final iteration of the church – today’s frame building – was built in 1870. In 1968 the Old Auxvasse and Nine Mile congregations merged into one church, the Old Auxvasse-Nine Mile Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Bill Jessop is the current pastor.

Before I departed Sharon asked, “Would you like to ride with me on my mule down the original trail?” I am completely appreciative of Missouri Mules – the ones with ears and tails – but I was grateful that her mule was the motorized, four-wheel version. We hopped in and away we went, moving eastward down the road until the gravel ended and nothing remained but the original tracks and swales.

As we moved through a grove of trees, our wheels followed the original tracks of the trace, the rocks little disturbed after two-hundred years. I thought of those who first crossed the Boone’s Lick Road with such hope, ambition, grit, determination and even piety. They left home and family behind. Some buried their dead on the way. Others ran Taverns, operated ferries, founded churches, homesteaded, and created a new life for their descendants. A few picked up again and traveled on to points west, outrunning debts, pursuing their fortune, or looking for spaces even less crowded. And later still, war traveled up and down the very same trail.

As my 21st-century mule traveled that same pathway, I imagined the many apparitions of the past still making their appearances, mirages passing us by on horseback, on foot, in wagons, a peculiar communion of saints and sinners on the move, the ones who came before us until they finally passed into the mists of history.

END NOTE

1. *The History of Callaway County, Missouri*, published by National Historical Company, 1884, and the Presbyterian church record, "Men of the Auxvasse Church who Lived and Died between 1861 and 1911."

## Central Museum of History

The Central Museum of History opened its doors in the fall of 2018. Its mission is focused specifically on preserving and interpreting the history of Central Methodist University, the City of Fayette, and Missouri Methodism. The museum’s curator is Dr. Robert Wieggers, CMU professor of history. The museum is located in T. Berry Smith Hall.

Many may remember the name Stephens Museum. The Stephens Museum, which includes Central’s vast natural history collection, has been moved to the lower level of the Stedman Hall of Science. It is undergoing renovation and will be reopened in the near future.

The Central Museum of History has a large permanent display area with such favorites as the Boone Stones (grave markers of Daniel Boone and his wife, Rebecca), the Jordan Coller Collection of Civil War Artifacts, and the World War II-era gyro compass similar to those used on Navy ships. In addition, there is a large display of marching band instruments and uniforms of the past.

The museum also has a growing collection of Central athletics artifacts, including a 1922 leather football helmet worn by alumnus Joe McClintic, a fabric football jersey from 1943, and a

*Timothy Carson lives in Rocheport, Missouri. A retired pastor, he continues to write, teach, play his Irish Tin Whistle, and ride his mechanical horse. Tim is a native Missourian, a descendent of Kit Carson, and continues to enjoy anything having to do with the Boone’s Lick Road and Santa Fe Trail.*



**Timothy Carson’s host, Sharon Pierson, standing on the Boone’s Lick Road. This section is on the Beta, or second trace, of the Boone’s Lick Road through Callaway.** Photo by Timothy Carson

plethora of items from the 100-plus years of Central basketball.

For more information about the CMU Museum of History (listings of traveling and temporary collections on display), go to the CMU website: [www.centralmethodist.edu](http://www.centralmethodist.edu) and look for “Campus Attractions” under the “About CMU” tab.



**Manikins dressed in the uniforms of the Confederate (left) and Union soldiers. Formerly part of the Stephens Museum of Natural History collection, they are now part of the CMU Museum of History collection. The Union soldier is currently on display; the other manikin is in storage.** Photos by Don Cullimore



# The Cholera Epidemic of 1849 in Arrow Rock and the Boonslick

By Michael Dickey

A WIDESPREAD DISEASE IN 19TH-CENTURY America was Asiatic cholera. Endemic to India, it first appeared in the United States in 1832. In 1844, Dr. John Sappington wrote, "This disease has carried terror and desolation wherever it has gone, perhaps more than any other disease."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sappington said the disease first appeared in Howard County in 1833 about 8 or 10 miles below Arrow Rock. Once it was ascertained to be cholera, residents fled to Saline County and "encamped, panic-struck, as if an all-devouring demon had visited them...A general consternation and panic now overspread the land." In 1835 the disease reappeared, this time in Arrow Rock, infecting 18 people but only killing one.<sup>2</sup> The disease causes severe diarrhea and vomiting resulting in fluid loss. In the last stages, patients can actually turned blue. Asphyxiation occurred because dehydration caused blood to thicken and cells were unable to exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen. Death could

six hours.<sup>8</sup> The *Glasgow Weekly Times* edition of July 12, reported that physicians in Arrow Rock "had advised the inhabitants to abandon the place."<sup>9</sup>

The high mortality rate in Arrow Rock resulted in a report by Dr. Joseph Hutchinson, published in the "St. Louis Medical and Surgical Journal" in 1853.

[From] "A Report on Malignant Cholera, as it prevailed in Saline County, Mo. By JOSEPH C. HUTCHISON, M. D."

"My inquiry will be confined chiefly to what I saw of cholera, as it existed in Arrow Rock and its vicinity, where alone the disease prevailed as an epidemic, in Saline county; a few sporadic cases only having occurred in other parts of the county.

"Previous to the development of cholera, in 1849, Arrow Rock was remarkable for its salubrity. A death from any cause was comparatively rare. Cases of intermittent and remittent fevers occurred annually, though with less frequency and virulence than in the swampy bottom lying east and south-east, or in the country immediately adjoining...

"Health of the Country previous to the Development of Cholera.— The winter of 1848 and '49, and until the ensuing March, was unusually healthy, with the exception of an epidemic influenza, which appeared in December, 1848, and continued several weeks, few persons entirely escaping...In the latter part of March, 1849, diarrhoea appeared, and soon became very prevalent, attended with general lassitude, abdominal pains, and borborygmi; the latter symptom was often present without pain or diarrhoea, and was so universally prevalent as to salute the ear in every crowd. No other disease prevailed after the cholera epidemic commenced...

"The first case of malignant cholera, originating at Arrow Rock, occurred on 13th April, 1849. The victim was a married man, age thirty-five, of intemperate habits, who was engaged in steering a ferry-boat across the river at this place. This case offered the usual symptoms of vomiting and purging of a fluid analogous to rice water, with cramps, &c.; was considered convalescent from the disease in two or three days by the attending physician, Dr. Wm. Price, (who, I may remark, was perfectly familiar with cholera, having witnessed the former epidemic), when pectoral symptoms were developed in a severe form, under which he succumbed on the fifth day. He had mild diarrhoea for a few days preceding the attack, which was probably ascribed to the use of river water, and on the day previous had eaten and drank immoderately with some friends who were starting to California. No other case occurred in this family, which consisted of several members.<sup>10</sup>

"The disease continued to scourge several families and then abated. As the number of cases declined a sense of security returned to the community;

"...the business of the mechanic, the merchant, and the fanner, which had been suspended, resumed its wanted activity, and all hearts were exulting in the confident hope that the fury of the tornado had been exchanged for the gentleness of the summer zephyr. But a fortnight had scarcely elapsed, ere the "insidious destroyer," who, it would seem, was only recuperating his energies for a more terrible onslaught, burst forth with increased violence."<sup>11</sup>

Hutchinson reported there were about 100 cases. At this time

## CHOLERA!

Published by order of the Sanatory Committee, under the sanction of the Medical Counsel.

### BE TEMPERATE IN EATING & DRINKING!

*Avoid Raw Vegetables and Unripe Fruit !.*

**Abstain from COLD WATER, when heated, and above all from Ardent Spirits, and if habit have rendered them indispensable, take much less than usual.**

### SLEEP AND CLOTHE WARM !

**DO NOT SLEEP OR SIT IN A DRAUGHT OF AIR, Avoid getting Wet !**

**Attend immediately to all disorders of the Bowels.**

**TAKE NO MEDICINE WITHOUT ADVICE.**

occur within days or even hours of infection.<sup>3</sup>

Cholera reappeared in the spring of 1849. The new epidemic was so virulent that between 4,000 and 6,000 people died in St. Louis alone. Steamboat passengers carried it to the Boonslick Country.<sup>4</sup> "Farmers...feared to visit the towns, even to procure family supplies or medical attendance. When they came in, they would ride up to the front of a store, call for what they wanted, receive it, and without dismounting, gallop hastily away."<sup>5</sup> In June of 1849, the Town Board of Arrow Rock exhorted its citizens to keep their premises clean, "especially during the prevalence of cholera among us." Sick passengers disembarking from steamboats were immediately placed in quarantine.<sup>6</sup> Among those who died was Dr. Burrell Thompson who had graduated from the St. Louis Medical College in 1848.<sup>7</sup> According to a Thompson family tradition, the J. Huston Tavern was converted into a makeshift hospital for cholera victims. Dr. Thompson contracted the disease while treating patients there and died within in the space of about

Arrow Rock had a population of about 275, making the infection rate 27.5%. There were 33 deaths; making the mortality rate from infection 33%. So within the space of about four months 12% of the town's population died from cholera. This exceeded St. Louis's per capita mortality rate by 1.7%. Of the fatal cases, sixteen were males, eleven were white and five were black. Seventeen were females, nine white and eight black. Age demographics were as follows:

- Under 2 years of age - 1
- Between 2 and 10 - 5
- Between 10 and 20 - 7
- Between 20 and 45 - 16
- Between 45 and 65 - 4

Dr. Hutchinson reported that Boonville and Glasgow had no cases of cholera except among a few passengers discharged from steamboats. He learned from Dr. J. A. Lewis, that a cholera epidemic struck Glasgow in the summer of 1851. He attributed this to more steamboat landings occurring at Glasgow than at Arrow Rock. It was well known that cholera often first appeared on steamboat passengers. However, they believed that the patients contracted the cholera from miasma, a noxious form of "foul air." The theory held that miasma emanated from rotting organic matter as was common in swamps and river bottoms.<sup>12</sup> The proximity of towns to alluvial river bottoms combined with the direction of prevailing winds were believed to determine the severity of cholera outbreaks. Brunswick and Waverly also experienced violent cholera outbreaks in 1849. Dr. Hutchinson postulated that the "medical topography" of Arrow Rock, Brunswick and Waverly was more conducive to miasma and the spread of cholera than to Glasgow or Boonville.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Hardin M. Weatherford of Louisville, Kentucky, published *A Treatise on Cholera* in 1833. His treatments were often followed in the western states. He recommended "alkalies taken into the stomach...soda and tartaric acids...a grain of opium."<sup>14</sup> If the disease worsened, Port wine and more opium could follow the "soda and effervescing draught."<sup>15</sup> A worsening patient was to be given cayenne pepper and French brandy. Hot mustard plasters, which was ground mustard rolled into a flour paste, were placed on the pit of the stomach. If all else failed, more opium could be given generously.

Some physicians administered calomel, (mercurous chloride). A Dr. Johnson in 1840 advised "give Calomel, if that will not help, double and treble the dose of Calomel. If the patient recovers, Calomel cured him; if he dies, nothing in the world could have saved him."<sup>16</sup> Repeated doses of calomel led to a build-up of mercury in the brain, liver and kidneys resulting in memory loss, loss of vision, difficulty walking, tremors and ultimately death.<sup>17</sup> Patients rightfully often feared doctors and their treatments more than the disease.

Cholera actually resulted from bacterial contamination of food but especially water sources from infected human feces. British physician Dr. John Snow was able to demonstrate that a public water pump, not miasma, was ground zero for a cholera epidemic raging in London in 1854. When the pump was closed, the disease abated.<sup>18</sup> In 1883 German microbiologist Robert Koch, demonstrated that the bacteria *Vibrio cholera* in the small intes-

tines caused the disease. Italian microbiologist Filippo Pacini had identified the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae* in 1854, but his work was largely ignored.<sup>19</sup>

Many doctors did not abandon the miasma theory until the research of pioneering German microbiologist Dr. Robert Koch was published in the 1880s.<sup>20</sup> Although the miasma theory was wrong, it did make a connection between sanitation and the disease. As medical knowledge advanced, cholera increasingly became a disease relegated to underdeveloped nations. Today cholera is imminently treatable and survivable with antibiotics and hydration.

*Michael Dickey is administrator of the Arrow Rock, Sappington Cemetery, and Boone's Lick State Historic Sites in Saline and Howard counties, a position he has held with the Missouri State Parks Division of the Department of Natural Resources since 1986. Dickey also researches and interprets cultural themes of the central Missouri region historically known as the "Boonslick Country." He holds a bachelor's degree in art history, from the University of Central Missouri. He is the author of Arrow Rock: Crossroads of the Missouri Frontier (Friends of Arrow Rock Inc., 2004). Information in this article also appeared in the book*

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## Delayed Issue of Magazine

This issue of *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly* was scheduled for publication in June. Unfortunately, a technological gremlin brought editorial production to a halt. The hard drive – the most critical part – of the editor's computer failed. Several attempts to repair it were unsuccessful and it was necessary to invest in a new computer.

The next step was to attempt to retrieve digital files (text and images, programs, etc.) from the deceased hard drive—often an exercise in futility. But thanks to Modern Technologies Computer Service in Jefferson City, a retrieval of all files was achieved. Once this was accomplished, the “architecture” of the computer files had to be reestablished and all software (word processing, graphics, scanning programs and printers, etc.) reloaded.

The last road block was the result of our “planned obsolescence” marketing economy: a several-year-old wide-screen color monitor would not work with the new computer: the interface (cable connections) between monitor and computer had been redesigned. A new widescreen color monitor had to be purchased.

We regret that this complex resurrection of the editorial computer system took so long. We sincerely hope our readers do not experience a similar time-consuming and expensive situation.—  
*The Editor*

## Traveling in Boone County in the 1820s Exhibit Opens in Columbia

A special exhibition, "Traveling in Boone County in the 1820s," opened to the public June 18 at the Boone County History and Culture Center, after an interruption due to the coronavirus. It is being presented by the Boone's Lick Road Association in commemoration of Boone County's Bicentennial Project this year. The exhibit focuses on travel in Boone County two hundred years ago. It is expected to be at the Center until mid-November. Along with historic cultural items, the exhibition illustrates the important roles played by the Boone's Lick Road and the Missouri River in the settlement of Central Missouri and Western migration during the 19th century. It is expected to be at the Center until mid-November.

Included in the exhibition are maps and stories of the Boone's Lick Road, artifacts dug up on one of the earliest settlement sites at Thrall's Prairie in Northwest Boone County, a full-scale covered wagon, and wonderful images of transportation methods on the early Missouri River.

The project is supported with a \$1,000 grant from the Boone Electric Community Trust.

The exhibit is curated by David Sapp with professional-level graphic design by Greg Olson. Boone Commissioner Janet Thompson, Lisa Heffernan Weil, Bill and Judy Heffernan, Sheldon and Janet Toepke, Nancy Thomas, Tim Carson, Matt Harris and the Gary Lucy Studio in Washington, Missouri, all joined with support in the form of loans of items, time and money to make the project a reality. The largest item included is a covered wagon.

“Stop by the Boone County History and Culture Center and enjoy our contribution to the county's bicentennial,” David Sapp urges. Beginning June 18, the Center will be open each Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. It will be reserved for seniors over the age of 60 and other high-risk individuals between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. each day. Patrons of all ages will be welcome between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. each afternoon. Procedures will be in place to protect patrons, staff and volunteers.



A visitors to Boone County History and Cultural Center views covered wagon and artifacts related to travel methods in Boone County during the early 19th century. The exhibition is sponsored by the Boone's Lick Road Association. Photo by Don Cullimore

## BHS 2020 Member Fees Now Past Due

Boonslick Historical Society annual membership fees for calendar year 2020 are now past due. The dues year is January through December. Membership dues are \$15-Individual, \$25-Family, \$50-Sponsor, \$250-Patron, and \$500-Life.

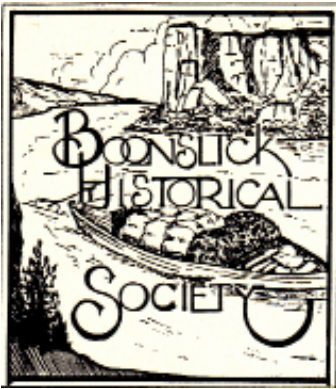
If you are not already a BHS member and wish to join, send a check made out to the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233. You will receive our publication, *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly*, and be able to attend annual Society events highlighting the region's history.

### From the Fayette Intelligencer

February 8, 1827

Lost – on January 23 in or near Franklin, a pair of saddlebags containing 38 dollars in specie, together with various articles. The finder will be liberally rewarded by leaving them with James M. Samuel, Esq., of Franklin or returning them to the subscriber.—From Bill Clark's online Local History Column





P.O. Box 426  
Boonville, MO 65233



### **Important Information About BHS Events**

To members and friends of the Boonslick Historical Society, for reasons of public health and safety related to the pandemic coronavirus (COVID-19), we, of course, canceled the July 12 Summer BHS meeting that was scheduled to be held at Oakwood (circa 1835-36), the historic home of Abiel and Jeanette Leonard and their family in Fayette. No plans have been made at this time for a fall meeting and banquet. We hope we will be able to reschedule a visit to Oakwood next year. For further information, contact BHS President Jim Steele at: [jsteele@woodcreekmedia.com](mailto:jsteele@woodcreekmedia.com). Let us hope for strength and unity during these trying times, and please do everything possible to stay well during the days and weeks to come —*Jim Steele and the BHS Board of Directors*