

# THE HERITAGE NEWS

Issue 20

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October, 1999

## EXERPTS FROM OLD SETTLER MINUTES OF SEPT. 10, 1898 AT KIMMSWICK, MISSOURI

President:	Rebecca Gagnon
Vice-President:	Lisa Thompson
Secretary-Treasurer:	Betty Olson
Newsletter Editor:	Lisa Thompson

The afternoon session was called at 1:45 in the great dining hall, after all had finished dinner. After some stirring music by the band, Judge John Thomas gave an excellent address on 'The Progress of Jefferson Co. and Southeast Mo., the Past Fifty Years.' He claimed the reunion being held at Kimmswick was extraordinary for the reason that just across the great Mississippi River lies the state of Illinois, which had long been U.S. soil, while on this side of the river where the reunion was held, only 95 years ago this territory belonged to Spain, and in our midst was James Irvine who being 98, was 3 yrs. old when this very land where Montesano Park is situated was Spanish Territory, and that it is remarkable that within the present year we have acquired much territory from the same source.

Among other things stated, he gave the origin of "King's Trace," a road laid out from St. Louis to New Madrid 122 yrs. ago by John Baptiste Gamache. For this the King of Spain gave him a tract of 850 acres of land lying at the mouth of the Meramac River. That road is not a mile from Kimmswick.

But now leaving the more ancient events, and coming within the topic of his subject, our progress the past 50 yrs., he could recall from experience, many happenings from 50 yrs. gone.

Fifty years ago he lived on Big River in a little log cabin. Then there was not a newspaper published in Southeast Mo nearer than New Madrid. We waited four weeks for election returns. The population in Jefferson Co. in 1850 was 9,000, now it is between 25,000 and 30,000. Kimmswick, Pevely, Hematite, Festus, DeSoto were not in existence 50 years ago. There was a landing at Sulphur Springs. He gave many reminisces of 50 yrs. ago, among them the methods of going to mill, of blacksmithing, foraging, the kinds of artificial light, the means of education, the construction of schoolhouses in the woods, quill pens vs. steel pens, etc. He took a peek into the log cabin - two spinning wheels, a big and a little one; a big, wide fireplace and a hot fire at night---mother and girls sewing, the boys shelling corn on a quilt for the mill next day, the smaller children parching corn by the fire, etc. He made mention of enterprises that had lived and died; iron furnace of Windsor Harbor, Iron Mountain and Pilot Knob all gone. Tiff factory at Vineland and the Frumet Mines have shut down. In their stead we have railroads, rock roads, Crystal Plate Glass Co.'s Works, DeSoto with her factories, Festus reclaimed from the woods. All within 25 years and all these here in our own County.

Changes socially and morally were dwelt upon and those points exhausted. At the conclusion of the Judge's address, the band played "Home Sweet Home" with variations.

## The Progress of Railroad Depots

*In the early days of the railroad many Jefferson County towns attributed their success or failure to the Iron Mountain Railroad. Railroad station depots enjoyed prosperity for several decades, but a changing world and modern transportation soon left many of these once prosperous towns behind. The following articles shows the progress of some of these towns in 1866.*

(Reprinted from the Leader, Jan. 4, 1867)

### Victoria

Victoria is fully keeping pace with other railroad stations, and assuming the orderly shape of a thriving town. The improvements are generally of permanent character, and the buildings neatly furnished. Mitchell's Victoria House is the second hotel in this county and is kept in the most orderly and comfortable manner. During the year of 1866, there were erected at Victoria the following new buildings:

*Fishback dwelling, cost \$1,500; Jennings dwelling cost \$1000 and Drug Store building cost \$400.*

#### Business Statistics

Oscar Dover sales merchandise	- \$5000
J. Castelle -	2,500
F.M. Jennings-sales drugs and fancy goods - 6 months	3,000

B. Honey and Chas. Vinyard have each shipped and sold large quantities of wood. Five hundred and fifty cars of wood have been shipped from Victoria during the past year.

Value of fruit shipped at Victoria, \$5000.  
Charges on freight received, \$2000.

The demand for Victoria property is rapidly increasing. The success of the orchards is attracting much attention, and the fruit business will be considerably increased.

C.H. Bissett's saw mill is doing a good business, which is rapidly increasing. The new year will witness the introduction of a wool carding machine, and thus commence the manufacture of woollen goods and initiate an enterprise which may lead to great and good results.

Victoria possesses one of the best sites for a town existing on this Railroad. It is provided with a good school house and a church building will probably be erected in the ensuing year. The County Horticultural Society holds its monthly meetings and keeps its library there. Other indications point to a prosperous new year for Victoria.

### Tyro

(Tyro was renamed Vineland in 1867)

No attempt has been made, we believe, to lay off a town plat at Tyro, although a village will crowd in perhaps without one. Two stores are now doing a good business, and a good schoolhouse, costing \$1200, is nearly completed.

The great success of the orchards and vineyards of Messrs. Dr. Dyer, Judge Newcomb and D.W. Morse has attracted much attention to this neighborhood. Mr. Morse sold fruit the past season to the amount of \$3000. Mr. Bowen's nursery has met with success and he has prepared an additional forty acres for young fruit. His sales and orders on hand are 20,000 peach trees. 6,000 apple trees and 15,000 grape vines.

No statistics were available for the freighting business, but traffic has largely increased during the past year.

### Hanover.

Two good stores are in operation at this point, whose sales together amount to nearly \$25,000 (?) per year.

During the wood shipping season, 45 cars of wood are shipped per month. About 800

bushels of wheat and 500 bushels of corn have been shipped this year. The average amount of R. R. charges for freight forwarded each month is \$200. Passenger fares amount to \$220 per month.

Work has commenced on a building intended for a Masonic Hall and schoolhouse to cost \$3000.

### Pevely

This pleasant village has considerably increased its business in the past year. Property in the neighborhood has increased in value, and new citizens of character and means are purchasing homes.

Mr. Geo. Pegram, the steamboat man of St. Louis, and Mr. Foster, the publisher of the Jefferson City State Times, have purchased adjacent farms just northwest of Pevely and will enter into the cultivation of fruit.

#### Business Statistics:

<i>Railroad earnings for freight -</i>	\$5,221.22
<i>ditto received</i>	935.03
<i>Passengers-</i>	<u>2,401.95</u>
<i>Total</i>	\$8558.20
<i>Increase over 1865</i>	\$1001.50

The shipments of freight include 2,590 cords of wood, 2,380 bushels of wheat, 150 bu. oats, 415 bu. corn, 553 bu. potatoes, 6 cords staves, 25 tons of hay, 87 head of livestock, 819 flour barrels, 2,000 lbs. butter, 3,000 lbs. cheese, several thousand fruit trees, etc. These exports are valued at \$24,000.

Pevely contains about one hundred inhabitants; one good store; one hotel; boarding house; blacksmith shop; wagon shop; tailor shop; shoemaker; stone mason, and two saloons.

Another hotel is in process of building and considerable is said about building a new school.

### Hematite

Hematite is still the outlet for the majority of the Platin trade. Its buildings and population have doubled in number in 1866.

#### New Buildings

<i>Jas, England, value -</i>	\$1,500
<i>R.R. depot</i>	1,000
<i>Dr. Wyatt's</i>	650
<i>Sam'l T. Aiken</i>	800
<i>J.B. Dover</i>	1000
<i>Davis Williams</i>	250
<i>Thos. Williams</i>	200
<i>R. Whitehead</i>	200

#### Business Statistics

<i>Donnell's sales, 3 mos. -</i>	\$4000
<i>J. England's, 3 mos.</i>	2000
<i>W.F. Osborn, 5 mos.-</i>	<u>3000</u>
<i>Total</i>	\$9000
<i>England's store sales -</i>	\$20,000
<i>W.F. Osborn, wood sales -</i>	400

There are also two blacksmith and wagon shops, and two groceries. R.R. charges on freight forwarded, \$6000.

### Sulphur Springs

The only additional buildings in 1866 were the Presbyterian Church, cost \$2,500 and Brolaski's building, \$1000.

Half a million staves have been manufactured and shipped from here, besides nearly 5,000 barrels of lime and 300 cars of wood. Other business statistics are as follows:

<i>H.M. Parker, sales merchandise, lime and wood -</i>	\$12,000
<i>M.W. Green - sales merc.-</i>	4,000
<i>Scholler &amp; Gier -</i>	2,500
<i>Burgess, wood -</i>	2,500
<i>Widmer's Saloon -</i>	2,000

Burgess & Smith will cut one thousand cords of wood for market this winter. Parker is preparing to ship immense quantities of his "White Rose Lime" to the South this Spring. John O'Fallon is carrying on the stave factory.

## Kimmswick

Kimmswick begins to wear the appearance of a business town. So many of the buildings are of brick, and all being of good size, the whole place looks substantial and permanent. Most of the persons settling there are Germans, and they are determined that industry shall make up for any lack of capital that may exist. There are now in Kimmswick three stores, two or three groceries, two hotels, (we believe) two blacksmiths, a drug store, a boot and shoe shop, a brewery, new brick schoolhouse, butcher shop, brick yard, besides several residences.

The following comprise the **new buildings**:

Brewery, Myer & Co. - value -	\$6000
Hotel (by Robert Hunt)	2000
School house	1000
Butcher Shop & dwelling	1000
Saloon, Geo. Seeman	1400
Blacksmith shop, J. Fink	400
Wagon Shop, Isidor Ertling	400
Store (kept by F.D. Waters)	800
Saloon, H.L. Myer	500

### Business Statistics:

F. Luchtemeyer, sales -	\$35000
A. Shocker, butcher	5000
Geo. Seeman, saloon	4000

Bruhn & Anderson - 25,000 bu. of grain  
Bricks manufactured - 320,000  
(Luchtemeyer & Seeman)

Lager beer manufactured - 1500 bbls.  
(Myer & Co.)

Charges on R.R. freight forwarded	\$5000
Charges of freight received -	2000
Tickets sold (value) -	2400

## DeSoto

The year 1866 has been a era of marked prosperity for DeSoto. At least fifty percent has been added to the population.; the value of its property has at least trebled. Exact comparison can only be made in the matter of railroad earnings.

Freight on goods forwarded -	\$5876.92
On goods received -	16428.19
Passenger fares -	<u>4836.70</u>
Total -	\$27141.81

(The total doubled from the previous year)

### Business Statistics:

L.J. Rankin, merchandise (6 mos.)	\$14000
ditto      lumber	1000
Rankin & Donnell	24000
ditto      lumber-	1500
B. Cohen, merchandise,	40,000
Knorpp & Co.      "	20,000
H.S. Reppy      "	12000
DeSoto Bakery      "	5000
Cady & Burroughs      " 9 mos.	4000
W.L. Smith, hardware, lumber	5000
Hamel & Bro. Saddles, etc.	7200
Kruse & Co., druggists -	7000
Euler's City Mill -	8000
H. Rolfing, boots & shoes -	3000
I. Zollman -	<u>2500</u>
Total -	\$154,000

New Buildings - Cost 29,350

A year ago the population was estimated at 400. Now we can count 118 families, averaging six persons per family, showing a population of 708.

Prosperity has caused a general improvement of old buildings and the enlargement of small ones. Energetic persons are pressing the educational interests, and a fine two-story schoolhouse will soon be built.



## Organization of the Jefferson County Emigration Society

By Della Lang

"On Monday January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1866, in accordance with the call published in the Leader, a large assemblage of citizens met at the Court House, Hillsboro, for the purpose of organizing a County Emigration Society. On motion, Hon. Phillip Pipkin was chosen as Chairman, and Charles Clark, Secretary."

The objective of this organization was to promote emigration into this county.

Mr. Pipkin addressed the meeting, and on a motion appointed C.A. Clark, C.H. Bissett and Adolf Weber, as the committee to draft a constitution.

While the committee was in another room drafting the constitution, certain people were called upon to come forward and say a few words. John L. Thomas came forward and addressed the necessity of emigrants finding a home in Jefferson County, and the importance of better roads to bring them to the county. Col. J.W. Fletcher spoke in regard to the profits of cider making, peach culture, etc., which could be an attraction to newcomers.

John H. Morse got up to speak, saying that it was important to induce settlers to buy and cultivate the neglected soil of this county, and to promote its improvement and development. Everyone agreed. But Morse suddenly digressed into one of his typical political speeches, questioning the honesty of Gov. Thomas Fletcher. Morse and Fletcher were political enemies.

Col. J. W. Fletcher, the governor's brother, arose to remark that if Morse said Tom Fletcher had ever stolen a dollar of public money, he was a liar, and he would thrash him then and there. Morse kept talking and Col. Fletcher went after Morse several times, but the crowd restrained him.

The Chairman apologized for allowing Morse to speak, and said he had not expected a *party* speech. Morse attempted a feeble apology and the meeting continued.

Politics aside, the constitution was adopted and the following officers were elected:

President - John L. Thomas  
Secretary - Charles A. Clark  
Treasurer - R.W. McMullin

### Directors

Kimmswick -	Theo. Kimm
Sulphur Springs -	Jas. Burgess Jr.
Pevely -	D.W. Bryant
Hanover -	C. G. Warne
Hematite -	Wm. S. Vose
Victoria -	J. Geo. Rapp
DeSoto -	J.W. Fletcher
Tyro -	W.F. Bowen
Avoca -	John Cole
Plattin -	E.F. Donnell
Morse's Mill -	H.F. Dittmer
Grubville -	E.F. Frost
House's Springs -	Adolf Weber
High Ridge -	Isaac Sullins
Hillsboro -	E. Amor

The society remained active for a number of years, focusing on ways to attract newcomers to Jefferson County. They published information in St. Louis, St. Louis County and often in other states, hoping to entice new emigrants to settle in the county. John L. Thomas became a tireless representative of the society, often traveling to other cities to promote Jefferson County.

Thomas was still selling Jefferson County when he prepared a report for the Immigration Convention at St. Louis on April 14, 1880. Since his report is too lengthy to reprint, I've taken the privilege of reprinting the following page of excerpts:

### Selling Jefferson County - 1880

"Owing to the elevated situation of the county, it is one of the healthiest places to be found anywhere. It is far enough north to be out of the reach of pestilential and malarial fevers, and far enough south to be out of the extreme cold."

"There are two sulphur springs in the county - one at Kimmswick and one at Sulphur Springs - the curative powers of which are said to be as good as any in the world."

"Perfect freedom of thought and worship prevails among the whole people, who are liberal in the all important subject of religion... There are seventy-seven good substantial public schools in the county."

"We have two excellent gravel roads extending from the city of St. Louis nearly through the county. The Iron Mountain Railroad and these two roads run parallel with each other from St. Louis through this county at about the distance from each other of five miles... Indeed Jefferson County is nothing less than a suburb of the great city of St. Louis."

"It is estimated that three-fourths of the county is arable land, the balance is unfit for cultivation but produces an abundance of pasture grasses, and especially blue grass. The valleys along the streams have a very deep black loam, which is practically inexhaustible by tillage. Wheat, oats, corn, hay, clover, broom corn, Irish and sweet potatoes, tobacco and sorghum are chief productions of the county."

"There are six steam and water flouring mills in the county. These mills grind a large portion of the wheat raised in the county. The

Crystal City Plate Glass Co., the railroad machine shops at DeSoto and the iron foundry at Windsor Harbor employs many hands... The quantity of water and the abundance of timber provides excellent sites for water-powered and steam-powered manufacturies. Woolen and cotton mills, and factories for the manufacture of plows, wagons, barrels, harrows and all kinds of agricultural implements could be established, and made to pay good dividends."

"Lead and zinc ore are the only metals yet mined in paying quantities. There are, however, large deposits of Hematite iron ore and sulphur. The Valle Mines and the mines of Frumet have been worked for over fifty years and have yielded vast quantities of lead and zinc ore. The Sandy Mines is also yielding much ore. With all the lead deposits, the *bald tiff* or barytes is found in paying quantities. The lead ore is smelted at home, but the zinc ore is shipped to the Carondelet furnaces for reduction. We also have a white clay, known as *ball clay*, on Belew's Creek. This clay is being mined and shipped to Pittsburgh to be manufactured into *Queensware*, and other articles for use. Other clay for use in making bricks is also found here... and limestone of the best quality for building purposes, is found in abundance."

"The population of our county is now estimated at 20,000... We have room for a hundred thousand people... so come and take up your abodes among us. Men with capital, and men with strong skillful muscles and willing hearts are cordially invited to come and live in our midst. We appeal to the dairyman, the stock-raiser, the manufacturer, the farmer, the mechanic, the skilled artisan, for we confidently believe they can all find a fair and remunerative return for their labor and capital."

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## DID THE MOON SHINE IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

By Dave Hallemann

As I sit here writing this story I look out the window of my office, and notice the light of the shining moon can be seen in the field in front of my home. However this story is about another kind of "Moonshine", the kind that can be "chugged".

Let me start at the beginning. Sometime ago a "fellow historian" Norma Hoelzel called me to obtain some historical information for her book on Valles Mines she is putting together. I was invited to accompany Norma and her husband Charlie on an interview.

Norma asked me if I had ever heard of a large "Moonshine" operation in the Valles Mines area. She had learned of this "operation" by talking to neighbors in the vicinity who were children in the 20s and can attest to remembering the smell of the "process" on a hot summer day in their youth. I must admit this perked me up. From time to time you hear people "whisper" under their breath about a "still" so-and-so had out back during prohibition. I had never heard of a large scale operation. However it made sense that such an enterprise could be around in the 20's.

Norma was put in contact with property owners in the Valles Mines area where legend has it such an operation supposedly did occur, and the remnant of large vats used in the distilling operation were still to be seen on their property. Norma and Charlie were going to visit this owner and asked me if I would like to come along. I don't have to tell you how honored I was to be invited.

After a trip over country roads

we met at the beautiful home of the landowner, and his wife (names withheld upon request). I was invited into the spacious living room to a table where Norma and Charlie were already talking. After I was introduced, we all started talking history.

The conversation progressed to the beautiful house we were in. Our hosts are justly proud of this wonderful home and explained that the property was a camp a few decades ago, reportedly supported at one time by large St. Louis companies, and the home was the dining hall for the camp. It has been extensively remodeled.

We were next asked if we were ready to see the "vats". We exited the house and "hopped" into a Jeep. We proceeded to cross Joachim Creek and follow the fields toward the back of the property.

Shortly our host stopped and we all got out of the Jeep. I looked around but did not notice anything in particular. As we walked across the field concrete structures started to come into view just inside the woods at the bottom of a hill.

The "Moonshine Vats" were five in number. They were in a straight line with about 10 feet between each one, about 10 feet deep, and about 15 feet in circumference. They were constructed by digging a hole into the ground and lining the walls with chicken wire. Next taking concrete and smearing or "stuccoing" it into the wire much like you would do with plaster. Then concrete was poured into the bottom to finish the vat.

I must admit that this was not at all what I expected. We have all seen stills in movies and they are metal containers that the corn mash was loaded into, a fire set underneath to cook the contents, and a coil of copper tubing at

the top for the condensation to collect in to bring the "hooch" to the jar. This is what I was expecting. I was trying to envision why the moonshiners dug a hole and built a concrete vat to build a fire in. After all my experience was always on the other end of the "jar".

As we were talking, I was back in the classroom. I learned that the vat was filled with water, the corn and sugar was added, and the "brew" allowed to ferment for a specific period of time to turn into mash. Periodically this would be stirred with a paddle. Next the mash was taken and put in the metal still with the fire underneath. So this is what the vats were constructed for, if the legends are true.

Another ingredient that is needed to run a still is good clean water. Again this was available about 50 yards from the vats. Joachim Creek in this area, starts as a big "artesian" spring about 200 yards past the back property line. "Swashin' Creek" as the French called it runs clear and cool with reeds growing along its banks and minnows swimming in it pools. Corn could be readily obtained from farms in the area, and sugar obtained at nearby Valles Mines general store.

This area is near the old Highway 67, the one before the present modern highway. Charlie remembers in the 40s this road was concrete, as it was the major north-south road in the eastern part of the county. It also could be used to ship the "white lightning" to market.

So where were the stills? As we were talking we came to the conclusion that after prohibition the need for such an operation would no longer be necessary. The large distilleries could now legally produce liquor in sufficient quantity to satisfy the needs of the area. The "stills being made of copper and no

longer needed were probably sold as scrap metal to recover some of their value.

So all the elements were here and I was becoming convinced, however could this possibly be something else?

The owner told us how neighbors thought it was grain silos. This I doubt. The walls of the vats are only about 2 inches thick. It would be impossible to support a silo on a foundation this narrow. Charlie and the owner were both raised on farms and they could not come up with any other purpose for them.

The only guess I could suggest was that maybe the vats were some kind of leeching tanks used in the mining operations at Valles Mines. This however does not fit. Valles Mines never owned this tract. They do own the property adjoining this piece. So if they needed tanks they would have built them on their property. We loaded into the Jeep and proceeded toward the back of the property.

The next stop was to show us what are reported to be "guard stands" in the trees south of the vats. It is the belief of one individual that the place was heavily guarded and run by a group that had the "power" to be left alone. There are two stands on opposite sides of the narrow valley in this location. They look like modern day tree stands used by deer hunters, with wooden boards nailed to the tree to create a platform for someone to sit on. Up in the air wood will last a long time, this wood was well rotted and the tree was growing around some areas where the boards were nailed. 70 to 80 years is a long time and I don't think the wood is that old. To me they look like semi modern deer hunting tree stands. Maybe 20-30 years old but who knows. One long time resident of the area who

supposedly knew of the operation from information given by family members who lived nearby, placed the time period after prohibition around the late 1930s early 1940s. According to this source the still only lasted a short time before they were "asked" to leave. ( See Valles Mines by Norma Hoelzel for more information.

We returned to the house and had a much-needed glass of lemonade. (The "plain" kind.) We talked awhile longer about possible conclusions as to what we had seen, and then it was time to leave as Norma had another appointment.

There are many mysteries associated with this property. Was it Moonshine Vats, are those really guard stands? As I sit here contemplating these questions I can almost hear someone whispering under their breath, "Did the moon shine in Jefferson County?"

Until someone can convince me of another purpose for the vats I would have to say; "I believe it did at one time near Valles Mines."

## JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

712 S. MAIN STREET, DE SOTO,  
MISSOURI 63020-2401  
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### BOOK ORDER FORM

Title	Price	Qty	Total
Country Schools	29.95	—	—
1876 Atlas Reprint	15.00	—	—
Index to 1876 Atlas			
Soft Cover	15.00	—	—
Hard Cover	20.00	—	—
Index to 1898 Atlas	15.00	—	—
1907 Directory	10.00	—	—
Post Offices	7.00	—	—
Historic Map	1.00	—	—
TOPO Maps	2.00	—	—
Membership	10.00	—	—
Subtotal			—
Shipping/Handling	3.00		
each add'l books	1.00		—
TOTAL			—

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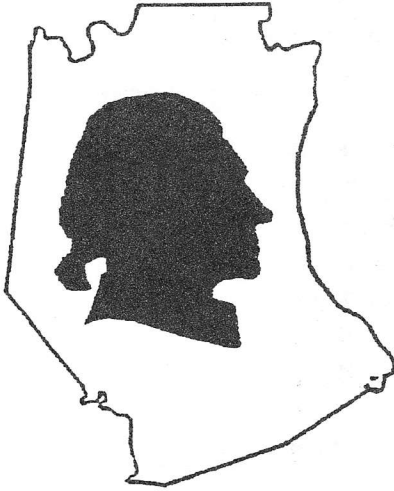
# JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Have you ever tried to come up with an appropriate logo for your group? Well, that is what we are trying to do now. David Halleman produced this one for our newsletter. If you have ideas or suggestions, even a drawing, please let us know.

## NEW BOOKS NOW AVAILABLE:

A reprint of the 1876 Atlas (maps, etc.) is now ready. Also we have reprinted the 1907 JEFFERSON COUNTY DIRECTORY which contains lists of people living in the county as well as some interesting ads. See the order blank on page 9 to get your copies.



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