

BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY



An overhead view of the restored Old Howard County Jail built in 1894. Photo by Jim Steele

Breathing Life into a Landmark Building

Remembering the colorful 'Katy' Railroad

**BHS Summer Meeting at Schnell Hall and Old HoCo Jail
*July 12 in Fayette***

VOL. 14 No. 2 — SUMMER 2015

BOONSLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERIODICAL

Family Gives Lay Papers to BHS for Historical Archives

BOONSLICK REGION HISTORICAL PAPERS AND SPECIAL documents that were collected and developed over a number of years by long-time Boonslick Historical Society member William D. (Bill) Lay have been given to the Society by his widow, Julia "Judy" Lay, and members of the family. They are to be included as a special collection within the official BHS archives being held at Smiley Library at Central Methodist University in Fayette.

Lay, an attorney who died in July of 2014 at the age of 84, was serving on the BHS board of directors at the time of his death. He and Judy had been actively involved with the Boonslick Historical Society and numerous other area and regional historical organizations since moving to Fayette in 1977.

"We think Bill would feel honored to have his papers in the BHS Archives at CMU Smiley Library," Judy Lay tells the Society. "He frequently used the archives there to do his research. BHS archives at CMU is an appropriate location for placing these documents and making sure they will be available for future reference by students, academics, and the public. He was dedicated to sharing the area's history. His undergraduate degree at University of Missouri was in history, and he was truly a life-long historian."

The Lay papers constitute a significant addition to the Boonslick Historical Society archives which include documents and other printed materials that have been collected since the Society was established in the fall of 1937.

Twelve boxes of Lay's papers were delivered to the BHS archives at CMU's Smiley Library in June after being picked up at the Lay home in Fayette. The papers will be reviewed to establish a list of all documents included. Following this initial review, the collection will be organized and an index will be established. The process will take several months and may be aided by the CMU Department of History. Once an index is completed, the papers will be available for scholarly research by students, academics, journalists, and other interested parties.

Boonslick Historical Society board member Michael Dickey, a historian and site administrator of the Arrow Rock and Boone's Lick State Historic Sites, says Lay was quite knowledgeable about area history and had undertaken numerous projects to collect and compile historical information and documents and had also been very active in promoting historical events in the Boonslick Region.

"Bill helped organize and set up the National Santa Fe Trail Symposium held in Arrow Rock-Franklin area in 1991," Dickey notes and adds, "From 1991-1993, Bill was a volunteer for State Parks, serving on the committee to develop the exhibits at the visitors' center in Arrow Rock. He was our Howard County informant and provided a lot of information about historical events on that side of the river. He transcribed a lot of Lyman Copeland Draper's

manuscripts pertinent to Missouri during the War of 1812, and he combed the *Missouri Intelligencer* [historic newspaper in Howard County] for references to the Santa Fe Trail.

"He bound this information into booklets that we still frequently use for reference. He would come in every once in a while to give us some new information on local history that he would find. He really was pretty savvy about the Corps of Engineers and the history behind projects to improve the Missouri River.

The Corps held a couple of meetings in Arrow Rock to discuss river projects that I believe Bill helped pull together."

A native of Columbia, Lay graduated from Kemper Military School in Boonville and earned his law degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1952. He was admitted to the Missouri Bar and entered the United States Army as a Second Lieutenant of Artillery. He later transferred to the Judge Advocate General's Corps and served at Ft. Sill, Okla., and Inchon, Korea, and continued as a reserve officer until 1964.

An active historian, Lay was a member of the Kemper Military School Alumni Association, the Boonslick Historical Society, the Howard County Historical Society, the South Howard County Historical Society, The Boonslick Road Association, the Fayette Area Heritage Association, the Civil War Round Table, and the Fayette Round Table Club. He was a member of the Fayette First Christian Church.

In addition to Judy Lay, family members include two sons, Jim Lay and his wife Mary of Boonesboro and Bob Lay and his wife Jennifer of Blue Springs, and several grandchildren.

Arthur Schneider, 1943-2015

Long-time BHS member Arthur J. (Art) Schneider, 71, passed away May 30.

Schneider held bachelor's degrees in education, journalism, and criminal justice; a master's degree in criminal justice; and an education specialist degree. He was a Vietnam veteran.

Earlier in his career, he worked as an assistant news editor for the *Helena-Independent Record* in Montana and as a reporter for the *Columbia Daily Tribune*. In 1975 he took a position as a public information specialist with the University of Missouri. He later was hired as an extension specialist for the University and was headquartered in Boonville, a position he held until retirement.

He also served for more than six years on the Central Missouri Food Bank Board with the Harvest House Board in Boonville. He played a major role in the Boonville Outdoor Arts Committee, including in the procurement of the Hannah Cole statue and statues of other Boonville notables.

Schneider is survived by his wife of 40 years, Vicki Kay, a son and daughter, and four grandchildren.

— Don B. Cullimore



William D. Lay Jr.
Photo courtesy Judy Lay

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: 660-248-1732. 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

Boonslick Historical Society Vol. 14, No. 2 • Summer 2015

Contents

Breathing Life into a Landmark Building Page 4

By Jim Steele



Journalist Jim Steele tells the intriguing story of the Old Howard County Jail and the unusual tactics used to save it from the wrecking ball.

Remembering the 'Katy' Railroad Page 7

By BLHQ Staff



Railroad historian and author Raymond George will highlight the BHS Summer meeting with tales of the iconic Missouri-Kansas-Texas, the "Katy," Railroad.

Coming Attraction: Special Civil War-era Feature

Editor's note: Coming in the Fall issue of the *Quarterly*, thanks to BHS member and historian Jim Denny, who edited a special feature, "The 'Birch Affair,'" by the late Tom Birch.

Denny notes that the article will present "... a vivid description of an interaction between Weston Birch, a wealthy and prominent Glasgow, Missouri, businessman, and Maj. C. B. Hunt, the leader of Union forces occupying the town during the late summer and fall of 1862, still early in the Civil War. Judg-

ing from the acrimony that arose between these two parties, it might be easy to forget that Birch and Hunt were both on the same side.

"The article is the last version of several drafts that Tom Birch prepared during the first half of 2010.

Among other historical sources, he relied importantly on the relatively untapped trove of Union Provost Marshal Records for civilians on film at the Missouri State Archives in Jefferson City."

— Jim Denny



Weston Birch House

Breathing Life into a Landmark Building

Saved by an eBay Sale, Historic Structure Was Slated for Demolition

By Jim Steele

The historic old Howard County jail and residence, located at 203 E. Morrison Street in Fayette, Missouri, is among those buildings in and around the city's courthouse square which are contributing entities on the National Register of Historic Places. In active use until May 2004, it was feared that after being taken out of service the jail — which by then was in a state of advanced deterioration — would fall victim to the wrecker's ball since the county had no funds to restore the structure. What has taken place since that time has been a unique development and source of pride for the Fayette area and beyond. — Jim Steele

In the Beginning

Newspaper accounts state that the old jail was ready for occupancy in the spring of 1894, with W. J. McGraw as the builder. Early in April of that year, ten prisoners who had been housed in Cooper County became the jail's first inmates.

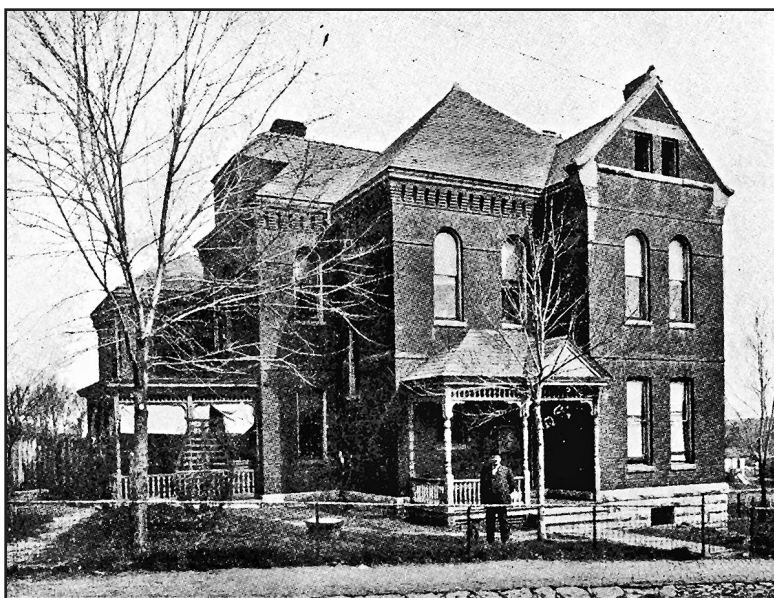
Generally, the building's appearance did not change much over the years. It was typical of county jails in the late nineteenth century, with the facility also providing a residence for the sheriff and his family. In many cases, the sheriff's wife served as an unpaid cook for the prisoners.

The first sheriff to live in the jail was George C. Crigler, who served from 1891 to 1894, and was the grandfather of well-known Fayette resident Billy Joe Crigler. George Crigler had lost part of one leg in an accident as a young man and it's reported that he made his own pegs. He later served in other political offices.

When opened, the jail could house approximately fifteen men; there were no provisions for female prisoners.

The two and one-half-story brick building is in the Queen Anne style, with the first story featuring (at the south elevation) a partial-width porch with pediment entrance,

spindle-work posts, and frieze. Fenestration is a 1/1 double-hung sash with stone lug sills, segmental with flat arches at the first story and secondary facades, with true arches at the second story and secondary elevations. There is brick string coursing between the first and second stories and corbeling



1905 photo of Howard County Jail. Courtesy of Jim Steele

below the composite roof line. It has a gabled pediment on the primary facade, with multiple hipped dormers and brick chimneys. The jail has a rusticated, coursed limestone foundation with prominent water table and a similarly styled hipped brick unit to the rear. A non-original addition to the west facade later provided office space for the jail; it is believed to have been built around 1937. Originally there was a garage at the site or possibly a porch.

In more recent years

Other than trees and shrubs, the jail did not change much in appearance over the years. Early photos show a fence around the building with what appears to be a porch on the west side. It is believed there may have been some remodeling done in the mid-1930s, including the addition of a new kitchen.

Always pressed for money, county officials generally made only those improvements deemed absolutely necessary, such as electrical and plumbing modifications and later a few window air conditioning units. The jail was closed briefly for about one and one-half-years in the mid-1980s, and prisoners were housed in adjoining counties. It was reopened after a new furnace was installed.

The jail residence was occupied by the sheriff and his

Fayette resident Jim Steele is the former owner/publisher/editor of the *Fayette Advertiser* and *Democrat-Leader* and adjunct professor of journalism at Central Methodist University. Now retired, he is a freelance writer and editor and member of the Boonslick Historical Society Board of Directors..

family throughout most of the years, but eventually those men who held the office did not choose to live in the residence which had become shopworn. The rooms were last occupied in 1991 by Sheriff Randy Yaeger and family. After that they were used only for storage.

Although popular lore has it that one or more prisoners were executed by hanging in the jail, there's nothing to verify that such an event ever happened. There were instances of prisoners escaping from the jail, and several times prisoners took their own lives.

Jailers killed in Randolph County

With the dawn of a new decade in 2000, it was becoming evident that the Howard County jail needed to be either replaced or renovated. One development which spurred local officials to realize the need for action was a tragic incident in neighboring Randolph County in 2000. Two jailers at an equally antiquated jail in Huntsville were killed during a daring daylight prison break.

Reflecting on this double murder, then-Howard County Sheriff Charles Polson realized that such an incident could just as easily have happened in Fayette — particularly with only one jailer normally on duty, along with the lack of a sally port and other modern security devices.

Polson, joined by the late Howard County Presiding Commissioner Winston Huttshell and others, began talking up the need for a new or refurbished facility. Presentations were made before civic groups and other organizations.

These talks, combined with articles in the Fayette newspapers, outlined the need to act quickly.

Ultimately a nine-member blue ribbon Howard County jail advisory commission was appointed. It was headed by longtime resident Gardell Powell and made up of a number of leading citizens. The group immediately began gathering information.

Various proposals and concepts were discussed and evaluated in the months that followed. These included looking at potential locations for a new jail which by law must be in the city limits of the county seat. Even the county-owned Keller Building was seen as one possibility. Many citizens articulated their positions in letters to the editor.

Ultimately, the advisory commission came to the conclusion that the old jail was totally unsafe, both for those who worked there and for prisoners. Acting on the group's recommendations, the Howard County Commission approved placing a ballot measure before county voters, to be decided in the November 2002 election.

The proposal before voters called for an additional half-cent sales tax to be in effect for about nine years, the proceeds from which would retire bonds to finance a new facility on county-owned property adjacent to the old jail. Cost: \$1.5 million. Earlier, it had been determined that refurbishing the



Spartan furnishings of old jail single cell were the reality of inmates who were incarcerated up until closure of the jail in the spring of 2004. Photo by Jim Steele

old jail [to meet modern standards] would be appreciably more expensive than building a new one.

In addition to providing offices for the sheriff's department (previously in the courthouse), the new structure would include space for women prisoners and would increase the number of cells from four to fifteen. It would also have a sally port, modern security devices, an exercise area, air conditioning and other improvements.

In an editorial the weekend prior to the election, the Fayette *Democrat-Leader* vigorously endorsed the proposal.

When election results were announced, law enforcement officials and others had much to celebrate. Voters approved the half-cent jail tax by a margin of 2,576 to 1,336. Had the measure failed, the jail would have been forced to close on January 1, 2003. However, with this mandate, county commissioners gave the okay to keep the old jail in operation until a new facility was completed.

Numerous planning sessions took place in the months that followed and ultimately a firm known as Arkatype was selected as the designer and Ebco Construction as the contractor. The usual ground-breaking event was held, followed by excavation work and construction as citizens watched while the new jail came to reality.

Finally completion neared and prisoners were transferred to the new building in May 2004. In addition, the sheriff's staff moved into its modern, efficient office space in the new jail. During the next month there was a Masonic ceremony and an official dedication event-open house took place which included representatives of the contractors, the architect, county officials, state officials and others. Former presiding commissioner Winston Hutsell, who by then was too ill to attend the ceremony, was commended for his role

in bringing the new facility to reality.

Then What To Do

With the old jail sitting vacant and badly in need of a new roof (not to mention having many other deficiencies), the question on the mind of county officials was: What do we do?

Those concerned with historic preservation were fearful that if the building was destroyed, the square would then lose its listing on the National Register of Historic Places (since the old jail was a key part of that designation). The preservationists vigorously opposed tearing it down, but still did not mount any kind of effective campaign to save the structure.

Others, including some serving on the county commission, asserted that the old jail was not worth saving and should be leveled for a parking lot. One thing was certain: The county had no monies to refurbish the facility and instead commissioners expressed hope that a group such as the Fayette Area Heritage Association (FAHA) would step forward to lead the charge.

While supporting the concept of preserving the building, FAHA did not relish getting into property ownership again as it had done following the collapse of the Eubank Brothers Building.

So for a number of months county officials simply treaded water and tried to figure out what to do. Legal notices advertised that the building was for sale for anyone who would be willing to refurbish it, but there were no takers.

Eventually, Fayette newspaper publisher Jim Steele (now retired), then president of FAHA, approached the commission asking for permission to let that organization serve as a promotional agent, working in concert with the commission to advertise the jail's availability to a wider audience.

The commission said okay, but still no acceptable bids were received. (The bottom line had been set at \$40,000.) A few low-ball bids were rejected.

Ultimately, the deadline to receive an acceptable offer approached and it appeared as though the wrecking ball was not far behind. As a last-ditch measure, Steele again went before the commission and requested an extension, which was granted, putting the deadline at October 31, 2005.

Then came an idea that ultimately achieved national media attention: Advertise the jail on eBay! Much of the credit for this idea is attributed to Christy Steele, then Jim's wife, who masterminded the logistics of arranging the eBay placement. She was (and is) an experienced eBay trader.

Enter Gary Kaplan

A detailed set of bid specifications was kept in the office of the late Mark Hill, then the county clerk. As inquiries come in copies were mailed to prospective buyers. One of

those who expressed interest was an affable Los Angeles attorney. His name: Gary Kaplan. A native Californian who is a graduate of Harvard Law School, Kaplan was (and is) employed by one of LA's most prestigious law firms which represents a number of well-known clients in the entertainment industry.

After talking by phone with Hill, Kaplan also visited by phone with Steele and ultimately a date was established for the prospective buyer to travel to Missouri.

He arrived on a quiet Saturday morning in late September 2005 and was greeted outside the jail by Hill and Steele, in addition to Sheriff Charles Polson. After touring the old jail, Steele and Hill took Kaplan on what was described as an hour-long "windshield tour" of Fayette and surrounding areas, showing the visitor various locations and points of interest. Later there was lunch at Emmet's Kitchen & Tap and then an evening meal in the Steele home. Gary also was introduced to a number of community residents.

Kaplan later told a Columbia reporter that he liked both his prospective get-away home and the community. "It's a nice town with a sense of the past," Kaplan said. "I just liked how quiet and peaceful it looked."

When the deadline to open bids arrived, Kaplan was the highest of four bidders at \$42,000. The property officially was transferred in November 2005. (**Note:** Later, Randolph County copied the idea and also sold its old Huntsville jail on eBay).

Saying he wished to have the old sheriff's residence as a Midwest vacation home and to make the jail available for possible use as a museum, Kaplan pledged to maintain the historic integrity of the property. A contractor and interior designer were selected.

To say the process took much longer and cost more than anticipated would be an understatement. For one thing, termites not only had destroyed non-load bearing parts of the structure, but also had eaten away at floor joists. "I didn't anticipate the degree of damage that I found in the building," Kaplan said. (No one has ever had the nerve to ask him how much it all cost.)

During those early years, Kaplan would return to Fayette every two or three months to oversee construction and make decisions. As the months turned to years he developed a network of friends within the community. More recently he generally has returned to Fayette about twice a year.

Most all of the work was completed by the fall of 2008. The living quarters are virtually unrecognizable from their previous deteriorated condition. The jail itself also was refurbished. The cells have not been decorated per se, but simply were restored to their original state.

Much of what has been accomplished encompasses the building's infrastructure and thus is not obvious, such

as modern wiring and plumbing, along with ground-source heating and cooling — plus all new windows and frames, a new roof, foundation improvements, tuck-pointing inside and out, modern insulation, new guttering, leaded glass and the list goes on. All was completed in accord with state preservation historic guidelines.

Outside, a lovely plaza with a fountain was constructed, along with a historically appropriate fence, brick sidewalks, two new porches, and beautiful landscaping done by local landscape artist Mark Thompson.

Inside, the residence does justice to a *House Beautiful* feature with crown molding, recessed lighting, walnut

floors, a downstairs half-bath, a state-of-the-art kitchen with a granite-topped island, electric fireplaces, beautiful fixtures and wall treatments, and refurbished antique mantels.

Upstairs, two bedrooms are equally well appointed, and a third bedroom has been turned into a large bath and laundry area. Stairways and banisters have been lovingly restored and the attic has been converted into a large party room.

So now it is done. A separate entrance off of Morrison Street on the east side of the building has been designated for the museum entrance if such ever comes to be. The aforementioned Mark Thompson continues to maintain the building grounds and checks regularly on the interior.

BHS Summer Meeting July 12 in Fayette Featuring Railroad Historian Raymond George And Tour of Old Howard County Jail

Raymond B. George Jr., railroad buff and author of books and articles on the historic Missouri-Kansas-Texas, M.K.T. or “Katy” Railroad, will be the guest speaker at the Boonslick Historical Society summer meeting, July 12, at Schnell Hall, 302 Villers Drive, Fayette. The meeting begins at 3 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

The Katy was established in 1865 under the name Union Pacific Railway, Southern Branch, and served an extensive rail network in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. In 1988, it merged with the Missouri Pacific Railroad and is now part of Union Pacific Railroad. It ran from San Antonio and Galveston, Texas, to Kansas City and St. Louis. Along the way, it came through Fayette and Rocheport. Its former right-of-way along the Missouri River is now the popular Katy Trail State Park, the nation’s longest completed rail-trail for hikers and bicyclists.

Following George’s presentation, attendees will have an opportunity to tour the restored Old Howard County Jail, 302 E. Morrison Street (see story page 4). Used as a county jail from 1894 until 2004, the Old Jail is among those buildings in and around the city’s courthouse square which are contributing entities on the National Register of Historic Places.

A native of Fayette, George, is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia with an arts degree. He is a charter member of the Katy Railroad Historical Society and the former editor of the Society’s publication, *The Katy Flyer*, which he currently serves as assistant editor and graphic artist. When George moved to St. Louis in 1973 to begin a career in commercial art, railroading soon became his main



Raymond B. George

hobby. George had always lived near the tracks of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (Katy) Railroad. His father, Raymond B. George Sr., was superintendant of the Katy’s Eastern and North Texas Districts, prior to becoming vice president of operations in 1965 with headquarters at Denison, Texas.

George is the author of countless articles about the history and operations of the M.K.T. Railroad for *The Katy Flyer* and other publications. In 1986 he co-authored *Katy Power: Locomotives and Trains of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, 1912-1985* with Joe G. Collias, and in 1993 he authored *The Missouri-Kansas-Texas Lines in Color*.

Both books are hard-cover high-quality publications filled with graphs and illustrations and significant information about the history, equipment (rolling stock) and facilities of the M.K.T. Railroad. Among the many art works are paintings depicting activities along the historic Katy route, including through Fayette and Rocheport and their depots. The cover of the *Katy Power* book is from a watercolor by Joe Collias of the Katy passing by the Rocheport Bluffs.



Historic M.K.T. Railroad bridge at Boonville has been saved from demolition by the Save the Katy Bridge Coalition, which hopes to incorporate it into the Katy State Park Trail.

Photo by Don Cullimore

Boonslick Historical Society

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Restored M.K.T. "Katy" Railroad caboose with its distinctive logo and colors now sits at the historic Katy Depot in Boonville, Missouri, on the south bank of the Missouri River. Photo by Don Cullimore