

BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY



1906 Mitchell Runabout, housed in the Lewis Miller Mitchell Motorcar Museum, Boonville

Photo by Deb Jewett

Preview of Major Essay on Morrison Family

Midnight Ride of Yore on 'Katy' Railroad Handcar

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Book Review—New Santa Fe Trail Guidebook

VOL. 15 No. 1 — SPRING 2016

BOONSLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERIODICAL

Preview of Things to Come, College Pranks, and Antique Cars

On page 4 is a preview of a major essay on nineteenth-century heiress Berenice Morrison-Fuller (1856-1947) that will be serialized over three issues of the *Quarterly*, beginning with the Summer issue in June. A native of St. Louis, Berenice Morrison spent her childhood in Glasgow. She was the daughter of a family that figured prominently in Howard County and Boonslick Country history and had a significant presence as merchants in the early history of the region, including the Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. They built a mercantile empire with roots in late eighteenth-century Philadelphia which extended into the Louisiana Territory, the Missouri Territory, and the soon-to-emerge state of Missouri. The extended family also figured prominently in education, banking, insurance, finance and Missouri River trade during a large part of the nineteenth century.

This issue provides an introduction to this exceptional essay. It was written by Missouri historian and BHS member Lynn Morrow and is based on his intensive research over several years. Containing previously unpublished material, it provides the author's fresh insights into Berenice Morrison and the Morrison family and its in-laws in the Boonslick Country and Missouri. The essay's intriguing title, "Salt-boiling to Star-gazing: Marriage, Merchants, and Money," refers to the Morrison family's connection to two Howard County, Missouri, historical entities: Boone's Lick near Boonesboro and the Morrison Observatory, which came into existence in Glasgow in 1875 and was moved to Fayette many years later. They are central to the story of Berenice's long life.

The first part of the essay is titled "The Traders: Keelboats to Steamboats" and will be published in the Summer issue of the *Quarterly*. Part II, in the Fall issue, is "Oswald and Berenice: Berenice Morrison's Education and Oswald's Visions." Part III, in the Winter issue, is "Berenice and Glasgow: The Morrison-Fullers in Glasgow." This engaging story of a Howard County heiress and her family is an important addition to the historical record and one we're sure our readers will not want to miss.



Berenice Morrison as a young woman in the latter 19th century. Photo courtesy of State Historical Society-Kansas City, Scarritt-Royster-Swinney Family Papers

College Pranksters

On pages 6-7: Student pranks and sometimes foolish stunts are as old as the Republic and an assumed part of college life. Author David McCullough notes in his masterful biography of our second president, John Adams, that Adams's son Charles was among a handful of late eighteenth-century undergraduate students at Harvard who reportedly "streaked" across campus one night, a prank that fits right in historically with panty raids that have been part of the college scene for many decades and reportedly still are occurring. So it was, in a manner, with several male students of Central Methodist College (now university) a half-century ago when they "borrowed" an M-K-T "Katy" Railroad motorized handcar and took off on a wild midnight ride between New Franklin and Fayette. As is often the case, the culprits were discovered. It's a humorous story related by BHS member Jim Steele, himself a Central student during the early '60s and an acquaintance of the handcar miscreants. Steele claims he was not one of them.

Antiques Cars, Wagons and Bikes

Pages 10-11 provide information on the BHS spring meeting, April 15, which will be held at Lewis Miller's Mitchell Motorcar Collection Museum in Boonville. The Mitchell was one of the signature vehicles of the early twentieth century, being manufactured between 1902 and 1923 before the company went under, suffering from the economic blows it took during World War I. The company played a long-time role in the manufacture of American transportation, beginning with wagons in the 1830s, then bicycles in the latter part of the century and motorized bicycles (motorcycles) and cars at the turn into the twentieth Century. The Museum features a unique and priceless collection of some of the few remaining Mitchell cars, bicycles and wagons that framed the company's nearly 100-year history.

Special Note: On pages 8 and 9 is an index of *Quarterly* issues for the years 2012-13-14-15.

—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: 660-248-1732. 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

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By Lynn Morrow

Berenice Morrison-Fuller, Glasgow Heiress



This issue features a preview of a major essay on the Morrison Family of Glasgow that will begin in the June issue of the *Quarterly* and run through December.

Midnight Ride on the Rails Lands Students in Court Page 6

By Jim Steele



Katy Railroad handcar stunt by Central Methodist College students a half-century ago goes awry and students pay the price.

BHS Spring Meeting April 15 in Boonville Page 10

By Don Cullimore



BHS members will meet in April at Lewis Miller's Mitchell Antique Motorcar Museum in Boonville. The company also built wagons, bicycles and motorized bicycles more than 100 years ago.

Book Review: *Santa Fe Trail Guide*

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Salt-boiling to Star-gazing: Marriage, Merchants, and Money

By Lynn Morrow

Introduction

Boone's Lick and the Morrison Observatory are two well-known historic sites in Missouri, yet, their organic and complicated connection in family history is not. The latter site resulted from the beneficence of Bernice Morrison (1856-1947), a teen-age ward of her uncle James Oswald Swinney (1830-1899) — Berenice wrote that the family called him Oswald. Bernice's charitable gift of \$100,000 to establish the observatory as a distinctive institution, to support professorships, and materially aid the general welfare of the Pritchett School Institute in 1875 is unique in Missouri history. What other young person in Victorian Missouri who had not yet reached majority age pledged that amount of money, worth \$2,180,000 in modern value, to the public good? Looking back 141 years, how could a nineteen-year-old heiress afford to direct such an enormous amount of money for a laudable purpose in small-town Missouri? And, how many other Missouri women lived a married life in the late nineteenth century with a hyphenated name, like Morrison-Fuller? Even her hyphenated name appears unique for the Booneslick and Missouri, and it reflects her access to radical, liberal thinking in Europe during the Victorian decades. Moreover, her financial support at Pritchett for mathematics, natural science, and languages is a modern STEM professor's dream. But, Berenice Morrison-Fuller had ongoing disagreements with the Pritchett school for nearly a half-century that finally drew to an end when the Morrison Observatory moved from Glasgow to Fayette. Berenice had a romantic and difficult relationship with Glasgow, her childhood environs, and later as home in adulthood for a decade in the Progressive Era. But, before that transpired, the Morrison imprint on Howard County, the Missouri River trade, and St. Louis institutions requires explanation.

Rarely are we able to trace, however superficially, three generations of an upper-class family in Missouri. The Morrisons

Lynn Morrow is the former director of the Local Records Preservation Program, Missouri State Archives. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Southeast Missouri State University (now Missouri State University), Springfield.

This is a preview of a major essay on nineteenth-century heiress Berenice Morrison-Fuller (1856-1947) that will be serialized over three issues of the Quarterly, beginning with the Summer issue in June. It was written by Missouri historian and BHS member Lynn Morrow and is based on his intensive research over several years. Part I is titled "The Traders: Keelboats to Steamboats." Part II, in the Fall issue, is "Oswald and Berenice: Berenice Morrison's Education and Oswald's Visions." Part III, in the Winter issue, is "Berenice and Glasgow: The Morrison-Fullers in Glasgow."

present a glimpse of a prominent merchant household, who produced an heiress who was "at home" in St. Louis, Howard County, Europe, and in Brookline, Massachusetts, a quintessential New England enclave. The family, writ large, represents a cameo of a self-conscious clan, men who were aggressive capitalists; all were believers in training and education for advancement, and they contributed to educational institutions. They were related by blood and marriage; all had their likes and dislikes of each other, but their extended family's long-distance mercantile reach from the Upper Missouri River, down to New Orleans, and across the Atlantic to England connected their intertwined fortunes throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

Trade east-to-west, and to a lesser extent west-to-east, is a dominant theme in Booneslick history. The Morrisons began business emphasizing the former and ended capitalizing on the latter. The first Morrison generation sent keelboats throughout the Ohio, most of the Mississippi, and along the Lower Missouri Rivers. The second generation of James Morrison's family managed steamboats along the Ohio, the Upper to Lower Mississippi, and the Upper and Lower Missouri River. This overview encapsulates the reach of this ambitious collection of risk-takers. The height of their commercial success accrued to the second generation in partnerships that invested in modernity's newly-emerging corporate structures of insurance and banking. Berenice Morrison, the third generation, inherited the prosperity of her antecedents to become an heiress, philanthropist, and suffragist. She was one of three state and national suffragist officeholders with deep connections to Glasgow.

The second generation included James Morrison's son, William M. Morrison, and his sisters, who married experienced urban merchants. Before James Morrison sold Boone's Lick, son-in-law Francis Yosti lived and traded in Santa Fe and son-in-law George Collier financed steamboats trading on the mid- and upper-Missouri River. William M. Morrison's marriage into the Capt. W. D. Swinney family brought two major river fortunes together. Then, the Swinneys and Morrisons capitalized on one another's advantages and prospered further in European markets. Son-in-law William G. Pettus, a leading political figure, corporate insurance agent and banker reaped profits made by the family. James Morrison's

son and sons-in-law became leaders who advanced institutional accomplishments in their home towns. All consummated judicious marriages, had ability to spot opportunity, and had a lot of good luck.

After the Civil War, the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis organized to ask questions and preserve answers about the founding and development of the city and state. At the 1882 meeting, president George Leighton, gave the annual address naming six French families who were principals in that history. Next, he listed the "Morrison's who came from the French settlements." Attending St. Louis businessmen still remembered that the Irish Protestant Morrison's had married women from leading French Catholic families in Kaskaskia, Ste. Genevieve, and Portage des Sioux, and that their Morrison children became principals in Missouri business among the interrelated fields of keelboat and steamboat trade, insurance, banking, the lead mineral trade, railroads, and in the support of educational and religious institutions. Historian, Walter B. Stevens, celebrated the family in his Centennial History of Missouri in 1921 by dedicating a section to "The Six Morrison's," recognizing scions of the family into the third generation in Missouri and Illinois (this essay excludes the Illinois Morrison's, although some did move to St. Louis).

Berenice Morrison is the focus of the third generation and about whom most of the essay is concerned. Although she was orphaned at a young age, her grandfather Swinney and father, Will-

iam M. Morrison, who were steamboat investors, international traders, bankers, land speculators and more, bequeathed an envied fortune to her. The story of her relationship between Uncle Oswald and her estate was beset with grandiose vision, failure, and embarrassment that ended with Berenice becoming a major landholder in Howard County. The Morrison Observatory became a virtual character in her long life. Her history connected to it is worthy of a modern soap opera script that she sometimes conducted while on an international journey.

Berenice's marriage to John Fuller and their life together was a Gilded Age romance punctuated with elite mannerisms and obvious class distinctions. Fuller's academic prowess and resolute devotion to socialist and libertarian philosophy rocked the tranquility of Glasgow in a decade of sensational political provocation, litigation, and brawls, until authorities arrested the Pritchett College president for attempted murder on Main Street Glasgow. Glasgow's small-town moralist culture, significantly infused with traditions espoused at Pritchett College, purposely left Fuller's story in a sorrowful dust bin to be forgotten.

Nevertheless, Morrison family history lies wide and deep in the records of the Booneslick, yet it rests quietly in Missouri history. The forthcoming essay describes a generational heritage that brought Berenice Morrison into Booneslick history and accounted for her privileged life.

BOOK NOTES

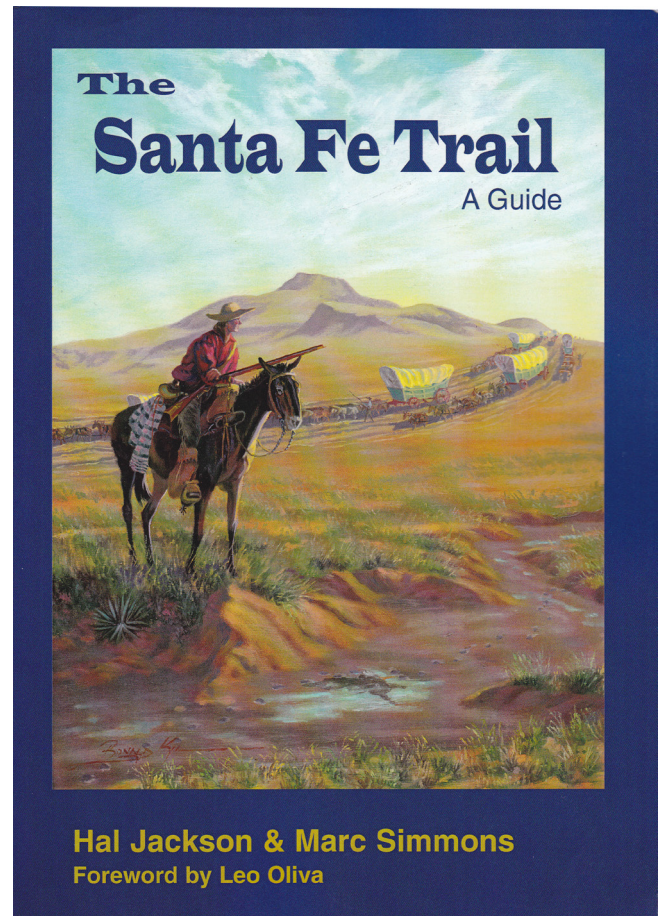
The Santa Fe Trail

By Hal Jackson and Marc Simmons

The Santa Fe Trail: A Guide is a new book co-authored by noted historians and trail guides Hal Jackson and Marc Simmons. According to historian and author Leo Oliva, this new book is "...the most informative and detailed guide to the historic trail that has been written." It is filled with maps, illustrations, sidebars, area history, and detailed directions to guide modern travelers along the trail.

The book also has a bibliographical section and index, a brief history of Santa Fe Trail sites and twelve sidebars covering historical sites and persons, including one on Boone's Lick, written by historian and author Michael (Mike) Dickey. Dickey is also administrator of Arrow Rock and Boone's Lick State Historic Sites and a member of the Booneslick Historical Society Board of Directors. The book is essential for any trail traveler. Paper cover, \$20.

The book is available at The Last Chance store online at www.lastchancestore.org. Or phone 888-321-7341.



Midnight Ride on the Rails Lands College Students in Hot Water

By Jim Steele

This is the story of a late-night escapade of more than 50 years ago which landed several men from a Central Methodist College (now university) fraternity, Alpha Phi Gamma (aka the Mokers), and their friends in hot water. But to understand our tale a bit of historical perspective is in order.

As residents of a certain age will recall, the Katy Railroad served Fayette until the mid-1970s. (Next time you're at the C&R grocery in Fayette glance across Highway 240 from the store's parking lot and you'll see the foundation of the old train station that stood from 1898 until being razed in 1979.)

Following the Civil War, the nation's railroad network grew at breakneck speed and our state was no exception. The Missouri-Kansas-Texas (M-K-T) railway, better known as the Katy, envisioned a line which would link Chicago with the gulf coast. As part of that effort, trackage in Missouri running northeast from Sedalia to Franklin to Moberly and on to Hannibal was constructed in 1873, reaching Fayette and Moberly in June of that year. It also served several other communities within Howard and Randolph counties.

As noted, the line initially continued on to Hannibal from Moberly, but that section was leased to the Wabash in 1923 and sold to the Wabash in 1944.

Ultimately this Katy route running north through Howard County and beyond did not pan-out as expected financially and later it became, in essence, a secondary line.

Meanwhile the Katy's financial backers concluded that more profit could be had by routing traffic through St. Louis. Construction of a main line across Missouri — running east from St. Charles — was completed in 1893. It ran along the north bank of the Missouri River until crossing at Boonville and proceeding to Sedalia, eventually continuing to Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

[That part of the 1893 trackage that existed within Missouri evolved many years later into our beloved Katy Trail, a development that came about following the M-K-T's decline in the 1980s and its absorption by the Union Pacific in 1988. But at this point

the hiking and biking path was more than 100 years in the future.]

The coming of the railroad to Howard County in 1873 proved a boon for both Fayette and its two institutions of higher learning, Central College (now Central Methodist University) and Howard-Payne, a two-year junior college for women which merged with Central in 1922.

Students in those bygone days rarely had the option of going home for weekends or even holidays, except perhaps for Christmas. But when they did so it virtually always was by train. In the



Mid-20th-century Katy Railroad handcar similar to the equipment "borrowed" in 1965 by Central Methodist College students who took a joyride at midnight on the tracks then existing between New Franklin and Fayette. Photo courtesy of Raymond George

Katy's heyday up to six trains a day came through Fayette — three north and three south.

Residents seeking a larger shopping venue rarely went to Columbia; they took the train to Moberly. Occasional "specials" transported students to football games and other events, including the arrival of a new school year.

From Fayette, students, salesmen and local residents could board the train south to connect with the Katy's east-west line at Franklin or go north to Moberly to connect with the Wabash.

Once paved highways reached Fayette, starting in the mid-1920s, the demand for regular rail passenger accommodations rapidly dwindled, eventually declining to "mixed freight-passenger service," with only one train a day each way.

By the 1960s, the rails from Franklin to Moberly weren't in the best condition and it was only an occasional freight that would traverse the route, perhaps once or twice a week as needed.

But that didn't stop some enterprising — albeit trespassing — Central Methodist students from doing a bit of joyriding on

BHS member Jim Steele is past chairman of the Fayette Historic Preservation Commission. He is the retired editor-publisher of the Fayette Advertiser and Democrat-Leader.

a warm spring night. Following is the description of one notable event from May 15, 1965, as described by (then) Fayette newspaper editor John Hert:

*Listen my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride that happened here,
On the 15th of May, in '65 –
Fortunately for all are still alive.
The sheriff was there to spread the alarm,
The students were coming through fence and farm:
“Four on a hand-car (none by sea):
You on the opposite track shall be!”*

The article goes on to note: “A midnight ride Friday on the railroad tracks is scheduled to stop in Magistrate Court in Fayette this afternoon.

“Four students who reportedly took a motorized work car from the M-K-T yards at Franklin and ran it along the tracks have a date to appear in court today to answer charges of trespassing on railroad property.

“Three of the four were injured when they jumped from the moving car after they had been spotlighted by a highway patrolman who had been alerted by Howard County Sheriff Delgar

Wells. They were patients in Keller Memorial Hospital until Sunday, when they were released. All are reported getting along satisfactorily.

“Sheriff Wells said that about 1:30 a.m. Saturday, as he was driving to Fayette on Highway 240, he observed the railroad work car going south toward New Franklin. He radioed the Missouri State Highway Patrol and in response Trooper David Terhune set up an intercepting position at the Highway 5 rail crossing at Estill. When the railroad unit came into view, the trooper turned on his spotlight and red flashing light.

“Robert A. Bovin of Webster Groves and E.C. Walker of Maryville, students at Central Methodist College, and George Payne of St. Louis, student at the University of Missouri, jumped and were injured. The fourth student, Howard W. Lark of St. Ann, who attends Central, stayed with the car and stopped it.

“The boys had taken the work car from Franklin to Fayette and were starting back when they were discovered.”

NOTE: Later the students received relatively light fines in the Magistrate Court of Vera Funk. They also were disciplined by the college; however, school officials refused to indicate in what way.

Changes Made in Boonslick Historical Society Board

Some changes in the makeup of the Boonslick Historical Society Board of Directors were approved during its January meeting in Fayette.

Long-time board treasurer Paula Shannon of Boonville resigned from the board in order to have more time to devote to other community activities, such as the Save the Katy Bridge Coalition, with which she has been long involved. The board reluctantly agreed to her request and appointed board member Sam Jewett of Boonville to be the new treasurer. Replacing Sam as board vice president is Brett Rogers of Boonville, who has also served on the board for a number of years. Cindy Bowen of Armstrong continues as president, and Denise Gebhardt of Glasgow continues as secretary.

Larry Harrington of Fayette was named to the board to replace the opening left by Shannon's departure. Another recent appointment to the board was Jim Steele of Fayette, who replaced Bill Lay, who died in July 2014.

Harrington is a former educator who taught social studies and political science and served as a guidance counselor

for many years in the Hazelwood Public School District. He was also an adjunct professor of political science at Missouri Baptist College for seven years. After retiring, he and his wife, Patsy, moved to Fayette, where he served for a number of years as outreach librarian with the Howard County Public Library. He holds master's degrees in political science and counseling.

Steele is former owner, publisher and editor of the Fayette *Democrat-Leader* and Fayette *Advertiser*. Prior to that he worked in communications with the United Methodist Church, was public relations director for Central Methodist College (now CMU), was in radio broadcasting in mid-Missouri for a number of years, and also taught in the Ashland Public School District. He holds bachelor's degrees in political science and history and journalism. Recently, he served for several years as an adjunct professor of journalism with CMU.

Other continuing members of the BHS Board of Directors are Don Cullimore of Fayette, Mike Dickey of Arrow Rock, Connie Shay of Fayette, and Tom Yancey of Fayette.



Larry Harrington



Jim Steele

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National Park Service illustration.

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BHS 2016 Member Fees Past Due

Boonslick Historical Society annual membership fees for calendar year 2016 are 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.

Boonslick Historical Society Spring Meeting Highlighting Antique Mitchell Motorcar Collection

The Boonslick Historical Society Spring meeting will be held April 15 at the Lewis Miller's Mitchell Motorcar Collection Museum, 210 E. Spring Street, Boonville, beginning at 7 p.m. The general public is invited. There is no charge to tour the museum, but a \$5 fee will be collected and given in its entirety to the Boonville Tourism Office. The money is used to promote Boonville and draw more visitors to the city. For more information, contact Cindy Bowen at 660-273-2374 or by email at gbowen@socket.net.

Lewis Miller is a direct descendent of the Mitchell and Lewis families, the founding families of the Mitchell Car Company, which actually began as wagon makers in the 1830s. The company later began making bicycles, motorized bicycles (motorcycles) and, in 1902, automobiles. Lewis has one of the largest collections of the various products sold by the their respective companies, including The Mitchell Wagon Company, Wisconsin Wheel Works, and the Mitchell-Lewis Motor Company. This private collection is constantly in the process of growing and being renovated and is now open to the public.

Pre-1900

For the Mitchell Companies, the era before the 1900s was a period of birth and tremendous growth. Although there were a few major setbacks along the way, by the 1900s, the Mitchell brand was well-established and successful.

In 1866, Henry Mitchell asked Calvin D. Sinclair, husband of his daughter Martha, to join the company, then reincorporating as Mitchell, Lewis & Company. This was good thinking on Henry's part as the post Civil War boom led to a surge in wagon building and purchases. The men who had made a living being soldiers now turned towards the West to find a new future. By 1870, Henry

Mitchell, Lewis & Co was one of the largest and best-equipped wagon manufacturing plants in the nation. It had over half a million dollars in capital, employed 7200 men and made 8,000-10,000 wagons a year. This came to a crushing halt in 1880 when the Racine, Wisconsin, plant burned completely to the ground. Instead of its ruining the company by spelling financial disaster, Henry Mitchell and William T. Lewis used the opportunity to begin anew, bigger and better.

By 1882, William H. Mitchell was expanding westward, opening the Portland, Oregon, branch of the Mitchell, Lewis & Company. In 1884, the company in Racine reincorporated as Mitchell & Lewis Company, Ltd, proving just how prosperous the business was becoming. For another decade, the company was outputting the finest wagons available for the day. In fact, by 1890, the firm was exporting wagons as far as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Mexico and Canada.

Henry Mitchell passed away in October 1893. The owner and management fell to William Turnor Lewis. On the cusp of the new century, ownership wasn't the only change happening at Mitchell. In Racine in 1898, William Mitchell Lewis added bicycles and motorcycles to the line of products offered. As the twentieth century dawned, the company had capital of \$1.8 million dollars and production had expanded to 25,000 wagons per year. But the new shift toward motorized vehicles, beginning with the motorcycle, would be the path the Mitchell vehicle production would take.

1900-1916

With the beginning of the new century, big changes started happening for Henry Mitchell and William Turnor Lewis's companies. Expansion into new markets was inevitable, starting with the introduction of the bicycles and motorcycles that had begun in 1898.

By 1902, the first motor cycles were being built for consumer purchase. By 1902, better mechanics and design led to a faster product and the Mitchell Motor Cycle was outpacing models made by Harley-Davidson in Milwaukee. In that first year of production, 600 Mitchell Motor Cycles were built, making it the best-selling motorcycle at the time.

But 1902 was also a big year for the company for another reason: the introduction of the automobile. The first motorcar was made by the company in that year and it became clear that the automobile would soon replace the wagon as a primary method of mobility. Thus, in 1903, The Mitchell Motor Car Company was established, as the company officially made the switch from wagons to automobiles.



Mitchell brought in his other two sons, truly making the business a family-centric one. For a decade, prosperity reigned. By 1877,

The engines used were designed by John W. Bate. Two car models were available that first year for purchase. One had 4 horsepower



1919 3-passenger Mitchell coupe is pictured in the foreground. It is part of a collection that includes nearly a dozen of the few remaining Mitchell motorcars still in existence. Photo by Jim Steele

and the other, larger model, had 7 horsepower. Each car offered two forward speeds and a reverse option.

In 1904, John W. Bate designed a new engine for the automobiles and began making suggestions to speed up the assembly process. Using these new procedures, 82 vehicles were assembled that year with the new engine.

The Mitchell Car needed a slogan and in 1905, the well known slogan was born: "The Car You Ought To Have At The Price You Ought To Pay." The company continued to expand, producing 315 vehicles, including bigger trucks. A 9 horsepower model car was one of the most popular models, selling for \$750 dollars.

In 1907, The Mitchell Car Company began shipping worldwide. An agency selling the Mitchell was opened in Paris, creating a central selling hub in Europe. Shipping to foreign countries didn't stop there. The car was sent to Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guatemala, Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Romania, South Africa, Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, and Hawaii. The Mitchell was truly known around the world for its quality!

In a feat of mechanical ingenuity, by 1908, all of the parts for the Mitchell car were manufactured in-house, except for the electrical equipment, wheels, and tires. Through the elimination of the middle man, production was streamlined even further and in that year alone, 2166 cars were built. The production plant for the Mitchell Motor Car Company covered 30 acres and employed 2,800 men in 1910, that year producing 5,614 cars. Expansion was happening so quickly that The Mitchell Wagon Company and The Mitchell Motor Car Company had to consolidate to form the Mitchell-Lewis Motor Company in order to stay ahead of production and demand

Changes and additions to the various Mitchell models increased in 1912. Cars ranged in size from a smaller "woman's" car to a custom limousine that cost as much as \$7000 dollars! The

year 1913 brought in the French designer René Petard to make some design adjustments, including electric lights and self-starters. Petard contributed these changes while also running the Paris dealership. Some employees recount the company covering 75 acres of land and having over 10,000 employees at its peak.

In 1915, The Mitchell Motor Company lost an icon. At the end of the year, William Turnor Lewis, the second founder, died suddenly of a stroke. Sales peaked at 10,000 units by 1916, but the family sold all its interest in the company to "big-city" investors from Chicago and New York. The family slipped quietly away from the company they had spent decades building. This year marked the end of an era as the Mitchell drove into a new era, a time plagued by disastrous model specifications, poor word-of-mouth

publicity, and a war that would close down the company for good.

By 1923, only 100 Mitchells had been produced for consumer purchase, forcing the company to file for bankruptcy. Bankruptcy wasn't just brought on by the Mitchell's diminished reputation or the earlier withdrawal of the Mitchell and Lewis family members. The war effort had an adverse effect on the public's view of personal transportation. Luxury was no longer an option for



1919 Mitchell panel delivery truck was used by Miller's Drug Store in Boonville as a delivery vehicle. Photo by Deb Jewett

the majority of the population. This effect, combined with growing competition from other emerging car companies toppled the Mitchell-Lewis Company from its lofty position above the other early automakers. In 1924, the Nash Motor Company bought the Racine factory, officially ending the Mitchell's production.

Editor's Note: Information in this article was provided by Lewis Miller and the Mitchell Car Collection website, <http://mitchellcarcollection.com>.

Boonslick Historical Society

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Modern-day photo of the Morrison Observatory, circa 1875, now owned by Central Methodist University and located in Fayette. The original observatory was funded by a gift from Berenice Morrison-Fuller and located in Glasgow. More about the observatory and the Morrison family will be presented in a three-part series beginning in the June issue. *Photo by Jim Steele*