

# BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY



Oakwood, built in 1835-36, was the home of eminent jurist and Unionist Abiel Leonard, pictured at the right.



## Oakwood: An Antebellum Architectural Treasure

Gift of Historically Significant Painting  
*Early History of County and State Fairs*  
Boonslick Historical Society Fall Meeting November 5

VOL. 16 No. 3 — FALL 2017  
BOONSLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERIODICAL



## Symbols of Social Custom and the Landed Gentry

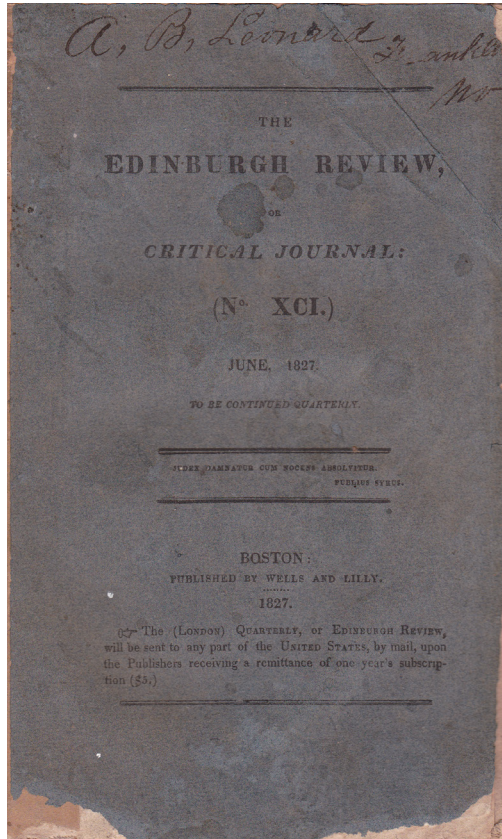
A nineteenth-century literary journal and a period window design might tell us more about the social values and architectural customs of the Boonslick and its landed gentry than a history text.

Landed gentry – historically a British phrase – referred to a social class consisting of land owners who were overseers of their own properties; some also became public, political, and military figures. The description aptly fits the personality in historian James Denny's essay (page 4) on Abiel Leonard, who was a Yankee slaveholder, Missouri Supreme Court justice, passionate Unionist, and builder of one of the Boonslick region's most distinctive homes, Oakwood.

Systems of landed gentry were established in the British colonies in Virginia. And the pretensions of social class embraced in land ownership were to follow nineteenth-century migrants from Virginia and the Upland South to the trans-Mississippi West and into the Boonslick, which became an outpost of Federalist architectural style and political personalities often shaped by a classical education. Successful "burghers," such as Leonard, used their accumulated wealth to buy land and create country estates, with the aim of establishing themselves as landed gentry.

As Denny notes in his well-researched essay, Oakwood was "one of the earliest pretentious brick houses to appear in the Boonslick," where the "... finest flowering of the Federal style in the western United States took place...."

Reinforcing Denny's portrayal of Abiel Leonard as a learned and influential presence in the Boonslick is a rare artifact placed in the editor's care by Harriet (Meals) Finkelstein of Kansas City, daughter of the late Jasper and Elizabeth Meals who owned Oakwood from 1971 to 2015. When going through her parents' papers after her mother passed away, Harriett found



**Above:** Copy of *The Edinburgh Review* with Leonard's apparent signature at the top was found in Oakwood in 2015 by Harriet (Meals) Finkelstein, daughter of the late Jasper and Elizabeth Meals who owned the house from 1971-2015. **Below:** The keystone caps over the windows at Oakwood were a common Federalist-style design feature when the house was built in 1835-36. Keystone photo by James Denny



a tattered copy of a nineteenth-century Scottish publication *The Edinburgh Review* with Abiel Leonard's apparent signature across the top of the cover page.

The template for quarterly periodicals was set by the *The Edinburgh Review*, founded in 1802 by four Whig lawyers with literary aspirations. Widely distributed in both Britain and America, it was a popular periodical among the better-educated American citizens of the era, along with the American national and international newsweekly *Niles' Register*.

The *Register* was as well known as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are today. From 1811 to 1849, it was the principal window through which many Americans looked out on their country and the world. Its circulation was large and included such readers as John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson.

In the biography, *Abiel Leonard, Yankee Slaveholder, Eminent Jurist, and Passionate Unionist* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), historian Dennis K. Boman notes that among Leonard's papers he found receipts for subscriptions to *The Edinburgh Review*, *Niles' Register*, and the *Fayette Missouri Intelligencer*. Clearly, Abiel Leonard was a well-read person with an interest in news and literature from both sides of the Atlantic.

### Fall Program Notes

Details about the Boonslick Historical Society fall meeting at the Hotel Frederick in Boonville are located one page 22. State Historical Society President Bob Priddy will be the guest speaker. Reservations for the November 5 meeting and dinner are required and must be received by October 27. A reservation form is included in the magazine.

—Don B. Cullimore

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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. 16, No. 3 • Fall 2017

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**George Washington Hanging Wallpaper** page 19



Laura Marsh, right, and her husband Terry, center, present painting of George Washington Hanging Wallpaper, a gift to The Ashby-Hodge Gallery. Accepting it are Dr. Joe Geist, left, and Tom Yancey.

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Cover photo of Oakwood by Don Cullimore. Photo of Abiel Leonard portrait courtesy of Leonard biography author Dennis Boman and James Denny.



# Oakwood: The Push of Pretention and the Pull of Provincialism in Missouri's Boonslick Region

By James M. Denny

On spacious, tree-shaded acreage on the eastern edge of Fayette, Missouri, sits a beautiful two-story brick house, Oakwood. It was the home of Abiel and Jeanette Leonard and their family. Oakwood was built in 1835-36, enlarged in 1850, and given a new portico in 1856.

The story of the construction and remodeling of Oakwood is contained in the many letters and financial records in the Abiel Leonard manuscript collection. For several decades these papers lingered unexamined in the attic of Oakwood. In 1930, the family allowed Frederick A. Culmer, a Central Methodist College professor, to examine the material. The result was a five-part series of articles on Abiel Leonard published in the *Missouri Historical Review*. A few years after Culmer's visit to Oakwood's attic, the Leonard family donated the massive collection to the State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

Any scholar of the antebellum period in Missouri inevitably follows in the steps of Culmer and makes a pilgrimage to this magnificent repository of documents. The collection is full of insights into the history of the pre-Civil War decades in Missouri, especially its rich political and legal history. Although less explored, there is also a wealth of information relating to the Leonard building activities and family life.

The letters and other papers of the Leonard collection document busy and productive lives. Abiel Leonard achieved distinction in early Missouri history as a preeminent lawyer, legal scholar,

Whig political leader, and, ultimately, justice on the Missouri Supreme Court. As the Civil War loomed he was a prominent and outspoken Unionist. For most of his career, Abiel was a successful attorney with a statewide practice who spent much of his time on the road.

Abiel's wife, Jeanette, played the typical role of a Southern lady who, far from living a life of leisure, was constantly busy bearing and rearing children and running a large household. When necessary, she also took charge of agricultural activities and supervised several slaves. She was educated, sensible, intelligent, literate, and, despite her deferral to her husband, had a strong moral compass and particular ideas about how to order her sphere, which embraced Oakwood and everything that happened there.



West face of Oakwood with restored portico. Late fall 2015 photo. Photo by Cathy Thogmorton

Because of Abiel's many absences, the family exchanged a multitude of letters. These letters allow us a sideline view of the daily life of an antebellum married couple building and improving a large residence while operating a large and bustling household. Some sixty letters cover a two-month period from late March through May of 1856, when the Leonards were having a new portico built. This correspondence not only provides a vivid daily account of the construction of the portico but also of every other domestic event at Oakwood at that time. From these letters, a blow-by-blow account emerges of what it took to get something of quality built in the "upper country" at mid-nineteenth century, while managing a farm and garden and overseeing a busy and complicated family life.

## Boonslick Beginnings

In 1819, a 22-year-old Abiel Leonard joined a host of land seekers streaming to the Boonslick boomtown of Franklin, Missouri. "Franklin or bust," was the destination of a long line of caravans filled mainly with immigrants from states of the Upper South—Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, or North Carolina. Lured by the legendary Boone name (attached to a salt lick) and by glowing descriptions of the bounteous countryside, they were rushing *en masse* to the fabled "Boonslick Country" to secure titles and



take up the rich land just coming to market following the War of 1812.

Unlike most migrants, Abiel Leonard was a Dartmouth-educated Yankee from Vermont. He came from a distinguished New England family that had fallen on hard times. When Abiel arrived at Franklin he was penniless, but he had an iron determination to achieve distinction. In 1824, he fought a duel with Taylor Berry and killed him. Berry had publicly assaulted Leonard after a legal proceeding. Although Abiel was a small, chronically ill, somewhat frail man, this event demonstrated his unshakable inner courage, a quality his Southern neighbors admired. Leonard's duel actually helped propel his career as a lawyer. As he prospered, he adopted another Southern custom, slaveholding. At one point, he owned ten slaves.

In 1830, Abiel's roots in the Boonslick were deepened still further by his marriage to Jeanette Reeves, a Kentucky-born lady. Jeanette was the daughter of Benjamin Reeves. Before he moved to Missouri, Reeves held several offices in Kentucky and served a term as lieutenant governor. After he relocated to Missouri, he became one of the commissioners to survey and mark the Santa Fe Trail.

Soon the newlyweds were ready to build their first house. In 1830, Abiel chose New Franklin as the site where he and his bride would set up housekeeping. New Franklin was the successor town to "Old" Franklin, which was being washed away by recurring Missouri River floods. Only a few scraps of documentary evidence survive regarding this dwelling. The cost of the house and cellar plus the lots, improvements on lots, and a stable came to \$1,546.83. We only know that the house was made of brick, kilned nearby by James Fryer, and that the brickwork was done by Fryer and Owen Rawlins, a noted early Howard County builder.

The house surely had more than one room and could possibly have been laid out along the lines of an old fashioned southern hall-and-parlor house with a larger (hall/living room) and smaller (parlor/bedroom) room plus a likely rear room, or ell, for cooking. The house was large enough to have breakfast and dining room tables, a bookcase, and a bureau with columns in addition to other furniture. While here, the couple had their first child, a boy who tragically died a month after birth.

### Building Oakwood

Three years later, Abiel and Jeanette moved to Fayette, the county seat of Howard County. It was a better location for Leonard to pursue his growing law practice. He purchased a 26-acre tract of land on the eastern edge of Fayette. Here, in 1835-36, the couple built their beloved home, Oakwood. The usually prolific Leonard papers are unfortunately slim on most of the particulars

of the building of this stately brick house. Abiel must have been at home a good deal of the time, for there are no letters to Jeanette about this ambitious undertaking. For the two years Oakwood was under construction, the couple lived on the premises in a log house with their one-year-old daughter, Mary. Before Oakwood was completed, daughter Martha would make her appearance.

Masonry on the house began in the spring of 1835. The contractor, William Collier, and his crew were top-notch bricklayers. One legend reports that Leonard was so particular about the quality of the brick that some batches had to be fired as many as three times before he was satisfied. The passage of 182 years confirms that he got his money's worth.

Oakwood is a large house: one room deep, two full stories, with rooms 20 feet square on each floor separated by hallways 11 & 1/2 feet wide. The first-story ceilings are an airy 11 feet in height. Attached to the rear of Oakwood was a one-story, three-room-deep addition, also of brick.

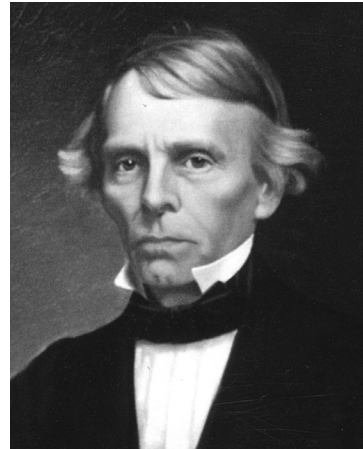
The design of Oakwood conforms to a very typical Southern house type. Architectural historians refer to houses such as Oakwood

as central-passage I-houses, in recognition of the distinctive one room deep, two-story with a hall profile. Such houses were visible testaments to the wealth and status of upwardly mobile Southerners throughout the Upper South.

By December 1835, Oakwood was taking shape. The walls of the main house were up and the roof finished by early 1836. Brickwork on the ell was underway. Leonard tried to make arrangements to have a Mr. Smith make shingles but was informed that Smith was too busy but that the "young man" could make 5,000, the first work he did. Father-in-law, Benjamin Reeves, wrote to Abiel, during at least one absence in 1835: "Your work is progressing so far as I can judge, quite well. Mr. Harvey is tendering his aid. Mr. Collier still believes there is brick enough to finish of course none is [hauling] from Hughes? Shepperd could not be prevailed upon to work."

Carpenters arrived on the work site to frame the staircase, lay the flooring, and complete the interior finish work. The doors, windows, mantel pieces, moldings, and trim were all made of locally obtained walnut. Indeed, every material in Oakwood—the "burned" brick, the clay for that brick, the lime for mortar, the stones for the foundation, and the oak structural and walnut finish woods—came from nearby locations.

It wasn't easy to build a large house in the Boonslick at a time when trading networks with cosmopolitan centers such as St. Louis or Philadelphia were still in a primitive state. Sometimes, even locally sawed lumber was hard to come by. At one point, an order for oak flooring and walnut lumber for the house had to be deferred for several months as Abiel's supplier in Chariton had to first



**Jeanette Reeves Leonard and Abiel Leonard were married in 1830 and initially lived in New Franklin before building Oakwood in Fayette in 1835.**

*Photos courtesy Dennis Boman*



A fanlighted central doorway was a typical Federal period design, as was the wood-paneled wainscoating. Photo by Don Cullimore

in 1835 to St. Louis merchants. Items needed included "Boston" nails in various sizes and large quantities, 180 panes of 12" x 18" window glass, a variety of hardware for doors and windows, including "Newell" hinges to attach window blinds and, it would seem, only made by a St. Louis blacksmith named Newell. There is also a rough draft of a letter he wrote in that same year to an unidentified person, very likely in St. Louis, requesting a variety of furnishings, including Scotch carpeting, in "deep, strong colors," best quality wall paper with velvet paper bordering for two rooms and a hall, material for curtains, including worked fringe and brass rods, a mahogany sofa, one dozen mahogany chairs, one dozen Windsor chairs, one high-post mahogany bedstead, a pair of brass andirons, shovel and tongs, and a brass fire fender.

The furniture and fireplace equipment he calculated would cost about \$290.00. On April 5, 1837, he paid Peter Powell & Co. of St. Louis \$182.11 for the hinges and fastenings and other materials he had ordered. Between May 1837 and February 1838, he paid Fayette cabinet-maker Samuel C. Major \$124.00 for locally made furniture.

Abiel and Jeanette were trendsetters. Oakwood was one of the earliest pretentious brick houses to appear in the Boonslick and remains to this day one of the oldest houses still standing in mid-Missouri. It has many of the typical features of the elegant Federal architectural style that flourished in Howard County during the late 1820s through the early years of the 1840s. The finest flowering of the Federal style in the western United States took place in the Boonslick. Oakwood is an important milestone in

"build three or four flatboats." (The steamboat era would not begin in earnest for another decade.)

To achieve the level of emerging affluence that Oakwood represented, Abiel was compelled to search beyond the limited resources of his immediate environment. "I am building a house and want some materials which cannot conveniently be had short of your city," he wrote

the emergence of this high-quality regional architectural tradition and a visible representation of the emergence of central Missouri's society, economy, and architecture from frontier conditions.

Oakwood's principal facade was laid up the Flemish bond brickwork (alternating header, stretcher courses of brick), a typical feature of Federal style houses of this era. A fanlight is set above double-leaf entry doors. Skillfully rendered cut-stone lintels and keystones top the windows and lend an elegant touch to the front of the house (Lilac Hill, 1832, south of Fayette, has similar lintels and keystones). The interior of Oakwood is finished with walnut woodwork executed in a Federal style unique to Howard County. Inside are finely carved mantels, bull's-eye door and window architraves, and other woodwork typical of the Howard County Federal style. The unusual carved oval paterae carved into the parlor mantels seem to belong to a singular school of design among Boonslick craftsmen. The same patera design was utilized in other houses in the Fayette area that were erected during the 1830s. The Claiborne Fox Jackson house is one such house that is still standing. The identity of the master craftsman who carved this group of wonderfully executed mantels and other fine Federal woodwork remains unknown. It's too bad Abiel's records offer no hint of the identity of this mystery woodworker.

## Enlarging Oakwood

By 1850, Abiel and Jeanette were ready to undertake the first of several major renovations to Oakwood. Abiel was 53 at that time; Jeanette, 38. Their household had expanded to several children. Mary was 17; Martha, 15; Reeves, 13; Ada, 10; Kate, 6; and Abiel, 2. A seventh child, Nathaniel William, would arrive the following year. Also living in their household were a relative and two wards as well as nine slaves.

Given the size of this household, it is hardly surprising that Abiel and Jeanette would decide to enlarge their house. They added another brick story to the existing rear ell and also a double gallery porch supported by square pillars with an outside stair and an



In 1850 Leonard added a second story to the the ell extension and a double-gallery porch supported by square pillars and an enclosed porch room at the end of the ell. Later renovations turned the porch into a greenhouse and the lower area became a modern kitchen. Photo by Cathy Thogmorton in 2015



enclosed porch room. Such galleried rear wings were beginning to become a common feature of large houses constructed in Missouri's plantation regions during the prosperous decade of the 1850s.

Abiel selected both native and imported lumber for this building project. He appeared to obtain most of his oak for joists, rafters, and the like from a Glasgow sawyer and tobacco manufacturer named J. F. Nicholds. But Leonard also decided to follow an increasingly popular trend of using pine for finishing lumber. Yellow pine (*pinus echinata*) was not native to the Boonslick region, but there were extensive pine forests in the central Ozarks along the upper Big Piney River watershed and other locations. By the mid-nineteenth century, these pineries were being exploited on a large scale by saw millers and other backwoods entrepreneurs. Pine lumber became increasingly plentiful as a source of easily worked wood that could be used for a wide variety of construction purposes.

That imported pine lumber was more expensive than locally harvested lumber did not affect its popularity. As the 1850s dawned, yellow and white pine were increasingly used in Boonslick construction. By this time pine was universally preferred to walnut for most mantels, doors, and interior trim work.

The pine boards for the Oakwood renovation, as well as 15,000 shingles, were purchased from a Boonville lumber dealer named R. D. Perry. As expected, Leonard paid more to acquire his pine boards, as costs to ship this commodity up the Missouri River had to be added in. Leonard paid between \$2.75 and \$3.75 a board foot for the pine; oak lumber cost far less at \$1.25 to \$1.50 a foot. That customers such as Ab-



**In 1856 Leonard added a portico to the west entrance of the house. Sometime around the turn of the 19th century, his heirs removed the portico and replaced it with an ornate Eastlake-style veranda that went across the entire front of Oakwood. In the 1930s, Leonard's granddaughter Jeanette and her husband Perry Spenser had the veranda demolished and the portico recreated, along with the original limestone steps crafted by German stone mason Anton Lutz. They can be seen at the bottom of the photo. Photo by Cathy Thogmorton**

**The photo below, taken in late 1920s, shows the house with veranda across the western face and bay windows. Photo courtesy HABS—Historic American Buildings Survey.**



iel were willing to pay more for pine lumber showed that the upper country was becoming integrated into regional and national trading networks.

During the course of the renovation, the Leonards experienced considerable difficulty obtaining enough brick for their project. At that time brickmaking and lime burning were still conducted entirely on the local level, either by farmers who set up kilns and began "burning brick," or by brickyards that were active in the major towns. Despite the fact that a regional building boom was in progress, with many brick mansions going up, the relationship between supply and demand was volatile. Sudden supply emergencies could arise.

Such a fate nearly befell Abiel and Jeanette when the flow of bricks ceased abruptly. Their brickmaker, James Patterson, had produced 30,000 bricks for the project before announcing, without notice, that he would provide no more. Abiel was away at the time, and two weeks of agitated correspondence passed between Abiel and Jeanette about where they could find more brick. Jeanette reported that a frantic search of the countryside was underway to locate someone who had set up a kiln and was ready to burn brick. A moment of hope evaporated when brick from a Mr. Gates proved of such indifferent quality that the mason, William H. Jones, 34, from Maryland, advised that no more be hauled from there. Jones suggested that good bricks were available from Boonville, if Leonard wanted to foot the extra expense of ferrying them across the Missouri River. Maybe that is what they decided to do, although Abiel generally avoided extra expenses whenever he could. One way or another, the needed brick



was found to finish the rear wing.

Leonard's main carpenter was William H. Nipper, a 33-year-old Tennessean who had migrated from Blount County. A biography in the 1883 *History of Howard and Cooper Counties* credits him with being one of the few good carpenters around. After 1858, Nipper retired to a 270-acre farm and took up agriculture.

Not long after the addition was completed, Jeanette gave birth, on June 24, 1852, to Nathaniel William. Three weeks later, her daughter Mary was married at Oakwood to Horace Everett, Jr.

Not until May of the following year was the last task of the project, the plastering, finally completed. There are payments to William Brunt for this work. For the first time in many months, the Oakwood household was blessedly free of workmen under foot.

## Justice Leonard's Portico

In the early spring of 1856, Abiel Leonard decided to build a portico and otherwise improve his mansion in Fayette. The intention to do so had been stewing in his mind for at least four years. In 1852, Abiel had written to Jeanette from Columbia: "I took supper today at Mr. Prewitts, and was so well pleased with his iron portico, just put up, that I am quite in the mind of having one to our house. It is both handsome and durable, but I presume a little more costly than a wooden one. (Ours) would be a very great improvement to our house."

One other notion of Abiel was to update the house by trying to fit a Greek Revival-style boxed cornice around the top of the main block. His carpenter, Samuel Stoner, cautioned him that no matter how up-to-date it might appear, the cornice just wouldn't look right, "without it [the cornice] is carried up pretty heavy it will look poor where it crops the chimney and if it is heavy it will come over the windows." Leonard allowed himself to be overruled by his carpenter/contractor. Stoner's advice to Abiel was one instance of how the provincial conservatism of a local craftsman

could blunt the cosmopolitan aspirations of his client. Other obstacles to up-to-datedness lay ahead for Abiel, including the resistance of his own wife, Jeanette.

Even without the cornice, an ambitious round of improvements was still on the to-do list for the 1856 spring building campaign. The portico, which was to be made of wood, not iron, was but one of several projects on the agenda for renovations and improvements. Also planned were new stone steps for the portico, interior painting, new plastering and papering, bridging of the main floors to stop their shaking, new blinds for the windows, new doors for the carriage house, and construction of a new servant's house for slave Ann to be attached to the existing smokehouse.

When the first news of the building campaign arrived via letters from his family, Abiel was in St. Louis, living by himself in a hotel room, attending a session of the Supreme Court. He repeated to Jeanette his often uttered lament that he was "heartily tired of being separated from my family."

By late March, the carpenters at Oakwood were ready to work. The first task they tackled was the portico. First, they took down all or part of an older porch. This cleared the way for the foundation of the new porch. The stone mason, "Old Mr. [Anton] Lutz," arrived to begin laying the stone for this new foundation. While Lutz worked on the foundation, the carpenters started on those elements of the portico that could be constructed on the ground.

The presence of these workmen with their demands for various kinds of assistance also signaled the beginning of a series of disruptions to the routine of agricultural

activities going on at Oakwood. This constant interference caused Jeanette no end of frustrations. Over the years the Oakwood estate had expanded to 300 acres. Oakwood had become a farming operation and the time for spring plowing was at hand. But the slave who was supposed to do that work, Uncle John, had first to



Photo taken in the 1930s shows the north parlor with bookcases that Leonard had built next to the fireplace. The mantel seen in both photos shows an oval-shaped decoration bordered on each side by ovolo designs. Upper photo courtesy of HABS, lower photo by Cathy Thogmorton in 2015





spend a week hauling sand, lime, and rock to supply the needs of Mr. Lutz. Then he was dispatched to Glasgow to obtain plank for the portico--plank, that it turned out, was not there. The first crisis had begun.

### The Plank Crisis

Abiel, for all his pretensions to Boonslick grandeur, still retained a strong measure of Yankee thrift. He kept a watchful eye on every penny he spent and would try to cut a corner wherever he could. In this instance he thought he could get a better bargain on his pine plank in St. Louis and still be ahead even after the cost of

Kingsbury house and the Prior Jackson house. Another of his projects, the William Jefferson Smith house, is also still standing.

For the time being, Samuel Stoner was able to keep his men occupied making blinds for the parlor windows. Jeanette, however, was clearly apprehensive, "I wish so much you could be at home for a short time to get the workmen agoing I can do nothing more than a child." But Leonard was busy trying to line up the shipment of the needed plank. He assured his wife that the thousand feet of pine lumber would be on the next packet heading upriver and should arrive at Glasgow in a few days. But the communications and transportation systems that kept Jeanette and Abiel in touch

with each other were much slower than the pace of events at Oakwood.

Jeanette was a conventional nineteenth-century woman who believed in deferring to the judgment of her husband. The portico had been Abiel's idea; she preferred that her husband handle all the supervision and decision making involved in building it. But with Abiel absent, still trying to micromanage the project, Jeanette found herself constantly thrust into



**Left:** After Jeanette's death in 1895, son Nathaniel and his wife Alice extended the first floor hallway all the way into the ell. The result was a lavishly decorated late-Victorian hallway and stairwell in a refined neoclassical design. **Right:** Downstairs room with fireplace and press closet at left.

*Photos by Don Cullimore*

shipping it upriver. The only problem was that Leonard had not shipped the plank yet. He had been trying to gain a further saving by waiting for a dip in the price of freight. His delay put considerable pressure on his ex-officio onsite manager, Jeanette. Now that the workmen had arrived, the last thing she needed was to have the project stalled because of a lumber shortage.

The carpenters, under the supervision of Samuel Stoner, had set up their workbench at the building site and were ready to get started. But there was little for them to do on site without the plank that Leonard should have sent by then. Stoner and his crew could not afford to sit around idle while Leonard tried to pinch a penny. Plenty of work awaited them elsewhere. Many fine houses were going up in the Boonslick during those prosperous years. Samuel Stoner had cautioned Leonard when the project began that he had rather more work on hand than he ought to have. This Pennsylvania-born craftsman was one of the more capable carpenters in Howard County. During the mid-1850s, Samuel Stoner worked on several large country houses for the slaveholding gentry of the area. Two Howard County houses Stoner helped build are on the National Register of Historic Places--the Horace

a doubly frustrating situation. Immediate decisions were necessary and she had to make them. She never relished stepping into Abiel's province, but nineteenth-century conventions aside, Jeanette was a manager of other people, as most Southern women were, and a very capable one. She kept a large household functioning efficiently. Leonard obviously depended upon her greatly, especially during his frequent absences, to supervise a broad range of domestic activities that encompassed their large garden and farming operations. Abiel would often remind Jeanette of the need to accomplish essential undertakings, although she hardly needed any prodding from her husband.

Jeanette was under constant strain as she tried to coordinate the many urgent tasks of an already hectic spring season, while being bombarded with constant requests from workmen needing materials. Her letters making their way to St. Louis in early April had little good news to report on either front. No progress at all had been made on the crops and garden, she reported, because the ground was too wet, and if not too wet, then there was no time because the workmen were needing supplies and materials that she had to provide.

First, there was a lime shortage. The surrounding countryside had to be scoured for lime needed by Mr. Lutz for the foundation work. Enough was finally located by her teenage son, Reeves, at Widow Mason's, four miles away. With lime on hand, the old porch came down on Saturday, April 5, to make way for the new foundation. Stoner estimated that they could finish the new portico in about two weeks if they did not have to stop for want of materials.

On the subject of want of materials, Jeanette reported that lumber on hand had served to make the parlor window blinds and that Uncle John had been dispatched to Mr. Ropes in Glasgow for a load of lumber that Mr. Stoner was not at all pleased with but had to use anyway as better lumber from Mr. Major in Fayette could not be obtained. "I hope you have started up the lumber you were to send up; otherwise, I fear our carpenters will have to stop."

With Leonard desperate to get the lumber shipped and not be the cause of a work stoppage, Murphy's Law made its entry into his equations. "Another blunder" began a letter written by Leonard to Jeanette on Saturday evening, April 5. He had been told, he tried to explain, that the boat leaving that day was the *Carrier*, when it was actually the *St. Mary*. The *Carrier* had left the day before, and consequently the lumber was on neither boat and would have to await the departure of the *Tutt*, which would go up on Tuesday. He hoped it would reach in time, but if not, Mr. Stoner could get enough white pine to keep him at work and wait for the yellow pine till it arrived. In any event, the lumber, he assured, would be sent on the first boat that went out, or on any other Glasgow or Brunswick boat.

On Monday, however, the picture did not look any brighter for Jeanette. Neither the *Tutt* nor the *Eaton* had arrived, although both were advertised that morning. By the next day, April 8, the lumber situation was becoming critical: "[We] feel a little disappointed about the lumber you were to have sent up, as the carpenters have been here ten days and we [are] needing it. . . . If Mr. Stoner could only get such materials as he needed I think his work would go so well. He seems an energetic persevering man."

The pressure of the immediate situation forced Jeanette to yield to Stoner's need for material. As the lumber obtained from Glasgow proved indifferent, and as none had arrived from St. Louis, Stoner resolved to select personally what he needed and was going to Boonville the next day for that purpose. Stoner wrote to Leonard that same day to explain the situation. Regarding the pine lumber, he had learned from fellow master builder, Joseph McGraw, that very good yellow pine flooring could be had in Boonville. It was his opinion that everything needed could be obtained locally. His end of the operation was obviously going smoothly: "We have the work nearly all out ready to put up. Mr. Lutz is at work on the foundation."

The day that Mr. Stoner went to Boonville for lumber was also the day Leonard's lumber finally cleared St. Louis, and he was also sending up some flower seeds and books for the children. His effort to orchestrate the building effort by letter from St. Louis had only resulted in frustration for his wife. She confided to her husband, "I believe we were wrong in attempting to build the portico at this busy season of the year, but no help now I suppose."

On Sunday evening, April 13, things seemed more under control. Jeanette was able to report that Mr. Lutz had finished the foundation and that the next day Mr. Stoner would probably raise the portico. The lumber from St. Louis had not arrived yet. When Leonard wrote his wife on Monday evening, he assured her regarding the lumber mix-up. No harm would be done as long as the lumber he sent up was carefully put away so

that it might be sold for what it cost. If it were thrown about carelessly, he warned, it would all be wasted. He was becoming very concerned about the corn, which he felt must be planted. He urged that Reeves be assigned the responsibility of seeing that the crop was put in while there was still time.

Jeanette hardly needed to be advised on the urgency of planting, for the letter she wrote to Abiel on Tuesday showed the stress she was under. There was no place in Jeanette's day for extras. While the children were thrilled with the books and flower seeds, there was really not time for slaves John and Jim to spade up a



**Above: before the upstairs hallway and stairs were added, this area was a covered porch. Bedroom doors can be seen in the photo.**  
**Below: upstairs bedroom with fireplace and two press closets.**

Photos by Don Cullimore





square in the garden in which to plant them. "Indeed there is so much for them to do it seems to me they get nothing done. It takes a great part of John's time hauling--today he was gone to Glasgow

Saturday, daughter Ada, 16, and son Abiel, Jr., 8, had good news concerning the portico. You should see how well it begins to look, said Ada. Abiel, Jr., reported that the workmen were getting on pretty fast and had the upper porch completed except for the "banisters," or ballusters.

The books Leonard had sent up were well received. Ada reported that she was nearly finished with the first volume of her history of the United States and that Willie, 5, asked her to read his book to him every evening. Abiel, Jr., wouldn't say much about his but didn't allow anyone within three feet of it. Kate, writing on Sunday, liked her life of Empress Josephine better "than any novel you could get me."

Jeanette, also writing that Sunday evening, said that the portico would be done in a day or two more. "I think they have been a long time about it," she laconically observed.

Abiel's efforts at conspicuous display seemed to meet with only faint enthusiasm from Jeanette, who seemed to be made of plainer, more sensible cloth. She shared with her husband the strong sense of duty toward society and family and worked hard to expose her children to whatever opportunities for enrichment and education presented themselves in Fayette. But she did not share his desire to outshine their neighbors in grandness. She was chiefly occupied

in keeping the engine of a large nineteenth-century extended Southern family running smoothly and ensuring that all of the cyclical activities of rural life were carried out in their appointed time. Spring was the time for planting and for a top-to-bottom cleaning of Oakwood. She was ready to get on with the cleaning, but another of her husband's aspirations was causing a delay.

### The Painting and Paper Standoff, Part I

The problem was what to do about the papering and painting that was on the agenda of improvements. Abiel wanted to find a paperer and painter in St. Louis, but Jeanette wanted the renovations



**In 1856-57, Slave Ann's house was built adjoining the existing smokehouse, at the rear. Behind this joined structure is a slave house that was built earlier, shown below. Note vented brick work on the smokehouse. Photos by Don Cullimore**

for the lumber you sent up."

As if that were not enough, Mr. Lutz had dropped by that morning on his way to get stone for the steps and wanted Jim to go along and help him. Jeanette refused, "for if we raise any corn I know its high time that they should be breaking up the ground and there is not a furrow yet." If corn was to be got in, it had to be immediately for in three or four days Mr. Lutz would need three or four more loads of stone hauled and would need the slaves to help.

It was becoming clear to Jeanette that not all the projects planned for that spring could be accomplished, what with Mr. Lutz's demands, the uncertain weather, and the mishaps with the lumber. She, therefore, decided that Slave Ann's house would have to be put off. The planning for this house had been well under way by then. Leonard had decided that it should be built abutting an existing smokehouse. This would eliminate the need for a wall and save the purchase of 2,000 bricks. The 6,000 bricks for the house had been ordered, and Stoner had been instructed to make a door and window for the house. Twelve-year-old daughter Kate served as a lobbyist for Ann. She wrote to her father that Ann was very anxious for her to ask if he would let the workmen make her a little closet. Ann's reaction to the news that her house would be postponed is not recorded. Kate, however, seemed to take the news in stride, "I will be very glad when I see Ann's house begun and I suppose she will be in the same fix but as the old saying is beggars should not be choosers, Ann and I will have to be patient."

It appeared that the first hurdle, the lumber shortage, had been cleared. Writing on Friday and





completed and the house returned to her control. In early April, she began pressing her husband hard on this issue. It seemed that Leonard was again attempting to transcend Boonslick provincialism by securing an up-to-date St. Louis painter but was either too busy to look, or was having no luck in finding one. Jeanette began a campaign, with subtlety at first, to recruit a suitable local craftsman. She introduced her first two candidates on April 20: "Mr. Stoner says he has no doubt but we could get the painter who did Dr. Talbot's work. He says also that Clinton Mack of Boonville was a very good painter."

Abiel was evidently not taking the hint, so three days later she added another turn. "What have you concluded about painting [and] papering. . . Dr. [Joseph] Smith [who married daughter Martha] says Mr. Fitzpatrick--the man who did Dr. Talbot's painting--is anxious to do our work and promises to do it well." She went on to explain her sense of urgency: "I wish you would decide what is to be done in this matter. My carpets upstairs are up and the house is in disorder and if we are to have papering and painting done soon it will not be worthwhile to put them down before the painting is done. If you have this work done now I suppose you will get paper for the rooms you intend to have repapered and send up soon." In a letter written the next day, to drive the point home, she again mentioned that she was very anxious to hear from him regarding the painting but would spare him a recital of the reasons given the previous day.

### Mr. Lutz, the Stone Mason

As if there were not problems enough, Anton Lutz, the stone mason, continued to be a source of vexation. Mr. Lutz had stated that it would take three weeks to make the steps. It was an extremely labor-intensive and time-consuming process, requiring considerable skill, to take huge limestone slabs and transform them into perfectly rectangular steps several feet long, as much as a yard wide, and a foot thick.

Lutz had emigrated from Prussia in 1847 and had a thick Ger-

man accent that the Leonard children loved to mock in letters to their father. Lutz, by steadfastly and diligently following his trade, bettered his condition and retired to the country, according to the *History of Howard and Cooper Counties*, far more independent and wealthy "than a whole regiment of little titled Hesse-Darmstadt, Saxe-Altenburg nobodies."

In 1856, Lutz was nearly at midpoint in his rise to the independence of a country gentleman and was apparently hired only for his skilled labor. He had no more than one assistant and shifted a good part of the responsibility for providing the heavy labor of hauling his materials to his clients, in this case the beleaguered Leonards.

Abiel was greatly agitated by the incident that had occurred four days earlier and responded emphatically:

*I did not intend that the steps should interfere with farming and hope you will not allow it to prevent or at all stand in the way of that business. I supposed that after the foundation was laid for the porch, Mr. Lutz, would wait for help as to the steps until we could furnish it. At any rate you can say to him, [slave] Jim cannot help him nor can John until our corn is planted. . . . You must observe that even one day is of moment when the crop is being put in, and he must wait for the hauling till you get a wet day.*

This statement reveals that Leonard still did not grasp the reality of building in the Boonslick: Skilled tradesmen were not going to skip paydays to suit Abiel's convenience. If the steps were to be completed, Jeanette had no choice but to yield to Lutz's need for materials. Fortunately, she could take refuge for her acts in the slow mails:

*I have just received yours of Saturday [April 19] last [it was then Wednesday] and hasten to answer it. Your orders always come a little too late. Some days ago Mr. Lutz and his man went down into Mr. Kingsbury's neighborhood and got up the rock for*



Brick fruit cellar has steps going down to a room with a unique beehive vaulted brick ceiling, shown at right. Photos by Don Cullimore





*our steps and yesterday, I had to stop John to go to hauling the rock. Mr. L said if it was not hauled now, he did not know when he could finish our steps as he would have to undertake other work, so I concluded it would be best to stop our boys and let it be hauled. It will take two more days after today and then I will try to keep our boys at the corn until it is planted.*

She consoled her husband with the fact that the season was backward due to the cold spring, and for that reason the corn was probably better out of the ground than in it.

### The Flower Garden

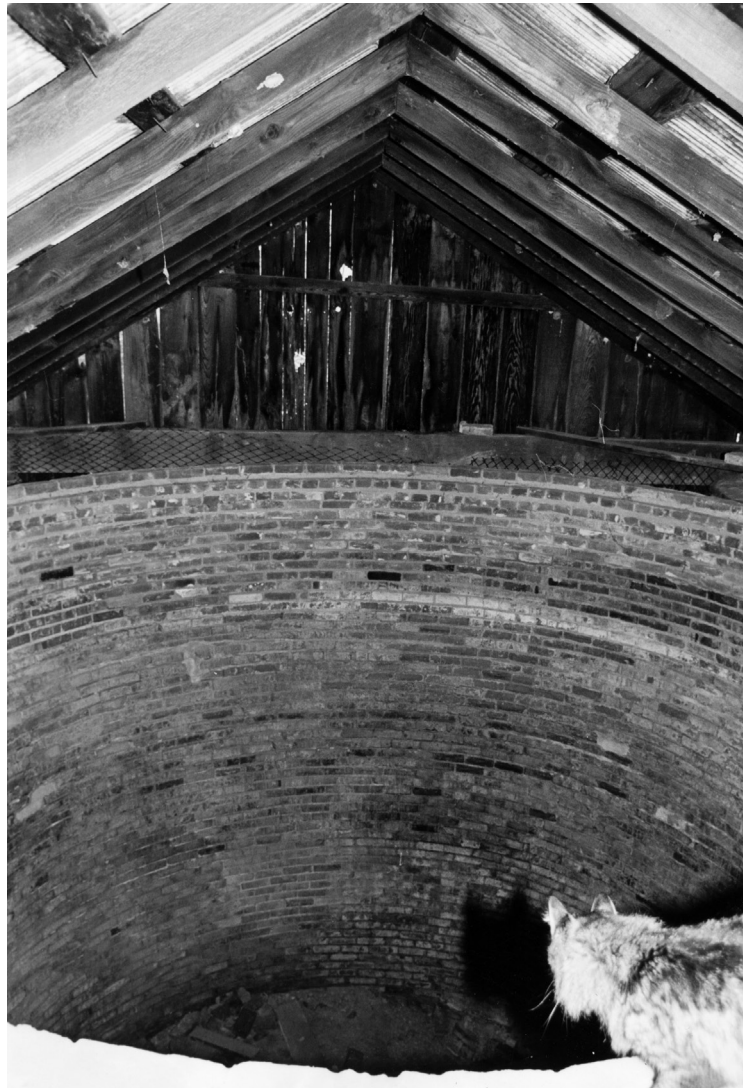
If Abiel's and Jeanette's letters were full of the myriad details, complications and frustrations of running a large domestic and farming operation during a fickle season and carrying on a major building program to boot, deeper subjects were touched upon from time to time. Leonard, painfully torn between his driving ambition and the isolation from his family it caused, pledged to his wife: "but to you I may say I wish my term of service was now expired, and that when it does expire, that shall be an end of any office or business that is to separate me from my family. . . . I do not regret altogether taking the office, but I cannot consent to retain it long if it is to part me from my family, as it has done."

Although he must have appeared to almost all who knew him as a cold and severely formal man, there was a deep tenderness in him toward his children that was apparent in his letters and that was reciprocated in the charming letters his children wrote him. Their letters were full of news and written with a sweet and guileless frankness that must have touched the absent parent. These missives conveyed to their busy father the intimate moments that did not often find a way into the distracted Jeanette's communications. Ada wrote: "Pa you ought not to stay from home so much or Ma ought to stay in St. Louis some. I know she gets tired of living out here by her self. We are at school all day you know & when we are at home I don't think we are much company."

Judge Leonard had ordered three pianos from New York (one for Oakwood, one each for his married daughters, Mary and Martha), and his children's letters were full of speculation about when theirs would arrive. And there was the most exciting event of all to report--the dancing school. "The Methodists say they don't know what the Episcopalians [the Leonards' denomination] will get here next--a race course they expect." This from Ada, who had received the hope of her teacher, Mr. Lucky [William T. Lucky, principal of Howard High School], that she would get too much sense in her head to want any in her feet. Kate assured, "if [dancing] effects every person as little as it does me it does no harm."

In response, Leonard sent letters that conveyed an affection tinged with his ever-present formality. He always expressed to his children his pleasure in receiving their letters, and always he encouraged his children in their studies.

Kate confirmed in both a personal letter and one ghostwritten for Abiel, Jr., that all of the flower seeds Leonard had sent would have to be planted together in the flower garden for, as Jeanette had written, slave Jim was too busy to take time to spade up a special square. This pained Leonard, for those flower



**Top photo: Only the red metal roof and superstructure of the icehouse show above ground. Below: Farm cat peers into 14-foot deep and equally wide brick-lined chamber where the ice was kept, packed with layers of straw or sawdust for insulation.**

*Top photo by Cathy Thogmorton, below photo courtesy James Denny*



seeds had been sent at the specific request of Kate: "Pa I have something very particular for you to do . . . it is this. I want a very pretty flower garden this summer and so does Ma and I want you if you please to get us some flower seed. . . . It would not do for us to have a pretty portico and house and piano and two good players on the piano and not a flower garden." Busy and preoccupied as he knew Jeanette was, still he pleaded: "Pray try and have a square ploughed up in the garden for the children. The boys can take time for this surely. Indeed, if they will take the plough they can do it immediately."

### The Wallpaper and Painter War of Wills, Part II

In a letter written on April 27, Leonard at last got around to the question of the painting and papering. It was now becoming evident that this particular project was an essential element in his agenda and that despite the strong pressure he was receiving from Jeanette, he was reluctant to surrender this particular prerogative to her. He broached the subject gingerly: "I hardly know what to say about painting and papering, that is, as to time and by whom it shall be done. I would greatly prefer being at home when this work is being done." But that would be no sooner than late June, which would hardly suit his wife's spring cleaning plans. Given this variance in their desires, he suggested a postponement, if that was agreeable with her.

It was an easy out for him as he was clearly not on top of the situation and readily confessed that he would likely not be able to locate a St. Louis painter. He conceded, perhaps a little half-heartedly, that they would probably be obliged to take on up-country painters. As he would have to buy the paper in St. Louis, he definitely wanted his wife's opinions about which rooms they would do. This matter, he deferred, would be left entirely to her taste and judgment. That same morning, Sunday, April 27, Jeanette skipped church to write her husband that the carpenters were about finished. Painting was still on her mind. "How I wish we were ready to have the painting done." Her choice, Mr. Fitzpatrick, would not be free as he was still at work on Billy Paine's [William Payne's] house. She obviously already suspected her husband's desire for

fashionableness to be at the heart of the delay and parried with the news that Mr. Fitzpatrick had reported knowing a man who could put a cornice around the ceilings if Leonard wished.

Her suspicions concerning her husband's social aspirations were on the mark, as was revealed in a letter written by him in a spare moment in a courtroom during the middle of the following week: "I called at Mr. Michael--the paper man--today. He told me it was common here to paper ceilings, and put on paper moldings and center pieces and showed me paper for that purpose. I thought, and so did Judge Ryland who was with me, that it would make a very handsome finish, far handsomer than anything we have yet in the upper country. He said it was used here in fine parlors."

He was evidently still trying to locate a St. Louis painter but with no luck. Having reported all this, he again went out of his way to try to gain Jeanette's concurrence in the course of action he was obviously pushing. "You must say what rooms you want repa-

pered," he urged, "the size too, and what ceilings you will have covered with paper. . . . Give me some idea of the colors and patterns for the different rooms. I wish you could see and judge for yourself and tell me too your own ideas as to the paper ceilings. My impression is that it is a good idea."

Jeanette, writing on the next day, Friday, May 2, had the usual dismal farming report: no corn yet planted because of wet weather, and poor prospects for the



**In 1938 the heirs of the Leonard family removed the Eastlake veranda installed on the west face in the 1920s and a new portico was built as a replica of the original portico built in 1856. The bay windows on the north side of the house also were bricked in. Photo courtesy HABS**

garden thanks to a little bug or worm that ate up everything as fast as it came up. But the carpenters were finished not only with the portico but also the bridging of the floors and building of the carriage house doors. They had gone, but Mr. Lutz was still there pecking away on the steps.

When she wrote again the following day, the subject of painting was on her mind, and it was evident that she was not yet ready to retreat from her position concerning the adequacy of a local craftsman to achieve their goal. "When we get our house repainted and papered it will look well enough for any country house." Mr. Fitzpatrick was their best chance for a painter, she added, and he would not be available for a month yet. "Had I not better get [son-in-law] Dr. Smith to engage him," she urged. "I should greatly pre-





When the original portico was built in 1856, stone mason Anton Lutz, an immigrant from Prussia, was hired by Leonard to build the three-tiered limestone steps pictured here. They have stood the test of time and are still in place on the rebuilt portico. Photo by James Denny

fer you being at home when the painting is done, but its a bad time in hot weather to do painting, and one always likes to get cleaned up in the spring if possible." She ended her point on the weak note that she suspected they had better wait until he was at home.

Concerning the papering, her aspirations were obviously more modest than those of her husband. She wanted a nice paper for the parlor and library but really didn't care so much about the sitting and dining rooms and was under the impression that Leonard had already decided it was not worthwhile to put a new paper in the hall. There was no mention by her then or later of papering any ceilings.

### The Portico, Finished!

With the portico at last finished, Leonard was impatient to know how it appeared. "I'm afraid from your silence," he told Jeanette, "it didn't answer expectation." Oddly enough, the first critical review was from the slaves, at least as reported by Ada. It was a very good-looking porch she assured, but "The servants were mighty concerned about it when it was first begun. Jim (says to me) 'We ought to have a fine new porch, you are getting too old (for) this ugly old one. I think we will have more company when we get the new one.' He seems to think the new porch would do a great deal towards bringing out persons." Son-in-law, Dr. Smith, stated emphatically that the new porch looked considerably better than the one removed. Jeanette stated that she thought the portico looked very well, much better than the old one, but reported a different variation of Dr. Smith's opinion, claiming that the doctor didn't like it because the posts were too small. Mr. Lutz, according to Ada, voiced a similar criticism, saying that the portico needed two more posts to look pretty.

### Reeves Leonard

The officious son-in-law, Dr. Smith, addressed another question of growing family concern--the behavior and character of Reeves. The overwhelming impression of Abiel is that he would never have sought the counsel of anyone but Jeanette in a family matter such as this, fraught as it was with such intensely personal emotions. Abiel and Jeanette believed that their ultimate fulfillment as a married couple would be expressed in the lives of their

children, in what they accomplished and contributed, and in how they conducted themselves. This was not a casual concern, but a compelling one that flared up in their anxiety over Reeves.

On April 11, Jeanette had expressed concern about her 17-year-old son's idle habits, and now, nearly a month later, Dr. Smith tried with an awkward delicacy to introduce the subject again. He urged that Reeves be extracted as soon as possible from the socially stifling environment of Fayette: "A little village (like Fayette) is bad for young men like Reeves unless they have something to occupy their minds and although Reeves is an excellent boy, yet . . . he has felt lonesome I have no doubt, and he has not been as choice of his company as I would have desired." The next day, May 9, Jeanette wrote on this same subject. But there was no delicacy in her words:

*I feel a great deal of anxiety about Reeves. We trust there is not much danger of his getting into bad habits [but] he wants ambition and energy and inclines too much to associate with low and ignorant boys. I have talked a great deal to him of the advantages of intelligent associates. Oh how little we know what is for our good or happiness in this world. We were so rejoiced at Reeves birth, and I know he has already given me more uneasiness than all my daughters.*

They were hopeful that many of these problems would be resolved by Reeves's impending departure for college at Dartmouth. For most of the preceding month, Abiel and Jeanette had been laying plans for this event; discussing how soon Reeves should leave for the beginning of the late May term; determining which clothes would be best to make or acquire locally and which out East or in St. Louis; launching inquiries to gain needed letters of introduction for Reeves when he was in Hanover; figuring out how long Reeves would stay in St. Louis and whether Abiel should or could accompany him to New Hampshire.

Behind this anguish, there was more to Jeanette's emotions than her worries over Reeves, more than the backwardness and perpetual dampness of that season, more than the constant strain caused by her husband's absence aggravated by the succession of petty crises in both building and planting. Just a few lines after her discussion of Reeves the 44-year-old wife informed her 59-year-old husband: "I feel quite incapable at this time of . . . caring for anything, for I find that I am again to become a mother. You have no idea how much I am distressed. We are so far advanced in life that the idea of having another child is dreadful to me." In the very next sentence she commenced to give the dimensions for the rooms to be papered.

Even before this letter was penned, Leonard was try-



Reeves Leonard in Union Officer's uniform. Photo courtesy James Denny

ing to quiet his wife's anxieties about their oldest son. In a vivid and obviously sincerely felt evocation of the nineteenth-century cult of motherhood, he urged his wife to get a handsome small Bible, write her name in it and present it to Reeves with the injunction that he keep it while he lived.

*If he [lives] to be an old man, he will prize it as the most valuable of all presents. If he shall conduct himself as I have no doubt he will so as to be an honor to his mother; let him whenever tempted to go astray from the path of strict honor and morality think of [she] who gave it to him and if he have the heart of a man within him, he will pause before he does any act that will at all dishonor his family by dishonoring her child.*

Upon receiving her latest letter he again tried to be reassuring. Things would improve once Reeves was in a place where his pride and ambition could be aroused. Abiel did not know that Reeves had any bad habits, and while he had his faults, as they all did, and did exhibit a less than desirable level of energy, still, Leonard offered, perhaps the two of them had been a little too exacting with their son. In any event, Abiel assured Jeanette that he would have a long talk with Reeves and show him that his father confided in him and knew that he would bear himself in such a way as to bring no shame upon himself, but do honor to them all. He would require strict accounts and weekly letters and would by regular correspondence supply the presence of a father.

Concerning that other revelation in her letter, he stated to her that it was in accordance with nature that they should awaken life and reminded her that their children had been a comfort to them and the main source of their happiness. "I confess for myself that I should be sorry to be without children in our lives." And again, he renewed his pledge to her to take no office nor engage in any business that would separate him from his family. "Rely upon this promise, and living together with our children we will endeavor to pass our lives as pleasurably as possible." For reasons unknown to us, Jeanette's pregnancy did not come to term.

### **Achieving "Apple Pie Order"**

On Tuesday, May 13, Jeanette got another new wrinkle added to her spring calendar. That was the day a letter from her husband arrived informing her that he had invited Cousin Mary, her husband Mr. Brown, and their three children to Oakwood as their guests and that they would be there by week's end. As he had been in ill health, Mr. Brown's comfort would have to be attended to. Jeanette had already concluded that if the painting could not be done before mid-summer it should be put off, and so it was probably of little distress to her to drop painting and papering entirely from the list of things to be accomplished. She assured Abiel that of course she would do everything she could for the comfort of her guests. Naturally, they would have no painting done while the Browns were with them; that had best be deferred until the following spring.

With the last major renovation project removed from the realm of immediate concern, the pressure on Jeanette was lifted considerably. By Saturday, May 17, the demanding Mr. Lutz had completed the steps, and, curiously enough, even the weather started to cooperate. Simultaneously, the wet cold season arm in arm with the irksome Mr. Lutz took their leave and allowed the normal

cycle of the seasons to be restored, if somewhat belatedly. With guests' imminent arrival, one seasonal task had to be accomplished immediately--the spring cleaning of Oakwood. As Jeanette herself reported on Saturday evening:

*I received a letter from you informing me that Mr. Brown and Cuz Mary would be here today--so I set to work and had the house cleaned from garret to cellar. 'Tis now in apple pie order and I am awaiting their arrival. . . . The house looks so well since I have had it cleaned up that I think we can very well defer painting it until spring--all except the portico and the two new blinds. . . . Mr. Lutz finished the steps yesterday. They are a great improvement to the house and I am thankful they are finished as the boys had to be hindered a good deal from their work to assist about putting them up. . . . Our place looks very pretty just now. The trees are in full leaf, snowballs and lilacs in flower and it seems a long time until you are ready to come home, a month or more yet--tis two months tomorrow since you left.*

Reeves's departure was one filled with relief but also emotion. Jeanette confessed to not feeling so sad since the day her eldest child, Mary, had married and Reeves in turn seemed genuinely moved. Ada, too, confessed to missing Reeves a great deal, more than she thought she could miss him, as he was more of a companion to her than her other brothers or sister Kate. But as Martha frankly put it, "now that it is all over [and] he is gone, I am glad of it and I hope he will come back all we wish and expect." And Jeanette, too, believed that Reeves had gone to where he would improve more than in Fayette. "He has a very affectionate heart I know and is capable of judging rightly." Finally, Dr. Smith wrote to assure his father-in-law that he had never intended to convey the idea that Reeves had been engaged in anything unworthy of him, but he knew the value of good associates and was fearful that bad ones found in Fayette that might influence his desires. Dr. Smith felt confident that Reeves had amply sufficient mind to achieve eminent success with a properly directed will.

The final worry of that spring, the planting, was tackled amidst a whirlwind of activities. Between the Leonard brood and Cuz Mary's visit, such a continual din was maintained during the day that Jeanette found it virtually impossible to write. There was the possibility of another session of the dancing school should the enrollment be high enough, so a decision would have to be made soon in that regard. An alliance of two prominent families through a wedding created a round of parties and balls to be attended. And at last, the pianos had arrived. Martha's was brought home first and was, according to report, admired by a procession of the local townsfolk including the resident music teacher, Mr. Danber, who pronounced it "splen tid!" But as usual in a Jeanette managed operation, essentials of planting were addressed before the new piano for Oakwood was collected from its arrival point. As Ada put it, "Ma won't send for ours--it is up in Glasgow. Ma says she has not time to send for it. Everything about the place as long as your little finger is dropping corn." May was nearly over, and it appeared that the slaves would have the corn planted in a few days. But then there was the riot of weeds that had to be tackled in the garden. The strawberries were starting to come on and they had enjoyed two boxes of them, but without Abiel, who was very much in his wife's thoughts, "Oh dear I am so anxious to see you -- but



patience must have her perfect work."

Some time in the latter half of 1857, Ann's house was finally built. J. W. Lutz (Anton's brother) was hired to do work. Bills for work on Ann's house amounted to \$24.50. Abiel ordered 30 bu. rock lime for the project from Peter Schamo. Ottaway Hix was paid \$7.50 for his work on Ann's house.

It was not until the spring of 1858 that "two young men from Virginia," nephews of a local merchant, were hired to do the painting. For nearly a month and a half, in the midst of continual dust and confusion, the house again was under siege by workmen as the project, plagued by more rainy weather, moved along far too slowly to suit Jeanette. This, and the building of a bookcase in the library, were the last building projects undertaken during Leonard's lifetime.

One area of activity that is essential to understanding Abiel's character was his extensive involvement in land speculation. A very basic aspect of his character was an unquenchable thirst for great wealth. He concluded early on that land speculation was the avenue to that wealth. In 1836, he wrote to his brother, Nathaniel, who lived on Ravenswood farm in Cooper County: "If we had \$50,000 I think in ten years we would have \$400,000. . . . I think in the next five years we would make all we want, and live at ease like gentlemen afterwards." During the 1850s, Leonard was instructing land agents in western Missouri to purchase titles without limit.

By the time of the Civil War he owned some 60,000 acres in Missouri and Iowa, bought mainly on credit. He did not foresee the Panic of 1857, which caught him vastly overextended with interest and taxes to pay on land for which there were no buyers. This occurred during a time when he was strapped for cash, due, in part, to the considerable reduction in income that came with his Supreme Court appointment.

The elegant lifestyle he was creating for himself, Jeanette, and family was one he could hardly afford. The three pianos he bought for his daughters cost \$1,000, nearly half his annual supreme court salary. Despite his pledge to Jeanette to spend his remaining days at home, his enormous debts, piled up by unbridled speculation, made that promise impossible to keep.

The professional gratification of Leonard's Supreme Court term had come with a fatal price, for the meager salary of the office fell far short of his needs. At 61 years old, he would have to rebuild his former lucrative law practice. Once again, he was in St. Louis trying to recoup his solvency. The end of 1858 found him enduring another agonizing separation

from Jeanette.

Abiel's health was not equal to what he had to do. He pushed his fragile reserves to their limit in an effort to get on top of a situation that became increasingly grim. By 1860, Reeves who had been sent by his father first to Dartmouth and then to Berlin to study Roman law, received word from Jeanette to come home and go to work. "The last six months have been the most melancholy and unhappy of my existence. . . . Dr. Smith thinks he may live a few more years, but I cannot think so. . . . I do not see how we can live. Your father's property is not worth anything and he is not able to do anything."

The strain of his exertions to recoup his solvency following the court term led to a breakdown from which he would not recover. The last years of his life were sad ones for him and Jeanette. He died in 1863 during the gloomy and unhappy years of the Civil War. In the end he became the victim of that very drive that had carried him through a duel and on to a successful and distinguished career but which finally propelled him into a financial mire.

Had his health been equal to his ambition and had he survived the Civil War years, he would have become wealthy. After the war, his estate regained its value. Reeves came home, enlisted in the 9th Missouri State Militia Cavalry, became a major, and fought guerrillas in central Missouri. He also spent much time, after the war, settling his father's estate and seeing to the education of his younger siblings. By 1869, Abiel's debts finally were settled, and the estate still owned some 21,000 acres, enough to provide an income for years to come.

### Keeping Oakwood Abreast of the Latest Architectural Trends

Jeanette survived Abiel's death by three decades and resided

in Oakwood until her own passing in 1895. Her son, Reeves, lived with her for part of this time along with her daughter-in-law, Alice Gardenhire Leonard. Reeves died in 1878 at age 39, perhaps due to a lingering Civil War wound. Following Reeves's death, Alice married the youngest Leonard son, Nathaniel William ("Willie") Leonard, who lived in Oakwood until his death in 1937.

The heirs of Abiel and Jeanette seemed to inherit a continuing desire to stay abreast of changing architectural fashions. This impulse

was not without its ironies. Sometime after Jeanette's death, Alice and Willie decided to banish Abiel's portico in favor of a ornate Eastlake style verandah that swept across the entire front of Oak-



**Undated color-tinted photo of Jeanette Leonard and her extended family and several house servants. It appears to have been taken in the latter 19th century before Jeanette died in 1895. Photo courtesy Jane (Mrs. Paul) Burcham**

wood. Victorian bay windows were added on the north side of the house. The first-floor hallway was also lengthened by an extension into the ell. The result was a deeper, more lavishly decorated late Victorian hallway in a refined neoclassical design. At this time the doorways to either room of the main block were enlarged to make the rooms en suite. High, paneled wainscoting was added to the hall along with an archway flanked by richly carved fluted Ionic columns and pilasters. Nestled at the end of the hallway a paneled Queen Anne style staircase was placed.

The transformed central hallway broke tradition with the original Federal character of the house, but it certainly succeeded as a high-quality late Victorian production with wonderful workmanship and materials. It qualifies as yet another ambitious example of the "up-grading" of Oakwood to keep in step with changing notions of elegance and refinement.

The process of each generation repudiating the taste of the preceding one was not over yet. There was one more skirmish in the ongoing battle of architectural styles taking place at Oakwood. Alice's and Reeves's daughter, Jeanette Spenser, a granddaughter of Abiel and Jeanette, along with her husband, Perry, decided in 1938 to undo the previous alterations to the exterior. The bay windows were bricked in and the Eastlake verandah was demolished. A new portico was built that seems to replicate the 1856 version. The rear ell was completely enclosed, as well. There is one feature at Oakwood, however, that has not changed. Through all the architectural vicissitudes occasioned by Oakwood's successive owners, the front steps, "pecked" out by Anton Lutz from stone loaded and hauled by Jim and Uncle John, have endured to this day at Oakwood.

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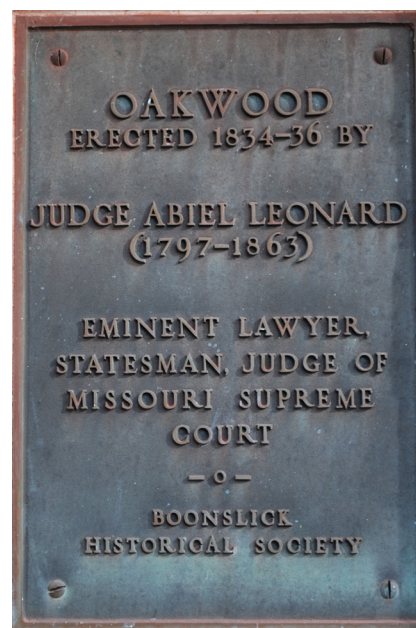
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## Acknowledgement

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## Historically Significant Painting Given to CMU

The gift of an original painting of two figures historically significant to the American Revolution represents an important addition to the permanent collection of The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art at Central Methodist University in Fayette.

The painting is currently on display during the gallery's fall exhibition "Passion vs. Reality: Three for the Fall—Paintings by Gary Cadwallader, Ceramics by Geoff Graham and Masterpieces from the Permanent Collection." The exhibition will run through November 16. Gallery hours are 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, closed on holidays. The gallery is located in Classic Hall on the CMU campus. For more information, call Gallery Curator Denise Haskamp at 660-248-6304 or email [dhaskamp@centralmethodist.edu](mailto:dhaskamp@centralmethodist.edu).

Of coincidental interest is the fact that the quaint village of Fayette was symbolically named after one of the figures in the painting and is the county seat of Howard, an important geographical connecting point propelling western expansion during the nineteenth century. The historic Boone's Lick Trail, from St. Charles, connected with the Santa Fe Trail at Old Franklin in Howard County, and the latter connected with the major Western trails – the California and Oregon – on the western edge of the state. Thousands of migrants passed through Missouri on these trails heading west during the great movement of pioneers between 1820 and the turn of the century.

The historically-themed painting is titled *George Washington Hanging Wallpaper*. An oil-on-canvas work, it measures approximately 25 inches square. The painting depicts George Washington at his Mount Vernon estate in Virginia standing on a scaffold hanging wallpaper that was being handed up to him by the Marquis de Lafayette, who came from France during the American Revolution to serve as a military aide on Washington's general staff. Also in the painting are Martha Washington, who seems to be surveying the paper-hanging project, and a black house servant who was applying the paste used to adhere the wallpaper in the house's ballroom wall.

The possibly apocryphal story behind the scene in the painting is that new wallpaper was being hung in preparation of a reception honoring Lafayette for his service to the American cause for liberty and independence from Great Britain. And that the wallpaper had recently arrived from England (after the war), but a local wallpaper hanger had failed to show up, so Washington was doing the job himself with Lafayette's help.

It was originally thought that the painting was the work of

noted American artist Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828), who had done many portraits of Washington, which would have dated its origin to sometime during the latter eighteenth century. However, an appraisal performed in 2011 by the Chicago Appraisers Association rendered an opinion that the painting was done in 1936 by Frank J. Reilly A.N.A. (1906–1967), and placed a value on it of \$2,500.

Reilly was an American painter, illustrator, muralist, and teacher. He taught drawing and painting at the Grand Central School of Art, and illustration at Pratt Institute and Moore College of Art. However, he is best known for his twenty-eight years of instructing at the Art Students League of New York and establishing the Frank J. Reilly School of Art in the early sixties, where he taught until his death in 1967.



*George Washington Hanging Wallpaper* by Frank J. Reilly

"Whether the story is true or not, the painting adds to our country's long interest in George Washington," says Denise Haskamp, curator of The Ashby-Hodge Gallery. "The city of Fayette, Missouri, is named after Lafayette, so that is of historical significance. The story is quite an intriguing one and seems to present the Washingtons and Lafayette in a humble moment, undertaking the labor that hired hands would have provided. I believe the black man [in the painting] to be Billy Lee who was Washington's personal slave."

Haskamp says The Ashby Hodge Gallery acquired the painting from Laura (Bonnema) Marsh of the Chicago area upon a suggestion by Joan Stack, art curator of The State Historical Society of Missouri. "Marsh originally contacted Stack, who suggested we might be interested in it," Haskamp adds.

"Laura's father was William Bonnema, manager of the wallpaper department at Sears, Roebuck and Company in Chicago. Being that the painting depicts the Washingtons hanging wallpaper, you can see the connection to Bonnema and Sears. William Bonnema was given the painting to hang in his office by a Mr. Shroyer, another company official, upon his retirement. Laura Marsh later acquired the painting from her father."

Since its founding in 1993, The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art and has sponsored numerous exhibitions featuring artists and art history of the Boonslick. It's first was *Brush With History: Artists of the Boonslick –175 Years* in 1996, featuring the works of famed Missouri artist George Caleb Bingham (1811-1879) and other noted Boonslick artists, past and present. Bingham, who had lived for a time in Boonville, also had a home in historic Arrow Rock. The gallery collection includes several paintings by Bingham and works by many other artists significant to the Boonslick region. — Don Cullimore

## The Booneslick Region and the Rise of County and State Fairs

By Lee Cullimore

The development of agricultural societies in Missouri had a rocky start in 1822 when farmers in Chariton County organized the Agricultural and Commercial Society of Missouri to promote communication between themselves and the region's business community. The effort failed after a brief run. Two years later, in the fall of 1824, what was billed as a state agricultural fair occurred at the St. Louis home of William C. Carr.<sup>1</sup> Sponsored by the St. Louis County Agriculture Society, that event also failed to generate enough interest for its continuation.

Though erratic in their development, local agricultural societies continued to arouse interest among the state's farmers, particularly in counties along the Missouri River, during the 1830's and '40's. In 1838 the Saline County Court instructed the sheriff to post notices advising citizens of a meeting at the log courthouse in Jonesborough on June 17 to organize a county agricultural society. Evidently this initial effort failed for nothing more is heard about a Saline County farmer's society for eighteen years.

Elsewhere along the Missouri River, Boone County is reported to have had an agricultural fair in 1835. Its success is unknown however the formation there of an Agriculture and Mechanical Society in 1848 led to the presentation of a fair in 1852. Cooper and Callaway counties held farmer's fairs in 1839, and although they generated some local interest both events failed for lack of financial support. Money issues plagued almost all early efforts to create county agricultural fairs.

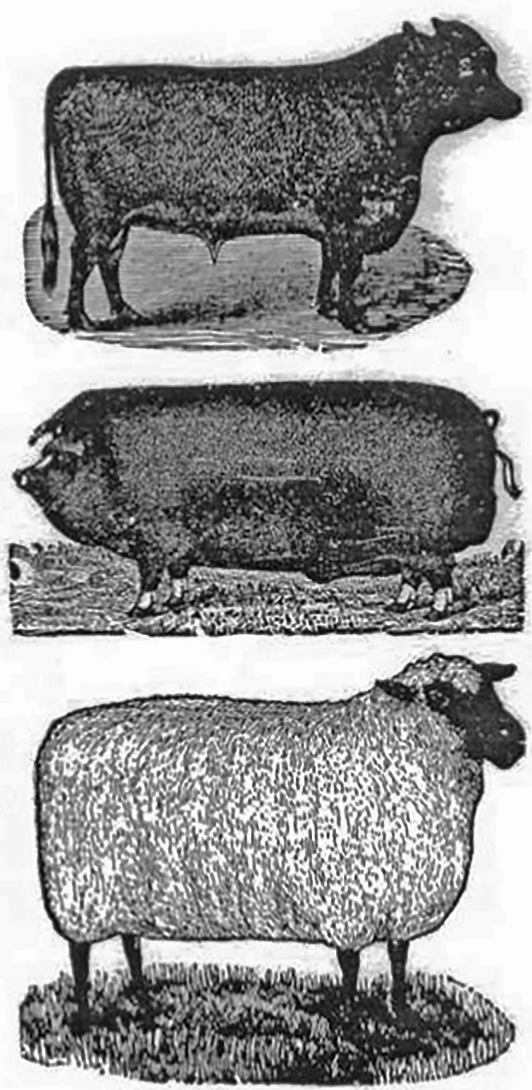
Historian R. Douglas Hurt described these ventures as admirable in concept but denied success by the parsimonious attitude of farmers.<sup>2</sup> They wanted the fairs; they just didn't want to spend money to support them. Despite set-

backs central Missouri farmers continued to show interest in holding county fairs.

Farther up the Missouri River, Howard and Lafayette counties created agricultural societies in 1853 and Saline County finally got on board, incorporating an Agriculture and Mechanical Association in March 1857. Former governor and Saline County farmer Meredith Marmaduke was named the county association's president. He held the post for two years during which fairs were presented on fifteen acres a quarter-mile south of Miami, a town on the river at the county's northern border.

The 1854 constitution of the Howard County agricultural society demonstrates a community-inclusive approach adopted by the organizers and the document likely became a model used for the development of similar societies. Its seventeen Articles and twenty-three Bylaws attempt to address every aspect of a fair's operation and the awarding of prizes. The constitution called for the development of agriculture, including . . . the great staples of industry and trade but also fruits and vegetables; the promotion of the mechanical arts . . . the improvement of the races of all the useful and domestic animals . . . the general advancement of rural economy household manufactures, and the dissemination of useful information on those subjects. All this was to be accomplished by fairs for the exhibition and sale of all such articles . . . and by the periodical award of premiums. . . .<sup>3</sup>

In planning for their fair the Howard County society sought to increase interest among the county's citizens, both rural and town, and thereby insure the event's financial success. The first fair, in 1854, was held over three days during which judges awarded premiums ranging from \$1 to \$10 in twenty categories of exhibits. Ten dollar awards were given for the largest yield of hemp per acre and the best Missouri-raised bulls, cows and oxen; plus mules, and blooded, harness, and saddle horses. Categories for exhibit ranged from orchards and gardens to Flowers, Paintings, and Drawings, typically women's contributions which garnered awards from \$1 to \$5. Men and boys focused their contributions on agricultural implements, carriages, buggies, wagons, and the expected farm



Cattle, hogs and sheep were important livestock in the Booneslick from the very beginning. Photo from 1905 Picturesque Fayette

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Lee M. Cullimore of Lake Ozark is the author of a recently published historical work, *The Boys of Company K*, dealing with Ohio Cavalry soldiers who served in the West during the Civil War. He is currently working on a biography of Meredith Miles Marmaduke, who established a mercantile, agricultural, and political family enterprise in the Booneslick Region during the early to mid-19th century. This article is excerpted from a chapter in the forthcoming book.



crops and livestock.

The increasing interest in sponsoring local agricultural societies was acknowledged by Missouri's legislators in February 1853 when they enacted at the urging of farmers from several Booneslick counties a bill to incorporate The Missouri State Agricultural Society, an early effort to establish a state fair.<sup>4</sup> The act empowered the society to buy twenty acres of land and erect buildings for an exhibition of various breeds of horses, cattle, mules and other stock, and of agricultural, mechanical and domestic manufactures and productions. Meredith Marmaduke's appointment as president of the society indicates his influence in securing the legislative action. Appointed with him as directors were the following influential farmers from central Missouri counties: James S. Rollins, Boone; Nathaniel Leonard, Cooper; Dabney C. Garth, Randolph; Roland Hughes, Howard; James C. Anderson, Callaway; Camm Seays, Osage; and James L. Minor, representing Cole County. The General Assembly added to the directors two Boonville men who would have important roles in establishing the society. Joseph L. Stephens, named recording secretary, was an attorney and later manager of a branch Bank of St. Louis; and William H. Trigg, who established the first bank in Boonville in 1847, was named treasurer. Another Saline County resident, John Locke Hardeman, was later appointed vice president of the society, most likely at the urging of Marmaduke.

In early May 1853 the members of the Cooper County Agricultural Society, led by William Trigg and Joseph Stephens, voted to join the new state society and agreed to work as a committee to develop a constitution and bylaws for the new organization. The document was completed by mid-July and Stephens sent Marmaduke and Locke Hardeman copies for review, along with a request for the names of potential financial supporters of the society. As well, the Boonville group agreed to organize the first state fair to be held later that year. Although the act establishing the society didn't specify Boonville as the site for the new fair, language in the bill pointed in that direction. Perhaps reflecting the General Assembly's lack of confidence in the idea of a state fair, they provided a meager \$1,000 of funding annually from the state treasury for four years to help get the organization on its feet. Otherwise the society had to fund itself through contributions and fees. By the summer of 1853 Marmaduke, Stephens, and Trigg had already raised enough additional money to purchase 14 acres of land overlooking the Missouri River just below Boonville known as the Rupell property. News of the state fair's scheduled opening on Monday, October 3, appeared in newspapers across the state that summer and aroused a great deal of interest. Joseph Stephens was so pleased with the response that he wrote Marmaduke to say that he was happy to see the very favorable notices the Society receives from the press. . . . Some of them publish the list of premiums [and] rules in entirety.<sup>5</sup>

More than four thousand visitors attended the four-day event, viewing exhibits and displays provided mostly by Booneslick area farmers and their families.<sup>6</sup> Some agriculture-related St. Louis business houses were also present. Boone County residents took home the most premiums, while Cooper County led in swine prizes, and Howard and Audrain in mules. Callaway County produced the best draft and saddle horses, and Boone County the best tobacco. Financial problems plagued the fledgling state fair following the 1853 event. Six thousand dollars had been spent buying

the fair ground and erecting the buildings, while receipts from the event were half that. Contemplating the 1854 state fair, Marmaduke and Stephens canvassed potential sponsors and donors in St. Louis in the spring, and as well commissioned Mr. Schoolfield of Columbia to travel east and see what financial support could be raised among implement and other farm equipment manufacturers. Enough money was raised to open the fair again in the fall of 1854, and the fairground facilities were expanded to accommodate more exhibitors.<sup>7</sup> But the event continued to be financially weak, and there was a growing feeling among state legislators that it was essentially a regional fair. Their concern was bolstered by the distribution of premiums—156 of 205 awards went to exhibitors from Boone, Howard, and Cooper counties. Heading into 1855 it appeared that the event might not survive, and there is no evidence that the state fair was held that year. In January 1856, John Locke Hardeman (Saline County's legislative representative at the time) notified Meredith that The fate of our Agricultural Society is decided so far as this House can do it. The House decided by a large majority to repeal the State Act and charter five district societies with 500 [dollars] to each. The Senate concurred in the House's action and as a consequence Missouri had no state fair for the next forty-five years.<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. what was billed as a state agricultural fair occurred at the St. Louis home of William C. Carr: George F. Lemmer, *The Early Agricultural Societies of Missouri*. Agricultural History, Vol. 17, No. 2, (July 1943), 145.
2. admirable in concept but denied success by the parsimonious attitude of farmers: R. Douglas Hurt, *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie*, 166. 1881 History of Saline County, 397-98, 451.
3. the development of agriculture, including . . . the great staples of industry and trade but also fruits and vegetables; the promotion of the mechanical arts: Constitution of the Howard County Agricultural And Mechanical Society. Box 5, Folder 4, Sappington and Marmaduke Papers, Missouri History Museum.
4. The increasing interest in sponsoring local agricultural societies was acknowledged by Missouri's legislators: An Act to Incorporate The Missouri State Agricultural Society, approved February 24, 1853. W.F. Johnson. History of Cooper County, Missouri, 90, 95, 222, 316, 918.
5. happy to see the very favorable notices the Society receives from the press. . . . Some of them publish the list of premiums [and] rules in entirety: Stephens to Marmaduke, May 7 and July 13, 1853. Box 5, Folder 3, Sappington and Marmaduke Papers, Missouri History Museum.
6. More than four thousand visitors attended the four-day event: First State Fair at Boonville. State Historical Society of Missouri, compiler. This Week in Missouri History, Vol. 5, np.
7. Mr. Schoolfield: Stephens to Marmaduke, June 10, 1854. Folder 19, Marmaduke Papers C1021, State Historical Society of Missouri.
8. The fate of our Agricultural Society: Hardeman to Marmaduke, December 10, 1855. Folder 20, Ibid.



## State Historical Society President Bob Priddy Speaker at BHS Fall Meeting November 5 at Historic Hotel Frederick

Bob Priddy, president of the State Historical Society of Missouri, will be the guest speaker at the Boonslick Historical Society (BHS) fall meeting, Sunday, November 5, at the historic Hotel Frederick in Booneville.

The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. and the program. Dinner reservations (due by Oct. 27) are required for everyone, including non-BHS members. Contact Cindy Bowen at 660-273-2374 or by email at [cbowen@socket.net](mailto:cbowen@socket.net) or return the reservation form included in the magazine. Cost of the dinner is \$25 per person.

Reservations will be on a first-come, first served basis, as capacity for seating at the dinner is limited to 80 persons.

Priddy, of Jefferson City, is a well-known historian, author and broadcast journalist who served as news director of Missouri-net Radio for 40 years before retiring in December 2014. A long-time member of the State Historical Society of Missouri Board of Directors, he became president of the organization in October 2016.

His comments at the fall meeting will include observations on the new building to house the State Historical Society – the \$40-million Center for Missouri Studies – currently under construction near the University of Missouri campus in Columbia and slated for completion in 2019. During his three-year term as SHSMO president, Priddy will help guide the SHSMO effort to raise \$20 million for an operating endowment.

Priddy wrote many of the first drafts of state political history during his four decades as with Missouri-net, a statewide radio network that specializes in covering state government and politics. He spent thousands of hours in the House and Senate during legislative sessions before retiring, and remains a contributing editor to the Missouri-net, continuing his “Across Our Wide Missouri” program that recounts things that happened on specific dates in Missouri history, covering motorsports for the sports webpage, and covering occasional events for the news department.

During his long career as a reporter, Priddy pioneered several efforts at opening state government to the people of Missouri. Until the Missouri-net was created, Missourians had never heard debate from the House and the Senate and had never heard the voices of their townspeople testifying before legislative committees.

The Missouri-net brought floor debate of both chambers to the radio and then to the internet, giving people anywhere in the world their first chance to hear issues being argued in the Missouri General Assembly. He was a leader in the long effort that opened the courts to radio, television and still-photography coverage, and persuaded the state supreme court to allow its hearings to be put on the internet.

Priddy is a national leader in his profession, serving twice as the chairman of the board of the Radio-Television News Directors Association—the first person to lead the organization twice.

The Department of State and the National Association of Broadcasters sent him to Poland and Romania shortly after the fall of the Iron Curtain to conduct seminars on the free press and the development of broadcast news reporting uncontrolled by government. He also has studied European history and economics through

a fellowship with a journalist exchange program based in Berlin, and has lectured at several universities in this country.

Priddy is the author of five books including his latest one about the art of the Missouri Capitol. He is working to finish his sixth book, about the construction of the current capitol and the century of challenges to Jefferson City’s existence as the seat of state government. He already is at work on another book that will

tell the forgotten story of a Jefferson City couple who were publishing an English-language newspaper in Tokyo when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

He and his wife Nancy have done archaeological work on Anasazi sites in southwest Colorado and southeastern Utah, have rafted and hiked in the Grand Canyon, and have explored the Galapagos Islands and the Peruvian highlands including Machu Picchu.

They live in Jefferson City. They have a daughter, Liz, who lives



**SHSMO President Bob Priddy**

*Photo courtesy Bob Priddy*

with her family in Columbia, and their son, Rob, who lives with his family in Longmont, Colorado.

The Boonslick Historical Society was founded in 1937 during a meeting at the Hotel Frederick of residents from Howard and Cooper counties interested in area history. It meets several times a year to enjoy historical topics pertinent to the Boonslick area. Society members have worked together over the years to publish historical books and brochures and to mark historic sites, most recently contributing to and supporting publication of a new comprehensive history of Howard County, the first in more than 130 years. The Society supported the founding of Boone’s Lick State Historic Site, marked the sites of Cooper’s Fort and Hannah Cole’s Fort and restored a George Caleb Bingham painting on loan to The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art, Central Methodist University, Fayette.

The hotel is a significant local and state historical landmark and is a classic example of Romanesque Revival architecture in the region. It was built in 1905 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS  
FALL BHS MEETING NOV. 5  
HOTEL FREDERICK, BOONVILLE**



## BHS Board Candidates to be Voted on at Fall Meeting

Five members of the Boonslick Historical Society Board of Directors will be candidates for re-election to the board at the fall BHS meeting and dinner November 5 at the Hotel Frederick Hotel.

Eligible for another two-year term are Carolyn Collings of Columbia, Sam Jewett of Boonville, Mike Dickey of Arrow Rock, Jim Steele and Don Cullimore, both of Fayette.

Continuing on the board until 2019 are BHS President Cindy Bowen of Armstrong, Brett Rogers of Boonville, Denise Haskamp of Glasgow, Becki Propst of Fayette and Larry Harrington, both of Fayette.

President Bowen will conduct a business meeting at the start of the fall meeting, during which members will be asked to vote on board members. Nominations from the floor may be made.

## Historian Thomas Gubbels Featured Speaker at BLRA Meeting *At Arrow Rock Historic Site Visitor Center Nov. 11*

Thomas J. Gubbels, associate professor of history at Lincoln University, will be the featured speaker at the fall meeting of the Boone's Lick Road Association (BLRA) on Saturday, Nov. 11, at the Arrow Rock Historic Site Visitor Center in Saline County.

The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. and is open to the public. The title of Gubbels' presentation is "Lifting Missouri Out of the Mud." This presentation traces the history and evolution of Missouri's highways in the 20th century. Topics include the creation of the Missouri State Highway Department and political resistance to road construction, as well as discussions of Missouri's Centennial Road Law and the state's role in the creation of Route 66 and the interstate highway system.

Gubbels is an associate professor of history in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Lincoln University. He received his PhD from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and he has previously worked for the State Historical Society of Missouri and the Missouri Department of Transportation. Gubbels' research focus is on the history of Missouri and recent U.S. History. He is also an expert on the history of Missouri's highways. He has spoken to audiences spoken throughout Missouri and has appeared on an episode of the "Modern Marvels" television program.

Members of the BLRA Board of Directors will meet beforehand at the Arrow Rock Historic Site Visitor Center at 10:00 a.m. to discuss business matters. The meeting is open to all interested parties.

For those who have made reservations, lunch will follow the business meeting at noon in the J. Huston Tavern. The cost is \$2. An RSVP is required no later than Wednesday evening, Nov. 8, but payment may be made at the door. RSVP with the names of luncheon attendees to: Dorris Keeven-Franke at [dorris.keevenfranke@gmail.com](mailto:dorris.keevenfranke@gmail.com).



**Thomas J. Gubbels**

*Photo courtesy Thomas Gubbels*

The Boone's Lick Road began as a trail about 1805 when Daniel Boone's sons, Nathan Boone and Daniel Morgan Boone, used a Native American trace to reach a salt lick Nathan discovered more than 100 miles west of the St. Charles area. The lick was located near Salt Creek in present-day Howard County and is now known as the Boone's Lick State Historic Site.

As travel increased, the trace grew to be a trail across Eastern Missouri. In the 1820s alternate routes were developed to travel through the new settlements of Fulton, Columbia and Rocheport en route to Franklin.

The BLRA website ([www.booneslickroad.org](http://www.booneslickroad.org)) features a Google map that shows the original (alpha) and later secondary (beta and gamma) routes the Boone's Lick Road followed between its start in the early 1800s through the 1820s, when the alternate routes were developed through Callaway, Boone and Howard counties.

The Boone's Lick Road Association was founded in 2011 with the mission to research, preserve and share the stories of this historic road; to educate the public regarding its importance in our national history; and to seek federal recognition for the Boone's Lick Road as a National Historic Trail.



**Boardwalk entrance to the Arrow Rock State Historic Site Visitor Center, which is located on Hwy. 41 about 15 miles northwest of Boonville. Photo by Don Cullimore**



**Boonslick Historical Society**

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Interior photo of original slave quarters at Oakwood, built sometime between 1836 and the 1850s. This structure, and a similar one built in 1856-57 for slave Ann, were unusual in that they were constructed of brick and had windows, brick floors, and a fireplace. See story starting on page 4.

*Photo by Cathy Thogmorton*