

# **BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY**



**The Historic Howard County Courthouse, built in 1887. Photo by Jerry Benner**

## **• REMEMBERING MISSOURI'S PAST – PART II**

- THE BATTLE OF BOONVILLE - 1861**
- BOONLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS**

**VOL. 20 No. 4 — WINTER 2021  
BOONSLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERIODICAL**

### Remembering Missouri's Recent Past and Commemorating the Battle of Boonville

THIS ISSUE OF *BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY* features Part II of journalist James H. (Jim) Steele's "Remember Missouri's Past" series (page 4), a remembrance of Howard County and the nation during the years leading up to World War II. We also take this occasion to publish historian James M. (Jim) Denny's recounting of the first Civil War Battle of Boonville on its 160th anniversary (page 10).

The First Battle of Boonville occurred June 17, 1861, in Cooper County. It began as Union Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Lyon sought to suppress Missouri's Southern-leaning State Guard. Fearing enemy artillery on the Boonville Bluff, Lyon and 1,700 federal troops landed by steamboat about 8 miles downstream on the Missouri River and began a march toward the town of Boonville. Along the way, they encountered rebels lying in wait. The brief clash became known as "The Boonville Races" due to the rapid retreat of panicked rebel forces. The battle's strategic impact was great. It kept the state and the Missouri River in Union control and denied rebel forces access to the region's vast resources.

#### BHS Board Nominations for 2022

The two-year terms for five Boonslick Historical Society board members are ending December 31, 2021. They are up for renewal, effective January 1, 2021. They are:

Jim Steele of Fayette, president; Sam Jewett of Boonville, treasurer; Carolyn Collings of Columbia, secretary; Don Cullimore of Fayette; Mike Dickey of Arrow Rock (Dickey is retiring as manager of Arrow Rock State Historic Site in December and will move his residence to Slater).

All five board members have indicated a willingness to continue serving on the board. However, Carolyn Collings has decided to step out of the secretary's role, and that responsibility will be passed on to another board member in 2022.

Board members whose terms end in December 2022 are:

Brett Rogers of Boonville, Sue Day of Pilot Grove, Larry Harrington of Fayette, Cathy Thogmorton of Fayette, and Sue Thompson of New Franklin.

Ten board members are the maximum allowed. Board membership is open to all members. Anyone wishing to nominate someone for consideration as a board candidate should contact BHS President Jim Steele at 660-537-0484 or [jsteele@woodcreekmedia.com](mailto:jsteele@woodcreekmedia.com). A brief bio of the candidate being nominated should be provided to Jim.

In future issues of the *Quarterly*, we will provide members with profiles of individuals who may be interested in becoming a board member.

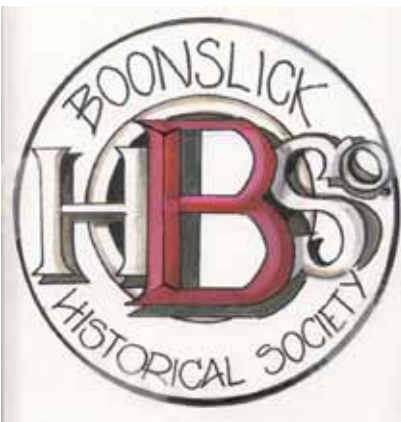
#### Dickey Retiring as Administrator of Arrow Rock Historic Site

Boonslick Historical Society board member Michael (Mike) Dick-

ey is retiring this December after a long career as a historian and administrator of Arrow Rock, Boone's Salt Lick, and Sappington Cemetery State Historic Sites with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources/State Parks Division. He is also retiring from Saline County Fire District. "I've been working for the state and the fire service for 35-plus years. [I'm] Hoping to slow down a little bit and spend more time doing historical research and perhaps getting back into art work," Mike informs us. He and his wife Diana will be moving from their Arrow Rock residence to 437 W. Maple, Slater MO 65349, after December 31.

#### Future BHS Meetings Still on Hold Due to COVID-19

Members of the BHS Board will meet early in 2022 to decide whether or not to hold membership meetings and events (normally three a year) and a fall banquet. There are continuing health concerns raised by the coronavirus epidemic COVID-19 and a new variant (Omicron). Final decisions on meetings will be made after periodic assessment of the threats posed by COVID-19 as the new year unrolls. We sincerely hope that we will have an opportunity next year to resume membership gatherings at places of historical interest in the Boonslick.



#### BHS 2022 Member Fees Now Due

Boonslick Historical Society annual membership fees for calendar year 2022 are now due. The dues year is January through December. Membership dues are \$15-Individual, \$25-Family, \$50-Sponsor, \$250-Patron, and \$500-Life. If you are not already a BHS member and wish to join, send a check made out to the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233. You will receive our publication, *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly*, and be able to attend annual Society events highlighting the region's history.

#### Seeking Contribution of Articles and Membership News

We encourage our members and others interested in history to contribute articles or other information of historical interest pertaining to the region, as well as membership news. 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](mailto:don.cullimore40@gmail.com), phone: 660-888-3429. Publication deadlines are February 1 for the March issue; May 1 for the June issue; August 1 for the September issue; and November 1 for the December issue. *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly* is published four times a year by the Boonslick Historical Association, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233.

—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](mailto:don.cullimore40@gmail.com), phone: 660-888-3429. Editorial guidelines may be obtained from the editor. Publication deadlines are February 1 for the March (Spring) issue; May 1 for the June (Summer) issue; August 1 for the September (Fall) issue; and November 1 for the (Winter) December issue.

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

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

**Officers and Board Members 2021**

Jim Steele, Fayette, President  
 Brett Rogers, Boonville, Vice President  
 Sam Jewett, Boonville, Treasurer  
 Carolyn Collings, Columbia, Secretary  
 Don Cullimore, Fayette  
 Sue Day, Pilot Grove  
 Mike Dickey, Arrow Rock  
 Larry Harrington, Fayette  
 Cathy Thogmorton, Fayette  
 Sue Thompson New Franklin

**Editorial Staff**

Don B. Cullimore, Editor  
 Cathy Thogmorton, Graphic Designer

# BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY

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**Cover Photo:** The historic Howard County Courthouse by photographer Jerry Benner. Pictured is the last of three courthouses built between 1823 and 1887. The county was founded in 1816 and known as "The Mother of more than 30 Missouri Counties." It was named for Benjamin Howard, governor of Louisiana (later Missouri) Territory, 1810-1812. Benner's work was featured in a historically significant exhibition titled "Courthouses of Missouri: A Photographic Study by Jerry Benner," at The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art on the campus of Central Methodist College in 2014. The exhibition included digital representations of what are often referred to as the architectural icons of Missouri's 114 county seats of government—the county courthouses. The show also included the historic St. Louis Courthouse near the Gateway Arch and the historic courthouses of the Boonslick Region. Color prints of the Courthouse series may be ordered from Benner by contacting him at [jbenner@mindspring.com](mailto:jbenner@mindspring.com). Copies of a wide range of Benner's creative photography are available at Grey Willows Arts and Antiques, 208 S. Main St. in Fayette.



**Boonslick Region courthouses, part of Jerry Benner's statewide courthouse series. L-R from top: Cooper County, Saline County, and Callaway County.**

# REFLECTIONS ON 1937: THE YEAR THAT GAVE BIRTH TO THREE SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATIONS

By Jim Steele – Second of a two-part series. Images courtesy of the author

*Author's Note: In the summer 2021 issue of the BHS Quarterly (Vol.2. No.2) we took a walk back in time to the year 1937 and in doing so highlighted major events happening in Fayette and Howard County, in addition to those issues making news around the United States and elsewhere. With this issue, first we include a quick review and then continue our look at additional happenings which took place locally and statewide 84 years ago.*

## A New Year Dawns

AS THE NEW YEAR OF 1937 DAWNED, BOONSLICK RESIDENTS largely went about business as usual. But several significant developments were on the horizon, including formation of the Boonslick Historical Society and the organization of the Fayette Rotary Club. On the state level, officials in Jefferson City were getting ready to launch the Missouri Department of Conservation which ultimately would grow to be a model for other states in the nation. These three developments will be the focus of this article.

Some of the major issues noted in Part I, 1937: Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated for a second term shortly after the new year dawns, the first time a U.S. president had taken office in January instead of March. Several persons from Fayette attended the event in Washington, including Lewis M. Means who was Missouri's new adjunct general.



Franklin Delano Roosevelt

War clouds began to gather overseas. The Japanese bombed Shanghai in China and late in the year sank the U.S. Gunboat *Panay* in Chinese waters. Congress expanded the Neutrality Act making it illegal to sell arms to warring nations. In May, Germany's pride "The Hindenburg" exploded in flames over Lakehurst, New Jersey, and Amelia Earhart was lost

in the remote Pacific in an attempted round-the-world flight. On a happier note, 200,000 pedestrians crossed San Francisco's Golden-Gate bridge on its opening day.

Two of the saddest notes of 1937 include the terrible flooding on the Ohio River, especially around Louisville, Kentucky, and Evansville, Indiana. Several Fayette families received refugees. Also, a tragedy at New London School in Texas occurs on March 18, 1937, when a natural gas leak caused an explosion that killed more than 295 students and teachers, making it the worst catastrophe to take place in a U.S. school building. Approximately 600 students and 40 teachers were in the building at the time; only about 130 escaped without serious injury.

In other developments, the DuPont Company patented Nylon; also the binary calculator was invented, The Lincoln Tunnel opened in New York City. The United States barred Americans from serving in the Spanish Civil War and Margaret Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize for her book, *Gone With the Wind*. One of the year's best-known movies was Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the first feature-length animated film made in America. The year also marked the debut of Bugs Bunny cartoons.

Locally, our Part I summer article told of various events and developments impacting Central College, and the Fayette schools, in addition to local businesses and organizations.

Now in this Part II follow-up we'll take a look at the history of three significant organizations that trace their beginnings to the year 1937, and ultimately had significant impact on life in the Boonslick.

## Fayette Rotary Club Organized

Now 84 years old, the Fayette Rotary Club has continued to serve for nine decades as a significant civic presence in Fayette and Howard County.

A charter from Rotary International was received on February 18, 1937 — this after several months of groundwork had been laid by local business and professional leaders.

The group actually may have had its beginnings with a Kiwanis Club which had been active in the early 1930s and then folded. Several of those former Kiwanis members were believed to have been instrumental in organizing the newly formed Rotary organization in Fayette.

Rotary International is now more than 116 years old. Paul Harris and a small handful of others founded the worldwide organization in Chicago back in 1905. Today it's the oldest of the nation's traditional service clubs — with Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist and others coming along in later years. Thus, the parent organization already was 32 years old when Rotary came to Fayette.

While the charter here was granted on February 18, the big day to kick off the new club really came on March 23, 1937, when more than 200 Rotarians and their wives (membership was restricted to men in those days) and some friends gathered for a gala evening banquet in the Methodist Parish House basement on the Central College campus.

L. E. Ziegler of the Boonville Club, which had sponsored the





**PROMINENT FAYETTE PEOPLE OF THE ERA, L TO R: Banker L.W. Jacobs Jr., Central President Robert Ruff, Adj. Gen. Lewis Means, Central Dean E. P. Puckett, Capt. B. I. Lawrence, and Dr. William Bloom.**

Fayette organization, opened the festivities that night and introduced the Rotary District Governor, Lester Wikoff of Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington.

After his remarks, Wikoff presented the new charter to the Fayette club's first president, Anson B. Barber, who was then the city's superintendent of schools. Barber pledged that Fayette Rotarians would serve the community and live up to the ideals embodied in the motto, "Service Above Self."

Central College music professor Frank Banyard led the group in singing of "America" which, to this day, opens each Wednesday noon meeting in the CMU Student and Community Center.

The 1937 banquet also included music by a Central College string quartet and a reading of poetry.

About a dozen other Missouri clubs sent visitors to the gala. Represented, in addition to Rotarians from Boonville and Lexington, were clubs from Columbia, Kansas City, Moberly, Jefferson City, Fulton, Slater, Sedalia, Brookfield, Rolla, and Chillicothe, among others.

Later the group adjourned to the Fayette Armory in the old Opera House at Main and Morrison streets. The armory, which some older Fayette residents remember, included a huge room on the building's second floor, plus a third floor balcony. Rotarians and guests danced that night to the music of Charlie Armstead and his orchestra.

The club's charter members were a cross-section of the community's business and professional leadership, including such well-known names as druggist Marvin Turner, ladies ready-to-wear shop owner Urless Clatworthy, men's clothier Charles H. Lee, Central Dean E. P. Puckett, and shoe store owner Robert Ricketts. Other charter members included dentist W. E. Ackerson, physician W. A. Bloom, undertaker Ralph Carr, editor-publisher Wirt Mitchell, Mac Mitchell, Fulton Moore, Walker Pierce, Nat Tracy, Howard Bruner, and Robert M. Fox.

Surprisingly, prominent banker L. W. Jacobs Jr. was not a charter member, but joined shortly afterward. He was president in 1940-41. Other early-day presidents included James Weathers, Thomas S. Denny, Dan Miller, Irvin Schnell and Cordell Tindall.

No charter members are alive today. The last charter member to pass away was Jim Weathers who died around 23 years ago.

Nat Tracy and Fulton Moore were early secretary-treasurers. Fulton Moore served five years in the post — the beginning of several long periods of service which included Jim Sutton, 11 years; George Kline, 16 years; Jim Steele, three years; and then Robert H. Bray who served for a whopping 25 years until retiring in 1998.

At that time the office was divided.

The club's only member to become a Rotary district governor was the late Ralph L. Woodward Sr. who served in that office in 1973-74. He was then Central Methodist College's (CMU) recently-retired president (1950-1970).

Locally, women members were added to the rolls after the parent body gave the green light in the late-1980s. Fayette's first woman president was Julee Sherman (now a CMU vice president) in 1993. A number of other women have served since then.

For many years of the club's existence, members would sing at each meeting, including such "memorable" tunes as "Roll, Rotary, Roll" and "R-O-T-A-R-Y - That spells Rotary." Those days are now but a distant memory, and to that many respond, "Thank God." One former song leader — who shall remain nameless — was known for wearing a rather obvious toupee, described by one club wit as a K-Mart blue-light special. It seemed the toupee got lower and lower on his forehead as he directed each week. Club members, with varying degrees of expertise, were called on to accompany the singing at the piano. One of these was the late John Hert who told this author that he did not relish the task and wanted it over as soon as possible. "I wasn't very good, but I played fast," he states. Now the singing is confined to the opening rendition of "America" which tends to proceed reasonably on tune as long as the Rev. Jamie Page is on hand to get the group started in the right key.

For many years, the club met each week at Mrs. Clifford's Tea Room which was located in the Sam Major home west of Home Oil. Later, Mrs. Clifford's was at Main and East Davis, the current location of Inovatia Laboratories. One recently deceased member, Martha Holman, waited tables in the venerable Mrs. Clifford's establishment and on occasion she served the Rotary Club.

Later meeting locations included the Gas Light Inn housed on the west side of the square. Also, Cornbread's, on the south side of the square and at times the Methodist Parish House.

In more recent years, the club — with a current membership of about 40 active members — has met every week on the CMU campus, first in the Holt Hall East-West Room (later renamed Missouri Room) and now on the fourth floor of the Inman Student and Community Center.

Over the years, weekly speakers have addressed a wide range of topics and, on occasion, groups have presented musical and dramatic presentations. Many speakers have been outstanding; others have perhaps told more than the assembled Rotarians wanted to know about a given topic.



In many cases, Rotary talks have been the catalyst for projects and ideas for community improvements. In addition, Central Methodist presidents, Fayette mayors, county commissioners and others have brought updates on the state of the college, the city, the county, the school system, or whatever — in addition to the annual visit by the Rotary District Governor.

Since 1937 club members likewise have taken part in, or contributed to, countless service projects. A number of members and friends have become Paul Harris Fellows, which has enhanced the work of the international organization. In recent years, the Fayette Rotary has been recognized by the district and RI for its work. Members also have expanded the club's youth exchange program and other avenues of outreach.

The Rotary budget each year supports a wide assortment of community projects and scholarships. Other monies from dues and contributions add to the work worldwide of the International Organization, including the significant Polio-Plus program which has nearly eradicated the disease worldwide.

While local Rotarians may reflect on humorous moments — such as off-key singing and occasional less-than-memorable speakers — the Rotary experience in Fayette has been, by and large, a great ride which has brought with it good works, leadership, inspiration, service, knowledge, and fellowship to the community. Thus it's hoped that the Rotary flame in Howard County will continue to burn brightly for another 84 years to come.

**(Editor's Note:** The following two articles included in author Jim Steele's 1937 Remembrance – Part II are excerpts from the Winter 2012-13 issue of the *Quarterly* (Vol. 11, No. 3.)

### **'In the Beginning':**

#### **Birth of the Boonslick Historical Society**

*By Don Cullimore*

Judging from period newspaper reports, the birth of the organization that was to become known as the Boonslick Historical Society appears to have been a spontaneous event. A short article on the day of the Society's historically acknowledged deliverance appeared a few hours earlier on the society page of the *Boonville Daily News* announcing that "reservations for the Cooper County Historical Society banquet this evening at 7 o'clock have been coming in 'very well,' it was reported this morning."

Dr. Eugene M. Violette, who was noted in the news article as "writing a history of Missouri," was to be the chief speaker. Also being presented at the meeting was "a photographic exhibit, the property of Alexander Piaget of St. Louis," to be shown in the banquet room. "The exhibit will depict a number of historic dwellings throughout state, several of which are located in Cooper and Howard counties."

There was no mention of a two-county or "Boonslick" historical society being discussed, but the embryo was in place.

It was the 18th day of November, 1937. The front page of the Boonville newspaper noted that city residents had been greeted early that morning by the first snowfall of the season – "three inches of wet snow" – and that it was still falling later that day. The temperature, which had fallen to 18 degrees that morning, later rose to 32. Front-page stories noted that hearings would be held in Boonville in January on requests by Southwestern Greyhound



**The historic Hotel Frederick in Boonville, often the site of the annual fall meetings of the Boonslick Historical Society. The organization was founded in the fall of 1937 during a meeting at the hotel of area historians and other interested citizens. Photo by Don Cullimore**

and the Sedalia-Marshall state bus lines to start passenger service between Boonville and Fayette ... that 250 guests showed up the previous day to honor Mr. and Mrs. Chris Smith on their 50th wedding anniversary in their Bunceton home ... that the deadline for obtaining a driver's license had been set by the state at November 23, and persons "caught driving November 24" without a permit would face a "fine of \$15.65" ... that FDR's hopes of passing some of his proposed legislation, including a wage-hour bill, were "dimmed by filibuster" in the Congress ... and the ominous clouds of an impending world war were noted in an Associated Press wire story headlined in bold-face caps: **"JAPANESE SEEK TO CRACK LINE NEAR SHANGHAI"**.

That evening, approximately 60 to 75 (newspaper and attendees' estimates varied) Boonville, Cooper and Howard County residents "interested in the preservation of historical data, sites and buildings" assembled in the Hotel Frederick banquet room "for the first banquet of the Cooper County Historical Society." Early during the meeting someone in the room rose to make a motion "that the territory be enlarged to include Howard County. The motion was met with approval of those attending and the new organization was effected."

A review of Boonville Historical Society archives maintained at Smiley Memorial library on the campus of Central Methodist University<sup>3</sup> reveals the founding of the society was not a serendipitous event, but was prompted by earlier recognition among members of the still-nascent Cooper County Historical Society that Howard County was tethered to Cooper as the Boonslick Region's first organized historical society by the umbilical cord of shared history.

The "birth" story was recounted several years later by the society's then president, Central College Professor Merrill E. Gaddis, who wrote in a formal program printed for the Tenth Anniversary of the Boonslick Historical Society, held February 26, 1947, at the Hotel Frederick: "The [Boonslick Historical] Society had its inception when a handful of Boonville citizens, much interested in historical lore, met somewhat informally and decided to have a 'Cooper County Historical Society,'" He further noted in the program that "The promotional stage had been advanced far until it

was recalled that the early history of Cooper County was inextricably interwoven with that of Howard across the river. ‘Why not back up and start over again?’ thought the organizers.”

“Accordingly,” Gaddis wrote, “a dinner-meeting was arranged at the Hotel Frederick in Boonville on November 18, 1937, with ‘approximately seventy-five members and guests present. Among them were representatives from among the old families of Howard as well as Cooper. Judge Roy D. Williams chaired the meeting. Here the ‘Historical Society of Howard and Cooper Counties’ was born, with Mr. L. A. Kingsbury as its president and Charles van Ravenswaay as secretary-treasurer. Mr. John Tolson (of Fayette) has the honor of having offered the motion which led to unanimous approval of such an organizational step. At a later meeting, January 18, 1938, Col. J. B. Barnes was chosen vice-president.”

During the first three years, the society’s meetings were held bi-monthly, Gaddis noted in the program, and added, “But wartime conditions, and perhaps the feeling that six acceptable speakers and the related entertainment could hardly be provided each year on the society’s limited funds brought a decision to make the meetings quarterly.” Annual dues were initially set at 50 cents. In the first 14 months of the society’s history, membership grew to 450 and later rose to as many as 600 by 1947. “State Historical Society officials,” Gaddis noted in the Tenth Anniversary Program, “in comparing the Boonslick group with most other county or regional societies, have often commented on the remarkable loyalty of our people to their organization and its objects.”

The name Historical Society of Howard and Cooper Counties marked the first seven years of its existence. In March of 1944, the society filed papers in Cooper County Circuit Court for a *pro forma* decree of incorporation under the name Boonslick Historical Society, discarding the original tag ending – “of Howard and Cooper Counties.” It was recognition by society members that the Boonslick Region had historical importance and presence far beyond the boundaries of Howard and Cooper Counties. The legal document’s articles of association also noted the purpose of the society: “This association is formed for the purpose of promoting literature, history, science and intellectual culture and the establishment of museums, libraries and the erection of public monuments.” At the time of the formal incorporation, Judge Roy D. Williams was president, Janet Moore was secretary, and Mrs. C. Albert Smith was treasurer. Fifty-six Society members “In Testi-



**Lilburn Kingsbury at age 93 being honored during a Society banquet at Central Methodist College for his lifelong commitment to Boonslick region history and his support for higher education. BHS archives**

mony” signed the incorporation document.

In addition to the society’s officers, a number of prominent citizens of Howard and Cooper Counties were among the signers: Col. Arthur M. Hitch of Kemper Military School; C. Albert Smith; W. Francis English of the University of Missouri; E. P. Puckett, academic dean at Central College; Professor William D. Basket of Central College; Col. John B. Barnes of Kemper Military School; Harry S. DeVore, president of Central College; E. J. Melton, founder of the *Boonville Republican* which merged in 1935 with the *Boonville Daily News*, which he served as editor, and the author of a history of Cooper County; and numerous others who constituted the well-placed professional and societal ranks of Howard and Cooper counties.

In his Tenth Anniversary Program comments, Merrill Gaddis noted that from the beginning the society had also had an impressive list of guest speakers at its yearly meetings: “In the total list one finds college professors, active and retired, representing 10 or more fields but all contributing to a knowledge of local history; also school administrators, high and low; prominent women from old families in the region and from several professions; librarians, directors of museums and historical societies, columnists and other journalists, a budget director, several local historians; and last but not least, an array of lawyers, all the way from county seat practitioners to state senators.”

The society’s 1937 founding story was also to be remembered at a Boonslick Historical Society Banquet 44 years later by its first elected president, Lilburn Kingsbury, then 97. Four years previously, he had been lauded by *Fayette Advertiser* Editor John Hert as “Mr. History himself, the man of Howard-Cooper area who probably knows more about its history off the top of his head than many others do after considerable researching.” Kingsbury had been invited to be the key speaker at the 1981 annual meeting of the society by its then president, Jasper Meals of Fayette. Kingsbury, known for a wry sense of humor, began his presentation by noting that it had been 20 years since he had been invited to talk to “our Society”.... “Perhaps,” he added, “it was because a lot of people may have shared the thoughts of a gentleman who lives within 10 miles of me who was recently visited by a friend of mine. To my friend he boasted that he was the oldest man in Howard County, a ripe 84. My friend told him that he was mistaken for he knew a man who was 13 years older, which brought on the following conversation:

‘Who is he?’

‘Near Franklin – Lilburn Kingsbury.’

‘Ain’t he dead?’”

Kingsbury then went on to recount the organization of the Cooper County Historical Society that occurred sometime before mid-November of 1937. “I do not have the date of that meeting (no minutes were kept of that action),” he told the group, adding, “But they soon decided that Cooper County had no early history that did not also relate to Howard County’s ... [that] it might be a good plan to involve historians of both counties in a joint society. Invitations were issued for a banquet meeting at the Frederick Hotel on November 18, 1937, and about 60 people attended it. At the time Charles van Ravenswaay, a young man, 26 then, frequently in our home pumping my father dry of historical facts, invited me to this meeting, but I had no interest in history and declined. But he was so persistent I consented to go to hush him up. I went but had no

interest in anything but the food. I was bored by the discussion of the organization, which I wouldn't even join. I was half asleep. I thought maybe a little cold coffee still in the cup might help keep me awake.

"In the time it took for me to raise the cup to my lips, drink its contents and set the cup down, I was shocked awake by hearing myself nominated for president and elected by acclamation.

"I was shocked beyond disavowing the honor. I was too paralyzed [at the] time to accept the honor. I could have shot Roy Williams if I'd had a gun. But after a few years, I became a worshiper at his shrine."

In the closing paragraphs of his written comments in the Tenth Anniversary Program, Merrill Gaddis noted again the society's mission: "The society is vitally interested in the identification, marking and preservation of historic sites, and in the acquisition of old records and other valuable papers. Scattered through the minutes of the society are to be found listings of materials thus secured, ranging all the way from Indian relics, private journals and town records, to the even more important papers of eminent statesmen and significant leaders long since passed away."

*Updated Conclusion:* The society has now completed 84 years of existence as a continuous body, as a significant historical-cultural presence in Howard and Cooper counties, from which a majority of its current membership is drawn. But the Name Boonslick Historical Society recognizes a cultural region beyond such limited borders, and membership today also includes residents of Boone, Cole, Green, Moniteau, Randolph, and Saline counties. Thus the society embraces among its interests, the recognition of important historical events and sites, and in its membership a much larger sphere than that of two central Missouri counties. Time and limitations of editorial space preclude a full recounting here of the society's involvements and personalities in the years between its Tenth Anniversary in 1947 and its 84th, which occurred November 18, 2021, but future issues of the *Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly* will continue its remarkable story. — Don B. Cullimore, Editor

## **A New Day in Wildlife and Resource Management: Conservation Commission Established in 1937**

*By Brett Dufur — Missouri Department of Conservation*

Missouri's Department of Conservation is now in its 84th year as a constitutionally independent state conservation agency. As such, it has served over the decades as a national model for the establishment of other state conservation/wildlife agencies largely free of the entangling partisan politics of state legislatures, and one that manages the state's wildlife and natural resources on the basis of sound scientific knowledge and research.

(The below article was written by Department of Conservation then staff writer Brett Dufur as part of a series on the agency's 75th anniversary (2012) and published throughout the year in the *Missouri Conservationist*. It was republished in the *Quarterly* with permission of the Department of Conservation.)

A SINGLE CANNON BLAST SLICED THROUGH THE SILENCE of a quiet morning on a Missouri River bend on July 4, 1804. The crew of the Lewis & Clark Expedition was celebrating the first official ob-

servance of Independence Day in the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase territory. The site today is known as Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area, located 30 miles north of Kansas City.

Among the entries in William Clark's journal [spelling and grammar are original] that day were observations of extensive prairies, rivers, a great number of goslings, and a clear lake containing vast quantities of fish and geese. He didn't write about the oppressive July heat and humidity, the "mosquitos" or the hardships endured. Instead, Clark wrote about the abundance and vari-



ety of wildlife, which was stunning even to this veteran explorer.

"The Plains of this country are covered with a Green Grass, well calculated for the sweetest and most norushing hay, interspersed with... trees, Spreading ther lofty branches over Pools Springs or Brooks of fine water... Shrubs covered with the most delicious froot is to be seen in every direction, and nature appears to have exerted herself to butify the Senery by the variety of flours raising Delicately and highly... above the Grass, which Strikes & profumes the Sensation, and amuses the mind, throws it into Conjecturing the cause of So magnificent a Senery... in a Country thus Situated far removed from the Sivilised world to be enjoyed by nothing but the Buffalo Elk Deer & Bear in which it abounds."

His awe of the natural beauty he saw here is a powerful testament to the connection people have always felt for this land. Yet it would take only a generation of early settlers to forge an entirely different Missouri than what Clark had described.

### **From Wildlife Depletion to Conservation Action**

By the 1860s, the insatiable demand for fur, feathers and meat had virtually emptied the forests. Relentless commercial hunting was rampant and unchecked. By the late 1800s, the largest lumber mill in the world came to the Ozarks to feed the booming railroad industry's thirst for railroad ties and a growing nation's need for wood products. In 1912 alone, 15 million hand-hewn railroad ties were sold in Missouri. It was also an age when a third of the Ozarks were burned each year in an effort to bring up the grasses



for livestock. Missouri's forests were soon depleted.

By the 1930s, the country was in the grips of the Great Depression. Our national trust of soil, water and wildlife were becoming similarly bankrupt. The existing Missouri Department of Game was largely a token gesture that had been weakened by powerful interests and left underfunded. Many Missourians had a deep seated feeling that things could be better—that even though Missouri's natural resources had been squandered through overuse, proper government regulation could help restore wildlife in Missouri. This ultimately set the stage for Missouri's citizen-led effort to restore Missouri's fish, forest and wildlife resources 84 years ago.

### Missouri's Citizen-led Efforts Take Root

On Sept. 10, 1935, nearly 100 sportsmen met at the Tiger Hotel in Columbia to discuss what could be done. They formed the Restoration and Conservation Federation of Missouri and devised a solution that was as simple as it was revolutionary. Columbia newspaper publisher E. Sydney Stephens, who became one of the leaders of the movement and later one of MDC's first commissioners, summed things up, "If you get a law passed, what have you got?" he asked. "The next legislature could repeal or amend it, and the politicians take over. By the same token, if you attempt to get a constitutional amendment through the legislature, you won't recognize it when it comes out. But if you write the basic authority exactly as you want it, put it on the ballot through the initiative and let the people vote it into the constitution—then you've got something permanent."

So they drafted Amendment 4, aimed at creating an apolitical conservation agency. Sportsmen fanned out across the state and gathered signatures to put the proposal on the ballot. On Nov. 3, 1936, voters approved the measure by a margin of 71 to 29 percent—one of the largest margins by which any amendment to the state constitution had ever passed. The sportsmen's vision had prevailed.

On July 1, 1937, the constitutional amendment creating the Missouri Conservation Commission took effect, creating an apolitical, science-based conservation agency with exclusive authority over forests, fish and wildlife. Over the next 84 years, the "Missouri plan" allowed the Show-Me State to build what is acknowledged as one of the nation's top conservation programs. Today that commission is more commonly referred to as the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC).

"Everything was new," recalls MDC's first chief of wildlife research, Bill Crawford, who retired after providing leadership in that role for 34 years. "It was an opportunistic time when we could find problems and really start to work on them."



**E. Sydney Stephens of Columbia helped lead the citizen effort to create a constitutionally independent conservation commission and state conservation department that was accepted by Missouri citizens through statewide vote in 1936. The commission began operation in 1937. Photo courtesy of MDC.**

Since that historic night at the Tiger Hotel, a series of unprecedented conservation and wildlife restoration efforts have been accomplished. "Not in their wildest imaginations could those early sportsmen have imagined what has been achieved," says Dave Murphy, executive director of the Conservation Federation of Missouri. "On the same landscape, at the same time that our human population has doubled, we've seen the restoration of wild turkey, deer, geese, river otters, raccoons and black bass, and every kind of game species that you can imagine."

### Missouri's Unique Citizen Led Conservation Legacy

Missouri conservation is unique—unique in its history, unique in the way it derives its authority and funding from citizens, and unique in the passion and commitment of Missourians to perpetuate this legacy. The Show-Me State's conservation efforts have a broad management base giving consideration to forests, fish and all species of wildlife.

The Conservation Commission serves Missourians by ensuring citizens have healthy forests, fish and wildlife throughout the state. To achieve conservation successes the Commission and Department staff strive to promote cooperation between the Department, landowners and the public through scientific information and mutual understanding. Conservation successes such as stable deer and turkey populations indicate this partnership and approach has worked in Missouri.

The department's director is hired by an unpaid, citizen Conservation Commission, rather than being appointed by the governor. This provision provides the Department with a great amount of stability and permanence that benefit citizens and Missouri's fish, forest and wildlife resources.

The commission is made up of four commissioners, with no more than two from the same political party. The governor appoints commissioners for six-year unpaid terms. The commission serves as the department's policy maker, approves Wildlife Code regulations, and oversees strategic planning, budget development and major expenditures.

The first members of the Commission were E. Sydney Stephens, A. P. Greensfelder, Wilbur C. Buford and John F. Case. Current Commissioners include William L. (Barry) Orscheln, Columbia, Chair; Mark L. McHenry, Kansas City, Vice-Chair; Steven D. Harrison, Rolla, Secretary; Margaret F. (Margy) Eckelkamp, Washington, Member

*Jim Steele is president of the Boonslick Historical Society and is the retired editor/publisher of the Fayette Advertiser and Democrat-Leader (2000-2011). In 2016 he served as editor of Howard County's bicentennial book, From Prairie Land to Promised Land: A Remembrance Across*

[www.boonslickhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.boonslickhistoricalsociety.org)

# The Battle of Boonville—1861

By James M. Denny

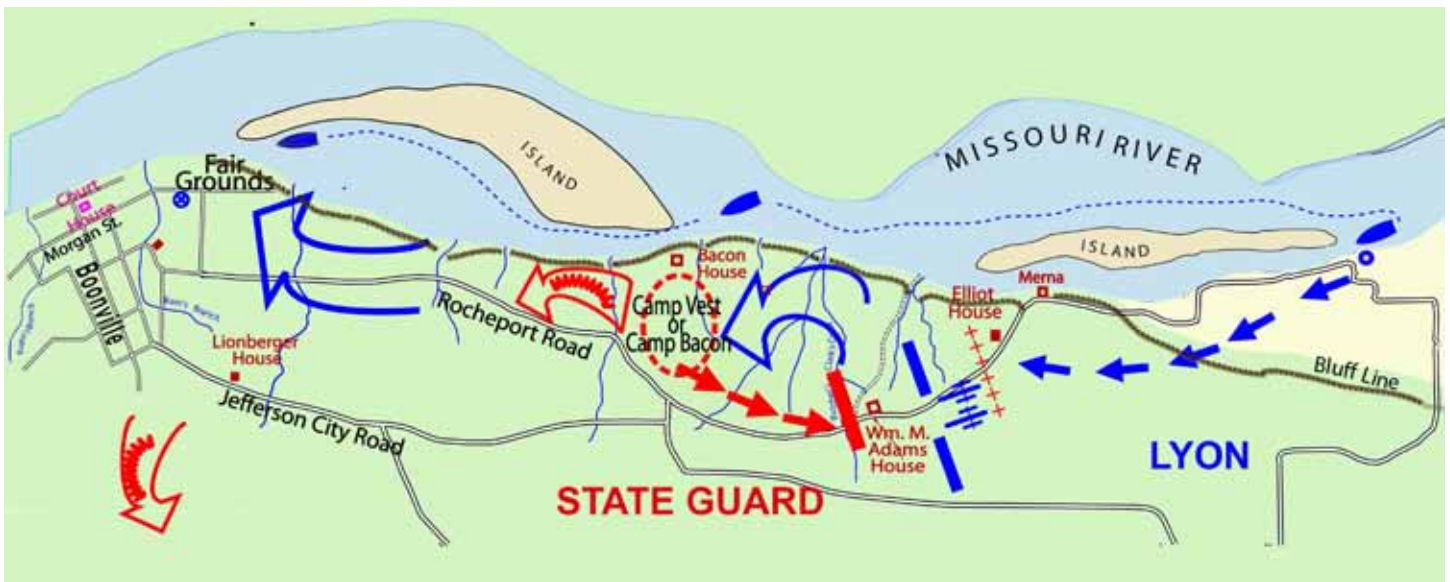
ON JUNE 17, 1861, THE BATTLE OF BOONVILLE took place at several locations along the old Rocheport Road. By most standards of warfare, the Battle of Boonville was more truly a skirmish or demonstration than a full blown battle. But small conflicts can sometimes have large consequences, and such was the case with the outcome of the Battle of Boonville. The battle was not only one of the first flash points of conflict in the rapidly escalating Civil War, but it also helped to decide in favor of the Union the then uncertain question of Missouri's ultimate status. Ex-Confederate Thomas L. Snead summarized the consequences of the Battle of Boonville in 1888: "Insignificant as was this engagement in a military aspect, it was in fact a stunning blow to the Southern Rights' people of the State, and one which did incalculable and unending injury to the Confederates."

Months of mounting tension between Unionist and Secession-

and Lyon, at the Planter's House in St. Louis. Lyon concluded this stormy meeting by declaring that a state of war now existed between Jackson's treasonous government and the United States.

Jackson and Price, fearing that Lyon's army would soon be on their heels, quickly left this meeting and returned to Jefferson City to organize a hasty evacuation of the Capitol. Reasoning that Jefferson City was too pro-Union to defend, Gov. Jackson and Gen. Price ordered their volunteers to muster at either Boonville or Lexington, both strongholds of Southern sentiment. If Boonville could be held for a couple of weeks while Southern volunteers massed at Lexington, the State Guard might be transformed into an army capable of holding Missouri for the Confederacy.

On June 13, Jackson evacuated the capital city. Two days later, Lyon, Blair and 2,000 soldiers arrived in four boats to take control of Jefferson City. Lyon was well aware of the danger that



**LEGEND**

- █ Federal
- █ State Guard
- \*\*\*\* State Guard Pickets
- ⚡ Federal Artillery
- ➡ Federal Advance
- ➡ State Guard Retreat
- ⚓ Steamer McDowell
- House Site
- Existing Antebellum House

ist factions preceded the outbreak of hostilities at Boonville. A pro-Southern faction, led by Gov. Claiborne Fox Jackson, was at work organizing a military force, the State Guard, to be placed under the command of Maj. Gen. Sterling Price. Backed by a powerful state military force, Gov. Jackson intended to lead Missouri into the Confederacy. Determined to thwart Jackson's designs was a strong Unionist faction based in St. Louis and led by Congressman Frank Blair Jr. and Gen. Nathaniel Lyon. The final break between these struggling factions came at a meeting, held on June 11, 1861, between Jackson, Price, Blair

could come from allowing Price and Jackson enough breathing space to assemble and train an army. Determined to prevent this by keeping his enemy on the run, Lyon continued steaming on to Boonville with 1,700 men.

Fearing that enemy artillery was emplaced on the bluffs near Boonville, Lyon disembarked his force some eight miles below town. At 7 a.m. Lyon set his army in motion. A march of two miles across the floodplain of the Missouri River led to a point where the road they were on, the Rocheport Road, began a gradual rise into the surrounding river hills. As the force started its ascent, State Guard pickets opened fire, and then fell back.

A mile to the west, an advance detachment of four or five hundred State Guardsmen awaited Lyon's approach. Earlier that morning, the Southern volunteers had moved out of their encampment, called variously Camp Vest or Camp Bacon, to take up their position on Rocheport Road. The commander of the guardsmen, Col. John Sappington Marmaduke, was not optimistic about the

outcome of the coming fight. He knew that his total force of 1,500 poorly armed and untrained men was no match for Lyon's disciplined and well-equipped soldiers. Marmaduke urged Gov. Jackson to concentrate his forces further south, at Warsaw, where battle with the Federals could be had on terms more favorable to the Southerners. With a victory in hand, they might be able to launch a campaign to drive the Federals from the state. Jackson, however, was unwilling to depart from Boonville without offering a show of resistance, and insisted they make a stand whatever the odds.

The position chosen for the Southern stand was along a lane that intersected Rocheport Road about a mile west of where the pickets first fired on Lyon's approaching army. On the northeast corner of the intersection stood a brick house behind which was a wheat field. Concealing themselves behind the house, its out-buildings and fences, and a thicket of woods, the state forces had a good position from which to pour fire into the exposed ranks of the advancing Federals.

The main portion of the battle opened at approximately 8 a.m. with a brisk shelling of the rebel position by Lyon's artillery, under the command of Captain Totten. The artillery occupied the center of Lyon's column while infantry steadily advanced on either flank. For a while, according to one newspaper account, the air whined with bullets as both sides unleashed volleys at one another. Totten soon found his range, and two cannon balls came crashing into the brick house, and others poured into the Southern position. Thus dislodged, the defenders fell back across the fences and through the wheat field. The Southerners were able to stitch together a new line near the brow of a hill, advance some 20 paces and open fire. Lyon's troops, now rapidly advancing, were compelled to cross a stretch of open ground. A body of the enemy concealed in a grove of trees unleashed what was described as a galling fire. This created the few casualties suffered by the Federal side. Again, Totten's artillery was pressed into service while the troops on both flanks pushed the attack.

It seemed at this point that the skirmish might assume the magnitude of a full-fledged battle, but the lack of arms and discipline of the Southern force began to take their toll. The superior military preparation and fire power of the Federal side soon overpowered the ill prepared Southerners and Marmaduke gave the order to retreat. The battle had lasted little more than 20 minutes. The withdrawing Southerners made an attempt to maintain some semblance of order as they pulled back, firing at their pursuers from any available cover. Their retreat, however, progressively degenerated into a disorderly stampede.

While the Federal infantry pressed the attack, the *McDowell* steamed upriver to a point opposite Camp Bacon and began to shell the position with an eight-inch howitzer. This discouraged the Southerners from any attempt to linger in the encampment long enough to gather their belongings. The Federals marched into to the hastily evacuated camp to find food still on tables and much equipment left behind including 1,200 pairs of shoes, assorted tents, blankets, and other items.

The final Southern stand was made at the fairgrounds, about a mile east of town. During the evacuation of the Capitol, Jackson had moved the state armory to this location. The river-based howitzer was again called into service and lobbed shells onto the Southern position while the Union infantry closed in rapidly. The retreating Southerners were forced to leave behind their only two



**Gen. Nathaniel Lyon and Col. – and later Gen. – John S. Marmaduke.**  
*Images and map courtesy of James Denny.*

artillery pieces, a pair of six-pound cannons that were never used against the enemy.

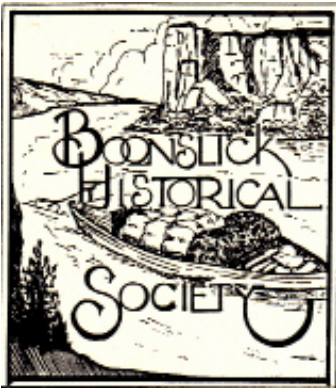
By 11 a.m., Gen. Lyon was riding into Boonville to receive the surrender of the town from a local delegation of citizens. At the same time, Jackson was exiting the other end of town, bound for southwest Missouri to link up with Price and his troops who were at the same time evacuating Lexington. Word of the Boonville rout convinced Price that the rich and friendly Missouri River valley was no longer a safe haven. Lyon's rapid action had denied Price and Jackson the precious time they needed to build up their army in the Missouri heartland.

As battles went, Boonville was clearly a small affair. Three Southerners were killed, and five to nine wounded, while the Federal toll came to five killed, seven wounded. Probably few battles of so minor a scale reaped such large results as did the Boonville triumph for Lyon. He had toppled the state government and sent the governor, general assembly and State Guard fleeing southward. Furthermore, the Missouri River was now a Federal highway that barred potential recruits in northern Missouri from joining Price and Jackson in southwest Missouri.

Eminent Civil War historian, Bruce Catton, summarized the significance of what Lyon had accomplished: "This fight at Boonville, the slightest of skirmishes by later standards, was in fact a very consequential victory for the Federal government. Gov. Jackson had been knocked loose from the control of his state, and the chance that Missouri could be carried bodily into the Southern Confederacy had gone glimmering. Jackson's administration was now, in effect, a government-in-exile, fleeing down the roads toward the Arkansas border, a disorganized body that would need a great deal of help from Jefferson Davis's government before it could give any substantial help in return."

*Jim Denny was a historian with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for 33 years before retiring in November 2009. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in American History from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He has also published numerous articles on a variety of topics including historic architecture, Missouri's Civil War, and the Lewis and Clark Expedition in Missouri. He is co-author with John Bradbury of The Civil War's First Blood: Missouri 1854 – 1861, published by Missouri Life in 2007. During his career with the DNR, he was manager of the Civil War Marker program to place interpretive waysides at the locations of significant Civil War events, and again during the the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial commemoration, 2004-2006. The information used in this article is from a Battle of Boonville historic marker he created.*





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## BHS Member Writes Biography of Meredith Miles Marmaduke

BOONSLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBER LEE M. CULLIMORE has written a biography of Meredith Miles Marmaduke, *How to Make A Fortune in Missouri: Meredith Miles Marmaduke, 1791-1864*. Marmaduke became Missouri's governor in 1844 and played a major role in the state's politics during the early and mid-19th century.

Two centuries ago, the promise of cheap land and abundant resources enticed Americans westward to the frontier that was Missouri. Some halted at St. Louis while others moved on to establish small farms and villages, their dreams satisfied. More restless men — risk takers, entrepreneurs, adventurers sought greater opportunities for creating wealth in the new state.

Among the more daring was Meredith Miles Marmaduke, a Virginia-born bachelor who arrived at Franklin, Missouri, in 1823 with a horse and a wagon, five slaves, and the desire to "make a fortune." His ambition soon led him down the dangerous Santa Fe Trail to trade in Mexico, fighting off perilous conditions, unsavory rivals, thieves, and Indian raids.

At home in Saline County, he married into the powerful Sappington family, raised nine children, and immersed himself in farming, numerous business ventures, and land speculation...Drawn into politics, he rose to become the eighth governor of Missouri.

This is Marmaduke's story, a tale of adventure, dicey deals, and political intrigue, seasoned with the occasional duel and family scandal. His legacy — far more enduring than the vast fortune he indeed acquired — left a lasting impact on his beloved Boon-

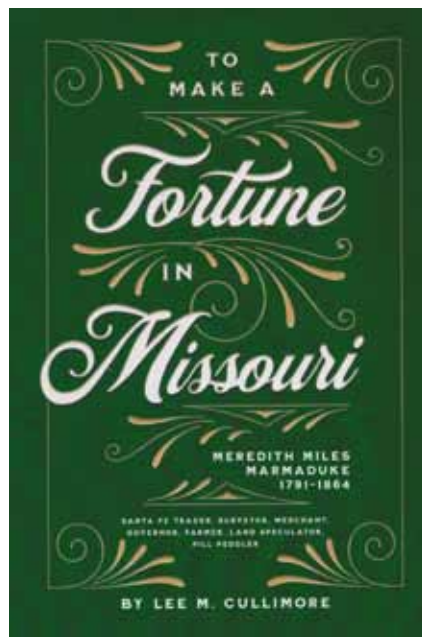
slick region of north-central Missouri.

The book is available at the Friends of Arrow Rock (the publishers) Bookstore and office on the boardwalk in historic Arrow Rock, or by ordering online at: [FriendsOfArrowRock.org](http://FriendsOfArrowRock.org). The 310-page hardback contains a Foreword, Introduction, Bibliography and Index. It is well illustrated with a 16-page color signature containing maps, artwork and portraits of important persons noted in the book. Cost is \$24.99.

Cullimore, whose middle name is Marmaduke, is related to a branch of the Marmaduke family through his paternal great-grandmother, Virginia Marmaduke Sharp.

He studied journalism at Lincoln University and the University of Missouri. For 30 years he worked as a writer, editor, radio producer, and publisher of special-interest magazines, primarily in the outdoor recreation and natural history fields.

He is also the author of *The Boys of Company K*, published in 2012 by High Plains Press. The book focuses on the lives of a group of ordinary men and boys from Ohio who served the Union as members of a cavalry company in the West during the Civil War, and whose contribution to the preservation of the Union was overshadowed by events in the East. *The Boys of Company K* received the "Book of the Year" award by the Wyoming State Historical Society in 2013.



*NOTE: Disclosure — the editor of the magazine and the book's author are brothers. We hope to present a review of the book by an independent scholar of history in a future issue of the Quarterly.*