

## Murraysville

### Recently donated artifacts tell a settler’s story

By Joyce Dorrell, JCHS President

In 1937, the century-old homestead of the Murray family, early settlers near Columbus, Missouri; was torn down by the then-current owner, T.L. Brockhouse. This historic cabin had stood for over 100 years, a silent witness to generations of life and change in Johnson County.

Uriel Murray brought his family to the area around 1830, settling on a farm roughly five miles southwest of Columbus. While it’s uncertain whether this was the first house he built, there was no doubt it had aged well past the century mark by the time it was demolished.

The original house consisted of two log rooms, with a large fireplace at its center. A wide porch stretched across the front of the house, with stairs leading up along one wall, then turning to pass between the two log rooms. Narrow doors flanked each side of the landing near the chimney, opening into the upstairs rooms. For its time, the home was considered

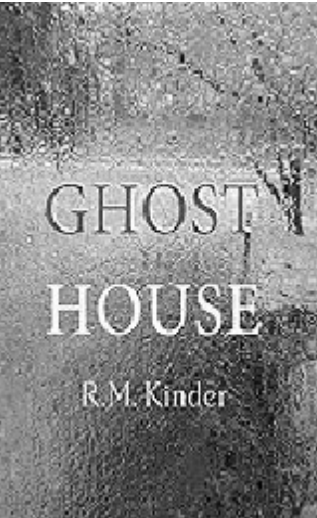
quite pretentious and an impressive structure for pioneer days. Its logs and timbers were joined with wooden pins, and at one point, the exterior was covered with walnut weatherboarding.

The home sheltered the Murray family through three or four generations until the Brockhouse family built their current residence on the same site. Afterward, the old cabin was relegated to use as a storeroom.

A large, flat rock near the site marked the base of the original fireplace and one of the quarters once occupied by Uriel Murray’s slaves.

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### Local Author Gives Readers a Scare for the Halloween Season



What happens when five people find themselves in what seems to be a common, serene country house telling extremely scary ghost stories? Then what happens when the house begins reacting to the stories?

There is evil in the house, and they are about to find out its depths.

THE MARY MILLER SMISER LIBRARY SELLS MANY HISTORICAL AND FICTION BOOKS. GET YOUR COPY OF ROSE MARIE KINDER’S BOOK, **“GHOST HOUSE.”**



#### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our Annual Members Meeting will be held October 5, 2025 at 2 p.m. at the Old Historic Courthouse, 302 N. Main St. Warrensburg, Mo.

Nominees for the JOCOHS Board of Directors selected by the 2025 Nomination Committee are Sherol Bell, Andrea Whitehead and Bill Wayne. Sherol was recently appointed to the board to a seat that was expiring 3rd term 2025. Andrea is on her first term, and Bill is on his second.

We hope you come show your support for our candidates and join the meeting to vote.



## MURRAYSVILLE

Nearby, you'll find the tombstones of Uriel Murray, who died in 1853, along with several other early family members.

The last of the Murray family to occupy the homestead was Tom Murray. His mother, Margaret Angeline Rice, holds her own place in local lore. She was the first white child born in the territory that would become Johnson County. Margaret was born in the Columbus settlement on April 7, 1829, to Pleasant and Verlinda Ray Rice, the first family to make a permanent home in the area.

It's said that Margaret was a sturdy, strong-willed child—qualities that made her particularly fascinating to the Native American tribes who passed through the area. To them, the little white girl was a marvel. Several times, she was taken by Native groups, but she was never harmed. It is recorded that they loved her deeply and would have defended her with their lives.

In 1808, the U.S. government purchased the region from the Big Osage and Little Osage tribes, who held the strongest claim to the land. Other tribes such as the Sac, Fox, and Shawnee passed through the area for hunting and trade, but none settled permanently.

According to Pleasant Rice, Margaret's father, there were times when as many as 2,000 Native Americans camped within five miles of their home. Though peaceful, their presence often disrupted daily life for the settlers.

William Porter Murray, who lived at the homestead in 1904 had several brothers. John H. Murray became an influential merchant in Holden. Nicholas F. Murray, who lived just west of Holden, upheld many of the Murray family traditions, while another brother, Finis Murray, made his home in Kansas City.

Tom's father, W.W. Murray was born in Missouri in 1824. He studied in Lexington before attending and graduating from Chapel Hill College, a renowned institution of its time. He returned to Johnson County, where he balanced farming with teaching and became known as a peaceful and upright citizen. W.W. was deeply involved in local affairs and committed to improving life in the county.

W.W.'s father, Uriel, was born in Tennessee and moved to Lafayette County, Missouri, around the time the state was granted statehood. By 1829 or 1830, he had settled south of Columbus. When Johnson County was officially organized in 1834, Uriel Sr. became one of its leading citizens.

In August 1835, Governor Dunklin appointed him as one of three county judges. He was later elected Presiding Judge, a position he held until 1848 and perhaps the longest term served by any official in county history.



Standing left to right: Dylan Roscoe James, Stryker Dorrell, Mark Brown, Frank Calhoon, Doug Bontz, Joyce Dorrell, Ricky Brooks, Jim James, Joe Spickard; Kneeling: Ross Frailey and inspirational cast member, Buddy the Dog.

## OLD DRUM CAST PLAY TO A FULL COURTHOUSE

On September 20th, the Johnson County Historical Society showcased "The Trial of Old Drum," a reader's theater production held in the old Warrensburg courthouse, where it was originally tried. This famous trial originally took place in 1870, and the focus of the case was the hound dog "Old Drum," who is still the most recognizable celebrity from the area today.

It was from this courthouse that the saying, "dog is man's best friend" originated, which is now one of Warrensburg's largest claims to fame. Now 155 years later, our actors found it an honor to reenact this case involving a dog's murder in the very space where it first happened. The play displays exactly why Warrensburg is now known as the "Home of Man's Best Friend," a result of lines said in a speech delivered by Senator George Graham Vest during the trial.

The production contained 10 actors who worked for weeks to prepare, honing and fine-tuning their characters. About 50 audience members attended the show and only spoke high praises of the performance.

The "Schoolhouse Jammers" provided opening music as audience members gathered, which set the ambiance for the play.

Overall, we had a great fall production, and the society hopes to continue improving the script. Special thanks to anyone who attended; we look forward to the next time!

**The Johnson County Historical Society wants to send YOU a heartfelt thank-you for your support:**

- ◆ The Murray Family collection including original JOCO land deeds, photographs and slave contracts. Donated by Michael Murray in Arizona.
- ◆ Civil War Diaries of Henry Worthen (We donated them to the Lone Jack Civil War Museum) The diaries held 1<sup>st</sup> hand accounts of the Battle of Lone Jack.
- ◆ Blueprints for our Heritage Library, The original deed for the Old Town Square and various photos and articles about the Historical Society from Joy Stevenson. Visit our museum if you are interested in seeing these items.
- ◆ We also want to thank Doug Bontz for diligently working hard to put this this newsletter out.

Joyce Dorrell, President  
Andrea Whitehead, Vice President/Library and Artifact Trustee  
Bill Wayne, Treasurer  
Anne Mallinson, Secretary  
Laurie Parker, member  
Donna Holt, member  
Ross Frailey, member  
Roscoe James, member  
Sherol Bell, member

Contact us at [curator@jocomohistory.org](mailto:curator@jocomohistory.org)  
Visit us at <https://www.jocomohistory.org>

**Be Part of Johnson County, Missouri, History!**

We're working to keep history alive, and we need your story to help future generations better understand our past. Your memories and are vital to preserving the legacy of our community. Don't let these stories fade away—share them now, before they're lost to time! Tell us your family history, too.

**BREADS, ROLLS**

**MARTHA’S NUT BREAD**

- 1 c. **scalded milk**
- 2 Tbsp. **butter**
- 1/2 **yeast cake, dissolved in 1/4 c. warm water**
- 3/4 tsp. **cinnamon**
- 1/2 tsp. **salt**
- 1 **egg**
- 3 c. **flour**
- 3/4 **nuts**



Add butter, sugar, and salt to milk. When lukewarm, add dissolved yeast, cinnamon, flour, and egg, well beaten. Add raisins and nuts. Cover and let stand overnight. In the morning, shape in loaves. Let rise and bake.  
From the handwritten cookbook of Jessie May Osborn, born January 1, 1892, died February 20, 1988. Martha Lee Osborn, born June 26, 1894, died February 4, 1991.

**OPEN HOURS**

**302 N. Main**

**Tuesday, 1-4**

**Friday, 1-4**

**Saturday, 1-4**

**CONTACT**

**[curator@jocomohistory.org](mailto:curator@jocomohistory.org)**

**660-747-6480**

At one point, Judge Murray offered to donate 80 acres of his finest land for the construction of a county courthouse, provided the county seat was established in Columbus. The area, rich in natural resources and home to the first families of the settlement, was considered an ideal location for a pioneer town. The offer was part of his re-election campaign, and it was agreed that he would take the proposal home for his wife’s signature and bring it back for official acceptance.

What happened next remains a mystery. Some speculate that Mrs. Murray, herself not far removed from her native Ireland, land of fiery spirits and fierce convictions; disagreed with the idea of giving away family land. Whatever the reason, the proposal was never brought up again. Judge Murray offered no explanation, and no one asked. Had the offer been accepted, the town would likely have been named **Murraysville** as proposed and agreed by the court.

Had that happened, the county seat, the railroad, and even the Teachers College might have ended up there. Holden, Kingsville, and even Warrensburg might never have existed as we know them. Murraysville might have become the cultural and economic heart of Johnson County. But it didn’t—and that is one of the many untold stories that shaped our county’s history.

**Be A PART OF HISTORY DONATE COLLECTIONS**

The JCHS is the repository for documents, photographs and memorabilia relating to the history of our county from its founding through today. Nearly everything that we have on display in the museum and on the shelves in the library were donations.



**Mary Harriet Miller Smiser  
(1883-1983)**

**Mary Miller Smiser  
Heritage Librarian 1969 to 1980**

Mrs. Smiser was a charter member of the Johnson County Historical Society and was secretary-treasurer when the society was reorganized in 1936. She was vice president in 1939, and was active in the second reorganization of 1955. She was Society president 1956 to 1958 and 1965 to 1968 and she was the author of "The Golden Years" a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Johnson County Historical Society.



## “BLIND WESLEY” THE OTHER BLIND PIANIST

From the community of Warrensburg, Johnson County, Missouri, came famous people, some well-known and others who were forgotten. John William Boone was one of those famous citizens. Also known as “Blind Boone,” he entertained others around the United States with his acute skills on the piano. However, not to be overshadowed by the fame of Blind Boone, was another little black, blind child, well-known to people in Warrensburg. He was Blind Boone’s nephew, John Wesley Hendricks (also spelled Hendrix). He was commonly known as “Little Blind Wesley.”

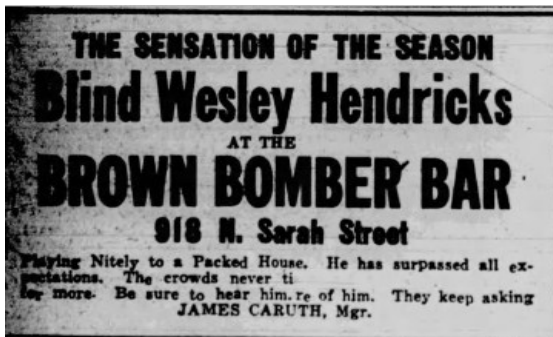
Although the research discovered no photos of Wesley, he was referred to as being small in stature, unlike the larger Boone.

*The Star-Journal, October 29, 1909*

### Concerning “Wes” Hendrix *[also spelled Hendricks]*

*John Wesley Hendrix is the blind negro boy who is often seen on the streets walking with a sure and certain tread, crossing where he desires without appearing a trifle nervous. This is “Wes” Hendrix, the blind boy, nephew of Blind Boone and apparent heir to Boone’s musical talent.*

*“But why should that boy be on the streets” said a citizen one day. He is a bright fellow and is entitled to a musical education. I have heard him play and he is really a marvel. Just fourteen years of age, a long life ahead of him, here in an educational center, and we let him grow up without doing a thing to cultivate those talents with which he could easily be something in the world and make his own way.” And this is all true. They say that Blind Boone is willing to take the boy and teach him but there are obstacles in the way. He ought to attend a school for the blind, and the citizen or organization which will take Wesley Hendrix off the street and put him into school will be doing a praiseworthy act.”*



*The St. Louis Argus, March 5, 1943*

and often had schemes to make money. One such project was to start an entertainment company with the star being Blind Wesley, the prodigy. His first two gigs were held locally and very successful, but the preacher had to disband his company when Wesley’s guardians rejected the preacher's offer to take him on the road. The preacher’s “Rev. Garner’s Concert Co.” was a failure.

Wesley was born into slavery. According to Johnson County Missouri historian, Michael Shaw, Wesley and his mother Rachel Carpenter were owned by family members of Daniel Boone. Elijah Boone was the slaveowner.<sup>2</sup> *[How ironic that Daniel Boone’s brother, George, is my 5X great grandfather.]*

Just a few years of age, Wesley picked up the harmonica and quickly mastered it. He then began to play the piano. Local citizens paid his tuition to a school for the blind in St. Louis, but he didn’t finish his education, there. When he was 11 years of age, his mother passed away so other relatives reared him.

A local black Baptist preacher, Tobe B. Gardner, who was very popular in Warrensburg and other places commonly

## Discover Your Roots: Beginner’s Genealogy Class

Have you ever wondered about the stories hidden in your family tree? Maybe you’ve heard bits and pieces about your ancestors but aren’t sure where to begin. Whether you’re just curious or ready to dive deep into your heritage, the **Johnson County Historical Society** invites you to a special event that could be the start of an incredible journey.

**Genealogy Class: “How to Research Your Family”**  
**Saturday, October 4th, 2025**  
**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Mary Smiser Heritage Library**  
**302 N Main Street**  
**Warrensburg, MO**

Join us for a hands-on, informative morning where history comes to life! This class is designed to help beginners get started on their genealogy journey and give experienced researchers new tools and tips for digging deeper.

Our **team of knowledgeable experts** will guide you through the process, showing you where to look, what to look for, and how to organize your findings. Whether you’re tracing your roots back a few generations or centuries, this class will give you the foundation you need.

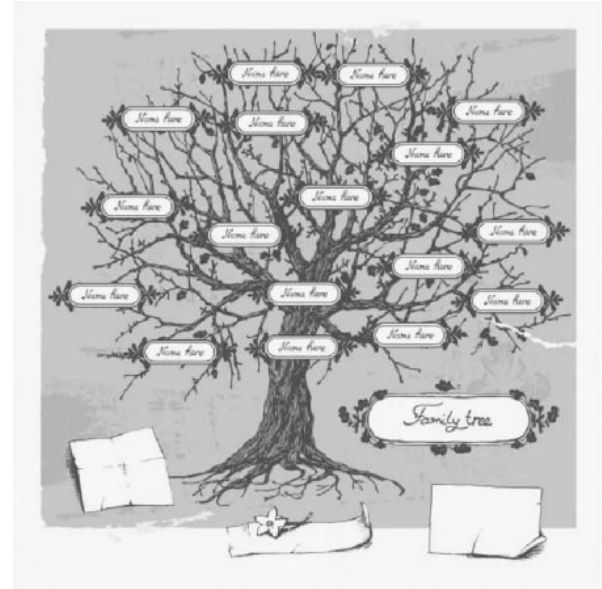
### Here’s what to expect:

- Step-by-step guidance on beginning your genealogy search
- Tips for using online and local resources
- Personalized help from experienced researchers

### Cost:

- **FREE** for Johnson County Historical Society members
- Open to the public with a small donation (all proceeds support our nonprofit mission). By attending, you are not only gaining valuable insights, you are also helping us preserve local history for future generations.

So join us in charming old downtown Warrensburg for a morning of discovery, connection, and a little bit of time travel. Bring your curiosity, your questions, and maybe even a family story or two. Let’s uncover the past together, your family history is waiting!



# Heartfelt Goodbye to West Central Missouri Genealogical Society

After 57 years of service, the West Central Missouri Genealogical Society has closed its chapter, leaving behind a legacy that will continue to inspire and guide future generations of family history researchers.

Organized in Warrensburg in October 1968, the Society was formed to help members uncover and preserve their family histories across ten counties: Bates, Benton, Cass, Henry, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Saline, and St. Clair.

In December 1969, the first issue of The Prairie Gleaner was published, offering original records, family queries, and discoveries that connected members across the nation and beyond. At its height in the 1980s, the Society had more than 500 members, with readers in all 50 states and several foreign countries. For nearly half a century, The Prairie Gleaner served as a trusted resource until its final issue in October 2015.

Though strong financially thanks to generous bequests, the Society faced dwindling membership, ultimately leading to the difficult decision to disband in 2025.

Through the years, the group met in five locations as its collection of books and periodicals grew. Since 2015, those holdings have been cared for by the Johnson County Historical Society, which has agreed to preserve the library and keep it open to researchers.

As a final gesture of gratitude, the Society presented gifts, distributing a combined \$135,000 to the 10 county historical societies in its area of focus. President Mike Shaw shared the joy of personally delivering the checks, recalling the looks of surprise that quickly turned to appreciation in each community.



At the Society's final meeting on September 22 at the Mary Smiser Heritage Library in Warrensburg, Treasurer A. J. Heck presented an honorary oversized check along with Johnson County's share of the donation to the Johnson County Historical Society.

In response, JOCHS President Joyce Dorrell expressed her thanks on behalf of the local Society, "We are deeply grateful for this generous gift. We are committed to keeping the Genealogical Society's library together so that future genealogists of Johnson County will have the resources they need to continue their important work."



**West Central Missouri Genealogical Society members say goodbye.**

**Sitting (left to right):** Rosalind Nichols, Mike Shaw, Deanna Lamb, Betty Lamb;

**Standing (left to right):** A. J. Heck, Harvey Christie, Donna Burden, Pam Thompson, Heather McCain, Doug Christie, Teresa Scarborough.



## *The Journal-Democrat, April 28, 1911* **Another Warrensburg Pianist**

*Warrensburg has many years cherished a belief that this town is entitled to a place in the hall of fame. This burg has contributed to the talent of the world in almost every line of human activity. We are especially strong in the matter of musicians.*

*On the operatic stage our most shining representative is Miss Alice Neilson. In other musical lines we have some stars but they come from our colored population. There is a strain of negro blood in this town which produces pianists. Blind Boone is a sample. As Boone's declining years advance, a young relative of his is arising to take his place, and even surpass Boone.*

*The Journal Democrat refers to Blind Wesley Hendrix, a well known negro kid about town. Ever since Wesley's infancy he has been known as a musical freak. Some months ago Walter L. Hout, of the Hout Scenic Company, became interested in Wesley and set about developing the boy's talent. Hout bought a piano player for Wesley, and the young negro went to work with a will. He has developed so that he can listen at the player through the most difficult classics, then sit down to a piano and make the mechanical player ashamed of itself.*

*Hout proposes to spend some money advertising Blind Wesley. Once he gets the negro's talent before the public there will be plenty of demand for his concerts, because he can certainly deliver the goods.*

*There is no apparent reason why Wesley, with superior advantages, will not surpass Boone as a performer in a very few years.*

Although Blind Wesley made his mark on Warrensburg, he eventually moved to Sedalia. He also lived in St. Louis for a period. In his youth he traveled around Missouri, playing in St. Louis and other venues. In Warrensburg, his work included playing for silent pictures at the turn of the century.

He eventually joined a minstrel show, playing jazz and popular tunes of the day, including ragtime. He also played at many churches. He displayed the best renditions of popular Christian hymns, much to the delight of parishioners. Later in life when minstrel shows, silent pictures and the like became a thing of entertainment history, Wesley continued to play at local churches, schools, and other venues, but his pay came from playing at bars. He was also known for his singing voice.

He never became famous like his uncle, "Blind Boone," but his mark was made on his family and Johnson and Pettis Counties.

John Wesley Hendricks died on June 4, 1946, at 51 years old at the hospital in Sedalia. His services were held at the Freewill Baptist Church. He is buried in the Crown Hill Cemetery in Sedalia,



**Daily Star-Journal  
September 26, 1911**



# Revenge, Murder, and the Pursuit of Justice

By Anne Mallinson

The Civil War ended in 1865, yet animosity between those with conflicting ideologies lingered, primarily due to the legacy of violence, destruction, and betrayal committed before and during the war. Murderers struck with impunity, even within the town.

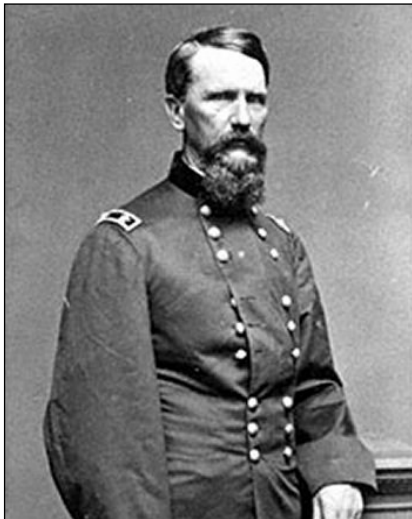
“It was nothing unusual for them to strike defenseless men with pistols, ride into and through business houses, shooting articles of merchandise from the walls, snuffing lights out of people’s houses with pistol shots, or shooting promiscuously into public gatherings. Religious meetings and political assemblages were ruthlessly broken up.”

Courts and judges could provide little justice. Perjury prevailed, as friends of those on trial verified the innocence of their cohorts.

On June 1, 1866, Major General Francis Blair Jr. was scheduled to speak publicly in Warrensburg. Extensive plans were made to ensure his safety at the reception. His speech was to be held north of the current courthouse, atop a platform erected for the occasion. Violent post-war terrorists, led by Bill Stephens, had threatened to kill Blair if he showed himself. A multitude of citizens from all parts of the county gathered, awaiting what was anticipated to be an informative political speech.

A party of Blair's friends waited at Ming’s Hotel to advise him against traveling to the courthouse square. They warned him of Stephens’ threats.

Known for his efforts to keep Missouri in the Union, General Blair replied, “I will speak this afternoon, and I will explode a shell in this town that will be remembered by these damned scoundrels as long as they live.”



Gen. Francis Blair, Jr.

At the time, Blair was a prominent Missouri politician. He had switched from the Republican to the Democratic Party and was violently opposed to Radical Republican Reconstruction policies. He was speaking out against the “Ironclad Oath,” a policy designed to restrict the rights of those who had fought against the Union, namely Confederate sympathizers.

General Blair began speaking at 1 p.m., but during the first hour, members of Bill Stephens’ group repeatedly interrupted with insulting remarks. After about an hour, Stephens himself climbed to the front of the stage and called Blair a “damned liar.” The general’s supporters threw Stephens from the platform. He returned and was thrown down a second time. On his third attempt to take the stage, men from both sides drew firearms.

## New JCHS Board of Directors



Sherol Bell

**Sherol Bell** recently accepted the position of board member on the Johnson County Historical Society. Her decades-long experiences holding officer positions on administrative boards will benefit the local society.

According to Bell, preserving the past for the future is important. “I like to know the how, who, when, and where of our past. I enjoy history of how our land was settled and who did it.” Bell has been a part of the Extension system in Missouri as far back as 1985, when she served as District Director of the West-Central Young Extension Homemakers. She also served on the Johnson County Extension Council representing MFA (Mutual Farmer’s Association) and held the position of secretary for several years.

She was a member of the Pittsville Extension Homemakers Club, serving in various positions: member, president, and secretary. Bell also held the positions of secretary, vice-president and president of Johnson County Extension Council.

Bell also held the positions of global and environmental Chairman for the Missouri State Extension Homemakers.

She has been a member of Enon Baptist Church for 50 years and served as Regional Consultant for the West-Central region of Women’s Missions Union and currently hold the position as state secretary.

“I enjoy meeting people to talk about past history of our county and surrounding area,” she said.

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A newer member to the Board, **Dylan Roscoe James**, has been serving on the Board of Directors for the Johnson County Historical Society since July of this year.

Initially growing up in Warrensburg, Roscoe was immersed in local acting groups and productions, serving as president for multiple choir and acting organizations in school. After graduating from WHS in 2010, he moved down to Cape Girardeau, MO to attend college.

After four years of Business Administration education at SEMO, Roscoe moved over to Denver to further his education at the Denver School of Massage Therapy- soon becoming a Licensed Massage Therapist in late 2015.

After a stint working as the Marketing Director for a downtown medical clinic, Roscoe launched an on-site chair massage company in Denver focusing on large-name corporate businesses in that area.

Within four years, the business had become one of the top options for Chair Massage services in the city- boasting 43 contractors on-staff. Soon the opportunity was presented to sell the business to a larger competitor. Seizing that opportunity, Roscoe quickly sold the company, bought an RV, then spent the next 2.5 years traveling the nation with his wiener dog- visiting a wide variety of historical sites and museums all around the country.

Upon returning to his hometown in 2024, Roscoe has more recently been seeking out ways to pursue his continued interest in history in his spare time- historical reenacting with a local Civil War group, helping with the Trial of Old Drum, and recently joining the Board to help make a difference with this area’s own historical society and sites.

It is with that spirit and experience that Roscoe will try and aid the Historical Society with its goals, and he is very excited for the opportunity to help make a difference!



Roscoe James

# POEMS BY ANNE MALLISON

## Johnson County Code

To drive the gravel,  
you learn how fast to take a curve,  
which two fingers to lift  
in slow salute to folks  
who plow their own driveways,  
and winter where rush hour  
means the mail truck came.

A breakdown on gravel  
means the next driver stops  
to offer a ride, a spare-  
neighbors in more than geography.  
Given the choice between curbs and ditches,  
I prefer a back road

## JCHS MEMBERSHIPS

Annual: **\$30**

Business: **\$100**

Lifetime: **\$500**

**There are also daily library passes.**

### The Johnson County Historical Society

is a 501c (3) non-profit organization which maintains the Mary Miller Smiser Heritage Library & Museum and the historic buildings on the Old Courthouse Square in Warrensburg, MO. Archives of original county records dating from 1834 are housed here, original deeds, original court cases files, along with the original newspaper binders from many of the county’s publications. We also house directories, Platt maps, cemetery records, family files, specializing in Johnson County local history.

## January 8, 1862

She sat on the stoop  
the sun scarlet at the bottom of the sky.  
Cupping a palm against an ear,  
She heard her man, then others  
A symphony of cattle calls,  
As if cows needed to be told  
When their udders begged for release.

One voice rose clear,  
the slave Cato calling hogs,  
his cry a signal of danger--  
the warning of Redlegs crossing the river,  
pounding uphill to the town.  
Columbus caught unaware.

Before the moon rose,  
The village was left in ashes.  
blood lay on the stoop  
and cows  
no longer needed  
to be milked.

## August 21, 1863

In Columbus, the waxing moon a witness  
As guerillas gather on the north fork of the Blackwater,  
bent on revenge against Union Redlegs,  
the death of their women raw  
even for men accustomed to carnage.  
Quantrill demands an eye for an eye,  
the price for wives, mothers, sisters  
silenced by the collapse of a Kansas City jail.

Sunrise at their backs,  
Two hundred join others in Lone Jack,  
cross the border into Kansas.  
Eighty miles from Columbus to Lawrence,  
A punishing price for horseflesh.

Guerillas gut the town--  
the settlement sacked, with a hundred and fifty dead.  
Afterward, Quantrill enjoys eggs in a hotel.  
The leader of the Redlegs, Jim Lane, crouches in a cornfield  
while wives and widows wait under a blackened sky.

It was said that one could hear the sound of a hundred pistols being cocked, some pointed at Blair and his guards, others aimed at Stephens and his men.

In the melee that followed, as Stephens’ men tried to tear down the stage, Stephens’ son Jim was knifed to death. Another man was severely injured. At that point, Bill Stephens and his gang ceased their efforts to disrupt the speech. They gathered Jim’s body and that of the injured man and withdrew.

General Blair continued with his speech for another four hours, concluding at 6 p.m.

*More information on the post-war era will follow in the next newsletter.*

Information for this article came from government sources and from the book *True Tales from Missouri*, compiled by Kathleen K. White, published in 1976.

**Major General Francis Blair Jr.** served as Attorney General for New Mexico Territory, Congressional representative for Missouri, U.S. Senator from Missouri and was the Democratic candidate for Vice President in 1868.

## Autumn Falls On Warrensburg.

*By Joyce Simmons-Dorrell 2025*

In a small town where the maples glow,  
Autumn winds sing soft and low.  
Leaves drift down in golden flame,  
Each street and porch a whispered name.

The home of Old Drum, faithful and true,  
Still holds his story in skies of blue.  
A loyal friend whose heart won’t fade,  
His memory walks where shadows played.

The Historic Courthouse stands with pride,  
On old town square where time won’t hide.  
Its walls of stuccoed brick, its legacy from inside,  
Stands proudly beneath the harvest sky.

Warrensburg, dressed in autumn’s hue,  
Feels warmer still when days are few.  
A small town heart, both proud and fair,  
With fall’s sweet spirit everywhere.

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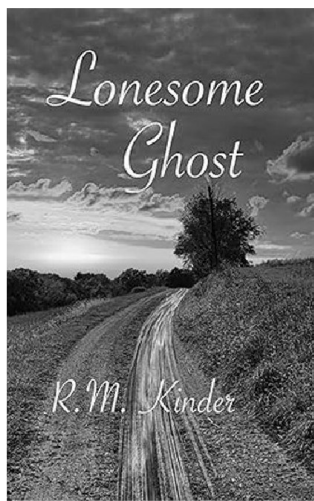
## The type of rhetoric that influenced young William McCown to kill Marsh Foster in the old courthouse in 1861.

*Frome The Weekly Union, July 25, 1860*

Something is brewing, sure; and we now warn our friends—the honest voters of Johnson County—to be on the alert, and “watch the corners,” for the notorious, obnoxious Warrensburg Democratic clique which **Marsh Foster** subjugated, and it was hoped extirpated, has been in grand secret conclave for two whole days, in a certain distinguished Senator’s” office, devising, concocting, and laying schemes by which they hope to carry the election in this county, and to defeat the independent candidates. We now inform you that the great mountain has been in labor; look out for the offspring. We are fully posted up as to their maneuvers and we want to the voters of the county to know that they “Court House Clique” ain’t dead yet, it is alive and “plotting against the whites.”

New Kinder Publication: *Lonesome Ghost*

As a former creative writing professor, Rose Marie Kinder has a range of writing passions. Her words can hold you and caress you, or they can scare the heebie-jeebies out of you. Suspense, mystery, and supernatural genres are commonly found in a Kinder publication.



*Lonesome Ghost* (ISBN: 979-8998797811) is the latest of Kinder’s long list of works. It was released on September 15 through Amazon Kindle. Kinder describes it as a 45 -minute read of between 30-36 pages, depending on the bookseller.

She can weave a great mystery and spirit a great ghost story. Her present book, a novelette (long story), set in the fictional Missouri Bootheel community of Buxton, in the Crowley’s Ridge Area of Stoddard County, is called *Lonesome Ghost*.

Although family love and dynamics are its overall themes, *Lonesome Ghost*, is suspenseful, mysterious, and edges into the thriller category. It’s eerie and intense, too. The use of extrasensory abilities is also explored in the book.

*Sarah convinces her sister Esther to go ghost hunting at an isolated, abandoned farmhouse where a murder occurred years before. Experiencing fragmented memories and an intimacy with the site, Sarah begins a passionate search to discover her family’s role in that murder and her relationship to the ghost.*

This creative writing professor has honed her craft as you will find. The Amazon Kindle book, *Lonesome Ghost*, is worth the purchase . Check out her other books found on Amazon.

Dr. Rose Marie Kinder’s writing is always guaranteed to take you on a journey.



“Do you have a piano I can play?”

A poet, without forethought, responds to a question poetically. When asked when she discovered writing to be rewarding, Kinder said, “*My love for words and music drew me forward, and when finances limited my opportunities, what is near and lovely and possible is what you grasp and hold dear.*”

Kinder was born a poet, and it was this nature that attracted other muses. She is a poet, writer, musician, composer, and artist. Her talent has never been stifled; it has always found a way to express itself, and there are so many expressions.

Growing up in the Missouri Bootheel, life could be challenging, but Kinder knew that despite a lack of money in life, one could always find happiness in writing...and music...so this author suggests she was always happy.

Kinder tells a cute Shirley Temple-ish story about herself. “*As a child I wanted to play the piano so much that I would knock on doors asking people if they had a piano I could play.*” Today, Kinder has a house full of musical instruments, and of course, most of them she can play.

Over the years, she has played with musical groups in Arizona and Missouri. In 2003, Kinder and former Johnson County Historical Society Director Lisa Irle, began a regular open mic jam session which later became the “Sunday Jammers” (The group is still jamming on Sundays).

From her literary nature, when asked who her favorite authors were, it was not surprising that Shakespeare was among her likes. However, her inspiration came from the works of Willa Cather, and William Faulkner. Her favorite was Willa Cather’s “My Antonia” and “Song of the Lark.” Her favorite Bible book is “Isaiah.”

The reason Kinder is so successful as an author? She knocked on many doors. Warrensburg and Johnson County are proud to have her as a citizen. She is a lifetime member of the Johnson County Historical Society where you can purchase some of her work.

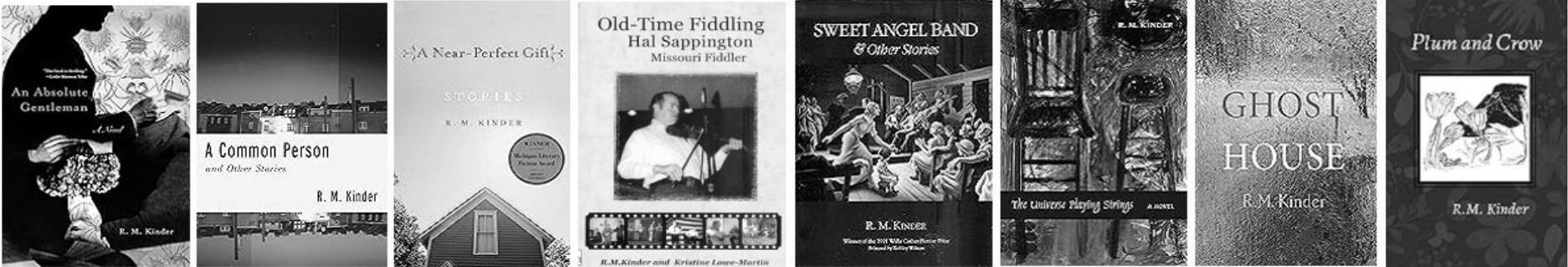


Kinder playing the mandolin

FOLLOW ROSE MARIE KINDER  
BLOG: <http://rmkinder.wordpress.com>  
WEBSITE: <http://www.rmkindernet>

LIFETIME member of the Johnson County Historical Society.

Most Kinder publications can be purchased at the Mary Miller Smiser Library or at Amazon.com.



KINDER’S AN ABSOLUTE GENTLEMAN (Counterpoint, 2009), A COMMON PERSON (Richard Sullivan Prize in Short Fiction, University of Notre Dame Press , 2021), A NEAR PERFECT GIFT (University of Michigan, 2005; Winner of the University of Michigan Press Literary Fiction Award), OLD-TIME FIDDLE: HAL SAPPINGTON: MISSOURI FIDDLER (co-author: Kristine Lowe-Martin, 2012), SWEET ANGEL BAND (Willa Cather Prize, Helicon Edition, 1991), THE UNIVERSITY PLAYING STRING (University of Mexico, 2016), GHOST HOUSE (LiquidAmber Publishing, 2024), PLUM AND CROW (LiquidAmber Publishing, 2025). These