

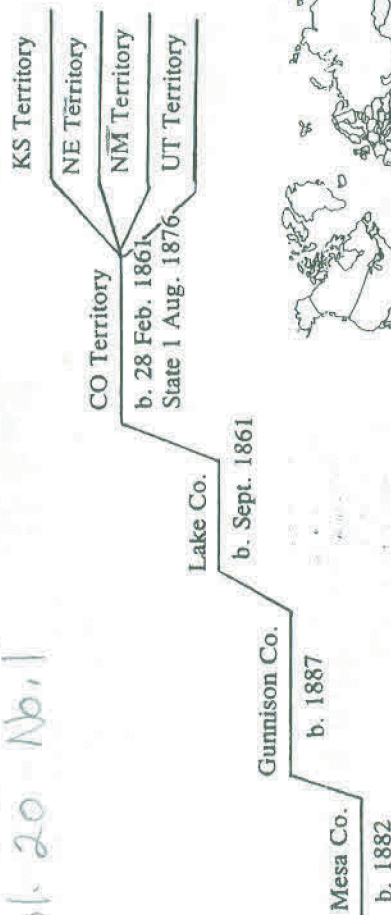
MESA

DWELLERS



A PUBLICATION OF THE MESA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 1506
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO 81502-1506

March, April, May 2000
Vol. 20 - No. 1



MESA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1506
GRAND JUNCTION, CO 81502

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SOCIETY OFFICERS

President	Rick Sheldon	██████████2
Vice-President	Vacant	
Secretary	Mary Halsey	██████████
Treasurer	Catherine Lax	██████████
Corr.Sec'tary	Wynona Hennessy	██████████



Calendar

Note: All Society meeting will be held at Cross Orchards until further notice. Cross Orchards is located at 3073 Patterson(F Road) on the south side of Patterson

ELECTED OFFICERS

One Year Term	Wanda Dodson
Two Year Term	Betty Grosskopf
Three Year Term	Dorothy O'Dwyer

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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Librarian	Betty Grosskopf ██████████
Historian	Jeanne Edwards ██████████
MCGS Librarian	Gloria Heitsman ██████████
Membership	Ron Knapp ██████████
Programs	Dennis Jenkins ██████████
Computer Editor	Rick Sheldon ██████████
Web Page Editor	Rick Sheldon ██████████
Newsletter Editor	Vacant

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

Don't miss a thing! Send your check today.

Attempting to work on all of your ancestral lines at one time is not the most efficient method. If several families are from one area, it may be workable, but researching several families in several different locations can become confusing. Also, taking time off from one line and going back to it later may help you approach a problem with a new perspective.

Contributions of neatly typed or written stories, requests for/or giving information, queries, or other information of importance to the membership are welcomed.

The Society disclaims responsibility for statement of fact or opinion made by contributors and will not accept material with obvious errors.

Annual Dues: \$10 Singles; \$12 Family.
Membership period is March 1st to April 30th.
Those with UNPAID DUES (after April 30th.) will not receive the Newsletter. Send a SASE to receive a current membership card **if** you do not attend regular meetings.

The Mesa County Genealogical Society was established in 1980 as a non-profit organization to promote an interest in genealogy. A Newsletter is published **in** March, June, September, and December. Regular meetings are currently held at Cross Orchards Grand Junction, CO at 7:00 p.m., on the second Thursday of each month. Visitors are welcome.

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WEB SITE LINKS FAMILY HISTORY TO AMERICAN HISTORY

Available to all Americans is an exciting new web site **www.my history.org**, a program to explore the connection of our family stories of our nation. The web site is an adventure for the whole family that offers a wealth of suggestions and resources for finding and preserving family stories and treasures, including samples of oral stories.

The National Endowment for the Humanities is sponsoring the project "My History is America's History," along with the White House Millennium Council, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, Genealogy.com, PSI Net, Inc, The National Association of Broadcasters, U.S. Dept. of Education, Heritage Preservation, Family Fun, and the Houghton Mifflin Broadcasting CO.

On line help assists in placing the family members in a setting of their historic times, weaving a powerful tapestry of America that illustrates our nation's history and culture.

George Washington said, "*Knowledge of our past creates stability in us, and is an essential part of family and history.*" Placing the family with their historic times show them, not as names and dates on a bare lineage chart, but clothes and surrounds them with the fabric of the historic times in which they lived.

The web page, "My History is America's History," is easy for both the novice and the experienced family history enthusiasts to record and preserve their family stories for future generations.

More information of this web site may be found in the current FAMILY TREE MAKER MAGAZINE.

The January MCGS program highlighted this new viewpoint on genealogy when Melba Fulton told of her family involvements in history. Some of her stories are published in this issue.

Census Tip

Since the 2000 census will not be released to the public until 2075, photocopy your completed census form for descendants who might need this information earlier.

NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY (NGS). Price reduction for online course "Introduction to Genealogy" (NGS members \$35; non-members \$50). Upon completion of the online course, students receive a \$25 discount toward the Home Study Course, "American Genealogy: A Basic Course." (www.ngsgenealogy.org)

If you fail to locate your ancestors in a given Federal population census, determine if agricultural or other population schedules are extant. Agricultural censuses were taken in 1850 through 1880. While they do not provide the family details of the population schedules, they will at least allow you to determine the family's location at a certain time.

ROOTSWEB'S GUIDE TO TRACING FAMILY TREES. Free online genealogy lessons written and compiled by Myra Vanderpool Gormley, CG, Rhonda McClure, and Julia M. Case (available both in HTML and PDF) with links to relevant online resources at RootsWeb and elsewhere on the Internet. (www.rootsweb.com)

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(The following story was written as an assignment in a family history writing class while attending the Salt Lake Institute in January, 2000)

The Tin Horn Blows

By Dennis R. Jenkins

On the morning of 7 August 1845, Darius Jenkins¹ heard the sound of the tin horn blowing. He considered the call and asked himself if he should join the "Indians" today or not.

During the years 1839 to 1845 Delaware County had to deal with an uprising from tenant farmers regarding unfair rent for the meager land that they farmed. Many anti-rent associations were formed in the county to protest the unfair treatment. A tin horn would sound out carrying up to three miles and being repeated throughout the county. From this alarm, the anti-renters would come to the aid of a fellow farmer whose land and livestock were being put up for distress sale to pay the back rent. They would dress up in calico dresses and sheepskin masks and these "Indians" would go in mass to the place being distressed. When the rent collector and sheriff came they would scare them off or disrupt any attempt to auction off the livestock.²

On 7 August 1845, one of these raids turned tragic when Undersheriff Osman Steele was fatally wounded. Nearly 250 individuals were arrested over the next few weeks. An inquest was held and depositions were taken from the prisoners regarding their involvement in the past few years Anti-Rent Association activities. The result from the inquest did not turn up any one man guilty of killing Undersheriff Steele. However, it was determined that someone would be punished for the murder whether guilty or not. One account says 94 of the prisoners were indicted for murder and 148 for other crimes.

When the sentences were pronounced 89 men were given sentences or fines. Two were to be hanged for the murder.³

A Jenkins family story passed down over the years says the two men that were tried for the murder were none other than Darius Jenkins and his brother-in-law Morgan Wheeler. The tale suggests that Darius had only fired his gun into the air. The story goes on to say the two were freed on bail during the trial and fled to Indiana. A few years later Darius and his family returned to Delaware County.⁴

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Another Tip:

America has been a sexist society. While we might not like it, that's the way it was. So if your female ancestor is selling property in 1850, signing a marriage bond in 1814, or listed as the head of a household in the 1880 census (with her husband listed last!), find out why. The reason might give you a gold mine of information.

Presidential Musings:

Another Family History fair is over and my thanks go out to all those who lent their time and effort. It was greatly appreciated.

Another new season has started and the events of this next year are upon us. Dennis has been diligent as always in lining up new programs and speakers for us to enjoy. New discoveries in regards to our ancestry are out there just waiting for us to find them.

We are still looking for a News Letter Editor to take over so if you are interested please let us know this issue had lots of contributions in fact more than what we could use, so bear with us they will appear in issues to come.....

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Further research revealed that Darius and Morgan testified at the inquest. However, the testimony indicated that the last raid Darius was on was mid-September of 1844, nearly 11 months before the murder of Sheriff Steele.⁵ Reports on the trial of the two men who would take the fall were not Darius or Morgan, but instead were John Van Steenburg and Edward O'Connor. These two men were sentenced to hang and 13 others were given lesser sentences. None of the 13 were Darius or Morgan. An additional 30 men received fines and 39 men had their sentences suspended.⁶

It is possible that Darius and Morgan were among the 69 unnamed men. It is also possible they were freed on bail and fled to live with relatives in Indiana. Whether Darius actually went to Indiana in the fall of 1845 is still uncertain. Further research is needed to determine where Darius Jenkins was from late 1845 to early 1848.

¹ For evidence of Darius Jenkins residing in Delaware County, New York between 1840 and 1845 see 1840 U.S. Census, Roxbury Town, Delaware County, NY, p 348, line 27 and his testimony in the Delaware County, NY Court Inquest into the murder of Undersheriff Osman Steele., 10 Aug 1845 to 1 October 1845. For evidence of Darius Jenkins residing in Indiana between 1848 and 1850 see 1850 U.S. Census, Jefferson County, Indiana, p. 18, dwelling 250, family 251, where he is listed as Rice Jenkins along with his wife Olive (Wheeler), daughter Phebe and son Francis M., see also Francis Marion Jenkins obituary, *The Staples World* (Staples, Todd Co., Minnesota), 5 August 1920, p. 1, col. 3 where it says he "was born in Jefferson County, Indiana, Dec. 31st, 1848".

² Dorothy Kubik, *A Free Soil---A Free People: The Anti-Rent War in Delaware County, New York*. (Fleischmanns, New York: Purple Mountain Press, 1997)

³ Ibid.

⁴ E-mail correspondence from Monica Carlstrom to author, 20 Nov 1999.

⁵ Delaware County, NY Court Transcript of the Inquest into the murder of Undersheriff Osman Steele, Acc. No. Testimony. -13, 1 September 1845, pp. 8-11.

⁶ David Murray, ed. *Delaware County, New York. History of the Century, 1797 - 1897*. (Delhi, New York: William Clark Publisher, 1898), 243-266, 281-283.

NATCHEZ GLORY, VICKSBURG GLOOM

Melba H. Fulton

I lived half-way between Vicksburg and Natchez on the Louisiana side of the river. During my fifty years there, I was always fascinated by the comparisons of the two river towns. The remnants of the Civil War differ in the two river-port towns. We had family connections with each town, although they had all preceded us in the time-line of the genealogy story.

Natchez is where we would always entertain our guests with tours, because it is beautiful with its spacious ante-bellum homes and beautiful gardens. We were especially enchanted with Rosalie which held both American history and family history for our us.

Peter Little arrived in Natchez in 1798, by Flatboat from Pittsburgh at the age of seventeen.

It was the same year that the Mississippi Territory was established. Opportunities were numerous, with the great influx of newcomers to the territory. He had come from Littleton, Maryland, son of Michael Little. His grandfather, Col. Peter Little was a member of General Washington's staff and had been a pallbearer at his funeral.

Peter's first ten years as a Natchez resident were filled with hard work. The Mississippi Territory was growing after the hostilities over river transportation between the United States and Spain. Opportunities abounded, and the Natchez landing thrived in commerce. Peter acquire property both in Louisiana and Mississippi. He developed a steam-driven circular saw to be used in the lumber industry. Enthusiastic with his cotton plantations on both sides of the river, Peter was rapidly becoming a wealthy man.

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Since he crossed the river often on a ferryboat, operated by Jacob Lowe, he became a good friend of the ferry owner. Jacob was stricken with yellow fever and died after a brief illness. When his wife felt the dreadful fever symptoms, she sent for Peter Little, and asked him to see about her young freckle-faced daughter. Peter was known for his integrity and honor. Not knowing what else to do, he married Eliza (1808). She was alone, thirteen years old, females could not own property, and immediately after the ceremony, Peter put Eliza on the train to go to school in the Baltimore.

How exciting Baltimore was to Eliza! The frontier life that she had known as a child could give no match to this busy, metropolitan town. She worked hard at her studies, but also at becoming a lady. She found the new life exciting and reported her enthusiasm to Peter often. Eliza appreciated the beauty of the fashionable ladies. She loved the ringlets in her hair, jewelry, and lace and white satin slippers, but most of all, she had found the glory of christianity. Eliza's parents had taken her to hear a Methodist evangelist in Natchez. From her first feeling of love of the church, Eliza was always recognized as a devout Christian. Her Maryland experiences enhanced her virtues. After her schooling in Baltimore, the bride returned to Natchez, where Peter and Eliza began their many years of happy marriage.

In 1820, Peter built the stately Rosalie, an exquisite Georgian mansion, on the bluff above the Mississippi River on the historic site of the old French fort. Peter had envisioned grand balls and entertainment fitting his station in Natchez, but Eliza's enthusiasm for religion soon made their house a convenient rest stop for the circuit-riding Methodist preachers. Finally, Peter built a separate haven nearby. He called it The Parsonage, where traveling ministers were welcome, and Peter and Eliza could have some privacy. Peter and Eliza had no children, but they reared two orphaned children

whose parents had died of yellow fever.

However, the child whom they considered their own child was Eliza Ann Griffin, Peter's niece. His sister Ann died in childbirth. Peter and Eliza reared her as their very own daughter. Peter wrote a will, leaving everything to Eliza and his foster daughter, Eliza Ann. Unfortunately, Eliza died before Peter, and Peter never did change his will to be current. He survived long after the will was written, and the will was declared invalid when relatives demanded the division of the estate. In 1857, Andrew Wilson, a Natchez millionaire bought Rosalie.

The Wilson families lived there for three generations. Family fortune had diminished, and the upkeep was too much for the last owners. The Mississippi Daughters of the American Revolution bought Rosalie, renovated it, and sponsors it as a tourist attraction all year in Natchez. For several years the two remaining family members, Rebecca and Anna Rumble lived there. They were hostesses, and enjoyed telling the history of Rosalie, and in their latter years remained there as guests.

The unwritten story of Rosalie is meaningful to me. I went to many family festivities at Rosalie--weddings, teas, and funerals because my husband's mother Frances Rowan Fulton had married into the Wilson family. As I worked on the Rowan genealogy, I found that three generations from Daniel Rowan --Frances' father, grandfather, and g-grandfather had been married at Rosalie. And I asked WHY. With detective feelings that only genealogy-lovers have, I started digging., and I found that Peter Little's brother had married into the Rowan family. Daniel's family had come to the Natchez area prior to 1800, just as Peter had. It gave a thrust of pride to know that the step-family had owned Rosalie, but even more pleasure came knowing that the Rowan's Peter Little had built it. The Rowan family may have had closer ties to Peter Little than most of the cousins who forced the sale of Rosalie.

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Peter Little's beloved Rosalie yields many stories of the Civil War. The beautiful gold-leaf mirrors were wrapped in blankets, crated, and buried in the ruins of old Fort Rosalie. Silver and china were hidden away from the house. U. S. General Walter Gresham, kindly moved himself and his staff into the comforts of the home, and Rosalie was declared Federalist Headquarters. The name of General Gresham has kept a great deal of respect through the years because he would not allow any depredation of the fine house. He ordered that the lace curtains and fine linens that were left be removed and stored. Although he did banish Mrs. Wilson to Atlanta as an underground Confederate agent, Rosalie suffered little damage from the Yankees, and most of the family remained in quarters at the house during his tenure there. Rosalie does bear on its wide-planked floors the scars of Union spurs, some of which may belong to General U S Grant, since he spent three days there during the occupation.

Vicksburg, the neighbor river port, sixty miles north of Natchez is the spot where the Civil War horrors occurred. Being a key city in control of the river traffic made it the viable point of watchfulness for the Union boats. The Union soldiers pecked away at it for a year before the Siege of Vicksburg which lasted six weeks in 1863, crushing the Confederates to surrender. Many whispered stories of history for my family were spoken of, without uttering words of detail. The family would not talk about the miserable times. Records show that several of our families lived in the Vicksburg area.-- Bozeman, Wixson, McIver, Stout, Griffin.

My g-g-great grandfather John Wixson had brought his family to the area in 1840, and purchased farmland on the outskirts of the town. He had enlisted with the Confederate Army before The Battle at Vicksburg took place. I researched his property only to find that the battle field was on his farm property. In 1868, his property was sold at tax sale with no family member present. He was

reported AWOL by the army, and never found, dead or alive, again. He and his family had lived across the road from his brother-in-law's family. Neither family, with their small children were ever found. John had two sons who were in the war also. One of them served Confederates well, although he was only sixteen years old. The other son Oliver Hazard Perry Wixson was a Union sympathizer. Recently, in a special section of the Vicksburg paper called, "Old Court House Comments," I read the heading, "Wixson, Worst Scalawag," and he was spoken of with bitterness that could only be found in Mississippi, in reference to a Federalist.

When I asked my Grandmother if she had heard some of the Civil War stories of the family, she said, "All I know is that they went to the caves. People who experienced those horrible days didn't talk about it." However, Mark Twain thrust his pen into the description of the times:

Signs and scars are still reminders of Vicksburg's tremendous war experience; earthworks, trees crippled by the cannon balls, cave refuges in clay precipices. The caves provided good shelter during the six weeks bombardment of the city. The hills of the town made natural shelter from the bombardments. The soil is clay, and the tunnels in the hills were dug to be large enough to in some cases house more than one family. They improvised make shift kitchens, and bedding, but most of the time the people went back and forth from their homes to the caves for shelter. A town of 4000 people thrust on a population of 27,000 soldiers and 3000 noncombatants, a city cut off from the world--walled in by gunboats on the river and soldiers on the land, no news, no buying and selling.

The dull quietness of the days, wondering when the next thrust of effort would come, the silence, the early morning silence so dead that the measured tramp of a sentinel far away could be heard faintly. Suddenly, all in a moment would come ground-shaking, thunder crashes of artillery,

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the sky is cobwebbed with criss-crossing red lines streaming from soaring bombshells, and a rain of iron fragments descend upon the city 's empty streets; streets which are not empty a few minutes later, but mottled with dim figures of frantic women and children scuttling from home and bed toward the cave dungeons. Sometimes the hunger and misery and sickness and fright and sorrow were so loaded in them that they never did really rid themselves of the weariness.

Sometimes the caves were crowded and hot. Sometimes the air was foul. Occasionally, people would become ill, or a baby was born in the cave. However, during the siege, the people would laugh about sharing quarters in the caves, eating horse meat, or making coffee from dried peas. Most of their homes had no windows, if they had not been torched during the war. They would go to church on Sundays, mixing their hymns with the gun shots. The people of Vicksburg never lost faith. They boosted the moral of each other by sharing what little they had, and they have become known in the South for surviving the terrible climax of the Civil War.

The Old Court House Museum has reams of interesting history and genealogy. Another museum there is the U.S.S. Cairo Gunboat and Museum. It is one of the seven ironclad gunboats named for the towns along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers . The Cairo is a formidable vessel holding thirteen big cannons. It played an important role in the Northern effort to control the Mississippi River and split the Confederacy apart. The gunboat was the first ship in history to be sunk by an electrically detonated torpedo. The Confederates set it in its watery grave until 1957 . The boat was lifted, finally restored, and is on display with many of its artifacts, weapons, munitions, personal gear, and the restored hull. It tells not only part of the battle story of Vicksburg but also tells us of our relatives who were there while it guarded the river. Although the

Griffins, Wixsons, Bozemans, McIvers and their in-laws were in the background of the dreadful siege of Vicksburg

Few anti-bellum homes are left standing in Vicksburg, and they have created little interest, because they are not elaborate mansions. The outstanding interest in homes is likely the Vick House, which was built after the war. It boasts of its stained glass windows, and eloquent service and food. It is operated as Oak Hill, a bed and breakfast inn. Natchez claims the place of elegance with its many prewar beautiful mansions. Since it was never actually invaded, its homes and gardens speak today more eloquently of the Pre-Civil War South than any other place.

References:

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U.S.S. CAIRO GUNBOAT AND MUSEUM (<http://www.nps.gov/vick/cairo/cairo.htm>)
THE MAJESTY OF NATCHEZ, Reid Smith and John Owens. Gretna, LA.: Pelican Press, 1986

When researching in published sources, photocopy the title page of any book from which you take notes or make copies. It is an easy way to later cite your source. Make certain all the necessary information is there and write the book's call number and the name of the library on the copy. Librarians have a difficult time locating "that fat green book."