



Of Special Interest

- **DUES ARE PASS DUE**
- **July Meeting Features Probate Records**
- **Editor's First Trip to Salt Lake City**
- **Jody To Present Lecture**

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June, July, August, 2001

Cathay Williams: The Only Known Female Buffalo Soldier

Oral Presentation to the West Texas Historical Society)
West Texas Historical Society,
4/11/97

Cynthia Savage

The pursuit of Cathay Williams through history comes to me through folklore. I have enjoyed studying the 9th and 10th Cavalry and to some extent the 24th and 25th Infantry for the past fifteen or so years. When reading about or visiting forts, many of which were active in the Civil War, I would read or hear a story that would perk up my folklore ears and I'd say, "These stories need to be collected." The stories deal with women who joined military units.

Cathay Williams was born to Martha Williams outside Independence, Missouri, in 1842. Although Cathay's father was a free man, she was born into slavery. She grew up in Jefferson City, Missouri, and was a house girl for William Johnson, a wealthy farmer. After her master died in Jefferson City and the Civil War broke out, Union soldiers under Colonel Benton of the 13th army corps

pressed Cathay and a number of others into service. They took her and the other servants to Little Rock, Arkansas. The officers wanted her to cook, something with which she was not familiar. She did not want to go. However, she did not have much of a say and she went to Arkansas, and in Little Rock she learned to cook.

Cathay had a front row seat to the Civil War. She traveled with the army and was at the battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas. She moved with them around Arkansas and Louisiana watching as they burned cotton, and she saw captured rebel gunboats burn on the Red River at Shreveport. From there she went to New Orleans, then by way of the Gulf went to Savannah and then to Macon as well as other places around the South.

In an act passed on July 28, 1866, Congress authorized six all black units of the military. Two of the units were the 9th and 10th Cavalry and there were four infantry units, the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, Fortieth and Forty-first. In later years these four infantry units were reorganized into two units, the Twenty-Fourth and the Twenty-Fifth. Together, the two cavalry units and the two infantry units

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Online Genealogy Class

Jody Nestler will be a guest speaker at Rick Castellini's computer class on July 11th, 2001. Jody, a Past-President of the Mesa County Genealogical Society will be speaking on the topic of Online Genealogical Research. The class is a two hour class that will be held at the UTEC complex in building B. UTEC is located at 2520 Blichmann Ave. (25

road and F1/2 road). The classes are scheduled to from 9 am to 11 am: 1 pm to 3 pm and the final class from 7 pm to 9 pm.

Cost for the class is \$5.00 per individual or \$8.00 for a couple. More information is available by calling Rick Castellini at [REDACTED] or his Web site [REDACTED]

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Mesa Dwellers

SOCIETY OFFICERS

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------|--|
| President | Judy Prosser Armstrong | |
| Vice-President | Norm Kronvall | |
| Secretary | Donna Roberts | |
| Treasurer | Ron Knapp | |
| Corr. Sec'yary | Wynona Hennessy | |

ELECTED OFFICERS

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| One Year Term | Wanda Dodsen |
| Two Year Term | Betty Grosskopf |
| Three Year Term | Dennis Jenkins |

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Heritage Quest | |
| Librarian | Betty Grosskopf |
| Historian | Jeanne O'Brien |
| MCGS Librarian | Gloria Heitsman |
| Membership | Ron Knapp |
| Programs | Dennis Jenkins |
| Computer Editor | Rick Sheldon |
| Web Page Editor | Rick Sheldon |
| Newsletter Editor | Rick Sheldon |

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.

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

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. **Note: All Society meetings are held at the Museum of Western Colorado 7:00 p.m., on the second Thursday of each month.** Visitors are welcome. The Museum is located at 4th and Ute. The meetings are held in the conference room located in the Whitman School Building.

Up Coming Programs

June 14th Dennis Jenkins presented an overview on using and understanding the census in your research process.

July 12th The Ancestry series film on Probate Records, Jo Culberson will moderate the program and answer questions after the film.

August 9th Annual pot luck Dinner to be held at the pavilion located at 543 Melody Lane. Dinner starts at **6:00 PM.** The Family History Center will be open for those who want to research after the Dinner. Bring service and covered dish.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER IF YOU RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER AND YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR DUES. SOMEONE GOOFED. YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE ANOTHER WITHOUT RENEWING YOUR DUES
Don't miss a thing! Send your check today.

Can You Help ?

I'm interested in the marriages of Mesa County in that my great-uncle Thomas Jefferson ROGERS married a Julie Mae KATES there in Grand Junction, CO. There is where they both died. Uncle Tom was born 18 March 1872, Clay County, North Carolina, lived his younger life in Towns County, Georgia and died in Grand Junction, CO about 1957. Do you know of this name(s)? Will you let me know? I suspect they were buried in Mesa County as well. Thank you for any help!
 Barbara T. Collins
 e-mail: candbtool@alltel.net

I wonder if you may be able to help? Do you have any members who would be willing to do some research for me in trying to gather some information from records in Mesa county? We seem to be hitting 'brick walls' every way we turn.

Regards,
 Glenn Roussos
 Sydney, Australia
 Email: nyoni46@hotmail.com

The Only Known Female Buffalo Soldier

are referred to as Buffalo Soldiers, a name given to them by the Plains Indians for their fierce fighting and short curly hair.

Cathay joined the Thirty-Eighth United States Infantry, Company A, commanded by Captain Charles E. Clarke on November 15, 1866, in St. Louis, Missouri. She enlisted as William Cathay. At that time there were no required medical examinations to enlist and as Cathay Williams intimated to a newspaperman, the Zouave uniforms worn by her regiment were not figure flattering. According to her discharge papers she was five feet nine inches tall, in addition to the notation of skin, eye and hair color that was the extent of any examination. There were only two people in her regiment who knew her true identity. There were a cousin and a "particular friend." Cathay apparently returned the favor and let her friend remain anonymous. As is reported she said, "They never "blowed" on me."

Her cousin and friend were partly the reason for her joining the army. But another reason, one she repeats in other situations and circumstances in her life is, "I wanted to make my own living and not be dependent on relations or friends."

After her enlistment by Major Merricum in St. Louis, she contracted small pox, and was sick at a hospital in what is now East St. Louis. As soon as she recovered, she said she joined her company in New Mexico. Capt. Charles Clarke, her company commander, wrote in her discharge papers that she had been under his command since May 20, 1867, six months after her enlistment. Clarke wrote when he met William Cathay, "At that time he was doing Garrison duty at Fort Harker, Kansas."

Cathay Williams said she was a good soldier, "I was never put in the guard house, no bayonet was ever put to my back. I carried my musket and did guard duty and other duties while in the army." Although this may sound like minimal requirements to claim the ranking "good soldier", Company A had trouble with insubordination in the regiment and during a court-martial a sergeant said, "there was [now] about half of them in the penitentiary."

Cathay told the St. Louis newspaperman, "finally I got tired and wanted to get off. I played sick, complained of pains in my side, and rheumatism in my knees. The post surgeon found out I was a woman and I got my discharge. The men wanted to get rid of me after they found out I was a woman. Some of them acted real bad to me." Her date of discharge is October 14, 1868.

After leaving the army, an affidavit filed with her application for a pension says she was located at Fort Union from 1869 to 1870 where she cooked for a colonel's family. From Fort Union she went to Pueblo, Colorado and stayed for two years working in a laundry. From Pueblo she moved to Las Animas and lived a year, once again working in a laundry. Then, Cathay moved to Trinidad. She said, "I like this town. I know all the good people here, and I expect to get rich yet.. You see I've got a good sewing machine and I get washing to do and clothes to make. I want to get along and not be a burden to my friends or relatives."

She told her story to the newspaperman in 1876, eight years after her discharge. Still in Trinidad in 1891, her dreams must not have come true as she filed for an invalid pension from the army. The surgeon's certificate reviewed her claims of suffering from deafness, itch, rheumatism, and neuralgia, and that these disabilities prevented her from earning a living.

Her affidavit said she was unable to do any manual labor for the past year and a half and that she had been confined to the hospital in Trinidad for a year and a half until about two months before filing for her pension.

I am now in the process of finding out what happened to Cathay after she left Trinidad. I understand she opened a boarding house in Raton. What I know is that she died in Raton, New Mexico, in 1924. She was 82 years old.

Editors Note: Information in this article was extracted from the web site www.femalebuffalosoldier.org more information plus copies of both enlistment and pension papers are available for viewing on this site.

Cathay Williams said she was a good soldier, "I was never put in the guard house, no bayonet was ever put to my back."

Available County Maps

DETAILED COUNTY MAPS

Detailed (not topographic) county maps for the following states are available from County Maps, Puetz Place, N2454 County Road HH, Lyndon Station, WI 53944-9565 (608/666-3331): Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida*, Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Kentucky, South Carolina. (*Only older version available) These maps are extremely detailed, and published in 11"x20" format. They include waterways, towns, railroads, roads (from the toll road down to township level), state parks and historic sites. The cost for each state's book is \$16.85, which includes 4th class mailing.

Jo Culberson

First Pure Research Trip To Salt Lake City

We finally made our first pilgrimage to Salt Lake City. Having some vacation time Dianna and I made our way to do some pure research. We had four days all allocated to just being at the Family History Library in Salt Lake.

The first time we walked in there it was like nothing I had ever experienced before. As prepared as I thought I was, I soon found out that you are not as well prepared as you think you are.

Several trips to the local FHL to gather the basic information on films and books and to make a game plan probably is well advised. Even though you expect to spend time

In doing the basic lookups if I had spent that time locally it would have given me more time to actually peruse the films and books I did find.

But the wealth of information that is there is just overwhelming. I made a comment to Dianna that I wish I had the family group sheets that several other people that were researching my family kept referring to. The next day while searching for something totally different I ran across a reference to them with the notation that they had been sent to Salt Lake for filming. Pulled the film and wow there they were right there, all the information that I needed for background and filling in blanks, it was outstanding. I think I actually wore out the scan card for the copy machines.

Not only was I extremely successful but Dianna who had been stumped on several different family lines was able to find some obscure facts and data that opened up even more avenues for additional research.

I had listened several people relate their experiences and found myself doing the same thing we would make plans to break for a lunch or dinner you know how it goes let plan on lunch at 1:00 well 1:00 comes and goes and then you finally *tear* yourself away to grab some lunch at 3:00 then hurry back because you know your missing out on something. I SHALL RETURN

Work Slowly Progressing On Cemetery Records

The extraction of our cemetery records is slowly making progress we have been able to extract some of the old records out of the old DOS based records program and import them into a Windows based database that make manipulation a bit easier. We are still working on the details as to how the records should be indexed and sorted but progress is being made thanks to the efforts of Dennis Jenkins and Rick Sheldon

Genealogical Library Request

The Mesa County Genealogical Library needs the following to fill in holes in the Following issues

Everton's Genealogical Helper:

1979 Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/Jun, Jul/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec

1980 Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/Jun, Jul/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec

1981 Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/Jun, Jul/Aug, Sept/Oct,

1999 Jul/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec

2000 Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/Jun

Heritage Quest:

Issue# 14 Jan/Feb 1988

Issue# 37 Nov/Dec 1991

Issues #47 (Sept/Oct 1993) through #66 (Nov/Dec 1996)

The Library has been receiving full collections of these magazines that are duplicate of what they already have. Please check with Gloria Heitsman on which ones they need before bringing them to the Museum.

We're on the
WEB
[www.gj.net/
mcgs](http://www.gj.net/mcgs)

Untangling Your Family History Via Land Records

By Myra Vanderpool Gormley, CG

If you avoid searching in land records, chances are you will never be able to compile your family history. And the further back in time you are able to trace your families in America, the more critical land records become to your research.

Once you have identified the county in which your ancestors lived, you should examine the index to the deeds and then obtain copies of the actual documents. Additionally, information may be found in government land records (state and federal).

Real property is land together with whatever is erected on it or affixed to it. The best title a person can hold in real property is called fee simple. In this country the term fee simple has always meant that the estate would potentially last forever and descend to one's heirs if he/she died intestate, or could be devised by will, or that the owner could sell any or all of it any time he/she chose to do so.

However, there are many kinds of estates less absolute than fee simple, and most of these can also be sold by the title holder, and sometimes be left to heirs or devisees. Some of the terms you may encounter are: life estate, estate in tail, estate upon condition, or estate for years.

A life estate entitles the holder to possess title to the property during the period of his own life or the life of some other specified person. A dower estate, frequently found in the records, is a life estate.

Estate in tail means the ownership is not absolute because of limitation on the holder so that he cannot convey more than a life estate (his own life) in the property, and upon his death, it descends to some particular class of heir only. Most estates in tail are created by wills. Today they are not legal in most states because they make the land unable to be bought or sold, but you may find this term

in some older records.

An estate upon condition is based upon the happening of some uncertain event. These are often created by wills wherein a man makes a provision in his will to provide for his widow by leaving her certain lands "during her widowhood." If she remarries, her estate in that land terminates and the title reverts to the estate from which it came.

An estate for years exists by contract for a definite and specified time period. Such estates exist and continue usually by virtue of the payment of an interest or rent.

A record you should always search for if you suspect your ancestor was married more than once is the ante nuptial contract. These were usually made prior to a second (or third) marriage. The purpose was to secure certain properties for the children of the former union(s). You may find these records in the court and/or land records. They exist in most states, but are prevalent in community property states and in the Dutch settlements in New Netherlands.

Search for all deeds pertaining to your ancestors' real property and be sure to look for Deed of Gift. This type of deed may be filed or indexed separately from others, and is frequently overlooked by researchers. A gift deed is where real property is transferred without normal consideration. Usually these deeds transfer land from a parent to a child and will say, "for the natural love and affection which I bear towards my son or my daughter, and their name, and for other valuable consideration."

The best sources of genealogical information will be found in land records. All you have to do is find and dig through them.

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the further back in time you are able to trace your families in America, the more critical land records become to your research.

Using Tax Records

We all know that people were taxed in some way because taxes are used to run various forms of government in our country. With this knowledge we can read and interpret these records to glean additional information during a man's lifetime. County records were normally on a yearly basis. At county levels taxes were imposed on land and personal property usually livestock. Tax lists will not tell you if a man was married but they could give you a clue on whether he had sons. A man without help could farm about 50 acres. On the other hand a

man with sons might be adding acreages from time to time and would be taxed accordingly. Some men bought and sold a lot of land to improve their location or as they became more prosperous. Early tax records can also be used to supplement census records. They can show where he lived, who his neighbors are, and the quality of his land and life.



MESA

DWELLERS

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