

Verna Ke

# Mill Creek

an Ozarks heritage

spring 1992

\$4.00



★ **UPON THIS ROCK**  
*a history of Brumley Christian Church*

★ **PIONEER MEMORIES**  
*the diary of James Harvey Vernon, part 2*

★ **RURAL MEMOIRS**  
*how to take a switchin'*

VERNA KEETH PEMBERTON  
 RT. 1 BOX 273  
 IBERIA, MO. 65486

## *— sit a spell —*

It's difficult to believe but this year marks the beginning of our third season of **Mill Creek**. We want you to know how much we appreciate all the encouragement and support we've received from our readers. We're hoping to expand **Mill Creek** into a video format in the near future. I have heard about Wilson's Cave all my life, but have never actually seen it for myself. I suspect this is true for most of you also. With a video camera perhaps we can allow those who wish to visit some of the history our area has to offer. Be watching!

Between this issue and the next our country will be celebrating what I consider to be the nearest thing to a holiday honoring heritage. Officially it is called Memorial Day but I always knew it as Decoration Day. It is a time set aside to recognize and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of this country, but it has become customary over the years to also use the opportunity to remember loved ones who have gone on to take their place among our heritage.

Debby and I have made it a practice to place a flower on the grave of each of our direct ancestors. Since both of us are 6th generation Miller Countians it takes two days to accomplish. We have to visit 11 cemeteries in Miller County and 2 in Camden County. There are those who think what we do is foolish. After all, why waste a holiday and a day off from work just to run around old cemeteries? We do this to honor our ancestors but also to make certain they aren't forgotten. It may be true that I never knew that person, but the grandparents I did know knew them and undoubtedly they were an important part of my grandparents' lives.

One of the saddest sights I've ever known is to see a bare, undecorated grave on Memorial Day. This indicates one of three things: (1) that particular family line has died out. (2) that particular family line has moved out of the area. (3) that particular family line has forgotten their heritage. I always hope it isn't the third reason.

Another sad indication of how "heritage poor" we are today is the fact that few of our younger generations are aware of where their ancestors are buried. Many can't even tell you where their grandparents rest, let alone earlier ancestors. One reason for this is the transient and mobile society of today. People used to live in the same area they grew up in but now "home" doesn't attract them anymore. And because they seldom return "home" they rarely visit the gravesites of their ancestors. Soon the ties to the past are forgotten - and so are they who once lived in them.

It's time to teach the children, folks.

Verna Keeth Pemberton  
1992

Editor-In-Chief  
**Greg Huddleston**

Associate Editor  
**Debby Huddleston**

Art and Illustration  
**Mark Baysinger**  
**David Huddleston**

Technical Assistance  
**Wanda Hinshaw**  
**Rachel Boatright**  
**Larry Boatright**

Distribution Assistant  
**Luke Huddleston**

Acknowledgements

"UPON THIS ROCK"

Jeanette Plemmons Hickman  
Jim & Ruth Sullivan-Thornsberry  
Gaylord & Leila Mae Tompkins Strange  
Freda Walker Weeks  
Helen Phillips  
Bill & Kate Ballenger Jeffries  
Jim McGowin  
Ralph & Alma Billyeu Byrd  
James & Chloe DeVore Pemberton  
Reber Hawkins  
Kermit & Phyllis Bond Steen  
Virgie McClaskey DeVore  
Brumley Christian Church

"PIONEER MEMORIES"

Joseph Towns  
Gertie Vernon Routon  
Chrystal Stark Sanning

"FAMILY TALES"

Alma Headrick DeVore  
Wayne & Helen Miles Smith  
Ruth Smith Grishkat  
Cecil Smith  
Zella Thomas Anderson

**COVER** — Members of the 1930 Youth Class  
at Brumley Christian Church. See page 24.

## CONTENTS

<b>From the Mailbox</b> letters from readers. . . .	4
<b>School Days</b> letters from students . . .	5
<b>Upon This Rock</b> a history of the Brumley Christian Church. . . . .	8
<b>Pioneer Memories</b> the diary of James Harvey Vernon . . .	28
<b>Rural Memoirs</b> memories of the farm. . .	37
<b>Heritage Announcements.</b> . .	40

This magazine is dedicated to the heritage that is ours and to those who gave it to us. Let them not be forgotten. Mill Creek is published three times annually at Rt. #1 Box 282, Brumley, Missouri 65017 and printed by B-W Graphics, Rt. #3 Box 86-A, Versailles, Missouri 65084. All rights are reserved and protected.

**NOTICE:** "PIONEER MEMORIES - the diary of James Harvey Vernon" is printed with the express written consent of the Vernon family. All diary material is further protected by copyright owned by Joseph Towns. Footnotes, maps, and historic observation are made by **Mill Creek** only to enhance the text provided.



## from the mailbox

Please find enclosed a check for \$50 for the **Gott Preservation Fund**. Keep me informed of your progress. My family is buried in the cemetery and I remember **Senator Ted Hawkins** speaking a Memorial Day service there.

Morgan Pope  
33411 SW Laurel Road  
Hillsboro, OR 97123

"Mill Creek"

Enclosed (for \$18) is a check to pay for one year's subscription to your magazine. Please send to the address below. Thanks!

Betty Sue Strasser  
6 Faragut Court  
Tonawanda, NY 14150

Dear Greg and Debby,

I picked up a copy of Mill Creek magazine and couldn't put it down until I read it from "cover to cover". I especially enjoyed the barn cleaning article. Could just see that happening. Anyway I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the whole magazine. Hope there will be more.

June Ahart  
Rt. #1 Box 104C  
Tuscumbia, MO 65082

We're sure doing the best we can to keep Mill Creek up and running, June. -Greg

Hi, Greg,

**Thomas Winfrey** was ordained a Baptist minister in Feb. of 1837. Several things led me to believe he was in Kentucky at that time. I know the name of the church was **Mt. Zion**. In your issue of Mill Creek (autumn 1991, page 31) you mention a **Mt. Zion Church**. Perhaps I've been researching the wrong state for Thomas' church record. Did Miller County's Mt. Zion Church exist in 1837? Could you find out for me? Thanks.

Mick Winfrey  
2294 Wildwood Lane  
Hanover Park, IL 60103

*Mt Zion Christian Church of Miller County, MO was organized in 1889. Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Cole County, MO is an even more recent congregation, existing only since 1976. Neither of these then are plausible as the church you seek. One possibility yet exists for Missouri however, Mick. In northern Pulaski County is a cemetery called Mt. Zion. Since the Winfrey family settled in southern Miller County this would definitely fit your locality requirements. It is unknown to me if a church existed there. If not, this is an unusual name for a cemetery alone. Cemeteries not affiliated with a church normally began as a family plot and would bear the name of that family or land-owner of the cemetery's location. Try contacting the Genealogical Society of Pulaski County P.O. Box 226, Crocker, MO 65452. -Greg*

# school days

LETTERS  
FROM  
STUDENTS

I attended **Barton School** for eight years. My teachers were **Ruth Watt Thomas** (we called her "Miss Ruth"), **Mary Swofford**, and **Layard Cross**. Mr. Cross was a big man with very broad shoulders. I was afraid of him. He wasn't mean or anything like that I guess his size scared me.

My brothers and sister and I walked to school through the woods - which was the shortest way, a little more than a mile. The names of my brothers and sister were **Daisy** and **Doral** and **Donnie**. My youngest sister, **Delcie**, started to school after I had already graduated. If the creek was up or the snow too deep then we had to walk on the road, making it a lot farther. By road, school was well over three miles from our house.

We usually went to school with some of my cousins.



**Dean**, **Iven**, **Irene**, **Grace**, **Lois**, and **Doral James** were children of my uncle and aunt **Everett** and **Tilda Shelton Witt**. We would all meet outside the **Mt. Union Church** and walk to school from there. We never were in too big a hurry to get to school. We were more interested in playing than anything else. I remember finding wild grapes and making my brother, **Donnie**, climb the tree to pick them for us. Once my cousin **Irene** got mad at me for some reason that I no longer recall. She took my lunch pail away from me and sat on it, squashing it flat. I was so upset because it was brand new and my mother, **Parthena**, had just given it to me. I got in a lot of trouble over that squashed lunch pail.

Part of the time we went to school with uncle **John** and aunt **Clara's** kids. (**John** and **Clara Reinhart Luttrell**.) The names of these cousins were **Basil**, **Lois**, **Shirley**, and **Gary**. They lived just on the other side of the **Mt. Union**

# school days

LETTERS  
FROM  
STUDENTS

Church and we would meet them at their house and walk to school from there. We usually got there right in the middle of their breakfast and I can remember aunt Clara hurrying here and hurrying there trying to get them all ready to go to school.

When the creek was up and we didn't have time to walk all the way around the road to school, my father, **Fred Witt**, would put a halter or rope on our horse and give us a ride across the creek. Dad would lead **Old Toby** through the woods while the younger ones rode on his back. The rest of us followed or led the way. I still can almost hear the clomp, clomp of Old Toby's hooves on the path and see Dad's hands lifting me on his back for the ride. At the creek we crossed over two or three at a time on Old Toby. Dad would take a few of us o-



ver and then go back and get some more until we were all on the other side. Sometimes Dad and Old Toby went all the way to school with us. Other times they turned back home after getting us across the creek.

One year Dad went off to work in Iowa. While he was gone we had to take care of the farm. I was the oldest and Mom would get me up at four in the morning to start the milking. We sold milk and all those cows had to be hand milked. I carried a kerosene lamp to the barn to milk by. There was a lot of work to be done before we even went to school. Mom kept me home some days just so I could help her out. I was so happy when Dad came home.

Dorsie Witt Huddleston  
Rt. #1 Box 284  
Brumley, MO 65017  
Barton School, 1938-45



# school days

LETTERS  
FROM  
STUDENTS

I began school in the year 1928 at **Jeffries School** near **Kaiser**. My first grade teacher was **Lucian Mace**. My second grade teacher was **Ethel Loving**. My third grade teacher was **Mable Calkin**. My fourth grade teacher was **Louie Ritter**. My fifth grade teacher was **Sylvia Ramsey**. My sixth grade teacher was **Garland Gott**. I had **Lucian Mace** again in seventh grade.

I remember the very big old heating stove in the center of the schoolroom.

The only punishment I got in school was when the teacher slapped me when I wouldn't talk. The teacher thought I knew how to tell him how I'd worked a problem in arithmetic. In reality I probably just lucked out and didn't know how I got the right answer. He thought I was just being stubborn.

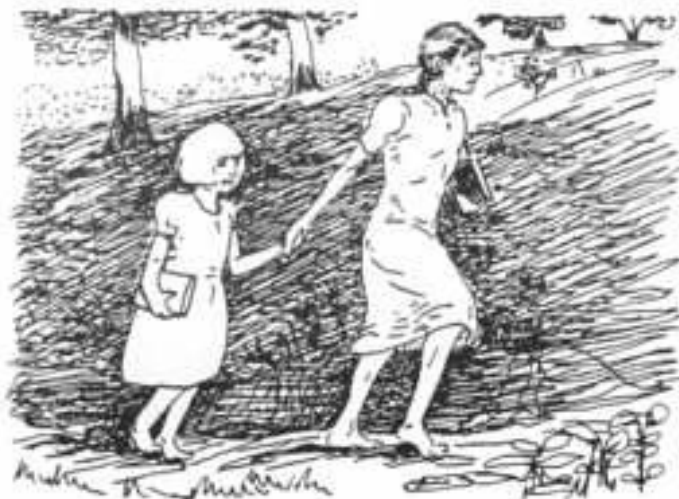
Elizabeth Maher Dunstan  
Rt. #5 Box 115  
Eldon, MO 65026  
Jeffries School, 1928-34



I was very young when I attended **Jeffries School** and so I recall very little about it. **Lucian Mace** was my teacher. I was probably too small to cause too much trouble because I don't remember ever being punished.

My best friends in school were **Lee Mace**, **Floyd DeGraffenreid**, **Lloyd Degraffenreid**, and **Lowin Dinwiddie**.

Billy C. Maher  
3899 Green Valley Road  
Suisun, CA 94585  
Jeffries School, 1933-34



At the center of this publication you will find the questionnaire that provides us with basic information regarding the school or schools you attended. We more than welcome your school memories. Simply complete the form and remove it by straightening the staples that fasten it to your copy of **Mill Creek**. Once the questionnaire is removed bend the staples back into place. Fold the completed form on the dotted line, stamp it, then drop it in the mail. It's that easy!

# UPON THIS ROCK

## *a history of* **Brumley Christian Church**

He bore the name of a king of Israel, and like that man "after God's own heart" **David Conner** felt the hand of God early in his life. His was a fairly normal and routine childhood for the day, the entirety of it spent locally.<sup>1</sup>

David grew from childhood in a religious household, learning to be sensitive to his spiritual nature. In 1883, at 26 years of age, he took his place among the shepherds and was ordained a minister of the gospel. Wanting to waste no time he set his hand immediately unto the work of the Lord.

Among the first of his tasks was a series of serv-

ices in a small, busy town called **Brumley**. Full of energy, but still virtually untested behind the pulpit, David contacted Elder **Jackson Thompson**, an older, more experienced spiritual statesman to assist him in conducting the gospel meetings. Thompson agreed.

David arranged the use of the new town hall and posted announcements of the upcoming services.<sup>2</sup> The meetings began on Saturday evening, 5 October, 1883, featuring young David Conner. By arrangement Bro. Thompson would join them on Monday, 7 October. Unforeseen circumstances delayed his arrival, however, keeping

---

<sup>1</sup> David W. Conner was born 13 April, 1857 in the Blue Springs/Bagnell area (Franklin Township Miller County, Missouri), the 6th child of **Walter** and **Amy McComb Conner**. During the Civil War a personal vendetta by southern sympathizers against the Conner family in general convinced Walter the safety of his family was jeopardized. They moved to Camden County to escape the raids and murder that had already claimed 3 Conner men. David grew up near **Freedom**, his parents are buried there.

<sup>2</sup> David's oldest brother, **John L. Conner**, was a physician residing at Brumley with a thriving practice. Undoubtedly it was he most instrumental in attracting David to Brumley. Always supportive of his younger brother we can assume John assisted David wherever needed, though we are uncertain to the actual extent of his involvement in the series of meetings mentioned in the text.



him away until the following Sunday. Since there was no telephone or radio or television from which to gather news surely he must have worried, wondering if David was up to the extra pressure and demand caused by his absence.

Thompson pulled his team into Brumley on the 13th amidst an air of excitement that enveloped the entire town. Instead of the failed meeting he had envisioned he found quite the opposite. Already there had been 13 confessions of faith and 9 had been baptized. Large crowds, increasing in number every day, were flocking to hear the songs and sermons offered by the young preacher. Jackson Thompson entered the town hall of Brumley that evening with his Bible in his hand, adding wisdom of age to the young man's youth and vigor.

The two ministers combined their talents, continuing services for nearly a week longer. Persuading, teaching, exhorting, pleading, even at times chastising, Jackson and David nearly brought the community to a halt as together they presented the gospel each evening. The meeting was definitely the news of the day, but all good things must end and this would be no exception.

Scheduled services ceased on Thursday, 17 October, 1883 by mutual consent. There had been 5 more confessions of faith and 9 more had been baptized. An additional 6 believers had crossed over from other denominations to embrace the gospel preached by the two men.

The final day was coming to a close, yet many in attendance were reluctant to

see it end. A Great Work had been done, a Mighty Presence felt, and no one wanted it to stop. Some suggested extending the meeting. David Conner had another alternative.

"Build a church. Here in Brumley."

The idea certainly seemed plausible, all the excitement and fervor of the past two weeks only making it all the more so. Surely the need was there. The large numbers of people who came each night had proven that. Encouragement and support from the community was easily evident. Perhaps this young preacher was right.

They talked for quite some time, carefully weighing the prospects. It was decided to organize a church. Those desiring to join this new congregation were invited to step forward. One by one they filed from the audience to the front of the building. Forty-two stood together and entered into covenant that day. **Brumley Christian Church** was born.

There were several steps necessary to get and keep the fledgling flock unified and growing. Leadership was provided by an elected church board. One of the first actions taken by the new church was the appointment of a pastor. Young David Conner, who had just captured their hearts with his impressive services, was the unanimous choice. He was approached and presented with the offer, gladly and willingly accepting the position.

The congregation at Brumley quickly expanded under his guidance. Soon the need for a building was quite evident. A site was located and

the land procured. The new church house would be built atop the hill near the town hall, providing a spectacular view of the Mill Creek valley with the Glaize hills marching away in the distance to the southwest.

The frame structure soon began to rise, a sacred beacon to all who wandered in darkness. It was completed at some point in early 1884 and its doors opened for worship. A belfry above the front entry pealed its rich call across the ridges and hollows, inviting all to come. The tone could be heard for miles since there was no sound of machine or hum of highway to compete against.

The glory of a new church building was dampened somewhat by the loss of a pastor. In June of 1884, David Conner was involved in another series of meetings, this time in **Eldon**.<sup>3</sup> With a new church house to worship in and a vigorously growing congregation to fill it, David was satisfied Brumley Christian Church was stable and secure enough to survive without him. His work here was done. The Lord called elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

Despite what some may have thought, the church didn't collapse when David Conner left. An indication that it was built not upon a man but upon a belief, a persuasion,

a faith. Men and pastors came and went through the ages, each contributing their part, each important in their own way; yet after they were gone the church remained. Brumley Christian Church thrived in the years after David Conner. Membership was 120 by 1889.

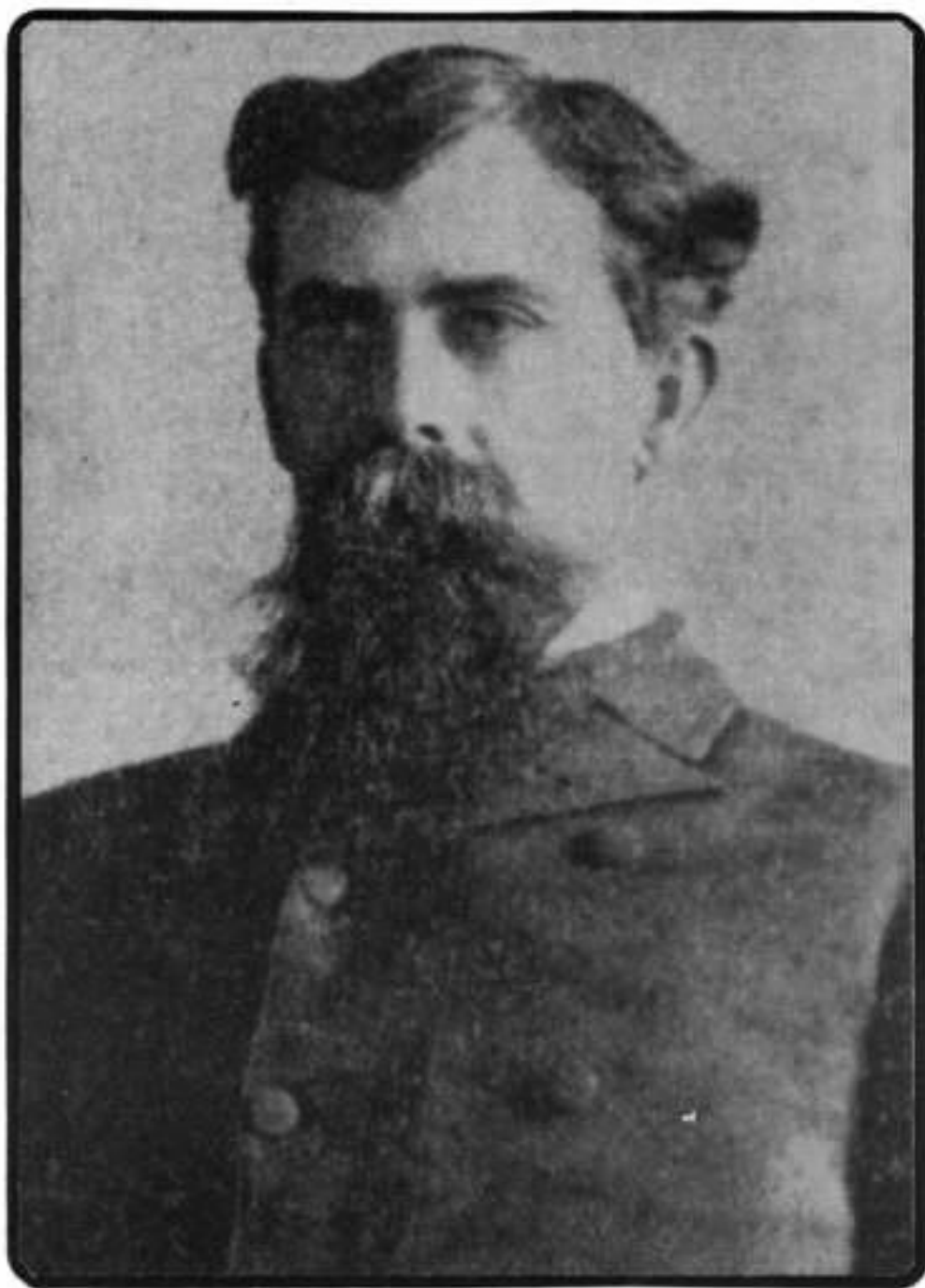
One of the greatest accomplishments of any church is the calling forth of one of their own into the ministry, for it is in this manner that the church is perpetuated. This happened early in the history of the Christian Church at Brumley. **James C. Thompson** was ordained a minister there in April, 1888, and he entered the work with great zeal and vigor. By his own account, when he finally rested from his labor, he had personally baptized over ten thousand persons. James C. Thompson served for 16 years in the capacity of pastor at Brumley, but the harvest fields in which he toiled reached far beyond that area to encompass all of Miller County and much of central Missouri.

Church membership was a serious commitment. Deacons, elders, and officers were charged with the duty of holding members to an exemplary lifestyle. Those who fell short of this scrutiny were dealt with publicly and harshly. The earliest record of

---

<sup>3</sup> This congregation became the **Eldon Christian Church**. The scenario described that brought the Brumley church into existence was repeated at Eldon to produce similar results there.

<sup>4</sup> The only clue suggesting David Conner may have pastored longer is the funeral of **Malinda Robinett** who died 18 February, 1887. Those services were conducted by him. After organization of the church his name is never mentioned again, except in this single entry. Though he seems to have disappeared from here, he is found elsewhere. After leaving Brumley he was a driving force in the **Central Missouri Christian Co-operative**, a league or association of churches.



**JAMES C. THOMPSON**

Known affectionately as "Preacher Jim",  
Rev. Thompson provided a source of  
stability during the church's  
early formative years as  
he guided his flock into the new century.

discipline occurred 13 Feb. 1886 as follows:

"After preaching the Elders after some talk and explanation Recommend the church withdraw fellowship from Bro. **Lazarus Phillips**, **Sis. Manda Christian**, **Paradine Workman**, and **Elvina Phillips** - These living and having lived some time in disorder and no evidence of repentance having yet appeared - The Church consent to above and fellowship is withdrawn as above recommended."

Discipline occurred for many and various reasons. Some, sensing reproach from the church, went ahead and saved them the trouble, as this entry dated 2 June, 1890 shows:

"The officers Recomed that Fellowship be withdrawn from Bro. **William Pepmiller** at his own request for profanity."

The most celebrated case of church discipline happened 2 August, 1901 when **Bertha Winnop Plemmons** endured a court of inquiry by officers from churches at Brumley, **Freedom**, and **Hickory Point**. These men examined evidence and testimony brought against her concerning charges of unministerial conduct. When an entire afternoon of proceedings were completed the church

clerk, **J. M. Hawkins**, recorded the following:

After Hearing the Evidence in the matter They give the following verdict August 2, 1901 "We your committy conclude that the Evidence was not sufficient to convict the defendant."

To the Church at Brumley  
Eld. A. Bear chairman

The board of investigation was comprised of **Henry Lamb**, **A. Bear**, **Herrod Williams** (all of Hickory Point) **Robert D. Fudge** (Freedom), and **H. D. Rutter** (Brumley).<sup>5</sup>

The incident became a source of hard feelings and apparently wasn't forgotten by either party. On 12 October, 1901, **Carroll** and **Bertha Plemmons** requested both their names be stricken from the church roll.<sup>6</sup>

Many events and occasions have marked the passage of time at Brumley Christian Church. Perhaps the saddest, as well as most unusual, occurred on 12 November, 1916. The day began like any other Sunday had for the previous thirty years as members and worshippers gathered at the church for regular Sunday services. The morning breeze carried a brisk reminder that Old Man Winter wasn't far away as people hurried through the front door to escape it's bite. Greetings and pleasant-

---

<sup>5</sup> **William Winnop**, Bertha's father, gave up his seat on the court to Mr. Rutter because of his understandable conflict of interest.

<sup>6</sup> Church records offer a unique, more personal insight into a community than do governmental records. Through them we can see many aspects of life in the past, not only of individuals but of entire areas. **James Martin Hawkins** served many years as church clerk and he made note of many events around Brumley. A notation written 8 February, 1890 reads "church closed being a great (deal) of sickness known as La grippe in the community". We call it influenza today.



(above) Edward Carroll and Bertha Winnop Plemons, newlyweds of only eight months, were embroiled in the most celebrated case of church discipline at Brumley. A board of investigation was formed of officers from Brumley, Freedom, and Hickory Point to examine evidence and hear testimony of charges against Bertha.

(below) An active member of the Brumley Christian Church, Bertha, Sunday school secretary in 1899, was exonerated of the charges brought against her of unministerial conduct in 1901.

ROLL OF OFFICERS.

1899

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<i>Mrs. C. D. Spearman</i> Superintendent.														
<i>Dr. J. L. Cannon</i> Assistant.														
<i>Bertha Winnop</i> Secretary.														
<i>Jennie Hamilton</i> Treasurer.														
Librarian.														
Chorister.														
Organist.														
<i>J. C. Thompson</i> Pastor.														

ries were warmly exchanged while the church began to fill. The bell rang, it's clear call echoing across town, filtering beyond the buildings and escaping into the countryside. Children filed into the church, faces reddened by the exertion of their play and the chaffing of the late autumn wind. Hymns were sung. Prayers were offered. The Good Book was opened and read.

Far away another Book was opened. A Father read the list contained within. It was time to call one of His children Home. He spoke.

At that moment, in Brumley Christian Church amidst the worship service, **Julia Martin Hawkins** collapsed. Her husband, **James**, reached down to assist her. Others rushed to her side. Immediate medical attention was available from **Dr. John Conner** who happened to be in attendance, but Julia didn't linger. The angels had come for her and she must go. Julia Martin Hawkins died there in church in the arms of her husband.

On 1 October, 1933, the church gathered in strength to celebrate it's 50th anniversary, a Golden Jubilee. The first pastor, David W. Conner, returned and brought the sermon that morning. James Thompson presented a special program entitled "The Church And Memories". Days of old were recalled and brought back to life once more. The forty-two who first stood in covenant were remembered. Of that original group only two remained. Names of the faithful were read aloud; **Cynthia and Zebedee Spearman, Nancy Martin, Uncle Maston Wornell, Mr. and Mrs. H.C. Jackson, J.**

**W. Lupardus, Hiram Robinett.** On and on the list read, each contribution immeasurable but not overlooked on this day of memories. It was the passing of the torch, one generation passing the care of the church on to another.

The day of memories soon became a memory itself. Enough generations had passed that the "old ones" were no longer persons, just names in a book of records. Familiar forms that once filled the pews were slowly forgotten as time passed by. Brumley Christian Church continued, it's history not unlike other congregations yet unique unto itself. There were prosperous years, lean years, great revivals, periods of falling away, days of religious fire, days of quiet apathy. But the church still stood.

The building that had been raised in 1884 remained virtually the same until 1969. In that year the interior was refurbished. A new drop ceiling was installed. The woodwork and walls received a new coat of paint. The original wood floors were sanded and refinished. Carpet was laid around the pulpit area and the length of the aisleway. Improvements continued in the year 1974 when the walls were covered with paneling, new cushions and coverings for the pews were bought, colored windows were installed, and a small storage building was purchased.

After several years of part-time and short-term ministers one of their own congregation stepped forward to become pastor. **Carroll Jeffries** suddenly ignited the church and membership once again was on the rise. His o-

pen and honest manner appealed to many, his roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-to-work attitude led the way. In 1976, under his tenure as pastor, a modest addition was built on to the back of the original structure. His death in 1980 left not only a church but an entire community in sadness.

On 22 September, 1991, the building that had sprung from a thirteen-day meeting in 1883 came down. A new generation now had new and different needs, needs that could no longer be served by a structure 107 years old.<sup>7</sup>

A new building now takes shape on the hill that overlooks Mill Creek valley, becoming as familiar to future generations as the original was to those past. A new house of worship shall beckon across the hills of the Glaize, an honor to the memory of those forty-two who stood and united that autumn of 1883. It, too, is raised in the same faith that brought them all together so many years ago to bring into existence the Brumley Christian Church.

---

<sup>7</sup> At the time of its destruction this building was arguably the oldest in Brumley. Testament to its age were the 100 year-old Sunday school records found in the attic and an 1879 penny that had fallen between the floor and wall, lodging in a small cavity of a beam. One can easily imagine a wayward offering escaping from the grasp of a child that was waiting for the offering plate to pass by a century ago.



Nestled among majestic oaks, this house of worship was used for 107 years. First known as the Church of Christ at Brumley the congregation there has long been called the Brumley Christian Church.

**THE ORIGINAL  
FORTY-TWO  
MEMBERS  
OF THE  
BRUMLEY  
CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH**

Organized as the Church of Christ at Brumley the church roll indicates the method of membership; by Relation, Obedience, Letter, or from various other denominations (In this case the Baptist Church at Brumley and the Methodist Church at Ulman). The church records closely monitor the relationship of each individual with the church. Entries include such phrases as "moved off and dropped", "dismissed", "excluded", "lettered out". Those who remained a lifetime bear the honor "died in the faith".

**Isaac Robinett** (#24 of the original membership roll) has this notation beside his name, "Gone to the Baptists", perhaps considered the ultimate indignity.

1	Salaman Blaubenship	Rel.	Elder
2	John F. Heart	Meth	
3	Geo. W. Heddleston	Rel.	Deacon
4	Susan Heddleston	"	
5	J. P. Shipman	Obed.	
6	Martha Shipman	"	
7	Sithia A. Embry	Rel.	Died Dec 22 <sup>nd</sup> 1899
8	Wm. R. Haebeak	"	
9	Mary E. Haebeak	"	
10	Nancy A. Brown	"	
11	Samuel Brown	Obed.	
12	Malinda Robinett	Baptist	died in
13	Nancy Martin	Letter	
14	Jennie Wright	Obed.	
15	Elizabeth Garner	Obed.	
16	E. M. Harper	"	died in
17	J. C. Martin	"	with parent
18	Fannie Martin	"	
19	Clara Freeman	Rel.	
20	J. M. Hawkins	Obed.	
21	Julia A. Hawkins	Obed.	
22	Rezekiah Sarrs	"	
23	Mary Ann Armitage	Rel.	
24	Isaac Robinett	Obed.	
25	Lucy Robinett	Baptist	
26	George H. Robinett	Obed.	
27	George W. Robinson	Rel.	
28	Parodine Workman	Rel.	
29	Delila Whittle	"	
30	Ledora Armitage	"	
31	Enriua J. Robinson	"	
32	Henry B. Armitage	"	
33	Fannie D. Wright	Obed.	
34	Missouri A. Bryant	Rel.	
35	Ledemia Head Sox	"	
36	Antonette Greno	Obed.	
37	Belle D. Wright	"	
38	Elizabeth Heart	Obed.	
39	J. L. Conner	Rel.	
40	Elvina Phillips	"	
41	S. M. Robinson	"	Elder
42	Elizabeth Robinson	"	



This Indenture, Made on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of May A. D. One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty four  
by and between Charles F Thornberry and Margaret D Thornberry his wife  
of the County of Miller Missouri  
parties of the First Part, and J M Howkins John S Hunt J L Martin J P Shipman  
and S Blankenship Trustees of the Christian Church at Brumley  
of the County of Miller in the State of Missouri parties of the Second Part:

WITNESSETH, That the said parties of the First Part, in consideration of the sum of  
Ten DOLLARS,

to them paid by the said parties of the Second Part, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do hereby GRANT, BARGAIN AND  
SELL, CONVEY AND CONFIRM, unto the said parties of the Second Part, their Successors, the following described Lots, Tracts or Parcels  
of land, lying, being and situate in the County of Miller, and State of Missouri, to wit:

A portion of the South West 1/4 of the North East 1/4 of Section Twenty Nine  
(29) in Township Thirty Nine (39) of Range fourteen (14) bounded as follows  
to wit;

Beginning at a post on the Subdivisional line Eight hundred and  
fifty links East of the center of section (29) Thence North 16° West three  
hundred and sixty six and one half links (366 1/2) Thence North 73 1/2° East two  
hundred and sixty six and one half (266 1/2) Thence South 16° East four  
hundred and sixty eight (468) links to said above or usual subdivisional line  
thence West with said line two hundred and eighty links (280) to the place  
of beginning so that said trustees and their Successors in office shall have  
and hold said property for the use and benefit of said Church.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the premises aforesaid, with all and singular the rights, privileges, appurtenances and immunities thereto belonging,  
or in anywise appertaining, unto the said parties of the Second Part, and unto their Successors and assigns, FOREVER; the said  
Charles F Thornberry hereby covenanting that he is lawfully seized of an  
INDEFEASIBLE ESTATE IN FEE, in the premises herein conveyed; that he had good right to convey the same; that the said premises are free and clear  
of any incumbrances done or suffered by him or those under whom he claims; and that he  
will WARRANT AND DEFEND the title to the said premises unto the said parties of the Second Part, and unto their heirs and assigns, FOREVER,  
against the lawful claims and demands of all persons whomsoever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said parties of the First Part have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

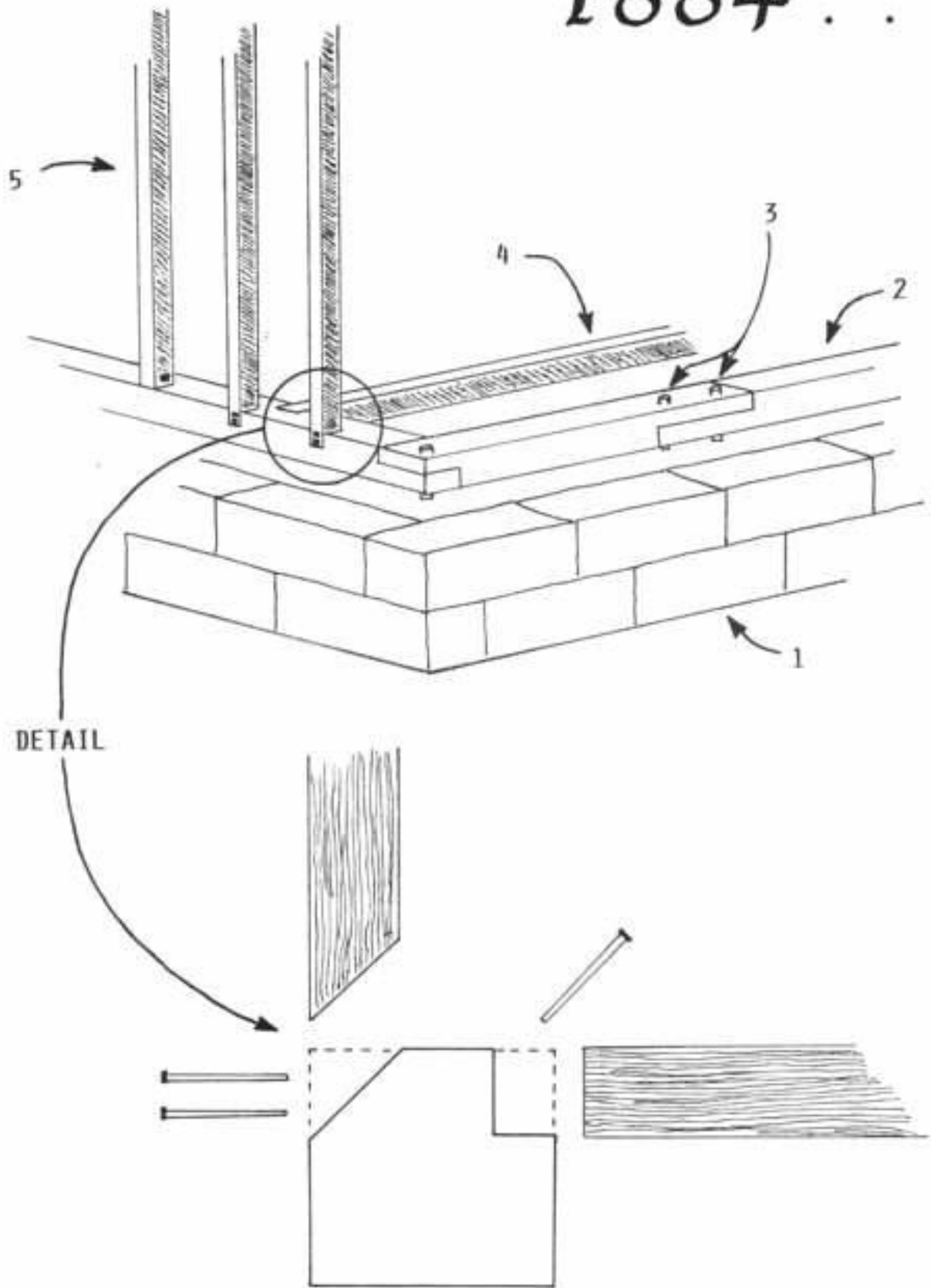
Signed, Sealed and delivered in presence of us,

Charles F Thornberry  
M D Thornberry



The new congregation at Brumley takes a more permanent posture with the  
acquisition of property and plans for a church building.

1884 . . .



## . . . building a church house

AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHURCH HOUSE RAISED IN 1884 REVEALS THE BUILDING TECHNIQUES USED IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY FOR RURAL MISSOURI CONSTRUCTION - AN INTERESTING COMBINATION OF POST-AND-BEAM ALONG WITH STUD FRAMING. THE PROCESS OF EVOLUTION TO TODAY'S MODERN BOX FRAMING IS QUITE EVIDENT AS METAL NAILS AND WOODEN PEGS SHARE THE DUTY AS FASTENERS. IT WOULD BE THIS DEPENDENCE UPON THE RELATIVELY NEW TECHNOLOGY OF METAL FASTENERS THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY CAUSE THE DESIGN TO FAIL - BUT NOT BEYOND REPAIR.

- (1) TO ACCOMMODATE SLOPE AND CREATE A SOUND, LEVEL BASE TWO LAYERS OF FIELDSTONE WERE CULTURED AND SET. EACH STONE MEASURED ROUGHLY 14" X 36".
  - (2) WHITE OAK TIMBER WAS CUT TO SIZE AND TRIMMED BY AXE TO 8" X 8" DIMENSIONS. LAP JOINTS AT CORNERS AND EXTENSIONS WERE SOLIDIFIED BY WOODEN PEGS TO HOLD THEM SECURELY TOGETHER. THE BEAM WAS NOTCHED FOR STUDS AND JOISTS BY AXE THEN SIMPLY RESTED UPON THE FIELDSTONE FOUNDATION.
  - (3) WOODEN PEGS, NEARLY 1½" IN DIAMETER, WERE DRIVEN THROUGH HOLES MADE BY A HAND AUGER TO SECURE THE JOINTS IN THE BEAM FRAMING.
  - (4) FLOOR JOISTS WERE FULL 2" X 4" MILLED OAK LUMBER SET ON 24" CENTERS.
  - (5) WALL STUDS WERE FULL 2" X 4" MILLED OAK LUMBER SET ON 18" CENTERS.
- (DETAIL) END VIEW SHOWS HOW THE WALL STUDS WERE CUT AT AN ANGLE TO ALLOW FOR NAILING TO THE OAK BEAM. FOR STRENGTH, EVERY THIRD STUD WAS CUT FLUSH TO STAND SOLIDLY ATOP THE BEAM AND SECURED BY TOE-NAILING (SEE ILLUSTRATION). AS THE BUILDING AGED AND SEASON AFTER SEASON BROUGHT THE WEIGHT OF WINTER SNOWS THOSE WALL STUDS CUT ON ANGLES BEGAN TO SLIDE FORWARD AND DOWNWARD IN THEIR SEATS. IT WAS THIS CAUSE MORE THAN ANY OTHER WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONDITIONS THAT BROUGHT ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BUILDING IN 1991.

1

Brumley Christian Sunday School  
January 4<sup>th</sup> 1891

Opened by singing and reading by Superintendent  
from 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 2-1 to 17 verse followed by prayer.

The following teachers were then appointed  
Bible Class - J. L. Conner in his absence J. T. Hart

Girls 1<sup>st</sup> Class - Alzina Spearman

Girls 2<sup>nd</sup> Class - Alice Spearman

Boys 1<sup>st</sup> Class - W. L. Dial

Infant Class - Zebedee Spearman

There were present in the Bible Class 17

1<sup>st</sup> Girls Class 7

2<sup>nd</sup> Girls Class 5

Boys Class 3 Infant Class 9

Total present in Classes 41

Teachers present 5

Contribution 21 cts

After a song and the usual closing exercises

Sunday School adjourned to meet at 10 o'clock.

January 11<sup>th</sup> 1891

Lura B. Conner  
Secretary

By W. L. Spearman Assistant

## DISCOVERED

ONLY HOURS BEFORE DESTRUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING.  
(above) In the attic were 100 year old Sunday school records. It is unknown when a Sunday school was organized at Brumley Christian Church. Though this may well have been the first day of Sunday school there, it is apparent that an organization or preparation had already occurred by the mention of an already appointed superintendent and established classes. Regardless, this is the earliest Sunday school entry available.

(right) When siding was removed to examine the building construction a penny was found. The rubbing (enlarged) clearly shows the date of the coin - 1879.



Brumley  
Christian Sunday School

	Jan. 11 91	Jan. 18 91	Jan. 25 91	Feb. 1 91	Feb. 8 91	Feb. 15 91	Feb. 22 91	Mar. 1 91	Mar. 8 91	Mar. 15 91
Ollie Spelman	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Walker Jackson	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Annie Wright	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
John Comer	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Isaac Wright	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
J. H. Comer	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Eliza Comer	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Alice Spearman	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Alvina Spearman	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Zebedeu Spearman	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
W. R. Dial	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
H. C. Jackson	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Mrs. H. C. Jackson	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Julius Jackson	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
W. J. Martin	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Lusa B. Comer	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Bona H. Thompson	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Rosa Wright	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Myrtle Berrold	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Ben Ward	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
H. B. Martins	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
George Wolsey	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
J. T. Wiseman	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
W. S. Spearman	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
J. P. Martin	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
W. C. Hawkins	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Charles Martin	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Henry Wiseman	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

1891. "Roll of names belonging to Brumley Christian Sunday School".  
All early records indicate this was the year a Sunday school was started.

CHRISTIAN BIBLE LESSONS.

LESSON IX.—MAY 27.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND.—MARK 6:30-44.

(Commit Verse 41.—Read Matt. 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17.)

30. And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure to much as to eat.

32. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran along thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

35. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:

36. Send them away, that they may go

into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38. He said unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42. And they did all eat, and were filled.

43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

DAILY READINGS.

MONDAY	Feeding the Five Thousand	Mark 6:30-44.
TUESDAY	Feeding the Four Thousand	Mark 8:1-9.
WEDNESDAY	The Feast at Capernaum	Luke 9:10-17.
THURSDAY	The Wedding Feast	Luke 14:15-24.
FRIDAY	The Bread from Heaven	John 6:25-40.
SATURDAY	The True Bread of Life	John 6:41-58.
SUNDAY	The Heavenly Banquet	Rev. 19:1-9.

SUB-TOPICS:

THE FOLLOWERS.  
FOOD.  
EAT.  
SEGMENTS.  
The Grand Results.

LESSON OUTLOOK.

I. TIME.—In the spring of A. D. 29, one year after the incidents of the last lesson.

II. PLACE.—The Five Thousand were fed east of the Jordan, on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Bethsaida. Here

a level plain stretches east and south from the Jordan for several miles in length, and in places nearly a mile wide, with high mountains in the rear. It is now called the Plain of Bataha.

GOLDEN TEXT.

My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.—John 6:32.

LESSON OUTLINE.

1. Seeking Needed Rest. Va. 30-32.
2. The Needy Multitude. Va. 33-37.
3. The Great Feast. Va. 38-44.

LESSON NOTES.

I. SEEKING NEEDED REST.—30. The apostles: The twelve disciples whom Jesus had before chosen to assist him in the work of the ministry. Told him all things: They made a report of their ministry.

31. Come ye yourselves apart: Away from the multitudes that were pressing them. Desert place: Away from the villages and cities. Rest a while: Rest must follow labor,

in order that the wasted energies of the body and mind may be recuperated. Many coming and going: At this time in his ministry the multitudes were continually thronging Jesus.

32. Departed . . . By ship: They crossed the Sea of Galilee, and went to a region that was little inhabited, at the upper end of the Sea of Galilee.

II. THE NEEDY MULTITUDE.—33. The

1890's Sunday school at Brumley Christian Church was taught from ordered material called "Bible Lesson Leaves". This "leaflet" was found in the attic inside a record book that spanned the years 1897-1899. (front)

## CHRISTIAN BIBLE LESSONS.

people saw them departing: They were watching Jesus and the apostles, as they set sail. Ran about thither: They went around the head of the sea, while Jesus and the apostles sailed across. Outwent them: They arrived at the landing-place before the boats did.

34. Moved with compassion: He pitied them because "they were as sheep without a shepherd," and many of them afflicted. Began to teach them: He had gone there to rest, but seeing the pressing need of the people, he spent the day in labor.

35. When the day was now far spent: Toward sundown, or after three o'clock. His disciples came: The twelve who had accompanied him in the boats. The time is far past: Meaning that the day was passing, and that it was near night.

36. Send them away: They were growing uneasy as they saw the night coming on. Buy themselves bread: Make provision for their temporal wants, which could not be supplied there in the desert.

37. Give ye them to eat: Though there are more than five thousand, it is not necessary to go away to buy food. Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread: This was Philip's estimate of the amount that would be required to give everyone a little (John 6:7).

III. THE GREAT FEAST.—38. How many loaves have ye: He asks the question to call

out the fact of the smallness of the supply. Five: These loaves were in the possession of a lad or young man who was one of the company. Two fishes: Small fish, salted and dried like herring.

39. Sit down by companies: In an orderly way, that all might be properly served.

40. In ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties: This, perhaps, meant that there were fifty ranks of one hundred each. Such an arrangement would make it easier to serve them, and show that there was no deception.

41. He . . . blessed: Our Saviour always sought a blessing on his food. And brake: The loaves of bread among the Jews, were made thin and brittle, and were therefore broken and not cut. Gave them to his disciples: He made the disciples the ministers in the distribution, multiplying it as it passed from their hands.

42. They did all eat: None in all the vast company were slighted or overlooked. And were filled: It was not a mere taste, but a bountiful feast; each one had as much as he desired.

43. They took up, etc.: Jesus would permit nothing to be wasted. Twelve baskets full: Baskets used for carrying food on a journey.

44. About five thousand men: Matthew adds, "Besides women and children." Probably the whole number was as many as ten thousand.

### LESSON QUESTIONS.

1. Seeking Needed Rest.—What did the apostles report to Jesus? What did he say to them? Where did they go to seek rest? Why to such a place as that? What was the occasion of their seeking rest? In what kind of labor had they been engaged? How did they reach the place selected? What was the probable distance sailed?

2. The Needy Multitude.—What did the people observe? What did they do? How

did they go? Which party first reached the landing-place? What did Jesus perceive? Why did he pity them? How did he spend the day?

3. The Great Feast.—What request did the disciples make? When did they make it? Why did they make it? What did Jesus answer? How were the people seated? How much food was there? How many ate? How much food was left?

### LESSON POINTS.

1. The Church should draw people to it by its benevolent activity and charity.

2. The true feast is that which is offered by and in Christ.

3. We should realize how large is the number of those who are without spiritual food.

4. Like our Master we should have compassion on the poor and needy.

5. God often tries us, to see how much faith we really have in him.

6. Whatever we do should be done in a quiet, orderly way. "Let all things be done

decently and in order," is an apostolic injunction.

7. The little that the lad had was made use of to feed a vast multitude.

8. We should give thanks to God for all our blessings.

9. We should never be wasteful, however abundant our supplies.

10. We should ever cultivate the spirit and habit of economy.

11. We grow the richer by our services for Christ.

(Entered at St. Louis P. O. as Second Class Matter.)

CHRISTIAN BIBLE LESSON LEAVES. Published monthly by the Christian Publishing Company  
2712 Pine Street, St. Louis, Mo.

TERMS.—SINGLE COPY, per year, 35 cents.  
PER MONTH: 10 copies, 15 cts.; 25 copies, 25 cts.; 50 copies, 45 cts.; 100 copies, 75 cts.  
PER QUARTER: 10 copies, 30 cts.; 25 copies, 60 cts.; 50 copies, \$1.20; 100 copies, \$2.10.  
PER YEAR: 10 copies, \$1.10; 25 copies, \$2.40; 50 copies, \$4.60; 100 copies, \$8.00.

(back)



THE GREATEST REVIVAL IN THE HISTORY OF THE BRUMLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH OCCURRED 26 SEPT. - 14 OCT., 1930 WHEN 45 PERSONS WERE ADDED TO THE CHURCH ROLL.

(above) Members of the 1930 Youth Class of Brumley Christian Church to be baptized;  
 1. to r. front row: Reid Martin, Elvia Thornton, Ruth Sullivan, Margaret Pennington,  
 Cleo Mace, Reber Hawkins, Loren Hollinsworth  
 middle row: Jim Dickson, Erma Stites, Chloe DeVore, Glee Plemons,  
 Bonnie Jean Dickson, Sherrel Wall  
 back row: Dollie Plemons, Susie Wright, Carl Plemons, Denvil Swenchart, George Withers

(next page, top) 12 October, 1930. Mill Creek baptizing.  
 at center: Rev. L. L. Roberts baptizing Chloe Pemberton  
 those in water awaiting baptism, from r. to l.: Cleo Mace, Kermit Steen, Susie Wright,  
 Reid Martin, Margaret Pennington, Reber Hawkins, Elvia Thornton, Carl Plemons,  
 Denvil Swenchart, Edith Markle Huddleston, Golphrey Huddleston,  
 Dollie Plemons, Tucker Jeffries  
 those obstructed from view by Rev. Roberts: Erma Thornton, Russell McClaskey,  
 Ruth Sullivan, Loren Hollinsworth

(next page, bottom) 12 October, 1930. Candidates receiving instruction before baptism.  
 The location is Mill Creek near where State Highway "C" crosses over it today.

Those baptized 14 October, 1930 by Rev. Roberts included the following:  
 Bonnie Jean Dickson, J. R. Dickson, Otho Harmon, Dale Williams, Ralph Markle,  
 Sherrel Wall, Louie Robinett, John Steen, Glee Plemons, Erma Stites, Laird Smith,  
 Chloe DeVore, Fern DeVore, Dr. W. D. Dickson. No photograph of that service was found.





## PASTORS

1883	- DAVID W. CONNER	1931	- S. A. CROUCH
1889	- JAMES C. THOMPSON	1958	- J. W. KRUSE
1900	- THOMAS H. WILSON	1964	- DR. ALFRED SCOTT ILLINGSWORTH
1901	- JAMES C. THOMPSON	1966	- LEE TODD
1902	- S. O. BURKS	1969	- RONALD MULLENS
1904	- JAMES C. THOMPSON	1970	- LARRY YOUNG
1909	- A. J. BAIRD	1974	- CARROLL JEFFRIES
1910	- W. H. SCOTT	1981	- JAMES MC GOWIN
1914	- S. B. BAX	1985	- RALPH BYRD
1916	- W. H. SCOTT		

## EVANGELISTS

1889	- BROTHER AKERS	1931	- J. L. FREEMAN
1889	- G. J. COWEN	1958	- J. L. FREEMAN
1892	- L. D. MONEYMAKER	1960	- J. L. FREEMAN
1892	- J. C. GLOVER	1962	- CLIFTON MC COY
1892	- J. J. LANE	1962	- EARL STARKEY
1893	- BROTHER ALEXANDER	1963	- PHILLIP WOODWORTH
*1894	- C. H. WHITE	1964	- L. E. EVANS
1896	- C. H. WHITE	1967	- LEE TODD
1898	- EDMUND WILKS	1968	- JOHNNY JOSLIN
1900	- S. O. BURKS	1969	- LARRY YOUNG
**1902	- ALBERT GULLEDGE	1970	- JAMES DAVIS
1903	- ALBERT GULLEDGE	1970	- PAUL BUSCHMANN
1903	- G. L. TOMSON	1971	- SAM CRANDELL
1905	- E. B. WOODS	1971	- JIMMY KRUSE
1906	- G. T. SMITH	1972	- BRUCE SNEED
1907	- T. J. HEAD	1973	- GENE EDWARDS
1912	- H. J. CORWIN	1973	- DAVID LESLIE
1917	- J. G. BONHAM	1973	- CLIFF HAZARD
1927	- R. F. MONEYMAKER	1974	- GREG JOHNSON
***1930	- L. L. ROBERTS	1974	- HOWARD MURRAY
1931	- J. S. MILL		

\* This meeting resulted in 44 additions to the church.

\*\* This meeting was the longest in church history, lasting three weeks and two days (23 total consecutive days).

\*\*\* The greatest revival ever at Brunley Christian Church. Forty-five were added to the roll, 32 by baptism and 13 by relation or letter. Several of those baptized during this meeting have vivid memories of the enthusiasm and religious fire that swept through the community. The following are accounts of the Mill Creek baptizings on 12 October, 1930.

### MEMORIES OF THAT DAY

**Ruth Sullivan Thornsberry** recalls her mother waiting on the bank with a big smile, holding a towel and a quilt to wrap her in. She was baptized in her 8th grade graduation dress.

**Reber Hawkins** remembers some of the boys changing clothes in a nearby barn. As they walked inside, **Kermit Steen** (who was directly in front of Reber) stepped on a corn cob that rolled out from under his feet. Kermit, stumbling about and desperately trying to keep from falling down, muttered "dammit to hell". Reber still gets much delight recalling this particular event while Kermit just grins.

*beginnings . . .*

(right) **David W. Conner**,  
first pastor of the Brumley Christian Church,  
was the person most instrumental  
in it's creation.

This photograph was taken when  
Rev. Conner returned to Brumley for the  
50th anniversary services in 1933.

(below) The aged structure resists the  
efforts of the demolition crew. With the  
support of one entire wall gone it continues  
to stand in defiance, but to no avail.  
By the end of the day it is only a memory.

*. . . and endings*



# PIONEER MEMORIES

## *the diary of James Harvey Vernon*

PART 2 - CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE

At the time my Grandfather **Jeremiah Vernon** moved to Missouri the state was not very thickly populated. Miller County had not yet become a county. There were only a few families in what is now Miller County. Very little land was in cultivation. They used plows made of wood and pulled by oxen to cultivate the soil.

The crops were mostly corn and some wheat, cotton, and flax. The flax and cotton were used to make their clothes. Almost every family had a spinning wheel and a loom to make cloth for their clothes. They used wool to make the heavy clothes; they used hand cards to card it and they knitted all their hose and gloves.

There was a blacksmith shop at **Mt. Pleasant** where supplies could be made for farm implements.

All stock, hogs and sheep, ran at large and were identi-

fied as belonging to each owner by certain marks on their ears made when the animals were small by cutting a place out of the ear. It was called "upper bit in the left ear" or "lower bit in the right", etc.<sup>1</sup>

Not only the domestic animals roamed the hills but wild animals as well. There were lots of deer, boar, panthers and lynx, bobcats and wolves. There were lots of wild turkeys and prairie chickens and wild animals for meat to eat.

Both Grandfather Vernon and Grandfather **Henderson** lived in log houses. Modern conveniences such as we have now were not even heard of then.

When Grandfather Vernon's children were about grown in the year 1850, he left Grandmother and the children, some of them married, and went to the goldfields, or started. He never lived to get there.

---

<sup>1</sup> **William Henderson, Sr.** earmark is a crop and split in the right ear and one swallow fork in the left and directs the same to be entered of record this 15th July, 1854." Book of Marks and Brands, Miller County, Missouri. Apparently **Jeremiah Vernon** never registered the identifying mark he used to distinguish his livestock from others.

He died on the plains. News had come that there was lots of gold in California and lots of folks went in wagon trains, wagons drawn by oxen, not very many roads, no bridges across streams made traveling very slow. In making preparation to go he made a new wagon box and made a cover for the wagon.

He took sick and died and was buried on the plains in eastern California. He had Bright's Disease. His companions, **Jimmy Taylor** and **Tandy Moore** and a Mr. Long, made a coffin out of his new wagon box and buried him beside the trail. He was about 45 years old. It was a long time before Grandmother and the family heard he was dead. News traveled slow in those days.

Grandmother lived on the old home place (where **Olean** is now) for several years, then she moved to a little farm near **Mt. Herman Church**.

A Baptist (frame house) church had been built there

by this time, before that there was a church just north east of where **Eldon** is, now called **Mt. Vernon Church** and that is where all the old settlers attended church.<sup>2</sup>

Grandmother had a stroke of paralysis at Mt. Herman Church. They took her home and she lived only a few days. They buried her at the **Allen Cemetery**. Most of the family were members of the Baptist Church and lived respectable lives.

My father's name was **Wilburn Vernon**. He was born 21 December, 1827.<sup>3</sup> He spent all his boyhood days on his father's farm, the farm he had homesteaded where **Olean** is now.

The house and stables were made of logs and all the cooking was done on an open fireplace. Iron kettles were used for boiling and bread was baked in dutch ovens made of iron.

Father never took any trips away from the home

---

<sup>2</sup> One could say the Mt. Vernon Church was a branch from the oldest congregation in this area, the **United Baptist Church of Christ at Gilgal** near **Bagnell**. The reason for the break away was not religious differences but merely the great distances required by some to attend. **Ebenezer Vernon**, Gilgal's first treasurer and brother to Jeremiah, was most instrumental in the organization of the new church near Eldon. All that remains of this once vibrant assembly is a smattering of broken stones in a small, overgrown, forgotten cemetery. Ebenezer Vernon rests somewhere among them.

<sup>3</sup> Family legend suggests that Wilburn Vernon was the first white child born in the territory that would later become Miller County. Though assuredly among the first, Wilburn's birth was preceded nine months when **William** and **Sarah Mulkey Miller** brought a son into this world near present-day **Spring Garden** on 21 March, 1827. They named their son **Pinkney** and to him generally falls the honor of first white birth. An argument (which this editor supports) can be made for young **Thomas West**. Beyond doubt the first white settlers to the territory of Miller County was **William West** and his unknown wife in 1807 near **St. Elizabeth**. They stayed only a matter of four years, moving on in 1811 and leaving hardly anything known of them until 120 years later. According to **Gerard Schultz's History of Miller County**, in 1930 a large, flat stone was uncovered by farm machinery east of St. Elizabeth. The peculiar find was cleaned and the discoverers startled to find a tombstone marking the grave of an infant child named Thomas West who died the very year his parents left this area.

24

I Jeremiah Vernon of the County of  
Kettler and State of Missouri being  
in perfect mind and memory thank  
be given to God calling in mind  
Jerem the mortality of my body and  
of knowing that it is appointed for all  
Vernon men to die, do make and Ordain  
Will thus my last will and testament  
that is to say principally and first  
of all I give and bequeath to  
Deley Vernon my dearly beloved wife  
(call) after my first debts is paid  
my land and stock of every kind  
all my farming utensils and tools  
beds and kitchen furniture together  
with all movable effects that remain  
save Deley Vernon is to have and  
to hold all of my estate during her  
life term or widowhood but at  
her decease or death it to be equally  
divided between her save Deley Vernon  
and my children my Will is that  
all my heirs should share equally  
whereas some of my children have received  
and have received Eighty dollars  
that will be deducted out of their part  
of my estate. I will give them names  
which have received that amount Polly  
Harkley Nancy Long Kettler Vernon  
Lally Henderson Rebecca Simmons  
Leah Romke Robert Harkley Nancy  
Long have died since and left an heir  
to each Mary Jane I will her one  
dollar

22

Signed Sealed published pronounced  
and declared by the said Jeremiah  
Vernon as his last will and  
testament in the presence of us who  
in his presence of each other have hereto  
Subscribed our names this 30<sup>th</sup> day of  
April 1850

John Brockman  
John E. Brockman

### THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JEREMIAH VERNON

"I Jeremiah Vernon of the County of Miller and State of Missouri being in perfect mind and memory thanks be given to God calling in mind the mortality of my body and knowing that it is appointed for all men to die, do make and ordain this my last will and testament that is to say principally and first of all I give and bequeath to Betsy Vernon my dearly beloved wife (all) after my just debts is paid my land and stock of every kind all my farming utensils and household and kitchen furniture together with all moveable effects that remain Said Betsy Vernon is to have and to hold all of my estate during her life time or widowhood, but at her marriage or decease it to be equally divided between her Said Betsy Vernon and my children, my Will is that all my heirs Should Shear equal, whereas Seven of my Children have married and have received Eighty Dollars that will be deducted out of there part of my estate. I will give there names which have Received that amount. Polly Starling Nancy Long Wilburn Vernon Sally Henderson Charity Simmons Leah Rounk Rebecca Starling. Nancy Long have died Since and left an heir To Wit Mary Jane I will her one dollar = Signed Sealed published pronounced and declared by the Same Jeremiah Vernon as his last will and testament in the presence of us who in his presence of each other have hereto Subscribed our names this 30<sup>th</sup> day of April 1850"

John Brockman  
John E. Brockman

Preparation for the journey west to the goldfields included this will written in April, 1850, an ominous, yet honest, view of the dangerous trip that lay ahead. Jeremiah and his companions left Miller County shortly thereafter in search of fortune and glory in California. By December the terrible rumors of his death on the trail were proven true. On the 16th of that month the Brockmans appeared before the County Court of Miller County and signed affidavits confirming their witness to the signing of his will. With the final wishes of Jeremiah Vernon executed accordingly, his file was recorded and case closed on 3 April, 1851. Jeremiah Vernon a pioneer citizen of Miller County, lies in a long forgotten and unmarked grave in eastern California.

Know all men by these presents that I Ebenezer Vernon of the County of Miller and State of Michigan of the one part and the Trustees of the United Baptist Church at Mount Vernon of the other part Witnesseth that for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar to the said Ebenezer Vernon in hand paid by the Trustees before the executing and delivery of this Instrument a receipt for the same as by said Ebenezer Vernon acknowledged and amplified with good bargain lease and leaving to the said Trustees of the above named Church to have and to hold all that tract of land to him as I Ebenezer Vernon of public worship as at least for many and nine years beginning on the first day of April 1841 and 100 inches more or less commencing at the N W corner of Section 21 and Township 42 North Range 13 west of the 5th P.M. and more South 49 De. East at 4 chains 58 links set apart from which all the first 13 inches be North 8 1/2% E 23 links and a hooking 14 inches diameter be North 67 1/2 W 63 links distance thence South 44 degrees west 3 chains and 50 links and set apart from which all that five oak 9 inches in diameter be North 11 1/2 degrees west 40 links and a hooking 10 inches diameter be North 46 1/2 De. and 40 1/2 links distance thence North 56 De. west one chain 37 links a hooking 6 inches diameter to chains 50 links set apart from which a hooking 11 inches diameter be North 41 3/4 De. west 74 links and all that oak 2 1/2 inches diameter be South 25 1/2 degree E 33 links distance thence N 1/2 E 3 chains and 10 links the beginning corner situated in Miller County aforesaid to have and to hold the above described tract of land to them the Trustees for the term hereinafter mentioned free from all encumbrances whatsoever touching and the said Ebenezer Vernon with various agree to and with said Trustees that he will consent to defend the before mentioned tract of land more or less to them the said Trustees from the lawful claim or claims of all and every kind in Witness whereof the said Ebenezer Vernon hath hereunto set his hand and seal this 7th day of May 1841 Ebenezer Vernon

Witness  
William Brookman

A. B. for the United Baptist at Mount Vernon Meeting House agreeable to an Article signed for building of said Meeting House do agree that all Disbursements shall hereafter accrue to said House except on one article they or such meeting

Paymaster Andrew McCastland, Melan Moore, Samuel Gillenland Trustees

"where all the old settlers attended church".

Deed transferring ownership of land from Ebenezer Vernon to the United Baptist Church at Mt. Vernon; Andrew McCastland, Melan Moore, Samuel Gillenland, trustees.



country. He hunted a lot and would tan the hides of animals. Some of the skins were used to make shoes for the family.

Wild deer were so plentiful in those days that father often would get up in the night to drive them away to keep them from destroying the crops.

My mother's name was **Sarah Susan Henderson**, daughter of **William Henderson**. She was born in Tennessee, 5 May, 1828. When she was ten years old she came with her parents to Missouri and settled on the **Little Saline Creek**. Grandfather homesteaded a tract of land and lived there for many years. Grandmother died there and was buried near Eldon at the **Salem Cemetery**.

My father and mother were married in the year 1846. They lived for awhile at Grandfather Vernon's, then father homesteaded 80 acres of land where Eldon is now. He built a house close to where the **Wacks Dairy Barn** is now. The house was made of logs used just as they were cut with the ax, the ends not straightened up. They called them kerf ends. The logs were dubbed with mud to keep out the cold.

My sister, **Mary Eliza**, and brother, **William Jeremiah**, were born before they moved to this place and I was born a while after they moved to where Eldon is now on 13 June 1853.

When I was about a year old, father sold that farm to **Captain Billy Miller** for \$200. Mr. Miller was called Captain because he drilled men to prepare for a fight or war if trouble with the Indians oc-

curred.

Father then bought forty acres of land just east of **Mt. Pleasant**. There was a one room log house on it. We lived there for about a year and my brother **Isaac** was born there. Mother said I was not pleased about the new baby and she found me with the hatchet and was going to kill it.

In the fall of 1855 was my earliest remembrances. I can remember Father hauling in pumpkins and rolling them down a board into the yard out of the ox-cart. The cart was a two-wheeled vehicle, the kind that was used almost altogether in those days and always drawn by oxen. Up until after that time we had never owned a horse. Two oxen were fastened together with a yoke across their necks with loops for their heads to go through and they were trained to be guided by talking to them. They didn't use lines as are used for horses. Gee meant turn to the right and Haw meant turn to the left.

Father traded that forty acres of land for 300 acres about 6 miles farther north on **Brush Creek**, traded even. He moved down there because the deer were more plentiful. There was a log house on it and a smokehouse.

Then Father traded twenty acres for a horse and bought another one and then we had a team of horses, the first I can remember. But we worked oxen a lot after that, especially about the plowing.

Before this time we always drove an ox-team to attend church at Vernon Church, near where Eldon is now. It was about six miles and we had to

start by sunrise to get there in time. We had no clocks and we counted time by the sun or "3 hours by sun", etc. We rode to church in a cart and sometimes it would be pretty crowded. I remember one time Brother Billy fell out and gave us all a good scare, but he wasn't hurt much.

We lived in that place about 5 years and sold a part of the farm with the house to **Joe Morrison** and built a new house up on the road, moved them in about 1861. I helped to hew the logs for the house and we made an improvement over the old house although it was made of logs, too. It was while we lived at this place that Father told me to take 2 pigs out and kill them. The sow had died. I felt so sorry for the pigs that I took them into the woods and hid them and would slip out milk for them and roasting ears. They grew to be big hogs and Father sold them.

Lots of interesting things happened before we moved to this place. **Adaline, Elizabeth,** and **Lydia** were born before we moved up on the road.

I remember when I was about 12 years old we children had gathered a large pile of walnuts and we were so proud of them. One morning we saw a bunch of hogs gathered around the walnuts. We wanted to chase them away but Father recognized the hogs as some of our own that had strayed and he had given up for lost so we had to keep quiet while they were headed off and driven into the lot.

Another thing I remember was hating the geese my mother had. She had a lot of geese and was so proud of them. She was making pillows

and feather beds with the feathers she picked from them. Once when one came too close to where I was feeding the cows I hit it on the head with an ear of corn. It just toppled over dead. I was so scared I ran and hid it under some leaves in a fence corner and went into supper. I felt too bad to eat and kept thinking about that goose. So as soon as it was dark I slipped out intending to carry it so far away that no one would ever know what became of it. When I came to the pile of leaves where it was hidden I began to dig down and as soon as I touched it it began to "Squake! Squake!" and ran away. Oh, what a scare, but what a relief!

My first school was at **Scab Town** where **Mt. Herman School** is now. I was only 5 years old the first term which lasted only about three months. The teacher was **Joe Russell**. He gave me a whipping the first day for pulling **Tom Henderson's** ear.

The schoolhouse was made of logs and had split logs for seats and had legs on them but no backs. They had puncheon floors. The only light we had was where a log had been left out along one side of the room, and right under this place was the writing desk. The house was heated with a fireplace with a chimney made of wood. The building had only one door. The only book we had to start with was the old blue-back spelling book. Every pupil had to study out loud and did for several years after I started to school. Then later when a teacher came to teach and had us to study to ourselves it caused quite an

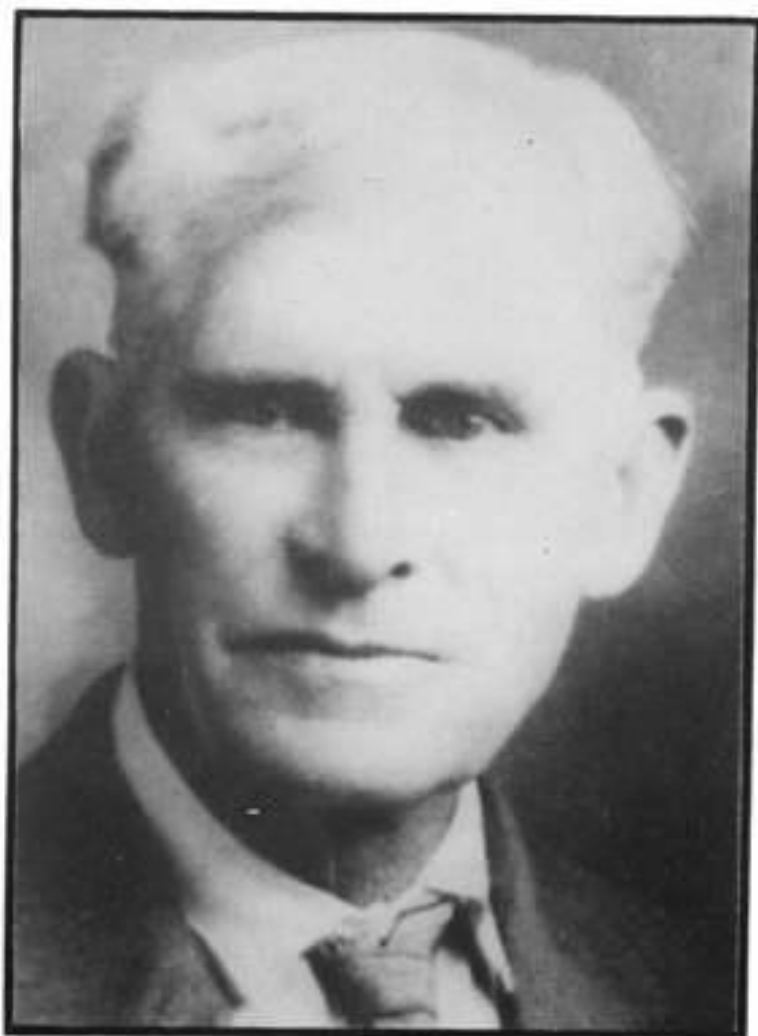
argument among the parents. Some thought quiet study wouldn't do.<sup>4</sup>

A Sunday School was organized at Scab Town and Father was put in as superintendent and that is when he learned to read. He had never had an opportunity to learn when he

was a boy. Our literature was the Bible and we had pamphlets, too, with good moral reading. We only got a few and different kinds so we would read them and take them back and exchange for others so everyone could read all of them.

---

<sup>4</sup> It once was a common practice for schoolmasters to instruct all their pupils to perform their studies orally. Each child sat at their seat and would read their lessons aloud. Some would be doing arithmetic tables, others spelling, while yet others would be reading. Different grade levels, all aloud, all at the same time! These were known as "biab schools", quite understandably. The concept of this teaching method was the use of the necessary mental functions required to perform the work. The vocalization of thought served the purpose of reinforcing the lesson being learned. "Quiet study", as Mr. Vernon so aptly describes, was first viewed as foreign. Teachers supporting and preferring this new practice were looked upon as slackers and lazy, unwilling to teach the children properly.



**NEXT ISSUE:**  
**the**  
**Civil War**  
**comes**  
**to**  
**Miller County**  
**through**  
**the actual**  
**memories**  
**of**  
**James**  
**Harvey**  
**Vernon**

CAN YOU IDENTIFY ANYONE IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH?



This photograph was found abandoned in an Eldon residence.  
It is very possible this is the interior  
of a former Eldon business.

submitted by: **Raymond and Linda Tubbs**  
315 West 3rd Street  
Eldon, MO 65026

Do you have any old photographs you wish identified? Let us help!



Patience is a virtue.

That was a lesson my mother was constantly teaching me as I grew up, and a point I always tried to remind her of when I was in her disfavor. Mom was probably an expert on patience considering the four children she bore and reared. Maybe she wouldn't have been so patient if we would have all been adopted. I guess she knew that one day we would all be turned loose on an unsuspecting world and she did not want to take the blame for the rise in crime statistics or the governments that toppled. I honestly believe the only reason she sent us to school was so they had to take partial responsibility for the way we turned out.

But there were times when patience wore thin and lectures found deaf ears. At those times Mom applied her expertise in another field she was so proficient in. That of correction.

My first memory of Mom's wrath came early in my career as a child. I call it a career but I'm glad it wasn't, for I would more than likely

have found myself unemployed. Dad and Mom would have given me my "pink slip" long ago. They always threatened to give me back to the Indians the way it was.

Anyway, Dave and I were over at George and Gertie's house, teaching all the cats how to swim in the stock tank. George and Gertie had cats, lots of cats. And we had every one that we could catch in the tank. It looked like a tub full of bobbing apples, on a much larger scale, of course. I don't know if it was all the mewling or all the splashing that brought our little swimming class to Mom's attention but it wasn't long until she showed up and marched us home, switching us all the way.

When I was growing up punishment wasn't dealt out by so many nights without television, or so many days of "being grounded". Punishment was swift and sure, being dealt at the scene of the crime - or the nearest place to it as soon as Mom could catch me when I saw her coming with her switch.

It didn't take me long to figure out that I didn't want to be around when Mom got her switch. And the best method I had of getting from one place to another was to run. Which I did. Mom always said it would be worse on us if we ran (whose Mom didn't, right) and it was generally true. But somehow I just didn't have the nerve to stand there and watch her get closer and closer with that dreaded switch. So I'd give in to my natural instinct for survival and flee for my life. Actually it wasn't my life I was trying to save but rather a certain part of my person, and although I couldn't see this particular part of my anatomy Mom had a way of making me aware of its existence

Usually I was joined in flight by my accomplice, which I would try to use to my advantage. I'd take off first and Dave would follow, being mindful not to let him get close enough to stick his fingers in the back belt loop of my britches - a bad habit of his that had cost me dearly on more than one occasion. We'd take Mom on a loop around the house and then I would slow down just enough to get Dave caught. You know, the old "sacrifice to appease the angry gods" trick. And then while he was getting switched, I'd make good on my escape. Justice was always inevitable, but I would manage a slight reprieve.

But then I noticed a trend beginning to develop. Dave was getting caught too soon, much too soon. The little weasel had discovered that by getting caught first he was the recipient of "fewer stripes". It seems that Mom

couldn't devote the time necessary to reform Dave with me getting farther and farther away.

A paddling. A spanking. A tanning. I've had them all, from flyswatters to belts. But the most feared, and the most effective, deterrent Mom had was a switchin', her method of underscoring the lessons she wanted to teach us. I guess she figured if our heads were too hard to absorb it then she'd find a softer spot that would.

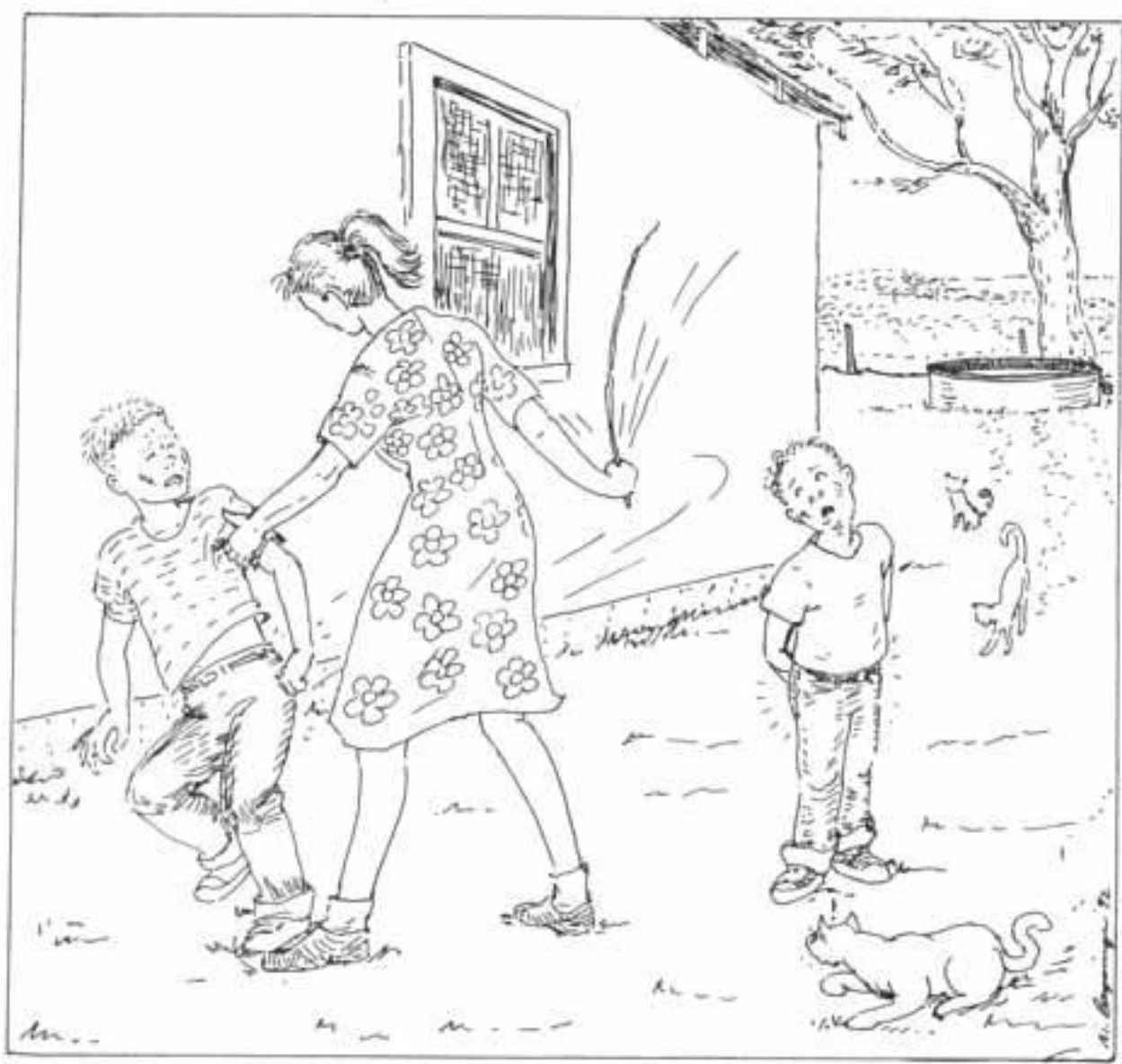
The hickory tree has a considerable reputation regarding the quality of "instructional aids" that can be obtained from among its branches. I, personally, believe the hickory is overrated. I've been switched with switches from practically every tree native to Missouri, and I can tell you from experience that elms make the best switches. The first elm switch I saw Mom cut made me giggle. Little ole bitty thing about half an arm in length and no bigger round than baling wire. I didn't stay tickled for very long. That elm switch was supple and it was springy. Of course technique had a lot to do with the "delivery" of instruction, and Mom had most certainly honed those skills to perfection. Goodness knows she had ample opportunity to practice. I do believe my mother had the quickest wrist in the county. When she switched us it was like someone using a machine gun. Wap-a-wap-a-wap-a. You were hit four or five times before you even had a chance to flinch.

Once caught it was best to stand still and take your switchin'. If you started

jumping around or moving about then everything was fair game, from the back of your neck down to the bend of your knees. Standing still allowed Mom to concentrate on the target, although hitting it every time was certainly not guaranteed. Another important rule about taking a switchin' is don't put your hands back there. They only become a part of the target

area, too.

I must say that I never had a switchin' I didn't deserve, and if the truth were known Mom probably still owes me a dozen or so more. And all those switchin's haven't left a scar or affected me in any ill manner. Except one. Even today I can't pass by an elm tree without smiling to myself - and suppressing the urge to run!



The grave of  
**SUSAN WINFREY,**

wife of William Greenberry,  
daughter of Thomas and Lucinda Winfrey,  
has been found.

At her death Greenberry lay her at  
the side of her mother in Warren  
Cemetery, with every intention of one  
day joining her there.

Marked by a simple fieldstone,  
her children later purchased a temporary  
funeral marker to signify  
her place of rest.

Many of the family then moved to Kansas  
and her grave lay unknown to  
younger generations.

Greenberry became ill while on a  
visit from Miller County to his  
daughters in Pretty Prarie, Kansas.

He died there and was buried  
at Lebanon Cemetery,  
surrounded by Kansas wheatfields,  
hundreds of miles from his home  
and his wife.

Donations are being sought to  
provide a permanent tombstone  
for Susan. Descendants, friends, or  
interested parties are asked to  
send their contributions to the  
following address:

*Mill Creek*

Route #1 Box 282  
Brumley, MO 65017

*received  
to  
date  
\$40*

please identify check and/or  
envelope with the following:  
**Winfrey Stone**

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN AREA HISTORY?**

Become aware. Become involved. Join the  
**Miller County Historical Society.**  
For more information contact this publication.



**LAURA LIVINGSTON CASEY**

lies in an unmarked grave at the side of her husband, Simeon Casey, in the Livingston Cemetery. Donations are being sought to provide a permanent tombstone for Laura.

Descendants, friends, or those who think it sad that someone should disappear with no memory or memorial to say they once walked this earth are asked to send contributions to the following address:

*Mill Creek*

Route #1 Box 282  
Brumley, MO 65017

please identify check and/or envelope with the following:

**Casey Stone**

**HAWKINS CEMETERY**

is maintained entirely by donations and contributions.  
Send yours to:

*Mill Creek*

Route #1 Box 282  
Brumley, MO 65017

please identify check and/or envelope with the following:

**Hawkins Cemetery**

**FREE! FREE! FREE! FREE! FREE! FREE! FREE!**

Do you have a worthwhile project of historic or heritage significance? We realize most of these are accomplished only with donations and volunteer labor.

Advertise yours **FREE** here in Mill Creek.

150 years ago, south of Ulmon's Ridge,  
lay a fertile region known as  
the Little Richwoods.

The pride of this land was a homestead called  
Gott Plantation.

It's sphere of influence was such that it's name  
was passed on to a school, a church, and a cemetery.

Now, in 1991,

**GOTT CHURCH**

stands threatened by the ravages of time.  
Unless funds are raised for repair and maintenance,  
this structure so familiar to so many for so long  
will probably have to be torn down. One historic  
structure in Brumley (Brumley Christian Church)  
has already suffered that fate this year.

Your involvement is necessary to save  
Gott Church.

Send donations and contributions to:

*Mill Creek*

Route #1 Box 282  
Brumley, MO 65017

*received  
to  
date  
\$150*

please identify check and/or envelope  
with the following:

**Gott Preservation Fund**

**WARREN CEMETERY**

is maintained entirely  
by donations and  
contributions.

Send yours to:

*Mill Creek*

Route #1 Box 282  
Brumley, MO 65017

please identify check  
and/or envelope with  
the following:

**Warren Cemetery**

**GOTT CEMETERY**

is maintained entirely  
by donations and  
contributions.

Send yours to:

*Mill Creek*

Route #1 Box 282  
Brumley, MO 65017

please identify check  
and/or envelope with  
the following:

**Gott Cemetery**

**OWN A PIECE OF HISTORY!**

Receive three square nails for your donation of \$10 or more  
to the **Gott Preservation Fund**. These nails were saved from  
the Brumley Christian Church building and date back nearly  
110 years. Limited quantity, so act quickly.

# EXTRAORDINARY DISCOVERY!

## *2 Civil War letters found in family Bible*

Here at **Mill Creek** we rarely release an item for public scrutiny until we've exhausted our investigative resources in an attempt to answer all the who, what, where, when, why, and how's. We've made an exception in this case because of the importance of this find. It isn't every day that historians are allowed the opportunity to examine original, undiscovered correspondence home from Civil War soldiers serving in the theatre of war. There simply is no way I can emphasize the historical significance of these long forgotten letters.

What we do know at this point, in brief, is the following:

Helena, Arkansas is situated along the banks of the Mississippi River approximately 75 miles south of Memphis Tennessee. Helena was a strategic point in the Union's western flank. Several soldiers stationed there were from Miller County. The principal correspondents - **James M. Hawkins** (age 16), **John W. DeVore** (age 19), and **Stephen F. Plemmons** (age 19) - were all young men from Brumley. James had been wounded during a skirmish with Confederate forces, the severity of the wound qualifying him for discharge. James was recuperating at home in Brumley, Missouri when these letters were written on the same piece of paper, one on the front, the other on the back. It is easily evident that the same writer penned both letters. Whether it was John or Stephen who did the writing remains unknown. Perhaps they were even transcribed by a third party as John and Stephen dictated. The letters have long been in the DeVore family, which indicates two possibilities. James, having received and read them, passed them on to John's and Stephen's families, with the letters finally coming to rest in the possession of the DeVores', or the letters were never sent and eventually carried home by John himself. Final research will appear in a future issue of **Mill Creek**.

The 130 year old piece of paper has been kept in the family Bible of **Alfred** and **Elizabeth Hawkins DeVore** (parents of John) It has survived the generations, with the passage of time those receiving it were unaware of the original setting and circumstances that the messages carried. It is now owned by **Alma Hedrick DeVore**, the wife of **Rawl**, a grandson of Alfred. **JoAnn Brown Jeffries**, of Ulman, while doing genealogical research was visiting Alma and viewed the letters. She recognized their importance and contacted **Mill Creek**. Many thanks to these two wonderful ladies for revealing to the world this precious treasure.

(The transcript on page #46 remains faithful to the original documents. Lack of punctuation makes reading them difficult. Spaces were added to allow easier interpretation.)

Helena Ark ~~of~~ March the 1 1848

Dear Sir I will now avail my  
self of the present opportunity of  
your paper lines to let you know how  
I am getting along and that is slow  
I have been sick ever since directly  
after you left here but have been  
going about camp but not all for  
duty well you I would love to be  
home with you but I am not able  
our money the other day that is to me  
pay you know that is not much but he  
said I think if he had any doctor  
I would get a discharge but you know  
Smith dont know any thing or dont care  
for mans life man died yesterday  
and hadden and Jim Maddy and Daniel  
Scott and Jack Burnley they are all  
dead and Henry B. F. Kuning I think  
will die before to morrow night and  
a great many more sick well James I have  
nothing of importance to write only write  
soon tell our folks to write and tell my  
friends to write if I have any give my  
respects to your aunts folks and your uncles  
alls folks So I will close write write  
yours truly S. J. Plesman  
So James M. Keaton

Helena Ark. March the 2nd 1863

Dear Cousin I would more take the pres-  
ent opportunity of writing you a few lines to  
let you know how I am getting along  
some here in doxie I am well except  
the headache I hope this will find you  
well and doing I received your letter yester-  
day it was glad to hear that you was getting  
well well James wrote to me to get what  
the boys owes you I cant get it this letter  
in the account of change I will get it and  
send it the next letter and will send you  
what I owe you I bought some a horse and  
had to pay for him and that took all  
I owned but have got some among to me  
well James I am very thankful of  
your advice just tell them talk on about  
that letter I sent and mak much of  
it tell them I am independant them  
I took to be a friends of mine's prauing  
false that is all right let them get  
my girl if she is willing it is all right  
So it is all right will spin Tom is tolerable  
well Tell pa and ma and Jim I am well  
hoping them the same I have been down with  
my back since I came back but am up now  
tell aunt Kate some girls I am all right  
I have nothing of importance to write  
White Saon and after yours truly

John W Deane Jr James M  
Hawkins

Helena Ark March the 1 1863

Dear Sir I once more avail myself of the present opportunity of Writing you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along and that is Slow Sure I have been Sick ever Since directly after you left here but have been going about camps but not alle for duty Well Jim I Would love to be at home With you but I am not We got our money the other day that is to months pay you know that is not Much but helps Some I think if We had any doctor I Would get a discharge but you know Smith dont know any thing or dont care for amans Life haman died yesterday and hadden and dinWaddie and david Scott and Jack Brumley they are all dead and Henry Pickening I think Will Die Before to morrow night and a great many more Sick Well James I have nothing of importance to Write only Write Soon tell our folks to Write and tell my friends to Write if I have any give my respects to your aunts folks and your uncles alfa folks So I Will close Write Write yours truly S F Plemmons  
To James M Hawkins

Helena Ark March the 2nd 1863

Dear Cousin I once more take the present opportunity of Writing you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along down here in dixie I am Well except the headache I hope this Will find you Well and doing I received your letter yesterday I Was glad to hear that you Was getting Well Well James you wrote to me to get What the boys owes you I cant get it this letter onthe account of change I Will get it and Send it the next letter and Will send you What I owe you I bought me a horse and had to pay for him and that took all I Drawed but have got Some coming to me Well James I an Very thankful of your advice just tell them talk on about that letter I Sent and mak much of it tell them I am independent them I took to be afriends of mine is proving false that is all right let them get my girl if She is Willing it is all right So it is all right Well Jim tom is tolerable Well tell pa and ma and Jim I om Well hoping the Same I have been down With my back Since I came back but am up now tell aunt Cattarine girls I am all right I have nothing of importance to Write Write Soon and often yours truly  
John W Devore To James M Hawkins

*family tales, stories, and legends*  
*of Miller County*

The sound of a distant dinner bell echoed through the night air, it's hollow toll eerily disturbing the darkness. Everyone had a bell to call their men in from the fields so it was certainly a familiar sound - in the daytime. But they were never rung at night. Never at night.

**Jim DeVore** was roused from his sleep by the sound. He lay a moment longer, attempting to get his bearings. East. From the east it came.

"**Dollie**," he spoke to his wife "do you hear that bell?"

"Yes, I do." she replied, rising from the bed.

They stepped outside, Jim still pulling his suspenders over his shoulders. The sound was much clearer now, coming from two hills over.

"Sounds like **John Smith's** place, Jim."

"There must be trouble there. Light me a lantern, Dollie, while I get my boots on!" He hurried in and quickly pulled on his shoes and shirt. He rushed out the door, grabbing the lantern offered by his wife.

Jim DeVore walked the distance to his neighbor's house in the gloom, his lantern feebly pushing away the night around him. Limbs and boughs clutched at his clothes, stars overhead gleamed their pale vigil, Old Joe Branch gurgled softly as he picked his way over the dark terrain. All the while the bell sounded it's strong tone. Never ceasing. Never slowing.

Jim came out of the creek bottom and began to work his way up the sloping approach to John Smith's. Jim DeVore found John standing at the bell, pulling with all his waning strength at the rope, tears streaming down his face.

Inside the house, **Moriah Smith**, wife of John, was dead.

This story was passed down to his family by Jim DeVore. The event took place north of Brumley when Jim lived where Rawl and Alma lives now. John and Moriah Smith lived on the old Will Gott place, or Payne place to those older than myself. The year is unknown.

submitted by: Alma Hedrick DeVore, Rt. #1 Box 286, Brumley, MO 65017

# IMAGES FROM HOME

---



*"Winter Slumber"*

VERNA KEETH PEMBERTON  
RT. 1 BOX 273  
IBERIA, MO. 65486