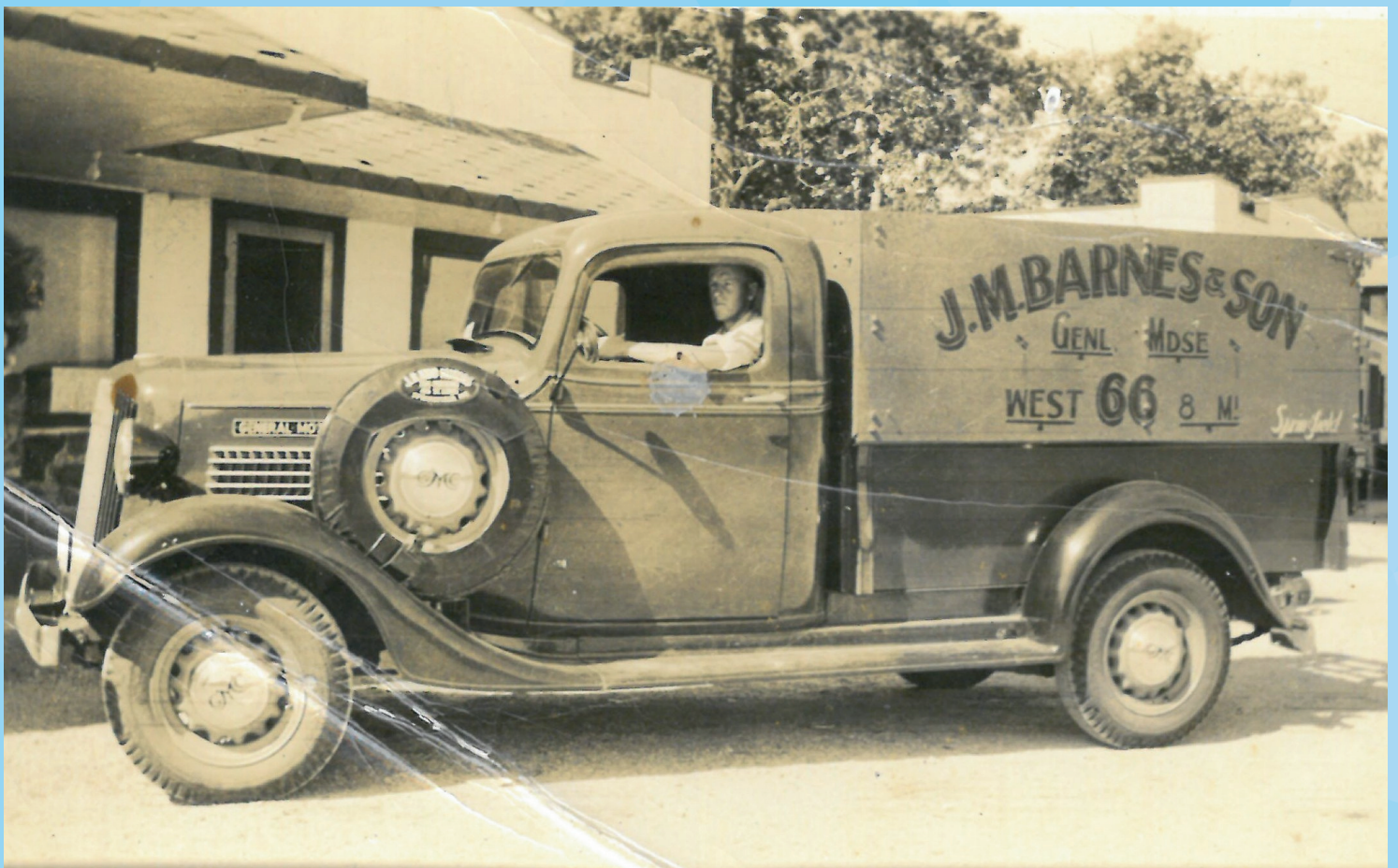


CHRONICLES OF THE COUNTY

**Featured:
Revolutionary War
Soldiers in Greene Co.**

**The Murder of
Hiram Christian**

**Carrier, Clerk, and
Chicken Keeper:
Recorder Arthur Finch**



**ISSUE NO.04
SUMMER 2026**

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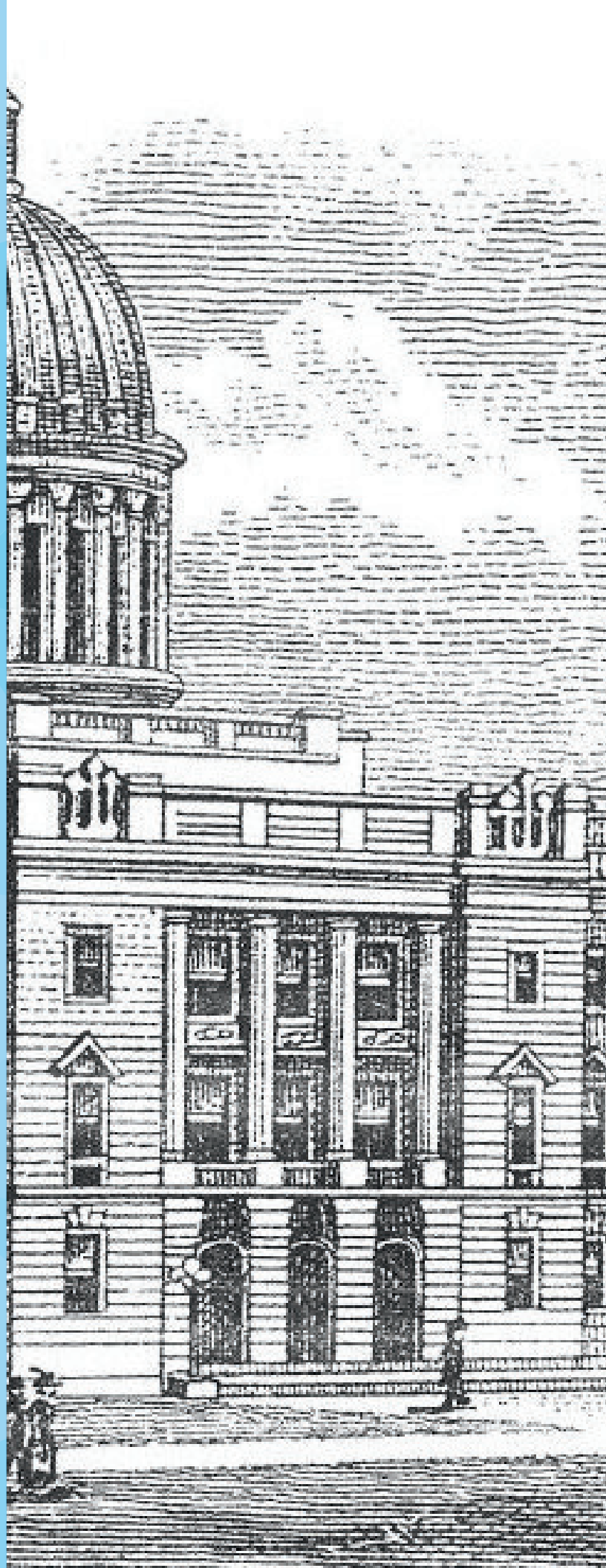
KYLEE MAY

Our Vision

To be a leading archival repository and research center in Missouri for county and regional history.

Our Mission

- To collect, organize, and maintain official and historical county records.
- To maintain suitable facilities for the retention and preservation of county records.
- To provide statutorily retained records as requested to county offices and the general public.
- To provide professional and knowledgeable records management services.
- To facilitate programs, resources, and outreach activities to increase public awareness about the value of the public records we preserve.



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AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY,
SPEAKER SERIES & RESOURCES

ON THE COVER: John M. Barnes proudly drives the store's very first delivery truck. Founded in 1932 along the newly established Route 66, Barnes General Store grew from a small roadside grocery into a bustling 25,000-square-foot hub that included a gas station, feed mill, and other services for travelers and local families.



From the Desk of the *Circuit Clerk*



I have been honored to serve as Circuit Clerk for Greene County's 31st Judicial Circuit since 2023. I previously helped provide electrical power to the people of Greene County at City Utilities in positions ranging from Power Plant Mechanic to Director of Power Supply and Strategic Operations.

The Circuit Clerk's Office serves people who seek the help of the courts in resolving their problems. We process Family, Probate, Juvenile, Treatment, Civil, and Criminal cases in 19 courts. Each of these courts operates with a Judge or Commissioner, Clerk, Bailiff, and sometimes a Court Reporter. Cases are heard in each of these courts nearly every day.

The Circuit Clerk and 75 Deputy Clerks work together to capture case information in a state-wide electronic database. The Courts use this information to process and bring cases to a conclusion. The public may access much of this information by using Case.net.

Each case must be initiated to get things started. We received more than 37,000 new case initiations in the 2025 calendar year (also referred to as filings). Many cases will have filings added after initiation. We capture documents and add comments (referred to as docket entries) to the state database. The documents and docket entries provide a history of each case. Clerks provide help to the public with copies of case files, filling out forms, court approved definitions, and information about how to access statutes, court rules, and local rules. We also answer questions concerning court procedures, where to look for legal help, information about a litigant's case, and information about mediation, required educational programs, and community services.

A Greene County Court was first held in the house of John P. Campbell in 1833 where Mr. Campbell was appointed Clerk of this Court. Twenty-nine people have served as Circuit Clerks in Greene County since 1833. The first permanent courthouse was constructed in the middle of the public square in 1837. Clerks moved into the unfinished second courthouse on College Street in 1861. Clerks moved operations and records to the third courthouse on Central Street in 1915. This building is now referred to as the Greene County Historic Courthouse and still houses many County offices. The courts moved to the current Greene County Judicial Courts Facility on Boonville Avenue in 1995.

Court Clerks have moved from storing case information in paper records to a state-wide electronic database system. The Circuit Clerk's Finance Department handled more than \$30 million of court related transactions in 2025. We provide an accessible website containing answers to questions, court approved forms, court schedules, information about our courts, and 24/7/365 access to file for a protection order. The Circuit Clerk's Office will gradually move archived paper court records into the electronic court record database. Historic paper court records will remain in the care of the Greene County Archives.

Our talented, dedicated staff treat everyone with dignity and respect. We work hard to ensure the people of Greene County have complete access to the Judicial System.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bryan Teemate". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Revolutionary War Soldiers in Greene County

History Makers

To mark the 250th birthday of the United States of America, Greene County partnered with the Ozark Mountain Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, to honor the Revolutionary War soldiers who lived in Greene County with a plaque in the Historic Courthouse.

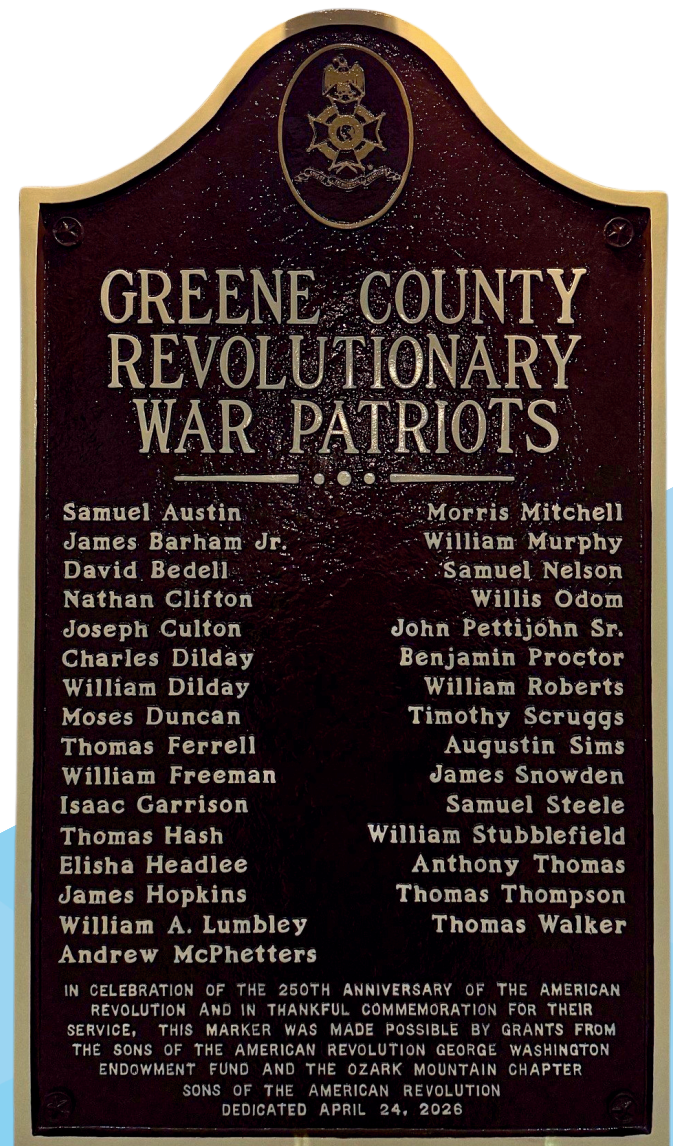
ELISHA HEADLEE

was born in Morris County, New Jersey, on May 18, 1760. He was a private in the Morris County militia.

Headlee married Mary Fairchild in 1787; the couple had 11 children, seven sons and four daughters. Around 1791 the family moved to Burke County, North Carolina. In 1823, they moved to Maury County, Tennessee, where they lived near their friends, Samuel and Jane Steele. Five Headlee sons married daughters of Samuel Steele, who was also a Revolutionary War soldier. By 1836, Headlee was a widower and moved, along with his children and their spouses, to Greene County. One son, John, was living in Greene County by 1835.

His friend, Samuel Steele, was already living in Greene County, as was his brother-in-law, David Bedell, another Revolutionary War soldier.

Elisha died on October 8, 1845, at the age of 85. He is buried next to his brother-in-law, David Bedell, in the Old Salem Cemetery.

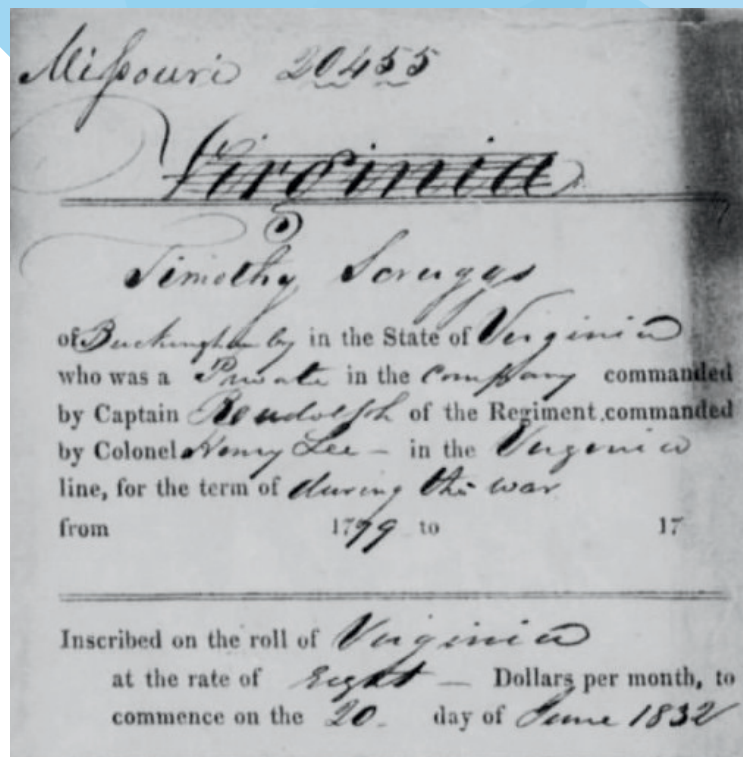


TIMOTHY SCRUGGS

was born in Virginia in 1761 and enlisted in Buckingham County in 1779. He was placed “in the company commanded by Captain John Rudolph,” in Lieutenant Colonel Henry Lee’s 1st Continental Dragoons. Lee’s dragoons were under the command of General Nathanael Greene.

At the end of the war, Scruggs was discharged at Charleston, South Carolina. He applied for his war pension on September 13, 1831, in Buckingham County, Virginia. He stated that he had no income “other than what arises from the gratuity of my children,” sons Daniel and David. Even the “old horse which [he] owned [was] dead.”

In 1843, Scruggs transferred his pension to Calloway County, Missouri, and, by 1850, he was in Greene County, as were his sons, Timothy, William, and David. He died in Christian County on August 29, 1853, and is buried in Griffin Cemetery.



SAMUEL STEELE

was born in Pennsylvania in 1762. At least, that is what his family told him. Later in life, Steele said he didn't know his actual birthdate, but his family had told him he was born on January 1, 1762.

The Steele family moved to Burke County, North Carolina, when Samuel was a child. It was there, after the start of the Revolutionary War, that he volunteered for service and spent three months as a private under Captain Robert H. Holmes. He was discharged at Charlestown (sic) and “returned home to Burke County.” Sometime thereafter, he volunteered for another three months, this time as a lighthorseman under Captain John Bickerstaff. During this enlistment, he was

“employed in scouting after the Tories.” After his discharge, he “returned home to Burke County again.”[1]

After the war, Steele married Jannett “Jane” Luckey, and, in 1810, the family moved to Giles County, Tennessee. They lived in Giles County for about six years before moving to Maury County, Tennessee. It was there that Steele applied for his war pension in September 1832; he was 70-years-old.

Jane Steele died around 1840 in Maury County. In July 1841, Steele applied to have his pension transferred to Greene County, where he had moved to be close to his children, most of whom already lived here. He died August 18, 1847, and is buried at Mount Comfort Cemetery.

[1] Light horse soldiers, also called light dragoons, were mounted soldiers.

WILLIAM FREEMAN

was born October 26, 1759, in Bertie County, North Carolina. He was still a teenager when he enlisted in the army in 1776. He served as a private in Captain Andrew Oliver's Company, Colonel James Hogun's North Carolina Regiment. He spent time in the 10th North Carolina Regiment under Colonel Abraham Shepherd; the regiment disbanded in June 1778. In July of that year, he enlisted and spent nine months in Captain Francis Child's Company, Colonel Anthony Hart's North Carolina Regiment. In 1781, he served three months in Captain

Taylor's Company, Colonel Eaton's North Carolina Regiment. He was in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse under General Nathanael Greene. Records indicate that he was on furlough in February 1782, and at that time, lived in Baden County, North Carolina.

Freeman married for the first time in September 1778 to Priscilla Hunt. The couple had at least one child, Micajah. By 1786, he was a widower and remarried to Mary Bryan; they lived in Burke County, North Carolina, and had at least eight more children.

Freeman applied for his war pension in Burke County in July 1832. By 1835, he had moved to Greene County with his wife to "procure land for his children and to enjoy their society as long as I live." At least three of their children made their home in Greene County.

He died on January 28, 1839. In June 1912, he was reinterred in the Springfield National Cemetery, the only Revolutionary War soldier buried there.

LBR

December 9, 1915.

Respectfully returned to

Martha C. Johnson,
253 W. Madison Street,
St. Francis, Indiana.
J. Freeman

The records of this office show that one Samuel Freeman served in the Revolutionary War as a member of Captain Tilman Dixon's Company, 1st North Carolina Regiment, commanded by Colonel Thomas Clark. He is shown to have enlisted May 29, 1777, to serve three years.

The ~~name~~ William Freeman appears on a list of Lieutenant Wilkinson's Company, 10th North Carolina Regiment, dated February 19, 1782, with remarks showing that he resided in Bladen County and that he was then on furlough.

Nothing further relative to these men has been found of record.

The collection of Revolutionary War records in this office is far from complete, and it is suggested as a possibility that additional information can be obtained from the State Auditor of North Carolina, Raleigh, or from the Commissioner of Pensions, Washington, D. C.

H. P. Mc Cain
per H. P. Mc Cain
per H. P. Mc Cain
per H. P. Mc Cain

The Adjutant General.

Form No. 124—A. G. O.
Ed. May 5-15—200,000.

The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. "Battle of Camden -- death of De Kalb" New York Public Library Digital Collections.



JAMES BARHAM JR.

was born May 18, 1764, in Southampton County, Virginia. On the first day of January 1781, he joined the Virginia Militia in Southampton and served for three months under Captain Jesse Whitehead. At Surry, Virginia, he joined a regiment under Major Duvall and Colonel Benjamin Blunt, who were commanded by General Peter Muhlenberg. He spent his three-month tour in Virginia; Captain Whitehead issued his discharge. Two weeks before his tour with Whitehead ended, he was drafted. After his discharge by Whitehead, he "served without intermission until the close of the war making [his] last tour" almost seven months in a regiment under Captain John Taylor, who was also commanded by Muhlenberg.

About three years after the war ended, Barham moved to North Carolina, and in 1785, he married Prudence Freeman Dunn in Raleigh. In 1813, the family moved to Logan County, Kentucky, where Prudence died on January 1, 1815. The couple had six children. James remarried on September 11, 1815, to Elizabeth Houston. They later moved to Callaway County, Kentucky, where Barham applied for his war pension in June 1833, although he had recently moved to the neighboring Trigg County. He was 69 years old.

In 1846, Barham applied to have his pension moved, first to Tennessee and then to Greene County, saying he wanted to be near his children. He died January 8, 1865, in Greene County. His gravesite at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery is a Greene County Historic Site.

A Statement, showing the Service of James Barham
Callaway County State of Kentucky

Period when the service was rendered.	Duration of the claimant's service			Rank of the claimant.	Names and rank of the Field officers under whom he served.	Age at present, and place of abode when he entered the service.	Proof by whom the declaration is supported.
	Years.	Months.	Days.				
<i>Sept 1781</i>	<i>3</i>			<i>priv</i>	<i>Capt Whitehead</i>	<i>69 yrs</i>	<i>1 Witness to the 2^d tour only</i>
<i>sub.</i>					<i>Col. Blount</i> <i>Gen. Muhlenberg</i>	<i>Smith</i>	
<i>Draft 1781</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>started</i>		<i>Capt Taylor</i> <i>Col. Merryweather</i>	<i>Callaway</i> <i>County</i> <i>State of</i> <i>Virginia</i>	

I am, respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. L. EDWARDS,
Commissioner of Pensions.

State of Missouri } 1846.
County of Greene }
Do it known that on the 28th day of December 1846 before the subscriber, a Justice of the Peace in and for said County, personally appeared John B Robinson and made oath in due form of Law that James Barham who has subscribed to the preceding affidavit, is the identical person described in said affidavit - and I the subscribing Justice of the Peace am personally acquainted with said John B Robinson and know him to be a person of veracity
Sworn and subscribed to before me
the day and year aforesaid
John B Robinson
John B Robinson

WILLIAM ROBERTS

was born in Johnston County, North Carolina, on September 25, 1762. He was a private in the North Carolina Militia.

At the start of the war, he lived in Wilkes County, North Carolina, and volunteered under Colonel Benjamin Cleveland. After six weeks, he was discharged by Captain Robert Cleveland. Roberts volunteered several times, both in Wilkes County and in Rowan County. He served under Captain John Cleveland and Majors Benjamin Herndon and Lewis; volunteered as a horseman under Major Lewis; fought under Captain Alexander Gordon at the Battle of Eutaw Springs, “where General [Nathanael] Greene commanded the American forces”; and volunteered as a minuteman under Captain Robert Cleveland, which led to a year of

off-and-on scouting for Tories.

In 1784, Roberts married Ann Vandergriff in Wilkes County, North Carolina. Both were originally from Johnston County.

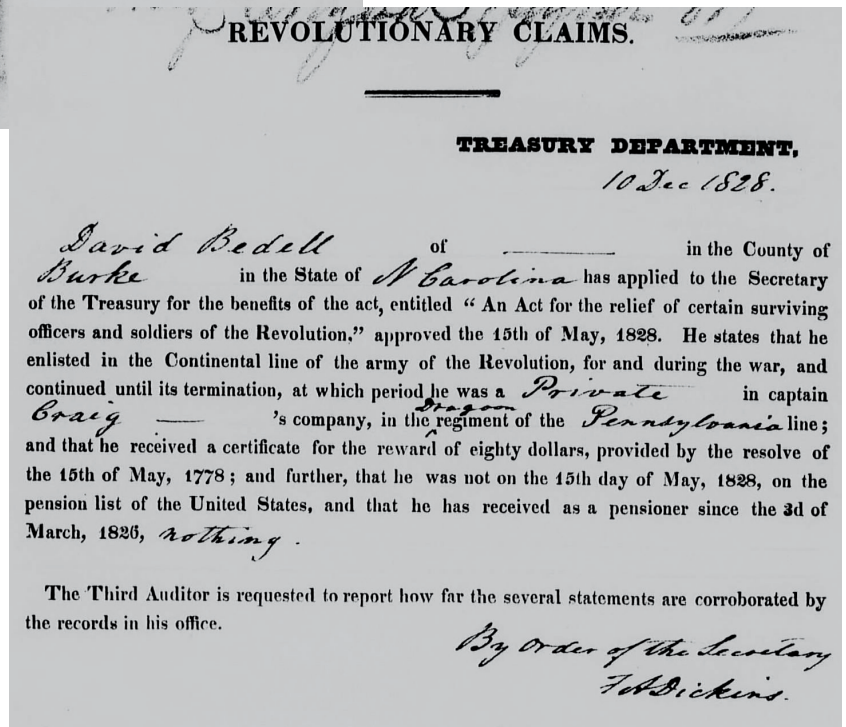
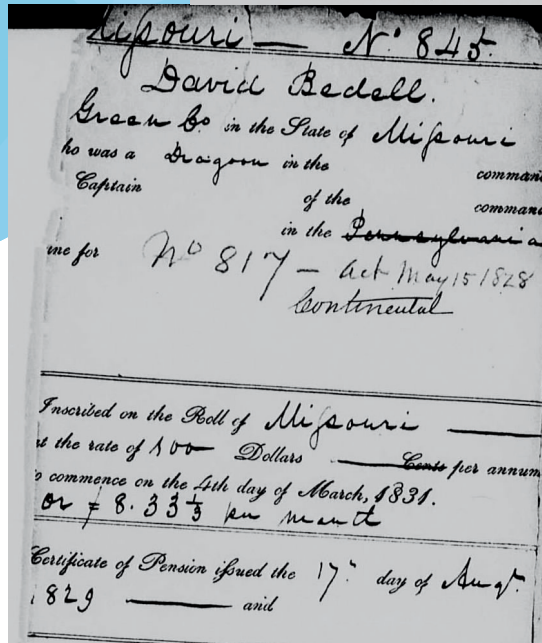
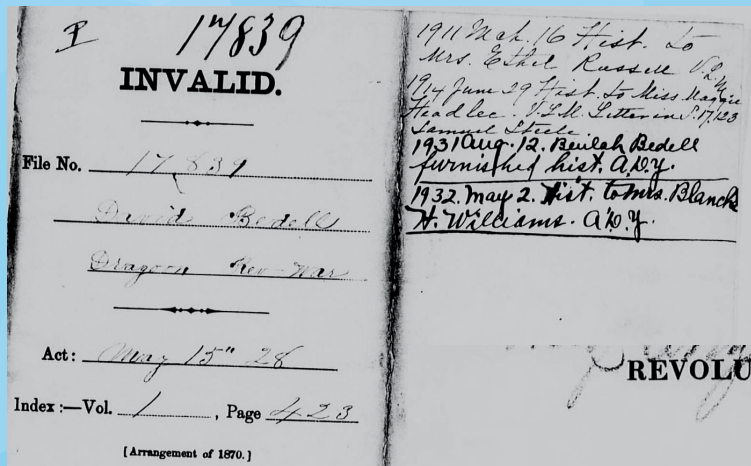
After the war, the Roberts moved to Washington County, Tennessee, where they lived for 15 years and had three children, Jacob, Sarah, and William. After that came a move to Grainger County, Tennessee, where they lived for eight years, followed by moves to Knox, Anderson, and Hamilton Counties, all in Tennessee.

It was in Hamilton County where Roberts applied for his war pension on August 28, 1832. In August 1842, he appeared before a Greene County justice of the peace regarding the transfer of his pension. This relocation was due to the move by one of his sons, “with whom he lived and who principally supported him.”

Roberts’ date of death and burial information are unknown.

The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. "Battle of Camden -- death of De Kalb" New York Public Library Digital Collections.





DAVID BEDELL

was born April 17, 1761, in Morris County, New Jersey. He was only 17-years-old when he enlisted in the army in October 1778, initially under the command of Captain George Gray. In his pension application, Bedell said he was a “private in the second troop commanded by Captain John Craig [and] in the fourth regiment of light dragoons commanded by Colonel Stephen Moylan of the Pennsylvania line.” In 1781, he came under the command of Captain Erasmus Gill and was sent to Virginia “to join General Lafayette,” then on to South Carolina to join General Nathanael Greene. Bedell served until the end of the war.

After the war he married Ruth Fairchild, whose sister, Mary, married his friend, Elisha Headlee, also a Revolutionary War soldier. In 1798, the family moved to Burke County, North Carolina, where the Headlees lived. It was there in 1828 that Bedell applied for his war pension and bounty land.

Ruth was killed in a carriage accident in 1833. The following year, Bedell and his sons moved to Greene County and settled near Ebenezer. His friend, Elisha Headlee, soon followed. In 1836, the Bedells helped establish the Old Salem Methodist Church.

Bedell died on March 24, 1840. He is buried in Old Salem Cemetery, and his gravesite is a Greene County Historic Site.

"Bitter Feuds and Lasting Hates"

The Murder of

Hiram Christian

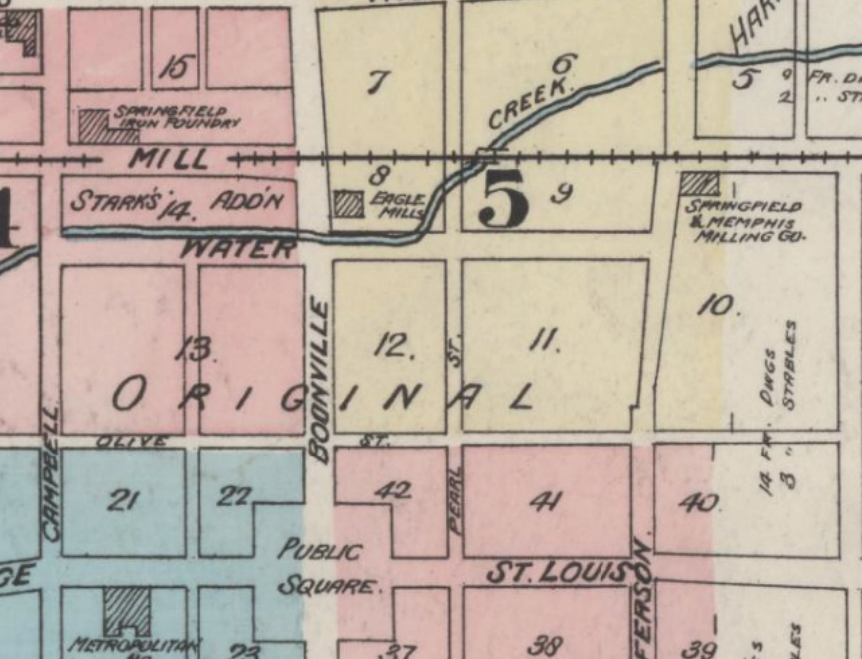
It happened on Friday evening, May 24, 1867, in downtown Springfield. Former Texan, Judge Hiram C. Christian, was murdered by John Thompson. His body was found lying behind the counter of the meat market where he worked.

Fifty-eight-year-old Christian had only been in Springfield since the previous September. He had left Texas "in the early part of the war," but returned in July 1865, where he was "was appointed Provost Marshal of Bell County," and made a few enemies. Upon his arrival in Springfield in 1866, he met with Lorenzo D. Bolen, who hired him to manage his market, located on the north side of Mill Street at Boonville Avenue. Christian told Bolen that he "did not want to be idle," but wanted to be working in "some business."

County Coroner Fred W. Scholten said the bullet entered Christian's head

"near the left temple." Within a couple of hours of the murder, witness testimony at the coroner's inquest was completed. During the testimony, the jury learned that Christian knew his life was in danger. Bolen testified that, a few weeks earlier, he was on his way to Texas with Benjamin Long. On their way south, they passed by Elkhorn Tavern in Arkansas on their way to Fayetteville. They met two men at a fork in the road, going in the opposite direction, towards Springfield. Near Fayetteville, they met up with W. W. Bishop, Christian's brother-in-law. Bishop told them about two men who had asked him where they could find a man known as Judge Christian. Bishop was concerned with the possibility that Christian's life may be in danger. Both men decided to write to Christian "to put him on his guard." Bolen mailed the letters in Fayetteville, and he and Long continued on to Texas.

I trust your honor
will pardon the liberty I have taken in addressing
you on a subject which apparently is creating an
Excitement in the States of Mo^o and Texas as regards
the Murder of Judge Christian in the City of Spring-
field Mo^o on the Evening of May 24th 1867 for the



About three weeks prior to his murder, Christian showed the letters to Steven S. Buck, who was in business with Bolen. Buck said Christian “considered him self in danger” and temporarily stopped sleeping in the market. While Christian was sleeping elsewhere, “someone broke into” the market and stole, among other things, the letters from Bishop and Bolen.

Hezekiah S. Blankenship testified that he had known Christian since the previous September. Christian told him that he had “difficulties” with the Price family and the McCauley family in Texas, both of whom were “in the rebel army.”

Lucius Rountree met the men that Friday when they stopped at his house about two miles north of town “asking for dinner.” It was around noon. The men asked Rountree if Greene County had a problem with horse thieves, as they had been told while passing through Fayetteville. Rountree told them he “did not believe there were many [horse thieves] in the county.” After having dinner and chatting for about half an hour, they offered to pay him for the food and were ready to complete their journey to Springfield. Rountree already had a trip to town

planned and said he would ride in with them. I “stepped right out to saddle my horse [and] saw them at the gate getting on their horses.” By the time he was in the saddle and on the road, he “could not see anything of them [and he] could see a half mile.” He was never able to overtake them.

Lemuel Grissom told the jury that he had stopped in at Bolen’s market at about 9 o’clock that evening to buy some apples. Grissom said Christian “spoke to him very short and said he had none.” He thought Christian “appeared angry.” There was a man in the shop with Christian; as Grissom left, a second man walked down from Mill Street and entered the shop.



Grissom had been out of the shop for less than a minute when he heard a shot fired...

and, shortly after that, another shot. He ran back to the market, where a crowd was beginning to gather, and saw Christian “lying dead behind the counter.”

Patrick Daly was on his way home Friday evening, between 8:30 and 9. He was walking “down on Mill Street from Boonville Street,” towards his boarding house, when he heard the first shot. Realizing it was near the meat market, he “stopped and looked in” that direction. Then he heard

footsteps coming towards him. It was dark, and the two men didn't know he was there until he shouted at them to stop; although he was unarmed, his intention, he said, was to arrest them. Instead, they shot at him, then kept running. Along with his brother and James Leady, who also heard the shot, he went to the market and saw Christian lying dead behind the counter. The only light in the store was from a burning candle.

It wasn't long before a group of men rode out of the city in pursuit of the alleged murderers. They headed west on Mt. Vernon Road at around 11 p.m. About five and one-half miles out of town, they lit paper on fire for light and "found some fresh tracks." At Little York, they "made some inquiries and got a candle." The men rode all night; by daylight, they believed they were close to catching the men. They "galloped rapidly forward" and soon caught sight of Thompson "as he was passing between two thickets of bushes." With pistols drawn, they surrounded him, and he had no choice but to surrender.

With Thompson in custody, one of the pursuers, Lieutenant Creighton, rode on to the home of William Logan, where the men had stayed the previous evening. Creighton asked if he had seen one of the men, but he hadn't. Just then, they saw a stranger "riding slowly by," and Creighton asked Logan if he knew the man; Logan did not. Logan walked over and

Murderer of Hiram Christian
He is about 5' 10" in height -
Straight-well built, but rather slight build
(I think) a sharp nose and Chin, rather
fair complexion for a man with dark
hair - hair was short when I saw him
on the 25th of May
He is about 25 years of age Talks freely
freely and is making well informed
Gave his name as Smith, but that is not
his correct name He is a Texan

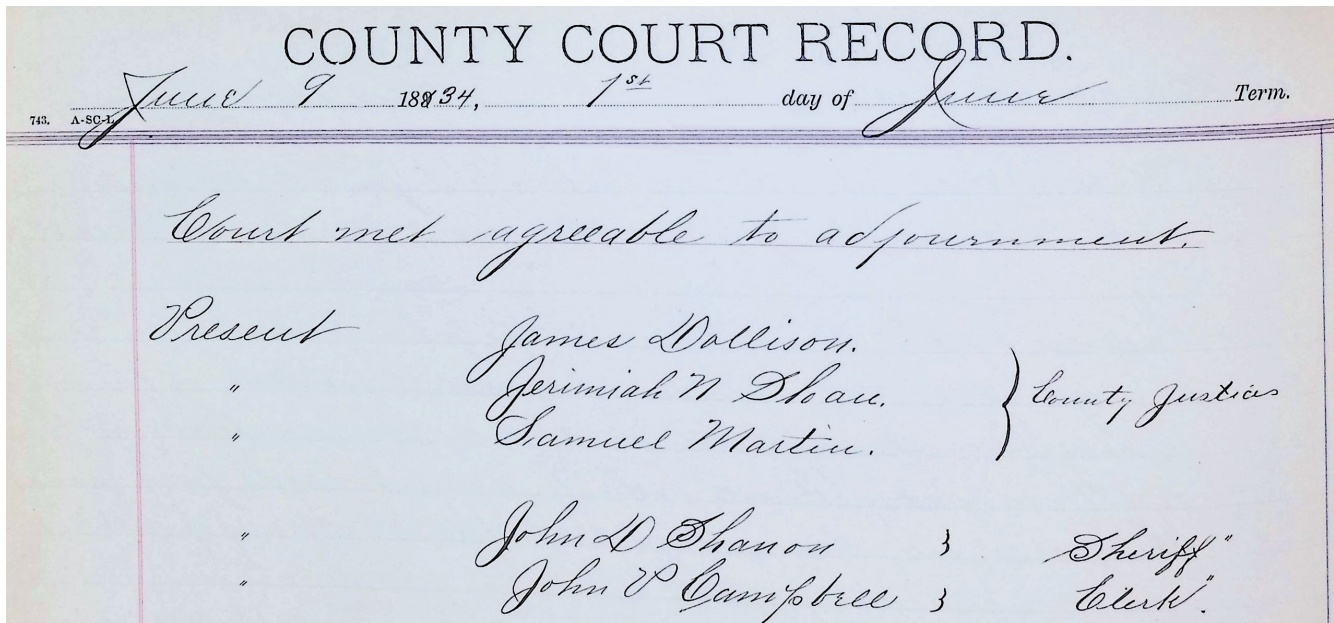
asked the man to stop and talked to him briefly. Creighton then walked over and decided that this was the other man he was looking for, and said as much, which led to the man putting "spurs to his horse." Creighton and the man exchanged gunfire, but no one was hit and the man, tentatively identified as Samuel Hasley, escaped on a horse he stole shortly after the murder.

Thompson was brought to town in custody of Colonel Washington F. Geiger. Daly recognized him as the man who shot at him the previous evening. Thompson's defense attorney was future Missouri Governor John S. Phelps.

On the morning of June 27, Thompson escaped from jail. He stole a horse and headed east out of town. The owner of the horse and a few other men pursued and caught up to him the next day in Texas County. They were unaware that he "was an escaped prisoner until they learned the fact from himself."

In 1869, a Greene County jury convicted Thompson of grand larceny for stealing a horse and sentenced him to four years in prison. He was indicted for the murder of Christian, but the outcome of that case is unknown.

News from the County Record



Continuing our series about the organization of Greene County, the summer of 1834 brought court dates in June and July. James Dollison, Jeremiah N. Sloan, and Samuel Martin continued their roles as county court judges. John D. Shannon and John P. Campbell remained in their positions as sheriff and county clerk, respectively. Daniel D. Berry was county treasurer and, in addition to his duties as associate county court judge, Sloan was also appointed county collector for 1834.

William Jameson & Company, Glanville and Huff, John Edwards, Cannefax and Ingram, R. K. Payne, John Lewis, and Daniel D. Berry all paid a semiannual state tax for a grocer's license in Greene County.

Campbell Township citizens recommended Simon Pastin for justice of the peace. The county court decided the appointment was

“not necessary or expedient,” and rejected the recommendation. The following day, the court reconsidered and appointed Pastin. After that appointment, they requested the appointment of another justice of the peace, Joseph Porter. White River Township residents asked that Anderson G. Newson be appointed as a justice; Abraham Testament was appointed justice of the peace in Elk River Township, “and the clerk of this court is hereby required to certify the same to the Governor.” Samuel Erwin was recommended to the governor as justice of the peace in Osage Township.

Spring River and Oliver Townships petitioned the court for a “division of townships or a new township” to be organized, called Center Creek. The court rejected their petition as “not necessary or expedient.”

On motion it is ordered by the court here that Margaret Briscow, ^{for} ^{and} is hereby allowed at the rate of One Hundred Dollars per year for the support ^{and} attention to Isaac Garrison, 'pauper' ^{and} the clerk of our court is hereby directed to issue to Margaret Briscow, orders on the County Treasurer, every three months for Twenty Five dollars.

James D. Shannon was appointed administrator of the James Wilson estate; Joseph Porter, William Dye, and James Renfrow were appointed to appraise his property. Wilson, for whom Wilson's Creek is named, died in June 1834.

County court ordered eight dollars per month be awarded to Jessie Bols, a "pauper," for a period of three months. The money would go to whoever was taking care of him. Margaret Briscow was allowed \$100 per year for "the support and attention to Isaac Garrison, a "pauper."

More roads were planned, rearranged, or cancelled, including the part of the road leading from Springfield to St. Louis, "from Springfield to Capt. Youngers by the way of Joseph Burdens and Humphrey C. Warrens... [which was] made void and dismantled." A section of "the old road leading from Spfld to Alexander Youngers...[was] abolished." Citizens in Mooney Township petitioned to change the route of a public road; the county court rejected the petition.

The county court appointed William Jeans as road overseer for District No. 1, leading from Newsom's Ferry on the Osage to the intersection of "the old road at the 20-Mile Prairie."

A public road was ordered from Springfield on "the nearest and best way to the Osage River, in the direction of Jefferson City." Alexander Younger, Henry Evans, Alpheus Huff, Jessie Brown, and Jessie T. Roystan were appointed to lay out the road. Joshua Brock, Washington Smith, Anderson Van, William Esters, William Landbury, and Job Ratliff were appointed to lay out a road from Springfield to Rogers, Arkansas; Josiah Dent was appointed road overseer for part of the Springfield to Boonville Road.

Wrapping up the summer term, county court ordered a general election for the first Monday in August at the courthouse. The election would be held for two days, Monday and Tuesday.

The court appointed Ephraim R. Fulbright, John Studevart, John Walker, Chesley Cannefax, and John McChaman as "patrols for Campbell Township...and selected Ephraim R. Fulbright as Captain of said company."

Lastly, the court ordered "that there be a bar built in the court house in the town of Springfield... [and] John Campbell be appointed commissioner to superintend the erection of the bar and building the benches, letting out the contract."

Barnes General Store



Barnes General Store began in 1932 on Route 66 west of Springfield, Missouri, as a small roadside grocery operated by John Barnes and his son Clell. Over the years it expanded into a larger complex that included a Conoco station, feed mill, and other services, serving both local residents and highway travelers. Clell and his wife, Theodosia “Theo,” were long-time operators and community figures. In March 1972, John “Buck” Perryman and his wife Marjorie acquired the business. Under their ownership, and later managed by their sons Rick and Randy, the store evolved into Barnes Town & Country Furniture and Appliances before finally closing in 2016; the site now hosts Main Street Feeds. Today, the building stands among Route 66 landmarks in Greene County, marking its place in the commercial and transportation legacy of the “Mother Road.”

All photos Courtesy of the Ruth Barnes Newton Collection, Greene County Archives



Carrier, Clerk, and Chicken Keeper: **Recorder Arthur B. Finch**

Arthur B. Finch was born near Strafford on August 18, 1885, and spent many years working as a rural mail carrier. On May 27, 1910, Arthur married Mabel Carter at the St. Paul Church; the couple made their home in Strafford. Carter was a graduate of Morrisville College.

In early 1913, the Finches moved to Springfield and lived in a house on West Center (not Central) Street. Finch hoped to get a job at the Springfield post office, but instead continued as a rural carrier on Route 8. That summer, he was elected vice president of rural mail carriers by the Greene County Letter Carriers Association. A year later, Finch was president of the organization.

In the spring of 1916, Finch passed the civil service exam and was finally able to begin work as a mail carrier in Springfield. He apparently liked to stay busy; that fall, him and his wife purchased several lots on North Grant Street with the intention of opening a poultry farm. Finch was "well known throughout Greene County as a poultry fancier... [and was] a member of the Greene County Poultry Association." By December, he had Rhode Island Red chickens for sale, and his birds were winning awards at the county poultry exhibit.

Finch was also involved in real estate sales before switching careers in February 1918 when he decided to run for the office of Greene County Recorder. By then, the couple had a young son, Gene, and were living on their property on North Grant.

In the August 1918 primary, Finch won the nomination against fellow Republicans, William S. Barnett and William T. Bigbee. He won his home township of Jackson 104 to 1. In November, he beat his opponent, Democrat D. Carson, 6,487 to 4,379. At only 33-years-old, Finch was the youngest person ever elected to office in Greene County.



—LYTLE PHOTO.

Arthur B. Finch, former county recorder, died early Tuesday morning at his home following a lingering illness.

NOTICE!

To Our Friends and Patrons

Having purchased the Hayward Insurance Agency, part of which was formerly owned by R. M. Rawls, I take this means of saying to you that my permanent office will be 304 Landers Bldg., after Feb. 1. Your business appreciated and given careful attention. No other business. Just insurance.

Arthur B. Finch
Insurance Agency

Arthur B Finch Phone 1090 Eugene A. Finch

:-: CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION :-:

State of Missouri, County of Greene, ss.:

This is to Certify, that at a general election, held in the County and State aforesaid, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, A. D. 1918, being the fifth day of said month Arthur B. Finch having received 6487 votes for the office of Recorder of Deeds the same being a greater number of votes than were cast for any other person for said office, was duly elected for the office of Recorder of Deeds within and for the County and State aforesaid.

In Testimony Whereof, I, John L. Likins, Clerk of the County Court of said County and State, have hereunto subscribed my hand and affixed the seal of said Court. Done at office in Springfield, this 30th day of November, A. D. 1918.

(CS) John L. Likins, Clerk. By W. R. Evans, D. C.

State of Missouri, County of Greene, ss.:

I, Arthur B. Finch, do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Missouri, and that I will faithfully demean myself in the office of Recorder of Deeds for which I was elected on the fifth day of November, 1918.

ARTHUR B. FINCH.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Court, at office in the City of Springfield, the date aforesaid. (CS) John L. Likins, Clerk County Court.

By W. R. Evans.

Approved in open court this 20th. day December 1918.

W. A. McGuire, Presiding Judge County Court, Greene County, Mo.
Filed this 23 day of Dec. 1918 at 1 O'clock 15 minutes P. M.

John F. Mason, Recorder.

Finch soon appointed his deputies, Mary Alberta Hendrickson, Carl W. Wingo, and his chief deputy, Livingston B. Grove.[1] When he began work on January 2, 1919, he stated that he planned to make sure "everything is being kept up to date."

Finch made the news that January when Sam Wing, an American citizen originally from China and the owner of a laundry, requested a marriage license. The Springfield Leader reported that Wing's romance "got a hard bump" when it "stumbled against the granite miscegeny laws of Missouri." Wing submitted his application to Finch and apparently told him that his intended bride was an American girl." When Finch told him such a marriage was illegal, Wing pointed out that he was an American himself, had lived here for a "long time," and could vote. American or not, Finch refused to issue Wing a license, stating that...



"There can be no marriage between mixed races in this state."[2]

By the end of his first year in office, Finch had issued over 900 marriage licenses.

Later that month, Finch ordered books that would be used to record military discharge papers for soldiers returning from World War I. Soldiers had been advised to record their discharge when they got home. Finch's brother, Irvin, had been stationed at Camp Funston, Kansas, and recorded his discharge upon his return.[3] Copies of military discharge papers, also known as reports of separation, may still be filed at the Greene County Recorder's office.

In December 1921, Finch announced his plan to run for re-election. In August 1922, he won the nomination against three other Republicans, and in November, he beat Democrat Jack W. McKee.

For his second term as recorder, Finch retained the same deputies. He did, however, redecorate his office and make improvements. Finch and his chief deputy, Grove, spent a whole day rearranging furniture and partitioning one of the rooms so that Finch could have a private office.

Arthur B. Finch
 Republican
 Candidate For
County Recorder
*A Life-Long Republican
 A Faithful Party Worker*

A record of 15 years in the postal department, having passed every examination asked for by the government. His courteous treatment won for him the friendship of all he served.

Qualified, efficient and active, he will, if elected, make a record in this capacity unequalled by any of his predecessors.

To secure his services you will vote for him at the Tuesday primaries—this insures his name on the ticket at the Fall election.

Fair and courteous treatment to all will be his endeavor, if elected.

**Vote For
 Finch for Recorder**
Your Support Appreciated

Paid Advertisement.

[H. B. 1030.]

MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE CONTRACTS: Mongolians.

AN ACT to amend section 4312 of chapter 50 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri for 1899, relating to marriages and marriage contracts.

SECTION 1. Certain marriages prohibited.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section 1. Certain marriages prohibited.—An act to amend section 4312 of chapter 50 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri for 1899 by inserting between the words “negroes” and “are,” in the fifth line of said section, the words “white persons and Mongolians,” so that said section, when so amended, shall read as follows: Section 4312. All marriages between parents and children, including grand parents and grand children of every degree, between brothers and sisters of the half as well as of the whole blood, and between uncles and nieces, aunts and nephews, first cousins, white persons and negroes, white persons and Mongolians, are prohibited and declared absolutely void, and this prohibition shall apply to illegitimate as well as legitimate children and relatives.

Approved June 14, 1909.

Mayo Clinic, the public knew he had leukemia.

By the summer of 1931, Finch’s condition was serious. He couldn’t hear well and had partially lost sight in one of his eyes. He died at home the following October. He was 46-years-old. Finch had already planned the details of his funeral, including the location, the pastors, the song, and his pallbearers, giving instructions well before his death. A newspaper editorial lamented that his death was a “civic tragedy.”

Finch paid for all the changes, including the paint, himself.

In August 1925, Finch again refused to issue a marriage license. This time, it was to a man who said he was Hawaiian, but living in Kansas. Missouri miscegeny law prohibited the marriage “of a white person to a person having as much as one-eighth of Mongolian or Ethiopian blood,” and Finch did not know the “racial affiliation of a Hawaiian.” Before making a decision, he asked county prosecutor Harold T. Lincoln for a legal opinion. Lincoln determined that it was “impossible to determine the blood of the foreigner,” therefore, Finch denied the license application.

Finch declined to run for a third term, even at the urging of friends. His term as recorder ended on January 1, 1927. That month, he opened an insurance agency in the Landers Building with his son, Eugene. A year later, Finch revealed that he had been sick for some time and by August, after a trip to the

[1] Hendrickson was the daughter of George W. Hendrickson, assistant postmaster. Wingo would later become clerk of the criminal court, serving from 1923 – 1926.

[2] Efforts to repeal Missouri anti-miscegenation laws in 1965 and 1966 failed. The laws remained in place until 1967, when the US Supreme Court decision in Loving vs. Commonwealth of Virginia banned laws against interracial marriage; subsequently, Missouri Attorney General Norman H. Anderson declared Missouri’s laws unenforceable.

[3] Although there was no legal requirement to do so, the practice of filing military separation papers began after the Civil War; the practice became commonplace after World War I.



Celebrating America

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

PUBLIC READING CEREMONY
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
FORMER MISSOURI GOVERNOR

HON. JEREMIAH "JAY" NIXON

DESCENDANT OF COLONEL JOHN NIXON, CEREMONIAL TOWN CRIER WHO
PUBLICLY READ THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE JULY 8, 1776

HON. JOHN ASHCROFT & HON. MAX BACON

FORMER U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL AND FORMER GREENE COUNTY CIRCUIT JUDGE

ALONG WITH MANY STATE & LOCAL OFFICIALS

OLD-FASHIONED ICE CREAM SOCIAL

TO FOLLOW - COHOSTED BY THE GREENE COUNTY
DEMOCRATIC & REPUBLICAN WOMEN'S CLUBS

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE ROTUNDA
940 N BOONVILLE AVE
SPRINGFIELD, MO 65802



JULY 8TH 2:00 PM



1776-2026
250
AMERICA
GREENE COUNTY, MISSOURI

The Greene County Archives Foundation Speaker Series



Dr. F. Scott Worman,
Associate Professor
of Anthropology,
Missouri State University

Archaeologists Elizabeth Sobel and Scott Worman present the results of archaeological and historical research focused on the communities associated with the Ash Grove White Lime Company and the Phenix Marble Company, both located in northwest Greene County. Their work shows that life in these late 19th and early 20th century communities decidedly did not conform to the popular stereotypes. They will share how historical archaeology in particular can help to reimagine and represent the history of southwest Missouri and the broader Ozarks.



Dr. Elizabeth Sobel,
Professor of Anthropology,
Missouri State University



Presents:

A Forgotten Ozarks: Unearthing the Story of Phenix

Wednesday, **July 22, 2026**

Speaker begins at **6:30 PM**

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Springfield, MO 65810

Refreshments served. For questions about **GCAF** or this event, please email gcaf2021@gmail.com

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Please contact us for full citations to our articles.