

CHRONICLES OF THE COUNTY

Featured:
This is the Tale about
a Dog...and Murder

Goad-Ballinger Post
No. 69: Two
Soldiers, One Legacy

Death, Disease, and
Drinking Water:
Coroner Dr. Stone



ISSUE NO.05
FALL 2026

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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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ON THE COVER: The Retail Merchants' Association's 1906 Fall Festival was a celebration that drew thousands from across the Ozarks, featuring daily parades sponsored by different local groups, live performances, vendors, and evening light and lantern shows. Springfield's weeklong October festival also showcased floats highlighting Ozarks heritage, reflecting the community's pride in local culture and traditions.



From the Desk of the *Auditor*

It is my privilege to serve the citizens of Greene County in the role of Greene County Auditor for the past 30 years. During my time in office, there have been many changes not only in technology but in the way we share financial information with real time data to the public through the transparency portal located on our Greene County website. In 2012, as the Greene County Auditor, I championed for the open-book management model, traditionally used in the private sector into county government. This improved financial literacy, transparency, and fiscal accountability across departments. The Auditor's Office coordinates weekly department-wide huddles to teach financial literacy and community awareness. In 2015, Greene County became the inaugural recipient of the Pioneer Award from the Great Game of Business for successfully practicing open-book management in the public sector.

How did our office get its start? In 1919, a Missouri statute provided that any city in the state with a population of 50,000 or more is entitled to have a county auditor. Greene County did not qualify until 1930, when the census showed Springfield had approximately 57,000 citizens. Before the 1930s, Greene County relied primarily on County Court (now Commission) and County Clerk to manage, track, and verify county financial records. On November 4, 1930, longtime accountant for the railroad, James C. Leslie won by 464 votes defeating James H. Langston to become the first Greene County Auditor.

J.C. Leslie appointed Tom Emerson as his deputy auditor to establish the recordkeeping framework. The auditor would receive \$2,400 annually and all financial matters of the county offices were under his supervision.

In the 1930s-1940s, the auditor's office kept massive handwritten leather-bound ledgers to track the county's money. The staff calculated by using hand-cranked adding machines. Documents were produced on manual typewriters using carbon paper.

In the 1950s-1960s, electromechanical calculators helped speed up the tax and budget calculations,



and the introduction of the photocopier allowed workers to instantly duplicate sheets instead of re-typing them.

By the 1980s, desktop computers began replacing the standard typewriters, and the office started using digital spreadsheets such as Lotus 1-2-3. Fax machines were also used for sending records.

In 1994, when I took office, the local government was transitioning to networked PCs running windows. Complex electronic queries could now be run across various county departments from a single computer.

By the 2000s, records shifted into .com and highspeed internet era, and the office implemented Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) accounting software. Physical papers were replaced with secure databases and digital recordkeeping, allowing for transparent auditing and faster processing times.

The 2025 census showed Greene County has 309,286 citizens. As the county continues to grow, so do we. Today, I am currently training on new ERP software, which will soon be implemented across the departments.

Cindy A. Stein

This is the Tale about a Dog... *and Murder*

FACE MURDER CHARGE



—Leader Staff Photo.

These farmer-brothers today answered to first degree murder charges in justice court near Cave Spring. They are Ed Alexander, left, and William Alexander, accused by the state of having shot and killed their neighbor, John Cook, from ambush in a neighborhood feud over a dog.

It all started in 1927 with the death of a foxhound called “Minnie.”

John Cook, of Ash Grove, said he loaned Minnie to friends on Thanksgiving Day, when the dog was shot by neighboring farmer, Robert A. Gregg. Gregg said Minnie chased a rabbit on his farm, and he “became angry and shot her.” John sued Gregg for \$300, based on the hound’s value and punitive damages. On a change of venue from Ash Grove to a Springfield justice of the peace court, the jury awarded John \$25 in May 1928. Gregg filed an appeal.

At issue was the use of land around Grantham’s mill, located “two miles west of Pearl,” an area where hunters were accustomed to using to work their dogs. For 70 years, Ash Grove area residents were allowed to work with their dogs on “Grantham’s mills property... since 1859, when the mills were built.” Gregg allegedly said “when he bought the old Grantham place in 1920 that he” would not allow fox hunting on

FARMER IS SLAIN IN FEUD OVER HOUND DOG!

his land and would "kill every dog found there." This may be what led to Gregg's barn being "dynamited in 1925" and his farm machinery being damaged. By now, John was accusing Gregg of killing "seven or eight" of his dogs before he killed Minnie.

In March 1929, "one of the most noted 'houn' dog" cases ever tried" in Greene County again went to trial. John still wanted \$300; Gregg now claimed that dogs had been killing "his sheep and otherwise damaged him, [and admitted] that he fired on a hound on his farm...but that he missed." This time, Cook was awarded \$50, and Gregg was ordered to pay \$478 in court costs; he requested a new trial, which was scheduled for May. The money wasn't his only problem; hunters apparently "bitterly resented" being banned from using the area around Grantham's mill, and Gregg was being "ostracized socially."

Numerous continuances prevented the May 1929 retrial; it wasn't until November 1930 that the case was finally heard again. Several witnesses were called, including Bill

Alexander. Gregg's attorney, L. L. Collins, accused him of conflicting testimony, pointing out that in an earlier justice of the peace trial he testified that he had seen Minnie "lying dead in a field," but now claimed that he had helped her "over a hog wire fence" after she was shot. Bill responded that he tried to say as little as possible at the previous trial. Collins did manage to get him to admit that he had "paid \$10 on the attorney's fee for the plaintiff."

One of the witnesses was Mollie Pittman, Bill's sister. She testified about searching for Bill in the "old eighty," where she found him

“*sitting there in the gully...
drunk as a boiled owl.*”

She said he had been drunk for about three months. In his testimony the previous day, he said he had been drunk for "several months" and "didn't consider himself

responsible for anything" he may have said regarding Minnie. Pittman said that when she found Bill, she saw the dead dog nearby.

After two days of testimony and the attorneys arguing "their respective side of the case with all the fervor they would put into a first-degree murder trial with human life at stake," the verdict this time was for Gregg. John's attorney, Fred Moon, filed a motion for a new trial. The

Springfield, Mo., Apr 3 1931

Greene County, Missouri

In Account With John Cook and Bill Alexander FUNDS:

Salary, Court and Election, Contingent, 157, Road and Bridge, Sp. Road and Bridge, Pauper.

Bounty on 1 grown wolf
Bounty on 5 wolf pups

10
15

Total 250

CHECKED BY COUNTY AUDITOR [Signature]

D.K. BY [Signature]

Approved [Signature] 19 31 Presiding Judge

Highway Engineer Associate Judge

Stamp: R. A. YOUNG, PRESIDING JUDGE, APR 23 1931

case had become less about the dog and more about a battle over who would pay the mounting court costs, now around \$700. Judge John Schmook denied the request for a new trial.

The Alexander brothers, Bill and Ed, were good friends with the Cook brothers, particularly with John and George. They even went wolf hunting together in April 1931. The friendship apparently ended by July, when Frank, John, and Harry Cook were charged with assaulting Ed. Ed said he was on his way home, past the "Cook place," when they stopped him and accused him of stealing one of their hound dogs. When he denied stealing their dog, John hit him with a club, while Frank "threatened him with an ax." Ed's face was "bruised and skinned."

The dog in question was Minnie's sister, Roxie. The Cook brothers appeared in justice of the peace court in Ash Grove, under George Mallicoat. John pleaded guilty and was fined \$10, plus court costs.

One month later, John was dead.

The "family feud" ended on September 2, 1931. That morning, according to Richard Cook's statement, he and his brother, John, were on their way home from Pearl where they had gone to have some farm machinery repaired, cutting across "Mrs. Clara Watson's farm," when Ed and Bill shot them. The Cooks broke into a run, heading in different directions; Richard escaped with minor injuries, but John was critically injured and fell around "150 yards" away from the shooting. He died at Springfield Baptist Hospital that afternoon.

Ed turned himself in that afternoon and said that his brother, Bill, was innocent in the shooting. He claimed that John and Richard had "accosted" him and Bill in the Watson pasture, alleging that John said "Kill him," and Richard tried to hit him with a "mowing machine part," but missed. Only then, he said, did he fire his shotgun at him. Richard ran, then John came at him, so he shot him in

GRIM FACES MIRROR 'FOX HOUND FEUD' MURDER TRIAL



"He doesn't look like a killer..." Many spectators at the trial of Bill Alexander, 44, (above,) have made that comment. The mild-looking, thin-faced farmer is on trial for his life as the murderer of his former friend, John Cook.



Mary Cook, sister of the slain John Cook, hopes that Bill and Ed Alexander will have to pay the limit for killing her brother. An ex-school teacher, she keeps house for the Cook boys who live at the family home.



"Bill Alexander didn't have anything more to do with the shootin' than me, and I was washin' that day!" Thus does Mrs. Mollie Pittman of Walnut Grove, faithful sister of the men accused of killing John Cook, dismiss the charges against her brother Bill.



Richard Cook, 23-year-old brother of John Cook, 28, Greene county farmer who died September 2 in what the state describes as an ambush. Richard, a principal witness for the state in the present trial, hopes Bill and Ed Alexander will hang.



This is Ed Alexander, younger brother of Bill, who now is on trial for murder. There is a strong bond of affection between the brothers, and Bill is regarded as the father of the family. At the time of the shooting young Ed Alexander took full responsibility for it. Ed probably will go to trial soon after his brother.

All photos made by Leader staff photographer since trial began.

the side. When John turned to run, Ed said his gun “accidentally discharged,” hitting John in the back of the head. He said John ran, then fell face down to the ground. Ed said he then ran to a nearby home and called a doctor, after which he came to Springfield to turn himself in. Prosecutor Dan Nee allowed Bill to return home after giving his story, which was quite different from that of Richard. Nee planned to await the coroner’s jury verdict before filing charges.

Physicians who examined John at the hospital said the “charge from the shotgun penetrated the back of his head and struck his brain.” The coroner’s jury determined that the shot fired at him was at close range, and he “could not have possibly run after the last shot struck him in the head.”

There were only two witnesses at the coroner’s jury on Thursday evening—one of them was Richard. Richard testified that he saw his brother stagger after the first shot that hit him in the side. He saw him try to “rise to his knees and then pitch over on his face.” He didn’t realize at that time that his brother had been shot a second time. The second witness was Gene Brim, an undertaker from Walnut Grove. It was his ambulance that took John to the hospital in Springfield, where he was declared dead at 2:35 p.m. County Coroner Dr. Murray C. Stone wanted to question Ed, but his attorney refused to allow either of the Alexanders to do so. The jury returned their verdict in 10 minutes:

*both Alexanders were
guilty in the death of John.*

Murder charges were filed against Ed and Bill the next day, although Prosecutor Nee believed that Bill was the one responsible for the deadly gunshot. Bill, who had

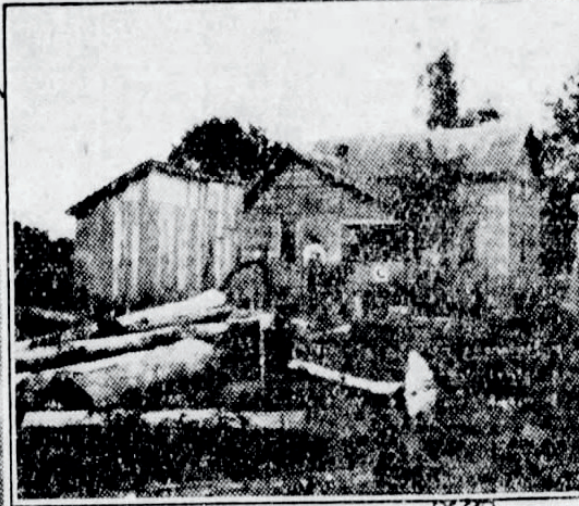
previously been released after Ed turned himself in, was now in jail along with his brother. Ed continued to insist that the Cooks started the disagreement that day, although Constable W. Scott Curtis had established that the Cooks were unarmed. Their preliminary hearing was set for the following Wednesday at the home of Justice of the Peace Whittenberg of Cass Township.

The preliminary examination began Wednesday morning, and “hundreds of farmers” showed up with their families to the “front yard” of Whittenberg’s home. The hearing was held outside under the trees and only lasted an hour and a half. The judge’s bench consisted of “an old packing case for a seat and a small kitchen table as a desk.” Only the attorneys and witnesses were provided with chairs. Cook and Brim were the only witnesses and testified much the same as they had at the coroner’s inquest. The Alexander brothers wore their overalls, but “had on new blue shirts, new black shoes, gray socks and new gray felt hats, all just alike.” Nee wanted the men held without bond, but Sam Wear, Val Mason, and Nat Benton, their defense attorneys, successfully got them each a \$40,000 bond.

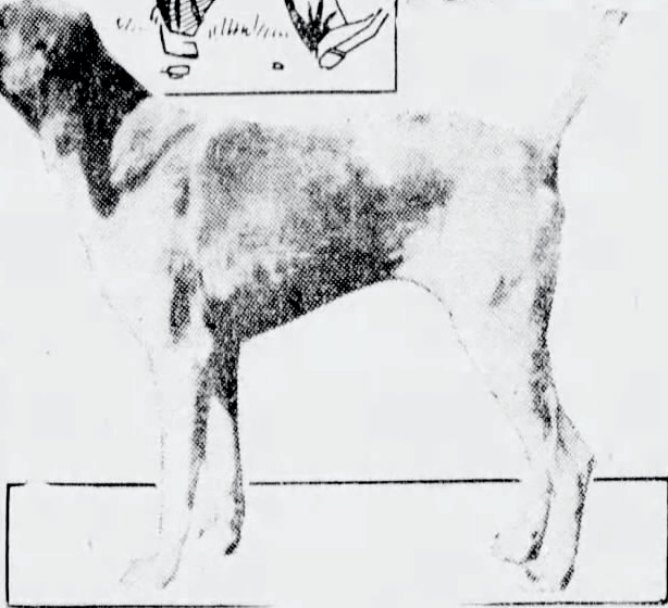
On February 14, 1932, Lucille Morris, reporting for the *Springfield News Leader*, described Ed and Bill as “tall lanky bachelor brothers – farmers and fox hunters,” and said the trial would likely “attract widespread interest” and quoted a national newspaper’s assessment of the trial as “a drama typically Ozarkian.” The trial was set to begin the next day.

The trial opened on Monday, February 15, with jury selection, which took most of the day. Testimony in the “houn’ dog feud” case opened on Tuesday to a packed courtroom. The brothers sat together in the courtroom but would be tried separately at

MURDER TRIAL CLIMAXES FOXHOUND FEUD



A fox hound named Minnie may or may not be dead but her influence was present today when William Alexander, young Greene county farmer, shown at the right, went to trial for the murder of his neighbor, John Cook, whose home is shown at the upper right. Ed Alexander, upper left, will face the murder charges in a separate trial. A typical houn' dog such as the Cook's Minnie or the Alexander's Roxie is shown below. The state will claim that a feud which grew up over the dogs and other matters caused the Alexander boys to shoot at the Cook boys from ambush as pictured by the artist in his sketch.



the request of Bill. Their sister, Mollie, was there, her "eyes red with weeping," but attempting to comfort her brothers. John Cook's sister, Mary, also "wept in the courtroom." Both women kept house for their brothers; after their mother's recent death, Mary stopped teaching to take care of her brothers, Harry, Frank, Richard, and George. Andrew J. Alexander arrived from Virginia to support Ed and Bill.[1]

County Coroner Dr. Stone was the first to testify when court opened at 9 a.m. Dr. Stone reiterated his testimony from the inquest, stating that John was shot in the head from "between 9 and 12 feet away." During the autopsy, he found the same material in John's head wound, which he described as "large and gaping, with a few smaller holes" around it. He said John "could not have moved a step after this shot hit him."

Brim, the Walnut Grove undertaker who was first at the scene, testified that he found John "lying on his face...with a piece of gauze over the back .

THE STATE OF MISSOURI,

VS.

EDWARD ALEXANDER and
WILLIAM ALEXANDERIn the Circuit Court.
Greene County, Missouri
Division No. 2.

Information filed at the September Term, 1931, of the Greene County Circuit Court against defendants for Murder in the First Degree. Preliminary trial had before J. P. Whittenburg, J. P., September 9, 1931, and defendants held for said Circuit Court in bonds of \$20,000.00 each, and in default thereof were committed to jail.

At the January Term, 1932, of said Circuit Court a severance was granted the defendants and defendant William Alexander placed upon trial by jury and during same Juror C. E. Ashley became dangerously ill. Trial suspended and declared by the Court a mis-trial. The defendant again was placed on trial by jury, found guilty and given Fifteen (15) Years in the State Penitentiary.

At the same term of Court defendant Edward Alexander was tried by jury, found guilty and given Ten (10) Years in the State Penitentiary.

Appeals to the Supreme Court were granted to the the defendants and such appeals were afterwards dismissed by the Supreme Court and the judgments of the Circuit Court affirmed.

of his head." John was still alive; Brim took him to the hospital, where he died about 15 minutes later.

On Wednesday, defense witness Charles Horseman said that he talked to John shortly before he was killed, and John said he was going to "fill the Alexanders full of hot lead." He later testified that John had a pistol with him at the time. Val Mason, with the defense counsel, represented John as a "huge, powerful, quarrelsome, turbulent, overbearing, dangerous man." He planned to prove that Ed shot John in self-defense, despite the Cooks not being in possession of firearms.

Richard testified next and related much of the same information as at the coroner's inquest. He testified that he and John were about to climb over a fence "to take a short-cut" home when the firing started. He said that "Bill had the shotgun and Ed the pistol." He heard shots "fired from the brush" and saw John fall "on his face." He ran "into the oats stubble on the other side of the road," with Bill and Ed chasing him. He was hit "in the back of the head with a shotgun charge."

Richard said that while he was running away, he looked behind and saw his brother "trying to rise

from the ground, getting to his knees and then falling down again." He denied that there had ever been any threats made between the brothers, but under cross-examination, he admitted that John had a fight with Ed the previous summer. He continued to deny that John had ever threatened to "fill Bill and Ed Alexander full of hot lead," as Horseman had testified.

Morris Mitchell testified for the state. He was at the home of his father, John Mitchell, the day of the murder. The Cook brothers stopped by "carrying a piece of a mower," and were not carrying weapons. For the defense, Vinton Swinney testified that John threatened to kill the Alexanders. Jim McCall said that John made the same comment in his presence, as did his wife. Leonard Brittain, for the state, said he saw Bill and Ed carrying a shotgun last summer. John Allen (Al) Brim, a hardware merchant in Walnut Grove and Gene Brim's father, identified the gun that "allegedly" killed John as the one he sold to Willis "Chuck" Alexander the previous autumn.

The defense had several people lined up to testify regarding John's reputation. One of them was former Greene County Sheriff Alfred Owen, who testified that John's reputation "for being quarrelsome was bad," a fact he knew because he had once arrested him. D. E. Shelley, Walter Abbott, and Roscoe C. Slatten, all Greene County farmers, also testified to John's "quarrelsome" behavior. Leonard Osborn, a barber from Walnut Grove, testified that the gun on exhibit looked like the one

which "Gene Lemons traded to the Brim Hardware company;" Gene Lemons agreed with Osborn's identification.

Throughout the day, Bill "sat chewing his tobacco, swinging one foot over the other and turning now and then to look around the courtroom or out the window." Nancy Nance of the *Springfield Press* reported that the trial was "Better'n a county fair... [and was] livening the long winter days when rain and cloudiness would otherwise keep them at home." During breaks, spectators crowded "around the spittoons" to talk about the case. The Alexander family milled around, greeting people with smiles and confidence that Bill and Ed wouldn't be convicted. Numerous relatives of the Cook family were in town for the trial; they were not so jovial.

Ike Lindsey, father-in-law of Willis, was called to testify for the state. He said Bill stayed at his house the night of the shooting. The next morning, his daughter, Delphia, found a "German Luger pistol and shotgun" under a bed. Lindsey hid the weapons in his garden and told Bill what he had done.

After a lunch recess, court resumed in the afternoon with the testimony of Bill. The *Springfield Daily News* described the 44-

year-old as a "lean-faced, drawling farmer." He testified that it was his brother, Ed, who killed John but claimed it was only because John came at them with a "heavy piece of iron in his hand." He claimed that he was unarmed and didn't try to help Ed hurt the Cook brothers. Bill

admitted that he had recently been carrying a shotgun with him out of fear of John.

The last witness testified that afternoon, and the case was ready to go to the jury. However, one of the jurors became ill and could not return; Judge White "declared a mistrial" and rescheduled for February 29. All of the witnesses would have to return and a new jury chosen.

Jurors were selected and testimony began on Tuesday, March 1. Nee announced he would ask for the death penalty. This time, Judge White banned any reference to the feud between the Cooks and Alexanders.

On Friday, March 4, Bill was convicted of second-degree murder, saving him from the death penalty, which a first-degree murder conviction would have brought. The jury recommended 15 years in prison. The decision was announced to a packed, but solemn, courtroom.

Ed still insisted that he was the one who shot John, not his brother, Bill. Judge White set Ed's trial for March 28. The defense planned to file a motion for a new trial on the basis that the court refused to allow evidence regarding the feud over Minnie, which they contended led to the shooting.

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CIRCUIT COURT, GREENE COUNTY
CRIMINAL RECORD

FRIDAY, MARCH 4th 1932, JANUARY TERM, 1932

INLAND PRINTING CO., SPRINGFIELD, MO. 44th JUDICIAL DAY: DIVISION TWO:

STATE OF MISSOURI, 96760c vs Div. 2 WILLIAM ALEXANDER,	Plft.) Information for Murder.) Trial by Jury. Deft.) Verdict of Guilty.
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Now on this day at the hour of Ten o'clock A. M. come the jury here into open Court in charge of the Sheriff and return unto the Court their verdict found herein following, to-wit

"We, the jury, find the defendant, William Alexander guilty of Murder in the Second Degree, and we assess his punishment at imprisonment in the Penitentiary for 15 years,

Dewey Hulse, Foreman."

Whereupon it is now ordered by the Court that sentence of said defendant be deferred until the 12th day of March, 1932. And it is further ordered by the Court that the jury herein be discharged from further service in this case.

On March 28, Judge White refused Bill's request for a new trial.

Testimony in Ed's trial began on Thursday, March 31. Crowds for this trial were considerably less than that of his brother's. The majority of the testimony was the same, with the exception that this time the jury was permitted to hear about the feud regarding Minnie. Nee again asked for a verdict of first-degree murder. Ed continued to insist that he acted in self-defense and that his brother was entirely innocent. On Saturday, April 2, the jury found Ed guilty of second-degree murder and recommended a 10-year sentence. As expected, Ed's attorneys filed a motion for a new trial; White denied the request and both brothers then filed a motion to appeal.

On April 15, Bill posted a \$25,000 bond and was released from jail for the first time in seven months. Upon his release, he "smiled and laughed and shook hands with friends." A week later, Ed also posted a \$25,000 bond. One of his securities was Gregg, the man John accused of killing his hound dog, Minnie. The following September, Bill's bond was revoked when one of his signers asked to be released. Sheriff W. Scott Curtis arrested him and returned him to jail. Ed was still out on bond and was reportedly living in Texas with his brother Harris.

Bill was never able to make bond again; Nee ordered that he be taken to prison the following week. However, it wasn't until February that Bill was delivered to Jefferson City. He told Sheriff Curtis that he might "as well go on and start serving his term," since he hadn't been able to make

VICTIM	SLAYER
	
John Cook, farmer, living between Walnut Grove and Ash Grove, who was shot to death today by his former friend, Ed Alexander, in a feud growing out of a dog's disappearance. It was John Cook who two and a half years ago began a celebrated law suit against R. A. Gregg, neighboring farmer, over the death of "Minnie", a foxhound. Bill Alexander a brother of today's slayer testified for Cook during this litigation, which Cook finally lost.	Ed Alexander (above), confessed slayer of John Cook, his neighbor, is held in Greene county jail pending an inquest Thursday night. The fatal shooting is believed to have been a result of bitterness which followed a long legal controversy over disappearance of Cook's fox hound. —KUCKER PHOTO.

bail. In April, Nee asked the attorney general to file a motion with the Supreme Court of Missouri to dismiss Bill and Ed's appeals because the one-year deadline for submission had passed.

The supreme court granted the appeal dismissal, but Ed was missing. Some said he was in Texas with his brother, others said he was in Mexico, still others believed he had died "violently." His sister, Mollie, "issued a public appeal urging him to return to Greene County;" otherwise, the bondsmen would have to pay his \$25,000 bond. Mollie said the last time she heard from him, he was in Arizona on his way to El Paso, Texas. She didn't believe he was in Mexico, but thought it possible he was in "an insane asylum somewhere," due to allegedly having been "clubbed over the head by [John]

Cook” over the alleged theft of Roxie. She said he had been having “strange spells” since that day.

In February 1934, Ed Alexander was still missing, and a \$500 reward for his capture and return to Greene County was issued. Sheriff Curtis sent a telegram “to the west coast” in the hopes someone would find Ed. However, Ed couldn’t be found, so his bond was forfeited. Now unable to afford the bond they had signed for, each bondsman settled with the county for \$2,000, well short of the \$25,000 bond they owed.[2] With that,

the story of the feud between the Cooks and Alexanders ended.

The feud may have been over, but the story wasn’t. October 1935 brought the announcement that the “famous houn’ dog case [would] be featured in [a] movie” starring Lionel Barrymore. The movie was actually based on a book called *The Voice of Bugle Ann*, by McKinlay Kantor, which was published in January of that year. The “movie men” visited the Jefferson City prison for photographs, as well as Greene County, and “[attended] a fox-hunters meeting...to get background.” The movie was in theatres in 1936.

Famous ‘Hound Dog’ Case To Be Featured in Movie



Bill Alexander

Lionel Barrymore

Lionel Barrymore Will Play Leading Role in Film Story of Ozarks Hills; Cameramen Visit Territory to Get ‘Color’ for Hollywood Picture

In 1953, Kantor published a sequel called “Daughter of Bugle Ann.”

In July 1939, the state parole board met to discuss the release of Bill, who was on year seven of a 15-year term.

Despite his eligibility for parole, the board denied his

release, saying he “‘had not served enough of his sentence.’” Bill would be eligible for parole again in two years, and the board said he would likely be released at that time.

In April 1941, Sheriff Ruel N. Wommack received a letter from the Los Angeles County, California, sheriff asking if Greene County was still searching for Ed. The letter led to county attorney William R. Collinson’s decision to look at the case files, only to discover that they were missing. It turned out to be a moot point; the Ed Alexander in question turned out to be the wrong one.

In August 1941, Circuit Clerk James Johnson publicly reported that the Alexander murder case files were missing, as were many other case files, mostly civil cases. He said it was “unlikely that they [would] ever be recovered.” At that time, case files could be checked out by attorneys with the promise of quick return. Johnson was able to get some of the files returned but said that a “complete mystery seems to” surround the disappearance of the Alexander files.

Ed was never found. When his brother, Andrew, died in 1975, his obituary referenced “Ed, of China,” as a survivor. After his release from prison, Bill moved to Pulaski County, Missouri, and married Pearl Gleason. He died in 1992. Richard died in 1955, after being struck by a car while working at a road construction site.

[1] Their mother, Ida Matilda Woodard Cook, died in September 1930.

[2] The bond securities were D. E. Cloud, John Rountree, Elmer G. Wadlow, John Farmer, Robert E. Gregg, and Leta Gregg.

Goad-Ballinger Post No. 69



Two Soliders, One Legacy

The Greene County Archives is honored to announce the acquisition of a selection of records and artifacts from the Goad-Ballinger American Legion Post 69, a donation that significantly enriches our ability to preserve and share the history of local veterans and their service to the community. We extend our sincere gratitude to Post 69 for entrusting us with these important pieces of Greene County's heritage. The following are the stories of the two soldiers whose courage and sacrifice inspired the name of the post, and whose legacies we are proud to honor.



John Goad

Lieutenant John Marion Goad was born in Springfield on November 16, 1896. He graduated from Springfield High School in 1912[1] and from then—Drury College, where he played football, performed in student plays, and earned a degree in mathematics, in 1916. Following graduation, he moved to Chicago to study law at Chicago University. His law studies ended in May 1917 when he enlisted in the Army and went to Fort Riley, Kansas, for training. In August of that year, he was sent to Camp Champaign in Champaign, Illinois, to study military aeronautics.

In September he completed aviator training and was qualified to be an aerial observer. He managed to come home for a brief visit with his family but soon received orders to “report at [an] eastern port,” likely New York. From there he sailed on the RMS Carmania, a former luxury ship now used for soldier transport by the Royal Navy.

In early October, Goad’s father, local attorney George W. Goad, received a telegram that his son had “arrived safely” in France. Originally expecting to train in Italy, by the end of the month, he was at a training camp in England with the Royal Air Forces. In writing to his parents, he said it was “difficult to write letters” due to censorship. He relayed that the weather was very bad, with constant rain.



By Christmas, Goad was expecting to return home soon to be an aviation instructor. He had recently won “honors as [a] crack shot,” for learning to use a Vickers machine gun, which were used on allied planes. Writing from Grantham, England, he said he had “mastered aerial photography, map drawing and bomb dropping,” and knew how “to fly a machine.” The following spring, Goad was flying with the Royal Air Force and had left for France, where he now expected to be permanently assigned.

In March 1918, Goad received a commission as a First Lieutenant and was attached to the 48th Squadron Royal Air Force in the British Army.

On June 27, 1918, while flying at 21,000 feet with a British squadron inside German lines, German planes attacked the squadron, and Goad was shot down. Unverified reports

said that he was able to jump from the plane after it caught fire; he was reported as missing in action (MIA). It took another year for him to be listed as killed in action (KIA).

A “home-coming celebration” was held at Doling Park for returned Greene County soldiers in September 1919. During the event, a new American Legion Post was formed, named the John M. Goad Post, in honor of Lieutenant Goad.

In November 1920, Goad’s body, having been identified, was disinterred “by Australians from [the] vicinity around Hamel.” He was reburied in what was then a British Military Cemetery in the Somme, in the section called Crucifix Corner, containing the bodies of as yet unidentified soldiers.

In September 6, 1921, his body was disinterred and sent to Antwerp, Belgium. From there, on March 1, 1922, he was shipped to Hoboken, New Jersey, on the ship Cantigny. He arrived on April 21; on May 24, he left New Jersey and finally made it home to Springfield on May 27, 1922. He was reburied at Springfield National Cemetery.

[1] Springfield High School is now Central High School.

Pictured on the left is Lieutenant Goad.

Homer Ballinger

Homer Jerome Ballinger was born in Morrisville, Polk County, Missouri, on September 28, 1894. He attended Scarritt-Morrisville College and Springfield Business College.

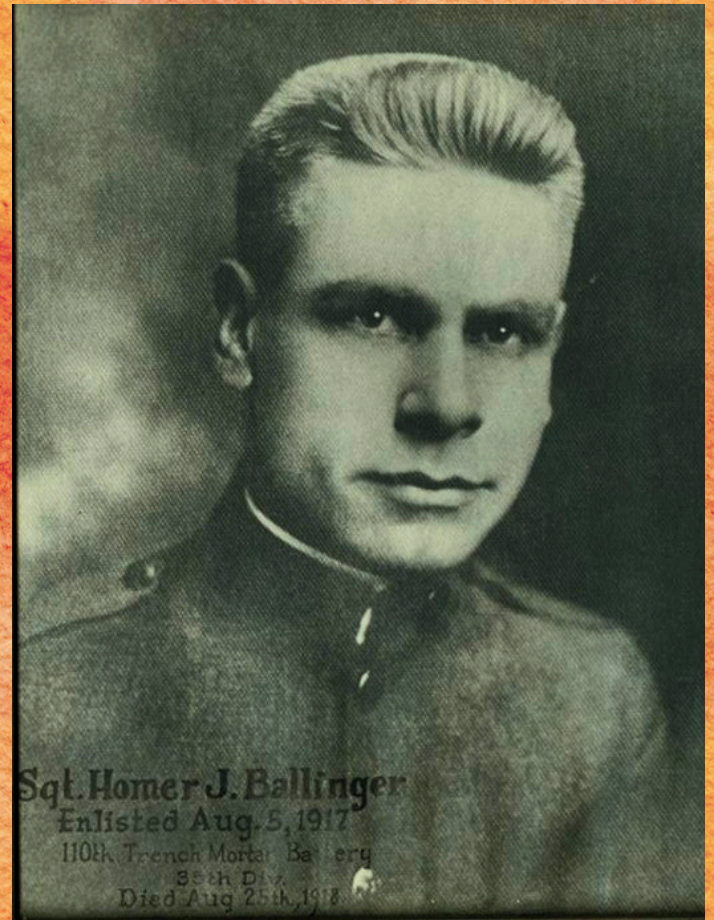
In late fall of 1915, Ballinger started working in the Woodruff Building. In June 1916, he enlisted in the National Guard and was assigned to Company K, 2nd Infantry and was sent to the Mexican border. It was from there that he wrote to John T. Woodruff in July, describing the unnamed town as “quiet and peaceful,” with a landscape made up of “cactus, sagebrush, and mesquite.” He told Woodruff that he expected to remain near the border for about eight months.



In April 1917, the United States declared war on Germany. Ballinger and a co-worker, R. Homer Mapes, were elevator operators in the Woodruff Building. After hearing the news, both men decided to join the Army. Ballinger, already in the National Guard, expected to be called to service at any time. The “business and professional men with offices in the Woodruff Building” decided to become “foster fathers” to the young men and promised to make sure they had everything they needed while serving their country.

On August 5, 1917, Ballinger was “mustered into the federal service.” He was placed in the 110th Trench Mortar Battery, 60th Artillery Brigade, 35th Division of the American Expeditionary Forces and sent to Camp Doniphan, near Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for training. The following December he spent a few days in Springfield before heading to his post in New York. On the fourteenth, he was honored at the Woodruff Building, where the business tenants installed his photograph and gave him a “Christmas remembrance.” He was even in town long enough to get married; on Saturday, December 15, he married 19-year-old Lucille Elsey.

Ballinger sailed from New York in May 1918 aboard the ocean liner Ceramic. In June, he sent word to Springfield that he had “arrived safely overseas.” On August 5, Ballinger was riding in an “auto truck” headed to the front, when the truck overturned while “going down a long hill.” Of the five men on the truck, Ballinger was the worst injured, suffering a ruptured bladder and fractured pelvis; he died on August 25. The Springfield Republican reported that, after the wreck, Ballinger had “asked that no news of his accident be told [to] his wife until after” the child was born. The Ballinger’s son, Homer Jerome Ballinger Jr., was born September 26. On October 1, 1918, Ballinger’s wife, Lucille, publicly announced the death of her husband.



In November 1919, a new American Legion Post was organized, called the Homer J. Ballinger Post No. 193. The first meeting was held in the courtroom of the Greene County Courthouse. In January 1920, the Ballinger Post members voted unanimously to join with John M. Goad Post No. 69, whose members also voted to approve the merger. The combined membership would be nearly 500. By early February 1920, the consolidation was complete. The post became the Goad-Ballinger Post No. 69.

Ballinger was buried in the French Civil Cemetery at Dijon. He was disinterred in late November 1921 and transported to Antwerp, Belgium, where, in January 1922, he was returned to the United States aboard the U.S. Army Transport ship Crook. He arrived in Springfield on the twenty-first. Goad-Ballinger Post No. 69 held a military funeral for Ballinger, as well as recognition of John Goad, whose body had not yet been found.

Death, Disease, and Drinking Water: Greene County Coroner

Dr. Murray Stone

Dr. Murray C. Stone was born in Leominster, Massachusetts, on April 22, 1880. He graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1903 and opened a general practice in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, until 1910. In December 1906, he married Eleanor Taft in Hyde Park, Massachusetts. Both of their sons were born in Fitchburg: Edward W. in September 1907, and Windsor, in October 1908. In 1910, the family moved to Kansas City, where Stone served as a pathologist for Kansas City General Hospital. By 1912, they were living in Jefferson City where he worked for the State Board of Health as a bacteriologist.

Stone came to Springfield in August 1912 to speak to the Springfield Board of Health about “possible typhoid fever sources” in the area. He noted that city water was safe but recommended avoiding spring water, wells, and cisterns, which could easily be contaminated. The water at Doling Park and Crystal Spring were both highly contaminated by sewage. Stone complained that Springfield did not have an ordinance for reporting typhoid fever, making the data incomplete. He recommended that water from any source other than the city water supply should be boiled before drinking, as well as boiling “all milk unless known to be from a safe source.”

In the summer of 1913, Stone resigned as state bacteriologist, citing a poorly equipped department that couldn’t provide sufficient service to the public. In September, the family made the move to Springfield, where Stone planned to open a “chemical and analysis laboratory” and open a private practice in the Woodruff Building.

In early 1914, Stone and Dr. Walter Cross, a city chemist in Kansas City, were “expert witnesses” for the Springfield City Water Company in a hearing before the Missouri Public Service Commission. The commission wanted to know why the “typhoid death rate [was] higher” during the summer when the Sac River and Ritter Springs supplied water to the city.



DOCTOR STONE

He said summer was the usual season for typhoid but believed the city water was fine due to the “high efficiency” of the filtration plant. He believed the wells used throughout the city were the source of typhoid, where “he claimed the bacterial count [was] high.” But Springfield had “53% of its typhoid fever deaths during the third quarter,” while other communities had 34%. Stone said it was an “indication of the sanitary administration of the city,” which was poor and that fact manifested particularly during typhoid season.

Stone was chairman of the Citizen’s Health Committee, which advocated “for a \$0.50 per capita tax yearly for the maintenance of the health department.” He “appointed a committee of five women,” one of whom was his wife, Eleanor, who were responsible for collection records from city council and councilman candidates “in regard to health measures.”[1]

Nineteen-sixteen was a busy year for Stone. In January, the Springfield

Hospital Board of Directors appointed him as pathologist and bacteriologist. Also in January, the recently formed Springfield Physicians’ Club elected him secretary-treasurer. In February, the brand-new Anti-Tuberculosis Association of Greene County elected him as secretary. In March, the couple had their last child together, a daughter, named Judy. Stone was also the second vice president of the Southwest Missouri Medical Society and regularly gave public presentations on health issues, including a baby hygiene meeting where he “spoke on the subject of infantile paralysis.”

In 1917, Stone was one of several area physicians who entered the military as part of the Medical Reserve Corps. He was first sent to Fort Logan H. Roots in Arkansas, then to Camp Logan, near Houston, Texas. In 1918, he was stationed at Fort Sam Houston, near San Antonio, Texas, where he was promoted to major. By the summer of 1918, the Springfield Daily Leader reported that “approximately one-third of the physicians of Springfield and Greene County [had] volunteered for service in the Medical Reserve Corps” of the Army.



SPRINGFIELD CITY WATER COMPANY
PUMPING and PURIFICATION PLANT

After the war, Stone resumed his medical career and public health initiatives. Springfield Hospital added a “laboratory for making bacteriological tests of blood,” and placed Stone in charge; Stone and Dr. Robert Glynn were on a committee to establish a venereal disease clinic.

Stone was an amateur photographer and a member of the Springfield Camera Club. He served on a photograph judging panel along with Domino Danzero. He also had an interest in history and was a member of the University Club.

In June 1925, the Stones returned “from the east” where they had spent three weeks traveling in the New England area, including a visit to his mother at Fitchburg, Massachusetts. This would have been the first time his new wife, Olive, had met Stone’s mother, Ella.[2]

In 1928, Stone decided to run for the office of county coroner as a Republican. In November, he beat Democratic incumbent Jewell E. Windle by 2,622 votes to become the next Greene County Coroner. He planned to keep his office in the Woodruff building. In January 1930, after serving as coroner for a year, Stone announced that he investigated

“ 50 violent deaths ”

in 1929, out of a total of 97 cases.

Stone faced two prominent criminal cases during his first term as coroner. The first, in January 1932, became known as the Young Brothers Massacre. This event even led to Stone being briefly appointed as acting sheriff after the murder of Sheriff Marcell Hendrix.[3] The second was February of that year, when William Alexander murdered John Cook. Stone, “the quiet, scholarly

bacteriologist,” was called as an “expert witness” for the prosecution in the case.

Under the Missouri statute in 1932, coroners were not permitted to serve successive four-year terms, so Stone could not seek reelection. That November, Democrat Dr. Charles A. George beat Republican Dr. Ulysses F. Kerr and took over as coroner in December 1932. George was currently the physician for the county jail and planned to stay in that position until January 1. At a farewell party for Stone, he “pinned the badge of office on the lapel of his successor.” He expressed relief at no longer being called in the middle of the night on cases and planned to enjoy his “new found freedom.” Upon his retirement as coroner, Stone compiled a “history of crime, suicide and fatal accidents” that occurred in Greene County during his tenure, using photographs he had taken himself.

In addition to his work as coroner, Stone had worked for the Springfield Water Company as a bacteriologist and chemist since April 1924. He regularly visited the filtration plant, taking samples and testing the water and, in November 1933, declared that Springfield had “an abundance of water of a high degree of purity.”

In April 1934, Olive Wilson Stone filed for divorce. She said that he regularly told her he did not love her and that he had moved out of their house “without cause or excuse.” The couple had been married 10 years. In May, her divorce was granted by default. The following November, Stone publicly announced his “secret marriage” to one of his laboratory technicians, Elizabeth Tuck. In October 1938, the couple had a son, Gregory.

Coroner J. P. Ferguson resigned in August 1939, likely due to health issues. It was up to the county court to appoint his replacement. Stone had the support of the

“majority of physicians” in Springfield, but he was not the person considered by the court.

Ultimately, Dr. Ned White, a Drury graduate, was chosen as the next coroner. According to Presiding Judge Frank W.G. Wheeler, White was chosen because of his youth and the location of his office on Commercial Street. He said that no “north side physician” had ever been coroner. The position of coroner was unpaid; payment went to whoever performed the autopsies.

White resigned in April 1942 when he joined the Navy. The county court appointed Stone in his stead to serve until the expiration of White’s term. Stone also registered for the draft, as did prosecuting attorney Dan M. Nee and Springfield Mayor Harry Carr.

A constitutional convention took place in Jefferson City in 1943-44. At this convention a debate was held regarding replacing the county coroner system with that of an appointed medical examiner. Stone said he was “in favor of the proposal.”

The following year, Stone threw his hat in the ring to be coroner again. He had been doing the job since White left in 1942. In the November election, he beat Bryan A. Riley by almost 6,000 votes. Stone was able to complete his term through the end of 1948, but in March 1947, he was admitted to St. John’s Hospital as a result of exhaustion, due to “the recent increase in coroner’s cases.”

Even after he left office, he still conducted autopsies for the county. The law allowed \$10 per autopsy if not performed by the coroner; coroners were paid up to \$25. In April 1949, Stone announced that going forward, he would do no more “post-mortems for less than \$50 each.” The county could not legally pay that amount, and no “physicians qualified to perform autopsies”

Oct. 1, 1931.
SPRINGFIELD, MO.
Office of Prosecuting Attorney
Greene County, Mo.
C. E. 1640
TO MURRAY C. STONE, M. D., DR.
LABORATORY 542 MEDICAL ARTS BUILDING

Sep, 28, 1931
Examination of truck, clothing, and finger nail
scrapings for blood stains
\$10.00

OK in wheel

CHECKED BY
COUNTY AUDITOR
BY E.

O. K.
OCT 7 1931
R. A. YOUNG
PRESIDING JUDGE

were willing to do it for that amount. A bill was pending in the state legislature that would allow local authorities to determine the amount paid for autopsies. The current coroner, Randolph Neale, visited Jefferson City to promote the bill.

Stone went to St. Mary’s Hospital in Kansas City for an eye operation in May 1950. After the operation, he had a gall bladder attack and had to stay in the hospital for a few days. A year later, at 71-years-old, he had a heart attack and died in St. John’s Hospital on June 12, 1951. He is buried in Worcester County, Massachusetts, near his parents.

[1] Eleanor Mabel Stone served on several local boards and committees, including the Women’s Welfare Home, the Parent Teacher Association, and served as the corresponding secretary for the Greene County Free Clinic.

[2] Eleanor Stone filed for divorce in December 1923, citing abandonment. The divorce was final in January 1924. The following April, he married Olive Wilson.

[3] Maude Hendrix completed her husband’s term in office.

COUNTY COURT RECORD.

Sept 9 1893, 4 day of September Term.

John W. Hancock,

vs

Greene County,

} account for \$1.35

Ordered by the Court that the

above act for bringing
Township at last August
election is hereby allowed.

Elijah A. Ball,

vs

Greene County,

} above act be allowed,
Osage Twp. last Aug election

W. W. Payne

vs

Greene County,

} above act be allowed, for bringing
Twp. last August election.

James M. Williams

vs

Greene County,

} the above act be allowed,
Spring river Township
election. distance for

Elisha Testament

vs

Greene County

} the above account
allowed, for returning
river Township, at the
distance Eighty one

News from the County Record

In the latest installment of our series about the organization of Greene County, we open with the fall county court term that began on September 8, 1834. The previous month, James Dollison was reelected as a county judge, and two new judges were elected: Alexander Younger and Benjamin Chapman. Dollison was appointed presiding judge of the court. John P. Campbell was still county clerk, and he appointed Cornelius D. Terrell as deputy clerk.

Also at the August election, Benjamin U. Goodrich won the vote for sheriff, beating Frank Leeper, William Townsend, and P. L. Smith. However, Goodrich died on election night; the county court appointed John W. Hancock as sheriff pro tem. Governor Daniel Dunklin later appointed Chesley Cannefax. John Roberts was elected county coroner.

The August election lasted for two days, and the county court paid six men to bring poll books from all county townships to Springfield. One of those men was Jessie Jennings, who rode to Springfield from White River Township, a distance of 40 miles, for which he was paid \$2. John W. Hancock came from Jackson Township, 27 miles away, and was paid \$1.35. Elisha Testament covered the most distance, riding 80 miles from Elk River Township; he was paid \$4 for his long journey.

Most of the two-day court session was taken up with guardianship issues and the payment of fees; the fall term closed on September 9.

Records Available

- Assessor's House & Business Photographs
- Collector's Tax Books – Personal Property
- Collector's Tax Books – Real Estate
- Coroner's/Medical Examiner's Records
- Recorder's Deed Indexes
- Springfield Council Proceedings, Ordinances, and Resolutions
- County Poor Farm Records
- Alms House Records
- Probate Records and Wills
- Sanborn Maps
- Circuit Court Records – Civil and Criminal
- Justice of the Peace Books
- Dram Shop and Pool Licenses





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