
News, Updates, & More

Varner Family Genealogy

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FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Copies of all issues of the newsletter are downloadable from the Varner Family website.

<http://home.kc.surewest.net/btvarner/VarnerGenealogy.htm>

Some files require a password to open. That password is: VarnerFamily (Case sensitive, no spaces).

2015 Newton/Varner Reunion

The time is here! The 2015 Newton/Varner family reunion will be held in Bolivar on Saturday May 23rd. We will have the facility between 10am and 4pm. Most attendees arrive just before lunch.

The address is:
1850 W. Broadway St.
Bolivar, MO.

Looking forward to the attendance of everyone!

Working on subject matter for the reunion. See you there!

QUESTIONS / NEWS

If you have anything interesting to share at the reunion, I will have a projector there and can show the information if you can provide it to me digitally.

For those who have internet access, you might try “The Genealogy Guys Podcast” site. There you can find weekly podcasts that deal in genealogy news and has plenty of interesting genealogy information. Prior podcasts are available on the site. The site address is: <http://genealogyguys.com/>

Speaking of podcasts, Family Tree Magazine also has a series of genealogy podcasts. Again, older podcasts are also available. The page also provides detailed information on how to listen to the podcasts. Family Tree Magazine address is: <http://familytreemagazine.com/Info/Podcasts>

My Heritage.com has produced a listing of the “Top 100 Genealogy Sites” on the internet. The links are to some very interesting sites. If you are interested, the site address is: <http://blog.myheritage.com/myheritage-coms-top-100-genealogy-sites-2010/>

The Use of Money During the Life of George Varner of Missouri

I thought it might be enlightening to discuss money in the time of George Varner. Specifically what was used during that time

period to fulfill the purpose. Today we use US currency, credit, and debit cards to pay for items we require, and receive the same for services rendered or items we sell. How much different was it then?

First, it seems unlikely that the small rural farmer of the day saw actual money very often. During the purchase or sale of land, maybe the purchase or sale of animals and equipment needed for farming, is the likely time that “money” would have exchanged hands. In rural Missouri the mercantile businesses and large farming or timbering operations would have most regularly dealt with money.

I think that it is safe to say that for the small farm owner, tenant farmer, or day laborer of 18th century Missouri, transactions were primarily fulfilled by trading labor or products of the farm. Informal IOU’s negotiated either through a hand shake or a scribbled note of paper were also common. Much of the purchase of merchandise was also conducted by this small time borrowing and trading. Especially away from major towns. Settling debts from such IOU’s would have likely occurred seasonally, when the crops came in or livestock was sold.

It is curious to understand what the different members of the state’s rural society, well-to-do or destitute, would have carried in their pockets that served the same role as the currency or debit cards of today? There is more to answering this question than you might think. Several factors of the day played a part in how Missourians felt about money.

In pre-statehood Missouri Territory, money was whatever the person you were trading with thought was valuable. If you were lucky enough to have a few silver Spanish reals¹, French livre², or coinage of other countries great, everyone understood the worth of silver or gold by weight. But silver or gold coins and gold dust was not abundant enough to handle all monetary transactions. One dollar was a lot of money. It might represent a month's labor. Not many people today carry a month's salary around in their pocket. Nor would persons of that time period.

A person could have a few pennies, depending on how common access was to this denomination. More likely a poorer person carried nothing except when something specific was being bartered for. In those cases the payment might be made with fur pelts, bushels of grain, or a chicken. The merchant or large land owner on the other hand could have easily been carrying a few pieces of silver.

All coins of the era were made of silver or gold. The term used for such coins was "hard" money. Coins held their value and did not fluctuate like the "fur money". A beaver pelt or deer skin might be worth one amount this year and less or more the next, while hard money always kept its value.³

¹ The real was minted by the Spanish in Mexico City and other sites south of Mexico from the 1500's and were common in early North America. Wikipedia: Currency of Spanish America

² A silver piece of France representing 18 ½ cents. Centennial History of Missouri, Vol 2, by Walter Barlow Stevens, p. 429

³ Centennial History of Missouri, Vol 2, by Walter Barlow Stevens, p. 431

"With the close of the War of 1812 came the rising tide of immigration (Into Missouri) which demanded something more than fur money, coin, and makeshift currency." The first bank of Missouri was organized around this time and the first bank note issued.⁴ This initially affected the large merchants only.

After 1820, when it was known that Missouri would become a state, what was considered money began to change.

In June 1821 the Missouri legislator made a mistake. What would come to be known as the "Loan Office Act" was passed. The act authorized issuance of certificates which became authorized for use in Missouri as legal tender for salaries, fees, taxes, and commodities. These certificates were to be redeemable at 2% interest annually. Within two years this backfired. Counterfeits surfaced. People lost faith in the certificates and panic sold them for pennies on the dollar. The State of Missouri had to buy back all certificates. \$184,788.00 of certificates were issued by the state. \$188,647.00 of the certificates were bought back by the state. For a generation thereafter, this subject was of prominent political importance in Missouri.⁵

In 1829 a branch of the Bank of the United States was opened in St. Louis. Slowly its paper currency would be circulated.

In 1832 Andrew Jackson was closing out his 1st term as President. Jackson and most "ordinary" people believed that the Bank of

⁴ Centennial History of Missouri, Vol 2, by Walter Barlow Stevens, p. 433

⁵ Centennial History of Missouri, Vol 2, by Walter Barlow Stevens, p. 439-440

the United States was unconstitutional. It controlled the money supply and printed money. Jackson and many others believed that only hard money could be the basis for finances. He felt that the bank placed too much dominance in the hands of mercantile businessmen. Further, it was felt that mismanagement at the hands of the bank caused the financial panic of 1819.

That year a bill was passed by congress extending the charter of the Bank of the United States. Jackson vetoed it. This action must have been popular because Jackson was re-elected. After re-election Jackson had all the funds in The Bank of the United States moved to other "state" banks. The Bank of the United States finally closed when its charter formally ran out in 1836.⁶

Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton was a vocal champion of the Jackson position. He committed the Missouri Democratic Party to specie⁷. "He advocated a monetary system in which there should be no money other than the precious metals." Another strike against paper money.

In 1837 the business class of Missouri garnered support and established the Bank of the State of Missouri. Even with staunch opposition of Benton, again bank notes were printed. Although common people avoided the currency when possible business men understood the need. \$10,000.00 in gold or silver took up a large amount of space and was hard to move around. \$10,000.00 in bank notes on the

other hand consisted of only a few flat pieces of paper. Plus the smaller denomination notes more easily served as salary for larger workforces.

The panic of 1837 brought about a flood of what would be called "shinplaster". Bank notes from out of state banks that lost much of its value because of the depressive times after the panic. The Bank of the State of Missouri wisely refused to accept or provide bank notes from any other bank, and used only its own. This kept the bank solvent through these rough times. The common, non-businessman however once again had the wariness of paper money reinforced.⁸

Throughout this period the Missouri farmer or laborer would have still carried out transactions much the same method as during the pre-statehood year. Precious metal coins for hording under the mattress, and other tradable items, trading labor, or IOU's for most common transactions.

In 1862 another strike against paper money occurred. Missouri Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson was pro-south, when the Civil War erupted, Jackson attempted to have Missouri leave the Union but fled Jefferson City when he could not achieve that goal. The US military countered Governor Jackson by declaring that Jackson had abdicated as governor and installed a pro Union governor. Jackson, the governor in exile had notes printed to support the confederate cause in Missouri. Many in Missouri were southern sympathizers and as the war turned against the south, these

⁶ <http://www.history.com/topics/bank-of-the-united-states>

⁷ Money in the form of coins rather than notes. Merriam-Webster Dictionary

⁸ Centennial History of Missouri, Vol 2, by Walter Barlow Stevens, p. 447

notes lost value Yet another case of paper money disaster.

“In 1863, an act with the stated purpose of creating a national currency and which permitted state banks to become national banks was passed by the United States Congress. While a national currency was undoubtedly needed, the main underlying purpose of the act was to better finance the Union's Civil War effort..... In 1865, Congress imposed a ten percent tax upon the payment after July 1, 1866, of any bank note other than national bank notes. As a result of this statute, most of the bank notes that had been issued by state-chartered Missouri banks became national banks”⁹ This had a unifying affect in that it made paper notes more reliable. If a local bank went out of business, its paper notes became worthless. National banks on the other hand had the backing of the United States, and any one banks troubles did not affect the notes.

In the post-Civil War years following the creation of the national currency, confidence increased with the successful use of this US currency in paper form. More and more Missourians began carrying this currency until the practice was common place. This resulted in future Missourians carrying US currency in paper or coin form as the accepted form of payment.

It was not smooth sailing however. Many in the older generations still refused to accept the currency. The panic of 1873 re-instilled fears. But stable paper money was here to stay.

⁹ Mo.gov: Missouri Division of Finance, History of Missouri Bank Regulations

So, what would George Varner of Missouri have carried as money during his life? Cannot know for sure but likely he used the barter system for most transactions throughout his lifetime.

During military days George would have been paid approximately \$5.00 per month in US coin.

In Missouri George would likely have used a combination of coin and normal tradable items of the day, such as skins, animals, or crops. Interesting to think about.....

George Varner of Missouri Direct Line DNA

Continue to seek progress with these individuals in procuring Varner DNA.

George Varner (1789-1861)

Samuel Philip Varner (1846-1896)

Francis Logan Varner (1874-1939)

Norman Walter Varner (1912-1997)

Raymond Walter Varner (1942-200xs)

Mother Lela Corneett

Jason Raymond Varner (40)

Mother Christine Elizabeth Swillium

Micha? Dority Varner (38)

Mother Nancy Dority

Norman Fredrick (Butch) Varner (68)

Mother Alice Ethlene Brown

Michael Logan Varner (43)

Michael Lee Varner (36)

George Henry Varner (1880-1946)

Henry Edgar Varner (1919-2003)

James Varner (??)

William Varner (??)

Henry Lee Varner (55)

Below are some examples of currency during this timeframe.



Spanish Real



French Livres

Both the above coins were often cut into four pieces along the cross lines and thereby become quarter dollars in value.



Early Missouri Bank Note



Civil War note issues by Governor Claiborne Jackson to support the confederate cause.



US Demand Note used when the 1863 national currency act was passed.



1879 US National Currency, National Bank note.

As always, please contact me with ideas
for future newsletters.....

Bruce Varner