

News, Updates, & More

Varner Family Genealogy

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April 2018

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Prior newsletters and other family genealogy information can be found on the Varner Family website.

<http://brucevarner.com/VarnerGenealogy.htm>

2018 Varner/Newton/Williams Reunion

2018 reunion is scheduled for Saturday, May 26th, 2018, in Macks Creek:

Macks Creek Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall
Macks Creek, MO. 65786

Opening at 10:00am! Because of travel, people often begin to leave the event about 3:00pm. Hope to see everyone!

This month's main article was brought to my attention, and information provided by Linda Newton Cushman. The actual work was done by Edith Whitworth in 1994, and by James P. Anderton. Enjoy!

QUESTIONS / NEWS

No questions this month.

George Varner of Missouri Direct Line DNA

No updates this month.

Riggs/Varner Connection

Dee Hunt Bremer contacted me about a newly discovered autosomal match to her. The match, listed via Ancestry DNA with a "Very High" confidence, has a family tree that has one line going back to Edmund Riggs.

This is great! Another piece to the puzzle that helps reinforce Edmund Riggs as father of Nancy Ann Varner's children. This is one of the ways autosomal is so important! It helps to add evidence using total strangers. Not conclusive through a single match, but rather by multiple matches along with additional information.

The Story of Felix Whitworth

Like many of us, I get focused on a specific goal and sometimes overlook things right in front of me. So to with genealogy. When I think of genealogy, I too often focus on ancestors and events as far back as possible. People about whom we know little. But, sometimes new details surface about places and people we believe we already know.

Camden County and our relatives or ancestors who have lived there is a good example. Although I grew up in Raytown, near Kansas City, we made regular trips to Macks Creek and the surrounding area. For holidays, during the summer, and for hunting. So I have not given much thought to the history of our families once in Camden County. Everything is already known right? Wrong! This story is going to be about events that took place in Camden County that even involved cousins.

I do not know if we are related to the Whitworth family. But they were neighbors. It is a fascinating story and helps give additional insight into early life in Camden County.

Some of what I relate below is paraphrased from a story in the Spring 1994 issue of Missouri Magazine. That story was written by Edith Whitworth. I will not be noting every reference for this article.¹ I have placed a portion of that article by Edith Whitworth on the website and I strongly encourage everyone to read it for themselves. It adds much more color to those events. I do reference other places where I obtained information as they are mentioned.

The Whitworth family moved to Camden County from Tennessee in the 1830's.

¹ Missouri Magazine, Spring 1994 Issue, pages 23-26
<http://missourimagazines.com/>

The family consisted of James Whitworth, his wife, daughter, and son Felix. The family settled along the Big Niangua River around what has been known as the Whitworth Bend, or Nine-Mile Bend.² Felix Whitworth was born before their migration, in 1832 and later married at 17.

The interaction of Felix with our relatives is one of the things that makes this story so intriguing.

An overview of what is alleged to have happened is provided below through excerpts from newspaper articles of the time.

“Daily Bazoo – Sedalia, MO.

Dec. 7, 1869

Latest News

T. W. Moses. One of Sedalia’s most respected citizens, and Dept. U.S. Marshal SHOT DEAD! While attending to his official duties.

Tipton, Mo., Dec. 7th, 1869. Mack J. Leaming, Sedalia, Mo. T. W. Moses shot dead on the 4th inst. Will bring corpse on mail train. Break to friends.

Ben Ratcliff

Assistant Assessor Revenue”

² I was unable to find an early Whitworth land patent in the area of Whitworth Bend. In fact the first Whitworth patent was not until 1859, and was just south of Macks Creek, some distance from Whitworth Bend, so it seems likely they squatted on land in that area, as did so many others.

“Sedalia Democrat

Dec. 9, 1869

Death of T. W. Moses.

We are called upon to record another deed of blood; we are to chronicle the assassination of one of our own and most honored citizens. Death is terrible under all circumstances, but in this case our pen is too infinitely weak to portray that thrill of horror that seized our citizens on last Tuesday, upon the reception of the telegram that announced the crusing news that our fellow-townsmen, Theodore W. Moses, U. S. Deputy Marshal for this district, had fallen by the ruthless hand of the assassin.

The facts attending his death, as nearly as we can learn, are as follows:

Information having been filed before United States Commissioner Washburne, for this district, that a man by the name of Felix Whitworth was engaged in illicit distilling in the country of Camden, a warrant was issued for his arrest, which process was placed in Marshal Moses’ hands to be executed. Colonel Leaming requested him to take sufficient help and arrest the supposed offender.

Mr. Moses, in company with Benj. Radcliffe, Esq, went, on last Saturday, to the immediate neighborhood of Whitworth’s house, for the purpose of arranging for his arrest.

They put up at the house of **James. C. Pile**³ to stay all night, Pile, his wife and one Richardson being in the house. Just after dark, while Messrs. Moses, Radcliffe and the other occupants of the house were quietly sitting by the fire, the door was opened, a rifle gun thrust in, and a rough voice exclaimed, "Halt! God d—n you, halt! And immediately fired, the shot taking effect in Mr. Moses' right side. When the door was opened the inmates all sprang to their feet, consequently Mr. Moses was standing when he receive the fatal shot. Mr. Moses lived only thirty minutes after he was shot, retained his reason until life was extinct, and passed peacefully away; the immediate cause of his death doubtless being internal hemorrhage.

The murder made good his escape, and has not been arrested, so far as we are advised.

A more fiendish and unprovoked murder could not be conceived or perpetrated, and we do most sincerely hope that the foul assassin may be speedily brought to pay the penalty due the outraged law and this great crime against society.

Mr. Moses was in the 28th year; a man of great personal excellences, he was king, suave and gentlemanly in his demeanor; courteous to all, offensive to none, a true friend, and upright citizen, the pride

of his family and a welcome guest in our best circles. Cut down in the prime of his manhood, without a moment's warning, and just as the future began to light up his life with its bright rainbow hues of hope, he is shot down, murdered in cold blood, away from the wife of his bosom, from family, from friends whose affection would gladly have turned aside the missile of death, had they been near, or, failing in this, would have perished there too. Mr. Moses may have had faults, and who has not, but his many virtues so refined his failings, if any he had, that he endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact. His body reached here on Tuesday evening, and was followed to the grave on yesterday by the Masonic and Odd Fellows Brotherhoods (he was a member of both orders), his sorrowing family and a large concourse of citizens. Previous to repairing to the cemetery, the funeral cortege entered the Presbyterian Church, where an impressive discourse was delivered by the Rev. C. H. Dunlap.

The death of Mr. Moses has cast a gloom over this whole community, and all would gladly share in the grief of his stricken family, but each feels his own sufficient sorrow."

"Daily Illinois State Journal (Springfield, Ill.)

Thursday, December 09, 1869

F. W. Moses, of Sedalia, Mo., Deputy U. S. Marshal, was shot and killed by Felix Whitworth on Saturday, the 4th inst., at 6 o'clock, in Camden county, eighteen

³ James C. Pile is the same James C. Piles, and Carl Piles, buried in the Berry Family Cemetery in Miller County and mentioned in several other places in this article. (See February 2018 Newsletter "Berry Family Cemetery") James Piles wife Emily was the daughter of Phillip & Rachel Newton Berry, and sister to Edmund Riggs wife.

miles from Linn creek. Moses, together with Mr. Ben Ratcliff, Assistant U. S. Assessor, went there to arrest Whitworth, who was running an illicit distillery, who had been hiding and avoiding arrest. Moses and Ratcliff had stopped at a house for the night, and were seated in front of a fireplace. The door of the house was thrown open and the fatal shot fired, the ball entering the body in the vicinity of the right nipple. He lived about thirty minutes. Whitworth is a desperate character, and made his escape.”

“Daily Bazoo – Sedalia, MO.,

Dec. 29, 1869

From the Saint Louis Democrat,
December 2?

The Murder of Moses.

.....There is no doubt that the murder was committed by Felix Whitworth, who was running one of the distilleries which the Deputy Marshal had instruction to seize, and for whom the Marshal had been searching. Mr. Moses and those with him went on the day before the murder, to Whitworth’s house, but were told that he was at the distillery; going there they found traces that he had been there shortly before; returning to the house they learned that he was still absent, and they then went to the house of a neighbor named **J. C. Piles** to pass the night. To this house the murderer came, opened the door, and shot Mr. Moses as he was sitting before the fire. **Mr. Piles** testifies that he recognized the voice as that of Whitworth, and the rifle pushed through the door, as his –

knowing it by some peculiarity of mountings. Over two thousand dollars reward has been offered for his arrest, and he is supposed to be still in the hills near the place where the murder was committed.....”

The Missouri Magazine 1994 article also described that Deputy Moses and Assessor Radcliffe had settled in for the night at the home of Carl Piles, just downriver from the Whitworth Bend.⁴ See [Whitworth Bend](#) map and [Piles Cabin](#) photo at end of article.

Edith Whitworth went on to write that Moses and “Radcliffe” went to the Felix Whitworth home and were told that Felix was off hunting wild hogs. One of the two men held up a set of shackles and said they would soon arrest Felix.

After the murder Felix left behind his wife and five children. He took up with a widow named Mary Richardson who herself left seven children to go on the lamb with Felix.

The two fled to Arkansas. In June of the next year (1870) they were found and Felix arrested by U. S. Deputy Marshal McKean and an assistant, in Randolph County, Arkansas.

⁴ Land patents show that James C. Piles at the time had several “lots”. This may also indicate that James C. Piles went by the first name of Carl.....

"Public Ledger (Memphis, TN.)

Friday, June 10, 1870

Arrest of a Murderer.

We find the following account of the arrest of a murderer who had been sojourning in Arkansas, in the St. Louis Times of the 9th:

Wednesday afternoon Felix Whitworth was brought to the county jail by Deputy United States Marshal S. W. McKean, to be held for safe keeping until five o'clock. Whitworth had some difficulty in Camden county with Deputy U. S. Marshal Morse⁵ last fall in regard to a distillery and during a reencounter on the 4th of December, killed him and fled. For five months Marshal McKean has steadily followed him, and on the 2nd of June found him in Randolph county, Arkansas, under the assumed name of McConnell Richardson, working on the cotton plantation of Mr. Dooty. The prisoner is about five feet eight inches in height, slimly built with dark, cadaverous face, which, however, was not devoid of a certain gentleness. He was clothed in blue and brown jeans, his head covered with a dirty white slouched hat, and was altogether a fair specimen of the uneducated, lawless backwoodsman. He was taken away heavily ironed, to Camden,⁶ at five o'clock last evening via the Pacific railroad."

⁵ Moses, not Morse.

⁶ Another mistake in reporting. Felix was transported to St. Louis and then Sedalia, not Camden County.

After Felix Whitworth arrived back at the jail in Sedalia, there were threats made by citizens to lynch Whitworth. For that reason he was moved from the jail in Sedalia, to a jail in Warrensburg.

"Sedalia Democrat

June 16, 1870

FELIX WHITWORTH.

As announced last week, this man who is accused of the murderer of T. W. Moses late of this city, was brought here by United States Deputy Marshall McKean. He was taken to Warrensburg and lodged in Jail to await his trial. Before leaving this city, there were some threats of lynching him, but Col. Leaming appealed to the crowd to let the law take its course, and the appeal was not in vain. We do not wonder that our citizens should feel somewhat vindictive towards the accused murderer of Moses, but we are glad that no violence was offered, as we stand irrevocably oppose to mob law, and then it would have been cowardly to murder a man, criminal though he may be, who is chained and at the mercy of his captors. We think that there are but few of our people who would sanction violent measures in any case, and we are glad they are so few."

Justice for Felix was not to be. He, along with an accused embezzler, and a horse thief escaped.

"Sedalia Democrat

Thursday Sept. 8, 1870

ESCAPED.

Felix Whitworth, who as charged with the murder of Deputy Marshal Moses, late of this city, escaped from the Warrensburg Jail on last Friday night. Two others escaped with him. They cut a hole through sheet iron and the brick wall and escaped. Whitworth was ironed, but it is supposed that he cut them off after his escape, as an axe was found, badly beaten up in the back yard. We shall rejoice to hear of his recapture, in which event we insist that he be sent to the Penitentiary for safe keeping."

Felix Whitworth was never recaptured.

"He looks like a fool," a man who knew Whitworth well once remarked of him to a newspaperman, "but is as sharp as chain lightning."

Stories have surfaced that Felix went back to Arkansas and lived out his days, but no one appears to know for sure.

The other interesting point that this story brings to light, is that our cousins had connections between Miller County and Camden County early on. James Piles lived in Miller County, moved to Camden County, and then moved back to Miller where he died.

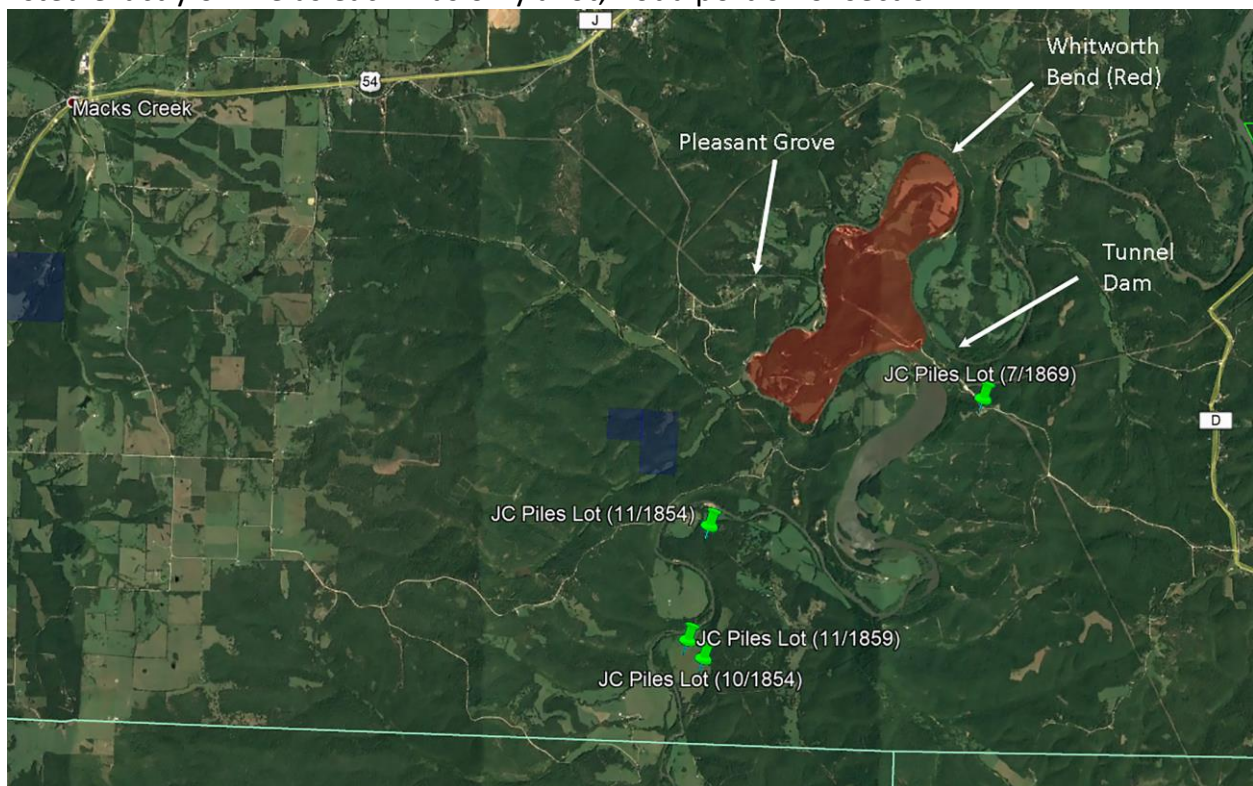
Maybe there are other stories out there about our Williams, Varner, Newton, Piles, and Riggs ancestors that would further connect early lives between the two counties.

Waiting for spring!

Bruce Varner

See next page for images

Area in RED is the Whitworth Bend. Green Pins indicate “Lots” owned by James C. Piles. Accounts would seem to indicate that the lot just outside of Whitworth Bend would have been the spot of Piles cabin and where the Deputy was killed. Pine are not in exactly the correct spots, because I have not searched the records locally, and they are listed exactly online as each was only a lot, not a portion of section.....



A photo of the Piles home where U. S. Deputy Moses was shot & killed. From the Missouri Magazine, Spring 1994 Issue.

