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# MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW.

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## CONTENTS

The Journals of Capt. Thomas Beck Nell	-	65
Peculiarities of Life in Daniel Boone's Missouri Settlement, by Will S. Bryan	- -	85
Col. Robert T. Van Horn, by Supt. J. M. Greenwood	- - - -	92
A Short Biographical Sketch of Gov. Lilburn W. Boggs, by W. M. Boggs	- -	106
History of the County Press of Missouri, by Miss Minnie Organ	- -	111
Notes	- - - - -	134
Book Notices	- - - - -	137
Necrology	- - - - -	141
The Missouri Society of Teachers of History and Government	- - -	147

A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF LILBURN W.  
BOGGS, BY HIS SON.

Lilburn W. Boggs, -Ex-Governor of the State of Missouri, was born in Lexington, Kentucky, the 14th day of December, 1792, and died March 4, 1860, at his farm in Napa Valley, California.

At the age of eighteen years he went to St. Louis and was cashier of one of the first banks of that city. He married a daughter of Judge Silas Bent, one of the oldest families of St. Louis, by whom he had issue two sons, Angus and Henry. His wife, Julia Ann Bent, died at an early age. His second wife, Panthea Grant Boone, was a daughter of Jesse Boone, a son of old Daniel Boone, of Kentucky fame, by whom he had issue ten children. She was born in Greenup County, Kentucky, where the city or town of Maysville is that was once the land or home of her father, and was the mother of the writer of this sketch. Ex-Governor Boggs was a brother-in-law to Judge Carr of St. Louis, whose wife was also a daughter of Judge Silas Dent. The Carr place in St. Louis is called after Judge Carr. Lilburn W. Boggs, the subject of this sketch, was acquainted with nearly all the early settlers of St. Louis,—the Chouteaus, the Robidoux, the Sublettes, and Campbells, of early days. Old Bill Sublette was a famous mountaineer and had three brothers, Andrew, Perry and Solomon. Old Antoine Rubidoux was the founder of St. Joseph, Missouri. L. W. Boggs was engaged in merchandising in different towns along the Missouri river, such as old St. Charles, old Franklin, opposite to the City of Boonville in Cooper County, Missouri, Fort Osage (near where the writer of these lines was born in 1826, October 21st), from which point L. W. Boggs hauled his goods out to his trading posts among the Osage and Kaw Indians. He finally settled down in the old frontier town, Independence, Missouri, in

Jackson County, and at one time was engaged in the Santa Fe trade about the year 1832 or 1833. He was well acquainted with all the leading business men of the City of St. Louis, such as Hon. Edward Bates, Judge Dent, Grant's father-in-law, who lived in the country on his farm. He was Lieut. Governor of the State of Missouri and later was elected Governor, holding the latter office from 1836 to 1840. He officiated at laying the corner stone of the present State capitol of Missouri. His name and that of other State officers are engraved on a large stone over the front entrance to the capitol where six large granite columns encircle the rotunda in front. L. W. Boggs was Governor of Missouri at the time of the trouble with the Mormons by the citizens of Jackson County, Missouri, his old home, but did not take part in the first riots and troubles with the Mormons and citizens of Jackson County. But after he was elected Governor he was induced to call out the State Militia and had the Mormons removed from the State, for which act the Mormons sent an emissary to Independence to assassinate him for revenge for having them removed from the State. They settled in Illinois and founded the town of Nauvoo at which place their prophet and leader, Joe Smith, prophesied from their temple, that the Ex-Governor of Missouri would die by violence inside of twelve months. In order to fulfill his prophecy, he hired an assassin to go to Missouri, and waylay the Ex-Governor and kill him. The assassin came to Independence in disguise as a common laborer and hired to a man to take care of a stallion, and after familiarizing himself with the Ex-Governor's habits and his family residence, slipped up one dark rainy evening and discharged a load of bullets from a large German holster pistol at the back of the Governor's head as he sat in his private family room reading his newspaper close to the front window, only a few feet distant, not over four feet, firing through the window while the other members of the family were with their mother yet in the dining room finishing their evening meal. Four balls took

effect in his neck and head, two of which penetrated his skull and lodged in the left lobe of his brain, and one went through the hollow of his neck and passed through the roof of his mouth which he swallowed with blood as his head hung over the back of his chair, while stunned from the shock. One ball lodged in the neck, among the muscles of the neck. There were seventeen balls altogether in the charge, those which did not strike the Governor passing over and around the head of his little daughter, six years old, who stood directly in line with her father and the window, rocking a crib cradle with an infant sister in it, striking the plastered wall of the opposite side of the room. The pistol had kicked out of the assassin's hand, which he did not take time to pick up again in the dark, and it was picked up by the assembled crowd, some one having tramped upon it. The pistol was recognized by its owner who said it had been stolen out of his store. He always thought that negroes had stolen it, but he remembered that a man by the name of Orin P. Rockwell, who kept the stable for Mr. Ward, the owner of the stallion, tried to buy it. Rockwell waited until he had been discharged and broke into this store and stole the pistol, a large German holster pistol, that chambered four balls or large buck shot. That clue was followed up and the Mormon's plan to revenge themselves on the people of Missouri was exposed and led to the arrest of this Orin P. Rockwell at the City of St. Louis, while trying to make his escape from Nauvoo at the time the authorities and citizens had offered a reward of \$3,000 for his arrest. The officer who arrested him at the steamer landing while he was trying to get away, disguised, was named Fox, a detective. The writer does not remember Mr. Fox' first name, but heard him relate the circumstance and of bringing him to Independence from St. Louis by stage all alone, handcuffed. The sheriff placed a guard of fifty men around the jail to protect the prisoner. After a long time the criminal got a change of venue to another county across the river, where, by the aid of counsel and money furnished

by the Mormon leaders, he made his escape in the night, but he lived to die a drunken sot and confessed murderer after many years at Salt Lake, where he had been accused of murders on the plains near Salt Lake City. The attempt on the life of Ex-Governor Boggs was made in 1842, after which he lived nineteen years. In 1846 he emigrated to California with his family where he lived the remaining fourteen years of his life. Having held various public offices for about 30 years, it was his intention after settling in California to retire from public life, but at the urgent call of the U. S. Military Governor, General Bennett W. Riley, during the establishing of law and order at the close of the war with Mexico, he was induced to accept the office of alcalde of the Northern District of California,—an important position, having jurisdiction over all the territory of Northern California extending to the Oregon line, including Sutters Fort and the Sacramento Valley and around to the coast, including all the territory north of the bay. All his official acts and his private business were conducted at Sonoma, the only town then north of the bay, being the home and headquarters of General Marino Guadalupe Vallejo, Commandant General of upper California, whose authority ceased at the close of the war with Mexico. Governor Boggs kept a large amount of his official documents, and his official acts are matters of record in the county records of Sonoma County at Santa Rosa, the county seat. All transactions in sales of lands, contracts, and criminal proceedings, by trials with juries, and even the performing of the marriage ceremony were performed by him as alcalde. His official and private papers after his death and long before had been kept in an iron safe, and were overhauled by various members of the family, and in search of many notes and accounts remaining unpaid by his customers during his mercantile pursuits at Sonoma, California, there was found a large amount of his public correspondence and other data during his term of office as alcalde of the Northern District of California, but these were consumed by being carelessly

burned by some of the junior members of the family at his farm in Napa Valley. I have written several short biographical sketches of his public and private career from memory, commencing from the time of his birth until his death, that are published in several historical works, and have supplied the State Librarian of California with a photograph of him and a short history of his life, which are kept on file in the Historical Department of the State Library in the capitol at Sacramento.

I have written this sketch from my own personal knowledge and dates taken from his family record of the births and deaths of the various members of the family, as recorded on pages in the old family record in my possession. His life was an eventful one and he had much to do with framing the laws of the State of Missouri. A full and complete biography of his life would fill many pages of history, and as I am in my eighty-third year I do not believe I could do the subject of so great a task justice on account of failing memory.

WILLIAM M. BOGGS.

Napa, California, April 3, 1909.

Following this was a paper by Miss Fannie Bennett, St. Louis, on "Victories of War vs. Victories of Peace."

In order that a definite communication might be made with other societies with regard to the time and place of meeting of the third annual meeting, a motion was carried that the society meet at Kirksville the second Saturday in May next.

Mr. S. A. Baker, Joplin, then read a paper on "The Future Citizen and Civics Instruction in the High Schools." Interesting discussions followed in which Miss Atwater, Dr. Loeb and Mr. Baker took leading parts.

A business meeting followed. The minutes of the last meeting were read and accepted. The financial report of the secretary was also accepted. The vice president of the society having left the State, Mr. J. M. Wood, Fredericktown, was chosen in his place. Mr. J. L. Shouse of Westport was chosen a member of Educational Council for a term of three years. A motion was carried that in case of any doubt about the time and place of the next meeting the matter should be settled by the Executive Council.

Mr. Violette, the chairman of the Committee on High Schools, then made a preliminary report. This chairman also made some remarks about the committee on teaching in the Elementary Schools. The chairman of the Elementary School Committee having left the State, it was agreed that the president should appoint another chairman.

A motion was then carried that the society leave the time of the meeting of the next State Teachers' Association to the Executive Committee of the association. The meeting then adjourned. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that the society is just beginning its day of usefulness. It is much to be deplored that persons who are often very enthusiastic when on the program are conspicuous by their absence when left off. The society needs a larger membership. It has now a paid membership of about forty. Its funds are meager. During the last year it has been permitted to do some very useful work through the kindness of State Superintendent Gass.

EUGENE FAIR, Secretary.