

**CASS COUNTY
GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY**
Newsletter July 2022

Hello Family Detective,

Thursday, July 28 is the next meeting of the Cass County Genealogical Society beginning at 1 pm at the Atlantic public Library. Invite your friends.

Glenda Farrier will be giving the program which might give you some goose bumps.

President CCGS,
LaVon

WITCHES, OH MY!

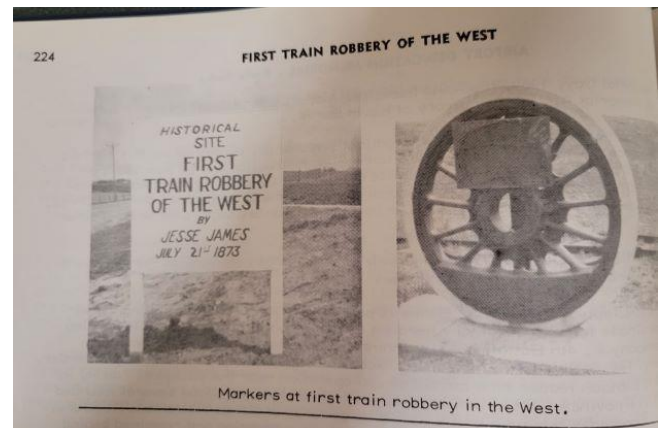
The History of the Salem Witch Trials will be the featured program presented by Glenda Farrier. Glenda has been doing family genealogy off and on for many years but only discovered her connection to Salem about two years ago. Several branches of her family came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1630's leaving England, and seeking religious freedom.

Some 60 years later, her 8th great grandmother was accused of witchcraft and hanged as one of the 20 witches put to death during the Salem Witch Trials in 1692. It was an unbelievable event in our country's history and even today, there are no good explanations for what happened.

Note From Mary

While indexing the Anita Centennial Book 1875-1975, I found several pages on Jesse James, the motorist bank robber. I knew he and his gang robbed the Rock Island on July 23, 1873 between Anita and Adair but had no idea he

was worth three pages in their centennial book. The following was typed from the Anita Centennial Book



Page 224 First Train Robbery of the West. The news article was taken from *the Des Moines Sunday Register of July 23, 1939* describes it this way. Kent Pellett was the writer.

Jesse James robbed his first train in Iowa. The outlaw made his own peculiar contributions to society by inventing the train stickup and the daylight bank robbery. His first train holdup was the Rock Island at Adair, Iowa, in July 1873. That was the first train ever to be wrecked and robbed in the United States. At that time, James was already becoming noted for his bank cracking's and stage coach robberies. Tall tales of this two-gun man were already making him a legend.

Jesse James, a preacher's son, grew up about like any other Missouri kid. He and his brother, Frank, went to Sunday School, and were known as good boys. But young Jesse could drop a red headed woodpecker at 50 paces. He became an outlaw when he was 16. The Civil War was on and members of his family were known as southern sympathizers. A band of Union soldiers hunting the notorious guerrilla, William C. Quantrill, invaded the home. When nobody would talk, they hanged Jesse's stepfather to a tree until he was almost dead, then beat Jesse on the back with a knotted rope. Jesse was not

one to take it. "Ma! " he yelled "I'll join Quantrill!" and he did.

Page 225 continued: During the war Jesse James got his "education " under Quantrill, one of the bloodiest Americans who ever lived. He and Frank took part in Centralia, Mo. massacre, when Quantrill's band wiped out 226 Union soldiers in one day. Jess survived 22 wounds, including two great holes in his lungs. When the war was over, he gave himself up and went home to Clay County, Missouri, to cure his lungs, get married and join the Baptist Church. After that there was a race in Jesse's life between God and the devil. There was blood on his hand and the law would not let him alone.

One night detectives came to his house to arrest him. Jesse awoke from his bed where he still lay with his lung wouldn't and fired at them through the front door. The detectives fired from the front of the house while Jesse ran out the back. Now Jesse and Brother Frank took up with their band of desperadoes.

When Jesse went abroad he always wore two Colt .45 revolvers, three cartridge belts and carried a rifle inside an umbrella—said the legends. He planned the Rock Island robbery when it was said the train carried \$75,000 in gold from Cheyenne. Members of the gang waited in Council Bluffs and Omaha to give him the tipoff.

Jesse was 26, tall and wiry with a blond stubby beard and shifty blue eyes.

On a hot July night, the James boys and five of their gang rode their horses through the rolling country of southwestern Iowa to the scene of the holdup. Raiding a station house for tools, they unbolted a rail and tied a rope to it. At 8:30 the train rounded the curve headed for Adair. The outlaws jerked the rail out of place. The engineer reversed his lever—too late. The engine jumped into the gap, turned over, killing the engineer, while the coaches piled up. The gang rode yelling and shooting to the baggage

car where the guard, at the point of a gun, opened the safe for the bandits.

They did not find the \$75,000 in gold—just \$2,000 in currency and some silver bullion. The silver was too heavy for them to carry. In their disgust the outlaws went into the coaches and began sticking up the passenger. They yelled and cursed and shot at the conductor, while women and children shrieked, cried, and fainted.

Thirty Chinese students headed for eastern universities were in the cars, their queues almost on end from fright.

With a few extra oaths and gun shots the James boys mounted their steeds and rode into the night. Soon the wires were hot with the news of the first American train robbery.

Page 226 Continued: At 1 a. m. the 30 Chinese students trooped down the track to Anita, Iowa, saying "This helle country."

Almost overnight Iowa and surrounding states were over-run with posse's, vigilantes and detectives. The Rock Island Railway offered a reward of \$5,000. The State of Iowa was prepared to pay \$600 a head for the robbers.

It was said the James boys were sorry about the Adair job. They hadn't wanted to kill the engineer for a mere \$2,000. The next day after the robbery, when the track had been cleared and the rail replaced, the train carrying the gold which the robbers had been seeking passed through unmolested.

It was thought that Jesse and his gang stopped at the Lincoln Center Hall south of Anita. Jesse James, himself, bought the rope, which was used to pull the rail out of place at the T. J. Burns general store in Casey. Several families in the area of Anita, Adair and Casey claim to have kept part of the gang overnight and fed them meals.

