



MTGS Messenger
Vol. 18, No. 5
September 2022
Jim Long, Editor

September 17 Meeting – Join Us for *Surprises*



Our September 17 meeting will begin at **1:00pm Central Time** at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and via Zoom (see link below).

Our speaker is **Melissa Barker**, Archivist of the Houston County Archives and Museum in Erin, and widely known as “The Archive Lady”. She will present “**Genealogy Surprises, Discoveries, and Outright Lies: Sorting out the Facts.**”

Most genealogists have made discoveries, found surprises, and documented some family information that was outright lies. Whether we are doing the Happy Dance or are shocked by what we have found, it is important that we document this information for future generations. Good or bad, it all tells the story of our ancestors.

Come learn from a seasoned genealogist and archivist the best way to handle the genealogy surprises, discoveries and outright lies that come our way.

Refreshments will be available, and don’t forget to check out the Freebie Table. You never know what you’ll find there (journals, magazines, books and sometimes maps).

The Zoom link for this meeting is <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83882464713>



34th Seminar Season Soon!

If you’re receiving this newsletter, you’ll also be first to know when registration opens for our **34th Annual Genealogical Seminar**, which takes place **November 19** at the **Tennessee State Library and Archives** and via **Zoom**.

Our lineup this year features great local speakers on a variety of topics:

J. Mark Lowe , FUGA	<i>They Drew a Crooked Line and Formed a Border</i>
Carol Roberts , Bedford County Archives	<i>Best Practices of Caring for Family Photographs</i>
Graham Perry , Tennessee Historical Commission	<i>Understanding Tennessee Cemetery Law</i>
Emily Farek , Tennessee State Library and Archives	<i>Care of Paper Collections and Preventive Conservation Basics</i>
Julia Doyle , Tennessee State Museum	<i>Preventive Storage and Care of Textile Collections at Home</i>

We are thrilled to be gathering **in-person** again for our Society's marquee event, and of course still offering remote participation, too. In-person attendees will also enjoy boxed lunches and snacks in the great conference center at the State Library and Archives, which affords **ample, umbrella-free** parking.



Shining a Positive Light on a Negative

A question arose recently in an online, local history group that I belong to. Someone said that she had several old **glass-plate negatives** and wondered where she might get them “developed.” While I’m not a professional photographer, I did have some personal experience to share, as I used to have some glass-plate negatives of my own (before donating them to my local County Archives).

Glass-plate negatives need to be **photographed or scanned while being back-lit**. A **light box** is the typical tool for this task, which provides diffused light behind the negative. You can find all sorts of videos online about how to make your own light box, and they can of course be purchased, ready-made. And many of us already have an excellent camera at our disposal, which also doubles as a telephone.

I recommended to the person who asked that she inquire at her local County Archives to see if they had the equipment to perform the task, in hopes that she might also consider placing those negatives at the Archives for long-term preservation.

Watch Those Buttons

The county in which I do much of my genealogy research is blessed to have a collection of glass-plate negatives from a photographer who worked from about 1905-1935. [Over 1,600 of his glass-plate negatives survive](#), and they've been digitized, using the technique described in the previous article. The collection has been placed online, in hopes of crowd-sourcing the identities of the people and places depicted.

I have been studying the part of this collection that appear to be [school groups](#), hoping to identify at least the buildings / locations, and of course ultimately the students and teachers. I was struggling to identify one particular school building (pictured at left). It looked 'fancy' for the county, which made me suspect it was in the county seat – but the door was on the 'wrong' side of the windows when compared to known photographs of the building.



When I zoomed in for a closer look at the details, I noticed that the **buttons on the boys' shirts and girls' dresses** were on the **wrong side**.

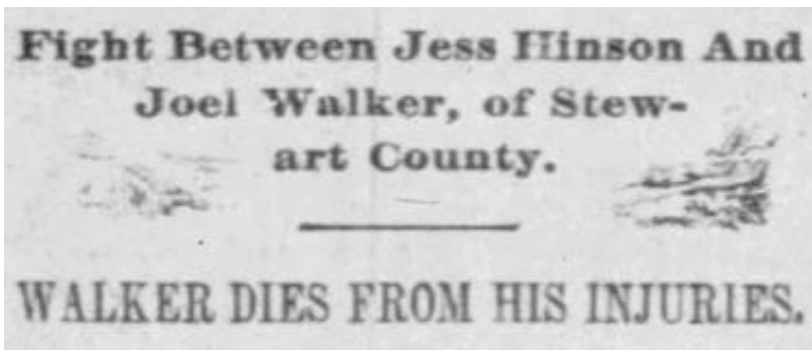
I mirror-imaged the photo on my computer to get the buttons on the 'correct' side, and suddenly the building **perfectly matched** the details of the known

county-seat school.

When you're dealing with older photos, check those buttons before making too many assumptions about locations and identities. Mirror-imaging the photos can also get parts in hair on the correct side of the scalp when compared to other, later photos. Note also that [tin-type photos are almost always a mirror-image of the subject](#), so you almost always have to mirror them to get a truer image of the subject and get the buttons in the right spot.



The Walker Murder – Not a *Banner* Moment in Newspaper History

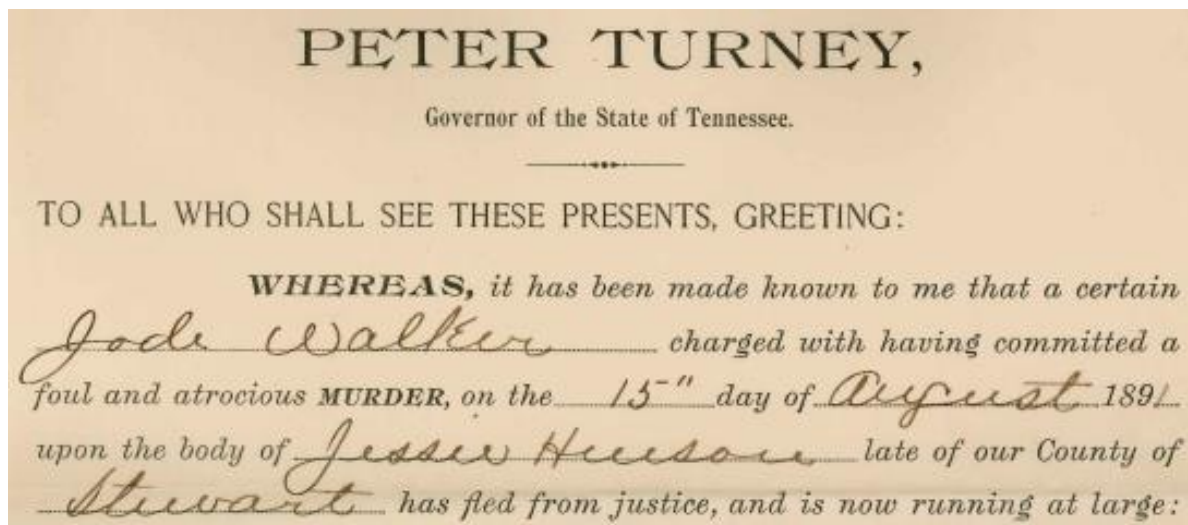


A friend recently sent me a clipping from an 1891 issue of the *Nashville Banner*, reporting a murder that took place very close to where her ancestors lived, and mentioning a surname from her family – Walker.

Imagine that you had found this clipping and repeated the sad story that your relative had been murdered, not thinking (or knowing) to ask more questions.

My friend was having trouble finding more information about the incident. She asked for my help in searching the County Archives for the details of her relative's horrible death.

I found the criminal case file in the [loose records at the Archives](#) – my favorite source for genealogical gold. But it wasn't quite the same story as reported in the *Banner*.



It seems that Jode Walker was the murderer, and Jesse Hinson the victim.

Further review of the case file

revealed that Walker went on the lam for 3 years, and was apprehended in Marion, Illinois in 1894. He stood trial in Stewart Circuit Court, and was sentenced to 2 years in the State Penitentiary for voluntary manslaughter.

Newspaper clippings are wonderful things to find in genealogical research, but don't forget to seek out the original records, in case the newspaper got one or two facts confused!
