

# COLE FAMILY NEWSLETTER January 2022

## 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Cole Family Reunion

August 8, 2021

About 27 Cole descendants met at Harley Park, Boonville on Sunday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It's always exciting to have first-time attendees and to hear of their family connection(s). People browsed the scrapbooks and a new one recounting 2020 and 2021 events, such as the 200-year celebration for our namesake county (Cole), Boone and Callaway Counties; the 2020 reunion; Hannah Cole's Fort being back in the family; and the DAR Hannah Cole Chapter wreath-laying and tree dedication at Briscoe Cemetery. About noon, everyone circled up for introductions, Charles Cole blessed the food, and the business meeting followed lunch. At the conclusion of the meeting, Wayne Lammers shared with the family a little bit about his new book, Boonville Then and Now, A Pictorial. To order, Wayne Lammers, 1509 Jefferson Drive, Boonville, MO 65233. The amount is \$61.00 each (shipping and tax included).



The reunion was a buzz of excitement, anticipating a visit to the site of the original Cole's Fort, which now is Cole-descendant owned. Also in town was a Cooper County Historical Society (CCHS) meeting, featuring a Bob Priddy speech, which leaned heavily on the early Cole women.

Following the business meeting, the group dispersed with some going to the Cole's

Fort property and some going to the Bob Priddy speech at the CCHS presentation and later coming to the fort site.

At the Cole's Fort property, Bob and Robin Painter greeted guests and passed out fliers. Kim and Bud Dickerson provided the exclamation point of the day by providing 'an old fashion hayride' back the long, narrow property to the monuments. From there, people descended the hillside on foot to take in a good view of the Missouri River and speculate the exact location of the fort. Excitement bubbled as Cole descendants stepped foot back on ancestral, family property.

### Committee Reports:

**Secretary-Treasurer, Kim Dickerson presented the Treasury Report:** Designated monies to each fund: Cemetery Fund - \$218; Scholarship Fund - \$133; General Fund - \$206; Total Donations -\$557

**Cemetery Report:** Carolyn Eichelberger, chairman: Jim Huckabay continues to mow the cemetery. Thanks to Bobby Painter, the dead tree limbs and stump are cleared. He had Newt McGuire cut the tree down, paid the fee, and donated his time and efforts to clear away the wood. It was approved to purchase a cleansing solution for some of the headstones.

**Scholarship Report:** Judy Cole, chairman: No applications were received this year. The 2022 Application will be posted at <https://coleassociation.com/category/scholarship/>  
Committee members continuing to serve: Judy Cole (chair), Missy Walker, Laura Cooper, Courtney Cole, Kim Dickerson, Ken Fortney.

## Election of Officers –

All officeholders were unanimously re-elected for 2021-2022 and are as follows: President: Robert (Bob) Painter, Vice President: Jon Painter, Secretary-Treasurer: Kim Dickerson.

Family statistics: River Stevens - youngest at 4; Carolyn Cole Eichelberger – oldest; the Wanda Lewis family and the Kim Dickerson family - tied for most attendees, 4 each; Charles and Judy Cole - married 60 years, and traveled the furthest, from Sheldon, Missouri; most unusual attendee - a red fox hanging out in the parking lot.

## Announcements:

- Please provide any updated family genealogy to Maude Painter Miller at [mmiller@coleassociation.com](mailto:mmiller@coleassociation.com)
- Maude has developed a Facebook page. Search *Cole Family Association*.
- The Cole Association maintains information on its website, [coleassociation.com](http://coleassociation.com). John Sage continues to manage the site for us.

Bob adjourned the meeting, inviting everyone to the Cole Fort property.



## Missouri, Montana, Mighty Mo, and the family Cole

*Boonville, Missouri and Great Falls, Montana; separated by over 1300 miles, yet connected by the mighty Missouri River, and a branch of the Cole family tree. Much like the meandering path of the river, the path of the Cole family's journey from Boonville to Great Falls cannot be traced in a straight line.*



When I was a child, my mother, Linda Jean Vice Williams, kept a framed black and white photo in her bedroom of a woman that I didn't know; yet she seemed familiar to me. I can recall asking my mother about the woman in the photo when I was somewhere around the age of five or six. She explained that the photo was of her mother (my grandmother) and that she had died before I was born. I later learned that her name was Elizabeth Belle Cole Vice. As time went on, my mother shared little details about my grandmother; she hated the name Elizabeth and preferred to be called Betty, she was of Scotch Irish descent and had red hair, she loved to dance, she always wanted to have a son with red hair but was blessed with four daughters instead (none of which had red hair), she used to say that a "drink a day, keeps the doctor away". Yes, just little details, here and there, just enough to give me a sense of who she was, but for the most part, she remained a mystery to me.

Elizabeth Cole's father (my great grandfather), Snowden (originally spelled Snoden) Cole owned two adjoining lots on the southwest side of Great Falls. He built two small houses on the property. My mom's older sister Patty, her husband Jim Jeanotte, and their two children, Ecole and Billy lived in the house on the front lot. Snowden's house was on the backlot.

Snowden died on August 23, 1970, when I was almost four years old. I can still remember going to visit him. My little sister Misty, and I would get out of the car and run the length of the long dirt driveway as fast as our little legs could take us to greet him. Then he would take us on a tour of his large backyard garden and show us the baby chicks that he raised in the old rickety garage next to his house. (From looking at old photos, I think that the old rickety garage, may have been the remnants of the shack he, my great grandmother, Clytice *McFarland* Cole, and their children lived in when they first bought the property in the 1930's.) He was also a beekeeper and always had fresh honey on hand. I'm told that he used to sell his honey in the local stores.

Snowden's house was torn down after his death. I'm assuming that the house suffered a great deal of damage from the 1964 flood and that he was not able to finish restoring it before his death. The house on the front lot was restored after the 1964 flood, restored again after the 1975 flood, and is still standing today. It isn't anything fancy; just a simple little 2-bedroom, 1 bathroom house that has been called home by several family members over the years; including my mother. It's a long story, but the house and property were almost lost several years ago due to unpaid property taxes. I was able to pay the back taxes and have the property deed transferred into my name. The property holds many memories, and it means a lot to me to know that it's not in the hands of strangers.

My parents separated in 1972 when I was 6 years old. In 1974, my sister and I went to spend the summer with our father, Charles Andrew Williams, in Springfield, Oregon. Dad had moved back home, to be near his parents and siblings after he and mom divorced. It was his decision to join the Air Force at the age of 17 that had brought him to Great Falls; he was stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base as an airplane mechanic. A decision that led to him meeting my mom... *And*, to my sister and I's existence.

Dad obtained legal custody of my sister and me, and we remained in Oregon with him after the summer of 1974; returning to Montana to visit our mom every summer and spring break each year after. It was during one of these annual visits to see mom in the spring of 1982 that she received a phone call with the news of her Aunt Stella's death. I had never heard her speak of Aunt Stella before, so I had no idea who she was. Mom explained that Stella was her mother's sister. We (my mom, her 3 sisters, spouses, and children) attended Stella's funeral in the small town of Winifred, Montana. The church was filled to the brim with the majority of the town's residents and our family. From the sermon given, and stories shared at the service, it was apparent that Stella had been a well-known and respected member of the community; yet to me, a member of her family, she was a total stranger. I hadn't even known of her existence until her death.

My relatives on my father's side of the family truly enjoyed reminiscing about the days of their youth and sharing stories about their families. My great grandmother, Beulah *Tillman* Williams, was extremely proud of her heritage and would often bring out her hardbound copy of "Spes Alit Agricolam" when my sister and I would go to visit her. The book is the story of the Tilghman (Tillman) and related families from 1225 to 1961. She would proudly exclaim that we were related to royalty, then flip through the pages pointing out photos of our ancestors. The Tilghman (Tillman) branch of the family is descended in two lines to Edward III and William the Conqueror and includes notable American figures Tench Tilghman aide-de-camp to General George Washington, US Marshall William "Bill" Tilghman, and writer F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Dad's father (my grandfather), Shelby Williams would often tell the story of how he fell in love the first time he laid eyes on my grandmother Artie *Lay* Williams. He was in the Civil Conservation Corps in Bunker, Missouri when he noticed her standing next to a stream; her long hair neatly rolled and tucked under at the nape of her neck. He thought she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. They married in 1941, and it was obvious right up until my grandmother's death in 1996 that they were still very much in love.

In the spring of 2021, my Uncle Arthur (Dad's younger brother) sent me a digital collection of old family

photos and a list of family graves that he had found on the Find a Grave website. Several of the old photos were taken in Missouri and included members of the Williams, Tillman, Dixon, and Lay families.

While investigating some of the grave records that Arthur had shared from the Find a Grave website, it occurred to me that this could be a useful tool to find information about my mom's side of the family, so I tried searching for Snowden Cole's grave. With very little information to go on, I wasn't having much luck. In the process of searching for his gravesite, I ran across a grave record for a woman named Viola *Dixon* Cole.

*Hmm...* my paternal great grandmother's name was Minnie *Dixon* Lay and my maternal great grandfather's name was Snowden Cole. This really piqued my curiosity! I couldn't help but wonder if my Dixon family ancestors and Cole family ancestors may have known each other. Then it dawned on me that at one time I had run across a photocopy of birth and death records from an old family bible in a box of my mom's things. After a successful search through the closet in the spare bedroom, I located the box and the records contained within; a handwritten list of birth, death, and marriage records, along with the names of Clytice *McFarland* Cole's parents and siblings, and the names of Snowden Cole's parents and siblings. The final entry, written in a different hand than all the others, is the record of Clytice Cole's death on Oct. 10, 1949. It's my assumption that this final entry was written by Snowden and all the earlier entries were written by Clytice.

I resumed my search on the Find a Grave website and managed to find the graves of Snowden Cole and his wife Clytice *McFarland* Cole in a few minutes' time. Both are buried at Highland Cemetery, in Great Falls. Then I started to search for the graves of Snowden's siblings. When I found the grave of his sister Blanche Emmaline *Cole* Richey, I was surprised to find a story attached. This story was a compilation of stories written by Blanche's daughter Eva Ruth Richey, her sister Verdi, and a newspaper article about the Cole family. It was like hitting the jackpot! After 54 years of knowing very little about my great grandfather, I suddenly had this incredible story before me of the Cole's being a pioneer family of Missouri who had forts named after them, and family relation to Daniel Boone. The writer of this portion of the story proudly states: **"You will find mention of these things and of Stephen and Hannah Cole in both Missouri history and in school textbooks."**

With this new information at hand, I started searching online for history regarding the Cole family in Missouri. Somewhere in all my searching, I ran across an advertisement for the Family Search website and signed up. This proved to be a good decision. After entering Snowden Cole's birth and death information, I was able to bring up the family tree and was amazed to find old photos, stories, and documents attached to the names of several of my Cole family ancestors. *Finally...* a fuller story of Snowden's life was emerging!

Snowden (Snoden) Franklin Cole, son of James and Charlotte Elizabeth *Long* Cole, was born June 4, 1884, in Oyer, St. Clair, MO. He was one of 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls. In 1905 he married Iva Ardella Reed.

Snowden and Iva had two daughters: Rilla Mae Cole, born July 31, 1906, in Belgrade, MT, and Stella Ruth Cole, born May 2, 1909, in Kolin, MT. Iva died March 20, 1911, and is buried in Oyer, St. Clair, MO.

Snowden married his second wife (my great grandmother), Clytice *McFarland* on October 6, 1915, in Denton, MT. Snowden and Clytice had two children: a son, Edgar James Cole born on July 5, 1918, in Denton, MT, and a daughter, Elizabeth Belle Cole (my grandmother) born on July 16, 1922, in Denton, MT. Rilla Mae Cole died of heart disease on January 17, 1933. She is buried in Lewistown, MT. At the time of Rilla's death, Snowden and Clytice were living in Great Falls, MT with their two children. Elizabeth Belle *Cole* Vice died of heart failure on November 8, 1963. She is buried here in Great Falls. My grandfather, John Edward Vice (D. Oct. 27, 2000), and my mother, Linda Jean *Vice* Williams (D. July 10, 2018) are buried beside her. Edgar James Cole died in a car accident in Salt Lake City, UT on July 21, 1968. He is buried in Heber City, Utah. Snowden was widowed twice and outlived three of his four children. It makes me sad to know that his life was filled with so much grief and heartache.

Snowden's uncle (my 2<sup>nd</sup> great-granduncle), Albert Silliman Cole, left Missouri and was living in Belgrade, MT in 1889, so I believe it is safe to assume that Snowden and Iva would have stayed with Albert and his family when they first arrived in Montana. Albert owned farmland, so Snowden may have gone to help him on the farm. According to my research, Albert remained in the Belgrade area for the remainder of his life. He died on July 17, 1953, and is buried in Bozeman, MT. Snowden's occupation is listed as a farmer on his 1918 draft registration card, he was living in Kolin, MT at this time. I found a land patent record showing that he



purchased 160 acres in Kolin, MT on March 1, 1911; 19 days before Iva's death.

Snowden's sister Blanche Emmaline Cole Richey and her husband Thomas Albert Richey moved to Belgrade, MT somewhere between the years of 1921 and 1924 (their 3<sup>rd</sup> child was born in MT in 1924). They also owned farmland in the Belgrade area. In 1948 they sold the farm and moved to Boise, ID.

As I continued digging deeper into the Cole family history in Missouri, I stumbled across the Cole Family Association website. After comparing the Cole family names mentioned in Hannah Cole's story to the names on my branch of the Cole family tree, I realized that this story was about my ancestors; Stephen Cole and Phoebe *Allison* Cole are my 4<sup>th</sup> great grandparents, and William Temple Cole and Hannah *Allison* Cole are my 4<sup>th</sup> great-granduncle & grandaunt.

My branch of the Cole family tree from Boonville to Great Falls is shown below:

4<sup>th</sup> Great Grandparents – **Major Stephen Cole & Phoebe *Allison* Cole**

3<sup>rd</sup> Great Grandparents – **Mark Cole and Mary Ann *Woods* Cole**

2<sup>nd</sup> Great Grandparents – **James Cole and Charlotte Elizabeth *Long* Cole**

Great Grandparents – **Snowden (Snoden) Franklin Cole and Clytice *McFarland* Cole**

Grandparents – **John Edward Vice and Elizabeth “Betty” Belle *Cole* Vice**

Parents – **Charles Andrew Williams and Linda Jean *Vice* Williams**

The Cole Family Association website offers Cole Family genealogy books for purchase by request, so I sent an email request to purchase a copy along with some photos of my Cole family relatives and an explanation of my connection to this branch of the Cole family. A few days later I received a response from Bob Painter, President of the Cole Family Association, explaining that the books are currently unavailable. Bob also extended an invitation to attend the 2021 Cole family reunion in Boonville, MO on August 8<sup>th</sup>. After exchanging several emails with Bob, I was determined to find a way to make it to Boonville for the reunion, despite my extremely busy work schedule. On April 27<sup>th</sup> I emailed Bob to let him know that I had booked my flight, hotel rooms, and a rental car. Having had so little information about my great grandfather, Snowden Cole, when I began researching my ancestry, I never imagined that the Cole family had such a celebrated history in Missouri, or that I would have the chance to meet other relatives of the Cole family. I could hardly wait for August 8<sup>th</sup> to arrive!

August 8<sup>th</sup> did finally arrive, and after an hour flight delay in Denver, I finally arrived in Boonville at 4:30 p.m. to a warm welcome from several Cole family relatives who were gathered in front of the Stretz house waiting to greet me as I pulled in the driveway. I had missed the larger Cole family reunion gathering that was held at the Harley Park Shelter House earlier in the day. This smaller group had stayed for a tour of the site of Hannah Cole's Fort, which stood where the Stretz house is located today... *And*, to welcome me. 😊

It was a brief, but memorable trip. I arrived on Sunday and left on Tuesday. During those two days, I had the chance to meet the family that just a few months prior I didn't know I had, and to walk in the footsteps of my ancestors. Bob was my tour guide and he made sure to show me as many places that pertained to the Cole family history as he could in those two precious days; Hannah Cole's Fort Site, Hannah Cole's statue, the site of Hannah Cole's ferry, Hannah Cole's Roadside Park, Hannah Cole's grave marker at the Briscoe Cole cemetery, a lovely visit with Caroline *Cole* Eichelberger at her home on Cole Drive, a trip to another cemetery where several Cole ancestors are buried, and the Hannah Cole historical exhibit at the River, Rails & Trails Museum.

As I reflect on this amazing journey from Great Falls, MT to the small town of Boonville, MO, I find myself fascinated by how vital the Missouri River has been to the creation and survival of these two places. The same river that provided drinking water to the inhabitants of Hannah Cole's Fort, water for their crops and livestock, a route for trade and travel, and a source of income for Hannah; the first person licensed to operate a ferry business in the area, is the same river that provides drinking water and generates electricity for the city I live in. My place of employment, the Meadow Lark Country Club, sits on the bank of the Missouri; the 18-hole golf course kept green year-round with water drawn from the Missouri. Like the blood that flows through our veins, rivers are essential to life for ourselves and our communities. May we value and protect this valuable natural resource for future generations.

While my research into my ancestry has yielded information far beyond my expectations, I still haven't found

any evidence to indicate that my Dixon family ancestors knew my Cole family ancestors. However, with so many connections on my father's side of the family to the state of Missouri, I won't rule out the possibility that my Cole family ancestors may have crossed paths with my Williams, Tillman, Dixon, or Lay family ancestors.

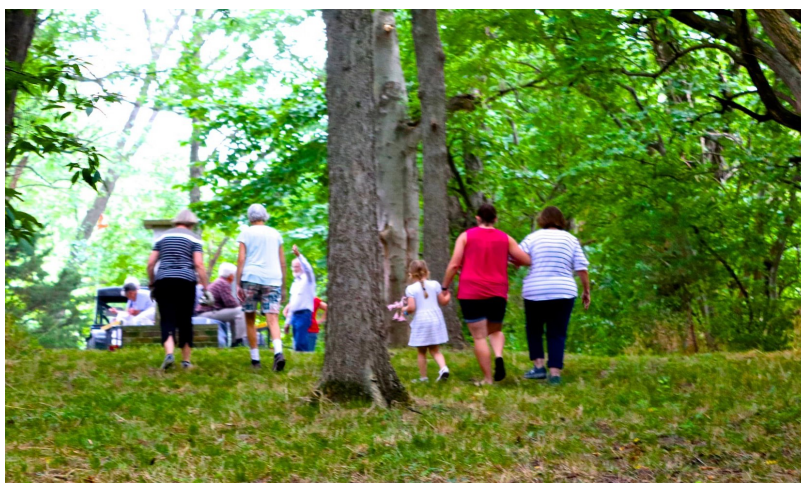
*Hmm...* I see another trip to Missouri in my future...

Sharlys Leah *Williams* Burnett

4<sup>th</sup> Great Granddaughter of Stephen Cole and Phoebe *Allison* Cole



*Standing on the bluff overlooking the river*



*Walking up the hill from the bluff*



*The Hannah Cole Fort Monument*

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