

COLE FAMILY NEWSLETTER

The Stephen and William Temple Cole Families



90th Celebration of the Cole Family Reunion

Held August 10 – 11, 2024



The 90th Cole Family Reunion was a great success. Over 100 attended and enjoyed unseasonably cool weather. The Cooper County Fair Ground Building served as headquarters for the weekend.

Special thanks to the people who worked on this event: Jon Painter, Nancy Alrich, Bob Painter (PG), Velma Cole, Don and Marianne Fues, Kim and Bud Dickerson, Robin Painter, Tesse Wilkes, Tish Martin, and Carolyn Eichelberger.

On Saturday morning, around 30 family members and friends participated in the **2nd Annual Rooted in the Boonslick Walk** to start the weekend. The Hannah Cole Fort site, Stretz house, Briscoe Cemetery, and Mt. Nebo Cemetery were available for tours Saturday afternoon. Saturday evening, the family gathered for a buffet dinner and visiting.

On Sunday morning, a 20-year rededication of the Hannah Cole statue was held, with Harry Weber, the statue's sculptor, speaking. Thanks to Marianne Fues and Carolyn Eichelberger for working with the City of Boonville to organize this special event and getting the special poster programs. Following the rededication, everyone met for our annual pot-luck meal and business meeting.

Reunion Meal and Business Meeting

The weekend was capped off with everyone coming together for our traditional family meal and business meeting. As people registered, they received a special medallion name tag made by Kim Dickerson. Everyone had a chance to check out the silent auction items, place bids, purchase reunion t-shirts and hats, and check out the genealogy/ancestry information



with Ray Owens. Special thanks to Jon Painter, who purchased and donated a display case to house unique family heirlooms that people brought to display. Thank you, Kim Dickeson, for making the special 90th name tags, and Tesse Wilkes for designing the 90th-year logo.

Several first-timers attended the reunion, and several returned after missing many years. We also missed some regulars.

- The youngest attendee- Henry Braden, son of Matthew and Hannah Braden
- The oldest attendee- Carolyn Eichelberger
- Traveled the longest distance - (Alaska, +/- 3,500 miles) – Jason Roe
- The longest-married couple - Charles and Judy Cole (63 years)
- The largest immediate family attending is Jon Painter's family (9): Rebecca Braden, Cole & Laura Painter, Jacob Braden, Matthew, Hannah, James and Henry Braden.



State Representatives Tim Taylor and Willard Haley presented the Cole Family with a proclamation from the Missouri Legislature. This proclamation acknowledges the Cole family as an integral part of Missouri's history. We want to thank Tim and Willard for their time and this special presentation.

Scholarship

Thanks to your generosity, we awarded two scholarships this year. MacKenzie Cole and Brianne Fortney were the recipients.



Very Special: Brianne Fortney is from Ashwaubenon High School, Green Bay, WI. Since announcing the scholarship winners, this note was received from Brianne. I want to share it with you. What an incredible young lady, demonstrating character and integrity. Thank you, Brianne, you are a role model.

"Hello Bob, I hope you're doing well. I have some very good news. I was recently awarded another scholarship that I applied for. It's called, the Mike Rowe Work Ethics Scholarship and is covering \$4,500 of my tuition- just over half of my total costs. Because of this, I'm now able to pay my remaining tuition completely out of pocket and without any loans! I'm emailing to request the \$500 allotted to me by the Hannah Cole Foundation go to the other recipient of the scholarship. I feel it's the moral thing to do given the opportunity and I want them to have just as good of a head start as I'm getting on my education." Brianne



Mackenzie Cole -Scholarship recipient update—In December 2024, she graduated from Excelsior Springs High School and is enrolled at Metropolitan Community College. She plans to transfer to MU in the fall to pursue a dual degree in Journalism and Art.

The Briscoe Cemetery Restoration

As you know, the Cole Association has been raising funds to cover the cost of the ground-penetrating radar at the Briscoe cemetery. During the reunion, we had several incentives toward this goal. We sold hats and T-shirts, netting \$823, held a silent auction and raffle, netting \$869, and passed the hat, collecting \$349 for the general fund, \$432 for the cemetery fund, and \$235 for the scholarship fund. The walk brought in \$349. The ground penetrating radar cost \$4,000. Radar aims to locate bodies and artifacts (stones that have fallen or broken) buried at Briscoe Cemetery.

Brick Campaign- Another incentive was started in 2023 to sell bricks and use those funds toward the Briscoe Cemetery Restoration Project. The previously ordered bricks have arrived and will be placed at the Briscoe Cemetery, providing a walkway and making it available for people to go and view their brick(s). The cost of a brick is \$90. This is a great way to honor or memorialize a family member or loved one. This project is a great way to honor your family. Order bricks at www.fundraisingbrick.com/colefamily/

Cole Family News:



Here's an update on the Lightfoot family: Raeanne and Jorge welcomed a new baby girl in September. Jorge, a Captain in the Army, was training in San Antonio during this time but made it home for a couple of days to meet his baby girl before heading back to training. They recently transferred to the Walter Reed Institute of Biological Research for Jorge's new assignment.

Zeke Stevens—Popi and Shannon Stevens welcomed a new baby boy on Thursday, August 8th. His name is Zeke, and he weighs 7 lbs. 15 oz and is 20" long.



Pictures of our Family and Friends

2nd Annual Rooted in the Boonslick Walk



Hannah Cole Fort Site and Stretz House Tour



Sunday – Sculptor Harry Weber – Redidcation of the Hannah Statue.





Reunion and Saturday Dinner





We had a great time being together as a family.

Cole Family Goes to California



By Will Kastner

Family photo, about 1900. My grandmother, Georgia Emma Bell (front, second from right—I have no confirmation, but I feel certain this is her); her father, John Richard Bell (seated right); her mother, Ida Louella Cole is almost certainly standing behind him (but the 10 Cole sisters are hard to distinguish one from another); and her grandparents, Jane Mary Sweany and William Temple Cole—“Uncle Billy”—(seated left); and Tyree Harris Bell.

Both of my paternal grandmother’s grandfathers were well known in their time, especially her paternal grandfather, General Tyree H. Bell, CSA, commanding Bell’s Brigade of Nathan Bedford Forrest’s cavalry, about whom there has even been a military biography published, as well as a printed family monograph. We know exactly when, why, and how he brought his family to California. How W.T. Cole came to California, though, is harder to pin down—there is no published biography, no Wikipedia page. But some of his legends seem to me to have elements of factual history that might be traceable, and earlier this year I set out to see if I could distinguish fact from fantasy, especially in trying to discover how W.T. came to California, establishing a branch of the Cole family here.

A story that has come down through the years is that W.T. first came to California as a soldier on one of John C. Frémont’s exploring expeditions. W.T. would have been 19 to 20 years old during Frémont’s early expeditions, so it’s not impossible, but I can find no trace of him in Frémont’s highly detailed personnel records. One hand-written, undated, and unsigned document in my files states that W.T. came to California by ship, but I can find no corroboration of this assertion anywhere. The most frequent story in my family is that W.T. led a wagon train to California, meeting his future wife, Jane Mary Sweany, on that train, but again, this has been hard to pin down—but maybe not impossible.

Sweany family records show that the family arrived near Dixon, California in September of 1850, appropriate timing for an 1850 wagon train trip from Missouri. While none of the family names are found in books like Rasmussen's California Wagon Train Lists, family mythology relates that a startling incident occurred early in the journey, and maybe if I could pin down the curious incident, I could identify the wagon train more precisely. (More on this incident at a future time.) My exploring the internet for information on wagon trains then led me to that magnificent resource, the Oregon-California Trails Association, octa-trails.org. Among its many virtues, O-CTA has compiled detailed lists of all persons known to have traveled on those western trails from the earliest days, lists easily available to the public. And there I found W.T. Cole!

Joining octa-trails.org allowed me to determine exactly the source for the O-CTA information about Uncle Billy and also led me to yet another fabulous resource, the Missouri Historical Review, which in 1928 printed the never-before-published diary of Bennett C. Clark of Boonville under the title "Diary of a Journey from Missouri to California in 1849." W.T. was a genuine 49er, as were the rest of these adventurers from Boonville: "Beverly Lampton, John Tucker, William T. Cole, Samuel Peters, Bennett C. Clark, John Corum, Newton C. Peters, Jesse Newman, William Norman [sic.], Mark Cole, John N. Gibson, Alfred Corum, Andrew B. Cole, John Brown, John Hill, Thomas Craig, Lewis Hutchinson, James M. Hill, Herod Corum, Simon Corum, James Campbell, James W. Newby, Hardise Reddick, and Dr. Saml. J. Tutt." I now have excellent documentation of how W.T. came to California, in 1849 at least (To be continued.)

William Kastner and his family live in California, where there is a large Cole contingent. In our conversations, Will has offered to write stories about the family. He will submit these to the newsletter, and we will post them on Facebook and the website. If you have stories or pictures, we would love to see them and the stories with them.

The 2025 Reunion will be on August 10th at the Cooper County Fairgrounds. Various activities will be available for those coming for the weekend.

Please read and help: Please send us the email addresses of your family members who did not receive this newsletter. If received by US Mail and if you have an email address, please send us your email address. Thank you.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/colefamilyassociation/>

Web sites: <https://coleassociation.com/> (thank you, John Sage)

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