

Missouri Folklore Society Newsletter

P.O. Box 1757, Columbia MO 65202
<http://missourifolkloresociety.truman.edu>

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Spring 2014

Annual Meeting November 6-8: Isle of Capri Casino, Boonville



Mark your calendars now. **Brett Rogers, Dave Para & Cathy Barton** will be organizing the meeting. We plan an emphasis on Native traditions, and the program leaders are eager for suggestions, ideas and volunteers. We hope to get Native speakers and performers, as well as the usual array of traditional craftspeople, scholars and tradition-bearers. There

will of course be the auction, jam and good fellowship, in a lively and fun environment. We're looking in to tours of historic area homes, including the Marcus Williams home, and Hickman house. Start thinking now about what you might share, and watch for the Call for Papers.

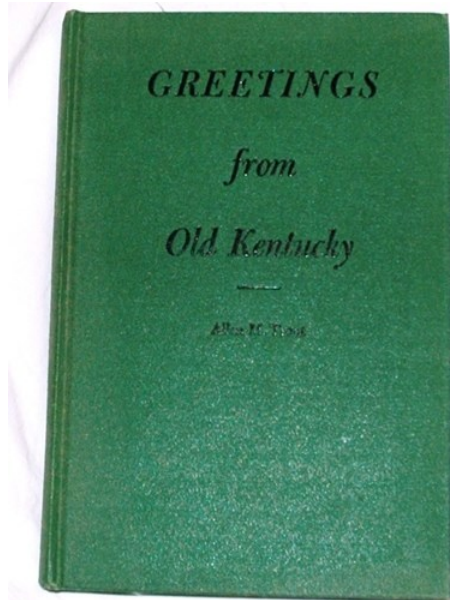


In Memoriam

It is with the greatest of sadness that we report the recent passing of two longtime and valued members of the Society.

Dr. John Schleppenbach died peacefully February 24, 2014, at his home in Quincy Illinois. He had taught communication at Quincy University since 1972. He was custodian and editor of the Harry Hyatt papers, and a past president of the Society. He is survived by his wife Barb, also a member of the society., and their three children.

On Christmas Day of 2013, we also lost **Dr. Susan Pentlin**, at her home in Warrensburg, where she taught at the University of Central Missouri from 1970 until her retirement in 2005. She was a scholar of the Holocaust, and an activist for human rights. She is survived by Floyd, her husband of 42 years.



Betsy Delmonico, of Truman State University, writes: At the Missouri Folklore Society benefit auction in November, I bought a big box of books for two bucks. Among the finds, one titled *Greetings from Old Kentucky* by Allan Trout, long-time columnist for the *Courier-Journal*. I grew up reading Trout's columns but this one must have been from a very young columnist since the collection came out in 1947. To make a long story longer, I finally got around to sampling it today and the first column in it featured a guy who lived two blocks from where I grew up--Doc Boldrick, asking whether "coal oil" and "kerosene" were the same thing. Trout's answer is fun:

"If you tote it away in a tin can with a potato stuck on the spout, it is coal oil. If you pour it in an old lamp with a smoky chimney and a wick that needs trimming, it is coal oil. If you pour some in an old lantern that has been battered around the barn lot for God knows how long, it is coal oil.

"If you mix it with pine tar and rub the compound on the old mule's sore shoulder, it is coal oil. If you mix it with turpentine and apply same to the old bedstead with a feather, to scatter the cinch bugs therein, it is coal oil. If you mix it with lard and rub it on the hide of a mangy old hound dog, it is coal oil.

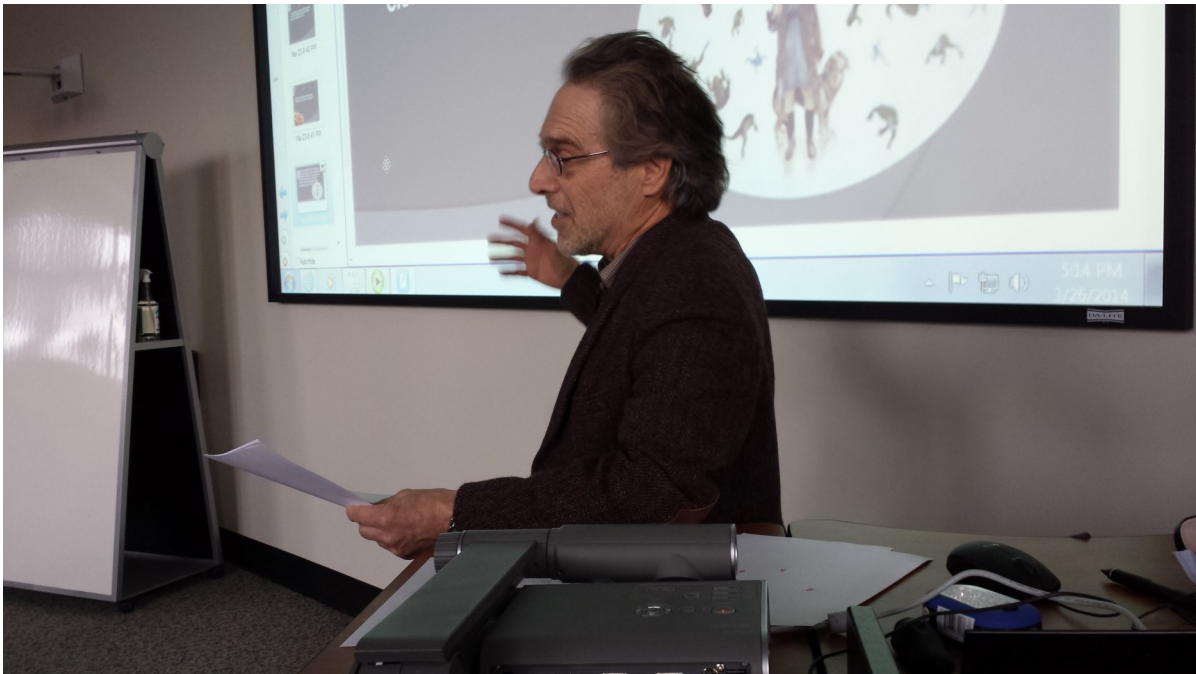
"To tell you the truth, sir, I doubt if kerosene would meet the domestic and therapeutic requirements of Kentucky ridge runners who cannot get along without it. I have been around a lot of country stores in my time, and I never heard anyone ask for Kerosene. But I have heard a sight of people ask for coal oil."

(pp 20-21 of the 1947 book, which was published by the Courier Journal. I googled after posting; he'd been writing columns for 8 years then, and kept writing for another 20)

As part of Truman State University's folklore colloquium series, **Dr. John Smelcer** spoke on the legacy of the devastating Good Friday 1964 earthquake that killed thousands of Alaska natives, and destroyed much of their material culture (see next page for more from this native informant/scholar).

Professor Tom Capuano shared insights from his decades of work with medieval manuscripts relating to agriculture: "From Medieval Romance to Rural Missouri: Seven Centuries of Agricultural Superstitions, Proverbs and Practices."

At the Spring student showcase, **Erin King** reported on fieldwork among the community of whitewater rafters in the Ozarks, while **Kelsie Howle** reported on the wordways of prisoners, and **Dylan Pyles** shared documentary work on Red Flame Records, an early 60s indie Rock & Roll label that flourished in Kirksville



Alaskan (Ahtna) native **John Smelcer**, one of the last living speakers of his Athabaskan language (as well as the author of a dictionary) and a faculty member at Truman State, has allowed us to publish two brief tales he collected in the field: a story of how seals came about, and a trickster tale involving Raven and Grizzly Bear.

I collected this story in 1987 while interviewing Aleut elders who had been interned by the U. S. government during WWII for fear of a full-scale Japanese invasion of Alaska's remote Aleutian Islands. U. S. Senator Ted Stevens, the longest-serving republican senator in American history, had asked me to interview Aleut elders to include their personal narratives in the Aleut Restitution Act (1988).



In some variations the brother and sister become sea otters instead. I had heard similar versions in Eskimo. In some versions it is a female helper who searches the village for the perpetrator, not the young victim herself. In some versions the girl rips his parka so as to recognize him. In one version she stabs him.

A very long time ago, there were no seals in the sea. There were fish and sea-birds and whales, but there were no seals. Back then, there was a village on one of the other islands. In that village a young girl had just turned of marrying age. She was very beautiful. Every young man wanted to marry her. One night, a man crept into her room while she was asleep and forced himself on her. It was so dark that the girl couldn't see who it was. All the same, she fought back, but she was not as strong as the man. This went on for several nights. Then that girl thought of a plan. The next time the man came for her, she would scratch his face so as to mark him. Sure enough the man returned under darkness, and true to her plan, the girl scratched his face. The next day, she walked around the village looking for a man with a scratch on his face. To her horror, the man turned out to be her older brother. In her great shame, the girl ran to the cliffs and threw herself into the sea. But instead of drowning, she came up as a seal—the very first female seal. Because the brother loved his sister so much, or maybe because he was ashamed of what he had done, the brother also jumped off the cliff, coming up as the first male seal. All seals thereafter came from the two of them.

This story is a variation of many stories cataloging Raven's trickery in killing his fellow beings to eat them. In a Tlingit story he runs down the throat of a whale into his belly and eats him from the inside out. In an Iñupiaq Eskimo variation, he tricks an entire village, killing them in an avalanche and dining on their eyeballs and feasting on their corpses all spring. This story comes from my own tribe (Ahtna Athabaskan), and it was told to me by Johnny Goodlataw of Tazlina Village while I helped him put his fish-wheel into the Copper River. I had received a special permit from the State of Alaska to allow us to start fishing a week earlier than anyone else as part of an Indian youth education program I was then directing called Positive Pathways.



One day in the springtime, when there was still plenty of snow on the hills and mountains, Raven was searching for something to eat. He was always hungry, that Raven. He was flying around when he saw Grizzly Bear looking for food on a hillside. Raven had a wicked idea, so he flew down to talk.

“Do you want to have some fun?” he asked with a sly smile.

“What shall we do?” replied Grizzly Bear.

“Let’s slide on the snow.”

Raven went first. He slid on his back down a snowy slope. When he was at the bottom he stood up and shouted to Grizzly Bear.

“That was fun! It’s your turn!”

So Grizzly Bear slid down the slope on his haunches. After that Raven saw an even higher and steeper slope.

“Let’s slide down that one,” he said, pointing a black wing.

But Grizzly Bear thought it looked too steep.

“I don’t know. That looks pretty dangerous,” he said.

To show him that it was safe to slide on, Raven flew up to the top and slid down on his back again. He went really fast and he spun around a few times, but he made it safely to the bottom.

“That was great fun!” he shouted up to Grizzly Bear who was standing at the top, anxiously peering down the slope.

But Grizzly Bear was unsure. He kept pacing back and forth, huffing and snorting, stopping every now and then to look over the edge. While Grizzly was nervously pacing, Raven made a sharp spear using his knife. He set the angled spear firmly into the packed snow at the bottom of the snowy slide so that it would impale the bear when he came down. But the hesitant bear wouldn't slide down.

“If I made it, you can make it!” Raven jeered. “You're so much bigger and stronger than I am.”

Finally, goaded by Raven's taunting, Grizzly Bear decided to slide down. He went faster and faster down the slope. He went so fast that the spear planted at the bottom of the hill went right through his heart and killed him. Even though bears are pretty skinny when they first come out of their dens in the spring, Raven ate him anyhow.



The children in this photograph, taken by Miles c 1900-1903, are relatives of the author.

**Missouri Folklore Society Board Meeting
Saturday November 9, 2013
Trout Lodge**

Minutes

Call to order 11:35 am
Appreciation to John and Carol Fisher

Reports of Secretary and Treasurer (Davis and Para)
Minutes from March at Lenoir Center submitted, approved as read.

Treasurer: final bills for this conference still be paid. One new life membership; Schroeder endowment growing slowly. We're over the \$60K mark. Looks like we'll break even, except for \$934 in digital projectors. Moved and approved.

85 attendees
Auction \$844.50

Announcements regarding Boonville Meeting (Barton, Para) Isle of Capri again. November 6-8. Possible them would be a Native American focus. Ioway and Missouri experts being lined up; American Folk Art could also be a push.

Plans for Meeting in 2015
Roger Jungmeyer and Debra Greene stepping up for Jefferson City 2015

Brett Rogers not here

Publications reports
a) MFS Journal (Wolz, Davis, Fisher)

Fishers producing a triple issue – 2007-9.

Index issues: 2010-11

Best of and Guide to: Jim and Adam – in process.

Lyn Wolz has the journal mockup 2005-6 (approx 240 pps)

- b) B) Newsletter – proceedings of this meeting; in process
- c) C) MFS website – some files lost in server migration
- d) D) digitized journals (Vandergriff) reminder of a number of venues for making these files available; at some point we will have to decide if we want the access free or paywalled.

Committee Reports

A) Schroeder endowment fund

b) long term communication group (Wolz, Vandergriff, Rogers, Para, etc) Hasn't met

New Business:

Discussion of what to do with/about rather large cash surplus. We want to use some for scholarships. Let's use to sponsor young people to attend and present – lodging, food, conference fee. Details to be worked out at March meeting. Formal proposal to come.

Certificate in honor of Cecil and Ruth Williams read aloud by Cathy Barton.

Appreciation of Jan and Liz for all their hard work in organizing, Sam Griffin as always.

Now officers and board members, slate elected.

Cathy Barton accepted gavel.

Adjourn 12:05n



Howard Marshall appeared with **John P. Williams** at the 2014 Big Muddy — Boonville, April 4-5

**Missouri Folklore Society
board meeting 3-15-14
Lenoir Senior Center**

Present: Cathy Barton, Dave Para, Adam Davis, Brett Rogers, Liz Faries, Clyde Faries, Metazee Morris, Gladys Coggsell, John Fisher, Rachel Gholson, Carol Fisher, Carolyn Bening, Jim Caudle, George Caudle, Jan Caudle, Genevieve Vallentine, Margot McMillen

call to order: President Brett Rogers, 11:10 am

introductions

Minutes from November meeting at Trout Lodge moved by Metazee Morris, seconded Clyde Faries; approved unanimously

Treasurer's Report: Dave Para

We chalked up a slight loss on the meeting in November \$700 – not the first time this has happened. We had high service fees, and we paid for two projectors. We gained a few new members, had some album sales. Interest rates still falling. Balance stands at \$27000 – quite a lot, but soon to be depleted by journal production. Jan “Eagle Eye” Caudle caught an error – our expenses for the year were considerably more than \$93. Corrected by committee. Discussion of Schroeder endowment. Such awards as are being made come from principal, as interest income is so low. Contributions are welcome, but they will not get the fund to the point where it will yield significant interest. Request to include a note in the next newsletter inviting memorials and other contributions to the fund. Discussion of procedures for memorials. Conversation to be continued in November.

Adoption of report moved Jan Caudle, seconded Clyde Faries, approved unanimously.

Thanks were expressed to all who organized the fine meeting at Trout Lodge.

Plans for 2014, Isle of Capri Casino, Boonville (November 6-8):

More emphasis on Native traditions.

Tossing around ideas for titles

Mike Dickey to be invited to speak on native traditions. A prominent researcher.

Ken Burch on atlatl throwing – can invite Curtis Wagner, an expert, to do demonstration.

Metazee will contact Tim _____ flintknapper from Hannibal.

Ralph Duren champion birdcaller from Jeff City

Involve Gary Buxton, with his birdcallers.

Greg Olson to try to get an Ioway speaker

Mary Barile on Boonslick ghosts

Bettina Havig, Columbia, an expert quilter

Master/Apprentice program also located in Columbia.

Carolyn Bening is in contact with a basket-making team.

Gary Buxton can talk about wheat-weaving.

Adam is encouraging Lisa Higgins to round up some of the MFAP clientele, Rachel Spillars

Boonville home tours a possibility (DAR HQ) Marcus Williams home, Hickman house (casino might help with transport)
scheduling tours, board meeting, general meeting
Proposed: 1pm tour, 4pm meeting

Discussion – let's waive student fees. It's a small amount, not going to make a huge difference, of course, but it's a gesture. Genevieve Vallentine emphasized other kinds of outreach. Discussion of methods of reaching young people.

2015 meeting-- Roger Jungmeyer and Debra Greene for Lincoln University

Possibilities for 2016, include Springfield and Ste. Genevieve (they are very eager to get us back). But it is noted that we need to come back to the center of the state every second year.

Publications reports

Lyn Wolz – Adam read notes. Discussion regarding developing editors' manual. Discussion of new permissions procedures. Brochure.
Jon and Carol Fisher showed samples from their nearly-complete issue on food.
Lyn wants her index issue to be print. We might continue while funds hold out.
Discussion of opening the journal to monographs. Genevieve Vallentine is interested.
Report on awards & prizes – recognition for Jim Vandergriff & Donna Jurich; Margot McMillen volunteered to work on it.

New business: discussion of options for Spring meeting:

continue here (without Becky organizing it);

BoCo historical society across the highway;

Margot McMillen talked about HyVee community rooms, rentable for \$25 or so.

We could ask Lisa Higgins if MFAP would host it at the old Ellis Fischel.



Announcements:

Jan Caudle read a report on the Trout Lodge meeting. 60 registrations, 7 guests, 22 presenters, 7 student presenters.

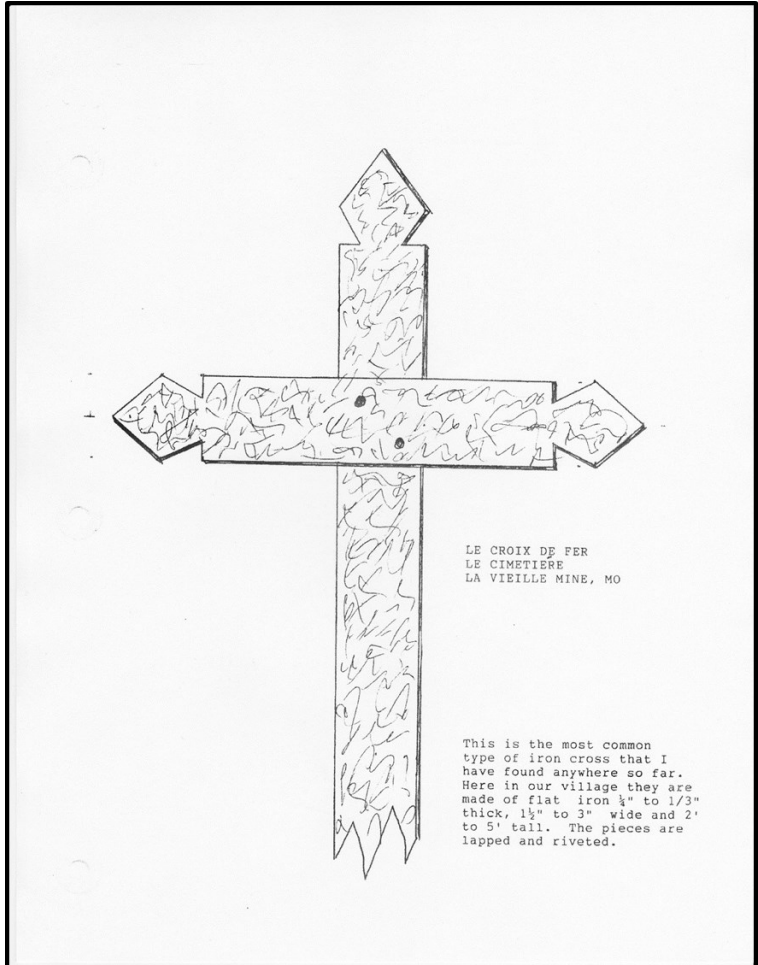
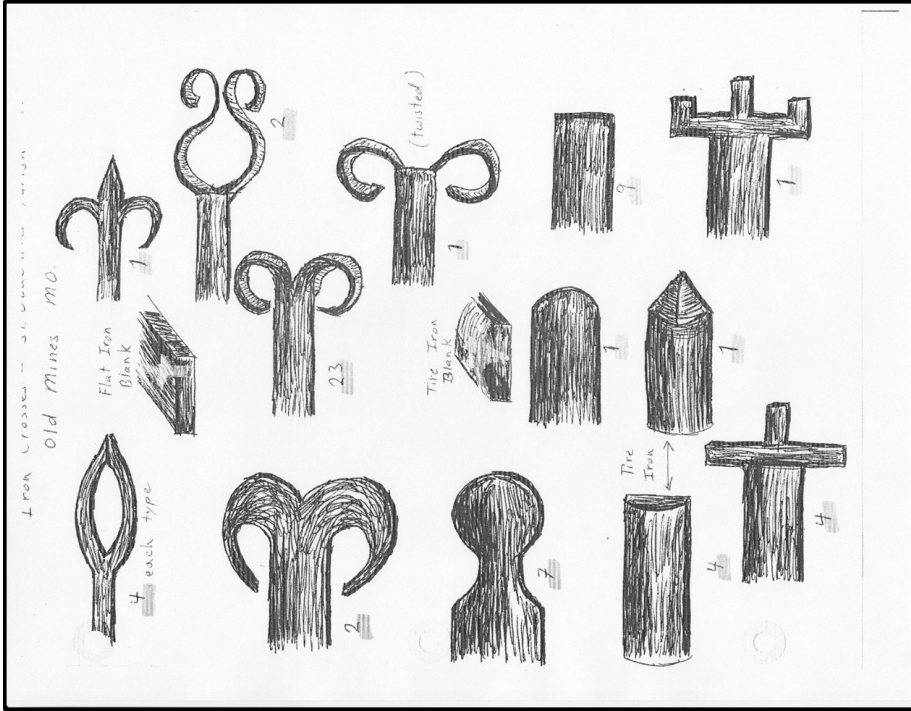
Big Muddy is April 4 & 5

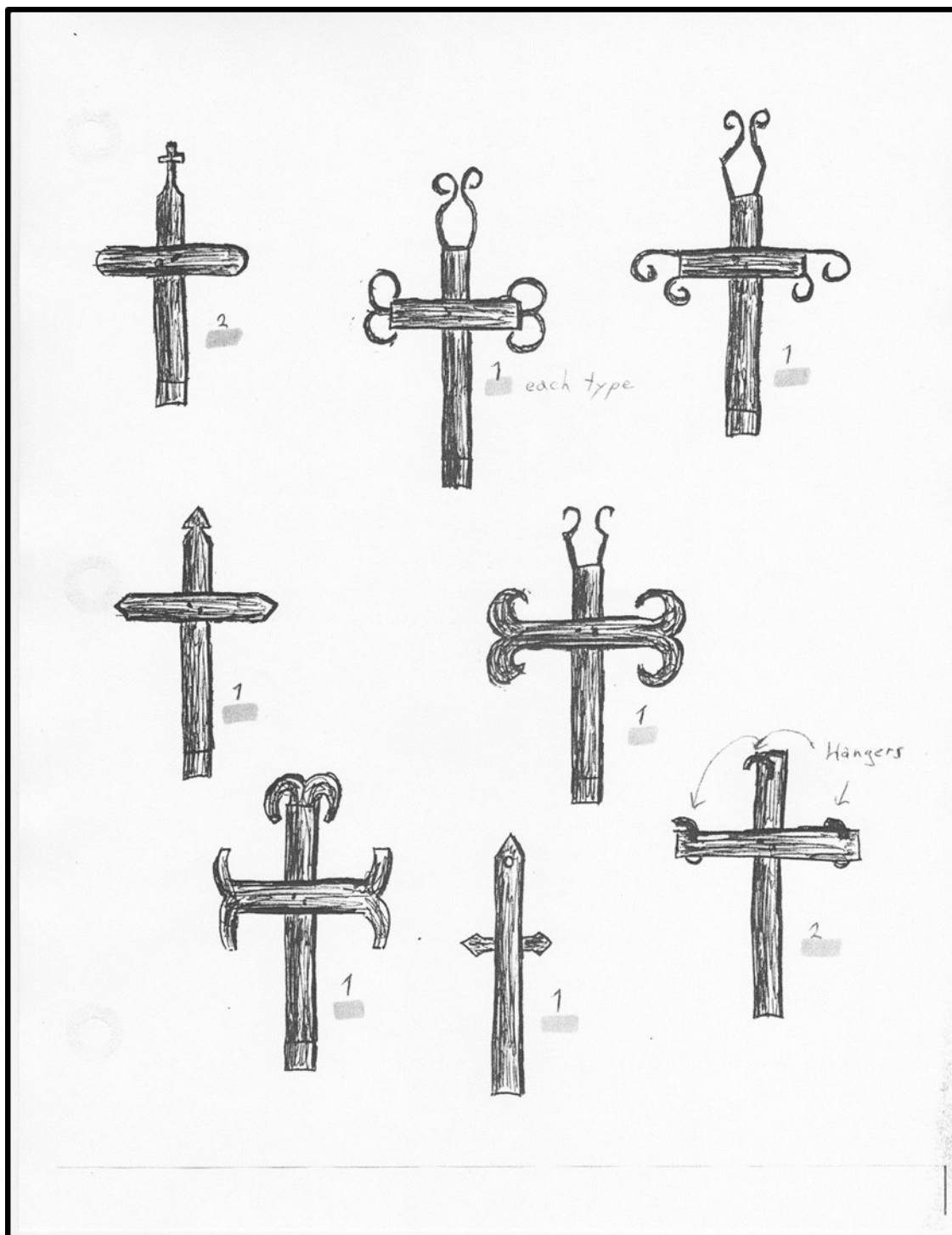
Condolences on house fire to George & Linda McCollum

Announcement of the death of John Schleppebach

Yes Missouri There Really is a Bootheel, Clyde

Cathy & Dave (Barton and Para) also appeared at the 2014 Big Muddy.





Kent Beaulne is graciously making available to us some of the images he displayed as part of his presentation at the Trout Lodge meeting (Potosi) in November of 2013).

Look for more at <http://missourifolkloresociety.truman.edu>