

# Friday Funny: Spellbinding Entertainment

—The Young People's Societies of the M. E. Church will hold a union sociable on the church lawn Saturday evening, Aug. 3. Cake and ice cream will be served from 6 to 10 o'clock. Spelling contest between Senior and Junior Leagues at 8 o'clock. Don't fail to attend this spell-binding entertainment.

"Spellbinding entertainment" in Monroe, Iowa. 2 August 1895 "Monroe Mirror," Vol. 23, No. 40, Page 3, Column 3.

## Roberts Family *(Click for Family Tree)*

Our ancestors Elizabeth Ann Murrell and her husband John Roberts lived in/near Monroe, in Jasper County, Iowa. It has always been a small town, and they made their own entertainment, as people still do in small towns. They were also members of the M. E. (Methodist Episcopal) Church there, so may have been chaperones or otherwise involved in this "sociable" on the church lawn.

Of course, don't miss the pun. Many of us know an incredibly wonderful man who was born in Jasper County, and who would never miss a chance for a pun... Maybe he came by that ability/terrible trait honestly by growing up in its midst? (Though this 'sociable' was way before his time.)

## Notes, Sources, and References:

1. Source as above.

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## **Tombstone Tuesday: Alfred and Marths S. (BARRY) PAYNE**



Headstone of Alfred and  
Martha S. (BARRY) PAYNE,  
Ivanhoe Cemetery,  
Mundelein, Lake County,  
Illinois, via Find A  
Grave with kind  
permission. (Click to  
enlarge.)

[McMurray Family, Payne Family](#) *(Click for Family Tree)*

Alfred and Martha Stedman (Barry) Payne had almost 55 years of marriage together before they were parted by the death of Alfred at age 79. Martha survived her husband by about 14 months. She was six years older than Alfred, so was 87 when she passed away.

The couple is buried in Ivanhoe Cemetery, in Mundelein, Lake County, Illinois. Their monument can be found in Section B-East-Lot 21.

## Notes, Sources, and References:

1. Images taken by a very kind Find A Grave photographer. Thank you for allowing us to use them!
2. Alfred Payne Find A Grave Memorial# 93659548—<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=93659548>
3. Martha Stedman (Barry) Payne Find A Grave Memorial# 93659547— <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=93659547>

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# Amanuensis Monday: The 1880 Agriculture Schedule for Aaron and Ann Elisy (Murrell) Brown

OF THE PERSON WHO CONDUCTS THIS FARM.				ACRES OF LAND.				FARM VALUES.			
THE NAME.	OWNED.			IMPROVED.		UNIMPROVED.		OF FIRM, including land, fence, and buildings.	OF FARMING IMPLEMENTS and machinery.	OF LIVE STOCK.	
	Owning.	Leased for fixed money rental.	Leased for share of produce.	Tilled, including fallow and grain in rotation, (whether pasture or timothy.)	Permanent timothy, permanent pasture, orchards, vineyards.	Woodland and forest.	Other unimproved, including "old fields" and growing wood.				Dollars.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Magg. Ely	/			80				2200	75	756
2	Quintin Ely	/			180				4800	100	550
3	Joseph Jasper	/			80				3000	200	980
4	John Sherman	/			80				2000	100	600
5	Brown Aaron	/	X		100				1800	200	600
6	Murrell, W. A.	/			240				6000	300	2200
7	Roberts, John	/			120				2400	100	300

1880 US Federal Census Non-Population Schedule for Mound Prairie Township, Jasper County, Iowa for Aaron Brown, page 9, Line 5. (Click to enlarge.)

[Roberts Family, Murrell Family](#) (Click for Family Tree)

The year 1880 found Ann Elisy Murrell and her husband Aaron Brown, along with their children, in Mound Prairie Township, Jasper County, Iowa. In addition to being on the population schedule (the regular census list), the family was included on the 1880 Agriculture Schedule (AKA 'Non-Population Schedule') that listed the details of their farm. They were included in this census just before Wiley Anderson Murrell, Eliza's father, and her sister's husband, John Roberts.

In 1880 Aaron Brown owned the land he was farming (probably had a mortgage on it though), however Wiley and John were renting their land. (They were farming on shares- they worked

someone else's land but provided a portion of their crops to the owner in lieu of paying a cash rent.)

An 'amanuensis' is one who copies manuscripts, or, in this case, we are using it to mean one who puts into a narrative what is basically a chart (the Ag census)- sort of writing it out to make a bit more sense.

Aaron and Eliza owned 100 acres, a farm slightly smaller than John Roberts' rented land of 120 acres, and much smaller than Wiley Murrell's 240 acres of leased land. (But they *owned* those 100 acres!) The value of Aaron and Eliza's farm, including land, fences, and buildings, was \$1800, and they had \$200 worth of implements and machinery to work it. The family had spent \$20 on building and repairing the farm during 1879.

The estimated value of all farm production, either sold, consumed by the family, or still on hand, for the previous year was \$1300.

The farm had 3 acres of grasslands that were mown to produce 4 tons of hay. This hay would be important fuel for the 'engines' of the day- horses and mules. The family owned 5 horses (not all would be the larger work horses) and 2 mules/asses. They did not have any working oxen.

The family had 4 "milch" cows on hand on 1 June 1880. The census lists 3 other "Neat Cattle"- probably beef cows for the family, and maybe including a bull for increasing the herd. Three calves were 'dropped' (born) during 1879, and 2 of their cattle were sold living; 1 died, stayed, or was stolen and not recovered. The total value of their livestock was \$600.

The 'milch' cows were important for making butter as well as the milk that would have been used for drinking and cooking. During 1879, 325 pounds of butter were made on the farm, most likely by Eliza and her daughters. (Only 2 of the 9 farms on that census page had higher butter production.)

The family did not own any sheep, but did have 23 swine (pigs) and 40 poultry birds, with the value of eggs produced in 1879 listed as \$160. The pigs were often women's work, and the poultry would have definitely been taken care of by the women and children- it was a busy life for all on the farm.

Aaron and Eliza's livestock was worth \$600 in total.

The family did not grow barley or buckwheat, but did plant 60 acres in Indian corn, the multi-colored corn that we now see as decorations in fall. This corn is usually preserved by drying (or making hominy in the south). The family farm produced 3,000 bushels of this corn, and 500 bushels of oats on the 20 acres planted; both were probably fed to animals. Four acres planted in rye produced 60 bushels, and 20 acres of wheat yielded 200 bushels. At least some of the wheat would have been milled into flour for the family's use, if not all. To finish off the family's needs for baking, 3 acres were planted in sorghum, yielding 500 gallons when pressed of a nutritious and somewhat sweet syrup that would have been used sometimes instead of sugar. They likely sold much of that or traded for other goods at the local general store.

The Ag Schedule also lists 2 acres planted in Irish potatoes (white), yielding 150 bushels to bake, mash, put in good midwestern potato salad, etc.

The Ag Schedule also tells us what they did not grow on the farm: hops, tobacco, sweet potatoes, pulse (beans like soybeans), flax and hemp (both used for fibers and ropes), no broom corn, nor maple sugar/molasses. They also did not have any orchards, grapes/vinyards, nor a 'market garden' where they grew produce to sell. (They most assuredly had their own family vegetable garden, however.) They also did not have beehives for honey or wax, and did not sell any forest products.

Obviously, life on a farm was a very full day of work in the

field, barn, chicken coop, pigsty, and home.

American farm life may seem easier today with big combines and computerized planting, but a farmer's life is still a tough one. We need to respect and appreciate our farmers and their families throughout all our history, as they built and fed America, and still do today. Having a secure food supply, by it being produced right here in America, is so important to our county's safety and security.

### **Notes, Sources, and References:**

1. 1880 US Federal Census Non-Population Schedule for Mound Prairie Township, Jasper County, Iowa for Aaron Brown, page 9, Line 5. Available on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.

*Click to enlarge any image. Please contact us if you would like an image in higher resolution.*

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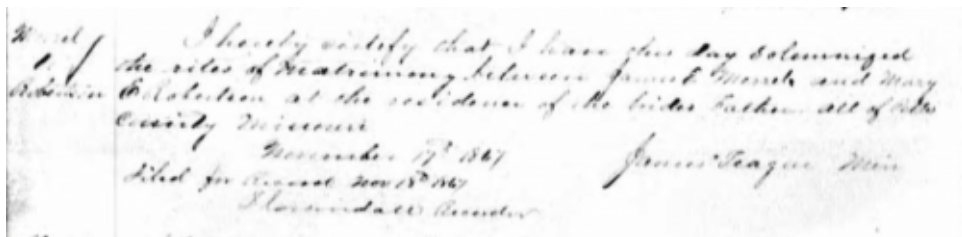


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## Wedding Wednesday: The Marriages of James Edward Murrell



7 November 1867- Marriage Record for James E. Murrell and Mary E. Robinson. (Click to enlarge, but scan very hard to read.)

[Murrell Family, Roberts Family](#) *(Click for Family Tree)*

James Edward Murrell received his final pay and discharge in Illinois after serving in the Union Army of the Civil War. We do not know if he returned to the family farm in Warren County, Illinois, right after the war, or if he moved back to Missouri (where he had worked in 1860).

We do know, however, that he married Mary E. Robinson about two years after his discharge, on 17 November 1867 in Pettis County, Missouri. (Wonder if he had met Mary when he and his brother William Anderson Murrell were working in Missouri before the war?) The marriage record states that they were married at the home of the bride's father, and all were "of Pettis County," Missouri. So James had moved back to Missouri sometime after the war, and set down roots.

The parents of James migrated to Iowa in 1868, and some of

their children went with them. Maybe, since some of their other children had moved far away from Warren County, Illinois, Wiley Anderson Murrell and his wife Mary Magdalen (Honts) Murrell had an easier decision as to whether or not they would migrate west. (See previous posts for details on this migration.)

We don't know Mary E. Robinson's history before the marriage, nor the names of her parents, so this is some additional research to add to the list.

James and Mary had 6 children born in Missouri: William Murrell b. 1869, James R. Murrell (1871-1951), Ida J. Murrell (1873-1917), Luther George Murrell (1877-1929), baby 1879-?, and Clifton Clemons Murrell b. 1882.

The family was in Elk Fork Township, Pettis, MO at the 1870 census. James was listed with Mary and 2-year-old son William. He was noted as a farmer with \$200 in personal estate- no real estate value was listed. This suggests that he did not own land, so taking a look at his neighbors was the next research, as he may have been farming for them or a family member. Sure enough, on the census page prior, is his brother John Murrell with wife Lydia Rayburn and their two children. (John and Lydia had moved to Pettis sometime between their marriage in Warren Co., Illinois in 1862 and the 1870 census.) John was enumerated as a farmer with \$1740 in real estate value, and \$500 in personal estate value. Between entries for John and James a Benjamin Robertson and his wife and son were listed, and Benjamin was a farmer born in Missouri- he could be Mary's older brother if the names were confused (Robinson/Robertson). Benjamin had \$1950 in real estate and \$300 in personal estate. Both Benjamin and John were 5-10 years older, so could have been the big brothers, helping their younger sister and brother (respectively) get started in farming. None of these farmers are found in *The History of Pettis County, Missouri, including an authentic history of Sedalia, other towns and townships, together with ... biographical sketches...* by I.

MacDonald Demuth, 1882, unfortunately, so it is hard to know more about their life and relationships.

James and Mary Murrell were still in Pettis County at the 1880 census, and in Calhoun, Henry, MO by 1900. Mary died 20 February 1905, and in 1910 James was living with his son James & family at age 68. Son James was listed as a farmer in Bowling Green Township, Pettis County, and they are noted as being on the Ag Schedule; they probably were living on the farm, maybe even the family farm?

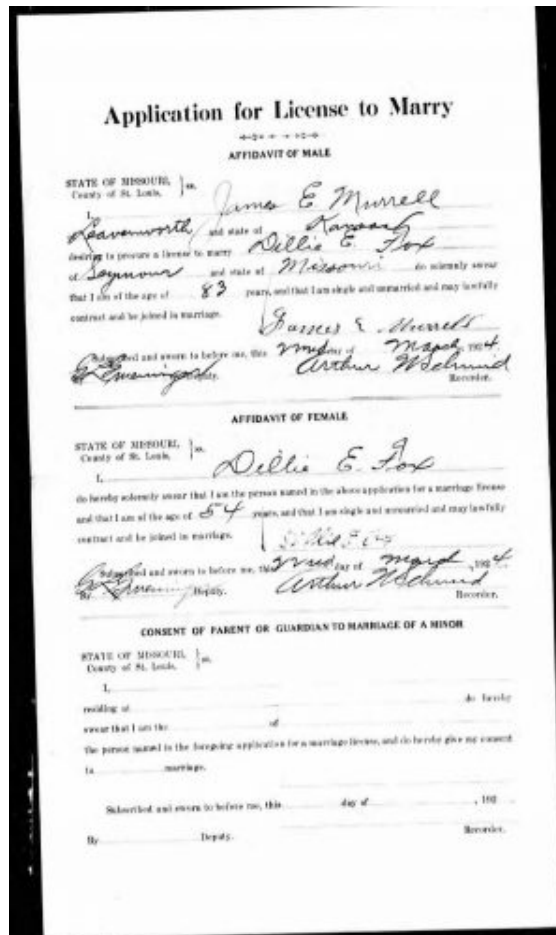
In 1912 at age 70 James was in a US National Home for Disabled Soldiers in Delaware, Leavenworth, KS and is noted there multiple times through 1922.

Life changed for James E. Murrell on 22 March 1924. He married Dillie E. Fox on that date in Clayton, St. Louis, Missouri. That is on the other side of the state from Kansas- wonder how this marriage came about? And how did we learn about this marriage?



James Edward Murrell and his wife, likely Dillie E. Fox, in the early 1920s at Seymour, Missouri.

The above picture was kindly provided by cousins (thank you!) but it did not seem to be taken before 1905, when Mary E. (Robinson) Murrell died. Additionally, Mary was only about four years younger than James, and the unnamed woman in this picture appears quite a bit younger. Finding the death certificate of James helped solve this mystery- the informant was "Dillie E. Murrell" of Seymour, Missouri. So this image is likely of James with his second wife. A search brought up a Missouri marriage record for the pair:



22 March 1924 marriage record for James Edward Murrell and Dillie E. Fox, via "Missouri Marriage Records 1805-2002" on Ancestry. (Click to enlarge.)

James and Dillie were to have two years together as husband and wife.

The rest of their story will be in a future post.

### Notes, Sources, and References:

1. James Edward Murrell, Find A Grave Memorial #60556601 <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=6>

[0556601](#)

2. Mary E. (Robinson) Murrell, Find A Grave Memorial #60556678  
<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=60556678>
3. Re: Find A Grave Memorials- please note that this author wrote the biographies on the memorials, so we are not plagiarizing in this post.
4. "The History of Pettis County, Missouri, including an authentic history of Sedalia, other towns and townships, together with ... biographical sketches..." by I. MacDonald Demuth, 1882.

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## Tuesday's Tip: The Griffin Family Coin and Family History



1881 Morgan silver dollar engraved with birthdates of the Griffin family. It has a pinback, and was purchased on eBay many years ago. (Click to enlarge.)

**Tuesday's Tip: Look everywhere for family history information.**

On this Valentine's Day, it is fitting to feature this wonderful "love token" on the blog.

No, we are not related to the Griffin family, but it would be nice to find someone who is a descendant.

So, what is a "love token"?

During the late 1700s, through the 1800s and even up through

World War II, coins were sometimes used as an inexpensive and personal form of memento, jewelry, or good luck token. One or both sides of the coin would be filed or sanded down and rubbed smooth. Designs, words, names, initials, would then be hand-carved into the soft metal of the coin. Sometimes areas were cut out of the coin, enamel or raised metals would be added, or it might be cut into a shape other than round. The finished token might be gold-plated, or more rarely, a gold coin was actually used for the token.

These engraved coins are often called "love tokens," as a sweetheart might make and give a special coin to celebrate a wedding, anniversary, special event, or just their love. Coins were engraved by soldiers in bunkers ("trench art"), by farmers during a cold and dark winter, by factory workers in the evening after many long hours at work, or at fairs and expositions. Examples of this art might sport very simple or even crude engravings, some punched with a nail or sharp object, or very fine, elegant art cut by a professional engraver. A pinback could be added, and sometimes more than one coin would be made into a brooch. The coins could also be made into a bracelet (love token bracelets were quite the rage at various times), or added to a watch fob; less often were the coins made into pendants to wear as a necklace. A gentleman might even keep one of these special coins in his pocket, for good luck, or wear it as a stickpin. Engraved coins were given not just to sweethearts, either- other family members might receive a personally engraved coin, with initials or the relationship, such as "Mother," or one might be a remembrance of a special trip. Love tokens were used in other countries as well as the United States, and may be found on the coins of various countries.



The above coin is an 1881 Morgan silver dollar, one of the most popular coins ever made because of its beauty. One side of the coin was filed down, lines drawn across and a branch of



leaves added along both the right and left curves of the coin. The top of the coin has the word "Born" and then names and birthdates were added. The bottom center appears to have the date 1901 with a small design on either side.

Transcription:

Born

T. Griffin	Mar. 25 185?
B. "	Apr. 19th 1859
R. "	Mar. 23rd 1881
M. "	Apr. 22nd 1883
E. "	July 15th 1885
A. "	Nov. 7th 1887
G. "	June 15th 1890
L. "	June 10th 1893
C. "	Jan. 23rd 1896
H. "	Aug. 29th 18??



Reverse of 1881 Morgan silver dollar engraved with birthdates of the Griffin family. It has a pinback, and was purchased on eBay many years ago. (Click to enlarge.)

My hypothesis is that this coin was a gift from T. Griffin to his wife, B. \_\_\_ Griffin, and it listed the births of their children. If both husband and wife were born in 1859, they would have been about 22 years old in 1881. Their marriage was likely around 1880, estimated from the birth of their first child.

Perhaps the silver dollar was a gift to the wife at the birth of their oldest child in 1881. (Do people still collect coins from the birth year of their child? It was common at least 20 years ago.) Then, twenty years later, in 1901- perhaps as a 20th anniversary gift, or even a Valentine present?- the saved coin was engraved and lovingly given to the mother of eight. She would have worn it proudly, especially since the "worth" of a woman back then was highly correlated to the number of children she could bear.

Please note that the above is just a possible description of the background of this love token- we have no proof for any of it. It has been challenging to learn more about this family, especially since only initials are used for first names, and "Griffin" is a fairly common name. Since the coin was sold on eBay, we may never know how many times it changed hands or travelled to another town.

Our hope is that someone researching the Griffin family name will find this post, and compare the engraved information to known family members. If any of our readers know more about this family, or have suggestions for finding them, please contact us at the blog!

### **Notes, Sources, and References:**

1. Coin owned by author.
2. "Darling, Can You Spare a Dime? How Victorians Fell in Love With Pocket Change"-  
<http://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/how-victorians-fell-in-love-with-pocket-change/>

3. "What are Love Tokens?" by the Love Token Society– <http://lovetokensociety.com/history/love-tokens/>
4. Of course, coin collectors are horrified at the defacing of coins for love tokens, and there are some coins that would have been worth quite a bit of money had they not been engraved with an image or words. Love tokens are, however, a delightful reminder of our past. They would have been cherished by their owners and proudly worn, and some, such as this coin, can even tell a family story.

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