

Date: June 21, 1864

Originator: Josephine Thomas, my grandmother. She had married C. B. Thomas on Feb. 24, 1864.

To: Gillie Bodine, who was visiting in McLean County, and her granddaughters Gilly and Mary Parker Stiles.

Comment: Mr. John R. Jones, according to his tombstone, was 79 years old. Horse-stealing is not proper; but he must have been a confused old gentleman to have fired at five armed and desperate men who wanted only one horse. This tragedy led to another, this one in cold blood. Major General Stephen Gano Burbridge, commanding the military district of Kentucky, ordered two Confederate prisoners, John Berry and May Hamilton, brought from Louisville to Bloomfield and shot in reprisal for the killing of Mr. Jones. The legend is that the prisoners at the camp were required to draw straws and these two got the short ones. There is a further legend that some of Mr. Jones's relatives could have saved the hostages if they had pleaded for them. They would not do it and were so unpopular after the war that they left the state. The house still stands, at the Bluegrass Parkway and Ky. 55 interchange. As we drove by, my father used to point out where the shooting had occurred and say that the blood stains could still be seen on the porch.

Notes: 1. "Cousin Ike": Unidentified. Isaac Webb? Had he accompanied Grandma to McLean?

2. "Uncle Isaac": Isaac Bodine, who lived across the field at the "Arnold Place."

3. "through the flags at the door": Presumably the family would have seen the flags as they went to Bloomfield and Grandma would know about them. Did Federal sympathizers in the area make a display of U. S. flags? It would have told Confederates where to steal horses. (*"Flags" could also mean "irises."*)

4. Shindlers: Josephine's sister Virginia married George Shindler about 1858. I think he ran a store at Maud (then Glenville but never mentioned in this correspondence. Perhaps it was officially "Beach Fork Post Office" at this time.) I imagine that Josephine Breckenridge first met C. B. Thomas when she visited her sister Virginia Shindler at Maud. (*This interpretation seems unlikely.*)

5. Death at Shindlers: The name of the victim is mostly missing because of a gap in the paper. It could be Vandike.

6. Mr. Jones's will: He was a wealthy man for the time. Perhaps some of the interest in the will derives from the fact that Mrs. Jones was newly married to him and possibly was much younger. The wife buried next to him at Camp Ground died in 1862.