

GEORGE H. WALSER
and
LIBERAL, MISSOURI

An Historical Overview

by

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WELCOME TO LIBERAL

LIBERAL, MISSOURI IS A DELIGHTFUL LITTLE COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST MISSOURI ABOUT THIRTY MILES NORTH OF JOPLIN. IT WAS FOUNDED IN 1880 AS A SHOWCASE FOR LIBERALISM. THE EXPERIMENT, HOWEVER, WAS A FAILURE. THE LIBERAL THEORIES, WHICH SEEMED SO PROMISING ON PAPER, TURNED OUT TO BE A DISASTER IN REAL LIFE.

THERE ARE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM LIBERAL, MISSOURI

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INTRODUCTION

A rose by any other name, does not smell the same. Vance Packard in his book "Hidden Persuaders," relates an interesting experiment. Identically the same soap was placed in three different boxes. One box was predominantly yellow. The second was predominantly blue. The third was designed with a mixture of blue and yellow. Women were asked to test each sample. Most said the soap in the yellow box was too strong, and that in the blue box was too weak. Though identically the same soap was in all three boxes, most preferred the sample in the yellow and blue box.

Al Ries and Jack Trout report a similar experiment in their book "Positioning." They said that blind taste tastings of champagne have often ranked California brands above French ones. We taste what we expect to taste. Inexpensive Gallo tastes much better when poured from a bottle you believe is fifty year old French Burgundy. Our perceptions of reality are influenced by our own prejudice and preconceptions.

The same is true of history. The "facts" of history are constant, but our perception of them is not. Americans celebrate July 4, as "Independence Day." This happy occasion commemorates our victory over England in the Revolutionary War. Englishmen look at this same celebration in a much different light. July 4, is not a happy day in England.

The same truth applies to the story of George H. Walser, and the history of Liberal, Missouri. Though the facts remain the same, our perceptions of them may differ.

My first exposure to this remarkable story came through the writings of two men, the Rev. Clark Braden, and J.P. Moore. Their views of Liberal, and their opinions of its founder, G.H. Walser, were quite different. Several things help to explain these differences.

First, they wrote at different times in history. Braden first published his pamphlet, "The Fulfillment of a Dream," in 1885, and revised it in 1886. This was a particularly trying time in the town of Liberal. During that period, people were leaving Liberal, and property values were declining. There was some speculation that the city may even cease to exist.

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The fabric of liberalism was starting to unravel. Rancor and bitterness abounded. This was the Liberal that Clark Braden encountered and wrote about in 1886.

J.P. Moore did not even visit the town of Liberal until 1896, and did not move there until 1899. By this time, the situation in Liberal was much more stable. The passing of more than ten years brought many dramatic changes. For example, Walser had reversed his position on churches. In Braden's day, he opposed them. In fact, Walser even bragged that Liberal was "the only town of its size in the world without a priest, preacher, church, saloon, God or hell . . ." By the time J.P. Moore arrived, however, Walser welcomed churches. The town had also changed. In 1899, Liberal was not as liberal as it once was. The cutting edge of militant liberalism had been dulled, and the radical nature of the great social experiment had been greatly reduced.

Secondly, their historical perspective was different. Braden was an opponent of Walser, and Moore was his friend and former employee. At one point, Mr. Moore even lived with the Walsers. Moore's book, "The Strange Town," was not completed until 1963. By this time, Liberal was just like every other little town in S.W. Missouri. A blazing inferno loses much of its intensity when you are eighty years removed from the heat.

Here is an example of the way Moore's friendship with Walser may have affected his historical perspective. On page 151 of the Strange Town, Moore wrote that Walser ". . . entered the Union army . . . and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel . . ." This was apparently what Walser told him, and he had no reason to doubt it. He should have. Walser obviously lied about his military service. His friends believed him, but his enemies did not. In this instance, his enemies were right.

Walser was not a Lieutenant Colonel, he was only a Captain. Furthermore, he was dishonorably discharged from the military. On May 4, 1865, Captain Walser was dishonorably dismissed from his position as Provost Marshal in St. Joseph, Missouri. The charge against him was "malfeasance in office." Clark Braden knew about this and mentioned it on page 4 of his pamphlet, "The Fulfillment of a Dream." Moore claimed to have read Braden's pamphlet, but obviously did not believe the charges.

Walser apparently never told anyone the truth about his military service, not even his wives. In the course of his life, Mr. Walser was married to four different women. His last wife, Esther, obviously thought he was a Lieutenant Colonel. She proudly identified her deceased husband on his mausoleum as "Lieut. Col. George H. Walser." She apparently did not learn the truth about his military service until 1926 when she applied for

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a Widow's Pension.

Walser died on May 1, 1910. We must remember, however, that early in his life, the liberal Mr. Walser did not believe in God. Consequently, he had little or no incentive to tell the truth about anything.

I have written these remarks to warn you of my own biases and preconceptions. I believe in God, and the Bible. The story of Liberal, Missouri, is a therefore a beautiful story to me. It confirms my preconceptions. It is like a parable of conversion. Liberalism turned out to be a failure. That's what I would have anticipated. The town of Liberal changed, just like I hope all liberals will. It is a fact of history that Liberal is no longer liberal. Touche! The story of Liberal is a positive example. Furthermore, Mr. Walser, who once was an unbeliever, came to describe himself as a "converted infidel." Wonderful! This is what I hope will happen to every unbeliever. Some of history's most godly men were also "converted infidels."

I see myself, therefore, as a friend of Liberal. This is, to me, a marvelous story. I wish I could have known Mr. Walser personally. I hope someday to meet him in heaven. When I point to some of his sins, I do not do so in a belligerent manner. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Everyone needs grace and forgiveness. I hope that nothing written here will bring pain to the Walser's family, or anyone else. This is a positive story! May it encourage everyone to faith in God. The great heroes of Scripture, like George H. Walser, were also sinners in need of forgiveness and grace.

I am firmly convinced, however, that Liberalism is wrong, and that Walser was wrong for promoting it. Walser's liberal theories should not be judged by what he thought, or wrote, but by what his teachings produced. It is undeniable that his liberal theories produced a mess. That is at least one reason, why he changed.

Jesus said: **"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:16)** The value of a teaching or philosophy is easily evaluated by its fruit. You may be confused by conflicting religious books, and the clash of differing philosophies. Fruit, however, is not confusing. Jesus taught his followers to consider fruit. You may be fooled by the writings of Mao Tse-tung, but you should not be confused by China.

Our pilgrim forefathers believed the Bible. They had the words "In God We Trust," inscribed on this nation's currency. It is impossible to understand the United States of

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America apart from its rich biblical heritage. This country is the product, or "fruit," of what they believed and taught. Every nation is a showcase for its own teaching and philosophy. Those who do not like the Bible, should perhaps be as honest as Mr. Walser was. They should emigrate somewhere and start their own country.

Thank you for taking time to read these words. May this fascinating story be helpful and instructive in your life. The older and wiser Mr. Walser said it like this: "I write from the standpoint of a converted Infidel! I have patiently investigated without bias all sides of mental and spiritual philosophies. All I desire is the truth, whose footprints I will follow wherever it leadeth; for what is truth for me is truth for all, whether that truth be divine or secular."

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CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Thank you for your interest in George H. Walser. Reading about his remarkable life can be a very positive experience. The inscription on his grave indicates that he was born at Aurora, Indiana, May 26, 1834. He was raised in the Christian faith, but early in life rejected much of orthodox Christianity. After a lifetime of struggles, he returned to the faith of his fathers.

Not much is known of his family. A document dated, March 7, 1895, offers some limited information. The document was certified by John G. Todd, a Notary Public in Barton Co. Missouri. Todd was Walser's son-in-law. He married Lena Walser in 1888. They had six children, four sons and two daughters. Todd said he had examined family records and mementoes in a bound drawing tablet and discovered the following entries.

G. H. Walser's father, Mark Walser, was born on March 21, 1802, and died February 13, 1882.

His mother, Sara Gray Walser, was born July 5, 1808, and died August 19, 1902.

They were married February 1, 1824.

Rannals Walser was born February 7, 1825.

Barbara Walser was born November 5, 1826, and died February 6, 1840.

John Walser was born December 28, 1828, and died April 16, 1847.

Liddy Walser was born April 5, 1831, and died December 20, 1836.

George H. Walser was born May 26, 1834.

According to these records, George was the youngest of five children. He was born

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the same year that Cyrus Hall McCormick received a patent for his mechanical reaper. On December 1, of the same year, President Jackson announced that the national debt would be paid off by January 1, 1835.

Robert Owen

Not too long before Walser's birth, an event was taking place in Indiana that may have impacted his life. An infidel by the name of Robert Owen was establishing an experimental community at New Harmony.

Owen's theories were bold and outrageous. He wanted to abolish religion, marriage, and the private ownership of property. He reasoned that without marriage there could be no immorality, and without owning, there could be no stealing. Finally, he felt that the removal of religion would eliminate mental and emotional problems produced by guilt.

Mr. Owen purchased property belonging to the Rappites in 1824. This included the village of New Harmony and 30,000 acres. Several thousand people were attracted to his theories. Owen was so arrogant and confident that he predicted that within three years the city of Cincinnati would be depopulated.

Owen was a man of great wealth and benevolent intentions. Inspired by the notion that his plans would revolutionize human society, he submitted his ideas to the governments of Europe and America. He visited foreign countries and communicated directly with men of prominence. He was privileged to present an explanatory memorial to the Congress of sovereigns at Aix la Chapelle, and had extensive interviews with Prince Metternich of Austria.

Back home, the government of Mexico offered him a district one hundred and fifty miles broad to try his experiments on a grand scale. This grant would have included that part of California where gold was later discovered. Fortunately, the California project never materialized.

Some feel that Owen's theories were dealt a death blow by a preacher named Alexander Campbell. Campbell refuted his theories in a famous debate in April 1830. Robert Richardson described the debate in his book, "The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell." On the last day of the debate, Mr. Owen ran out of material, and Mr. Campbell spoke for twelve hours. Richardson felt it was a brilliant defence of Christianity. He wrote that it presented a "cogency of argument, comprehensive reach of thought and eloquence,

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(that) has never been surpassed, if ever equaled."

At the conclusion of his remarks, Campbell asked those who believed in the Christian religion to rise to their feet. There were over twelve hundred people present, and they rose as one man.

Next, Mr. Campbell asked all who were doubtful of the truth of the Christian religion to stand. Only three persons arose.

The acid test of Owen's theories, however, was not to be found in a partisan vote at the conclusion of a debate. The futility of his ideas was best exposed in the laboratory of life. New Harmony, Indiana, did not develop into a great country to rival the United States of America. His theories, which looked so good on paper, utterly failed in the real world. His grandiose proposals which sounded so good in the classroom, produced only havoc and confusion in real life.

Many years later, a preacher by the name of Clark Braden, would also prove a nemesis to G.H. Walser. Braden came to Liberal, Missouri, conducted a series of debates, and attacked liberalism with bull dog tenacity. Perhaps it is not by accident, that Braden was a disciple of Alexander Campbell.

Move to Illinois

At some point in his early life, Walser moved to Illinois. Walser's friend, J.P. Moore, said that he studied law and was admitted to the bar by the Supreme Court of Illinois, and began practicing at Middleport in about 1856. Moore also believes this was the year that Walser married his first wife, Harriet.

Clark Braden, the preacher, was less complimentary about Walser's life in Illinois. He charged that Walser spent time in jail there. He wrote:

"G. H. Walser, the founder and proprietor of Liberal, first achieved greatness in Paris, Edgar County, Illinois, where he was running a store, on which he secured insurance far beyond its value. It mysteriously got afire and was saved several times. The last time Walser was found in bed sound asleep, and hard to wake, though the wick of the candle in his room was still smoking. He was watched, caught in the act of setting fire to the building, and spent three years in jail, part of the time in irons, for an attempt to break

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jail, and escaped the penitentiary by the chicanery of D.W. Voorhees, his attorney. He was dismissed from the army in disgrace for crime and misconduct, and although he has made desperate efforts to be restored he has failed . . ."

At this time, I cannot verify either the affirmations of J.P. Moore that Walser practiced law in Middleport, Illinois, or the charges of Clark Braden that he was in jail in Paris, Illinois. I do have documentation, however, proving that he was dishonorably dismissed from the military, and will present it in a later chapter.

Based on the information available to us today, it seems that George H. Walser was born in 1834. This would mean that he was twenty-two when he got married in 1856. Military records indicate that he was mustered into service on June 13, 1861. This would mean that he was twenty-seven when he became a soldier. I have no idea where, or how, he studied to become a lawyer.

CHAPTER II

WALSER AND THE MILITARY

In 1861 the United States of America was plunged into a horrible War. The World Almanac estimates the number of battle deaths at 498,000. The American People's Encyclopedia places the figure at 618,000. There were from 26,000 to 31,000 Confederate troops who died in Union prison camps. The Civil War was America's most costly war regarding the loss of American lives.

Here are some events immediately preceding the outbreak of war, and Walsers subsequent enlistment in the Union Army.

On March 9, 1861 the Confederate Convention at Montgomery authorized the organization of an army.

On April 20, 1861 Colonel Robert E. Lee resigned his U.S. Army commission, and two days later took command of the Virginia troops as a major general.

On May 20, 1861, North Carolina became the 11th state to succeed and the Confederate capital was moved from Montgomery to Richmond, Virginia.

Here is the account J.P. Moore gives of Walsers military service. As I have said before, it is not accurate:

"He entered the Union army on the first call of President Lincoln for three-months' volunteers, and reenlisted for three years. He attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of the 20th Illinois volunteers. Basing this statement on the understanding of a very close relative, and as related to this writer in a letter: When the war was over, Mr. Walsers felt the purpose for which he had gone to war was accomplished, disliked to serve in the occupation of the South, had no grievance against those people, had plans of his own for life, so simply got on his horse and left the army. He had wished to be released and was probably tired of waiting on technicalities. This action, of course, was against regulations, and probably involved him considerably with the

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army; but he evidently won his point and no punitive measure was applied. He was a purposeful man and must have had his own ideas, then as well as later on." (The Strange Town, p. 151)

George H. Walser did enlist in the Union Army. He was "mustered in" on June 13, 1861. The next day, June 14, 1861, he received a commission as Captain of Co. I, 20 Reg't Illinois Infantry.

He was only in the service for a few months, but this was not because he was a "three months' volunteer." It was because he was sick and apparently couldn't get along with his fellow officers. The following information is taken from military records:

He was on the sick list from September 1, 1861, to October 11, 1861. On October 16, 1861 he applied for a "leave of absence" because of "remittent fever," and "diarrhea."

Also in October 1861, Capt. Walser was "placed in arrest by order C.C. Marsh for refusing to leave his Co. and return to Cape Girardeau just before the battle of Fredrickstown, ordered into arrest Oct. 19."

On November 3, 1861, he tendered his resignation because of "ill health, to take effect immediately."

On November 4, 1861, he changed his mind, and wrote to Col. C.C. Marsh: "I do hereby remand the resignation sent in by me on yesterday. I have every hope of a speedy recovery of my health and do not wish to leave the service . . ."

His commanding officer sent an accompanying letter with his attempt to remand his resignation. He wrote: "I inclose the withdrawal of resignation of Capt. G. H. Walser of the 20th Reg. Ill. Vol. I beg leave to state that I deem that the best interests of the regiment require that his resignation be approved and accepted and would respectfully request that his withdrawal thereof be disapproved." Capt. Walser was not allowed back into the service at this time.

REENLISTED - 1864

On October 10, 1864, G.H. Walser was mustered back into the military as a

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Captain. This time he was serving with Co. I, 43 Reg't Missouri Infantry.

On November 25, 1864 he was assigned as Asst. Provost Marshal for the District of North Missouri.

On May 4, 1865 he was dishonorably dismissed. The dismissal letter read:

"By direction of the President on the recommendation of the Commanding General Department of Missouri, Captain George H. Walser, 43d Missouri Volunteers is hereby dishonorably dismissed from the service of the United States for malfeasance in office while Provost Marshal at St. Joseph, Missouri.

By order of the Secretary of War
W. A. NICHOLS
Assistant Adjutant General"

Please note that G.H. Walser began, and ended, his military career as a Captain, and not as a Lieutenant Colonel. I am told it is quite common for men to lie about their military exploits. These fabrications are commonly called "war stories." In this regard, it seems that Capt. Walser was quite common.

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CHAPTER III

FOLLOWING THE MONEY TRAIL

The Scriptures teach that the love of money is the root of all evil. When you "follow the money trail," it helps to understand many questions regarding man's behavior. G. H. Walser came to S.W. Missouri in 1866. I do not know why he made this move, unless it involved money. Somewhere, and somehow, he got his hands on a lot of money in S.W. Missouri. His friends, of course, would assume that he got it honestly. Clark Braden charged otherwise. Braden wrote:

"While living in Carthage, Mo., he concocted a railroad bond fraud. By hiring villains to hold a pretended bond election in thinly settled towns, by perjury, forgery, and fraud, he loaded the towns with fraudulent bonds, sold them, and escaped the penitentiary by compounding his villainy. He next took part in a gigantic land steal, in which the United States Government was defrauded out of tens of thousands of acres of the best land in Southwest Missouri, at a few cents per acre, as worthless, because 'swamp lands.' He has swindled scores, in disposing of the land he stole from the government. A common piece of villainy was to show a purchaser, an excellent piece of land, giving as its number, that of a worthless piece. The purchaser soon found that he had paid the price of good land for worthless land, and without remedy, for Walser was careful that there be no witnesses . . ." (Taken from the Fulfillment of a Dream, pages 4 - 5.)

Swamp Land

I do not have any documentation regarding a railroad bond fraud, but documentation about swamp land is available.

On September 28, 1850, Congress approved:

"An Act to enable the State of Arkansas, and other states to reclaim the swamp lands within their limits, it is so provided that all the swamp and overflowed lands made unfit thereby for cultivation within the State of

Missouri which remain unsold at the passage of said act, shall be granted to said State. And whereas in pursuance of instructions from the General Land Office of the United States the several tracts or parcels of land hereafter described have been selected as Swamp and Overflowed lands enuring to the said state under the Act aforesaid being situated in the District of Lands subject to sale at Springfield, Missouri . . ." These hand written words are then followed by the legal description of lands which were designated by the state as "swamp lands." The Act was then signed by President James Buchanan.

Defrauding the Government?

There are no swamp lands in S.W. Missouri. Yet, thousands of acres were "declared," or "designated," as swamp land.

The generally accepted theory of how this happened, involves fraud. Enterprising land dealers were said to have placed a boat in the back of a wagon. Then they climbed in the boat and drove over large sections of rich farm land. Then they signed affidavits that they had been over the land in a boat. In this manner large sections of land were purchased from the government for pennies on the dollar.

I have no way of proving that G.H. Walser participated in the "boat scam," but court records indicate that he did buy a lot of land, and that a considerable number of these purchases were designated as "swamp land," also known as "patent land."

Barton Co. Court House records verify that Walser, or his wife, bought "swamp" or "patent" lands on:

November 9, 1866
March 12, 1867
July 16, 1867
August 31, 1867
November 21, 1867, Etc.

In fact, they bought sixty-three farms, or parcels of ground from March 19, 1866, to May 3, 1870. Not all of these were "swamp" lands. Some were acquired at sheriffs' sales, and others were merely on the market at what Walser thought was a good price.

Philanthropist?

Walser's friends saw him as a philanthropist. Perhaps at some point in his life he was. In the 1860s and 70s, however, he seems to have been characterized by greed. Many of the old silent movies featured a wicked landlord who would take away the family farm. Walser would have been perfect for the part.

Purchasing farms at Sheriffs' sales caused him to evict a great many people. Take, for example, page 216 in the Circuit Court Records of Barton County. Twenty-six law suits are listed on this page, and Walser filed fifteen of them. Here are the people listed on this single page. Walser sued them all for eviction or collection of debt:

Robert and Charles Olive
D. H. Bowers
Abraham Nigh
R. T. Cartmul
F. E. Reynolds
C.B. Couch, Hoyt, J.J. Humphreys, A.G. Wray, Lee Chiswill, J.H. Neal,
and Charles VanPelt
David A. Olds
John Couch and Joseph A. Watkin
Phillip Hamir
Thomas G. Harvey
Barton Co. and M.B. Earll
F.D.W. Arnold
J.M. Travis and D.A. Olds
Chas. Newberk
Edward G. Ward, James T. Ward, R.J. Tucker and wife

If this is philanthropy, it is a different kind than I am familiar with. We must remember, however, that Walser was in a period of change and development. Later, he would be more generous. Billy Graham once observed: "If a person gets his attitude toward money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area in his life."

CHAPTER IV

THE FOUNDING OF LIBERAL

The original plat for the town of Liberal, Missouri was dedicated and entered into county records on October 26, 1880. This cite had the advantage of being located at the convergence of two railroads, the Frisco, and the Missouri Pacific. The property was originally purchased as "patent" land on June 10, 1859. Twenty-one years later, Walser purchased it, and other lands, from W.C. Davis and W.H. Parker, for \$5,650.

Information obtained from the Western Historical Manuscript Collection in Columbia, Missouri, provides the following perspective.

"George H. Walser, a lawyer and prosperous business man, had lived with a colony of free thinkers at Paris, Illinois and at the close of the Civil War moved to Lamar, Missouri. Land was cheap in that territory at the time and he bought up several sections, paying as low as 12 1/2 cents an acre for some of it. Walser gradually organized a settlement about 15 miles west and four miles north of Lamar and called the new town Liberal. The original motive for the town was announced as follows: 'To give an asylum for those noble men and women who are willing to sacrifice the comforts of life and joys of social intercourse, rather than live a life of deception and falsehood, was the incentive which actuated us in starting the town of Liberal, where we could enjoy the full benefits of free American citizens without having some self-appointed bigot dictate to us what we should think, speak, write, print or send through the mails.' "

Streets in the new town were named for men whom Walser admired, like Ingersoll, Darwin, and Paine. It needs to be remembered, however, that Ingersoll, Darwin, and Paine had never seen the havoc which their social theories would produce. These men lived, wrote, and died in the midst of Christian influence. They never really tested their theories. They founded no cities or countries for liberalism alone, as Mr. Walser did. They were only theoreticians!

Walser sent out advertisements for his new community with this bold and optimistic

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proclamation:

Liberal now has such an impetus that it can smile at the combined powers of priest, preacher, church, saloon, God or hell; and they are the happiest and purest people on earth. The only fit home for liberally disposed persons. Liberal is in a good country, rich in all the needs of life usually found in good countries.

Address G.H. Walser
Liberal
Barton, County, Missouri

Charles Darwin, for whom Walser named a street in Liberal, was not totally opposed to Christian influence. In fact, he presented this compliment to Christian missionaries in his Journals of Research (pages 414, 425, and 505.)

"They forget, or will not remember, that human sacrifices and the power of an idolatrous priesthood - a system of profligacy unparalleled in another part of the world - infanticide, a consequent of that system - bloody wars, where conquerors spared neither women nor children - that all of these have been abolished; and that dishonesty, intemperance, and licentiousness have been greatly reduced by Christianity. In a voyager to forget these things is base ingratitude; for should he chance to be at the point of shipwreck on some unknown coast, he will most devoutly pray that the lesson of the missionary may have reached thus far . . . The lesson of the missionary is the enchanter's wand. The house has been built, the windows framed, the fields plowed, and even the trees grafted by the New Zealander . . . the march of improvement, consequent on the introduction of Christianity through the South Seas, probably stands by itself in the records of history"

Walser, however, seemed determined to avoid the influence of Christianity. Sadly, at this very time, his marriage with his first wife, Harriet was falling apart. The Scriptures teach that God is a very present help in time of need (Ps. 46:1.) Walser, however, would not admit that need. Both he, and his family would suffer because of his unbelief. Many years later, Walser's fourth wife, Esther, would write that his marriage to Harriet P. Cunningham was "consummated in 1880." Since Walser already had two children by Harriet at this time, I am assuming she meant that their marriage ended in 1880. They may

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have stopped living together in 1880, but divorce papers were not filed until March 17, 1883. The divorce was granted on October 20, 1884. Their son Mark was twenty-three at the time. He was born March 30, 1861. Their daughter, Lena, only fourteen. She was born September 14, 1870. There is an old saying: "When momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." Obviously, Harriet wasn't happy. I am assuming that nobody else was either.

Their family problems may have impacted the life of their son, Mark. Clark Braden charged that Mark . . .

"Spent a part of his promising youth in a house of refuge, for crime. In Lamar he ran in debt, wheedled friends into going his security, and ran off in the night with his goods, and left them to pay \$4,000 for him. He forged the names of two friends, as securities to the notes, on which he borrowed money at the bank, and his illustrious sire had to buy him off to save him from the penitentiary. His last exploit as far as heard from, was to draw out of the bank in Ft. Scott between five and six thousand dollars, as his father's clerk, and use it - overdrawing his father's account and embezzling the money . . ." (The Fulfillment of a Dream, p. 5)

Someone has observed: "If your philosophy of life does not work at home, don't export it." At this time, however, Walser was in the "export business." No matter how many personal problems he was facing at home, he was confident that his philosophy of life could solve the problems of the world. When the blind lead the blind, however, both fall into the ditch.

Walser's personal frustration with religion must have been intensified by the presidential elections of 1880. James A. Garfield, a Christian minister, became the twentieth President of the United States. As you know, Garfield was killed by an assassin in 1881.

1880 was also the year that Thomas Alva Edison was granted a patent for his incandescent electric lamp. Unfortunately, George H. Walser was still walking in darkness.

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CHAPTER V

WITH ALL HIS MIGHT

The book of Ecclesiastes offers this sage advice: **"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest"** (Eccl. 9:10.) The point of the Scripture involves action. When you die it is too late to pursue your dreams.

Whatever criticism we may level at G.H. Walser, we can never accuse him of being lazy, lukewarm, or indifferent. He was a man of action. Even though he was wrong, he deserves some credit for not sitting on the sidelines.

Wise King Solomon reminded his readers that when you die, it is too late to do anything. There is no work, device, knowledge, or wisdom in the grave. These four different words describe a wide variety of human activities. Many come down to the last days of their lives regretting the fact that they had been too restrained, cautious, and careful. Their major theme is "if only." George H. Walser never had these regrets.

There is another passage in the Bible that offers some consolation to people like Walser. The following words were written to the church at Laodicea. **"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou are neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth"** (Rev. 2:15-16)

It seems that God prefers people to be anything but lukewarm. Hot is best, cold is next best, lukewarm is last. Walser's coldness to Christ may have been an advantage. Like Saul of Tarsus, he was an opponent to Christianity. It seems, however, that opponents to Christ are easier to convert than those who are not opposed to anything.

It seems that Walser was opposing God with "all his might." He was risking everything. Proving his liberal theories seems to have been the all consuming passion of his life.

Among the town's first buildings, was a small frame structure that Walser constructed for his law office.

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The first newspaper in Liberal was initially called "The Liberalite." Its Publication started within a year or so after the town was founded. G.H. Walser was the first owner and editor.

The first hotel was called the "Ozark House." It was also started by Mr. Walser.

Liberal's first park was called "Catalpa Park." It also was Walser's project. Ruth Black Aten describes Catalpa Park on page 163 of her book, "She Kept Men Standing."

"This Catalpa Park, a thirteen-acre plot a half mile south of town, was designed and built by Mr. Walser, Liberal's founder, at a cost of some forty thousand dollars. He maintains it at his own expense for the public's enjoyment. It surely is beautiful. It has many flower beds and ornamental fountains; twenty latticed, vine-covered pergolas; an artificial lake that is used by bathers and boating enthusiasts in summer and ice skaters in winter; and a wonderful picnic area in a grove of catalpa trees. Nobody seems to know why Mr. Walser chose the catalpa, but he ordered a thousand from a nursery and had them planted in his park in his town.

In the park there are summer cottages, an excellent boarding house, and an ice cream and lemonade stand. For indoor events there's what is called the 'Celestial Dome.' It is a large octagonal building, complete with stage and moveable seating. Three public lectures are held each Sunday. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons there are band concerts, and at night there is dancing. Lighted by kerosene lamps, this place is large enough to accommodate as many as twenty-eight sets or 224 square dancers at one time. The caller is a Freethinker by the name of Guffy."

The Liberal City Cemetery was Walser's project too. It was fashioned in a circle, and every person buried there is facing the center. The center lot is a perfect circle, ninety-eight feet in diameter. It is neatly bounded by a concrete retaining wall about six inches high. This, of course, is where Mr. Walser planned to be buried. It was commonly believed that he designed the cemetery so that should there be a resurrection, his followers would rise to hail him as their leader.

As I have said before, Walser was wrong! His great gamble did not work! His theories failed! At least, however, he had the courage to try. His long and difficult pilgrimage brought him at last to faith in Christ. At the end of his life, when his health was

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gone, and his money was gone, he changed. He deserves credit for this too. In his last book, written in 1909, he described himself as a "converted infidel."

The late Jim Elliot observed that a man is not a fool for giving up those things that he cannot keep, to gain those things that he cannot lose. We cannot take it with us, but we can send it ahead so that it will be there when we arrive.

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CHAPTER VI

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE CAME?

Howard R. Russell, in his book, "A Lawyer's Examination of the Bible," provides this interesting quotation from James Russell Lowell. When Mr. Lowell was Minister of State to England, he rebuffed critics of Christianity with these pointed words:

"I will challenge such skeptics to find a place ten miles square on the globe, where a man can live in comfort, security, and decency, where he can find education for his children, reverence for infancy and old age, honor for womanhood, or any sacred regard for human life, where the gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way, laying a foundation for such a condition of affairs. If they can find such a place, it will then be in order for them to emigrate thither and advocate their unbelief. Scoffers against religion are dependent upon the religion they discard for every privilege they enjoy as citizens of a Christian community." (Pages 191-192)

In this regard, we must admire Mr. Walsler for having the courage to put his theories into practice. He didn't like Christianity, thought it was wrong, and therefore tried to improve on the efforts of the pilgrims. Unfortunately, things did not go as smoothly as he had planned.

Again, I quote from Clark Braden. Mr. Braden visited Liberal during those early turbulent years when liberalism was unalloyed by the moderating influences which came later. These words were written in 1886:

"No doubt there are infidels all over the United States and Canada, who long for a sight of this infidel land of Canaan, and its new Jerusalem, as devout Mohammedans long for a sight of Mecca, and for the same reason, they have never seen it. Hundreds have been duped into making the pilgrimage to this Infidel Utopia, only to waste time and money in the journey, or worse, to be swindled and losing all they invested . . . there was no lack of free love . . . Liberal was famous for its lawsuits. If an infidel got mad at another, he rushed before a magistrate or to Lamar, and charged his enemy with some

crime or misdemeanor . . . There was no trouble to get men and women to swear what was wanted . . . perjury was gross and infamous . . . profanity has ever been the commonest form of speech in Liberal."

Braden alleged one particularly distressing incident that involved Mr. Walsler himself:

"The town was notorious for its rows and scrapes. We have mentioned the brutal assault of the Walsers on Grayson. Walsler tried to swindle Gilmore, the man who opened his mines. In a suit Gilmore's evidence was believed . . . the cowardly Walsler ruffians followed him into a store, and while old Walsler stood before him and abused him, the cowardly ruffian, Mark Walsler, sneaked up behind him and knocked him down with a weight. Then, the two ruffians stamped and kicked their helpless victim, splitting his ear, his lip, and fracturing his jaw. Old Walsler tauntingly yelling at him, 'God damn you, why don't you lie still?'"

If you think Braden was wrong, or that he overstated the sad state of affairs in Liberal, why don't you try the same experiment on your own? First, either move to some remote place on the globe where there is no Bible or Christian influence, or start a city on your own as Walsler did. Make sure you emphasize that you do not want the Bible and Christian influence. Do not be surprised if such a community becomes a sewer, filled with the dregs of human society.

J.P. Moore regretted Braden's approach, though he did admit that there were a "few rotten apples in the barrel." Moore cited Mr. and Mrs. J.K. Belk as an example of people whom he considered to be "an honorable and highly respected couple, and useful citizens." He said they would have "abhorred any thought of Freeloze" though some accused them of being "votaries of that cult."

All I know about the Belks is related by Moore in his book, *The Strange Town*. The essence of what he told about them, however, defeats his own arguments. The history of the Belks actually substantiates the theory that people came to Liberal to escape the responsibility of moral restraints.

On page 135 Moore relates that:

"Mr. and Mrs. J.K. Belk came to Liberal from northwestern Kansas in 1881.

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They were Freethinkers, and because of that they were attracted to Liberal. They were wealthy, and through their daughter, Mrs. Lillian Myrtle Belk-Branson-Sibley, the city of Liberal and the Liberal school district came into a considerable portion of their wealth, by bequest."

On page 160 Moore informs us that Belk had two sons by a previous wife. This information was obtained "by chance." It seems that a resident of Liberal, Mary Burgess, made a trip to California. While she was there, she just happened to meet a woman by the name of Belk. It turned out to be Mr. Belk's first wife. The first Mrs. Belk was amazed to hear that her husband was still alive. Belk was a stage coach driver, and when he didn't come home, she assumed he had been killed in an Indian massacre. She had no idea that he had a new "Mrs. Belk" and was living in Liberal, Missouri.

Moore continued the story on p. 161:

"This story was corroborated by one of these sons, who came here after his father's death in 1917, on behalf of himself, his brother and their mother, and demanding a share in their father's estate. He found that title to the real property had been transferred to the daughter. But he did receive a substantial cash settlement. In proof, this son, who was a frequent visitor in my office while here, exhibited to this writer a check and a bank draft, totaling \$20,000, that had been given to him by Mrs. Belk, to satisfy his claim without litigation. If there was to be more, he did not say."

I think it was Ross Perot who said: "If a man's wife can't trust him, why should I?"

CHAPTER VII

EDUCATION IN LIBERAL

One of the first laws regarding public education in the United States was enacted in 1642. It was called the "Old Deluder Satan Law." The principal reason for this law was to make people literate so that they could read the Bible. Our ancestors in Europe were persecuted for possessing, or reading the Bible. The founders of America did not want to repeat this error. The Bible was, therefore, an integral part of their educational philosophy.

The first college in America was Harvard College in Massachusetts. It was established by the Puritans less than ten years after their arrival in America. The official motto of Harvard was: "For Christ and the Church." One hundred and six of the first one hundred and eight colleges in America were founded on the Christian faith.

George H. Walser had a different philosophy of education. He founded "The Freethought University," which would pursue education without the Bible. I obtained a catalog to this university from the Western Historical Collection, of the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri.

Walser wrote in this catalog:

"THE FREETHOUGHT UNIVERSITY offers to the Freethinkers of America the advantages for which they have so long waited. Here the growing, inquiring minds of innocent children, just merging into manhood and womanhood, may be trained and educated free from the chains of superstition and mental slavery that have weighed so long and heavily upon our entire educational system. Here, untrammelled by bible, creed, or ism, the truth will be sought for the truth's sake alone, and the warfare upon error be unflinchingly and unceasingly carried out."

"Liberals of America, for years you have been looking forward to the inauguration of a Freethought institution of learning where creeds and dogmas would cease to wield their poisonous influence over the world . . . Therefore, by all means, let every Liberal who has children to educate send

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them to the Freethought University . . . Liberals, let us not delay our efforts to advance this enterprise. Whatever we may be able to do let us not wait until next month or next year, but let us act immediately . . ."

Walsler continued: "The citizens of Liberal are honest, sober, industrious and moral as a class. They are free from religious dogmatisms of every kind. Every person here is esteemed for his manly bearing rather than his religious faith . . . We expect Liberal to become an educational point, and to that end we invite to our midst all lovers of learning . . ."

O.E. Harmon said that the first educational institution was the "Instructional School." This developed into the Liberal Normal in 1884. Later this merged into The Freethought University. This educational experiment began with seven professors but went down hill almost immediately. In 1886 Clark Braden wrote: "The school never had more than fifteen pupils . . ." Obviously, the Freethought University did not develop into a great center of learning to compete with the Christian colleges back east.

The University of Mental Liberty

O.E. Harmon also described the U.M.L. Hall in his book "The Story of Liberal, Missouri." This book was published by the Liberal News in 1925. Harmon wrote:

"This building was erected for public purposes; the main object being to provide a place where any person could come and speak on any subject providing he kept himself within the rules of parliamentary decorum. It was to be to Liberal what Faneuil Hall was to Boston in old New England days. U.M.L. Hall was the scene of many a fiery debate; and we can easily imagine the diversity of views that would be expressed when Free-thinkers, Spiritualists, and Orthodox Christians aired their opinions.

There was one occasion that deserves notice. It was the Sunday evening before the Presidential election of 1888. The meeting was held in the hall, and the usual liberty of speech was to be allowed, only the speakers were to be limited to ten minutes' time. Mr. G.W. Baldwin was chairman of the meeting. Various persons had spoken, and it came Mr. G.H. Walsler's time to speak. He was brim full of ideas, and when the ten minutes had expired he found he was not nearly through of what he wanted to say; so he kept on talking. Mr. Baldwin called him to order, whereupon Mr. Walsler talked on,

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and Mr. Baldwin reminded him that his time was up. Mr. Walser finally quit under protest, but with the deep feeling that liberty of speech had been suppressed.

This was the last public meeting held in the venerable U.M.L. Hall. In the next issue of the paper was the following notice: 'U.M.L. Hall closed for repairs.' The building was soon after sold to the Methodists and used as their place of worship until the new church building was erected a short time ago. The new church was dedicated in 1923.

The above incident is interesting from the fact that Mr. Walser and Mr. Baldwin were leaders in their respective fields of thought. Both were well read men and good speakers. Mr. Baldwin was a strong Agnostic, while Mr. Walser was a strong Spiritualist. Baldwin was a Democrat, Walser was Republican. So it is easy to see that when they came in conflict, either in debate or otherwise, something was doing." (Pages 25-26)

It needs to be noted that the sale of the U.M.L. Hall to the Methodists was a reversal of Walser's previous position. Some attribute this change, not only to a moderating attitude toward Christianity, but also to his arrogance. Mr. Walser owned the hall. The very idea that he would be limited to only ten minutes speaking time in his own building was not to be tolerated. Since the Methodists had been the most evangelistic in attempting to convert the infidels, the sale of the U.M.L. Hall to them, may have seemed a good way to get even.

Freedom of Speech and Thought

The St. Louis Daily Globe Democrat featured an article about Liberal on May 2, 1885, p. 10. It is titled: "An Infidel Experiment." Here is a brief excerpt:

" 'What do you think of Walser?' Mr. Adams was asked. 'I think,' said he, 'he is a man who wants to rule or ruin. He is the worst fanatic I ever saw.'

'But don't you think he is honest in his intentions?'

'No; he is a man who is richer than anybody else around here. He owns the land the people live on, and he has it in his power to make things lively for anyone he doesn't like. He is a lawyer and involves everyone he has a

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quarrel with in a lawsuit, compelling them to pay attorney's fees, costs, etc., even if they don't lose the case.'

'But he invites everybody to speak in the U.M.L. Hall.'

'Yes, he invites preachers to hold forth in his hall, but when they attempt to do so he interrupts, bullyrags, contradicts and controverts them until life is a burden to them. Walser, when anyone goes to preach, jumps up every ten minutes and fires questions at him . . . '

The same article related that Walser had interrupted a religious meeting outside of the U.M.L. Hall:

"He insisted on criticising and controverting the various points in the sermon of the day, justifying the imposition of his views on the people with the statement that the town was a liberal one, that free speech was accorded everybody, and that he owned one twentieth of the church . . ."

"Nearly one third of the inhabitants of Liberal have moved off of Walser's land and established a town of their own, called Denison. The history of this schism is interesting viewed from any point, and goes to show that men who profess to be infidels and Liberals can be as bigoted and fanatical as the men who in olden times applied rack and screw to those who would not believe and practice with them . . ."

Waggoner's Addition

O.E. Harmon relates this story on pages 15-16 of his book:

"In 1881, one H. H. Waggoner made an addition to Liberal with the view of getting a place where Orthodox Christians could live to themselves. Here they could live unmolested and watch with contempt the doings of their infidel neighbors. But alas! Their joy was to be short lived. A wicked barbed wire fence did the mischief. An account of the building of the fence is given in the newspaper, 'The Liberal,' of April 18, 1883, and is as follows:

'G.H. Walser has bought the Waggoner's addition to the town of Liberal. The readers of the Liberal two years ago will remember that this addition

was the great bone of contention between the Liberals and the Christians. The addition was laid out by Mr. Waggoner for the purpose of inducing immigration of Christians who would be strong enough to out number the Liberals and defeat the enterprise. That was prevented by a high post and barbed-wire fence which was immediately put on a strip of land adjoining the town which had been laid off into lots, which they mistook for a street. By this fence they could neither get ingress nor egress. They could not climb over the fence because it was too high; they could not crawl under it because it was too low; and could not crawl through it because of the stickers on the wires. So they just sat down and swore that we were the meanest set on earth, and we guess we were. We saved the town by it and now we are happy."

Clark Braden wrote:

"When some persons who would not submit to the infidel bulldozing began to settle on the lots that Mr. Walser did not own, outside his town plot, the infidels of Liberal actually undertook to build a wire fence around Liberal, across a public highway so as to prevent Christians from entering the town, even to go to the depot. One Monday morning all Liberal could be seen at work, digging holes, carrying posts and wire and putting up this evidence of infidel 'tolerance' and 'liberality.' Walser's wife and other female infidels were driving down stakes as ostentatiously as possible. The railroad authorities telegraphed that they would remove the depot if the lunacy was not abandoned, and that freak of infidel lunacy removed."

J.P. Moore wrote:

"Knowing Mr. Walser as I did, it is my opinion that he alone conceived and financed the building of the fence; and that it was built in a gesture of contempt, and more as a psychological than a physical barrier. As to how well it actually worked, we now have as evidence only the conflicting stories of Mr. Walser and Mr. Braden on which to base our judgment. Anyway, the fence is long since gone and so are the principals involved."

It appears that there was not as much freedom of expression and thought in Liberal, as liberal people might suppose. Dean Rusk offers this insight:

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"Free speech and free press are not based on the notion that everyone is going to tell the truth. From John Milton through Thomas Jefferson, and up to the present time, the right of free speech and free press is based upon the notion that if everyone is free to say and write what he pleases, then the truth has a better chance to emerge than if these processes were subject to some sort of external control, particularly control by the government."

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CHAPTER VIII

FREE LOVE

Everyone seems to agree that some people came to Liberal feeling that freedom of thought meant free everything. Walser himself was accused of advocating "free love." This is not too surprising. At this point, Walser did not believe in God, and his wife had not been with him for months, or years. He did not marry his second wife, Hannah, until about 1887.

Clark Braden wrote:

"In a speech in the U.M.L. Hall, in April 1884, Walser declared before a crowded audience, that he was a 'free lover,' and that he established Liberal to make it a free love town. The Lyons woman, President of the Sunday Evening Entertainments, declared in Mr. Cumins Meat Shop that she was a free lover in belief and practice. Mrs. Belk, the Postmistress, the Replogle woman, the Yoemans girls, and others have made such statements repeatedly . . ."

"The following facts are well known and will not be denied in Liberal and vicinity. There lives near Liberal a farmer named George Boulware. He is a sceptic, but a man whose word is good. He tells openly and boldly this story. His hired man attended Sunday Evening Entertainments in Liberal. He told Mr. Boulware that while the dancing jamboree that always follows the Sunday Evening Entertainment was in progress, boys, young men and old men, were allowed, after paying a dollar each, to go behind the scenery on the stage and commit fornication with a female who was there for that purpose . . ."

The St. Louis Daily Globe Democrat, May 2, 1885, published a lot of charges, even though the reporter felt that most of them were untrue. Here is a small sample:

"The freedoms and unrestraint of the Liberals, human nature being considered the same everywhere, have given rise to scandal of the most

unsavory sort, and charges of free love and mixed relations between the sexes are freely made. Young girls and young women in all the enthusiasm of their Liberal belief, use cuss-words that would stagger a sailor. Books which are generally kept under lock and key are read freely by the young, and 'Plain Facts,' by Dr. Kellogg, and 'The Science of Prevention,' by another medical quack, have been seen in the hands of young people who would never have the opportunity see them except in a Liberal town. The charges include foeticide, and the statement is made by a Denisionian that but three children have been born in Liberal in five years.

Clark Braden vowed that such charges were true. He said they were "iron clad," and "water proof." Regarding the charge of "foeticide," he wrote:

"Foeticide is the prevailing practice in Liberal. There have not been as many children born in Liberal, born of infidel parents, as it has been years in existence. Mrs. Rosenkrantz, the wife of a hotel keeper in Liberal, told Dr. Bouton, when dying of foeticide, that it had been performed for her in Liberal sixteen times, and that the ground around the hotel was full of murdered foetuses. Van Law, the marshal, dug up a half developed embryo in digging a drain for the hotel."

When J.P. Moore wrote "The Strange Story" in 1963, the earliest resident of Liberal, still living, was Mrs. Bertha Palmer. She was born June 6, 1875. She moved with her family to Liberal in 1880 when she was only five years old. Her little brother, Claude Bouton, was accidentally scalded to death in the summer of 1882. He was the first person to be buried in the Liberal Cemetery.

Moore notes p. 98:

"As to freelove, Mrs. Palmer believes that there were definitely some votaries of this cult who found their way into Liberal, in the town's very early days, seemingly believing that 'Freethought,' meant 'free everything' - which it definitely did not. In respect to this she recalls attending a public meeting at the opera house, when a speaker asked all who believed in freelove to stand up. She says there was quite a sprinkling who did stand up. According to the best of her memory, one of those who stood up was a young man named Sam Suydam. The young man's mother, who was a Christian, was present. When she saw her son stand up she was so

disturbed that she cried and said, 'Why, Sammy, I didn't know you believed that awful way.' "

The frank presentation of these unpleasant facts needs to be tempered by the realization that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." David is described in Scripture as a "man after God's own heart." Yet, David was a sinner. Here is a portion of Ps. 51: David is thought to have composed this psalm after committing adultery with Bathsheba.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee . . ."
(Ps. 51:1-13)

Every generation develops certain "sayings." For example, almost everyone has heard that a stitch in time saves nine. The early church had "sayings" too. Paul wrote one to Timothy:

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15.)

We must never become so focused on the sins of others that we forget our own.

CHAPTER IX

CLARK BRADEN

Since I have quoted so extensively from Clark Braden, it is appropriate that you be more familiar with him.

O.E. Harmon knew Braden personally and provides this information on pages 17 - 19 of his book, "The Story of Liberal, Missouri."

"As the writer knew Braden before his visit to Liberal, a few words about the history of the man may not be out of place here. Clark Braden was a native of Ohio. He received his early education at Hiram College in that state. This is the same school President Garfield once attended and where the martyred President was at one time a teacher. In his younger manhood Braden was an infidel. Later he became converted to Christianity and entered the ministry of the Christian church. At the same time he was a teacher, and according to reports of pupils who attended his school he was a teacher of considerable ability. When the writer first knew him he was at the head of a school at Carbondale, Illinois, known as Southern Illinois College. About 1869-70 he came to Anna, Illinois, where the writer lived and preached once a month, delivering three sermons at each visit. Most of the time during his ministry he was a teacher and he organized the first teachers' institute ever held in Southern Illinois. He was a great controversialist, and not many months passed when he was not debating either with some infidel or some preacher of another denomination . . .

Braden was a fighter and sometimes an intemperate one. He seemed to glory in controversy, as the people of Liberal learned on his visit here. He debated with C.W. Steward ten times in Liberal, and there are some still living here who remember Braden's visit to the town. This was in February 1885. He was placed under arrest while here, and as the writer understands it, was arrested on a charge of embezzlement from a firm in Nebraska. Braden's pamphlet recites his arrest on a charge of libel, in which he was acquitted.

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Braden's pamphlet is a severe reflection on the character of the people of Liberal. The writer does not express himself as to the truth or falsity of these charges. The fact is, the pamphlet was written and caused a big stir at the time."

J.P. Moore acknowledged the notoriety of Braden's pamphlet and tried to blunt its influence by pointing out errors.

When Braden visited Liberal, for example, people were leaving and property values were declining. Braden assumed this would continue. Based on his observations, he predicted that Liberal would fail and be swallowed up by the neighboring town of Pedro. Braden was wrong. Pedro failed, not Liberal. It should be remembered, however, that after Braden made his prediction, Liberal changed.

The Saint Louis Daily Globe Democrat had this to say about Braden:

"Preacher after preacher has been here and has been downed by Walser, whose sharp tongue, power of ridicule and invective have been too much for them. I must except one, though, a man named Braden, who is in Dennison now. Braden is a Christian preacher, who would just as lief fight as eat, and he lost no time after being interrupted in his lectures at the U.M.L. Hall in telling Walser so. Well, Braden is the only man who ever shut Walser up. Walser would just sit right down all through a meeting and never say a word. But Walser wasn't altogether defeated, for one day Braden was arrested and taken to Nebraska on a requisition. He has since returned and you may look out for something to drop before long."

Braden had this to say about Walser and lawsuits:

"The writer was interviewed in Lexington, Mo., April 22, by Sam Keller, a correspondent of the Globe Democrat of St. Louis. This interview was published in the Post Dispatch of May 2, a most damaging report of affairs in Liberal. The writer returned to Liberal April 23, and delivered six lectures in Liberal. In these lectures he ventilated Walser, Fishback, Yale, and the parties who had been covering him with defamation for months. He was arrested for criminal libel in his statements, published in the Post Dispatch, and was tried before Judge Hall in Lamar, May 18. After the prosecution had presented their evidence, the case was submitted to the jury without any

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rebutting evidence by the defence, and the jury speedily brought in a verdict of 'No cause for action.' Then the Post Dispatch, R.F. Holland and the writer were sued for twenty five-thousand dollars damages, in a civil suit. Learning that the defence were thoroughly prepared to prove that Liberal was a den of infamy, and its hotels brothels, the prosecution asked that the suit be dismissed their own costs. Infidels are lying, claiming that the writer signed a libel. It is a lie made out of whole cloth. The writer defies the Infidels to face him in any court in the United States."

Braden concluded his pamphlet with this statement:

STATE OF MISSOURI, COUNTY OF BARTON ss.

Clark Braden, was tried before me, Justice of the Peace, in and for Barton County, state of Missouri, on the 18th day of May, 1885, for criminal libel, in certain statements he was charged with have made to a reporter for the Post Dispatch, a paper published in St. Louis, Mo., and which appeared in that paper of May, 2, 1885. After the prosecution had presented all their evidence, the case was submitted to the jury without any rebutting evidence by the defence, and Clark Braden was acquitted by the jury.

A. HALL - Justice of the Peace

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CHAPTER X

THE FAILURE OF LIBERALISM

The previous chapter makes reference to the St. Louis Globe Democrat, and an article which became the focal point of a lawsuit. That article was written in 1885, and alleged, among other things:

"Now, at the end of five years, and at a time when one should be able to determine pretty accurately the value of such an experiment, the great religious daily sends a missionary into Barton County to ascertain how grows a town under a liberal influence and the best of natural advantages. The missionary remains in Liberal for a day and a half; mixes thoroughly with the people, and, after a due consideration of everything heard and observed, is compelled to say that the experiment is a failure; that the town, instead of keeping pace with other towns of the same age, has fallen far behind them, and instead of being the happy, prosperous, community it promised to be, is shriveled, contracted, torn into by dissensions, and is in a condition where only prompt actions in behalf of its friends toward a complete reorganization will save it from disintegrations . . . nearly one third of the inhabitants of Liberal have moved off of Walser's land and established a town of their own, called Denison . . ."

The St. Louis Post Dispatch of May 2, 1885 concurred:

"Nine tenths of those now in town would leave if they could sell their property. More property has been lost by locating in the town than has been made in it. Public schools and infidel meetings have been held in rented buildings, except what were held in the Universal Mental Liberty Hall, the stupendous title of a building about the size of a smoke house, which it clearly resembles. The 'lively paper' is a four column sheet, printed one page at a time on a ram shackling old job press that looks old enough to be contemporaneous with the discovery of printing. The type had been condemned for the foundry when Walser purchased it years ago. The paper is about as legible as if it had been printed on a curry-comb. The matter is

cheap, low flung abuse of Christianity. The paper is a fair specimen of the public spirit, liberality, intellectual and educational condition of the place. The town is as badly collapsed as the printing office. Property cannot be sold for near its cost. There are many vacant lots from which buildings have been moved, fifteen having been moved at one time . . . "

Clark Braden added:

"The bonds of the town and its warrants are offered at fifteen cents on the dollar and without purchasers. The marshal, in November 1886, sued the town for the eighty-five cents he lost on each dollar of its warrants issued to pay him. The coal mines, of which so much was said in the paper of Liberal, have not averaged a car of coal a day during the time they worked. The miners were idle three fourths of the time, and Walser is preparing to close them. The paper has suspended and the office material is for sale. The public school has no building to meet in, the partly finished school house is locked up, and loaded with debt, business men are moving their goods, people are leaving, and those that are left, look like mourners awaiting a funeral, of criminals awaiting the penalty. So stands Liberal, December 1886 . . . "

There can be little doubt that things were not going well for Walser. In addition to his business and financial problems, his twenty-seven year marriage to his wife, Harriet, ended in divorce on October 20, 1884. Though Mr. Walser was the plaintiff, the court required that he pay Harriet seven thousand two hundred and fifty dollars. Apparently, he did not have the total amount in cash. He therefore agreed to pay twelve hundred and fifty dollars cash, the rest in various notes at 10% interest. He was also required to pay for the care and support of his daughter, Lena.

Someone has said that we do not see the light until we feel the heat. Walser was feeling plenty of heat, and the light was beginning to shine through. This famous Freethinker, was in the process of becoming a believer.

Symbolic of this change, was the sale of the Freethinkers, U.M.L. Hall, to a church. As we have mentioned before, the last meeting of the "Freethinkers" in this hall, was the Sunday evening before the Presidential election of 1888. This was the meeting where Walser was silenced by a ten minute limitation. The building was sold to the Methodist Church on September 16, 1889 for four hundred and eighty-eight dollars. Then, other

churches came. In due time there was a Christian Church, Baptist Church, Church of Christ, Church of God Holiness, etc. Soon, Liberal was just like every other small town in S.W. Missouri.

The Globe Democrat predicted that the town would disintegrate unless there was a complete reorganization. The town did not disintegrate, and this was apparently due to considerable reorganization.

From our present vantage point in history we have seen other failures of liberalism. Take, for example, the recent collapse of the U.S.S.R. They didn't believe in God either. They even put into practice some of the same erroneous theories that Walser tried. The cynic said it best: "One thing we learn from history, is that people do not learn from history."

Again, it is comforting to remember that Walser changed. When he realized that his liberal theories were not working, he had the courage to abandon them. Biblically speaking, there is something good and wholesome about the confession of sin. **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9.)**

The citizens of Liberal should therefore not feel badly that the original inhabitants of their town were sinners. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. No one can be saved without the grace of God!

John Newton wrote the beautiful hymn, "Amazing Grace." Newton was a much more famous sinner than Walser. He was born in 1725, the son of a sea captain. His mother died when he was only six. After two years of formal education, he joined his father's ship at the age of eleven. The early years of his life were spent in immorality, debauchery, and failure. He even sold his fellow human beings into slavery and spent time in jail.

Newton was converted to Christ during a violent storm, and at the age of thirty-nine, became a minister of the Gospel. He spent the rest of his life in Christian service. The grace of God truly is amazing! This is why he wrote his famous song:

"Amazing grace how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I'm found,

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was blind, but now I see."

Newton died in 1807, the year before Walser's mother was born. These words are written on his tombstone in Olney, England:

"John Newton, Clerk; once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy."

The life of George H. Walser, is another reminder of God's amazing grace.

CHAPTER XI

SPIRITUALISM

Someone has described man as a "worshiping animal." Wherever he has left the ashes of his campfire, he has also left some indication of a belief in the supernatural. Even those who claim to be atheists, have, for all practical purposes, deified time. Everything which the believer explains by God, the atheist explains by billions of years.

Someone else has suggested that the only atheist who can be intellectually honest, is the person who knows everything. Once someone admits that they do not know everything, they are also forced to acknowledge that God may exist in the area of their ignorance.

We should not be surprised, therefore, that the people of Liberal would seek the supernatural. This hunger for God, manifested itself in various forms of spiritualism.

Walser, himself, became a promoter of spiritualism. J.P. Moore refers to a discourse he delivered on "The Chemical Laboratory of the Soul." These remarks were given at the funeral of Mrs. John Becker in the "Spiritualist Hall." He said: "The discourse was esoteric, as the Hindoo would say; that is, no one but the initiated could understand it. In the course of his talk, Mr. Walser told of being present on three occasions when the deceased and he, himself, had communicated with the spirit of her departed son."

Moore wrote that the Spiritualist Science Association of Liberal, was formed and incorporated in 1889. He quotes from "The Encyclopedia of Death and Life in the Spirit World," that "modern spiritualism originated with the three Fox sisters at Hydesville, N.Y. in 1848."

It is my personal belief that this type of spiritualism has been around since Eden, and that it has manifested itself in every generation. Today, the same, or similar notions are a part of the "New Age" religion.

It seems that G.H. Walser was in the process of spiritual growth and development. He once wrote: "As a Freethinker, I wandered into the field of Materialism, Atheism,

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Agnosticism, and finally Spiritualism . . ." The death of Walser's third wife, Alice, no doubt helped him to see the weakness, and inadequacy, of spiritualism. I like to think that his interest in spiritual things was at least a step in the right direction. I pray that his spiritual pilgrimage ultimately brought him to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fortunately, God will sort out all such matters in due time.

It is a fact of history, however, that there was a spiritualist group in Liberal, and that they hosted meetings for people from all over the country. J.P. Moore's grandfather, John S. Hatten, was a spiritualist. Moore attended at least two of their encampments. The first he attended was in 1896, before moving to Liberal. The second in 1899, when he helped operate a refreshment stand. Moore said the 1899 meeting was the "seventh and last encampment." He also said that: "Mr. Walser was an ardent believer, and it was mostly through his efforts and because of his willingness to assume most of the expense that these big meetings were made possible."

The fact that these "spiritualist encampments" ceased to be sponsored by Walser, may well be an indication of the spiritual changes taking place in his own life.

The Death of Alice Walser

As I said earlier, the death of Walser's wife, Alice, may have also helped him abandon spiritualism.

Perhaps I should take time to explain that Walser's second wife, Hannah, divorced him on June 25, 1895. The divorce decree granted her \$3,600 cash, and an allowance of \$25 per month. Walser had fallen in love with a Mrs. Alice Martha Newman. This, no doubt, did not help his marriage to Hanna. Moore described Alice as "a brilliant and beautiful woman, thirty-seven years younger than Mr. Walser." Then added: "They were married in about 1894 . . ."

Since I have a copy of Hannah's divorce decree, dated June 25, 1895, I know he could not have been married to Alice in 1894. I mention these dates, however, to provide insight into what was going on in Walser's life. He was either seeing Alice while married to Hannah, or shortly thereafter. It is safe to say there was not much time between his second divorce, and his third marriage.

Walser's grandiose dream of a liberal paradise had failed. Both his bank account, and his ability to make money were diminishing. Liberal's problems were compounded by

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a disastrous fire on November 4, 1897. Nine businesses on the west side of Main Street were destroyed. Walser said he had seen the errors of materialism, atheism, and agnosticism. His recognition of spiritual reality may have been part of his attraction to the beautiful and brilliant Alice Newman. She was a spiritualist medium and lecturer, and became his wife.

It must have been quite devastating to Walser when Alice died by suicide. Her approach to spiritual reality contained a fatal flaw. It obviously did not bring fulfillment. She became neurotic, addicted to drugs, and mentally ill. She took a fatal dose of poison July 14, 1902. By her own request, she was buried at midnight. Her grave was initially beneath the trees about seventy feet from the Walser home. In 1940, her remains were moved to make way for a coal mine.

Surely, the death of Alice Walser must have had an impact upon her husband. He had tried atheism, agnosticism, materialism, liberalism, and spiritualism. He was sixty-eight years old at the time of her death. His health was failing. He was in a search for something, or someone, that would bring meaning and fulfillment to his life. Everything he had tried, so far, however, had failed.

A Spiritualist Hoax Exposed

I cannot leave the subject of spiritualism, without recounting the comical account of the way a spiritualist hoax was exposed. It happened in the spring of 1887, near the beginning of the spiritualist movement in Liberal.

The standard price for a spiritual encounter was one dollar. At the time, however, this was a considerable amount of money. For your dollar you could have your fortune told, see objects move, receive spirit writing, see spirit photography, etc.

One poor soul named Wiggins, traveled all the way from New York to have a seance with his departed mother. When she "appeared," she seemed to have on the very dress she had worn the day before her death. The old man was overcome with emotion, and wanted to hug and kiss her. He was restrained from doing so, however, and warned that any attempt at physical contact would break the "en rapport" of the circle and cause the spirit of his mother to vanish.

In reality, poor old Mr. Wiggins would have been kissing Wylie S. VanCamp. Wylie was a Freethinker, and one of the town drunks. He conspired with J.H. Roberts and Dr.

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Bouton to take advantage of the spiritual hunger in Liberal, and scam their fellow citizens. VanCamp was the smallest of the three, so he operated in the attic. He was also a good penman and skilled at free hand drawing.

Their seance business was rudely interrupted by an untimely fire. When volunteer firemen chopped a hole in the roof, they discovered the cache of paraphernalia which made the "spirit manifestations" possible.

The perpetrators of the fraud, however, were unrepentant. The arrogant Dr. Bouton felt that his deception had provided an "answer" to what many people were looking for at a very reasonable cost. He even capitalized on the seances after the hoax was discovered. He published a pamphlet, revealing in detail his techniques, and explaining how easy it was to fool people.

It seems, however, to Walsers credit, that he did genuinely believe in spiritualism. He was apparently not in it for the money.

Jesus said that the truth would make you free. Sometimes, however, the truth first makes us miserable.

CHAPTER XII

A MILITARY PENSION?

Alice Walser died on July 14, 1902. On October 12, 1902, Mr. Walser married Esther J. Jamieson at Galena, Kansas. This was his fourth wife. She was twenty-nine years younger than he was. J.P. Moore described her as "corpulent, matronly and steady - well suited, one might say, as a wife for an elderly man."

Walser was apparently running out of money. On April 5, 1905, he made application for a Veteran's Pension. The pension could not have been much, and his application for it is at least one indication of his financial need. The form indicates that he had never applied for a pension before, and that he was partially unable to earn a living because of his age.

Walser, you will recall, served in the Union Army two different times. The first time he had an honorable discharge, the second he did not. The person filling out one page of his application form wrote: "He has had no service either in the army or navy, other than in 20 Ill. Inf."

Walser, with trembling hand, wrote: "Except - I served as Captain of Co. I, 43 Mo. In., but in no other service than those mentioned above."

When I read this I said to myself: "Atta boy George!" He told the truth, even though it kept him from receiving a pension. His application was rejected May 8, 1905, "because claimant was not honorably discharged from his last contract of service."

I am assuming that the application for this pension was made without the knowledge of his wife. Two things lead me to this conclusion. First, if Esther had been aware of this, she would have known George was not a Lieutenant Colonel. Apparently she did not know this, for when he died she had the inappropriate rank inscribed upon his mausoleum. Second, Esther applied for a military widow's pension on July 30, 1926. In her application she stated: "That she has not heretofore applied for a pension; that said soldier was not a pensioner, never having applied for same."

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I am left with the assumption that George didn't tell his own wife the truth about his military service. If he had done so, he would have saved her a lot of trouble.

Esther was married twice after George died, first to Robert W. Bock on February 14, 1912, and then to James Edsall on February 24, 1919. Both marriages ended in divorce.

On January 10, 1924, the Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri granted the name of Walser back to Esther. Since she had been married at least four times, I am assuming she took back the name of Walser so she could collect his pension.

Esther went to considerable effort to prove her case. It involved documenting the marriages, divorces, and death of her former husband, etc. She got the bad news in a letter from Winfield Scott, dated November 17, 1926: "Your above-entitled claim under the Act of May 1, 1920 filed August 3, 1926 is rejected on the ground that as shown by a report from the records of the War Department your husband, the soldier, was not honorably discharged from his final contract for service in Company I, 43rd. Missouri Infantry, during the Civil War."

Apparently thinking there must have been some mistake, she went to her congressman, the Hon. Joe J. Manlove, for help. He received the same sad news in a letter dated December 14, 1926.

Esther passed away July 4, 1929. How sad! Some wise man once said: "Be careful when you stretch the truth, for invariably somebody gets hurt when it snaps back."

CHAPTER XIII

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS

In 1909, Walser wrote his last book: "The Life and Teachings of Jesus." J.P. Moore considered this his most noted prose work. This is the book in which Walser described himself as a "converted infidel." The next year, Walser would be dead.

Unbelievers, like Walser, face a philosophical dilemma. H.G. Wells expressed it beautifully in this quotation (reported to have come from the American Magazine, July 1922.)

"Jesus of Nazareth . . . is easily the dominant figure in history. I am speaking of him, of course, as a man, for I conceive that the historian must treat Him as a man, just as the painter must paint him as a man . . . To assume that he never lived, that the accounts of his life are inventions, is more difficult and raises more problems in the path of the historian, than to accept the essential elements of the Gospel stories as fact . . . So, the historian, disregarding the theological significance of his life, writes the name of Jesus of Nazareth at the top of the world's greatest characters."

G.H. Walser claimed to be in search of truth. Yet, he could not be intellectually honest without personally investigating the historical Christ. Many, if not most unbelievers, have never personally investigated the claims of Christ. Perhaps this was true of Walser. When he did so, however, the teachings of Jesus apparently made more sense than anything else he had considered. Biblical faith rests upon evidence.

Walser was nearing the end of his life. His dreams of a liberal utopia had vanished like a vapor. His money was gone (Probate Court the following year appraised his assets at only \$1,661.60.) His health was gone. His home life had been a disaster. He was reduced to nothing. Someone has observed, however, that when God creates something, He starts from nothing. Walser's personal disaster was therefore something positive. The same is true of us. When we are reduced to nothing, God can begin a creative work in us.

It is not unusual for unbelievers to be converted when they consider the evidence.

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Consider, for example, a contemporary of Walser by the name of Sir William Ramsay. Ramsay was also initially an unbeliever. He, like Walser, was also a man of action. He was not content to sit in a class room, or on a bar stool, and criticize Christ. He was a "doer" not just a "talker." Therefore, he decided to sponsor an archeological expedition and prove the Bible wrong.

Ramsay set out from England in 1881. His plan was to focus on the writings of Luke. Christians believe that Luke wrote two inspired books, the Gospel of Luke, and the Book of Acts. Luke was so specific, that Ramsay assumed it would be an easy task to prove him wrong.

Take, for example, the comments of Luke about Jesus as they are recorded in Luke 3:1-3:

"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

Luke claimed to be writing accurate history (see Luke 1:1-4.) This brief sample of his writing reveals his attention to detail. Ramsay could check on such specific historical references. Supplied with the best equipment of the day, he spent fifteen years in the lands of the Bible, digging for evidence. Skeptics confidently expected all of their allegations and assertions to be substantiated.

In 1896, however, Ramsay published a large volume in defence of the Christian faith. It was called: "St. Paul, the traveler and the Roman Citizen." Ramsay had been converted by evidence. He continued to study and write for many years. He not only became a Christian, but also a staunch defender of the Christian faith. This remarkable defence of Christianity was published at about the same time George was entering his third marriage.

Giovanni Papini, is another example of an unbeliever converted by evidence. He was also a contemporary of Walser. He shocked the world by publishing his "Life of Christ" in 1921. This famous enemy of Christ concluded that we need a more "Christlike"

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world.

Lew Wallace was another contemporary of Walsers. There are a number of similarities in their lives. Both were born in Indiana. Both were lawyers. Both were officers in the Union Army. An atheist once predicted to Wallace that the little white churches in his beloved Indiana would some day be buried in the general crash of all religion. In the course of writing Ben Hur, however, Wallace actually studied the Bible for himself. His lawyer training in logic forced him to the inescapable conclusion that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the Living God.

The Christian Faith is unique in this regard. Many religions merely propose maxims to live by. Christianity, however, stands or falls upon historical facts. If Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead, our faith is vain. The essence of the Christian Gospel is that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again "according to the Scriptures." Every major event of his life and ministry was written in the Scriptures, and taught in the synagogues, centuries before it came to pass.

Walsers was a lawyer. His professional career involved the weighing of evidence. For many years he was paid to prove some conclusion "beyond a reasonable doubt." Nothing can ever be proven beyond "any" doubt. Some, for example, still insist that the world is flat, or that George Washington never lived. Their thinking, however, is not "reasonable."

So Walsers became reasonable. He once doubted Christ, and wound up doubting his doubts. The evidence he studied forced him to conclusions that he described as a conversion. Fortunately, God will determine the validity of his conversion. His openness to change, is nevertheless, commendable.

Since I have been unable to secure a copy of Walsers's book, "The Life and Teachings of Jesus," I am indebted to J.P. Moore for the following quotations. They are found on pages 147 - 149 of his book "The Strange Town."

"In my early life I rejected much of orthodox Christianity, and parts of the Old Testament as being merely history and the crude reasonings of primitive men in their first awakening to the belief and dependence on a power above and beyond themselves."

"As a Freethinker, I wandered into the field of Materialism, Atheism,

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Agnosticism, and finally Spiritualism, and I am ever thankful for my schooling along these lines, for my mind has been broadened, my conception brightened, and my nature brought more in harmony with my duty towards my fellow men."

"I write from the standpoint of a converted Infidel. I have patiently investigated without bias all sides of mental and spiritual philosophies. All I desire is the truth whose footprints I will follow where it leadeth; for what is truth for me is truth for all, whether that truth is divine or secular."

"The life and teachings of the Master can only be fully appreciated through the aid of the imagination, guided and stimulated by all the facts and of the world at his time . . ."

"I have wandered in the desert of disbelief, waded in the river of doubt, and in the sands of desolation. I have looked for hope and found none . . . I felt there was something more, there must be something more, or nature is a fraud and life the gall of a bitter cheat."

Of the Bible, Walser wrote:

"I thought it to be a mixture of imaginations; a compendium of laws of ancient times or a peculiar people, with scraps of history interbedded with their notions of religion, which did not comport with my ideas of what religion is, or at least should be . . ."

"My conception was that true religion is the development of the soul. It is not measured by any particular cult, form of words, trained actions, or belief; but it is the soothing elevation of man's higher nature that best fits him for the needs of a proper life, according to his environment . . ."

"Reasoning . . . we must conclude that God is absolute mind. He is intelligence and absolute wisdom, hence he knows everything."

"If the heart is right the religion is good for those who profess it . . ."

"Jesus founded no church, built no temple, wrote no creed; nor did he establish a worship. He did by example soothe the sorrying heart, healed

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the sick, and inculcated the great principles of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God . . . "

"We are passengers on the great ship of life, going to another country to encounter new realities and experiences. Every person has a ship of his own and is his own pilot; to reach the port of safety we should study the chart which Jesus has given us."

Walsler made a rational choice. That philosophy of life that is not good enough to die by, is not good enough to live by.

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CHAPTER XIV

WALSER MEETS HIS MASTER

J.P. Moore wrote:

"Mr. Walser died at this home in Catalpa Park, May 1, 1910, twenty-five days before his 76th birthday. Death was due to pneumonia, contracted from getting caught in a cold rain while walking home from town. He was ill only a few days. On the day of this last trip to town, Mr. Walser was a caller at my office, The Liberal News, and we have a pleasant visit. He brought some little item for publication in the paper."

In 1926, when Esther was documenting George's death, she went to Leta West of Lamar, Missouri. Leta said she was:

". . . in possession of all the funeral record No. 3026, at page 294, shows that George H. Walser died on May 1, 1910, at Liberal, Barton County, Missouri, at the age of seventy-five years; that the physician in charge was Dr. C.A. Smith, of Liberal, Missouri, and the cause of death was anemia; that he was buried in Lake Cemetery at Lamar, Missouri, in Vault Section No. 1, on the 4th day of May, 1910."

Leta's account was given to substantiate Walser's death in a failed attempt to qualify for a Widow's Pension. Her account did accurately prove the day of his death. The date of his burial in Lamar, however, is not accurate. This is evident from two sources of information.

First, J.P. Moore notes that while his funeral was conducted at Catalpa Park on May 4, 1910, his body was first buried in a temporary vault at Fort Scott, Kansas. He wrote:

"Soon after his father's death, Mark Walser brought legal action, seeking an order authorizing that a tomb be built in the Walser lot in the Liberal burying ground to receive the body of his famous father. But the then Barton County Probate Judge Paul Tucker ruled that the court had no jurisdiction

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in the matter. So the will of the widow prevailed, and the mausoleum was built in Lake Cemetery, Lamar.

The cost of construction of the tomb sought by Mark Walser was to be paid from the Walser estate which was ample to afford the expense. Mark's petition asked that the expense be held to not exceed \$5,000. In that day that sum would have paid for a handsome structure - much more imposing than the mausoleum at Lamar." (The Strange Town, p. 54.)

As I said before, Walser was nearly broke. Moore was apparently unaware of Walser's financial condition. Appraisal for Probate Court, dated March 25, 1910, stated that the total amount of his personal estate was \$1661.60.

The second source proving that Walser was not buried in Lamar on May 4th, is Marvin VanGilder, Barton County Historian. Marvin recalls some bizzare information, which, to the best of my knowledge, is not in print anywhere. It is published, however, with VanGilder's permission. Since Walser died suddenly, arrangements for his burial were made after his death. As we have pointed out before, his widow, Esther, and his son, Mark, disagreed about where he should be buried.

VanGilder states that he was buried first in Webb City, Missouri. Local residents were apparently unaware of Walser's recent "conversion." Their complaints caused his Walser to be disinterred and buried in another temporary grave in Fort Scott, Kansas. This is the one referred to by J.P. Moore. In either instance, a May 4 burial in Lamar would have been impossible.

VanGilder also states that when the mausoleum was completed in Lamar, some time later, an open casket service was conducted for him on the Court House lawn. I'm sure the body of the controversial Walser was not welcomed by everybody in Lamar either. At any rate, he was finally placed in his tomb. His widow buried him with his beloved books. He was, however, not totally "laid to rest." The mausoleum, according to VanGilder, initially was not sealed. His unlocked tomb proved an irresistible temptation to the local young people. Many dared their comrades to open the door and take a look. Finally, by order of the city officials, the hinges on the cement door were removed, and the tomb was sealed.

Walser published three volumes of poems, "Wild Rhymes," "Poems of Leisure," and the "Bouquet." His Poems of Leisure contain the following words, which he called "An

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Honest Prayer.

Oh! thou invisible power
That moves the heart and stirs the brain,
Give sordid vice a transient hour
And let within thy bosom reign
A purer thought, a chaster love
That aye within my bosom move.

Thou motive force within my brain,
Let me invoke thee while I can.
Oh! let fraternal justice reign
And man become a friend of man;
For he alone, of all the train,
Can grace a saviour's proud domain.

EPILOGUE

The Bible book of Ecclesiastes describes King Solomon's search for happiness.

He sought for wisdom, only to discover that "in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

He tried wine, laughter and pleasure, but found that this also was vanity.

He built houses, and planted lush vinyards. He had orchards filled with wide varieties of fruit, and designed magnificent ornamental pools. Happiness, however, always eluded his grasp.

He accumulated silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings. Something, however, was still missing. Life to Solomon was vanity and a vexation of spirit.

He married many women, but even this did not bring him the gratification and fulfilment for which he was seeking.

At last, he arrived at the only conclusion to life that made any sense:

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13.)

George H. Walser tried many of the same things that Solomon did, and apparently came to the same conclusion.

What about you?

Michael C. Pratt died in a plane crash on December 24, 1974. Shortly before his untimely death, he gave this wise advice to a group of graduates.

"Be selective in what you think and do! Our many experiences are as strokes of the artist's brush, shaping and tinting each of our characters in sometimes very subtle ways . . . Always remember that Jesus Christ, our

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Lord, Master, Savior, teaches us the true beauty of unselfish giving. Let us strive to pattern our lives after the One who has opened the door to life, and life more abundant. Jesus Christ - the Way of Fulfilment."

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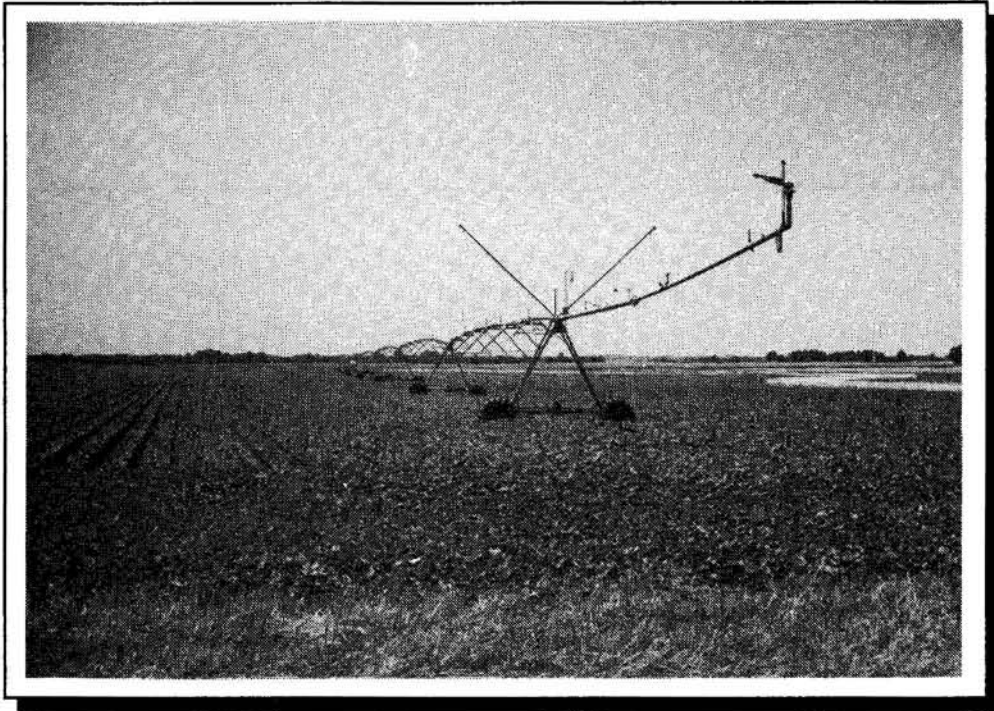
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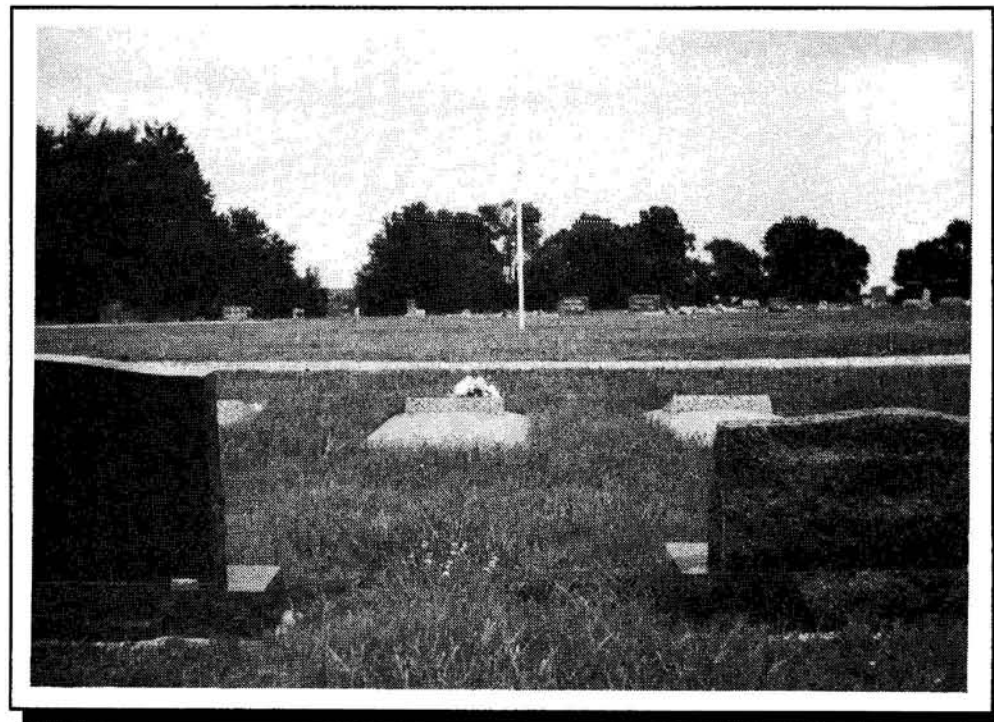
G. H. WALSER



MRS. ESTHER J. WALSER.



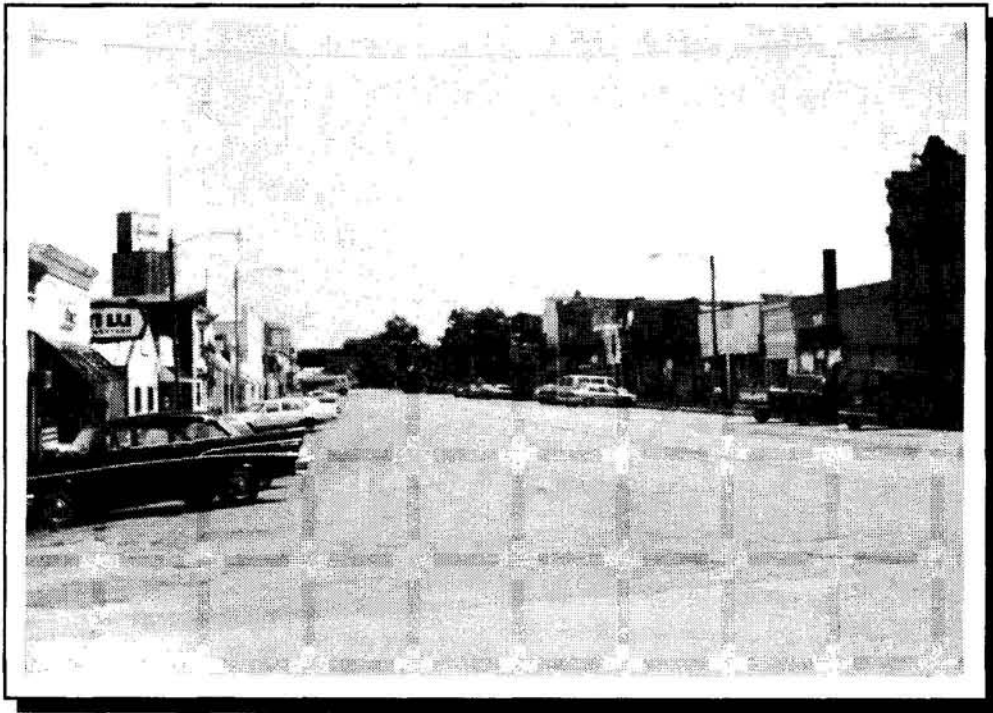
Land like this was purchased from the U.S. Government as swamp land



Liberal's circular cemetery where Walser planned to be buried



Walser's mausoleum in Lamar, Missouri



Downtown in modern Liberal

List of Documents

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14	Some law suits filed by Walser as a lawyer in Barton County, MO
15	Advertisement for Liberal mailed out by Walser
16-24	Catalog of the Freethought University -- Courtesy of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, 23 Ellis Library, University of Missouri -- Columbia. Columbia, MO 65201
25	Divorce decree from Hannah Walser
26	Death certificate of Alice Walser
27-30	Walser's application and rejection of military pension
31	Affidavit regarding Walser's death
32	Appraisal of Walser's estate for Probate Court
33	Esther's application for Widow's Pension rejected

CERTIFICATE.

I, John G. Todd, a Notary Public within and for the county of Barton and state of Missouri; do hereby certify that I have examined the family record of Mark Walser and Sarah Walser; which record is in a bound drawing tablet with other writings, drawings and mementoes and I find the following entries in the family record.

Mark Walser born March 21st, 1902. Died Feb. 13th, 1882.

Sarah Gray born July 5th, 1808. Died Aug. 19th, 1902.

And was married to Mark Walser Feb, 1st. 1824.

Rannals Walser born Feb. 7th, 1825.

Barbara Walser born Nov 5th, 1826. Died Feb 6th, 1860.

John Walser born Dec. 28th, 1828. Died April 16th 1847.

Liddy Walser born April 5th, 1831. Died Dec. 20th, 1836.

George H. Walser born May 26th, 1834.

There is no evidence of any changes or erasures having been made.

As witness my hand and Notarial seal this the 7th day of March 1895.

John G. Todd
Notary Public
My Com. Expires Aug 9th 1907



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
STATE OF ILLINOIS
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

Springfield, December 24, 1907

It is hereby Certified, That it appears from the Records of this Office, that

George H. Walden joined for service and was enrolled as Captain,

Company D, 20th. Regiment, Illinois, Volunteer Infantry June 13, 1861.

Commissioned, June 14, 1861. To Rank April 22, 1861.

Resigned November 2, 1861.

This Certificate is issued at the request of George H. Walden,

Reverend, Missouri.

Thos. W. Scott,
Adjutant General.

20 | III.

George H. Walker
Capt., Co. I, 20 Reg't Illinois Infantry.

Company Muster Roll

for Sept 1861, 1861

Present or absent Present

Stoppage, \$ 100 for 100

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for 100

Remarks: Discharged from Sept 1 to Oct 11 1861 in arrears from Oct 4 to Oct 31 1861. Shows no duty from an erroneous one hundred & twenty six dollars he will being present last pay day to draw his pay of

Book mark: _____

(888) Walker Copyist.

20 | III.

George H. Walker
Capt., Co. I, 20 Reg't Illinois Infantry.

Company Muster Roll

for Sept 1861, 1861

Present or absent _____

Stoppage, \$ _____ for _____

Due Gov't, \$ _____ for _____

Remarks: Discharged to take effect 30th Sept with No 8.

Book mark: _____

(888) Walker Copyist.

20 | III.

B. N. Walker
Capt., Co. G, 50 Reg't Ill Inf.

NOTATION.

Book mark: 1374. 28 1875.

Record and Pension Office,

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Washington, May 2, 1880.

Upon evidence afforded by the records of this Department, and upon information furnished by the Auditor for the War Department, this officer is regarded by this Department as having been mustered into service in the grade of captain, Ill. Inf., Co. G, 50 Regiment Ill. Inf., to take effect from June 13, 1861, to fill an original vacancy.

Book mark: B.

(882) B. Copyist.

Capt. G. W. Walser, of the 30th Regiment
Wing's Volunteers, having applied for a cer-
tificate on which to ground an application
for leave of absence, I do hereby certify
that I have carefully examined this Officer
and find that he had an attack of Remit-
tent fever on the 29th of July last, and
from the effects of which he has up to
this time not fully recovered, and that
in addition to the general debility
consequent upon the aforesaid disease
he has within the last week been
attacked with diarrhoea. And that in
consequence thereof, he is, in my opin-
ion unfit for duty. I further
declare my belief that he will not
be able to resume his duties in a
less period than three weeks
Dated at Birds Pt. C. Goodbrake
Oct 16th /61 Surgeon 30th Ill. Regt.

Col. March of the 20th Regt. being absent
from this post, I approve the above application
and ask that leave of absence be granted
to Capt. Walser if deemed proper by the General
commanding
Birds point, Oct. 17 1861.
W. L. Wallace
Col. 11th Ill. comdg. post

N. | *20* | **III.**

George H. Malsler,
Capt., Co. I, 20 Reg't Illinois Infantry.

Appears on

Company Descriptive Book
of the organization named above.

DESCRIPTION.

Age *27* years; height feet. inches.

Complexion

Eyes; hair

Where born

Occupation

ENLISTMENT.

When, 186 ..

Where

By whom; term y'rs.

Remarks: *Resigned Nov. 3/61.*

(388g)

Hastie
Copyright.

N. | **20** | **III.**

George H. Malsler
Capt., Co. I, 20 Reg't Illinois Infantry.

Appears on **Returns** as follows:

Joined Aug 1861: Present.
Sept 1861: About sick Camp
dummy Sept. 1861

Oct 1861. Placed in arrest by
order C.C. Marsh for refus-
ing to leave his Co., and
return to Camp Girardeau
just before the battle
of Fredrickstown
ordered into arrest.

Oct 19

Nov 1861. Resigned at Birds
Point Mo. This resignation
approved to take ef-
fect from Nov 3/1861
The date of his resignation
& notice served on
him Nov 7/61 at
which time the
Command passed
to 1. Lieut. George E. King,

Book mark :

(546)

Reed
Copyright.

Birds Point Nov. 3rd. 1864

C. W. Marsh.
Colonel commanding
21st Regt. of Ill. Vols.

Sir.

I do hereby tender my
resignation, as Captain of Company I
30th Regiment Illinois Volunteers, on the account
of ill health, to take effect immediately.

I remain yours &c.

George W. Nalser.
Captain of Company I, 31st
Regt. Ill. Vols.

Above resignation approved and
acceptance recommended.

Recd Ins 20th Ill. vol
Birds Point Nov 27/64

C. C. C. C. C.
Com 20th Ill. vol

Birds Point Nov 3rd 1864.
C. C. Marsh.
Colonel 20th Regt. Ills. Vol.

Sir, I do hereby
renew the resignation sent in
by me on yesterday, I have every
hope of a speedy recovery of my health
and do not wish to leave the service if
do my duty.

I remain yours &c.

G. H. Wacker
Captain Co I 20th Regt
Illinois Volunteers.

Disapproved

C. C. Marsh
Col 20th Regt Ill
Army Post.

Head Quarters 20th Ill vcs
Beids Post Ill Nov 4/64

Sir

I enclose the withdrawal
of resignation of Capt J. H. Malvern of
the 20th Reg. Ill vcs. I beg leave to state
that I deem that the best interests of
the regiment require that his resignation
be approved and accepted and would
respectfully request that his withdrawal
thereof be disapproved

I have the honor to be
Your Obedt Servt

Capt John A. Raulin's
A. A. Gen
Care of Ill

La Bellair
Col 20th Reg. Ill vcs

Head Quarters, Department of the Missouri,

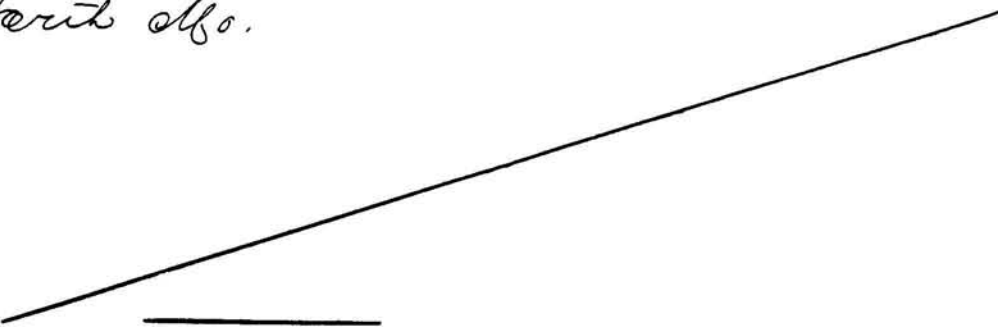
St. Louis, Mo. Nov 25th 1864.

SPECIAL ORDERS,

No. 327

EXTRACT.

12... Capt. George W. Walsh, 43rd Mo. Inf. is hereby assigned to duty as Asst Provost Marshal for the 6th Sub-Military District, District of North Mo.



By Command of Major General Rosecrans,

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

Assistant Adjutant General.

SPECIAL ORDERS, }
No. 205.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, May 4th, 1865.

(Extract.)

* * * * *
46. By direction of the President, on the recommendation of the
Commanding General, Department of the Missouri, Captain *George H.
Walser*, 43d Missouri Volunteers, is hereby dishonorably dismissed the
service of the United States, for malfeasance in office while Provost
Marshal at St. Joseph, Missouri.

* * * * *
By order of the Secretary of War:

W. A. NICHOLS,
Assistant Adjutant General.

OFFICIAL:

Wm. A. Nichols

Assistant Adjutant General.

Paymaster General

Dr Sir A Joseph Pro May 20th - 1865 -

I write you a line in regard to a matter you will be kind enough to give your attention to if possible. Cap Geo Waker of co D 43 Mo Volunteer Infantry received an order from the War Department at Washington purporting to dismiss him from the service of the U.S. for "Malfeasance in office while acting as Prov Marshall at St Joseph Mo". I believe from what I know of Cap Waker that a very grave error has been committed in this matter by some one. I know not who. The Secretary of War has some evidence before him on this subject and he would not have acted in the premises. Cap Waker knows nothing about this matter. He had no intimation of any charge against him until he received the order dismissing him from the service. I believe when the charges are investigated and Cap Waker

has an opportunity of refuting them
~~charge~~ that it will be shown that he
is a most injured man. I believe
that parties here are at the bottom of
this thing. From what I have seen
of the way Cap Walsen has
done his duty I believe if he committed any
errors at all they were on the side
of duty to the cause and the country.
Cap Walsen has written to the
Secretary of War asking an investigation
and if he will not grant that he
desires a copy of the letters in
which were sent to the Secretary
by some one unknown to Cap
Walsen also a copy of the evidence
(if there is any in the office against
him). You will be kind enough
to go to the war office and ^{request} the Secretary
to give Cap Walsen an opportunity
of defending himself. If the Secretary
is not willing to do this you will request
of him a copy of all letters or evidence
that may be in his office in relation
to the conduct of Cap Walsen while
Pro Marshal at St Joseph. By
giving attention to this matter if
possible you will confer on me a

personal favor, which I shall
ever remember. Please write--
Respectfully yours &c
J. B. Parker

P.S.

Capt. Walker is a good friend
of yours
J. B. Parker

To
Hon. B. St. Louis

I join with Mr. Parker in his request
because I deem it a matter of justice
to Capt. Walker

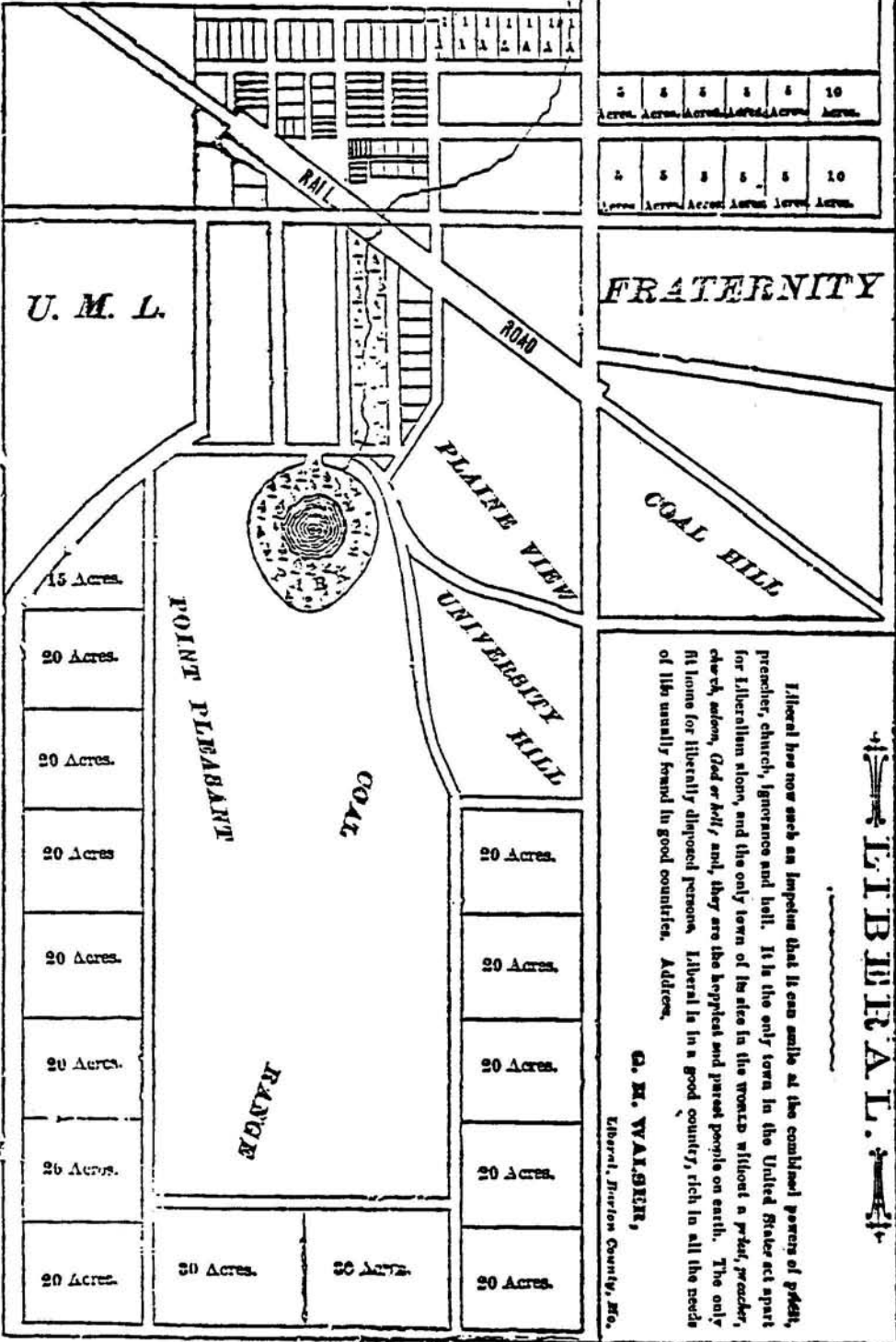
Respectfully
Thomas B. Biggers

Ms. A. 9. 058. 165

Mr. Parker is Circuit Attorney
for this district. Mr. Biggers was
a Major in the Federal Service
L.

No. of File	ADVISE INDEX			NAMES OF PARTIES		Date of Filing Papers			CAUSE OF ACTION
	Vol.	Page	No.	PLAINTIFFS	DEFENDANTS	Day	Month	Year	
1	A	587	4	Halsey George	Robert H. White Charles Clark				
2	A	39	11	do.	A. H. Browne	14	9	1872	Ejectment Trans. of Judge
3	A	279	10	do.	Abraham High	19	9	1872	debt
4	A	57	10	do.	R. T. Cartmell	21	9	1872	debt
5	A	328	9	do.	F. E. Reynolds	5	10	1872	debt
6	A	133	12	do.	C. B. Combs, H. G. J. Van Gelsberg A. J. Young, L. E. Chalmers, J. H. Fitch, Chas. Van Buren				Sanctions on v. F. E. Reynolds
7	A	287	10	do.	David A. Alder	8	8	1873	Ejectment
8	A	169	8	do.	John Corley & Joseph A. Hathin	8	8	1873	Ejectment
9	A	139	3	do.	Phillip Hamner	25	8	1873	debt by attachment
10	A	167	1	Hard Edward G.	J. B. Henderson	16	9	1873	Trans. of Judge from Justice Court
11	A	158	5	Halsey G. H.	Thomas S. Harvey	22	9	1873	Trans. from Justice Court
12	A	25	7	Hall P. L. Est. by bid.	Martin Breddin	14	7	1874	debt
13	A	413	12	Hard James T.	J. O. Turner	25	8	1874	debt
14	A	239	10	" 25-7	Hard James T. Deymond Mackey & Winnifred Breddin	15	8	1874	debt
15	A	57	10	Hard James T. H. G. J. Van Gelsberg	R. T. Cartmell & Viola Cartmell	23	9	1874	Ejectment
16	A	43	8	Halsey G. H.	Barton, C. S. M. B. Carley	30	9	1874	To require diffn of certain way before Wardon Linn
17	A	3	10	Halsey G. H.	F. D. McArnold	9	10	1874	Trans. of Justice from Justice Court
18	A	404	4	" 95-5	Hard James T. W. B. Carley	27	8	1874	Trans. of Justice from Justice Court
19	"	395	10	" 287-10	Hatson Geo. H. J. M. Tracy, J. A. A. Alder	6	3	1874	Trans. of Justice from Justice Court
20	A	275	12	Halsey G. H.	Chas. Newbert	20	10	1874	debt by attachment
21	A	58	8	Hard Edward G.	Sam. T. Claunch	24	6	1875	Attachment
22	A	414	1	Hard James T.	J. O. Turner	21	9	1875	debt
23	A	435	7	" 432-4	Halsey G. H. Edward S. Hard James T. Hard	24	9	1875	Remission of certain of of seign
24	"	41	3	" 67-13	Hard James T. Joseph Cartmell Jacob & Abiel Turner	22	9	1875	To set aside deed
25	A	444	3	Tracy A. J.	James Truesdell	4	3	1876	Replevin
26	A	11	3	Hard Geo. E. by bid.	Boston County	6	6	76	Recover Purchase Money

LIBERAL.



5	5	5	5	5	10
Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres

2	5	5	5	5	10
Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres

U. M. L.

FRATERNITY

PLAIN VIEW

COAL HILL

15 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

POINT PLEASANT

COAL

UNIVERSITY HILL

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

RANGE

20 Acres.

20 Acres.

Liberal has now such an impetus that it can smile at the combined powers of greed, prejudice, church, ignorance and hell. It is the only town in the United States set apart for Liberalism alone, and the only town of its size in the world without a priest, preacher, church, school, God or hell, and they are the happiest and purest people on earth. The only fit home for liberally disposed persons. Liberal is in a good country, rich in all the needs of life usually found in good countries. Address,

G. M. WALSH,
Liberal, Huron County, Mo.

LIBERAL.

LIBERAL.

Those who contemplate making Liberal their home, as well as those desiring to avail themselves of its educational institutions, would naturally desire to know something of the people and surroundings of the place.

LIBERAL

is a thriving town of about 800 people, and is located at the crossing of the Kansas City, Springfield & Meropis railroad and the Nevada & Madden road. The latter is to be the main line of the Missouri Pacific from Sedalia and the North and East to Galveston, Texas. By these roads we are placed in direct communication with all points of commercial importance, East, West, North and South, thus giving us facilities of railroad communication not surpassed by any town in the west, by means of which our merchants can take choice of markets, and consequently pay more for produce than merchants of neighboring towns.

We have a healthy location. With a proper attention paid to the laws of hygiene, families find but little, if any, need of the physician. Malarial fevers are of rare occurrence, and the ravages of consumption are unknown, unless it follows the patient from less favored localities. Children and young people are extremely healthy. All wear the bloom of youth into the years of maturity; making Liberal particularly fitted for a school, as health is always of the highest importance to those tasking themselves with mental work.

Barton County is principally prairie, though along the many streams that flow its face much valuable timber is to be found. Coal is found in abundance in the immediate vicinity of the town, and it is now mined quite extensively, affording work for many hands.

The citizens of Liberal are honest, sober, industrious and moral as a class. They are free from religious dogmatism of every kind. Every person here is esteemed for his manly bearing rather than his religious faith. No one is proscribed for his political or religious opinions. The people of Liberal accord to every person the rights they demand for themselves, but expect from all a fair standing of citizenship. We expect Liberal to become an educational point, and to that end we invite to our midst all lovers of learning. Those who are seeking an education, and those who have children whom they desire to bring up in a manner that will capacitate them for the duties of honorable and useful lives should come where all such advantages are afforded.

G. H. WALSER.

FIRST ANNUAL CATALOGUE

OF THE



LIBERAL UNIVERSITY

LIBERAL, MISSOURI.

PL. M. 287

[1887]

PORT SCOTT, KANSAS:
MORTON FURNISHING HOUSE AND BINDERY.

☼ The • Freehought • University. ☼

FACULTY.

M. D. LEAHY, B. A. PRESIDENT,
Metaphysics, Greek, Latin and Oratory.

R. V. HOFFMAN, B. S.,
Natural Sciences and Higher Mathematics.

T JOHN LEAHY,
History Higher Arithmetic and Common Branches.

HERMANN NAUMANN,
German, French and Gymnastics.

G. H. WALSER,
Commercial Law

MISS GENOA L. COWLEY,
Vocal Music.

OBJECT AND CHARACTER.

The Freehought University was founded to meet the demands of the age. There is scarcely an institution of learning to-day that is fully in accord with the spirit of our civilization. This is an age of wonderful activity, of rapid living. The genius of the nineteenth century is hurling our mighty civilization along the cycles of progress at an incredible speed. Great changes take place in a day. Old customs, systems and ideas are constantly giving away to newer methods, grander conceptions and higher ideals. An institution of learning, to keep abreast with the spirit of the age, must throw off the lethargic stupor so characteristic of the past, when men refused to think, and in the sunlight of freedom don the gilded mantle of individuality and independence of thought. That, among our hundreds of colleges and universities to-day, such an institution can scarcely be found, is apparent to every thinking person. Truth is everywhere being sacrificed upon the altar of dogmatism.

This is what has made the Freehought University a necessity. Its object is to furnish to the student the best conditions for right and free thinking as the only basis for all true mental development.

While every effort is taken to properly direct the student in every department of his moral and intellectual unfoldment, individuality is at all times the watchword and individual effort the criterion of success.

The aim of the institution is not to imbue into its students infidelity to any system of theology or philosophy. All systems, creeds and isms are studied from a strictly secular standpoint, and a spirit of independence encouraged in all lines of thought.

A WORD TO THE LIBERAL PUBLIC.

IT is, indeed, with feelings of pleasure that now, as the first year's work draws to a most successful close, that we invite the attention of all lovers of truth to the only institution of learning in America that is absolutely free from superstition.

Believing that earnest Freethinkers everywhere recognize the value of such an institution, we feel that to enlist their support it is necessary only to assure them that the institution has in it the elements of success.

The unparalleled success of the Freethought University during the past year enables us to give some of the elements of superiority to be found in an institution where superstitious influences are unknown and the search for truth is untrammelled and free from creed or ism.

The most important consideration in selecting an institution for the higher education of the young should be in regard to the associations that cluster around the life of the student. In this regard the Freethought University claims superiority. Among its students is found that individuality and independence of mind and character which is the legitimate fruit of Freethought and the highest characteristic of a perfect mental and moral development.

Every effort is made to elevate the aspirations of the students to a plane where they will fully appreciate the value of education and the necessity of unceasing individual effort on their part.

The methods of instruction and discipline employed are based upon the principle that individual effort is the only means to individual development, and are such as are most conducive to this end.

All Freethinkers are earnestly appealed to, to aid us

in placing this institution foremost among the educational institutions of the land:

Respectfully,

G. H. WALSER,
W. H. CURLESS,
MRS. L. H. GREELEY,
D. P. GREELEY,
MRS. H. M. WALSER,
F. J. UMBRITE,
C. H. FINK,
JOHN MCRVAE,

Board of Directors.

IMPORTANT TO FREETHINKERS

Are you a Freethinker? If so, do not fail to study carefully every word in this circular. It brings to you the long expected day, which it is hoped will be greeted as glad tidings in the home of every friend of mental liberty in the United States,—the land of liberty. Although we live in the boasted land of Freedom, with its unequalled educational advantages, it is a fact which earnest Freethinkers have always deplored that they can not give to their children the desired education without placing their young minds in the very midst of superstition.

This will no longer be so. Herein you will learn that The Freethought University offers to the Freethinkers of America the advantages for which they have so long waited. Here the growing, inquiring minds of innocent children, just merging into manhood and womanhood, may be trained and educated free from the chains of superstition and mental slavery that have weighed so long and heavily upon our entire educational system. Here, untrammelled by bible, creed, or ism, the truth will be sought for the truth's sake alone, and the warfare upon error be unflinchingly and unceasingly carried

on. Liberty of America, for years you have been looking forward to the inauguration of a Freethought institution of learning where creeds and dogmas would cease to wield their poisonous influence over the minds of our people. We now ask you to

offerred by The Freethought University. Should you be able to discern therein the elements of success, we feel certain that you will unhesitatingly come forward with all the aid at your command. Every Liberal in America ought to do something, and as soon as possible, to place this institution foremost in the educational work of America.

There are various ways in which you can render us assistance. The first great requisite for a successful school is a goodly number of students. Money without students can never build up an institution of learning, while students will always be an efficient factor whether there be an abundance of money at hand or not. Therefore, by all means, let every Liberal who has children to educate send them to The Freethought University. But, although students are the great requisite to success, if you cannot send us students there are other ways in which you can aid us. A donation, however small, of money to help defray current expenses, or of books to help build up a library, or donations of specimens for the departments of Geology, Zoology, Physiology, &c., will be gratefully received. Liberals, let us not delay our efforts to advance this enterprise. Whatever we may be able to do let us not wait until next month or next year, but let us act immediately. The scope and nature of the institution are clearly set forth in this ANNOUNCEMENT, which we submit to your careful study, trusting that it will meet with your approval and call forth your efforts in our behalf.

Very Respectfully,

G. H. WALSER,
W. H. CURLESS,
Mrs. L. H. GREENELEY,
D. P. GREENELEY,
JOHN McRAE,
MR. HANNAH M. WALSER,
JAY CHAARTEL,
P. J. ENBRITE,
C. A. FINN,
Board of Managers.

◀COURSES OF STUDY.▶

While it is claimed that the Freethought University offers to the Liberals of America advantages superior to any other institution of learning, in so far as its course of intellectual training is based on the great principle of Liberalism, "Universal Mental Liberty," it is also claimed that the courses of study, which have been prescribed as given in tabulated form on pages 9, 10, 11 and 12, will prove to be inferior to none.

In the preparation of those courses of study the object has been to lead the students into those fields of knowledge, to furnish them with that course of mental discipline and for that length of time, which experience has proven will result in the greatest amount of intellectual power, enabling them more effectually to cope with the difficulties of life, and more successfully to pursue the profession or vocation they may choose to enter.

THE CLASSICAL COURSE

embraces, in a course of four years, those lines of study and rigid mental discipline which will give to the student the greatest development of intellectual strength and accuracy of thought, while the daily and weekly drills add that polish and control of self necessary to a successful professional career. The work in debating, essays and general reading furnishes a fund of knowledge and power of expression not to be gained in any other way. To enter this course students must have a thorough knowledge of the common branches. Graduates receive a diploma and the degree B. A.

THE SCIENTIFIC COURSE

is somewhat similar to, though less extensive than, the Classical, from which it differs in that it requires a more extended course in Mathematics, no Greek, and less of

Latin and the Metaphysical Sciences. It is intended for those who do not desire to expend much time on the ancient languages. For those who desire a purely English Scientific course, the course in Metaphysical Sciences will be substituted for Latin.

This course prepares those who take it to walk successfully in any of the avenues of life. Students entering this course must have a fair knowledge of the common branches. Graduates receive a diploma and the degree B. S. By remaining one year longer and pursuing the classics and metaphysics, they will receive the degree B. A. and diploma of Classical course.

THE TEACHERS' COURSE

is intended to fit those desiring to teach for any position in the educational system of Missouri. It embraces all that is required by the school law of Missouri, together with a thorough drill in the latest and most improved methods of teaching and school management. The work in general reading, essays, etc., will prove to be an important element in the success of those who take this course. Persons who wish to prepare for the profession of teaching can not do better than to take the Teacher's course in The Freethought University. Graduates of this course receive a diploma.

THE COMMERCIAL COURSE,

as prescribed in this institution, is as thorough, progressive and practical as that of any institution in the land. There is a constantly increasing demand for young men and women of trained business capacity, and no person can enter the busy, active lines of American life without first receiving this training.

The course offered by the Freethought University in this department cannot be excelled anywhere. The method of instruction will be such that students not only become qualified to conduct any business, but they become successful teachers of the subject as well, for which there is also a large and steadily increasing demand.

Diplomas are granted to the graduates of this course.

ORATORICAL COURSE.

The object of the Oratorical course in the FreeThought University is to produce polished and effective readers and speakers. The course of instruction will cover the entire ground of expression, neither neglecting its simplest forms nor stopping short of its highest:

Elocution will be taught as a science and as an art. As a science, it investigates the principles of delivery, and the aim of the school will be to so instruct in the science that its students will be able to analyze the most difficult forms of literature, and decide with certainty as to the manner of delivery. As an art, it belongs to a department of culture which aims to express the divine principles of beauty. In this, it will be the purpose of the school to train the students so that they will have full control of the vocal organs, and be able to apply artistically to each style of composition its appropriate form of delivery. Again, we will aim to develop skill in conversation, readiness in extemporaneous speech, a finished platform delivery, affording thorough training in public speech to the lecturer, the lawyer and the statesman.

The course of instruction, as given in the curriculum, will embrace one year's work, together with daily drill in gesture, calisthenics, elementary sounds, breathing, articulation and conversation.

To enter this course, students are required to have at least one term's work in Rhetoric, Mathematics through Algebra, and a fair knowledge of Literature.

To graduate in this course requires Mathematics through Geometry; two terms in Rhetoric and the Philosophy of Style; American Literature, one term; English Literature and English and French History, two terms each; Mental Philosophy and Intellectual Development of Europe, one term each; weekly drills in Oration, Debates and Composition; and Elocution during the entire year. The degree B. O. will be conferred on those completing the work.

COURSES OF STUDY.

Class.	Number of Course											
	FRESHMAN, ONE YEAR—12 WEEKS.				SOPHOMORE, ONE YEAR—12 WEEKS.				JUNIOR, ONE YEAR—12 WEEKS.			
Term.	1st Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	3rd Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	3rd Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	3rd Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks
Fall Studies, Daily Recitations.	Arithmetic, Grammar, Phys. Geography.	Algebra, Rhetoric, Elocution.	Algebra, Nat. Philosophy, Civil Government.	Rhetoric, Zoology, Amer. Literature.	Arithmetic, Geometry, Chem. His. of Civ. in Eng. Latin.	Geometry, Chemistry, Geom. Phys. Geom.	Geometry, Chemistry, Geom. Phys. Geom.	Geometry, Chemistry, Geom. Phys. Geom.	Algebra, Rhetoric, Elocution.	Algebra, Rhetoric, Elocution.	Algebra, Rhetoric, Elocution.	Algebra, Rhetoric, Elocution.
Weekly and Tri-Weekly Drills.	Debating, Writing, General Literature.	Debating, Essays, General Literature.	Debating, Essays, General Literature.	Debating, Essays, English History.	Debating, Essays in French History.	Debating, Essays in Roman History.	Debating, Essays in French History.	Debating, Essays in English History.	Debating, Essays, General Literature.	Debating, Essays, General Literature.	Debating, Essays, General Literature.	Debating, Essays, General Literature.
Daily Drills.	Penmanship.	Penmanship.	Drawing.	Drawing, Dictating, Excursions.	Geologizing, Excursions.	Excursions.	Excursions.	Reading, Experiments.	Reading.	Reading.	Reading.	Vocal Music.

COURSES OF STUDY.

SCIENTIFIC.											CLASSICAL.				Name of Course	
SOPHOMORE, ONE YEAR—42 WEEKS.				FRESHMAN, ONE YEAR—42 WEEKS.				SENIOR, ONE YEAR—42 WEEKS.				Class.				
4th Term 10 weeks	3rd Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	3rd Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	3rd Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	Terms.	Full Studies, Daily Recitations.	Weekly and Tri-Weekly Drills.	Daily Drills.	
Botany. U. S. Const. Hist. Phys. Geography.	Arithmetic. Nat. Philosophy. History.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Grammar. Geography.	Arithmetic. Rhetoric. Phys. Geog.	Rhetoric. Civil Government.	El. of Astronomy. Rhetoric. Civil Government.	El. of Astronomy. Rhetoric. Civil Government.	Political Economy. Greek Drama. Intel. Dev. of Eur.	Political Economy. Greek Drama. Intel. Dev. of Eur.	Criticism. Iliad.	Logic. Horace. Anabasis.	Mental Philosophy. Tactics. Greek Exercises.	Debating. Essays in Intellect. Science.	Debating. the Hist. of Philosophy.	Rhetoric. Rhetoric.	Debating. Essays in English Literature.
Debating. Essays. General Literature.	Debating. Essays. General Literature.	Debating. Essays. General Literature.	Debating. Essays. General Literature.	Debating. Essays.	Debating. Essays.	Debating. Essays.	Debating. Letter Writing.	Debating. Essays in Political Dev. of America.	Penmanship.	Penmanship.	Penmanship.	Penmanship.	Penmanship.	Penmanship.	Penmanship.	Penmanship.
Vocal Music. Vocalizing Excursions.	Vocal Music.	Reading.	Reading.	Drawing.	Drawing.	Drawing.	Penmanship.	Plocution.	Plocution.	Plocution.	Plocution.	Plocution.	Plocution.	Plocution.	Plocution.	Plocution.

COURSES OF STUDY.

SCIENTIFIC.											CLASSICAL.				Name of Course	
SENIOR, ONE YEAR—42 WEEKS.				JUNIOR, ONE YEAR—42 WEEKS.				FRESHMAN, ONE YEAR—42 WEEKS.				Class.				
1st Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	3d Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	3d Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	3d Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	Terms.	Full Studies, Daily Recitation.	Weekly and Tri-Weekly Drills.	Daily Drills.
Algebra. Zooology. American Lit.	Algebra. Rhetoric. History.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.	Algebra. Rhetoric. Physiology.
Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.
Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.	Plocution. Plocution. Experiments.

COURSES OF STUDY.

TEACHERS.													Name of Course
COMMERCIAL.			ORATORICAL.			THIRD YEAR—12 WEEKS.			SECOND YEAR—12 WEEKS.			Class.	
2 Terms—21 wks.			ONE YEAR—12 WEEKS.			4th Term 10 weeks			3d Term 10 weeks			2d Term 10 weeks	
2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	3d Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	3d Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	1st Term 10 weeks	4th Term 10 weeks	3d Term 10 weeks	2d Term 10 weeks	Terms.
Arithmetic. Grammar. Book-keeping.	Arithmetic. Grammar. Book-keeping.	Elocution. Intel. Dev. of Pur. Mental Philosophy.	Elocution. Hist. of Civ. in Eng. Criticism.	Elocution. Philos. of Style. English Literature.	Elocution. Rhetoric. American Lit.	Evolution of Man. Political Economy. Mental Philosophy.	Hist. of Civ. in Eng. English Literature. Physiology.	Trigonometry. Eng. Const. Hist. Geology.	Geometry. American Lit. Chemistry.	Geometry. U. S. Const. Hist. Chemistry.	Civics. Civil Government. Geology.	Genet. U. S. History. Nat. Philosophy.	Full Studies. Daily Recitations.
Debating. Commercial Law.	Debating. Letter Writing.	Orations. Essays in French History.	Orations. Essays in French History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in French History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in English History.	Debating. Essays in General Literature.	Debating. Essays in General Literature.	Debating. Essays in General Literature.	Weekly and Tri-weekly Drills.
Pennmanship. Drawing.	Pennmanship. Drawing.	Modern Orators.	Milton. Ancient Orators.	Shakespeare.	Shakespeare.	Elocution.	Elocution.	Elocution. Geography. Excursions.	Elocution. Experiments.	Vocal Music. Geography. Excursions.	Vocal Music. Experiments.	Reading. Experiments.	Daily Drills.

◊COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.◊

TIME.

On examining the courses of study it will be noticed that the Classical and Scientific courses embrace about the same scope of work in four years for which most institutions require six or seven years.

The question will naturally arise, How can you do it? Will your work be thorough?

The answer is found in the fact that a majority of the young men and women of to-day can and do complete the work in from one-half to two-thirds of the time prescribed in most colleges,—a fact which American people are coming to recognize, and college curricula are being shortened accordingly. The old plan of forcing young men and women to spend seven or eight of the best years of life in doing that which can be done in four or five, will soon be a relic of the past. Let those students who can complete the work in three or four years, do so. Those who must have more time can have it. Thus alone can mental power and energy be developed.

STUDIES.

Students are required to take but three regular studies with the accompanying daily and weekly drills. Instead of scattering their energies over a large number of studies, as is the case in many institutions, their entire efforts are concentrated on a few, thereby developing both concentration and continuity of thought, the chief elements of intellectual strength.

IN THE CLASS ROOM

the students will be found doing the work for themselves. Instead of listening to dry and prosy lectures from drier and prosier professors, the method of instruction so prevalent in our colleges, they take an active part in the discus-

sions. The teacher is only a guide, a director. The students do the work.

THE REGULAR WORK.

The course in Ancient Languages is thorough and practical. The students are put at once at the work of translation and composition. German and French will be taught as soon as a sufficient number desire them.

In the Metaphysical Sciences a thorough study is made of the various phases of intellectual philosophy—Mysticism, Realism, Idealism, and Skepticism. Special attention will be paid to those questions, an understanding of which is so essential in this age of strife between Reason and Superstition.

The course in Mathematics covers almost the entire field. The most improved works will be used.

In the study of Natural Sciences every effort will be made to direct the student to a closer observation and investigation of Nature. Botany and geologizing excursions, and experiments in Chemistry and Natural Philosophy by the class, will form an interesting and important feature of the work in these sciences.

The general work in the form of debates, essays and general reading is an essential factor in giving a polished and rounded development of the mental faculties.

The Normal Department affords to teachers opportunities for becoming proficient in the profession equal to any Normal School in the West.

The work in Elocution and Oratory is one of the most attractive features of the institution.

Plain and ornamental penmanship will be taught according to the latest and most approved system.

No pains will be spared to build up the finest departments of Music and Fine Arts to be found in the West.

THE TEACHERS.

In selecting a Faculty, the aim has been to secure teachers in whose hands Liberals could trust the education of their children without fear of their minds being dwarfed by superstition, and at the same time teachers who are specially qualified for the work they will be given to do.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

LOCATION.

The Freethought University is situated in the beautiful little city of 800 free, moral, intelligent, liberal people. It is fast coming to be recognized as the center of Liberalism in America, and is easily reached by rail from all the principal cities of the West.

WHO CAN ENTER.

While the Freethought University is open to all, the wants of Freethinkers, yet all, without regard to creed, are alike welcome to share its questions at issue, between Christian and Freethought. Spiritualist are of the gravest importance to the person should decide upon them with freedom. Christian friends, are you afraid to enter? not, you may come to the Freethought University with the assurance that your system will be defended as the altar of Truth. If its teachings will survive; if they are false, you should be the first to rejoice on knowing the truth.

TIME TO ENTER.

Those who desire to take a course of instruction, enter with the beginning of the term, not having the time or means to wait, who desire to take an elective course, may enter at any time and find classes suited to their wants.

CALENDAR.

Fall Term begins.....
 Winter Term begins.....
 Spring Term begins.....
 Summer Term begins.....

EXPENSES.

Tuition, per term.....
 Boarding, per week.....
 Room rent, per week.....

In every case tuition may be paid in advance.

For further information

Write

This judgment satisfied in full, except as to costs, this 25th day of June, 1895. Hannah M. Walser, Plaintiff.

Attest: W.W. Mayes, Clerk. By H.C. Timmonds, Her Attorney of record.

Be it remembered that on the 25th day of June, 1895, the same being the 26th Judicial day of the February, 1895 term of the Circuit Court of Barton County, Missouri, the following, among other proceedings were had, to-wit:

Hannah M. Walser, _____ Plaintiff,)
vs)
George H. Walser, _____ Defendant.)
DEGREE OF DIVORCE.
ALIMONY \$ 3600.00.

Now at this day the above entitled cause coming on to be heard, and both parties appearing, the plaintiff in person as well as by her attorney, H. C. Timmonds, and the defendant in his own proper person, and both parties announcing ready for trial, the cause is submitted to the Court; Whereupon the Court, after hearing the evidence, doth find the issues in favor of the plaintiff; that the allegations in her petition are true; that for one whole year next before the filing of plaintiff's petition, that defendant, without good cause, absented himself and failed and refused to live longer with plaintiff as her husband and has ever since so failed and refused.

It is therefore by the Court decreed, that she the plaintiff be and she is hereby divorced from the bonds of matrimony entered into by and between her and the defendant and that she have and recover of and from the defendant, as alimony in gross, the sum of Thirty Six Hundred Dollars (\$ 3600.00), which sum shall be in lieu of plaintiff's dower interest in defendant's property; and also in lieu and satisfaction of the judgment heretofore rendered by this court at its February Term, 1894, between the same parties, granting plaintiff a monthly allowance of Twenty Five Dollars (\$ 25.00) for maintenance; for all payments from and after June 30th, 1895, and that plaintiff recover of defendant her costs in this case.

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING
 WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK---THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD
 V. S. No. 2.

N. B.—Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. PHYSICIANS should state CAUSE OF DEATH in plain terms, so that it may be properly classified. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important.

MISSOURI STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Do not use this space.

Copy of Record

1. PLACE OF DEATH
 County Jasper Registration District No. _____
 Town Liberal Mo. Primary Registration District No. _____
 City Liberal Mo. State Mo. Ward _____

2. FULL NAME Mrs. Alice Halser
 (a) Residence No. Liberal Mo. St. Ward _____
 (Usual place of abode) (If nonresident give city or town and State)
 Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. da. How long in U.S., if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. da.

PERSON AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS					MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
3. SEX <u>Female</u>	4. COLOR OR RACE <u>White</u>	5. SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED (write the word) <u>married</u>			16. DATE OF DEATH (MONTH, DAY AND YEAR) <u>July 14 1902</u>	
5A. IF MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED HUSBAND OF (OR) WIFE OF <u>G. H. Halser</u>					17. I HEREBY CERTIFY, that I attended deceased from _____, 19____, to _____, 19____, that I last saw him _____ alive on _____, 19____, and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at _____.	
6. DATE OF BIRTH (MONTH, DAY AND YEAR)					THE CAUSE OF DEATH* WAS AS FOLLOWS: <u>Suicide by poison</u>	
7. AGE YEARS MONTHS DAYS IF LESS than 1 day, hrs. or min. <u>27</u> <u>—</u> <u>—</u> <u>—</u>					CONTRIBUTORY (SECONDARY) _____ (duration) _____ yrs. mos. da.	
8. OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work <u>House wife</u> (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) _____ (c) Name of employer _____					18. WHERE WAS DISEASE CONTRACTED IF NOT AT PLACE OF DEATH: _____ DID AN OPERATION PRECEDE DEATH? _____ DATE OF _____ WAS THERE AN AUTOPSY? _____ WHAT TEST CONFIRMED DIAGNOSIS? (Signed) <u>H. A. Drummond</u> _____, 19____ (Address) <u>Carterville Mo.</u>	
9. BIRTHPLACE (CITY OR TOWN) _____ (STATE OR COUNTRY) _____					*State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or in deaths from VIOLENT CAUSES, state (1) MEANS AND NATURE OF INJURY, and (2) whether ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL, or HOMICIDAL. (See reverse side for additional space.)	
10. NAME OF FATHER _____					19. PLACE OF BURIAL, CREMATION, OR REMOVAL <u>Liberal Mo.</u> DATE OF BURIAL <u>July 17, 1902</u>	
11. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (CITY OR TOWN) _____ (STATE OR COUNTRY) _____					20. UNDERTAKER <u>J. P. Steele</u> ADDRESS <u>Liberal Mo.</u>	
12. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER _____						
13. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (CITY OR TOWN) _____ (STATE OR COUNTRY) _____						
14. INFORMANT (Address) _____						
15. FILED _____ 19____						

Act of June 27, 1890.

#1332932

INVALID PENSION.

Claimant, George H. Walser
 P. O., Liberal Rank, Captain
 County, Darton Company, 43 Mo. Vol. Inf.
 State, Missouri Regiment, 43 Mo. Vol. Inf.
 Rate, \$ _____ per month, commencing _____

REJECTED

Pensioned for _____ inability to earn a support by manual labor.

RECOGNIZED ATTORNEY.

Name, C. J. Wadleigh Fee, \$ _____
 P. O., Washington D.C. Agent to pay.

(No honorable discharge from last service)

Submitted for rejection May 8, 1905, Edw. Talbot, Examiner.
 Approved for Rejection as claimant was not honorably discharged from his last contract of service (Co. "I" 43 Mo. Vol. Inf.)
 Approved for _____

Aggregate of disabilities shown, permanent in character: \$ _____

May 27, 1905 H. J. Denton
 Legal Reviewer.
June 3, 1905 O. H. Harris
 Re-Reviewer.

Medical Examiner. Medical Reviewer.
 _____, 190____, Medical Referee.

Not pensioned under other laws at \$ _____ per month for _____

Enlisted Apr. 22 1861, and honorably discharged Nov. 3 1861.
 Reenlisted Oct. 10 1864, and honorably discharged May 4 1865.
 Declaration filed Feb. 10 1905, alleges permanent disability, not due to vicious habits, from age

_____, M. C. Claimant does not write.

W. H. T. For.

West Div.
O. I. No. 1332937
George H. Walser
Cal. 20 Ill. Inf
act of June 27, 1890

Department of the Interior,
BUREAU OF PENSIONS,
Washington, D. C.

Apr. 5, 1905

SIR:
Will you kindly answer, at your earliest convenience, the questions enumerated below? The information is requested for future use, and it may be of great value to your family.
Very respectfully,

Mr. Geo. H. Walser,
Liberal
Dartmouth, Mo.

W. H. T.
Commissioner.

No. 1. Are you a married man? If so, please state your wife's full name, and her maiden name.

Answer: *Ester Felt Josephine Walser - It was Blount*

No. 2. When, where, and by whom were you married? Answer: *Oct 12th 1882*

at Galena Kansas by Rev. Sara C. Scovell

No. 3. What record of marriage exists? Answer: *The record is in*

Probate Court Columbus Kans. & Certificate

No. 4. Were you previously married? If so, please state the name of your former wife, the date of the marriage, and the date and place of her death or divorce. If there was more than

one previous marriage, let your answer include all former consorts. Answer: *Marriet P*
Marion at Middleport Ills. April 1860 - divorced
in January 1874. Hannah M. Divorced.

No. 5. Have you any children living? If so, please state their names and the dates of their

birth. Answer: *Mark Walser born March 30th*
1861

Lena E. Todd born Sept 14th 1870

Date of reply, *April 10*, 1905

G. H. Walser



West Division.
O. I. No. *13329327*
George H. Walser
Co. *I 20 Reg't Ill Inf.*

Department of the Interior,
BUREAU OF PENSIONS,
Washington, D. C. *April 5, 1905*

SIR: To aid this Bureau in preventing any one falsely personating you, or otherwise committing fraud in your name, or on account of your service, you are required to answer fully the questions enumerated below.

You will please return this circular under cover of the inclosed envelope which requires no postage.

Very respectfully,

Mr. Geo. H. Walser
Liberal
Partow Co. Mo.

V. Warner
Commissioner.

1. When were you born? Answer. *May 26th 1837.*
2. Where were you born? Answer. *Dearborn Co. Indiana*
3. When did you enlist? Answer. *April 19th 1861.*
4. Where did you enlist? Answer. *Rockport Ill. Middletown Ill.*
5. Where had you lived before you enlisted? Answer. *Rockport Ill. Middletown Ill.*
6. What was your post-office address at enlistment? Answer. *Rockport Ill. Middletown Ill.*
7. What was your occupation at enlistment? Answer. *Lawyer*
8. When were you discharged? Answer. *Sept 3rd 1861*
9. Where were you discharged? Answer. *Bridgeport Mo*
10. Where have you lived since discharge? Give dates, as nearly as possible, of any changes of residence, *Rockport Mo. from 1863 to 1866. Then in Kansas Mo. from 1866 to 1873. in Carthage Mo. from 1873 to 1880. in Liberal Mo. from 1880 to 1905.*
11. What is your present occupation? Answer. *Lawyer*
12. What is your height? Answer. *5* feet *7* inches. Your weight? *160-*
The color of your eyes? *blue* The color of your hair? *gray* Your complexion? *fair*
none Are there any permanent marks or scars on your person? If so, describe them.
13. What is your full name? Please write it on the line below, in ink, in the manner in which you are accustomed to sign it, in the presence of two witnesses who can write.



George Henry Walser

WITNESSES: 1. *E. H. Wheeler*
2. *James Andrew*
[Witnesses who can write sign here.]

Date: *April 4*, 1905

SPECIAL NOTICE.—The civil officer before whom this affidavit is executed should be careful to fill in all spaces, both in the caption and jurat.

GENERAL AFFIDAVIT.

State of Missouri, County of Barton, SS:

In the matter of pension claim of Geo. H. Walser
20 Ill. Inf.

ON THIS 11th day of Apr, A. D. 1905, personally appeared before me
John Good

in and for the aforesaid County, duly authorized to administer
oaths Geo H Walser aged 71 years, a resident of Liberal
in the County of Barton, and State of Mo

whose Post-office address is _____

well known to be reputable and entitled to credit, and who, being duly sworn, declared in relation to aforesaid
case as follows: he has had no service either

in the army or navy, other than
20 Ill. Inf.
(NOTE.—Affiant should state how he gains a knowledge of the facts to which he testifies.)

Except I served as Captain
of Co. F. 43. Mo. Inf.
but in no other service than
those mentioned above



further declares that _____ no interest in said case and _____ not concerned in its prosecution.

Geo. H. Walser
(Signature of Affiant.)

(If Affiant signs by mark, two witnesses who can write sign here.)

A.D. 1980143
Luther G. Walser, M.D.
Geo. H. Walser
Co. I. 20th Reg. Ill. Inf.



STATE OF MISSOURI)
County of Barton) SS.

Leta West, of lawful age, first being duly sworn upon her oath, deposes and says that she is the wole owner and proprietor of the Humphrey Hardware & Furniture Company at Lamar, Missouri; that the Humphrey Hardware & Furniture Company was formerly owned by her father, Hoyt Humphrey, and, during the lifetime of the said Hoyt Humphrey, he was engaged in the undertaking business at Lamar, Missouri, in connection with said hardware and furniture business; that she is in possession of all the funeral records and that funeral record No. 3026, at page 294, shows that George H. Walser died on May 1, 1910, at Liberal, Barton County, Missouri, at the age of seventy-five years; that the physioiah in charge was Dr. C. A. Smith, of Liberal, Missouri, and the cause of death was anemia; that he was buried in Lake Cemetery at Lamar, Missouri, in vault Section No. 1, on the 4th day of May, 1910.

Affiant further says that she was well and personally acquainted with George H. Walser and with Esther J. Walser, his wife, and knows that Esther J. Walser is the widow of George H. Walser, above mentioned.

Further, affiant saith not.

Leta West.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19th day of August, 1926. My commission as Notary Public will expire on the 28th day of August, 1927.

Ralph W. Martin
Notary Public.



DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY.	APPRAISED VALUE	
	Dollars	Cts.
(1) One Cow	35	00
(1) One Hog	20	00
Corn	79	80
(1) One Horse	1	25 00
Law Books	76	80
Stone Quarry Tools & Machinery	10	0 00
List of notes left as collateral security with Bank of Liberal as security for note and money advanced		
Guy L. Wade note ,with int.at 8% with Edwin F. James Enderser	7	00 00
W.L.Lavery Note with interest due from Nov 5th 1909 at 8%	15	0 00
Alex. Barnes Note with interest from Nov 10th 1909 at 8%	300	00
Mary M. Pannahill Note with interest due from Feb 10th 1909 at 8%	75	00
TOTAL AMOUNT OF APPRAISEMENT,	\$ 1	6 61.00

We, the undersigned Appraisers, certify the above to be a full and fair Appraisalment of the Goods, Chattels and other Personal Estate of G.H. Walser deceased, as produced before us by Eather J. Walser, wife, and J.G. Todd, Administrator,

of said G.H. Walser deceased.

GIVEN under our hands, this 25th day of March A. D. 1910

Frank C. Cress
O. J. McElanahan
J. B. Richardson

APPAISERS.

Widow Division
Geo. H. Walsler,
Co. I 43 Mo. Inf.
W.O. 1550143

November 17, 1926

Mrs. Esther J. Walsler,
520 W. Daugherty Street,
Webb City, Missouri.

Madam:

Your above-entitled claim under the Act of May 1, 1920 filed August 3, 1926 is rejected on the ground that as shown by a report from the records of the War Department your husband, the soldier, was not honorably discharged from his final contract for service in Company I, 43rd. Missouri Infantry, during the Civil War.

Respectfully,

Winfield Scott,
Commissioner.

EIG/LRH

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- **"The Story of Liberal Missouri," by O. E. Harmon - Published by the Liberal News, Liberal, Missouri. 1925**
- **"The Strange Town - Liberal, Missouri," by J. P. Moore - Published by the Liberal News, Liberal, Mo. 1963**
- **The St. Louis Globe Democrat, May 2, 1885, p. 16**
- **The St. Louis Post Dispatch, May 2, 1885, p. 5**
- **The "First Annual Catalogue" of the Freethought University, Published in Ft. Scott, Kansas by the Monitor Publishing House and Bindery - sometime in the 1880s**
- **A pamphlet, "The Fulfillment of a Dream," by Clark Braden. Published 1885 and revised in 1886**
- **Barton County Court House records**
- **Miscellaneous clippings and papers obtained from a variety of sources over the past twenty-five years**
- **Interviews with Barton County Historian, Marvin VanGilder**
- **"She Kept Men Standing," published privately by Ruth Black Aten in 1967**
- **Documents from the National Archives Trust Fund Board, Washington, D.C. 20408**
- **Information obtained from the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, 23 Ellis Library, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, Missouri 65201**
- **Information obtained from the Library, in Liberal, Missouri**







This street sign in Liberal, Missouri provides an interesting commentary on liberalism. Once you see what liberalism did here, you won't want to make a left turn either!

**Order From
College Press
P.O. Box 1132
Joplin, MO 64802**

Possible explanation for Walser's dishonorable discharge

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF NORTH MISSOURI,
Macon, Mo., April 5, 1865.

General G. M. DODGE,

Commanding Department of the Missouri, Saint Louis, Mo.:

GENERAL: I have the honor to report the following facts in relation to the administration of the provost-marshal's department at Saint Joseph, Mo.: Reports having reached me that there were certain irregularities connected with the arrangement of the military prison and

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LOUISIANA AND THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI. [CHAP. LX.

prisoners at Saint Joseph, Mo., indicating that illegal arrests had been made, and that there was a collusion between the assistant provost-marshal and certain attorneys and law firms at that place, by which good, law-abiding citizens who were known to possess considerable means were arrested and incarcerated in prison and made the victims of a premeditated scheme of rascality, I at once determined to give the matter a thorough examination and eradicate the evils if found to exist. For this purpose I proceeded in person to Saint Joseph on the 25th ultimo and made a searching investigation. I took the statement of thirty witnesses, making upward of 100 pages of testimony. The facts as developed in my examination seemed to more than justify the reports that had reached my ears, and, in fact, I found the state of affairs much worse than I had any reason to anticipate. It seems that for some time past, through some agency which I was not able to fully trace out, witnesses have been brought, or came voluntarily, before the provost-marshal and made affidavits to show the disloyal character of certain individuals residing within the limits of the sub-district. The parties against whom such affidavits were filed were in all cases men of considerable wealth, and resided generally at some distance from the post. Upon these affidavits, no matter how flimsy, against an individual the provost-marshal would send out a scout of picked men selected by himself and arrest the man, bring him in, and incarcerate him in jail. If the prisoner demanded to know the charges against him he was informed that he would find out soon enough, or that he could not know. In any event, he received no satisfaction, but was hurried off to prison. Once in prison no one, not even his wife or any member of his family, was permitted to see or have any communication with him whatever, except a few members of the legal profession who were in favor with the provost-marshal. These were allowed to pass to and from the prison *ad libitum*. After the prisoner had been confined several days, long enough to realize all the horrors of his situation and ready to sacrifice almost anything to regain his liberty, an attorney visits the prison ostensibly to see some client. Our prisoner, anxious to learn something of his own probable fate, approaches him and inquires if he knows anything of the charges against him. Attorney shakes his head ominously and tells him that he has heard something of them from the provost-marshal, and that it is a very bad case. Prisoner wants to know if he can do anything for

him: Attorney replies that he will see what can be done. Says he possesses great influence with the authorities, and if any one can save him he is the man, but that he would not think of touching the case for less than \$1,000. Next day attorney calls again. Says he has examined the papers and finds it a much worse case than he had anticipated; that if the case ever comes before a military commission his (prisoner's) life is not worth a cent. But he says further that he is a brother-in-law of the provost-marshal, and that he may possibly be able to induce him to suppress the charges and not bring the case to trial, but says if he does undertake the case he must have \$1,500; and he works upon the fears of the prisoner until he finally secures that sum. He then tells the prisoner that his only hope of saving his neck is to make or sign a written application to the commanding general to be banished from the State, not to return during the war. This the prisoner finally does. His application is of course granted, and the provost-marshal releases him from custody upon these conditions, giving him twenty days to make his arrangements for moving. Before he is released, however, this attorney exacts from him a price for the information that has passed between them. Then, to more fully illustrate the

mode of procedure, and to show the slight grounds upon which citizens have been deprived of their liberty and made the victims of this species of prosecution and rascality, I forward them with exact copies of the affidavits upon which J. C. Compton was arrested and imprisoned and finally banished from the State (see papers* marked A), together with an order* issued by the assistant provost-marshal. These papers are the only evidence on file against Mr. Compton, and the provost-marshal knew of no other evidence against him. I also forward the within statement of Mr. Compton (marked B*) taken before me, which gives a full history of the case. The case of Compton is but a fair sample. The cases of Boone, Finney, Fielding, and others are in every way similar and more or less aggravated. These parties had, during the first year of the war, been known as Southern sympathizers, but they have from the first been law-abiding citizens, and have given no material aid to the rebellion in any way, shape, or form, and are as bitterly opposed to guerrillaism and kindred offenses as the most radical Union man. Some of them have aided me materially during the past year by giving important information relative to the movements of guerrilla bands. During my investigation I called in the circuit judge and laid the matter developed before him, and requested that the rascals be brought to punishment. I have since learned that two of them have been indicted by the grand jury, which was then in session. I revoked the order of banishment in the cases of Compton, Boone, Finney, Fielding, and Maupin, subject to your approval. I cannot reason to any other conclusion than that the provost-marshal, Capt. G. H. Walser, is guilty of a criminal complicity in these rascalities; but whether the evidence is sufficiently clear to warrant his arrest and trial before a court-martial is somewhat questionable. Unless there is strong reasonable probability of his conviction, of course it would be impolitic to bring him to trial. Until the investigation I had every reason to believe Captain Walser an honorable and trustworthy officer, in whom I reposed full confidence.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, general, your obedient servant,

CLINTON B. FISK,
Brigadier-General.

lids down upon this world that they may open again on a better and brighter one, and made the soul sing the immortal song of joy, "Oh, Death, where is thy sting? Oh, Grave, where is thy victory?" This was the conqueror Jesus whose words of truth pierced the hearts of men with the barbs of love and led them from the trammels of sin to the glories of righteousness, in mercy, charity and good will toward men.

Jesus, with boundless love and forgiving spirit, carried his own cross to the place of crucifixion and with calmness he met the frowns of scorn, with love he answered the shafts of hate, and as the cruel spear entered his blessed side and they could do no more, he uttered the grandest prayer that ever ascended to the throne of God: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." What a triumph! What a victory! What a conqueror!

Walser, the "converted infidel" writes this description of Jesus in his book about the Life and Teachings of Jesus (1909).

The United States has a list of conquering pens in her many periodicals, directing the minds of statesmen, molding the sentiments of the people along the line of patriotic devotion to the principles of self-government, domestic purity, elevation of society, and the cultivation of moral rectitude. Of the great authors of the United States we cannot speak in detail. While America is young in the sisterhood of nations, her sons lead the world in the practical development of the utilities of life and in the elucidation of man's obligations to man for the amity of the world.

But there is one conqueror who stands alone, above them all; who has conquered riches with poverty, pride with humility, ostentation with meekness, hate with love. He succored the weak and suppressed the strong, reprovved the tyrant and sympathized with the oppressed. The wails of woe found pity in his heart. He was the personification of goodness, kindness. He was by nature as tender of heart as a pure woman. He was a hero in fortitude and a great warrior in the battles of right against wrong. He was a conqueror of the passions of the body and a director of the intellect to the highest standard of men's duties one to another. The sick of body, soul, and mind were of his charge. He had a deep concern for the afflictions of the world, and in ministering to them forgot himself. And finally he transformed the dreaded king of death into a white-winged angel of peace which kisses the eye-