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### **LOST IN TIME**

Author: Julius K. Hunter

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Article Text:

\* When three 19th-century coffins turned up in St. Louis County, historians were left to unravel the puzzle - and opened a window into our past.

STEPHEN MADDOX would be relieved to know that the digging has stopped. If it is, indeed, possible to experience unrest in the grave . . . Maddox would surely be spinning by this time at the decimation and disappearance of his family's final resting place.

The prosperous gentleman farmer, who once owned land in what is now Kirkwood, the village of Huntleigh and Frontenac, tried desperately during and at the end of his lifetime to keep his wife, 12 sons and daughters and his grandchildren together in life and in death.

But he failed.

After the three coffins were unearthed in the Huntleigh home-building project, the final resting places of Maddox kith and kin have been discovered in more locations than the old man would have ever imagined or approved.

Stephen Maddox of Virginia, born in the decade following the 1770 census, migrated to St. Louis and environs in the early 1800s to join hundreds of his fellow Virginians in claiming a stake in the government's cut-rate land deals. The kinfolk of his wife, Sarah Bowles Maddox, were among the earliest settlers of Fenton. The name Bowles Avenue is a current testament to her family's presence in the St. Louis area as early as 1818.

Land records show that Stephen Maddox purchased a piece of property in Carondelet in 1813. Soon Maddox would own 652 acres in what is now St. Louis County, earning the right to be called "country squire." The Maddox spread was bounded roughly by Manchester Road on the south; Geyer Road (formerly Maddox Road) to the west; Litzinger Road on the north and Lindbergh Boulevard as the eastern boundary.

His last will and testament, drawn up on April 1, 1844, tells us a great deal about the meticulous-ness of Stephen Maddox's master plan for the lives and deaths of his beloved wife, children and grandchildren. The will specifies in several places that his bequests would not be activated until after the death of his wife, Sarah. And the Maddox will shows an unusually detailed outline for providing for his five daughters first - before the

four living sons and the children of the deceased sons could claim a single square inch of property or a single stick of furniture.

Maddox chose his eldest son, Turner, along with his good friend Jonas Geyer to supervise the distribution of his earthly possessions. The will dictated that each of the five Maddox heiresses - after their mother's death - would inherit 80 acres of land and a personal slave. After the daughters claimed their inheritances, the Maddox grandchildren were each given a portion of land and a slave for each family unit. The Maddox men could then lay claim to what was left, dividing everything equally.

The old man anticipated that there might be some squabbling among his sons, noting in the will that "i! f they cannot agree to such division then the land and Negroes are to be sold by my executors with the other property in such manner and on such terms as they may consider most advantageous to those concerned."

Stephen Maddox was a slaveholder in the manner of many of his Virginia country squire neighbors and friends who had flocked to the Missouri Territory in the early 19th century. To provide some relativity to the dozen or more slaves owned by Maddox, his contemporaries Ulysses S. Grant owned one slave; Martin Hanley, one of the founders of Clayton, owned four slaves; and Col. John O'Fallon held title to more than 40 slaves. When Maddox wrote his will, there were 1,531 slaves held in all of St. Louis.

Timothy Baumann, an anthropologist at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, has extensively studied slavery in Missouri. He believes - beyond the cruel reality of one individual owning another - that Maddox was likely to have been a benevolent master ! who knew those he held in bondage by a first name. And Baumann notes: "Slaves held in Missouri were generally treated in the kinder, gentler Tennessee and Kentucky style. Treatment was generally much harsher in the Deep South where the demands on a slave's lifestyle were much tougher."

Indeed, a friend of Maddox who lived in what is now north St. Louis County donated a meeting house to his slaves. And Thomas Musick was known to worship with his slaves. The Musick Baptist Church on Fee Fee Road in Maryland Heights was donated by Musick in 1811. But lest the lives of s laves be ladled with too much syrup comes this cryptic article from the Missouri Republican dated Monday, July 6, 1863:

#### DROWNED IN A CISTERN

A negro woman named Johanna, slave of Mr. Maddox, was found yesterday morning drowned in his cistern. The coroner held an inquest, and the verdict of the jury was suicide.

That slave girl, a tender 17-year-old, belonged to Turner Maddox, son of Stephen. The inquest was quickly convened, and the coroner's pro! nouncement of suicide was made the same day Johanna's body was discovered at the bottom of Maddox's well.

Slaves were an important commodity in the Maddox clan. Stephen Maddox bequeathed a slave named Jackson to his daughter Ann Glanville; Frances was left to Jane Huckstep;

Virginian Waltonspiel could claim Kitty; Susan Pfeifer would own Lydia and Sarah Cross was gifted with Amanda. The children of Maddox's deceased son, William, were given a slave girl named Mary; to the children of his deceased son, John, he left Martha Ellen.

There is evidence that the master's concerns for the slaves who lived in shanties on the Maddox property transcended their lives.

On a windy, crisp day in March 1832, Stephen and Sarah Maddox hosted a group of fellow ex-Virginians and some of his French and German neighbors at the Maddox homestead near Manchester Road. In attendance were such familiar surnames to St. Louisans as Ballas, McKnight, McCutcheon and Geyer. The purpose of the assembly was to establish a church.

Maddox joined two other landowners with contiguous properties in donating an acre each for the church grounds. The Des Peres Presbyterian Church meeting house - also known as the Old Stone Church (and now the Faith and Des Peres congregation) - was built a year later and still stands on the east side of Geyer Road, midway between Clayton and Manchester roads. The land donors stipulated that the fledgling congregation set aside a cemetery with a designated section in which their slaves would be buried.

Oddly enough, there are no church records to show that either Stephen or Sarah Maddox ever joined the Des Peres Presbyterian Church. The fact that abolitionist martyr Elijah Lovejoy was called by the Old Stone Church congregation as one of the first preachers may have kept the Maddoxes away from Sunday services. But Stephen Maddox had focused on life after his death.

His will notes that if Francis Pfeifer, husband of Maddox's daughter, Susan, would promise to look after ! and take good care of Sarah Bowles Maddox after the testator had passed on, the Pfeifers would be rewarded with the additional grant of "one wagon, one horse, one plough, two cows and calves, one axe of his choice, one-fourth of the stock of hogs and one-fourth of the crop on hand or in the ground. . ."

Stephen Maddox's last will and testament also contains some rather curious codicils. He notes that a son, Anderson, owed him the then considerable sum of \$700. But the old man instructed the co-executors that he was willing to knock \$80 off that debt "for expenses incurred by him (Anderson) in removing the remains of my deceased son Gustavus from New Orleans to St. Louis."

The will noted that co-executor Turner owed his father money, too. The notation is a clue to Turner's later life . . . a dandy's life of reckless and irresponsible financial dealings. One outstanding element of the Maddox will is its provision for a burial plot on which all the ! members of the vast and prolific Maddox family might be interred. Madd ox insisted that his daughter Susan set aside on the land she would inherit - notably the east half of the northwest quarter of Section 25 - "one-fourth of an acre of ground within its limits so as to include the family burial ground."

That is the same lot where construction workers excavating for a basement last summer found three custom-made iron coffins with viewing plates. The site on Radnor Road in Huntleigh is a quiet, grassy hillside, shaded with several large trees. It would have made a pleasant final resting spot.

So where were all the Maddoxes buried who died before the 20th century? It appears that the best laid plans of Stephen Maddox to have his family members buried together somehow went awry. Records show that Sarah Maddox died on May 26, 1870, at the age of 86. The next day, four coaches were rented to take her entourage and her body and solidly built iron coffin from the family home off Manchester to the family burial plot. Turner Maddox died on Oct. 29, 1869, seven months before his mother passed away - and before he was legally entitled to any of her money or property. And Turner, who died of cirrhosis of the liver, could have used her financial help; he was \$47,000 in debt. He was eulogized at his house at 312 South Seventh Street and was buried at Bellefontaine Cemetery.

In defiance of his daddy's will, Turner had purchased a 20-by-40-foot burial plot with two lumber business partners in Bellefontaine Cemetery for \$75. That was at a time when the average annual salary for an American was \$300 a year.

"Bellefontaine Cemetery had opened in 1850 and would have been considered a more prestigious place to be buried when Turner Maddox died in 1869," according to Ann Fleming, president of the St. Louis Genealogical Society. "Many of St. Louis' more elite citizens who had died before Bellefontaine opened its gates were disinterred and reburied in the then new cemetery."

And Turner had surely abandoned country life to hobnob with St. Louis' silk-stocking crowd. There is evidence of Turner's publicly purported wealth found in the personal papers of prominent St. Louisan Charles Lucas Hunt. An IOU reveals that Hunt had borrowed the significantly handsome sum of \$1,093.33 from Turner Maddox on July 1, 1858.

Hunt, by the way, was arrested by Union officers and jailed in May 1864 for leading a Missouri-wide, St. Louis-based clandestine conspiracy to aid the Confederacy and overthrow the Lincoln Administration. The Turner Maddox loan of more than \$1,000 to the Grand Commander of the secret Order of American Knights confirms how the Maddox family felt about the Civil War.

We know where Turner Maddox's wife, Tabitha, is buried. She died in July 1897, and was buried just to the right of her husband at Bellefontaine.

So where are all the other Maddoxes?

The 15-day-old son of Thomas Maddox and his wife, Ann, was buried in 1842 far away from what would become the Maddox burial plot in the Coldwater Cemetery in Florissant. That was two years before the Stephen Maddox will was penned. Thomas

Maddox died of a "lingering illness" - what today we would call cancer - at age 63 just one month after his mother died in 1870. Even with the wishes of the strong-willed patriarch ringing in the ears of the surviving children, it would be highly likely that Thomas would have wanted to be buried next to his infant son in the Florissant plot, now maintained by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

One of the iron coffins unearthed during the bulldozing of the Huntleigh property bears a metal plate identifying the remains as those of "F.M. Glandville - Age 20." That is, no doubt, a misspelling because the remains are, no doubt, those of Frederick Glanville, a grandson of Stephen Maddox and one of eight children born to Ann Maddox Glanville and her husband, John.

One of the other coffins is that of a young child. The other is believed to be that of a petite female.

Cal Rae, archaeologist for Missouri's Historic Preservation Program, says: "We do not want to violate or desecrate any of the coffins. We will not open them unless we can find a legitimate descendant of the Maddox family who would be willing to give us authorization. We have an agreement with the Faith and Des Peres Church - the Old Stone Church - to re-bury the three coffins unearthed in Huntleigh in the cemetery there. But we want to first survey the land and then be sure there will be no contamination problems."

And where were all the Maddox slaves buried?

There are slaves interred in the Des Peres Presbyterian Church cemetery, as directed by the founding fathers of that church. But the Maddox slaves would have been freed by the time the Maddox will was activated in 1870. They were officially freed by Missouri state law and the federal Emancipation Proclamation fully five years before Sarah Maddox died.

Some of the Maddox slaves may have stayed on as servants. In fact, some Missouri slaves threw off their shackles - if ever so briefly - in August 1861 when Union Gen. John C. Fremont stormed across the state unilaterally freeing all African-Americans held by Confederate sympathizers.

The Maddox family, with its Virginia traditions and support of the Confederacy, would have been directly affected by the Fremont liberation order. Turner Maddox was one of many wealthy St. Louisans officially tagged by a wartime tribunal as a Confederate sympathizer to be punished by a fine ranging from \$50 to \$500. The levy was used to support the thousands of refugees who had flooded into St. Louis from war-torn neighboring states. (In fact, John W. Maddox, a grandson of Stephen Maddox and son of Thomas Maddox, died in the Gratiot Street Prison here on Jan. 18, 1864. He was a Confederate prisoner of war ravaged by consumption - we'd call it tuberculosis. And two sons of Ann Maddox Glanville, William and James, fought for the Confederate States of

America. James was severely wounded three times; William died in the Battle of Vicksburg.)

Gen. Fremont's unauthorized liberation order was meant to wound Missouri slaveholders, such as the Maddoxes. His order was later countermanded by a frustrated President Lincoln who reasoned the liberation would "alarm our Southern Union friends and turn them against us." The swaggering general was fired two months after his bold order. But whether slave or free, the African-Americans who toiled on the Maddox property were entitled to be buried in the Des Peres Church cemetery. Some of them, including the slave girl, Johanna, may have been buried in the Maddox plot.

"Missouri slaves were often buried on the fringes of the master's burial plot," notes anthropologist Baumann. "And it was not terribly unusual for a favorite Missouri slave to be buried relatively close to the master."

Where Stephen Maddox is buried remains a big mystery. Surely, he would have been laid to rest after he died in 1844 as the first resident of the family plot he created. That would place his remains under the rolling hill of a Huntleigh mansion. None of the three iron caskets disinterred in Huntleigh is believed to be that of Stephen Maddox.

And archaeologist Rae, after an extensive onsite inspection and survey, believes no more Maddox bodies will be unearthed. Rae noted that the three coffins were found at the bottom of a gently sloping landscaped hill. He speculates that burials on a hillside plot would have started at the top of the incline with subsequent plantings progressing down the hill. The interments at the bottom of that hill would have been the most recent. According to Rae, "There's no likelihood that there are any more coffins endangered by the current construction. The landowner has promised not to do any more bulldozing or digging on the property - no swimming pool; no tennis court - so the state has given that homeowner the green light to continue the homebuilding project! .

Some officers and old-timers at the Des Peres Presbyterian Church swear that Stephen Maddox is buried somewhere in the church cemetery he helped establish. But no church records can substantiate the claim. Sadly, there is no headstone to identify his final resting place. And no one could have been more particular about where he wanted to be buried more than 153 years ago.

Surely, Sarah Maddox would have wanted to be buried next to her husband, who died 26 years before her. She would not have elected to be buried in the family burial plot of her brother, Anderson Bowles. That spot, in Fenton, is today overrun by weeds. So unless there was a relocation of the earliest coffins to the land the Maddoxes had donated to the Des Peres church, it is unlikely that the remains of Stephen and Sarah are buried in the Old Stone Church plot where the three members of the Maddox family will be reburied. The family burial plot Stephen Maddox ordained may have been decimated as early as 100 years ago.

Esley Hamilton, preservation historian for the St. Louis County Parks Department, discovered how the Maddox family plot first passed into obscurity. "Susan Maddox Pfeifer sold the 80-plus acres of land she inherited from her father to a Willis and Arrenda Brent in 1872 for the then hefty sum of \$8,000. The deed she signed specified that the Brents must preserve the Maddox family burial plot forever. But then the Brents fell upon hard times, borrowed money against the property and eventually suffered a foreclosure against it. The next deed on the property fails to specifically mention a Maddox family burial plot at all."

And so it is that time and tide, plows and bulldozers, cattle and cars, have had more than a full century to pillage, plunder and pave over the hallowed burial plot and fervent dream of an incredibly meticulous planner. His kinfolk - exercising their trademark independence - had themselves planted under an incredibly vast blanket from North St. Louis City to Florissant to Fenton, mirroring the growth and development of the city to suburban expanses more than 20 miles beyond Laclede's Landing.

Perhaps Stephen Maddox, wherever his spirit or aura or ghost lies – will finally rest in peace when a Maddox, Glanville, Huckstep, Pfeifer, Cross or Brents steps forward to claim the three family members. Or perhaps there will be final peace for old Stephen just to know that the digging has stopped.

[Note from the Old Meeting House Committee at Faith Des Peres: The three coffins were reinterred at the south end of the church property. There is no marker for the graves. If you look at the cemetery marker map (find a link on the cemetery census page) – the graves are just northwest of marker 92]

Caption:

(1) Color Photo By Jane Rudolph/Post-Dispatch - RIGHT: From left, James A. Francis of the Ambruster-Donnelly funeral home, archaeologist Cal Rae and the Rev. Bruce Levine, pastor of Faith and Des Peres Presbyterian Church, in the Old Stone Church cemetery, where remains of three members of the Maddox family will be reburied.

(2) Color Photo By Jane Rudolph/Post-Dispatch - ABOVE: A nameplate, F.M. Glanville - Age 20, on one of three iron coffins unearthed in Huntleigh. It is believed to be a misspelling of Frederick Glanville, a grandson of Stephen Maddox. His mother, Susan, was among five Maddox daughters.

(3) Color Photo Headshot - Julius K. Hunter says the reburial of Maddox family members in the cemetery for which Stephen Maddox donated land "will be appropriate closure to a family story that old Stephen could not have foreseen 165 years ago. Or might he have had some premonition?"

(4) Color Map By The Post-Dispatch - Maddox Property - Map of part of St. Louis County showing the boundary of Stephen Maddox's property in the 19th century. Map of the St. Louis area shows the general location of the property. PHOTO, MAP

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