SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
G.A.R. POST PROJECT FORM

PLEASE:
- Type or print, using a ballpoint pen, when filling out this form. Legibility is critical.
- Do not guess at the information. An answer of "Unknown" is more helpful.
- Include a photograph of each viewable side and label it with name & direction of view.

- Thank You

Post Information

Post Name: Bob Ford   Post Number: 303

City/Town: Coffey   County: Daviess   State: MO

Brief History of the G.A.R. Post (use separate document if necessary):

> One source lists town as Coffeysburg
> Cornelius Yost was first Commander

Meeting Facility

Structure Still Exist? ○ Yes ○ No ⦿ Unknown   Type of Building: ○ Stand-Alone ○ Shared-Use

Identify Specific Location:

Description of Records

Do the Records Exist? ○ Yes ○ No ⦿ Unknown   The Records are: ○ Originals ○ Copies

What are the conditions of the records?

What do the records consist of?

Location of Records

Repository Name:

City/Town: County: State: Zip:

Additional Information:

Submitter Information

Submit Date: 1/20/2012   Name: Walt Busch

Camp Name: US Grant   Camp #: 68   City/Town: Arcadia   State: MO   Zip: 63670

Email: wbusch@hotmail.com

Print Form   **Submit to Current G.A.R. Post Records Officer Listed @ http://www.suvcwmo.org/garposts.php**   Submit by Email

Was a Missouri G.A.R. Post Named after '*that Dirty Little Coward*'?

Robert Newton Ford
31 Jan 1862 Ray Co, MO – 8 Jun 1892 Creed, CO

Jesse James, infamous guerilla, bank robber and star of many legends died in April 1882, when he was shot in the back by one of his gang members, Robert Ford. Most Missourians and history buffs know that story. They may even know that the song '*Jesse James*' that calls Robert Ford, 'that dirty little coward' was first recorded by Bascom Lamar Lunsford in 1924. Since then, it has been sung by many a folk singer and Rockers including Bob Seger and Bruce Springsteen. The song, which is on the list of the top 100 Western songs of all time, memorializes both Jesse and the man who shot him. In it, Robert Ford is remembered as a dirty coward and the song lauds Jesse as "…a friend to the poor, he'd never rob a mother or a child, there never was a man with the law in his hand, that could take Jesse James alive."

But in rural northwestern Missouri near both the boyhood homes of the James and the Fords, some Union men may have memorialized the man who became known as Jesse James' Assassin. In Davies County, in a town once known as Coffeyburg (now Coffey), the Grand Army of the Republic established Post 303 and named it the "Bob Ford" Post.

Created in 1887, the Ford Post's first commander was Cornelius Yost. Many of the G.A.R. posts in that county were gone by 1895, but the Ford Post was still going strong into the next century. Given the fame or infamy, depending on your point of view, connected to the name Bob Ford, one might think that if this Post would have wanted to avoid mistakes. They could have easily put the soldier's rank or middle initial in the Post's name to avoid the suggestion it was named for *the coward*.

Yes, the post could have been named after Robert Ford. Most likely it was. Apparently many Union- hearted men in that county took offense to the fact that 4 years earlier, a Davies county jury was picked by the state to try Frank James, the rebel guerilla turned criminal, of all his crimes. The jury returned a not guilty verdict and Frank was absolved of any crimes he may have committed. Are we sure that the post is named after him?

Did some members of the G.A.R. consider him a hero? The origins of the post have yet to be found…

Ribbon owned by Doug Roussin, PCC, *Gen. Thomas Fletcher Camp No. 47*

Governor Thomas Crittenden formerly the Colonel of the 7th Missouri State Militia, wanted to suppress the robberies and violence committed by the James Gang. He authorized a reward of $5,000 (which was paid for by railroad corporations) for the capture of Jesse James and also for his brother Frank, dead or alive, which resulted in Robert Ford killing Jesse in 1882. Following Ford's conviction for the murder, Crittenden pardoned him. On October 5, 1882, Frank James surrendered in Jefferson City. His trial was moved to Davies County, as the only two crimes he ended up being tried for were a robbery in Gallatin, MO and murders in Winston, MO. Both are towns in Davies, County.