



William L. Vandeventer Papers (R1428)

Collection Number: R1428

Collection Title: William L. Vandeventer Papers

Dates: 1883-1890

Creator: Vandeventer, William L.

Abstract: The William L. Vandeventer Papers contain the unpublished manuscript *Justice in the Rough* on the Bald Knobbers written in 1937. The collection contains the typed manuscript and accompanying photographs.

Collection Size: 0.2 cubic foot
(3 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center - Rolla](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given, assigned, and transferred to the Society all copyrights, and associated rights the Donor may possess in the materials.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *William L. Vandeventer Papers* (R1428); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Patricia K. Brown on July 8, 2009 (Accession No. RA1448).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the William L. Vandeventer Papers can be found in the following collections:

Bittersweet Collection (R0669)

Processed by: Processed by Kathleen Seale, May 3, 2018

Historical Note:

William L. Vandeventer was born May 16, 1889, in Garrison, Missouri. Vandeventer started practicing law in southeast Christian County in 1919. He worked as the county prosecuting attorney. In 1920, he was elected to represent Christian County in the General Assembly. He was appointed assistant United States Attorney in Kansas City in 1926, and named the United States Attorney General for the western district of Missouri in 1929. Vandeventer moved to Springfield, Missouri, in 1934, where he once again went into private practice. He was then appointed to the Springfield Court of Appeals in 1944, and served in that capacity until his death in 1953.

In response to the lingering violence and lawless in the Ozarks from the Civil War, groups of concerned citizens banded together in vigilant groups to mete out justice. Formed by Nat Kinney, in 1883, the Bald Knobbers were a vigilante group in southwest Missouri, operating mostly in Taney, Christian, and Greene Counties. The group quickly overstepped its originally purpose and moved into a life of crime including acts of vandalism, destruction of property, assault, and murder.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into three folders by document type.

Scope and Content Note:

The William L. Vandeventer Papers contain the unpublished manuscript *Justice in the Rough* on the Bald Knobbers written in 1937. The collection contains the typed manuscript and accompanying photographs. *Justice in the Rough* is a 177 page, typed manuscript written by William L. Vandeventer who grew up on stories of Bald Knobbers. The manuscript focuses on the formation of the group and events that took place in Christian and Taney Counties, including the murders of William Eden and Charles Greene. Folder 2 contains 20 images of the Bald Knobbers, sheriffs, and locations referenced in the manuscript. The *National Police Gazette* is an oversize page from the police publication showing images of the Bald Knobbers who took part in the Greens-Eden murders and were captured by Sheriff Z.A. Johnson in Christian County. The page is dated June 6, 1888.

Container List:

- f. 1 *Justice in the Rough*, 1937
- f. 2 Photographs, *Justice in the Rough*, 1037
- f. 3 *National Police Gazette*, New York, 1888

Index:

Index Term	Folder	Image
Christian County (Mo.)	1-3	
Dickenson, John T.	1-2	Yes
Edens, William	1-3	
Howell, W.N.	1-2	Yes

Index Term	Folder	Image
Johnson, Zachariah A.	1-3	Yes
Kinney, Nat N.	1-2	Yes
Mathews, John	1-2	Yes
Mathews, Phoebe	1-2	Yes
Mathews, Wiley, -1889	1-3	Yes
Ozark (Mo.)	1-2	
Walker, David, -1889	1-3	Yes
Walker, William, 1870-1889	1-3	Yes
Watson, G.A.	1-2	Yes