

In Memoriam

Arthur Paul Moser (1902 - 1987)

Arthur Paul Moser - "Paul," as he preferred - died in early May, 1987, at the age of eighty-five. Moser may be ranked second only to Robert Ram-say as a specialist in the origin of Missouri placenames, an accomplish-ment all the more remarkable in light of his non-academic background. A tenth-grade dropout and then blue-collar worker, Moser began his pla-cename work at age sixty-seven, at the encouragement of a lecturer on local history. His next seventeen years were devoted to research. He spent much of each day in the local library, and over a period of fifteen years printed up at his own expense booklets on all 120 or so Missouri counties. The most valuable parts of these booklets concern information that Moser personally acquired from conversation or correspondence with local figures. (They are available at the State Historical Society of Mis-souri, the School of the Ozarks [Point Lookout, Missouri], and the Springfield Public Library.)

Moser's influence survives also in a variety of unpublished manuscripts, and in a ten-year stream of information/suggestions/leads/newspaper clippings that I have credited to him in my own writings. As a token of appreciation, I dedicated Volume 2 of *Interesting Missouri Place Names* to him.

By chance Moser was ideally situated for his work. Missouri , particu-larly the southwest, abounds in unusual placenames (*Peculiar, Whoopup, Clever, Fairdealing, Henpeck Creek, etc.*). Moser was encouraged local historians right from the start, and stories featured him in the Springfield (Missouri) and Kansas City newspapers. The interest of university people gratified him later, illustrating one area of profitable town and gown coöperation. Moser's work also illustrates the contribution our senior citizens can make to scholarship.

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Moser