

The Herald

Grand River Historical Society, Chillicothe, Missouri

N. Hoyt, Editor

April 2009

Vol. 22 No. 2

“DISCOVER THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN NORTH MISSOURI!”

The Grand River Historical Society Museum will open for the 2009 season the weekend of April 4 & 5, with hours from 1 to 4 p.m.

We welcome you to come and view the many interesting exhibits your museum has to offer.

In the main building you will see the railroad exhibit with a working train whistle. You may enjoy the display of Native American artifacts and be sure to see the 8-foot tall wooden Indian carved by David Pyrtle of Chula, Missouri. Also view Chief White Sand's (aka Vincent Moore) Mic-o-say headdress and leggings, the display of antique guns and the iron jail cell. Don't miss the oldest item in the museum, a mammoth tooth found in Livingston County.

The second exhibit room is dedicated to Main Street, with displays of a soda fountain, Mom & Pop grocery store, dental office, barber shop and beauty shop. You will see memorabilia from the Chillicothe Business College and the old Chillicothe High School. There are uniforms from every war, worn by Livingston County service men and women, from every branch of the military. There is a large room of farm implements and tools, all types, shapes and size. Can you guess their purpose and how they were used?

The Annex building located east of the museum houses the Moore Monument wagon, the Churchill Trucking Company Ford truck, the Irvinbilt Truck and an antique fire truck that all the children enjoy.

PLAN TO VISIT YOUR MUSEUM SEVERAL TIMES THIS SEASON.

We hope you can attend the Quarterly Meeting/ Potluck Dinner on Tuesday, April 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall in Chillicothe, MO. Mr. Kenneth Churchill, speaking about Churchill Truck Lines, will present the program..

Bring food to share, your own table service and a friend or two. We'll be looking for you.

Mary Underwood
2nd Vice President

G.R.H.S. LOGO CONTEST

The logo contest had 30 high school students submitting impressive logo designs for the recent logo competition, and the judges have selected the following:

- First Place - AMANDA FOX (11th Grade,
Chillicothe High School)
\$100 Gift Card at WalMart
- Second Place - JON MARTIN (12th Grade,
Chillicothe High School)
\$75 Gift Card at Casey's
- Third Place - ALISHA ASHFORD (10th Grade,
Chillicothe High School)
\$50 Gift Card at WalMart

In the near future, Brenda Fellhoelter of BK Web Works, will be setting up a website for the Grand River Historical Society Museum, and incorporating the new logo design.

**ANNUAL MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY,
APRIL 19**

1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.
Refreshments will be served

FARMERSVILLE (A town for the farmers)

No. 19 Mrs. Luther Boone Wheeling, Missouri
Constitution-Tribune 7-9-54

The land for the Farmersville school site, as well as for the village by that name, was given by Joseph Kinney and wife on September 25, 1869. The school was built the following year, located in the northwest part of the village, in Cream Ridge township No. 59, District 5, Range 23, twelve miles north of Chillicothe and fourteen miles south of Trenton.

All the land on the west side of the present highway 65, lying in the town's site, was included in the original deed. Mr. Kinney wished the village to be useful, especially to farmers—hence it was named Farmersville.

Fred Kinney, a great-grandson of the founder of the town, and a resident of Farmersville in 1954, said the village in the early days was much larger than it is today. There were two churches, Methodist and Christian, two grocery stores, three blacksmith shops, a drug store, a saloon, a coffin, wagon and plow manufacturing plant owned by a Mr. Palmer, and two grist mills. The mill in the south part of town was a saw mill/grist mill combined, owned by Elijah Spence. The mill just north of town was a flour mill owned by George Kinney. The town at this time had two Doctors, Dr. F. P. Batdorf and Dr. Huff.

Mr. Kinney attended two terms, 1889-1890 and 1890-91 at Farmersville. His teacher was Miss Eva Ward.

Since the earliest records of the school were burned in a fire which destroyed the third school building in 1914, several residents of the town and former pupils of the school were interviewed to obtain some facts about the school's earliest history.

Mrs. Mary Victoria Terry, 117 Jackson Street, Chillicothe, was the oldest person interviewed. She started to Farmersville school in 1870 at the age of seven. She came to Farmersville from the province of Ontario, Canada with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Glover. Her mother, Louise Evener, came to Canada from Germany at the age of 14 on a sailboat.

Mr. Ira Marshall, who had established a cheese factory in the Hazel Hurst district, persuaded the Glover family to follow him to Missouri. He met them at Chillicothe and then took them to the old Methias hotel at Farmersville located on what is now known as the Carl Collison farm.

Mrs. Terry said she helped milk 50 cows owned by her father. Her daughter, with whom she lives, Mrs. Emma Terry Thompson,, said that in Canada, her grandfather built long rows of cowsheds to protect each beast against the wintry weather. Besides making cheese, the family sold butter at Trenton for 8 to 10 cents a pound.

Mary Glover wore dresses to school which barely cleared the floor. In spring she wore calico and in winter

she wore dresses, stockings, mittens, a cape and even coats made by her mother from sheep's wool. Even school girls helped make clothing, taking their knitting to school with them, so they might work at it when the days were too stormy to play out of doors.

She wore coarse button shoes, fitted by measuring the length and width of her foot, since the children were never taken to town for a fitting.

Minie (sic) Gifford was her first teacher. Another teacher she remembers was Frank Cosgrove.

Some school activities which she recalled were writing, spelling, and cyphering contests with other schools, the winner receiving a prize. She stated that attending these contests was a great deal of fun. The school's organ was loaded on a large hayframe, roomy enough to seat all the pupils on benches placed down both sides of the hayframe and one through the center, and pulled by four horses. The pupils sang as they rode along.

Mrs. Thompson said she attended one term at Farmersville. Her teachers were Katy Batdorf, who taught the winter term, and Mary (Conger) Weigel, who taught the spring term.

W. O. Kile started to Farmersville school in 1873. Mr. Kile currently lives in Farmersville. His father, Elias Kile, who came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, bought forty acres of land in the town before the Civil War. He was a Civil War veteran.

He describes the first building as being of wood frame, approximately 24-30 feet, facing south. There were two doors on the south and three windows on the east and west sides. The 25 pine desks each seated two pupils, lined up on either side of the school room, so that pupils on one side faced those on the other.

A rostrum extended across the north end, with a blackboard above it. There were recitation benches on either side of the room and one in front. The teacher's desk was on the rostrum. A wood-burning box-type stove, with a drum on top, heated the room. Shelves for dinner pails were on the west side of the door and nails beneath the shelves held the pupils' wraps.

From forty to fifty pupils were enrolled at this time, some of them grown boys and girls. The terms were divided into five months winter and three months spring.

Mr. Kile's first teacher was Brock Hudson, who lived 1½ miles west of the school. Another early teacher he remembered was a Mr. Hart. His last teacher was Miss Josephine Norville. During this term of school he took part in a program which he described as an exhibition. Four couples danced the minuet. The name of the play was "George Washington and His Guest." He played the part of Washington and Lizzie (Bethards) Mitts was Martha Washington. Others taking part that he recalled were Ike Kline, Wilmer Brown, Beulah (Taylor) Dickman and Maudie Watson. ##

**MISSOURI MUSINGS
OVER EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS**

By Mable Jones Bryan

Originally written October 11, 1951

While we were living on Slack Street, Mrs. Lucy Mills moved to Chillicothe from Avalon and built a one-story frame house on the lot just south of the Sloan's, with her front door on a line with Ann Street which ends at Vine. While her house was under construction, my younger brother Charles and his playmate Charles Winthrop Mansur (Winnie) were walking the floor joists, as boys will do, when Winnie's foot slipped and he struck a joist with such force that he cut a deep gash in his chin. It left a deep scar that remained with him to the end of his days. Mrs. Mills lived in that house for almost half a century, and as long as I can remember she had a companion and housekeeper, Bettie Wilcox. Mrs. Mills was one of the most faithful members of the Elm Street Methodist Church, South.

It was while we were living on Slack Street that Uncle Tom and Uncle Dick both married. Uncle Tom's bride was Miss Vernon Poindexter, eldest daughter of Doctor E.S. Poindexter, a prominent physician in Chillicothe and a pillar in the First Baptist Church. The old Poindexter home stood at the southwest corner of Clay and Cherry Streets where the home of Mr. Ira Hedrick was built in 1924.

Uncle Dick's bride was Miss Mildred Towner, daughter of Judge Minor Towner, of St. Louis and Huntsville, Missouri. Judge Towner's home in St. Louis was on Sheridan Avenue, near Garrison Avenue, and his country place was a large farm near Huntsville. When Christmas of 1870 rolled around, Uncle Dick and Aunt Middie arranged to spend the holidays with the other members of the Towner family at Huntsville. Anna, the first-born of their five children, was then only a few weeks old.

That Christmas promised to be a red-letter one for me, as Uncle Tom and Uncle Dick gave me my first set of furs—a muff and short scarf—and moreover, I was to go with Uncle Dick to Huntsville, which meant that I would have my first ride on a railroad train. Aunt Middie and the baby had gone down there a few days before Christmas. To reach Huntsville, we took the Brunswick,

Chillicothe & Omaha train to Brunswick, and changed there to the North Missouri, which is now the main line of the Wabash. But what had promised to be a joyous holiday season had a disappointing ending for me. Mrs. Menefee, an older daughter of Judge Towner, had arrived with her several children from St. Louis and they had developed the mumps the night before our arrival. It took me no time at all to catch the swollen jaws from them; and Uncle Dick rushed me home where I promptly passed them on to my brother and two sisters.

In 1871, little Amy being five years old and we older ones being in school, my mother decided to embark upon a business career. Grandmother Reynolds consented to come from Trenton to live with us and take care of Amy while Mother opened a millinery store uptown. I remember that a dear old lady, a friend of the family, was greatly disturbed when she heard of my mother's plans, and coming to see her, asked if she couldn't think of some other line of business to enter, since "milliners seem always to get themselves talked about." However, Mother stuck to her plans, since her brothers could give her advertising in the leading newspaper of the County, and also obtain railroad passes for her so that she could buy her supplies in St. Louis and Chicago. Her first place of business was a one-story brick building on the south side of Clay Street, midway between Locust and Elm, a building that was only recently torn down. [in 1951] The business prospered from the start, and then within a few months of happiness over her success, another cloud came over our lives. Amy contracted a serious case of croup and died within a few days time. She was taken to Trenton for burial beside her father.

After that sorrowful interruption, Mother returned to her millinery business and soon had to look for larger quarters. Clay Street was not a good location, but there were no vacant buildings around the Square, and the best place she could find was on South Locust Street, north of the New York Store, which was then located on the northwest corner of Locust and Clay. The southeast corner of Locust and Clay had on it a two-story frame building which was a hotel conducted by the Cooper family who had moved from Trenton. Nat Cooper, who later married Nancy Poindexter and moved to Portland, Oregon, was a member of the family. There was another two-story frame hotel at the southwest corner of Clay and Elm Streets, and it was owned

and managed by Mr. and Mrs. William McIlwrath. Mr. McIlwrath later entered the book and school supply business in which he was very successful. Still another two-story frame hotel on Clay Street was at the southwest corner of the intersection with Washington, where the Grace Apartments now stand. It was known as the Marcum House.

During those early years in Chillicothe our family physician was Alexander Monroe Dockery, son of Rev. Willis E. Dockery who was one of the pioneer preachers of the Southern Methodist denomination in our part of the State. I remember that during an epidemic of smallpox in 1869, I was vaccinated by Dr. Dockery, and the scar is still visible on my arm. It was about the year 1870 that young Doctor Dockery was married to Miss Mary Bird, daughter of Greenup Bird who had a large home on East Polk Street in Chillicothe. Uncle Dick Reynolds was best man at the wedding, and when the Bird family moved to Kansas City, about 1879, Uncle Dick bought their old home. It was there that his family of two daughters and three sons grew to maturity, and after they had all left home, he and Aunt Middie rented the house to the William Ellett family, about 1902. By that time Alexander M. Dockery was Governor of Missouri. The house is still standing.

I have already mentioned the New York Store which was owned by Smith, McVey & Company. Captain Archibald McVey had come to Chillicothe soon after the close of the Civil War from Hinsdale, New York. His wife was a Miss Hawley from the same place, and after the McVeys had become established in Chillicothe, Mrs. McVey's two sisters, Miss Nell Hawley and Mrs. McKee, also settled here. Mr. McKee was Superintendent of the Public Schools of Chillicothe at the time the new Central School building was erected. Then Jonathan Hawley and His brother Fred also came to Chillicothe and lived here the rest of their lives. Jonathan Hawley married Miss Mamie Rider of Warrensburg, Missouri.

About the same time that the McVeys came here, Daniel Fanshaw Chapin arrived from Hinsdale, New York and opened a furniture store on South Locust Street, as well as a branch store in Utica. When we moved to Chillicothe in 1867, my mother purchased an oval center table of solid walnut from Mr. Chapin and I still have it in my

parlor. At the time she had Mr. Chapin frame a large steel engraving which she had ordered from Philadelphia. It is entitled "The Picnic on the Fourth of July" and still has a place of prominence in my parlor. The Chapin Furniture Store was about two doors north of the Congregational Church which stood at the northeast corner of Locust and Ann. Part of that old church building is still standing [*in 1951, and in 2008 as well*].

One of the leading general stores in town when we came here was that of Wigley & Beauchamp, at the northeast corner of the square, where the First National Bank was built after 1900. When we were furnishing our first parlor in Chillicothe, my mother bought a three-ply ingrain carpet from that firm and twenty years later when my husband and I moved into a house on West Calhoun Street, there was enough of that carpet left to cover our hall. It was a red and green leaf design.

And now to return to other families in our neighborhood on Slack Street. The Platters were mainly a family of sons. They were in the business of buying and selling horses and mules, and had a stable on South Locust Street, west side. Above their stable was a large hall which had been there before the Civil War, and I am of the opinion that it was there Nelson Kneass and his troupe performed when they came to Chillicothe, about the time we moved here. I remember hearing my mother and "Aunt" Sarah Ficklin White tell of attending theatrical performances in that hall two or three years after our coming to Chillicothe. I don't remember ever going to the theater before I was eleven or twelve years old.

My schooling in Chillicothe began at the Fourth Ward School, which was then located in a frame building of Gothic style, with steep gables, located on the east side of Walnut Street, a short distance south of Third Street. It was later converted into a residence, and as late as 1906 was still standing.

Then about 1870, when I was in the fifth grade, I entered the Chillicothe Seminary, a private school conducted by Brother James M. Long who had married Ellen Wright, a daughter of David and Catherine M. Wright. I continued to attend Professor Long's school until he left Chillicothe in 1877, to take charge of St. Paul's Episcopal School for Boys at Palmyra, Missouri.

(To be continued...)

