

# MUSEUM MUSINGS

WESTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

JANUARY ~ FEBRUARY ~ MARCH 2016

P.O. BOX 266 ~ 601 MAIN STREET ~ WESTON, MISSOURI 64098 ~ 816-386-2977

## Latest Museum Project Undertakes Preservation of Gravestone Information

The Weston Historical Museum now possesses almost 1,200 photographs and information about headstones in the Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Mrs. Ann Saugstad, a long-time director and volunteer of the Museum, took all the pictures and with the help of a map and several reference books

on the cemetery, transcribed information from each stone.

This has been an undertaking not only tedious but one which took over a year to complete.

Ann became interested in doing this project when she was requested to take photos of several old stones by out-of-state relatives.

When she returned a year later to again fulfill a request of photos, she noticed the stones she had previously photographed were greatly deteriorated.

Fearing the loss of the stones and/or the information, Ann was determined to take a photo of every headstone within the cemetery in order to preserve it and its information for future generations. Thus began the project that brought us nearly 1200 photographs and more information on the county's oldest cemetery located here in Weston.

There are, unfortunately, some stones on which the information has eroded due to time and weather. Other stones have been broken or are lying flat on the ground. Even these were photographed

Then there was the problem of how to enter the project photos along with all the information into the

computer. Marsha West, the museum's computer guru, came to the rescue, working diligently to set up a special computer program just for this project.

When Marsha ran into a problem, she contacted several "computer nerds" who were friends of hers. They gladly helped and eventually the program was set. The two ladies have been working on this part of the project for several months and hope to have it completed by June of this year.

## Museum Looks For Volunteers

In the past year we at the museum, have lost several volunteers due to moving or health issues and we are now down to a very few. Our computer guru, Marsha, is to be gone for the first three months of the year as she and her husband are both retired and want to do some traveling. We need someone to take her place as we are still in the process of photographing and cataloging every item in the museum.

We need people to do filing and putting away of artifacts. If you have a knack for putting together numerous items into a cohesive, attractive display, we need you. We would like to re-start our Trivia Nights again, but need people to help with all that entails.

As an outreach to the citizens of Weston, we have a display case in the Weston branch of Mid-Continent Library. It needs to be changed five or six times a year, and we need ideas and help getting that done. Interested?

Got ideas for displays, for fund-raising, etc.? We need you. We take volunteers of both genders. Please give us a call, drop by on a Monday morning after 9:30 and see what we are doing and if you might be interested. Help us continue to acquire and preserve Weston's history for the next generations.



# Members Enjoy Story of Early Aviation

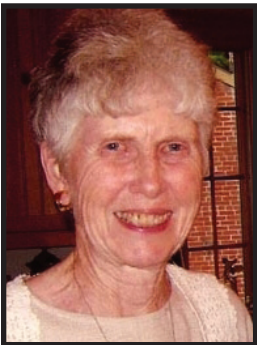


Rose Gatschet, mother of Charles "Skip" Gatschet, was a skywalker during the early 1900's. Pictured is Lilian Boyer, another well-known performer, during one of her "walks".

The Weston Historical Museum hosted their annual dinner and meeting November 8<sup>th</sup> at the Eventful at Locust Grove. The Avalon catered the meal to 74 members and guests who attended the evening's festivities.

Following the dinner a business meeting was held and all officers were re-elected.

President Carl Felling recognized several people in his comments. Ruth Marr offered her resignation from her Trustee position. Ruth has long been a member of the Tour Committee and assisted with the development of several Tour brochures. She and her husband, Mike, also volunteered for many years to do the up-keep of the yard and brick sidewalk.



RUTH MARR

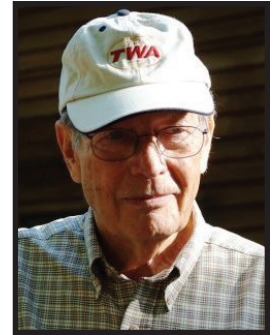
Quint Shafer also resigned from his position on the Board of Trustees due to his responsibilities as a Platte County Judge.

Mr. Felling praised Mrs. Ann Saugstad for her work in cataloging all the graves in Laurel Hill. This project took over a year. He noted the undertaking is a "tremendous project that will assist people in family research for years to come."

Mrs. Marsha West was recognized for her work in planning a program for the Laurel Hill Project and downloading pictures and all pertinent information.

Two new trustees were voted in for the coming year: Krissy Fulk and Paul Norman.

The evening's program was given by Charles "Skip" Gatschet, speaking on early aviation as seen through the eyes of his parents, Charles and Rose Gatschet. In her early years Rose was a "Wing Walker" and Charles was one of the first pilots from Kansas. The two were evenly matched in bravery and in pushing the field of aviation to grow and expand.



SKIP GATSCHET

President Carl Felling spoke briefly on the Museum's appreciation for the community's support from the citizens of Weston as well as the businesses.

## New Machine Provides Music for Dancing

*(Taken from "The Weston Chronicle", July 13, 1917)*

An Edison machine furnished the music for the dance held in the Eureka Hall last Friday night, July 6, 1917. Quite a number of the young folks attended but for many the weather was too unfavorable. The dance was voted a success, however, taking all things into considerations.

Dances and other entertainment are enjoyed, especially by the younger generation, in the Eureka on a regular basis.

## Weston Will Have a Talkie at Eureka

*(Taken from "The Weston Chronicle", October 19, 1934)*

Weston is again to have talking motion pictures. Mr. Parker of the Parker Amusement Company in Leavenworth, will be here Monday night, October 22, 1934, to present a talkie picture at the Eureka Theatre.

Mr. Parker presented the free shows sponsored by the merchants in Platte City this summer and those who attended from here know the high type of talkie he presents.

Watch the paper next week for announcement of his bookings.

## Veterans Reunion Group Visits Museum

In late October a group of thirteen WW II veterans and several of their spouses came with their tour guide to visit the Weston Historical Museum. The trip was part of their reunion.

According to the hostess of the day, Ms. Susan Grinlinton, the group were enthusiastic and extremely interested in the history of the town and its early inhabitants. Though they toured a bit, they were more interested in the answers to their many questions.

Susan said they made her day with their interest and enthusiasm in learning about new places.

The men and women came from Kansas, Oklahoma, Georgia and Missouri.



## Railroad Came to Weston in 1861

*(This brief history of the railroad was found in the Weston Chronicle dated March 21, 1913.)*

Fifty-four years ago this month, the Weston & Atchison Railroad company was chartered under the general statutes and John Doniphan made president.

The City of Weston took \$50,000 of stock and issued bonds which were afterward declared void. On April 27, 1859 ground was broken in the presence of a large assembly. On July 15 of the same year, the Weston & St. Joseph railroads were consolidated with the Platte County railroad.

In January 1860, the road was in operation to Atchison. In December 1860, it was finished to Iatan, and connected with Weston and Leavenworth by steamboat. On April 4, 1861 the road was finished to Weston. In 1863 the name was changed to Platte County railroad. In 1867 it took the name of the Missouri Valley railroad and in 1870, was named the Kansas City, St. Joseph & Council Bluffs railroad."

*"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."*

*- Maya Angelou*

## Searching for Several Of Our Members

Several copies of the last museum newsletter mailed to our members in early October have come back to us with notification that the person no longer lives at that address. While we have tried to find these two ladies by using a phone number, and checking with friends or relatives, we thus far have been unable to re-send the newsletter to them.

If anyone knows a new address for Ms. Vivian Beck Dissette and/or Mrs. Norma Stephen, please let us know. They both have been long time members and we want them to be able to receive their Museum Musings.

Thank you.

### *The Nostalgia Store*

at the Weston Historical Museum

New & Used Books

• Cookbooks • Paper Dolls •  
Souvenir Publications • Prints

Check us out through our website:  
[www.westonhistoricalmuseum.org](http://www.westonhistoricalmuseum.org)

## Member Adds to Weston Organists File

Last year in our newsletter *Museum Musings*, it was mentioned, in an article from *The Weston Chronicle*, that Weston had two classically trained pipe organists: Peter Gray and Roger Hardesty. Mr. Gray is deceased and Mr. Hardesty is retired.

After reading the newsletter, Ms. Catha Hall of California, wrote to us about others from the Weston area who were proficient at the organ. She mentioned that she knew Roger had worked for many years for the Italian pipe organ manufacturing business of Fratelli Ruffati.

Quoting from her letter, "Weston and environs have inspired three other people to study classical pipe organ: Sally Gaskill, Larry Stratemeyer from Farley and myself, Catha Hall.

"Sally studied classical organ while attending Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Dr. J. Julius Baird was her teacher from 1972-1976 where she was an organist for three years at Shove Chapel on the campus. Sally also spent the year of 1977-78 living in England and studying organ with Lady Susi Jeans.

"Larry Stratemeyer from Farley studied at the UMKC Conservatory before earning his Masters at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York in 1986. He then studied in France with Marie Clair Alain. He is currently director of Music at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"The Lutheran church in Farley has a small Wicks pipe organ.

"At age 14 I started playing for church services on a Hammond electronic organ at the Weston



*This console of a 2/7 Wurlitzer organ in Essex, New Jersey is similar to one installed in the Weston Christian Church in 1978.*

Christian Church. Emmet Smith, Professor of Organ at Texas Christian University, introduced me to the world of classical organs. While at TCU I studied under him 1971-1975 majoring in Music Education with a minor in classical pipe organ performance. During the summer of 1974 I was fortunate to attend a pipe organ tour with Dr. Smith and participated in organ master classes with many European organists

"The American Guild of Organists is a professional organization promoting organists and church musicians in the U.S. and my membership has been active for approximately 22 years."

Ms. Hall goes on to tell us that the Christian Church in Weston has installed the only pipe organ in the town. In 1977-78 to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Church's founding, a contract was entered into with the Reuter Pipe Organ company of Lawrence, Kansas. A 2 manual, 7 rank instrument was installed during the fall of 1978.

Sally Gaskill is a Museum member and lives in New England.

## Women's Firsts in Platte County

Among those voting for the first time in Weston, in 1920, were three sisters, Julia Shortridge, Mrs. E.W. Railey and Mrs. Georgia Malin (all three were McAdows); Mrs. Mary Tammany (mother of Mrs. George Marr); and Mrs. Rosalie Unmessig.

Mrs. J.W. McAdow, DeKalb, was the first woman Mayor there. All other DeKalb city officials elected were women also. This was in 1926.

In 1935 a woman was elected to the Weston Board of Education for the first time.

Carolyn Elsea was Weston's first alderwoman, elected in the early 1970's, and Barbara Baker served as Weston's first female Mayor, serving 10 years, beginning in 1987.

## Something to Ponder

Ada Lovelace, who was the daughter of English poet Lord Byron, invented a method of using punch cards to calculate Bernoulli numbers, becoming the first computer programmer in 1843. In her honor, the U.S. Department of defense named its computer language "Ada" in 1980.

In 1991, Ann Tsukamoto was the co-inventor of a process to isolate the human stem cell.

Fire escapes, Kevlar vests and Toll House Chocolate Chip cookie were all invented by women.

## Did You Know. . .

. . . that in November of 1910 shortly after two o'clock in the afternoon a balloon was seen coming from the southwest over the river. It veered to the east then to the northeast going in the direction of New Market where they landed? It did not exactly pass over Weston, but was in view of the town for about an hour. Two men were the passengers and the balloon started from Topeka, Ks., about ten in the morning.

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. . . that there was a big killing at Sugar Lake in 1911? In September of that year, doves (not the 'soiled dove' variety) were being killed by the thousands on Sugar Lake. Dry weather forced the birds in towards the Lake for water.

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. . . that Ann Eberwein was elected as president of the local Girl Scout Troop? It was in July of 1952. Other officers elected were vice president, Connie Jameson; secretary, Mary Ruth Webb; treasurer, Raydene Lindsey; Librarian, Linda Offutt.

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. . . that in order to go to a late session of Camp Osceola, in 1952, a number of the Weston troop members worked most of the summer to make the necessary money for the camp? Buck Rowland worked on the farm with his father and put in one and a half acres of tobacco of his own.

Bruce Hull started early each morning and worked until late in the evening. He hauled and put up hay for his father, and he put in two and a half acres of tobacco for himself.

Jack George is another boy who helped with farm work, working mostly in the tobacco. Jack Gray was busy doing all sorts of odd jobs as well as delivering papers twice daily.

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. . . that in 1968 a brick sidewalk was found on Thomas Street that was about 24 inches below the surface of the street? Virgil Craven of the City Water Commission was digging around a broken standpipe in front of the Thomas Street Inn when he struck some bricks, laid in perfect pattern in a thick bed of sand.

No matter in which direction he went, Craven kept uncovering a brick sidewalk. The most logical theory thus far is that this must have been laid before the fire of 1855. There are no markers on the bricks and quite a pile of ashes and clinkers was on top of the bricks.

## Bits and Pieces From Bertha's Morgue

*The Weston Chronicle*, dated Nov. 23, 1922 brought us this bit of news: "Miss Virgie Lee Fellows tied with Mary K. Gray for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the "Good Roads" contest sponsored by the local newspaper and both banks. Other winners in the contest were Frank Hardesty and John Farra."

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Oct. 12, 1934, in the local newspaper we found these following two items:

"Weston is again to have talkie motion pictures. Mr. Parker of the Parker Amusement Co. will be here Monday night, October 22 to present a talkie picture at the Eureka Theatre."

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"Mrs. Annie Gittinger was the honored guest at a birthday celebration at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Henry McAdow and Mr. McAdow. . . Those present to share the day's pleasures in celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday were Mr. and Mrs. J.N. Gittinger of Kansas City; Mr. and Mrs. Sam McAdow, Harold, Virginia and Dorothy McAdow Mr. and Mrs. David Layton and Mrs. Rofena Dye."

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According to an article in an issue of *The Weston Chronicle*, dated in June of 1937, "Miss Jean Grisham was 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner in the Platte City High School essay contest." We also read, in September of 1954, that Jean had enrolled in college.

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We found this item in the issue of October, 25, 1963, "Mr. Wm. M. Giffie opened the Leather Store and Harness Shop in Platte City on April 26, 1911 in the same building where he is now located.

He learned the trade of harness making from his father, William Giffie, as a boy in Green, Kansas. He came to Platte County in 1911 and worked for Joe Dillingham until he purchased the shop from Mr. Dillingham and started in business for himself.

Mr. Giffie holds the record for the longest continuous service as a business-man in Platte City.

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In an issue dated November 18, 1966 we read: "The home of Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Hastings of St. Joseph, was broken into last week and robbed of three million dollars of silver, jewelry and antique guns. Mrs. Hastings is the former Hazel Sharp of Weston."

# Mystery Corner Update

Thanks to Charles Bradley, as well as several others, we now know that the “pink house” at 527 Washintgon Street, featured in the last newsletter, was at one time owned by Mrs. Grace Guenther.

According to Mr. Bradley, when the banks were closing down in the late 1920's early 1930's, Mrs. Guenther, afraid her funds would disappear, marched down to the Railey Bank on Main street and demanded ALL of her money immediately. To back up her demands, Mrs. Guenther had taken a gun along with her. She was one of the few who actually received ALL of her money as the banking system collapsed.

In the late 1940's, possibly the early 1950's, Mrs. Sarah Weigman purchased the house and it is Sarah who had the brick house painted pink. According to Ms. Bernita Taulbee Sarah's brother, Elmer Lindsey, painted the house the color she wanted despite his vigorous objections to pink.



In 1958-1960 Joyce Yates Priddy and her twin brother Royce rented the home from Mrs. Weigman. The house is owned by Sarah's daughter, Carolyn Jordan.

## Characters of Weston

***Comes out of the Shadows;***

***Disappears into the Mist***

She drifted into town, seemingly from nowhere, knowing none and none knew her. Generally silent, an observer choosing to remain distant, she had one trait. She was a cigarette smoker. Seldom did one see her without a long cigarette dangling from her mouth, a pack of them rolled into the sleeve of her white tee shirt. She always wore a full or gathered skirt with the tee shirt and her footwear always seemed to be scuffed, down-at-the-heel brown boots.

“Cigarette Mary” is the name the town gave her and it was the only name anyone knew to use. Skinny, but not scrawny, her hair was worn short and looked as though she took a pair of dull scissors to it now and then. Though no one knew exactly where she stayed, she was usually clean and as neat as it was possible to be.

It became apparent early on that Mary did not care much for men though she never ran from them or seemed to cower in a manner that might have meant she had been physically abused. She seemed fond of animals and professed to dislike children but was seen once or twice reaching out to touch a toddler gently on the head when she thought no one

saw the gesture; gaze lovingly at a baby in a parent's arms; and to stand up for a child who was being bullied or harassed by other children.

Mary did like to partake of the beer and wine on occasion and when she did, she imbibed deeply and at those times she could get belligerent and foul-mouthed. Verbally she would attack someone on the street, a passer-by and always a male. If she became foul-mouthed in front of other women she would later, sober, approach the women and shyly apologize for what she had said. But she seldom carried on a real conversation with anyone.

Mary would appear in town much like a shadow. One might see her buying a loaf of bread, going to the post office, or standing around watching, always observing people and events, but never joining in. There, but not there.

After several years, it became apparent that Cigarette Mary had moved on, left with no prior notice, no good-byes, no word to anyone. It was as if the shadow had disappeared into the mist and never returned. No one knew where or why. Was Mary her real name? Where did she come from? What was her story?

*Most of us spend too much time on the last twenty-four hours and too little on the last six thousand years.*

– Will Durant

# Pulled Pork Anyone? Or Barbecued Beef?


(This article was taken verbatim from "The Weston Chronicle", dated October 27, 1933.)

Beeves from the Brice Ross farm and hogs from the W. Schaback farm will be eaten tomorrow by the 4,000 visitors expected for the big, free barbecue, a gift to the Tobacco Show from the Geary Tobacco Warehouse Company.


The pit for the roasting of the meat was dug between the two warehouses and the work is superintended by Henry Miller, an expert negro from Leavenworth, KS., who has served many Shriner barbecues there and prepared a number for the Chamber of Commerce in Kansas City. He is considered the best man in his line in this part of the country.



Mr. T.C. Geary, owner of the leases on the local warehouses, is expected from Kentucky this evening and will mingle with the Platte County tobacco growers, families and visitors at the Show.

## IRISH BLESSING



May you always have  
A sunbeam to warm you,  
A moonbeam to charm you,  
A sheltering angel so  
Nothing can harm you.



## 2016 Museum Officers

|                      |                                                  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| President .....      | Carl Felling                                     |
| Vice-President ..... | Clay Bauske                                      |
| Secretary .....      | Francie Stoner                                   |
| Treasurer .....      | Ted Wilson                                       |
| Director .....       | Barb Fulk                                        |
| Hostesses .....      | Sigi Rowland<br>Susan Grinlinton<br>Terry Chapin |

# WESTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

*A Non-Profit Corporation for the Preservation of Historic Information.*

601 Main Street • P.O. Box 266 • Weston, MO 64098 • 816-386-2977

## 2016 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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| No. of Memberships    | Category                                                | Dues  | TOTAL |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
|                       | <b>Individual</b>                                       | \$15  | \$    |
|                       | <b>Family</b>                                           | \$30  | \$    |
|                       | <b>Patron</b>                                           | \$100 | \$    |
|                       | <b>Benefactor</b>                                       | \$250 | \$    |
|                       | <b>Life Membership</b><br><small>(one time fee)</small> | \$500 | \$    |
|                       | <b>Additional Donation*</b>                             | \$    | \$    |
| <b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b> |                                                         | \$    |       |

Membership includes an electronic version of the Museum's quarterly newsletter *Museum Musings*. To receive it, please indicate your email address on the line above.

Check here if you prefer to receive *Museum Musing* by regular mail.

**CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

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**WESTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM**  
P.O. Box 266 • 601 Main Street • Weston, MO  
64098



*"A people without a history  
is like wind on the buffalo  
grass."*

*Crazy Horse, Oglala Sioux*

## ? **Mystery Corner**

While taking pictures in Laurel Hill Cemetery, this headstone brought a lot of curiosity from many of us. It was on the grave of George D. King who died March 18, 1906, at the age of 38.

The statue, which has been broken off of the base, depicted a bare-foot man holding a book in his hands. He was wearing short breeches and an "artist" shirt, loose, flowing and untucked.

The head and the hands with the book are missing, which we believe is due to erosion. This headstone is thought to have been within the African/American section of the cemetery, but not certain due to lines or boundaries of the different sections.

We are looking for information on George D. King. Does he have family still living? What did he do for his living? Does anyone know anything about him or possible relatives? Please call the museum at (816) 386-2755 and leave a message if we are not there; stop by on a Monday or drop us a note. Thank you.

