

SECOND PLACE: JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH DIVISION

“History of Weston”

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Who Founded Weston and When?

The historical town of Weston was founded around 1837 when a few settlers drifted into the Indian’s territory. Although the settlers originally found this land of honey and rich soil, it was Joseph Moore, an ex-soldier from Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas that claimed the land which is now Weston.

What Is The Platte Purchase?

Shortly before the founding of Weston, 1836 – 1837, the United States Government bought the land along the east banks of The Missouri River from the Iowa, Sac, Fox, Sioux and the Algonquin Indians in the Northwest corner of Missouri. The Indians moved to a reservation in Kansas. This was known as The Platte Purchase. It was named after the Platte River. Also because Platte means flat in French. Soon, people from the Eastern part of the United States of America consisting of the states Kentucky, Tennessee, and South Carolina began to populate the area. By 1850, the census of Platte County was 16,488, of which 2,559 were slaves.

Important Person #1: Benjamin Holladay.

Benjamin Holladay was one of the most important and colorful of Weston’s pioneers. Although records say that Holladay did not live in Weston for long, he was responsible for most of its growth. Benjamin ran away from his domineering father in Kentucky to the South and of course, arrived among the rich fertile soil of Weston where he settled with his cousin Bela Hughes. Bela Persuaded Benjamin to stay because after all it was a wonderful town, and by nightfall he was convinced to stay. After establishing himself Benjamin cajoled his family into moving to Weston. Later Benjamin reunited with his family. At the age of twenty-one Holladay opened Weston’s first saloon on Thomas St. He also established a general store and was the town’s first postmaster.

Important Person #2 And #3: Dr. G.W. Bayless and Senator David R. Atchison

An important character from the Civil War period was a man known as Dr. G.W. Bayless, he was a medical doctor for the soldiers and veterans, who purchased farm land known as Hazelwood, and was known for his pro-slavery attitude. In

fact, Hazelwood is owned today by Pete and Diana McCuffrey. When the Civil War started in 1850, Dr. Bayless and a man named Senator David R. Atchison joined forces in favor of slavery. The census of 1855 was recorded. 2,935 Platte County slaves were valued at \$1,264,860. March 30th, Senator David R. Atchison took Platte County citizens into Kansas to pose s residents for the purpose of voting for slavery. The results of the election were: Pro-slavery, 5,427; Anti-slavery, 791. The Government soon noticed the fraud. Following the election, Kansas citizens came across the Missouri River and set fire to several sites in Weston for retaliation of the fraud.

Important Person #4: Daniel Boone

Descendants of Daniel Boone lived in Weston for about 150 years, 1837 – 1987. One of the houses on Spring St. was owned by the descendants of Daniel Boone .Theodore Warner happened to be Boone's grandson and Theodore came to Weston with his companion and business partner, Ben Holladay.

Of course Daniel Boone wasn't just a legend in Weston, he was on back in Kentucky as well. He served as an officer in the revolutionary war he was involved in several Indian wars. He explored and settled Kentucky, he was a county sheriff, he was elected to Virginia General Assembly, was a very successful hunter and was a national folk hero and still is one to this day. Daniel Boone's fame is told through stories and is remembered by Cumberland Highway's original name.

Weston's First Newspaper and the Weston Chronicle

One of the first newspapers in Weston was *The Eagle*. E.S Wilkinson was the editor of *The Eagle*. The Winter of 1842, Wilkinson's Attempt to establish a paper had to be postponed due to the ice on the Missouri River, therefore the paper could not be sold until Spring. When Wilkinson's newspaper got around to the residents, the Weston Commercial was born in July of 1872. In 1886, the original owner, J.B. Mundy, sold the Weston Commercial to B.J. Bless Jr. The Bless family owned the paper for 98 Years before the paper was sold to Beth and Jim McPherson who in June of 1984 renamed the paper to The Weston Chronicle.

Early Businesses

- Weston Milling Co.

Built in the 1850's by Eli Wilhoite, who went bankrupt. The Raily Bank took over it and sold half of the interest to David Holladay, who later transferred his interest to John S. Maitland.

- Weston Brewery

It was established in 1842 and was closed with the onset of the Civil War. After the war it reopened as The Royal Brewery.

Black History of Early Weston

Over the years, after slaves acquired their freedom, the only black families remaining were the Dydells and the Andersons. Oscar and Josephine Dydell had approximately fifteen children. Those who were known were Leon, Oscar Jr., William Taft, Avloid, Ethel, Nancy, Frazier, and Margerine.

Henry Anderson, who was sold as a slave at the age of eight, raised twenty-two children in the Weston area. These were from two marriages. The first wife is unknown, the second wife was Ada Busey Anderson. The children that are known to us are Elizabeth , Jennie , Claire , Wilbert , Alma , Jesse , Mary , Frank , Jay , Henry Ernest “ Boo “ , Lester “ Soup “ , and Omega “ Maggie “ .

The Anderson and Dydell families came together when Margerine Dydell and Omega Anderson were married in 1933.

Tobacco

- Tobacco

In 1904, the first tobacco warehouse was built in Weston by Rumpel and Bless. Tobacco became popular and at one point, Main St. was crowded from curb to curb with tobacco wagons. Burley, which was used with other substances to produce cigarettes, was the type of tobacco grown in Weston.

- Hemp

The pioneers, who settled Platte County, first was a cash crop. Since Hemp was used for cordage and rope it was considered first. They were familiar with it as well because it was grown in most of Missouri and Kentucky. Later in 1860, 19,267 tons of Hemp was produced. It was the largest produced in the state, and the farmers received \$200-\$300/ton. Theodore Warner was one of the heaviest dealers in Weston. Later, Theodore sold his shop to Jacquemin and Schenkner who made the last shipment of hemp in 1885.

Interesting Facts

April 13, 1843 – The first issue of the Platte Eagle.

January 1844 – Allen McLane bought the Platte Eagle Moved to Platte City.

1847 – Postage Stamp was invented and introduced to Weston

Long Distance – 25 Cents

Short Distance – 12 Cents

1850-1860 - Avalon Café was built.

June 25, 1852 – Wilkinson and Adams issued the Argus at \$2.00 / year.

August 1860 – Gas lights were installed on Main St.

1888 – Uncle Tom Jones, a veteran in the war of 1812, died in Weston at the age 104.

April 4, 1893 – Bank of Weston was built.

1896 – Weston bought new fire equipment.

1936 – Hulls Warehouse were burned in fire that destroyed all three warehouses.

- For many years Weston was the liquor capital of Northwest Missouri.
- After the Civil War People Took a Large Interest in Baseball and that brought a national association of “Baseball Players” with over 200 teams. Several teams were formed in Weston. Those Teams traveled to neighboring towns for games and tournaments.
- Some kids only made it up to fourth or fifth grade. If they could read, write and add up a list of numbers then they could insure a fair price for their crops.

References

Memories of Weston, Missouri Vol. II. Millennium Edition – 1837 – 2000. Miller, Sandra Lewis. Heritage House Publishing, Marceline, MO.

Memories of Weston, Missouri, A Visual History, 1837 – 1992. Miller, Sandra Lewis. Heritage House Publishing, Marceline, MO.