

Museum Musings

APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2019

WESTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM, 601 MAIN STREET, HISTORIC WESTON, MISSOURI 816-386-2977

Kirkpatrick Island Was Situated in Bean Lake

By Ken Klamm

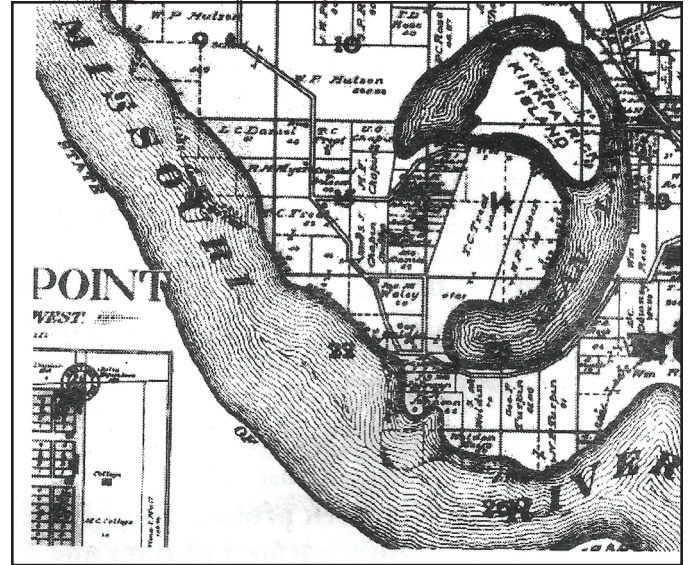
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Bean Lake in northwest Platte County included a large inhabited island for many years. As noted in recent Bulletin articles about Cow Island and an island off Parkville, the shifting course of the Missouri River over the years has resulted in the formation and disappearance of islands along the western edge of the county.

Bean Lake “is named after Benjamin Bean who came from Mason Co., Kentucky in 1838 and owned land in the area,” according to History of Platte County Missouri: A Proud Legacy, page 80. The Missouri Dept. of Conservation website notes, “Meriwether Lewis and William Clark camped in the vicinity of the south side of this natural area. At that time the Missouri River flowed to the south and north of the natural area and the high ground of the natural area was an island. By 1850 the river had shifted westward and the old river course formed an oxbow lake named Short Creek Lake. In the 1870s the lake was renamed Bean Lake, its name today” (see website <http://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places-go/natural-areas/little-bean-marsh>).

An island existed in Bean Lake and was inhabited by the Kirkpatrick family, descendants of Alfred Kirkpatrick. “In 1841 Alfred and his family moved to Platte Co., MO and settled at Bean Lake. In 1846 President James K. Polk deeded part of the marsh and shore of Bean Lake to Alfred, a former aid to the President. An additional grant from President James Buchanan and the purchase of adjoining ground brought the Kirkpatrick holdings to 300 acres” (see <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/b/o/z/Ronald-E-Bozarth/GENE1-0019.html>).

The island is mentioned in a legal case involving a land sale that was decided by the Missouri Supreme Court in March 1907 in which the plaintiff was W.H. Kirkpatrick [William Henry, a son of Alfred] and the defendants, “Mary O. Pease and others,” according to the Southwestern Reporter, volume 101, pages 651-657. On page 653 is noted: “In 1897 plaintiff lived on an island in Bean Lake, close to tract A, on the shore. We infer he had



resided there for many years, kept a fishing and bathing resort there and under some undisclosed arrangement, had stables and a feed lot, possibly for his own stock, but certainly for the horses of those who came to his resort to bathe and fish, which stables and feed lot covered a part of tract A, and were accessible from his island. The water of Bean Lake had permanently receded from its ancient bank, leaving the old bank as a bench and serviceable as a shelter for stock . . . “

The island is labeled Kirkpatrick Island in both the 1877 Illustrated Historical Atlas of Platte County and, as shown below, in the 1907 Standard Atlas of Platte County.

Ora Kirkpatrick was a son of William H. Kirkpatrick. A family history submitted by Frances Kirkpatrick Brown-Siler for publication in History of Platte County Missouri: A Proud Legacy (pp 488-489), notes that “Ora Kirkpatrick was a lifelong resident of the west side of Bean Lake, as was his father, William Henry Kirkpatrick. When William Henry died he left portions of his Bean Lake ‘island’ to his children, Ora, Mahala and Dora.”

Ms. Brown-Siler’s family history continues, “At one time Bean Lake was a flourishing lake. People leased lots and built cabins on Ora’s west side property of Bean Lake. The Kirkpatrick Camp was composed of numerous small rental cabins, a commissary and a bathhouse that provided baskets for the swimmers’ changes of clothes and a wringer for removing water from swimsuits The camp had good docks, rental rowboats, picnic tables

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Did You Know . . .

. . . that in August of 1861 “Rebel flags are flying; anarchy prevails; rebel camps are formed at Platte City; at Gooseneck, and at Cain’s; a regiment is to be raised for the South” –Paxton’s Annals August 12

“Arms are gathered and provisions collected. The Union men close their eyes in silence; business stands still; merchant disposed of their goods; valuable property disappears; horses are stolen or pressed; and crime goes unpunished.” In September of that year The Mechanics Bank of Weston deemed it unsafe to keep their gold in the city so Thomas Beaumont, S.P.S. McCurdy and William Paxton left for St. Louis with \$125,000 worth of gold which was deposited in the parent bank in that City. While the men from Platte County were in St. Louis General Fremont declared martial law in both the city and the State of Missouri which necessitated them getting passes to return home. This was quite a complicated procedure according to Paxton.

. . . that the port of Weston was destroyed in June of 1858 by a change of the channel of the Missouri River? It was not the first time the flowing Missouri would change course and certainly not the last. In the 1950’s after disastrous floods occurred in the western part of the state for two years straight it was decided that something had to be done to control the river. The Corps of Engineers was brought in and work commenced on a series of dams and channel changes. When finished it was declared that the Missouri would never flood in such a manner again. In 1993 “The Mighty Mo” showed once and for all that nature will not be controlled by man and it went out of its banks in July and was from bluff to bluff between, Kansas and Missouri.

. . . that in the flood of ’93, citizens of Weston and surrounding area banded together three different times to fill sand bags and help get them to the city wells. First, they placed the bags around Well #1, which was lower than the other two and was in danger. The river continued to rise and topped that well. Bags were then placed around Well 2 and the same thing happened. When it topped Well #3 City employees aided by civilians who had knowledge of the wells, went to work to pump out the overwhelmed well. By canoe, boats, highboys, they carried sandbags from the “White Bridge” to the well. To help keep the citizenry in water, they brought water in milk trucks and added that to the water plant on the bluffs, and...

. . . that one afternoon during all of this fight to save the wells, a pumper truck, completely filled with water and driven by a spokesman for the Kansas City Fire

Department, appeared at the water plant? “Where do you guys want this dumped,” he asked as he explained he had gone to the east to pick up a truck for the Kansas City Fire Department and being a citizen of the Weston area at that time he knew how dire the situation was. “I figured I could kill two birds with one load. The truck drives smoother with water and we needed it here.” The flabbergasted City Workers were thrilled.

. . . that among those giving assistance were the owners of the local plumbing businesses: Floyd Liberty and Chuck Sebus. They, along with Larry Clemens and Danny Masoner, City employees, devised a way to pull water off the surface of the flooding river, which was purified and used by every one in town and on the water districts, after first obeying boil water orders.

. . . that the City of Weston, unlike its neighbor to the north, St. Joseph and to the south Parkville, did not lose water service during the flood.

Carl’s Corner

by Board President Carl Felling

The winter may be over, spring is starting, and the Museum has opened it’s doors for the 2019 session. This promises to be a very active summer and fall in the Museum.

Two display cases have been updated over the winter. One presents “fashion accessories of the well dressed in the early 1900’s”. This display has an outstanding collection of lapel pins worn during this time frame. The Museum owes a special thank you to June Kisker who has loaned these to the Museum from her collection.

Another case updated is titled “From Owls to Bluejays” that shows the changes to the West Platte school buildings over the years.

One of the Museum’s biggest projects over the winter was the preparation of a grant application to the Platte County Parks and Recreation Department. This grant application for the upgrading of the building’s restrooms was prepared by Clay Bauske, Museum Vice President, and we are excited to report that it was approved this past winter. Bids were taken and accepted, and construction has begun.

With summer around the corner, you may be having out of town guests, grandchildren or brothers or sisters visiting, and the Museum is a great place to show them. There is so much to see and learn while in the Museum.

The Museum Volunteers look forward to seeing you at the Museum.

Recalling Past Independence Days

by Ruth Mary Clemens

Fourth of July or Independence Day has been around for quite a few years. And it has been celebrated in every fashion imaginable, from private parties to public parades; political orations or fun-filled rodeos. From coast to coast and even Pole to Pole, Americans love their fire-cracker filled holiday.

Weston is no different. Back in the day when it was fashionable to hold large town gatherings, they picnicked and partied with great enthusiasm. When Fort Leavenworth first started having their public fireworks display most of Weston would journey to Kansas to see the beautiful explosions and enjoy the musical interludes provided by the military band. The crowd was always large but the traffic was controlled by MP's in their smart uniforms and with those funky lighted batons they used to direct cars.

One year as memory recalls, we were there in two vehicles because the entire family just didn't fit in the station wagon. Dad drove one car and Mom drove the other. If you knew Ruth Bless, you know she didn't stand over 4'10", and when she drove all you could see was her small hands at the top of the steering wheel. This particular evening as we journey back towards home, mother was paying very close attention to the tall, thin MP who was waving her forward. At the same time, he raised his hand in the well-known motion of "STOP". So, she did. Still holding one hand up he motioned her forward and when she didn't, he walked briskly towards her rolled-down window. (Every one's windows were rolled down because most cars didn't have air-conditioning in those days.)

"Ma'am," he said in a soft southern drawl, "when I motion you forward, I mean for you to come forward."

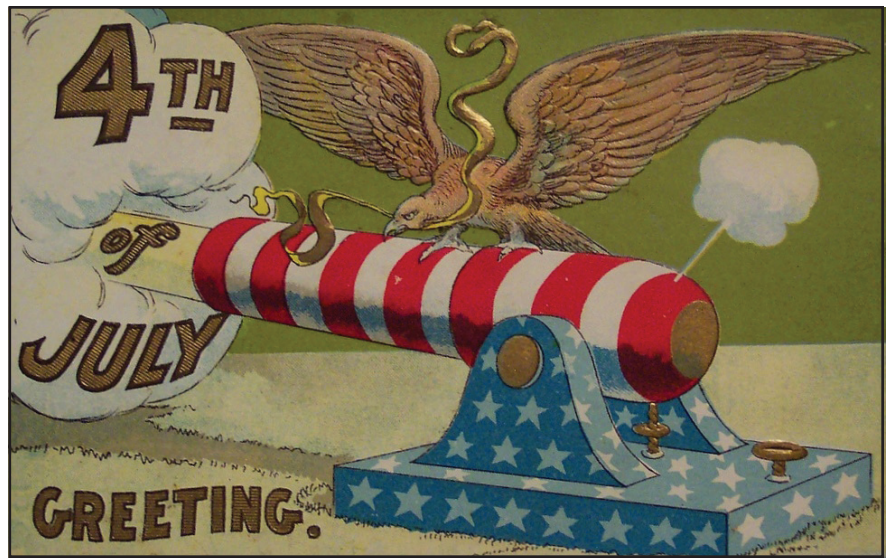
"Well, if you want me to come forward, then taken down your other hand which means stop," she replied sweetly.

"Ma'am," he said less softly, "PLEASE just go."

And she did. She drove forward so close to the soldier that his buttons scuffed against the side of the car, and she waved "ta da" out the window as she moved on down the avenue. We kept waiting for his whistle to blow but it didn't. Thank heaven the Weston Jaycees started their fantastic run of local displays soon after that.

While the extravagant displays put on in these later years have been fantastic, I remember the years when we all fended for ourselves. Everyone made it out to Spinners on 45 Highway to make the purchase of Pinwheels, Black Cats, Snakes, Sparklers, Roman Candles, and M-80's. (Or so I heard but of course M-80's weren't legal so I am sure none were sold nor none bought!) Chester Spinner must have had the market on those little boxes of snakes and punks because he would hand them to the town kids by the sacksful. They were for many years the only firework we were allowed to shoot off by ourselves. When you graduated to sparklers and Black Cats you were moving on. But those Fountains and Roman Candles were to be shot off only by Charles.

Now in our backyard was a beautiful spreading maple, so shooting Roman Candles there was a waste of effort. Charles needed a better plan and he came up with one. He fastened a piece of pipe to one of the posts on our front



porch. There he could slide the firework down into the end of the pipe, light it and whoosh, it would sail out over the front yard and we had our own display. Every ball from that "candle" was counted to be sure we got our money's worth! The fountains he took over to the top of the cistern beside the front porch and lit them for full effect, and pinwheels were nailed to the same porch posts when their time came.

Before the evening display we could shoot off the noise makers and those ever present "snakes". One thing we discovered quickly was that the metal cover for cistern pumps was a great enhancer of sound. Laid flat across the very small opening slits of the cistern's concrete lid, it made the perfect holder for firecrackers, one at a time or a whole package. The initial blast was enhanced by the sound reverberating in the metal chamber and the echo from the depth of the well.

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It's Mushroom Time!!

by Terry Chapin

April showers bring . . . mushrooms! For many of us in Weston, this time of year means we're out and about playing an outdoor game of "I Spy!".

This year is already proving to be an epic year for mushrooms with the perfect blend of rain and warmth for our fungi friends to flourish.

The favorite fungus among us is undoubtedly the morel mushroom. When cooked or dried, it's a nutty and meaty mushroom that's easy to prep and doesn't require anything other than a little butter.



For those who've already been hunting, you likely have your "spots" and some tips and tricks you've acquired over time. For the newbies and the amateur hunters in the Weston area, there's a few things to keep in mind as you hit the ground looking for morels.

To give a little history on mushroom hunting, during the late 19th century Americans started really hunting and cooking up mushrooms in their own kitchens. So right around the time Weston was founded (1837), the US was going through a mushroom heyday and recipes based on edible mushrooms began being documented and shared from kitchen to kitchen. Prior to this, mushrooms were mainly reserved for use in condiments but not as a side or main dish. Inspired by the French, Americans really took mushroom foraging, identifying, and cooking to a whole new level. Even today, locally foraged mushrooms are worth their weight in gold ...just ask any of your neighbors who are searching for morels after a spring rain shower.

The old timers say that when the oak leaves are the size of a mouse's ear, then it's time to look for morels. Another sure bet is the temperature. After a week of 50



degree night with some rain, mushrooms start to pop out. Learning to identify prime trees (Sycamores, Ash, Hickory, & Elms) and finding well-drained areas will help you find more morels. Also, keep in mind that South and West side slopes will have warmer soils first so you're more likely to find morels in these areas. Another tip - bring a child! They're low to ground and may be able to more easily spot the camouflaged morels.

All in all, there are 19 species of morels. In the Weston area, you're likely to find four of those 19 - Black, Yellow, White & Sandy which are all classified as "true" morels. The easiest way to distinguish between a true and false morel is to cut the morel in half. If it's hollow, it's a true morel. If it's not hollow, that's a false morel and should not be eaten.

Interested in learning more about mushrooms? Check out your local Missouri Mycological Chapter that features free classes and forays. In fact a Weston foray is planned for October 5th (yes, there are still mushrooms to be found that late in the year!). For more, check out the Missouri Mycological Society page at momyc.org.

Happy hunting!

Independence Days . . .

(Continued from Page 3)

This sound was so pleasing to us that for years we saved a package or two of black cats to set off in the same manner at midnight New Year's Eve. This was a tradition our neighbors knew about and tolerated very well for the most part. One year a young couple had moved into the rental house next door and as luck would have it, they agreed to babysit New Year's Eve with their infant niece. The baby had a bit of an upset tummy and was difficult to get to sleep but finally she settled down and they retired early for the evening.

At the stroke of midnight there was a loud commotion of fireworks being shot off. Something akin to a cannon being shot. The babe awoke, the couple awoke, the neighborhood dogs awoke. The Bless children and parents retired for the evening; the dogs calmed down and the neighbors—well they stayed awake for fear of another attack.

It would be many years later when that house came under attack again by some Bless children. Bottle Rocks had come into play by then and we had firm instructions on how to handle them and where to aim them. Thus, as the sunset in the west, we lit our punks, got our thick pop bottles, loaded them and aimed them carefully at the neighbor's tin roof.

Tin, we reasoned, didn't burn. Of course, it undoubtedly made a pinging sound if you were inside, but that didn't occur to us. It didn't until an occupant of the house came outside and popped their head up above the hillside (we held the high ground) to suggest we cease and desist.

Something made us do it, I guess the devil, but we lowered the bottles slowly, well over said person's head, and fired off another round. She ducked quickly, came back up to demand we stop and just as we readied another volley our Independence Day came to a sudden end. The heavy hands of Charles Bless captured two of his ruffians and the smaller hands of Ruth Bless grabbed the other two. After forced apologies, the brats were towed back inside, given severe lectures and NEVER got to buy bottle rockets again!

So much for memories. I also remember how frightened our loyal dog Brownie was on this holiday. She retreated to the basement and would not come out without at least a day of no explosions. It is that memory that makes me understand, albeit unwillingly, the move to end some of the noise makers as they cause consternation for some vets and pets. And I know they can be very dangerous as we have experienced injuries in our own community over the years.

So it is great to see the civic drive for a community

Bits and Pieces From Bertha's Morgue

James Richardson, "Walking Jim" as he was known, was with the 224th Regiment during the Korean War. Richardson was awarded the Blue and Silver Infantryman's badge by Major General Hudelson for bravery above and beyond the call. Major General Hudelson took the badge from his own uniform and pinned it on Walking Jim at the scene of his heroic action, noting that Richardson "carried his radioman down an icy trail on which men were crawling on their hands and knees to escape injury from ice and wounds from the enemy."

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An issue of *The Weston Chronicle* dated August 18, 1969 reads: Temperatures of over 100 degrees have baked Weston since July and 90 degrees for the entire week before.

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An item of interest dated June 21, 1963 relates "The ZIP Code will go into effect for Weston as of July 1. Everyone in Weston will use the ZIP Code (64098) on all of their correspondence to speed mail deliveries and reduce the chance of mis-sent mail," says Acting Postmaster Kent Weigman. As an aside to this piece of news, *The Weston Chronicle* had to remake every one of their addressing stencils on this occasion. Over 800 stencils had to be re-typed with street, town, state and zip codes. This was quite an undertaking which took several weeks of prep and resulted in many sore fingers as one had to strike the typewriter keys firmly to make the cut into the special cardboard/paper stencils.

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*The Weston Chronicle*, dated June 23, 1967 gives us this: Mr. Charles Fischer has signed a contract as Supt, of Schools with the West Platte R-II District. Mr. and Mrs. Fischer have three daughters; Cheryl is 9 years old; Debbie is 7, and Paula, who is 5.

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In September 1960 we read "Mr. Alfred Hasemeier, County Librarian, became a charter member of the The Weston Historical Museum. He was also among the lists as ex-officio trustee for the Museum.

Al's wife, Jane, also became a Charter Member.

celebration on the Fourth of July here in Weston. We look forward to joining everyone at the parade, the children's activities and the evening ending with a grand display of fireworks. As we all join in the festivities let us not forget what the celebration is about: the founding of a nation conceived in liberty, to secure the blessings of that liberty for themselves and all posterity.

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June 2019

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Looking for Something Interesting to Do?

The Museum has opened for a new season and new displays have been prepared and others re-freshed.

As history is always occurring, chores will start afresh. Cataloguing, filing, labeling and research will continue as usual. Volunteers are always appreciated on "Work Day Mondays."

Substitute hostesses are also welcomed.

If you can help in any way, please let us know by calling 386-2977 for more information or to volunteer a couple of hours of your time.

The Nostalgia Store

at the Weston Historical Museum

Stop by to see our newest merchandise. Perfect for gifts.

Kirkpatrick Island . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

and a natural sandy beach . . . As time passed, the boats used for hunting and fishing were being replaced by large recreational motorboats . . . With every flood Ora would move his family to higher ground; he would then row his boat back to inundated home and stay until the water subsided . . . Both the lake and the club remain but due to the devastation of the 1993 flood, many homes were destroyed, including the Kirkpatrick home. The lake is shallow and silt has eliminated the cool springs and deep water."

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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

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Membership includes an issue of our quarterly newsletter *Museum Musings*. To receive it electronically, please indicate your e-mail 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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** *Additional Donations* will support programs, exhibits, preservation and other activities. Please indicate the amount of your voluntary donation.



WESTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

P.O. Box 266 • 601 Main Street
Weston, MO 64098



No volume of history is insignificant, even the worst chapters. Especially the worst chapters.

~Terri Guillemets

Weston Home Highlight:

635 Washington Street

This lovely antebellum home was built in 1843 by Abraham Baker. The two-story home was shot-gun style architecture, with four fireplaces, nine-inch walnut baseboards, woodwork and staircase. The walls were three bricks thick, which made it cool in the summer. Windows were hand-blown with air bubbles present in most of them. The building directly behind the home was the summer kitchen and slave quarters.

The current driveway was at one time a city street connecting Main Street (next to the Benner House) and Summer Street.

The original dry-laid stone wall which ran the width of the property was replaced in the 1960's, using the same stone, but with concrete due to liability issues.

William and Margaret Newman purchased the dwelling in 1856. Ten years later it was sold to Thomas and Amanda Beaumont, he being a local physician at the time.

In 1873, Reuben and Sarah Browning became the next owners, followed five years later by Richard and Pocahontas Jacequemin. In 1890, the sold the home to Benjamin Moore, Sr.

From 1895 until 1905, the home was owned by George



and Mollie Baker. Other owners (in order) were:

William F. Cartwright

James and Medley Hardesty

August and Louisa Winter

S.B., B.B. and Amelia Layton

Bill and Betty Stephens and

daughter, Karen Stephens Croskey

Wilbur "Baldy" and Mary Jane Hellebuyck-Rowland

In 2017 Jon and Kathleen Rydholm bought the home and continue to keep the "lady" in the style to which she is accustomed.