

Museum Musings

OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2019

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

High Water, Low Land, Rivers and Bridges Are a Big Part of Farley History

We welcome Chuck McCardie, an avid historian and resident of Farley, to our Museum Musings staff. He will be contributing both pictures and content to us on a regular basis.

Flooding has always been a way of life in and around Farley. The rich, fertile land attracted farmers in the early years. At that time, the Platte River had a winding path that came east of town and then ran parallel to the Missouri River and flowed into the Missouri River at Parkville. With easy access to both rivers, Col. Leavenworth first considered the location at Parkville to establish a fort for the Government. He would ultimately decide on the Kansas site with its higher elevation. With flooding and the ever changing Missouri River channel, the Platte would later enter at both Waldron and Parkville, then just Waldron and eventually Farley.

In the early 1900's, farmers were constantly battling the rivers, hoping to save their crops. In anticipation of summer flooding, farmers would often cut and thresh their crop before it was time. It was up to the farmers to build dikes to protect their fields.

The railroad also ran along the Missouri River before 1907. It ran between the Missouri and Platte River between Farley and Waldron. The bridge to cross the Platte was at Waldron. There was a hotel at this stop for Farley, however, this was almost a mile from the city itself. During high water, there was no way for guests to get to town for supplies if needed. In 1907, the railroad having enough of flood repairs, moved the Beverly/Waldron line north towards the bluffs, where it resides today.

The rail bridge was completed in 1907 and stood unscathed until the 1940s. The bridge was damaged a few times, the worse being in 1945 when it was destroyed by the rushing water of the Platte River. During most flood years, the Missouri River is responsible for the flooding around Farley. As it rises in height, the Platte River is not allowed to freely flow into the Missouri. This causes the Platte River to rise and, according to locals around

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Looking over the Farley bottoms.

Carl's Corner

by Board President Carl Felling

The Museum's year is drawing to a close, and we are very thankful for a successful year. The year was celebrated at the Annual Dinner on November 10th. It was noted at the meeting that we continue to enjoy strong community support and many hours of volunteer service. The new Legacy Membership classification has been very successful its first year with five members joining this classification. In this issue there is an article reviewing the activities of the annual meeting.

Following the Home's Tour the Museum will be closing for the season and reopening in the spring. During this time each year the Museum is refreshed with the assistance of volunteers using their excellent imagination with new case designs and layouts. The first of the year is also the time host/hostess schedule is developed. If you would like to volunteer as a host/hostess on the Sunday afternoons the Museum is open you are encouraged to contact Clay Bauske at Claymuseumguy@gmail.com

It is hoped that all of you will have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Before we know it spring will be here, and we will be doing outside clean up work around the Museum.

The Museum Volunteers look forward to seeing you at the Museum in the coming year.

Did You Know . . .

. . . that the Weston PTA once conducted a sewing school? In June of 1915 sixty-two students enrolled in the sewing school, several in all classes and a majority in more than one. Clothes making, quilt piecing, crocheting, tatting and embroidery classes were among those offered for six weeks.

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. . . that the Royal Brewery razed five homes on Spring Street between Welt and Rock streets? One of those houses was the home of John McConnell. James McConnell lived in the C.A. Ohlhausen home at the corner of Washington and Spring. Mrs. James McConnell was Lola Mason, the daughter of Samuel and Susan Burnes. She had two daughters, Birdie and Myrtle and a son, Marmaduke.

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. . . that Luther Hoy, originally from Hampton, late of the Parkville Area, enlisted in the Confederate Army at the age of seventeen? He served under General Price; was wounded in the knee by grape shot but insisted on returning to battle as soon as he healed.

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. . . that the Knights of Pythias was established in Weston in 1896? In 1921 the lodge initiated M.R. Waggoner, C.R. Ohlhausen, George and Owens Lee Hull, Gene Doppler, R.A. Barrett, F.E. Doran and Leon Hillix.

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. . . that a flour mill was to be found on Bee Creek between Weston and Platte City? The name of the mill was Packers. It was powered with water and they did "custom" grinding. The farmers took wheat in their wagons to the mill and waited while it was ground for different uses. Often the grower had to wait overnight for his flour. Mr. Packer was never known to invite any customer to eat with him. When the noon hour came, he called the customers to his office, locked the door and went to his home, some distance away.

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. . . that Weston had a number of milliners? Nannie and Pearl Norris opened a millinery store in the front room of the Calvert building on Main Street in 1922. Mrs. Wakefield, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Miller was a milliner for Jacquemin & Shenkner in their store on Main Street. One Mrs. Bowlby was a milliner here in 1869 as was Mrs. M.B. Styles.

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. . . that Oscar Berry, who died in 1932 at the age of 94, was one of Platte County's last surviving Confederate soldiers? He also served as Platte County Sheriff twice in the years following the Civil War.

Old Livery Stable Erected in 1895

The following article was published in "The Weston Chronicle" on March 14, 1946.

With the tearing down of the two buildings facing Main Street near Market Street, a bit of old history pops up. The livery barn just south of the corner was built in 1895, financed by Mr. and Mrs. B.H. South. They bought the lot from the Burnes estate. The Burnes family, once the elite of this town, moved to St. Joseph, where they laid the cornerstone of a huge fortune. Their bank is still intact. One of the Burnes brothers became a United States Senator.

Arthur Lennox built the barn.

South invested in a large stock of buggies, carriages, horses and even a vehicle, which is seldom seen any more, but was considered the smart equipage at the end of the Victorian era. It was a landau. Webster describes it a "four-wheel covered vehicle with a top divided into two sections which can be let down or thrown back."

Those were the good old days when Weston had a very active band of ten persons. Mrs. South had a picture of this band in the landau which was bought especially to take this band to picnics at Salem, Leavenworth and Platte City. Another vehicle, which Mr. South found much in demand was a surrey "with fringe on top", used largely by picnic parties and at Fair time.

In 1889 Mr. South sold the livery barn to J.W. Murdock, then a prosperous real estate man, and Wm. Wood, who sold it in September 1904 to Witt and Gene Miller.

Geo. Peck, who died many years ago and was the first husband to Mrs. Mattie Robbins Light, also owned the livery stable for a while.

By 1911, the inroads of the auto industry were being felt and within a few years, the Miller barn was a thing of the past. Farmers and townspeople used it for storage of all kinds, but in the last few years, the Hull brothers have used it almost exclusively for housing tobacco.

For a brief period large community sales, conducted by the late W.R. Hull were held in and around the barn.

The clearance of both buildings has left a "wide-open space" at the intersection of Main and Market.

. . . that there were ferries both at Weston and the Ri-alto area? Capt. John Wells owned and ran them. He was well known to most river travelers in the early 1840's. One of his ferries cost \$14,000 to build but sank soon after it was completed.

Trustees View Truman Plans at Annual Meeting

Sunday evening, November 11th the Weston Historical Museum held its annual meeting at Eventful at Locust Grove. There were 73 in attendance for the social hour and business meeting.

Carl Felling, president of the Museum, reported that the Museum enjoyed a very successful year. The restroom was remodeled and brought up to ADA standards. This project was made possible by a Platte County Parks and Recreation Grant.

It was further reported that the exterior of the building has been cleaned and the gutter downspouts have been improved. The new Legacy Membership classification has been well received with five members joining this classification.

The Museum Trustees had two resignations last year: Sigi Rowland and Becky Robertson. It was noted that these two have contributed hundreds of hours to the Museum with hosting and maintaining the exterior grounds. New Trustees were elected to the Board of the Museum to fill the above positions. Jessica Larsen was elected to fill Sigi Rowland's term and Paul Schewennesen to fill Becky Robertson's term.

Officers elected for the coming year are President, Carl Felling, Vice President, Clay Bauske, Secretary, Francie Stoner and Treasurer, Ted S. Wilson.

The program was presented by Clay Bauske, Curator of the Truman Library. Mr Bauske reviewed the four year project to create all new exhibits, visitor amenities, and program space in the Truman Library. His presentation included a video of the completed project as it will look when finished in September 2020. In addition Mr. Bauske discussed the history and organization of the Presidential Library System.

The meeting was closed by acknowledging the Bank of Weston, The Weston Chronicle, Farmfare Catering, Eventful at Locust Grove and Platte County Parks and Recreation for their support of the Museum.

Mr. Felling also thanked Barbara Bless, Terry Chapin and Ruth Mary Clemens for the excellent work they are doing in preparing "The Musings", the Museum newsletter. Also he expressed his appreciation for the support the Museum receives from the community and for the many hours of volunteer service provided to the Museum.

Friday, July 26, 1901: the colored Masonic Lodge gave a picnic at the J.E. Wells pasture last Friday and a festival in the Rumpel-Bless building on Main Street that night.. The dance was given in the Blancjour building.

Sale of Old School Prompts Memories

The sale of the old school building in New Market in March of 1945 did not seem like a "big deal". However, many residents and former residents brought forth numerous memories of the town and especially of the schools.

The land on which the schools were located, was held by Jacob Adamson when the town was first platted. It was at that time called Jacksonville and was later renamed to New Market.

The first school building was a two-room brick which was sold on October 7, 1885 to James Hatfield for \$150. Mr. Hatfield also obtained the contract to build the new two-story frame building for \$1,187. Later a new one-room building was built.

On March 10, 1945, their school being consolidated with the Dearborn high school, the last building was sold to Joe Lamar who used it as a tenement house.

The Camden Point children were also transported by bus to Dearborn for schooling.

Among the older teachers who were recalled were W.A. Bowen, '80-'81; Temple Baughman, '82-'83; and Mr. and Mrs. C. Monson, '84-'85.

Mr. Raffington was the first teacher in the brick building in 1868 and so far as is known, Mrs. Rebecca Paige was the last living scholar in 1945, who attended this school 59 years ago. Her son, J.D. Paige, attended school in the second building and her grandson, Billy Paige, started his schooling in the third building.

Amazing though it may be, 108 children were regular school attendants in 1888. That year, the district bought twenty cords of wood with which to heat the school building. Two dollars a cord delivered was paid to Wm. Hillix for the wood.

In older days, teachers' salaries ran from \$45 to \$60 a month for the adult room and \$30 to \$35 for the primary room.

Among the older directors were: John S. Williams, Benton Gabbert, William Hillix, Coleman Lawrence, Reuben Dovsky, S.H. Dean, G.W. Fields, R.M. Farra, T.J. Lamar, Gale Anderson, Joel Hill, W.A. Wilson and F. Robinson.

A.G. Rader, 71, an antique dealer in Weston died March 4, 1952. His mother was Mrs. Susan Rader. She was 88 at the time of her death in 1931. His father was a Confederate soldier.

A.G., for many years, had an antique shop on Main Street. (Ed. note: Mr. Rader's shop was located where Celtic Ranch stands today.)

Bits and Pieces from Bertha's Morgue

The local newspaper gave us this on Sept. 6, 1896:

"Three Missouri River government steamers came up the river last Sunday. They were The Alert, the John R. Hugo and the Atlanta. The largest was the stern-wheel boat, which had in tow the U.S. Office boat No. 2. It is 130 feet long by 30 feet wide and two stories high.

"The Hugo had in tow two boats that resembled Noah's Ark. They were United States quarter boats, designed for quarters for men engaged on the river work. The Atlanta had three barges and a flat boat.

"Capt. A.J. Spahr was in command of the Alert with Wm. Lingo and Alexander Carey pilots and Charles Hart on the deck. Capt. R.M. Marshall was in charge of the Hugo and Capt. John Marsh of the Atlanta."

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Mrs. Lena Moore, teacher in the Iatan school made her report for the month beginning February 23 and ending March 20, 1903:

"Those present every day during the month were Blanche Grover, Zelma and Nelson Evans and Henry P. Grover.

"Those receiving 100 in deportment are: Fannie Simmons, Tessie Abraham, Ethel, Georgia and Earl Turpin, Vivian Shelato, Charles Hinson, John and Jimmie Abraham, Jimmie Davis, Owen and Ora Palmer and Dee Page."

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An article in The Weston Chronicle dated May 7, 1937 brought us this:

"W.W. Kyle, rule route carrier since 1918, was retired from service last Friday by virtue of his having reached his 65th birthday.

Mr. Kyle began as a substitute carrier December 1, 1918 and became a regular employee of the government in August 1919. Since that time he has traveled 166,225 miles. For sixteen years his route comprised a 26-mile route and for the past three years, he made 43 miles a day.

"He began delivering mail with a horse and cart; in a year or so he kept an auto for the better weather and used the horse intermittently for seven or eight years longer. When Mr. Kyle began delivering over the rural routes, he had about 125 boxes; today there are between 170 and 180 boxes."

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The week of September 10, 1937 we read:

"Tuesday morning marked a new epoch in the history of the Weston School when the new \$75,000 building was opened for use. The first to enter the High School room was Jesse Pepper and the two girls first appearing for their

school work were Marjorie Gerner and Callarene Carter."

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The issue of November 22, 1940 read:

"Edwin C. Shouse of Waterford, California, who is visiting his two sisters in Kansas City, spent Wednesday until Friday with Mrs. Lydia Hillix and Miss Frankie Owens. The childhood days of the three were spent together as the farms of their parents were located nearby at Camden Point. The Shouse farm is now occupied by Vaughn Hull.

"Mr. Shouse owns and operates a ranch in California which is located 100 miles southeast of San. Francisco. He raises all kinds of circus fruits and a number of varieties of nuts are grown on the ranch."

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The local newspaper noted on November 24, 1950 "in the election of an all star Northwest Missouri 6 Conference team; Dave Webb and Henry Lentz were chosen as first team members. Harry Lentz was placed at left guard and Dave Webb was given one of four backfield positions. Don Schneider was awarded a berth as guard on the second all-star team, while Mike Marr, Pat Marr and Phil Kyle were given honorable mention."

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The Weston Chronicle issue of March 17, 1967 reported: "Miss Linda Lawson and her parents went to Heavener, Oklahoma last week to attend the funeral and burial services for her fiance Gary Walden, who was killed in Vietnam on February 27 by a sniper's bullet. He had been there 18 months. Gary was due to return this week and to be married soon."

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December 20 1946 told us: "Home In Indiana" is the title of the movie but the actual setting for the picture to be shown at the Weston theater Tuesday and Wednesday is Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, according to information received this week.

"Many Platte Countians are familiar with Mt. Sterling but friends of Mr. and Mrs. Hobart Ratliff will have special interest in the picture because it includes a scene of the Ratliff home in which their daughter, Viva Dee, was born.

"Mr. and Mrs. Ratliff moved from Platte County to Mt. Sterling where they were living at the time of Viva Dee's birth in 1930. They returned to Weston the following year and have since made their home here. Viva Dee is a junior in Weston high school and a member of the girl's basketball team."

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The issue of November 3, 1967 read:

Those taking the buses to the Platte City-Weston football game recently, has a "ball". The idea was thought up by Principal Tom Trail and associates, to do away with the parking problems -- but bus riders agreed it was fun not to have to drive -- they just "lef the driving to Trail."

New Market Memories

S.J. Gabbert Vividly Describes Longing in a Boy's Heart

The following article cam from the June 21, 1935 issue of "The Weston Chronicle":

Sweet memories cluster in an entanglement of sadness, gladness, tragedies, mingled with comedies and errors. It was my first town. As a boy my dad sent me to the then wonderful city of New Market, some fifty years ago. I came, I saw, I got lost. On Old Nell, the family horse, I became confused in its streets, that seemed as intricate then to me, as the mottled downtown streets of Chicago do now.

What memories come back to me now. The old brick store on the corner, run by Armstrong & Co., had exquisite jars of striped stick candy that looked to my longing eyes almost as large as cord wood sticks. How my childish mouth watered and hungered for its tempting sweets. Oh, childhood dreams and wishes are beyond the imagination of older ones. They are peopled with castles, knights and ladies fair, but the old town of New Market so I will confine myself to memories of my first love.

Just think, four big stores, two saloons; a barber shop with a striped pole in front, was run by Emmett Keegan, whose father, Pat Keegan, had a tailor shop on Main Street. Here I had my first pair of pants made out of jeans cloth. What breeches! I felt like a millionaire and thought all the girls were looking at me with adoring eyes. I pictured the Bishop Hill as my abiding place, with a castle, moats, gates, and towers that reached to the skies. Pat Keegan, Warn Harris with his staff; Gowens, with his saloon; Wilderson, the chair maker; Lowe's store with a great big "Injun" with a tomahawk, who I thought was waiting for bad boys; Lily Robinson, my first lady love, whose midnight hair and eyes beckoned me to do daring deeds of valor. The churches, with their tolling bells of happiness; the Christian church and the Methodist. The Presbyterians used the Methodist building also. The members of the last two were finally moved to "Lick Skillet", now known as Dearborn. But the church on my choice and my girl's choice was, and still is, the Christian Church which still gives me a hearty welcome.

The depot on the old Rock Island spur was also transferred to the new town of Dearborn. I had my first train ride there. Hayden Leavel and his two children, Chris and May, L.C. Gabbert and myself went on it to Atchison, Ks., to attend a circus. My but I was scared as I

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Two Generations Win With Tour Writing

The following article appeared in an April, 1965 issue of "The Weston Chronicle".

Next week is Journalism Week at Missouri University where hundreds of writers, editors and publishers gather for many festivities but most of all to hear top-flight men and women in that profession. One of the big days is Friday, when the Missouri Press Ass'n. and the Women's Press of Missouri are honored.

The Missouri Press is a group affiliated with National Federation of Press Women. Each year the 50-odd affiliates conduct a writer's contest in about 25 categories. This year The Weston Chronicle writers will carry away four awards in the Missouri contest, and all four pertain to the Old Homes Tour of last October.

Mrs. Charles Bless, assistant editor, won a first place berth in "Special Edition, daily or weekly, by a woman". It is quite an honor to win this prize in competition with daily papers. Mrs. Bless' entry was the special edition in The Chronicle of October 23rd, 1964 which carried many old news items and pictures, some almost a century old. Besides being circulated with The Chronicle of that week, a number of extra copies were donated to the Country Store where they sold rapidly for 25c each.

Mrs. B.J. Bless, Jr. won a first award with the booklet which she compiled for the Tour ticket purchasers. This booklet still finds sale at the Museum.

The 1st palace winners in each state are sent to national judges who chose again for top-flight writers. Winners will be announced at the San Diego meeting of the National Federation of Press Women in June.

A second and a third place were won by Mrs. B.J. Bless, also pertaining to the Old Homes Tour.

An issue of Dec. 23, 1956 told us: "Friends of Robert Mann will be glad to learn that he has recently been made Commander of the U.S.S. Spoonbill, M.S.C. now stationed in Jackonsville, Fla.

2020 Museum Officers

President	Carl Felling
Vice-President	Clay Bauske
Secretary	Francie Stoner
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Flood water covers 45 highway south of Farley. Circa 1945.

Floods . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

at the time, to even flow backwards. Walter Humphrey remembers a time the Platte River sat still for so long it became clear, as the sediments settled to the bottom. In 1945, the high water was coming down the Platte River with the Missouri remaining at normal depth. This cause a swift current normally not seen at the bridge at Farley. The current began to wash away the supports and eventually cause a separation at the north end of the bridge. A fisherman, who lived SW of town near the MO River, was walking home from the Farley store when he noticed the gap. He ran to workers on the south side of the track to tell them of his discovery. They were able to run down the tracks to stop a northbound train before it reached the damage bridge. Over time, the supports for the bridge would give way and two large sections of the bridge would fall into the river. The fisherman was later given a \$100 reward from the railroad company.

The Lutheran Church was originated SE of Farley in the river bottoms. When the Missouri change course in the late 1880s, it put the church on the Kansas side of the river for a time. Due to constant fear of flooding, the church was torn down, piece by piece, and rebuilt where the current church is now located.

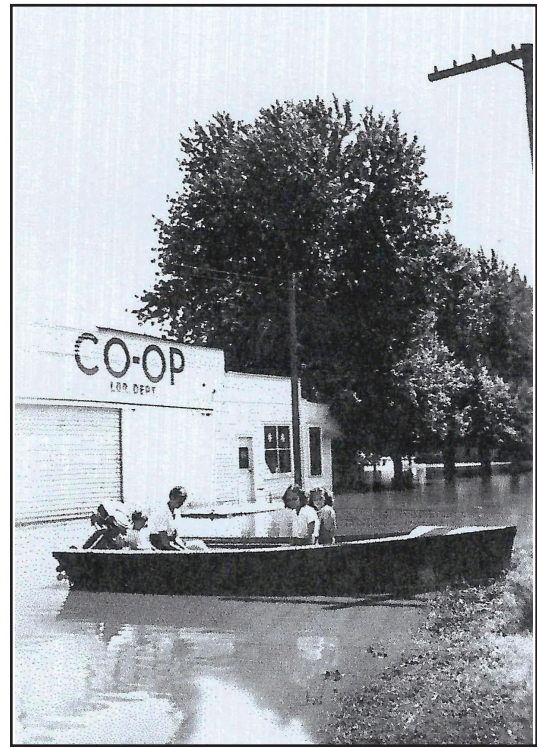
It is my understanding the floods of 1951-52 did not affect the town of Farley itself. This was a Missouri River flood and I believe it affected the areas NW of town such as East Leavenworth, Mudd Lake, Stillings, Beverly, etc. I could be wrong with this but have nothing to say otherwise.

I do remember the 1965 flood. My grandmother lived on the hill behind the fire station in Farley. She watched us kids during the day while our parents worked. I remember standing on the stoop outside the door looking at downtown Farley. I also had a clear view of the road that went to the ball field and then on to the river. The road beyond the ball field was lined with tree overgrowth back then. It was the old dirt road that led to the old bridge that crossed the river before the 1933 bridge was build over the Platte River. As I was looking down the road, I saw what seemed to be a wall of water coming down the road between the trees. I yelled in the door to grandma. She came out to see the water and immediately went in and hit the siren button. She had the fire phone in her house and would ring the siren when calls would come in. I don't recall if I was watching for water or just happened to be looking down that way. I learned later the river was at the level of the dike when it gave way. The water



would flood our home in the lower part of town. Most of the homes on River Road and part of Main St. would get water in them or at least their basements. It was after this flood that things heated up about following through with recommendations of straightening the lower end of the Platte and building levies.

During 1993, Farley was spared thanks to the levy and sandbagging over the road and RR tracks. I was mayor at the time and recall sitting in a car with a county commissioner making a phone call to Carol Tharp, county Emergency Preparedness Director. The water was up near the road and we were afraid it might raise enough overnight to begin flooding Highway 45. It was decided to close the road and RR. She notified Burlington Northern and the MODOT. We began sandbagging that night to fill in the gaps in the levy. We got a few feet up and quit for the night. Daylight the next morning found 6 inches of water on the sand bags. We requested help from Parkville as they had more people than they could use. A bus load of workers showed up and finished sand bagging to make it level with the existing levy. In short, they helped save our town. The water continued to rise at a rapid rate and we would not have had the manpower to get it done otherwise. The water would get to the top of the levy/sandbags and was seeping over. We were afraid we were going to lose the battle. Later that day, the levy broke on the Missouri River at Waldron. That dropped the Platte River at Farley about 6 inches. It slowly receded from there. During this process, it continued to rain on and off. The water from the bluffs had nowhere to go so it slowly backed up from the levy back into town. We secured a pump with a large diameter hose from FEMA. Mark Wittmeyer provided a tractor to run the PTO required pump. It was operated



Area residents use a boat to navigate the flood waters near the Farley Coop building.

24/7 by volunteers from Farley. The pump took water from the field and pumped it over the levy into the river. This kept the runoff water from backing up to the homes on the south end of town.

Before Hwy 45 was built thru Farley in 1933, there was an old bridge that would come off it's approach whenever the river was high. I'm told by locals it was flooded many times and would be repaired by farmers on each end of the river. I believe the bridge was build in 1887.

Gabbert . . .

(Continued from Page 5)

looked out the window and saw trees rushing by while I seemed to be standing still. But I had to be brave for my younger brother, Lewis was in my care. We soon arrived at our destination, but all dreams must vanish as bubbles in the air, and ours soon fled for just as we sat down to see Barnum's three-ring circus a cyclone came along and tore down our "playhouse". We could hear the ominous roar of the lions and tigers, the shriek of elephants. What a hero Hade Leavel seemed, as he never blinked an eye, but kept us in as the frightened crowd rushed out. What a thrill to come home and spin tales about the frightful things that happened.

Later on in life, C.G. & W. railroad came along and things boomed. A bank was built, board sidewalks were made all over town, three new stile blocks were built in front of the Christian church, a long row of hitch racks were

placed on both sides of the road, and how we 'boomed' for awhile. Then the bank closed its doors, the sidewalks went to decay and were made into kindling wood, and stores vanished but the old church stood.

Again the old town revived when the U.S. Highway came along and made it a connecting link between Kansas City and St. Joseph. The church is still there and pretty girls and friendly boys seem to grow on Bee Creek as in no other soil. And there is a welcome mood to its people that makes you want to live longer and linger in its past memories. There is a gracious hospitality that no other town ever possessed unless it is in the south. Friends come and go but the spirit of peace lingers there and upon the little cemetery west of town, where departed kin and kindly friends lie in their last deep rest. Welcome New Market, my boyhood town! No farewells. May you live forever.

S.J. Gabbert



WESTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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



*“If history were taught in
the form of stories, it would
never be forgotten.”*

*Rudyard Kipling,
The Collected Works*

WESTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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