

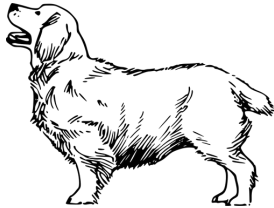
Johnson County Mo. Historical Society  
302 North Main Street  
Warrensburg, Missouri 64093



### OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### WE WILL...

1. Be tolerant and respectful of diverse stories from multiple perspectives.
2. Respect property rights.
3. Focus on authentic and engaging experiences.
4. Honor the region's peoples, past and present.
5. Appreciate unique cultural and historical assets within the nationally important landscape.
6. Invest in community engagement, education and empowerment.
7. Sustain and grow a sense of place.
8. Value and protect the natural environment.
9. Consider future generations in everything we do



GETTING MARRIED?  
CONSIDER HAVING

A

Courthouse  
WEDDING

LET JOYCE OR DONNA KNOW IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN  
JOINING A DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW TO WRITE HISTORY.

# THE BULLETIN OF THE JOHNSON COUNTY (MO.) HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING  
2024

### OPEN HOURS

Tuesday, 1-4  
Thursday, 1-4  
Friday, 1-4  
Saturday, 1-4

302 N. Main

CONTACT

curator@jocomohistory.org

### PRESERVING OUR PAST FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



### WAYS YOU CAN HELP SHARE YOUR TIME

The JCHS Library and Museum always welcomes volunteers. We need help recording our heritage but also in interacting with the public. We need short-term volunteers to help maintain our buildings and grounds.



### Be A PART OF HISTORY DONATE COLLECTIONS

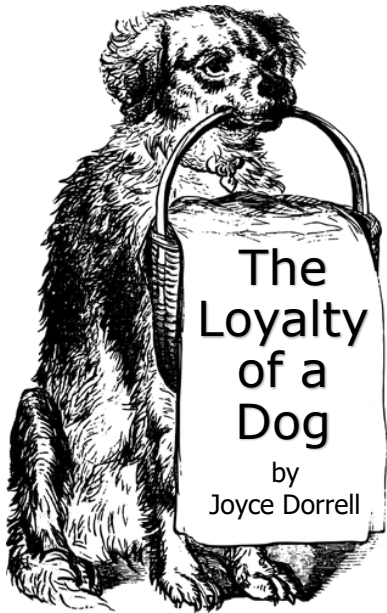
The JCHS is the repository for documents, photographs and memorabilia relating to the history of our county from its founding through today. Nearly everything that we have on display in the museum and on the shelves in the library were donations.



### CONSIDER CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Money or securities given to the JCHS not only help us serve our mission but also provide the donor with a tax deduction. We appreciate gifts of any size, and we welcome memorial gifts honoring a friend or family member.

The Johnson County Historical Society is a 501c (3) non-profit organization which maintains the Mary Miller Smiser Heritage Library & Museum and the historic buildings on the Old Courthouse Square in Warrensburg, MO. Archives of original county records dating from 1834 are housed here, original deeds, original court cases files, along with the original newspaper binders from many of the county's publications. We also house directories, Platt maps, cemetery records, family files, specializing in Johnson County local history.



Jip was a good dog, he was a mixed breed, the kind you call a mutt. Everyday, while 17-year-old John Simmons worked the fields of the family farm near Columbus, Jip would stay and watch over the water jug, jacket, and metal lunch pail left there for a much-needed break. Jip was always happily waiting to greet his master as he came in from the field for lunch, and then again when the hard day's work was done. Equally, John was always happy to be greeted by his favorite furry friend. He gave him a pat on the head, a rub on the chin, as he told him, that he was "Such a good boy"!

In 1945, when the dog days of summer passed, the autumn temps stayed mild, and the harvest fled into November. The 16th started out like any other day. John filled up his water jug for the day as he sipped his coffee with sugar and just enough milk to turn the color from black to gold. His mother packed his pail with last night's biscuit and poured the pork fat from the cast iron skillet right on top.

Come lunch time the biscuit would soak in the grease and be soft and full of flavor, and he always saved a bite for his buddy Jip. After breakfast, John threw on his jacket, gathered up his jug and stepped out near the barn where the John Deere Model B was ready, hooked up to

the Woods Brothers 1 Row Corn Harvester. Behind it, a high sided wagon, emptied the day before, was attached to the corn picker and ready to be filled again.

He removed the cap off the exhaust of the tractor, turned the choke fully on, made sure the ignition was off and turned the gravity-fed gas valve. He then slipped the throttle just enough to let the gas flow, put the tractor in neutral and turned the fly wheel three times to draw some gas into the cylinder. He then shut off the petcocks, put the choke at about halfway and pulled the ignition switch on. When he flung the fly wheel one more time, the ole girl began to purr. Jip heard the call of the tractor starting and jumped on after John took his seat and sat down next to the water jug just under his feet.

John drove to the northeast field where the last of the field corn was to be harvested. He stopped to place his water jug and lunch at the tree line to keep them cool in the shade. The warmth of the morning sun shining down encouraged him to pull off his jacket and drape it across the water jug. Jip, who had hopped off soon as the tractor stopped rolling, took to his spot right next to the lunch pail.

After a few hours of running up and down the corn rows, the harvester started grinding so John jumped off the tractor and went back to inspect the trouble. An awful jam keeping the cogs from turning and the rolling of the corn had come to a complete stop. Without thinking twice, John pushed at the clump that was preventing the machine from working. The clump of husks broke free, but as it did, it rolled and pulled his hand, smashing his fingers inside the machine. He was unable to break free as three of his fingers were torn and shredded, stuck between the rollers. But as fate would have it, he was able grab a wrench from his pocket that he just happened to grab right before jumping off the tractor and pried his hand free.

————— **Continued on inside page**

## JOIN US ON OUR MISSION

The objective of the JCHS, organized as a nonprofit corporation shall be:

- 1 To collect, organize and make available for public use documents, records, and published materials pertaining to the history of Johnson County, Missouri and its people.
- 2 To collect, preserve and exhibit historical artifacts and objects related to the county's history.
- 3 To maintain and preserve the Society's buildings and historic properties on the Old Town Square.
- 4 To encourage and promote educational activities designed to interpret and explain the county's rich and diverse historical past.
- 5 To oversee the staffing and operation of the Mary Miller

***Smiser Heritage Library and Museum***

[jocomohistory.org](http://jocomohistory.org)

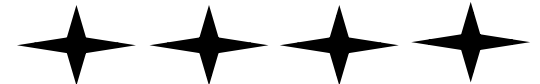
## MEET OUR NEW VOLUNTEER

*Brian Young*



Brian comes to us from the Church of Latter-day Saints. He has been working on displays, learning the archival process and procedures, as well as researching inquiries and helping with the day to day maintenance at the museum complex.

Recently he cleaned all the guns in the museum and curators room and has been metal detecting the historic square and finding many lost items buried in the grounds around the courthouse and other buildings. He has an interest in genealogy and hopes to continue volunteering once his church service is over.



### The Dog Tax is All Right

The pot of progress continually boils and often something comes to the top which stirs great minds. The latest thing off the pot today is a news release from the Gaines Dog Research Center of New York which suggests that dog owners be licensed rather than the dog. If this means that the dog owner will have to wear a leather collar with a brass tag attached we will be forced to take the negative side.

The Dog Research Center goes on to complain that funds derived from dog tax are all too often used for no-dog purchases such as building and maintaining highways. This is slightly out of line because the highways do provide cars for the dogs to bark at thereby providing a mild form of recreation for the canines. Without going into the subject any further we feel we can leave the dog tax thing pretty much as it is until the dogs really complain.

*The Star-Journal, December 1, 1944*



# UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER NEWS

## More RESEARCH YOUR HOME Classes



Do you live in an old home, farmhouse, neighborhood? This class shows you how to research your property to find whether it has a rich history.

Contact  
[curator@jocomohistory.org](mailto:curator@jocomohistory.org)

## SCHOOLHOUSE JAMMERS & HONEY CREEK

The jamming happens most every Sunday between 2-5 p.m. Come enjoy the music.



## Historical Walking Tour



The Trails Regional Library walking tour will begin at 6:30 p.m. on July 9. Sign up at the Trails Regional Library for details.

## CONTRA FOLK DANCES

February 2025 on the Sunday prior to Super Bowl weekend. Join in.



## New Website on the Horizon

To better serve our members and the public, we are in the discussion phase of developing a new website at JCHS. The new site will be easily navigable. Content will be easily readable and printable. Each community in Johnson County will get their own homepage with fully functional navigation. If you have suggestions about content, design, or navigation, please send your suggestions via email to [curator@jocomohistory.org](mailto:curator@jocomohistory.org) or mail to 302 N. Main Street.



## HISTORICAL CHRONICLES

JCHS has introduced three series of articles about Johnson County history. The first series is called **Who's buried in Sunset Hills Cemetery?** It contains the stories about Johnson County citizens who created our history and what we are today. The second series is called **Stories from the Ephemera.** It contains stories on a variety of very interesting topics. The third series is simply called **Small Books**, which contain more extensive content. These articles can be read online or printed for offline reading. They are all printer-friendly.

## MEMBERSHIPS

- DAILY for non-members—\$5 One-person, one-day access to our research library
- GOODALL YEARLY—\$30 Good for all persons at one address for the year.
- BLIND BOONE BUSINESS—\$100 This is for one year. It comes with advertisement in our bi-yearly publication "The Bulletin" and as supporters in all our events for that year.
- OLD DRUM LIFETIME—\$500 Lifetime membership.

FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION

# OLD DRUM DAY

JUNE 8, 2024  
10 am to 4 pm  
302 N. Main Street

COME ENJOY  
THE FUN!



## CAR SHOW



CRAFT VENDORS

## DEMONSTRATIONS

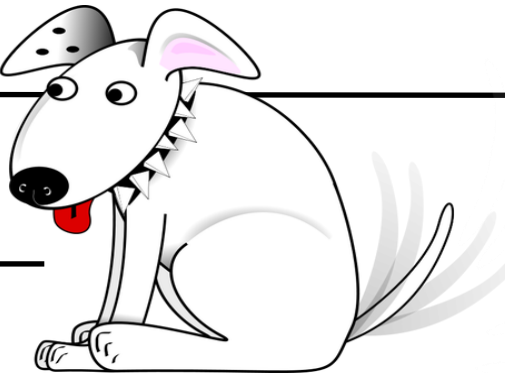


LIVE



MUSIC

## DOG SHOW



ENJOY THE FOOD, TOO!

OLD DRUM AMBASSADOR AND MUCH MORE

## Continued "Loyalty of a Dog"



John and Shirley Simmons

cue his friend. Once he reached John, he wrapped the tablecloth around his hand as tight as he could, helped him into the truck and rushed him to the County Hospital in Warrensburg.

John spent over five days recuperating after having surgery in the hospital. Enon Baptist gathered get well cards and sent them along with flowers. Family and friends from Columbus, Holden, Elm and Warrensburg all came to visit. The Doctor had been able to salvage the index finger on his right hand but was unable to save three others. He had fused the joint a little inward on his index finger so he could still grab things with his thumb, and more importantly, still be able to draw and write.

When his wounds had healed enough to be managed by himself, John was excited to get back home and see his good pal Jip. However, Jip was not at home waiting, nor was he hanging out by the barn. John called for him over and over to come, and when he didn't appear, he started walking the farm in search for him. As he was walking, he realized he had left his favorite jacket at the scene of the accident, and he headed toward the tree line to fetch them. He nearly couldn't believe his eyes to such a happy surprise as low and behold, there sat Jip, waiting for him to return, right there beside his lunch box as he always had before. He greeted his old friend with a pat on the head, a scratch under the chin and told him what a good boy he was. Good ole Jip had stayed guard to

A neighbor who lived near the edge of the field John was working heard all the commotion, stepped outside to have a look, and quickly realized something was very wrong. He could see John, holding up his arm and quickly moving toward him, so he pulled the tablecloth off the table, as it was the first thing

he saw, and ran to res-

## Clean and Crisp

by Sandra Wayne

Inside the barn is cool now,  
No reason to look for curled-up kittens  
And ruffed chickens.  
They're outside  
Where everything is.  
Taking a sun bath  
and drying to a crisp spring breeze.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

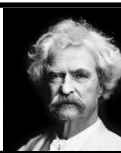
Too often people forget the importance of keeping collections together for its



providence. We are looking for volunteers who understand the importance of our mission. History is something to learn from, not to be thrown away.

The more I learn about people,  
the more I like my dog.

Mark Twain



the lunchbox, water jug and jacket for a solid week, deeply cementing his loyalty and forever proving his love for his best friend.

Foot Note \*Despite the challenges, John kept farming, married his sweetheart, raised eight children, and worked full time as a foreman at Stahl's Specialty Company from which he retired. He spent his golden years spending time with his wife Shirley, refurbishing old tractors, reading books on history and tinkering in his workshop. John and Shirley were members of the JOCOHS and made many donations to the Society, including helping with the move of the Elm School to the History Society Complex.

## The Star-Journal

October 8, 1920

Every public spirited citizen of Warrensburg interested in preserving and disseminating information relating to the achievements of Missourians during the past one hundred years should become members of the Johnson County

"A people who will not honor its history, will make little history to honor."

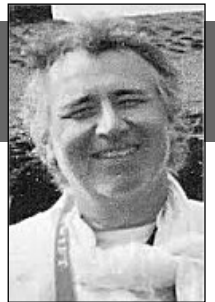
Historical Society which thereby entitles him to active affiliated membership in the State Historical Society. Certainly the history of Missouri and of Johnson County is well worthy of preservation and highest honor.



Consider  
giving a gift  
of  
membership  
to a loved  
one.

## MEET OUR NEW VOLUNTEER

Steve Walker



He was born and raised in Marshall, Missouri.

### Education

1970: B.A. in English (Missouri Valley College)  
1973: M.A. in English (Central Missouri State University)  
1976: M.A. in Library Science (University of Missouri--Columbia)  
1983: Educational Specialist (Central Missouri State University)

### Work

1977-1978: Assistant archivist at Missouri State Archives  
1979: Inventoried holdings of Missouri State Museum  
1979-2016: Cataloger and reference librarian at Central Missouri State University/University of Central Missouri

Steve has done twenty expeditions with Earthwatch, where volunteers assist scientists throughout the world. He continues to travel, having so far visited over 80 countries.

Steve is also a published author. In 2009, he had a book published on travel. Since the mid-1980s he has produced a fanzine about the horror writer H. P. Lovecraft.

Steve has lived in Warrensburg since 1979.

"At the Johnson County Historical Society my current interest lies in the identification and organization of materials."

OLD DRUM DAY is our official fundraising event held annually. it is designed to help recoup costs of building upkeep, along with preservation procedures for the Johnson County (Mo.) Historical Society.

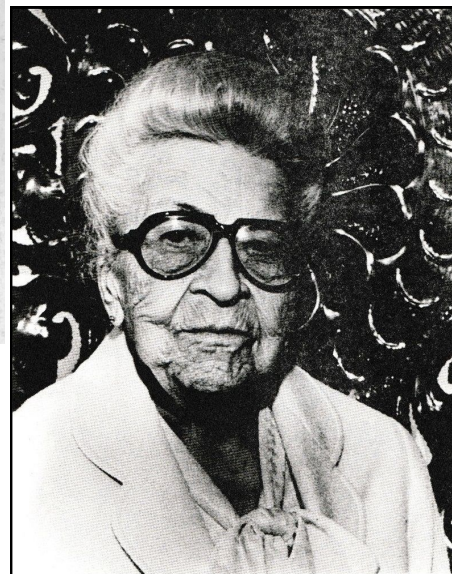
## RENEWALS

Reminder to renew your memberships.  
Pay at the library or contact via email at  
curator@jocomohistory.org



From Kansas City Times, May 25,

Mary Miller Smiser Library is named after the local historian. She is buried at Sunset Hill Cemetery (1883-1983).



GRANDMA'S CAP AND GOWN, donned for commencement at Central Missouri State college, where she received her master's degree, win admiration for Mrs. Mary Miller Smiser from two of her grandsons, Kit Schwensen and Karl Schwensen, both of Warrensburg.

## David Nation Gets a Few Plugs

*Warrensburg Journal, April 21, 1876*

Quite a stir was occasioned here yesterday morning by a collision between Mr. W. S. Shepherd, a young lawyer of this place and D. Nation, editor of the Journal. Nation, for the last three months, has been attacking 'Shepherd in his paper in reference to the correspondence on "Ft. Peck," in the Holden Enterprise. Shepherd met him on Holden Street and struck him in the face. Nation returned the compliment with his cane. Shepherd took the cane from him and got his (Nation's) head under his arm, and presented him with about four "plugs" in the face before he was taken off. The sympathy is all for Shepherd.

## OUR HISTORIC COMPLEX HOSTS FOUR MUSEUMS

- ◆ The Heritage Museum
- ◆ Historic Courthouse
- ◆ Elm Schoolhouse
- ◆ Leland Culp Agriculture and Industrial Building

(SEE OUR GOODALL LAWNMOWER DISPLAY)



[curator@jocomohistory.org](mailto:curator@jocomohistory.org)

## First Normal School President Leaves Among Rumors

George P. Beard was from the Radical Republican Party and ran for Missouri Superintendent of Schools in 1870 but lost to Ira Divoll. The Normal School's Board of Regents members were hardcore Democrats.

Beard had been the focus of the Board of Regents almost since his inception as the first president. Then, according to some papers, he gave a speech that supported Ulysses S. Grant for U. S. President, which did not go over well with local Democrats. Beard did more than a speech. According to a Brookfield, Missouri newspaper, Beard and others had called for Grant ratification in Warrensburg. There was much support for him in Brookfield.

*Brookfield Gazette, July 11, 1872*

Prof. Geo. P. Beard is widely and favorably known in Missouri, and elsewhere, as an able and distinguished educator, and this one act of those who assume to be the custodians of his political preference for the Presidency [US President], will set the seal Rev. G. P. Beard 17 of condemnation on all the fine pretensions of this State administration to "liberalism" and freedom from party dictation.

President Beard found that he was about to be removed for utter incompetency, and pretentiously made a Grant speech to surround himself with "a false odor of martyrdom...." He resigned instead. In February 1872, the board voted to remove him from his position, but Beard and the community did not hear about it until the Spring of 1872.

In retrospect, incompetency was never a description of Beard's ability, so this leads one to accept he was dismissed for partisan reasons.

There was much commotion over his absence. Area Republicans were concerned that Beard was fired because of his political choice for the U.S. president. There was so much blame and questions that created much gossip among citizens. So much so, that the Missouri Teacher's Association initiated an investigation into his release as president.

Read his entire story in "The Grasshopper War," found on the **JCHS** website under **Historical Chronicles**.

*Daily Star-Journal, December 15, 1897*

## Thrashed for Trying to Elope with Preacher's Daughter.

Yesterday, Rev. M. L. Johnson, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, delayed the morning services in order to give Bert Rodney, an actor, hours to leave town. Mr. Rodney, failing to comply with Mr. Johnson's wishes, was assaulted at about noon by Frank Johnson and driven from the city.

The trouble was brought about by the actor winning the affections of Miss Pearl Johnson, the minister's daughter, and attempting to elope with her. About two weeks ago Bert Rodney and another actor arrived and put up at the Central Hotel, of which Rev. Mr. Johnson is the proprietor. There he met Miss Johnson.

Under the auspices of a local lodge, and assisted by local talent, Rodney produced a drama at the opera house. Miss Johnson took a leading part in the play and was in the actor's company a great deal.

The result was the arrangement of an elopement, Sunday being set as the time. Rodney went to Sparta Thursday to give a benefit play, and while there wrote a loving letter to Miss Johnson. The letter fell into the hands of Rev. Mr. Johnson.

The minister awaited his opportunity and met Mr. Rodney, who had just come from Sparta, near the Presbyterian Church, where he created a scene. Frank Johnson, Miss Pearl's brother, gave the actor a thrashing.

Presented by JCHS & Beyond Life Paranormal Research Group  
Saturday July 13, 2024 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

# *Whispers of* Warrensburg

Experience the chilling echos of history at the 1838 Old Town courthouse where the past comes alive with paranormal energy. Join us for a spine-tingling evening as we delve into the mysteries surrounding the infamous murder that took place within these hallowed walls. Hear the whispers of the past as experienced paranormal investigators guide you through the eerie corridors and shadowy chambers, uncovering the secrets that still linger. Will you dare to confront the spirits that roam these historic grounds?

Don't miss this exclusive event for a night of thrills, chills, and a glimpse into the unknown. Book your tickets now and step into a world where history meets the supernatural!

**LIMITED AVAILABILITY!!**

**\$20 Per Person. Contact [curator@jocomohistory.org](mailto:curator@jocomohistory.org)**

Investigation led by Jenn Dorrell for Para stuff.

As seen on Talking Weird Podcast, Untold Radio AM,  
Ghostly Archives Podcast and Paranormal Plus Podcast.