



OLD DRUM DAY—JUNE 14, 2025



Grandma Betty's Pie Crust

- ◆ 4 cups flour
- ◆ 1 1/2 cups lard (NOT SHORTEN-ING)
- ◆ 1 tablespoon sugar (add more sugar for sweeter crust.)
- ◆ 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- ◆ 1 egg
- ◆ 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- ◆ 1/2 cup water

Directions:

Blend flour, sugar, and salt. Cut in lard until particles are the size of peas. Beat egg, blend in vinegar and cold water. Sprinkle over flour mixture, a tablespoon at a time, tossing with fork to mix. Work dough together with fingers until it cleans the sides of the bowl. Chill before rolling (even better after it has been frozen). Makes enough crust for 1 full pie (fruit) and a 1 crust open-faced pie (banana cream, etc.).

OPEN HOURS

302 N. Main
Tuesday, 1-4
Thursday, 1-4
Friday, 1-4
Saturday, 1-4

CONTACT

curator@jocomohistory.org

660-747-6480

Our Historic Complex Hosts
four Museums

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

The Evolution of Johnson County Courthouses: *From Settler Homes to Historic Landmarks*

By Joyce Dorrell, JCHS President

The first county court meeting was held at the home of an early settler shortly after the county was established. Governor Dunklin selected the first county officials during a poll at Columbus and Gallaher's Mill (Montserrat) after the county was formed. The first official county court session took place on April 13, 1835 in Columbus Mo. at the home of Mrs. Nicholas Houx, a widow of a county pioneer. Four months later, her home was also used for the first circuit court session in Johnson County.

In 1835, Warrensburg was chosen as the county seat, and the court moved there from Columbus. The first place where court was held in Warrensburg was located at the log home of Henry Colbern, where the court met in 1836.

Building #1

In the following years, the court ordered the construction of a building for county records and offices. An 18-foot square building was built in Old Town and used for court purposes until 1842. This wooden structure was located at the corner of Water and Gay St. and after the court moved, it became the parsonage for the Methodist Church located across the street.

Meanwhile, three commissioners were tasked with finding a permanent site for the courthouse. One of the commissioners, Daniel Morgan Boone, the son of the famous frontiersman, helped select a spot that's now bounded by West Gay, North Main, West Market, and Water Streets. This site offered a great view of the surrounding area.



COURTHOUSES

Continued from page 1

Building #2

On February 16, 1838, Harvey Dyer was appointed to design the second courthouse, a two-story, 36-foot square building in the Georgian or Federal style. The courthouse, now known as the Old Court House, was completed in 1841 by contractor Joe Wade. Dyer reported some issues with the construction, including the alignment of one wall and the height of the chimneys, but considered most work to be done to contract.

The courthouse wasn't ready for use until 1842, but once completed, it became the county's first significant public building. It was used for a variety of purposes, including as a place of worship for several congregations, a schoolhouse, and a community center. It played a central role in Johnson County for three decades, even hosting a speech by Senator George Vest, which added to its historical significance.

In 1861, due to the violence of the Civil War, county records were hidden, with some saying they were placed in a hollow log by Mrs. Mathias Houx and Mrs. "Aunt Polly" Hill. The records were returned after the war. During the Civil War, the railroad reached Warrensburg, and businesses moved away from Old Town. In 1866, the court ordered the construction of new public buildings for up to \$75,000, a decision that caused concern among citizens in Holden, who felt burdened by post-war economic struggles. After a vote, the courthouse stayed in its current location, but in 1875, the court moved to New Town.

Building #3

The third courthouse, completed in 1875, was a frame building made from pine lumber. The citizens of Warrensburg donated the funds for its construction. The courthouse was 30 feet wide and 50-60 feet long, resembling a barracks more than a courthouse. It stood on the west side of the present-day square, with a cannon on the front lawn. After just 20 years, dissatisfaction with the building grew. In 1895, some citizens fired a cannon through the courthouse door, which led to the building's demolition and the construction of a new courthouse.

Building #4.

The construction of the fourth courthouse, completed in 1896, marked a defining moment in the county's history. Built from locally sourced sandstone, the courthouse came with a hefty price tag of \$50,921.29—an investment that would stand as a symbol of the area's growth and ambition. Among its many striking features was a magnificent statue of Minerva, the Goddess of Liberty, poised with a staff topped by a golden orb. Yet, mysteriously, this iconic ball was removed in the mid-1900s, and the reason behind its disappearance remains debatable to this day.

Adding to the courthouse's grandeur, the clock tower once emitted a brilliant light, visible for miles, that guided travelers to the city. Unfortunately, this beacon of illumination was eventually turned off to cut electricity costs—and it was never restored. The building's roof also once featured two majestic statues, positioned at the front and back entrances. These figures were removed in the 1960s for restoration but were never returned, leaving behind only the memories of their once-proud presence.



DELTA CHI FRATERNITY VOLUNTEERS

Delta Chi Fraternity from the University of Central Missouri worked hard on April 1, 2025, to Spring clean the brick memorial, courthouse, and schoolhouse. These men and former student members have served an important role at the Johnson County Historical Society in Warrensburg, Missouri, for many years. We appreciate their support and volunteer work.

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.

Be Part of Johnson County, Missouri, History!

We're working to keep history alive, and we need your story to help future generations better understand our past. Your memories and experiences are vital to preserving the legacy of our community. Don't let these stories fade away—share them now, before they're lost to time! Tell us your family history, too.

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.

Board of Directors Activities

We have been very busy during the winter months to improve the infrastructure at the library. New equipment investments will improve our systems. Also, the solar panels are reducing our electric bill, considerably.

We are now planning for summer activities, especially Old Drum Day. We would appreciate volunteers for the summer months. Please consider helping the society.

New members were elected to the Board of Directors during the last Annual Membership Meeting on October 13, 2024. Lisa Irle, Ross Frailey, and Gregory Bontz were elected. Since then, Lisa Irle resigned, and Donna Holt was appointed to fill her position. Several months later, Jerome Anderson resigned and Michael Shaw was appointed to fill his position.

In late winter, we purchased a new copier machine that has many functions. One money-saving feature is the ability to print, fold, and staple newsletters. This will save several hundred dollars for each newsletter printing.

The board also purchased a new desktop computer, laptop, and hard-drive. The board also purchased archival software to begin the task of inventorying and developing a searchable database of all archival and museum content. This will mean we need volunteers.

A four-tier 3' wide by 24' long set of shelves has been built in the basement to house museum pieces and other archival content. The basement has been rearranged to provide easier inventorying and retrieval of items.

A new tax professional has also been hired who we hope will be more suitable for our not-for-profit organization.

Window replacements on the Old Courthouse will begin, soon.



To keep receiving our newsletters and enjoy all the benefits of membership, please remember that yearly memberships expire in June. If you haven't updated your membership since before January 2024, it's time to renew! Visit us at the Mary Smiser Heritage Library, mail to Johnson County Historical Society, 302 N. Main Street, Warrensburg, Missouri 64093, or e-mail curator@jocomohistory.org.

MEMBERSHIPS

YEARLY **\$30**

BLIND BOONE BUSINESS
\$100

OLD DRUM LIFETIME
\$500

NON-MEMBERS

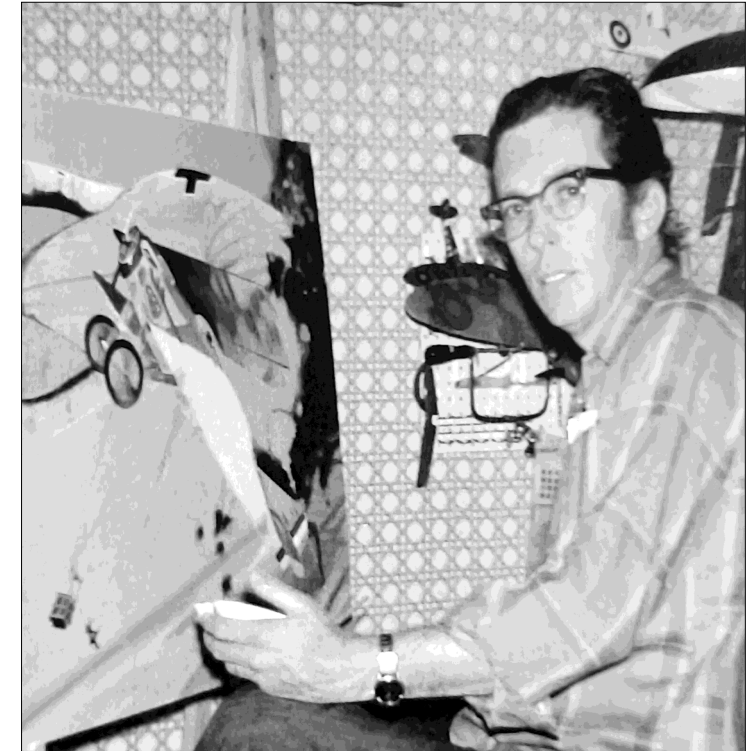
DAILY
non-members **\$5**

Late Warrensburg Veteran was a Talented Artist

Born in Warrensburg, Missouri, Paul Brooks (1934-2013) was a self-taught artist who started painting, drawing, and crafting as a young boy growing up in The Great Depression (1929-1939). His mother, Marion Brooks, had unique talent for watercolors.

Paul's paintings varied in subject from airplanes, ships, landscapes, portraits, and historical scenes. His most celebrated work is titled, "The Warrensburg Train Depot 1890." This historically accurate painting was selected for a Warrensburg Telephone directory cover in 1990.

A U. S. Navy veteran—Paul won gold and silver awards for his World War Two ship models from The international Plastic Model Association.



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.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS DEFINED

If you bought an individual membership in 2023, and you want to continue receiving our newsletter, be sure to update your membership. The 2024 memberships **will expire** soon.

Also, as a reminder, Family Memberships are meant for the purchaser for their lifetime and the residents in their home. They are not inherited, nor do they carry over to a new family once one has grown up and moved on from that residence. If you are unsure of your membership status, contact us at curator@jocomohistory.org

From the Kitchen of *The Star-Journal* Cooking School (1920)

Heritage Notes: *The Star-Journal Cooking School was conducted September 12-16, 1927 in the high school auditorium. Demonstration of the stuffed cabbage dish was provided by Edna M. Ferguson.*



Stuffed Cabbage

- ◆ 1 medium cabbage
- ◆ 1 cup pork sausage
- ◆ 1 cup chopped cabbage
- ◆ 1 cup bread crumbs
- ◆ 1 egg
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon salt
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon baking powder

Cut cabbage from top downwards the stem half way into eight sections and drop into warm water for 10 minutes. Then drain and fold back 4 or 5 of the outside leaves of each section. Scoop out the center, leaving an opening large enough to hold the stuffing. Finely chop this scooped out cabbage and add it to the sausage,, crumbs, egg, baking powder, and seasoning. Fill the cavity with this and fold back the outer leaves. Tie up the cabbage in a cheese cloth. Drop into boiling water and simmer for one hour. When done, lift out and drain, and place on the serving dish, and pour parsley sauce over it.

A nod to the past, from the past.

The Courthouse on the Hill was once a proud and important building. Over the years, it saw many changes and played a big role in the town’s life. However, like many old buildings, it eventually fell into neglect, especially during the Civil War. But even though it wasn’t in perfect shape, the courthouse had some moments of renewal. Repairs were made, and for a while, it seemed like the building might bounce back.

However, change was on the horizon. In 1869, the Clerk's Office just south of the Courthouse caught fire and burned down. After that, things started to shift. The courthouse began to lose its importance as the center of the town. Slowly, court offices moved down the hill to a new area near the train depot, where there was more space and more activity.

By 1878, the courthouse was no longer the main hub for the town’s business. On March 21, 1878, Judge William McMahan decided it was time to sell the building. He asked Sheriff Z. H. Emerson to put the courthouse up for auction. On October 23 of that year, the Evangelical Church of Warrensburg bought the courthouse for just \$500.

Before it became part of the church, Melville P. Moody, who later became a Circuit Clerk, wrote a poem in honor of the old courthouse. His poem, written in 1878, remembered the building as a strong symbol of justice and community.

Moody’s words that follow remind us that while buildings and places may change over time, the stories and memories they hold stay with us.

"Old Court House"

By Melville P. Moody

The old courthouse in its glory gone,
Yields not to gloom nor swift decay.
Courageously it still holds on,
And renders service everyday.

Content it stands upon its hill,
By court deserted yet not by many.
Beneath its roof it shelters still,
The home were order first began.

Once in its walls was heard the tongue,
Of eloquent, impassioned plea,
Here tears were shed and hearts were wrong,
But olden judges' stern decree.

Blind Boone Park is a Historical Landmark

By Joyce Dorell, JCHS president

Did you know that Boone Park in Warrensburg, Missouri, was named after a famous composer and concert pianist, John William “Blind” Boone? In 2001, a three-acre plot on West Pine Street was reopened as Boone Park to keep his legacy alive for future generations.

Despite his disability, he developed his musical talent and became internationally known. He even gave free concert tickets to children, so they could experience the magic of music! His story inspired countless people, especially those with disabilities, showing them that anything is possible.

But Boone Park isn’t just about honoring a musical legend– it also symbolizes the growth of Warrensburg. In the past, the city was segregated, but it has since become more inclusive and integrated. The idea of creating a park for the black community was approved by the city council, ordinance 885, in 1953, and the park was officially named Willie Blind Boone Park in 1954. The park continues to be a symbol of progress and community unity. Boone Park is not just a place to visit– it’s a piece of history that reminds us of the power of resilience and the importance of inclusivity!



Elder Brian Young Nears Completion of Church Service Mission

The Johnson County Historical Society would like to recognize and thank Elder Brian Young, who will soon be completing his Church Service Mission with us. Brian began volunteering with the Society in June 2023 as part of his mission through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His service will conclude in May 2025.

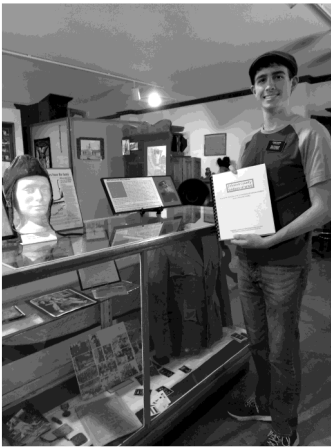
Brian arrived with a strong interest in history, which quickly deepened when he discovered a file in our archives authored by Dorothy Brendal Bonar. The file, detailing Knob Noster’s involvement in World War I from 1917 to 1919, sparked his curiosity and inspired a project of his own.

During his time with us, Brian researched and wrote a booklet chronicling the experiences of Johnson County soldiers during World War II. Drawing from local newspapers and personal letters housed in the JOCO archives, his work brings these powerful stories to life. The finished booklet is now available for public viewing as part of the Mary Smiser Heritage Library’s World War II display.

Beyond his research, Brian has played an active role in the day-to-day operations of the Historical Society. He has responded to research requests from the public, helped maintain the Society’s property, and supported various projects with dedication and care.

Looking ahead, Brian plans to spend the summer working as a camp counselor for a church youth program that will take him across the country. Following that, he plans to pursue certification in UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) Systems.

The Johnson County Historical Society extends its heartfelt thanks to Elder Brian Young for his hard work, enthusiasm, and commitment to preserving our local history. His contributions have left a lasting mark on our organization and community.





Missouri State Library Bookmobile begins

By Gregory D. Bontz

Photo from old postcard

Many older citizens from the late 1950s will recall when the first bookmobile showed up at their elementary school. It was amazing and exciting. The sights, the smells, the colorful books; all in a giant vehicle. Many pupils in those days had never been in a library. It was a childhood experience that made great memories.

It began in 1955, when the **Missouri State Regional Demonstration Library** introduced the bookmobile program. The bookmobile would travel between towns and schools, making sure all children had chances at reading a good book without buying it. Unfortunately, the program only went to a half-dozen

counties to test the program for efficiency and application, and the program was only for one year.

The program was a “hit” in Johnson and Lafayette counties. Thousands of books had been distributed in a week’s time. Free books to read and return.

Johnson Countians liked the program so much they petitioned the local government to put a tax proposal on the referendum for creating a Trails - Regional Library Bookmobile. It passed. The bookmobile ran until 10-15 years ago.

Bookmobile Day was a special day.

The Schoolhouse String Band

- ◆ Will perform on Sunday afternoon on May 4, 2025 at the Mid-Missouri Artist’s Show at Warrensburg Community Center.
- ◆ Old Drum Days on June 14.
- ◆ On June 17th at Fort Osage in Buckner, Missouri as part of events commemorating the 200th



OLD DRUM DAY 2025

JUNE 14, 9 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

- ◆ Featuring by popular demand
- ◆ Live Play Performance:
- ◆ “DRUM Faithful and True Even Unto Death”
- ◆ Live play Performance
- ◆ Doggie Costume Contest Crown- ing of Old Drum Ambassador
- ◆ Free Museum Tours All Day
- ◆ Bake Sale
- ◆ Vendors and More

**For more information, contact
curator@jocomohistory.org**

I HAVE TALKED TO PEOPLE, IN PERSON, FROM FOUR CENTURIES IN HISTORY

By Gregory Douglas Bontz

I was thinking about my great-grandmother, Willa French (Blackmore) Young. I was thinking how much I miss her. She was born in 1888 and died in 1986. Her 98 years gave me a long time to know her, listen to her stories, and to marvel at her resilience. My sister and I would spend weeks in the summer at her rural Rhineland, Missouri, home. So, I can say I knew someone from the 19th Century.

Her daughter, my grandmother, Erna Lucille (Young) Smith, lived to be 99 years old, so I had plenty of time getting to know her, listen to her stories, and marvel at her resilience. So, I can say I knew someone from the 20th Century.

I had grandchildren born after the new century. So, I know people born in the 21st Century.

Now, I have great-grandchildren who, if they live to at least 76 years and into the next century, I will have known someone who lived in the 22nd Century.

Chances are I have talked to people who lived in four different centuries. I think that’s *HISTORICALLY AWESOME*.

ADDITIONALLY

If someone born in 1899 lived until 2001 at the age of 102 years, he or she would have lived in three centuries. That’s cool, too.

THANK YOU

We want to thank Board member Mike Shaw for going to Minnesota to retrieve our newest donation.

It is a large cuboid container, which is a large travel trunk that travelled with the Schmidt-Domsch household from Germany in the 1880s to Johnson County.

Reverend Domsch served the German Lutheran Church in Dunksburg.



DUMMY LINE

The Star-Journal, November 16, 1889

The route as decided on so far begins at the bath house and skirts the north side of the big lake.

After leaving the lake it follows the ravine north for a few hundred yards, then with a graceful curve follows the ravine to Holden street. The route from this point has not yet been definitely settled. It may come in on Holden street but will more probably cross Holden street diagonally to Normal Avenue, and thence on Miller street to Gay and thence to the court house. Running parallel with and on the south side of the road will be a nicely graded boulevard fifty to eighty feet in width. The land through which the line is to run is owned almost entirely by Mr. Christopher. The road will be of standard gauge and regular railway rails will be used.

The intention now is to have a spur from the Missouri Pacific main track to connect with the dummy line on Miller street just south of the iron bridge. Excursion trains can then be run to the springs without the necessity of transferring passengers.

The motive power for the dummy line will be either steam or electricity. If the latter, the overhead wire system will be used, and five motors with a coach will be used, and fine motors with a coach for each motor will be purchased.

This line will be the means of utilizing many of the handsome building sites along the route, developing that part of the city.

DUMMY LINE AND EQUIPMENT SOLD

The Star-Journal, March 28 1922

The Dummy tracks and all equipment used on "Warrensburg's Street Railway," has been sold and will be shipped away from this city in the near future. C. A. Gray, former owner and manager of the Springs, made the purchase.

Work on tearing up the tracks was started several days ago. The entire track line likely will be up within the next ten days, following which Warrensburg will have no street railway.

Local residents who have patronized the Old Dummy for many years, will mark its passing with sincere regret. Millions of people have traveled to and fro from the springs in the twenty-five years the railway has been in operation. While 'tis true the Dummy failed many times when it was needed most, it has served the purpose well.

The tracks which have been in use these many years, were formerly the Wichita Railroad of Wichita, Kansas.

The original franchise for the Dummy line started in front of the court-house, extended east to Maguire, south on Maguire to the Springs. This route, however, was never followed, the Dummy always starting at Hotel Estes.

THE DUMMY LINE TRANSPORTED PEOPLE FROM TOWN TO PERTLE SPRINGS IN ITS HEYDAY.