

# WEST PLAINS GAZETTE

\$5.95

Number Thirty, Winter 1987



# When Christmas Shopping Was a Family Event

by Larry Batson of the Minneapolis Tribune

[Seven years ago in Gazette Number Nine, the following article was used for the Richards Brothers Christmas ad. After 55 years of business in the same location, Richards Brothers is expanding to better serve their customers. Because of the changes taking place, Oline Richards wanted to rerun the ad and update the article for the 1987 Christmas issue.]

Just before Christmas they would come to town one "evenin'" — which in the hills means any time after 12 noon. Families of hill people in old cars, trucks, once in a while a wagon with kids in back, wrapped in quilts against the cold.

They would split off into groups and take in the sights. Mothers toting babies, older girls gripping the hands of young children, boys of scuffling or flirting age rammin' around on their own or with chance-met friends. For hours they would walk around the courthouse square and the streets leading into it, looking in the store windows, pausing to chat or rest, waiting for early dark when the Christmas lights on the courthouse itself would be turned on.

Men would gather in clusters around the square, conversing quietly and listening with grave courtesy to the routine exchanges involving weather, work, livestock and grain prices.

The various segments of their families would pass every few minutes. Boys sniggering and shoving each other like frisky cubs, women pausing to greet newcomers to the male caucus or to inquire of absent wives, girls wearing that expression of serene unawareness that means they know they are watched.

At some time in the evening the family would come together again and walk down Washington Avenue to Richards Brothers store.

A country store like Richards was a wondrous place, an emporium where every need, every wish could be filled — within reason and the family's available credit. In hard times the hill people lived on hope and good intentions, from crop to crop. They handled cash money once or twice a year. In between the storekeeper carried them on his books.

Storekeepers like Dwight and Claude Richards kept the fragile economy of the hills in balance. They knew their people, and credit was based not so much on what a family owned but on its character, its reputation, its proven qualities.

"We Buy Anything, Sell Everything," was the Richards Brothers slogan. A storekeeper who insisted on cash did not survive. Claude and Dwight bartered.

You could haul a load of watermelons to Richards, stacks of

opossum, raccoon or rabbit hides, newly split fence posts, black walnuts (hulled or otherwise), chickens, eggs, a bucket of wild blackberries, ginseng root, anything useful that came into your hands. At the store you could turn it into dress goods, cheese, shotgun shells, tobacco, a can of kerosene with a raw potato to plug the spout . . . anything

The Richards brothers came from a family of storekeepers.

Their father and uncle opened the original store in 1904 in the village of Pomona, Missouri.

Claude reopened a store there in 1921 and Dwight joined

him in the business. Then in 1932 they moved to the county seat — a daring venture in those bleak times.

[In 1980, Larry Batson visited with Dwight Richards about the early years when the storekeepers

and their customers were living on "hope and doggedness." Following are excerpts from the interview.]

"Used to sell red wagons — Radio Flyers, they were called — and dolls and doll carriages by the truck lot," Dwight remembered. "A big wagon cost less than \$5. And we'd put up two-pound sacks of hard candy for a dime. Still do it, at Christmas only, but it's 69 cents now.

"Credit? Dh my, yes, we still give credit," Dwight said, "but we had to quit buying and swappin'. We gave up our slogan. You can't operate that way these days." And he talked for a bit of those Christmases long ago, the nights when the hill people came to do their holiday trading. . .

Finished with sightseeing, families would file into the big store, inspect the holiday goods, confer quietly. Then the children would leave, to wait outside and hope. Husband and wife would talk, make decisions. . . "Get this for sure, that if you can, and it would be mighty nice if. . ."

The woman would stand by, pretending not to listen, while her man and the storekeeper spoke in low voices. Figures would be jotted down on a brown paper bag and added. A decision would be reached. The storekeeper would call for help and clerks would begin putting up the order, wrapping or boxing dolls, wagons, candy to keep the children wondering until Christmas.

— From the Minneapolis Tribune, December 17, 1978. Reprinted by permission.

The photo above is our West Plains Store in 1932.



## RICHARDS BROTHERS

"Serving the Ozarks Since 1904"

# WEST PLAINS GAZETTE

WINTER, 1987

NUMBER THIRTY

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## ON THE COVER

These three photographs, which, being in a horizontal format, were not used for previous *Gazette* covers, summarize what the *Gazette* has always represented to me . . . people. The upper photo was taken in the winter of 1980-81 when we did a feature story on Bill Virdon, who at that time was manager of the Astros. Left to right: Dr. Marvin Fowler, Gene Richman, Bill Virdon and Jack Clark. At bottom left are Crockett and Willie Oakes, standing in their front yard on north Washington Avenue, circa 1982. At bottom right are Fay Shanks and his wife, Classie Jane, in their small post office-grocery store at Zanoni, Missouri, in Ozark County, about halfway between Hodgson Mill and Gainesville.

PHOTOS BY RUSS COCHRAN

## CONTENTS

**From the Editor's Desk . . . . . 2**  
**A Gazette Retrospective . . . . . 3**  
**Mike Cochran**  
**Letters . . . . . 7**  
**THE HISTORY OF WEST PLAINS**  
**A decade by decade account . . . . . 14**  
**Terry Fuhrmann Hampton**

## Au Revoir, Not Goodbye

by Russ Cochran

This is the last regular issue of the *West Plains Gazette*.

(Gulp!), Whew!! (Comic-book expressions)

It was almost exactly ten years ago that I started collecting the photographs, writing the articles, and selling the advertisements for the first issue of the *West Plains Gazette*. Knowing that issue #1 would be a prototype issue for all the following issues, I wrote every article myself, I sold every ad, and took all the pictures, edited and laid out the entire issue to suit one person . . . myself. I figured that I am so picky about reproduction quality, paper quality, and layout and design, that if I was satisfied with it, other folks would like it too.

That first issue took about three solid months of my life, longer than I had expected. I knew that the only way for the *Gazette* to continue would be for me to have help with the writing and editing and ad-selling chores in future issues, so my younger brother Mike (Michael Alan Cochran) came on board the good ship *Gazette* and we set sail for more issues. Starting

with about issue #4, Terry Fuhrmann (now Terry Hampton) started helping Mike, and when Mike left for greener pastures, Terry stayed on and she has really been the guiding force behind the *Gazette* for the last several years. I continued to take all of the photos for most of the issues, but finally had to give up even that, which was the most enjoyable part of the *Gazette* work for me.

Over the past ten years, many people . . . ones who knew a little about the printing and publishing business . . . have asked me how it was possible to have a high-quality, slick-paper, large-format magazine devoted to such a small area. Most larger cities have their own magazines, but as far as I know there is no other town on the planet Earth that is as small as West Plains and has a comparable-quality magazine.

Cities the size of Springfield have enough of a population base that they can sell enough copies to make a profit. They can charge more for their ads, they can sell

(Continued on page 72.)



As I put the finishing touches on issue Number Thirty, it is with mixed emotions of regret and relief. I am relieved to an extent to think ahead to next Christmas that maybe the holidays won't be quite so hectic for me because a *Gazette* deadline is looming ahead. I'm relieved that circumstances beyond my control will never make another *Gazette* late. But it is only with a small amount of gladness and a much larger measure of sadness that I write this last message from the editor for the *West Plains Gazette*.

Most of the other messages I've written for this page have been fairly simple to do. Even in Number Twenty-Nine when I faced a difficult subject I knew what I wanted to say. But this time, this last issue of the *Gazette*, what do I say?

Naturally I say thank you to our loyal readers and advertisers. You've all been supportive from the very start and have stood by us through the ups and downs.

I also say thank you to everyone who has ever loaned us a photo (or a whole collection of photos), called to give us more information on a published photo, or written us a letter or an article.

I think many of you have seen this as *your* magazine, sharing the

good times and the bad, contributing when we needed it (both money and information), and sharing the joy and pride we take in producing it.

One day (not so long ago) Russ said, "Let's make this last issue of the *Gazette* the history of West Plains." It sounded like a fine idea to me until I started really thinking about it. How could I ever travel 150 years back in time and tell the story of a town as diverse as West Plains, as special as West Plains? It wasn't easy, and I didn't have much time.

Making sure everything that should be included gets included in a work like this is nearly impossible. There will be many things left out that should not have been left out, and perhaps, a few things put in that would better have been replaced by something more important. I make no apologies for this history, unless there is an error in accuracy. I only ask that you consider how difficult the task was before being too harsh on my judgment of what I chose to include and what I did not.

I've relied heavily on past *Gazettes*, our old newspaper file, and other published sources. But I've tried to intersperse personal memories wherever I can. After all, it's all of the memories of everyone who has ever lived in a place that make up the history of that place.

Perhaps a story or photo will trigger an almost forgotten memory in you. For example, when I found the photo of the 1976 Bicentennial celebration (on page 68), I remembered that as a high school student I had made the banners which are posted on the courthouse behind the people in the picture. Those banners are on top of everything else in the time capsule and will be the first thing the members of the Howell County Court see when they open it in 2076.

Another memory is one of those things that has become a memory not because I actually remember it, but because of it's being told so many times over the years. When Richards Store burned in 1962, and

they put up the big tent, I was only about a year and a half old. One day while the tent was still up, I ran down the street and fell and hit my head on the pavement. One of the cashiers, Carolyn Vonallmen (who still works at Richards), helped fix me up. I still have a little scar on my forehead to remind me of the big tent at Richards Brothers.

It seems almost everyone from West Plains holds this town dear. Whether they still live here or whether they live far away, natives seem to view West Plains through rose-colored glasses. No one will ever be able to convince me that there's nothing special about West Plains. "It's just like thousands of other small towns across the country," you may say.

But I say no and readily admit to being completely prejudiced. I have little interest in delving into the histories of those thousands of other places. West Plains is my home. The only place I've ever lived, and, as far as I know, the only place I ever will live.

And now I've stalled long enough that I must come to the farewell part of this message — the hard part. I've worked at the *Gazette* since the summer I graduated from high school, and it's been such a part of my life for so long that I'm reluctant to turn loose. I've learned a lot in the past eight and a half years, and I've met and worked with many people who will always be special to me.

But as with everything, there is a time and a season, and the time for this magazine has come to a close. I think in many ways all of us hope to preserve a little of ourselves to live beyond the time when we'll be gone. It is my hope that the *Gazette* has preserved a little of everyone who has been connected with it, and that it has helped preserve the history of our town.

Thank you all for helping me enjoy my time with the *Gazette*. I won't say good-bye, but only God bless you until we meet again.

*Jerry Lynn Hampton*

December 22, 1987

# A Gazette Retrospective

by Michael Cochran

"Wow, you did it! You *really* did it!" That was my reaction when Russ handed me a copy of the Gazette's "First Big Issue" back in the spring of 1978. I'd known he was planning a publication based on the history of West Plains, but had never imagined the finished product would be a tabloid-size magazine printed on enamel gloss paper with a full color plasticized cover. I mean, we're talking *slick*, folks; swanky, deluxe, the works! And I was not alone in my surprise. I think everyone who saw the first issue was impressed, and pleased. But the question that always seemed to follow the initial wonder was a puzzled query: Why?

Why did Russ Cochran launch the *West Plains Gazette*? It wasn't in hopes of making money. Sure, a profit would have been nice, but that was never the primary motive where Russ was concerned. In his editorials, and in interviews and newspaper articles where he was asked, he always said that the magazine was inspired by his love and appreciation for the town and area that had provided him with a wonderful boyhood, and that the *Gazette* was his way of expressing and sharing those feelings; a gift he was returning in kind. I believe that's true, but I also think there's more to it than that.

Let's go back to the fall of 1974. It was Thanksgiving and everyone had come home. Russ had just informed the family of his decision to resign as chairman of the physics department at Drake University so that he could move back to West Plains and devote full time to his new career as a publisher and collector of comic art. Everybody, including me, was trying to talk him out of it. We were out driving around town that night when Russ mentioned he was looking to buy a building where he could both house his family and base his business.

"I think I know the place you're looking for," I said, after we had

driven by several uninviting candidates. "Just go south off the square." We rode in silence until Aid Hardware and then the Presbyterian Church slid by in the darkness.

"There," I said, pointing toward the Zorn building with its domed forecorner rising into the night sky.

"The Zorn building?"

"Looks like it's empty again," I ventured as we looked at its vacant windows. In recent years the Zorn had been used as a cafe and, later, as a motorcycle shop.

"That's it!," he said, pounding the steering wheel for emphasis. He wasn't kidding. Before the year was out, Russ bought the building from Jim and Dorothy Murrell.

In the months that followed, the big move was made, and with the steady attentions of various tradesmen and workers, the Zorn building was renovated, becoming a townhouse residence upstairs and a mail order office complex on the ground floor. All of which brings us back to the original question: Why the *Gazette*?

As word got around town about what Russ had done, it naturally aroused the collective curiosity of the community. I mean, here's a guy who resigned a top job at a prestigious university so he could move back to his hometown and play with comic books, right? If you've ever lived in a small town, you know how it is. Folks were just a bit puzzled, dubious even, as work on the Zorn continued, as in "*Now what is it he's gonna be doin' in there?*"

I think the *West Plains Gazette* was Russ's way of answering that question. It was his way of announcing that he was back, who he was, what he was about and what his priorities were. And it was his way of validating to himself what he had just done to himself and his family.

Russ has told me since that the weeks leading up to the publishing of the first *Gazette* were torture. He couldn't sleep, he was so nervous, he toiled with agony over every page and still was filled with worry and doubt. I know what he was feeling. . .stage fright: the age-

old fear of making yourself vulnerable in front of your peers. And no audience is as hard to face as the hometown who no longer knows you. If that first issue had flopped, there would never have been another. But it didn't. It was received with unanimous enthusiasm, and that's what brought me into the picture.

After the first *Gazette* went over so well, Russ did what any smart man would do. . .heave a sigh of relief and promise himself 'never again!' But on the other hand, public demand indicated the magazine should continue to be published on at least a semi-regular basis. So, enter brother Mike, the writer of the family.

A writer, yes, but as an editor and person in charge of producing a magazine on a tight schedule I had absolutely no experience. Nevertheless, I couldn't resist the opportunity, so I too quit my job and moved back to West Plains, diving headlong into the deep waters of the publishing business.

I began by purchasing half-interest in the magazine. Then, mostly for my benefit, we decided on a quarterly publishing schedule. While profit was not a major concern for Russ, it was for me as I had all my personal worth riding on the success of the venture. We hoped four issues a year would strike the best balance between the potential to make money and what was practically feasible for a staff of two to accomplish. Later, when the size of our staff had grown, we went to six issues per year, then back to four, but never succeeded in finding the magic formula that would have put the venture into the black. It was the lack of a firm financial future for myself and my family that eventually forced me to leave the *Gazette* in 1982.

The fact that we weren't able to show a profit doesn't mean we weren't having success. Each new issue brought a flurry of new subscriptions and brisk over-the-counter sales, the business community gave us consistent and loyal support through advertising in our pages and as retail sales outlets, and individuals such as

Dorotha Reavis and Toney Aid shared their many hours of personal research through their articles and photographs. And who can consider the stories and memoirs of people like Dick Shadburne and Herman Quick to be anything less than successful publishing? But in terms of finance, the bottom line is that we were never able to sell enough magazines to recover the expenses generated by expensive paper, full color covers, plastic coating, and other standards on which we were not willing to compromise.

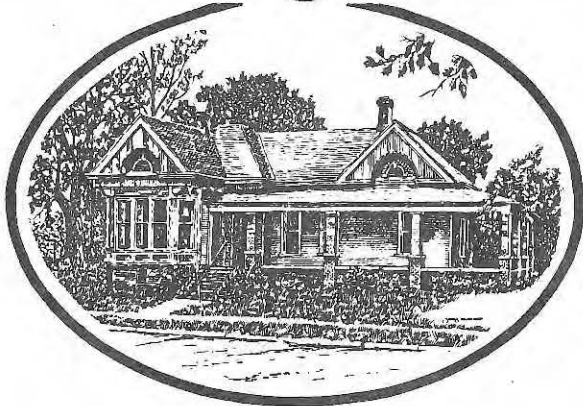
The standard of excellence established with *Gazette* number one was not easy to maintain. Our goal was simple: perfection in typography, graphics, photographic reproduction, and accuracy of historic data. Of course, it was never achieved, every issue had its flaws, but the desire to make it perfect was the major key to the consistent quality of each issue. On the other hand, the relentless pressure created by our

admittedly unrealistic goal caused many staff members to burn out after relatively short tours of duty. There is one staff member, however, who did not burn out: Terry Fuhrmann Hampton.

One of the features in *Gazette* number three, published in the spring of 1979, was a series of in-depth interviews with members of that year's high school graduating class, including Terry. At this point, I was running the magazine single-handedly, and as the workload rapidly grew, Russ and I agreed it was time to hire an office manager. We offered the job to Terry, she accepted and has been with the *Gazette* ever since, progressing from mundane office work to being the person responsible for designing each issue and seeing it through to the finished product. Without diminishing the invaluable input of all who have been associated with it, I think it's safe to say that without Terry, the *Gazette* would have ceased publishing long before now.

During my years as *Gazette* editor, I was frequently asked which issue I thought was our best. I can no more answer that now than I could then. As far as I'm concerned, each issue has contained material unique or noteworthy enough to be deemed a "best." Personally speaking, I think my best work was contained in the earlier issues, *Gazettes* Two through Ten, when my energies were fresh and financial considerations had not become so burdensome. The hardest work was researching and writing the histories of prominent pioneer families of the area. It was extremely difficult to separate fact from fiction, historically speaking, and harder still to find a way of presenting often unpleasant information in a way that was factually correct and still acceptable to the present day members of those families. The most enjoyable aspect was conducting interviews. Of these, I think our published interviews with Homer Arnett, Aunt Bess Newton, and Cap Newberry

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stand out as highlights of Ozark authenticity.

Do I have any regrets? Well, if we had known when we were just starting out what we know now, perhaps some costly mistakes could have been avoided. And certainly some great and colorful personalities slipped away before we could capture at least a part of them in our pages. But no. . .no regrets. From the beginning, our aim was to record with accuracy and compassion the history of this one small town and the hills that surround it, and to preserve that history in a form that will stand the test of time. And for 30 issues, that's exactly what we've done.

All issues of the *West Plains Gazette* have been printed on high quality paper to ensure that photographs and print won't fade, yellow, or crumble with age. The covers have all been coated with plastic to protect the contents from moisture and mildew. That means that copies of the *Gazette* will be around long after we and our children's children are gone.

I like to imagine a time, say 100 years into the future, when someone somewhere is going through their family's long-forgotten keepsakes. In the corner of an attic trunk they find a stack of dusty magazines. They take them out, dust them off, and start turning the pages, stopping here and there to read. In those pages our faces will be seen, our names read, our stories heard again. In this way, despite the years, they will know us, and we will know them.

This 30th issue marks the end of regular publication for the *Gazette*, at least for now. Will there be another *Gazette* in the future? The answer to that question will have to come from the person who created it in the first place, and who always paid the bills when the bank account was empty. But whatever happens, Russ, I think we can say,

"We did it. . .we really did it."

— *Michael Cochran*

## Organizations in West Plains

*The following is a list of organizations in West Plains arranged chronologically in the decade they were formed or founded. Sincere apologies to any group which might be left out.*

### 1860s

Mount Zoin Lodge A.F. and A.M. in 1867

### 1870s

Odd Fellows in 1871

### 1880s

Grand Army of the Republic in 1885

Royal Arch Masons in 1885

Knights of Pythias in 1889

### 1890s

Knights Templar in 1890

Order of the Eastern Star in 1890

Court of Honor in 1890

Woman's Relief Corps in 1892

Modern Woodmen of America in 1895

Rebekahs in 1896

Fortnightly Club in 1896

Woodmen of the World in 1897

Royal Neighbors in 1898

Company K of the National Guard in 1899

### 1900s

Chamber of Commerce in 1900  
(originally known as the Commercial Club)

Pythian Sisters in 1900

Knights and Ladies of Security in 1903

Needlecraft Club in 1906

Sew and Sew Club in 1907

Lacher Club in 1908

Bon Temps in 1909

### Teens

Brotherhood of American Yeoman in 1911

Boy Scouts in 1913

Wednesday Club in 1913

Five Hundred Club in 1913

Daughters of the American Revolution  
in 1914

Parent-Teacher Association in 1914

P.E.O. Sisterhood in 1916

Howell County Chapter of the American  
Red Cross, June 14, 1917

Howell County Extension Office in 1917  
(began with a home economist)

Wayne T. Boles American Legion Post  
in 1919

### 1920s

Girl Scouts in 1923

American Legion Auxiliary in 1923  
Business and Professional Women in 1925  
4-H (originally started as cooking and sewing clubs in 1926. Sometime in 1930s became known as 4-H).

### 1930s

Robert F. Mullins Post #1828 of V.F.W.  
May 9, 1930

Kiwanis, June 23, 1930

Women's Library Club II

October 18, 1930

Ladies Auxiliary of V.F.W.

November 26, 1937

### 1940s

W.P. Rotary Club, March 18, 1941

Lions Club, September 19, 1946

### 1960s

West Plains Artists Guild in June 1963

Lionettes Club in 1967

West Plains Elk Lodge #2418  
and Auxiliary in 1969

### 1970s

Optimist Club in 1970

Howell County Volunteers in 1971

Disabled American Veterans  
March 28, 1972

(Auxiliary one year later)

West Plains Council on the Arts in 1975

South Central Missouri Genealogical  
Society in January 1975

### 1980s

Christos Honse in 1981

Progressive Study Club (Partner Club)  
July 1983

Junior Club, July 1984

Juniorette Club, July 1984

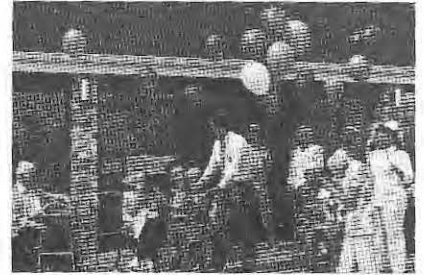
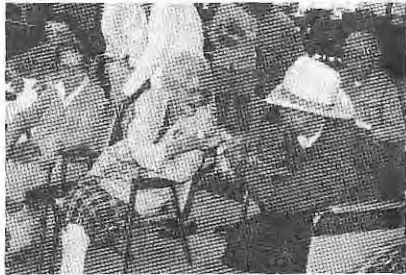
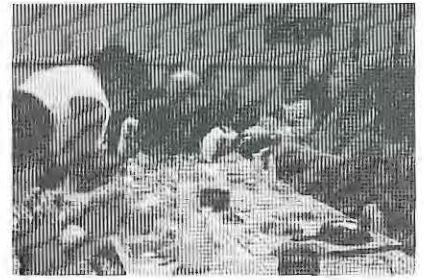
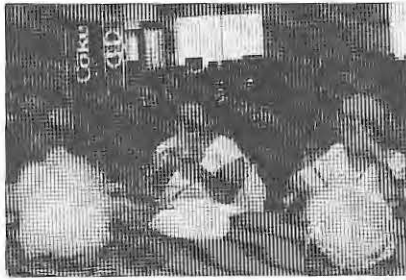
Girls Town Club, July 1984

Heart of the Ozarks Theatre Company  
(HOTCO) in 1987

West Plains Car Club in 1987

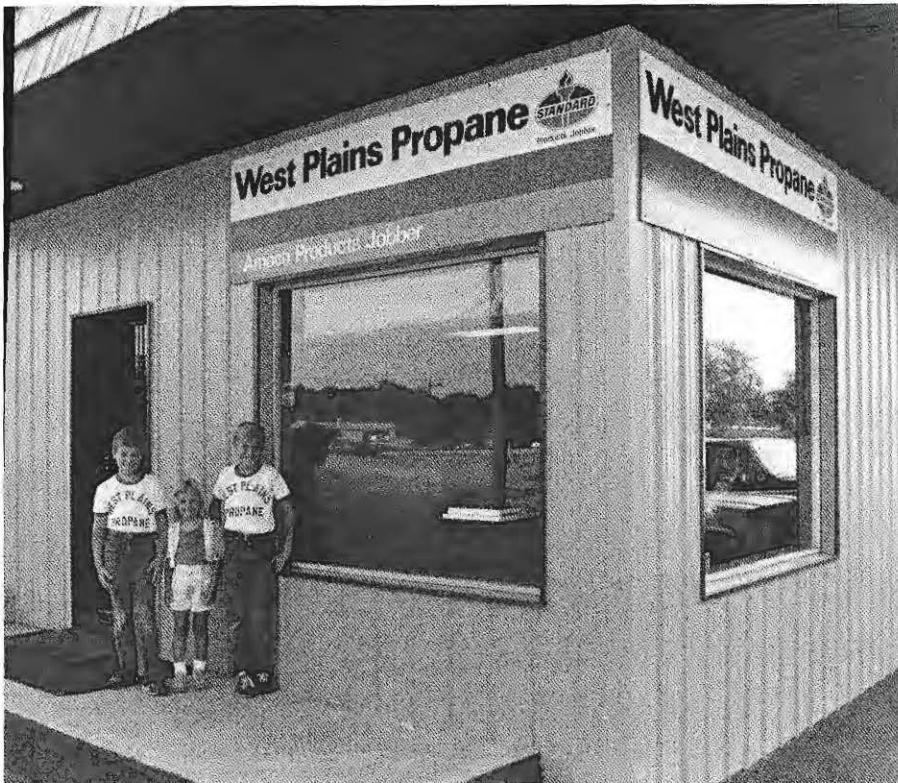
The Salvation Army has recently been re-organized in West Plains, and a local chapter of the Audobon Society and the American Vets, Post 98 and Auxiliary were also organized in the 1980s.

# WEST PLAINS HEALTH CARE CENTER



*Our Management Team shares a common goal: We want West Plains Health Care Center to be the finest Skilled Nursing Facility anywhere, and at the same time we want it to be a warm and happy home for our residents. Come visit us and tell us how we're doing.*

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Jacob, Megan, & Andy

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# LETTERS

(Many thanks to all the readers who have written to us over the years. Your kind comments have kept us going.)

Dear Russ,

I just received my current issue of the *Gazette* and am dropping everything to read it, as usual.

You always have so many beautiful and interesting people in your stories, most of whom I know or at least heard Mom and Dad talk about.

I'm so sorry that I read J.E. "Good" Hard's obituary a week before this magazine arrived. I hope he got to see it. I met Mr. Hard in 1954 while attending WPHS with his daughters. Many years later, in 1973, I again saw and talked with Mr. Hard in the coffee shop of the Holiday Inn numerous times. I never saw him without a smile on his face, and warm handshake, and a kind word to every person he met.

He TRULY was "GOOD"!!!

That's the way I remember your father, Van . . . Woody Woodworth . . . and Jack McFarland, just some of my Daddy's real good friends.

I've moved since the last *Gazette* came out but it caught up to me. Please note my new address. You see, I have them all, so far, and don't want to start missing them now.

I have to get back to my *Gazette* and please keep them coming.

Thank You,  
Roberta Barnett  
Mountain Grove, Missouri

*Note: Even though the entire magazine was not completed in time for Good to see it, he did have an opportunity to see the cover of the Gazette just a few days before his death.*

Thank you so much for the lovely tribute paid to our brother Good in your last issue. We shall all treasure that issue forever. I'm enclosing a poem I wrote which was read at the funeral. Use it if you see fit. We enjoy the magazine and look forward to every copy.

We have made friends with a woman who is trying to establish her family tree. Her folks came from Oregon County. I loaned her the issue featuring the early history and she was delighted. We have saved all of our copies and I especially enjoy going back through them from time to time. Enclosed is my renewal check.

Sincerely,  
Holly (Hard) Carlson  
Englewood, Colorado

FOR GOOD!

HE WAS A TREASURE,  
HE WAS A PLEASURE,  
HE WAS A GROUCH,  
WHO'D SIT ON THE COUCH,  
AND SAY "HELL!"  
HE LOVED TO VISIT,  
AND PHILOSOPHIZE,  
AND SYMPATHIZE,  
AND TALK WISE!  
HE LOVED HIS WIFE,  
HIS KIDS,  
HIS FAMILY,  
HIS HOME AND CHURCH,  
HE LOVED WEST PLAINS,  
HE LOVED GOD -  
AND GOD LOVED HIM!  
HE WAS OUR BROTHER!

- HOLLY CARLSON

Joe was right about it not being the Arcade Hotel, there was a small one-story building between the Quill building and the sidewalk along the Arcade Hotel which I had forgotten about. It was destroyed in the explosion. I think there was a picture of it in the *Gazette*, but if so, I don't remember the issue. Anyway it was my mistake. But I think the picture was a good summertime one, mindful of the days when clothes were made by hand, washed in the tub on a washboard, starched stiff, and ironed with an iron heated on a hot stove. White dresses and many petticoats! In some ways they were not the good ole days!

Pauline Pond  
West Plains, Missouri

*Note: This letter from Pauline was written in response to a comment from Joe Aid about the photo on page 64 of issue Number Twenty-Nine.*

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IN TOWN

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As you know, I have never been critical of anything which you have printed in the *Gazette*. Never was there ever a reason to. You also know that in some of the articles which I have submitted there have been some errors in times and places which, in your editing, you have corrected before printing.

Now, in *Gazette* #29, I must point out that, due to my own sloppy handwriting, some errors have shown up in "Scatter Shooting" about the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904. For instance, Delmar Gardens which has long been known as one of the premier entertainment and amusement parks in the country was printed "DELMAR GORDON'S" and "DELAWARE GARDEN." The municipal opera is "MUNI" not "MUNY," the song was "Meet Me in St. Louis, (pronounced LEWY) Louis, Meet Me at the Fair" — of course some people do call "LOUIS" "LOUIE" but never in St. Louis.

The main reason that I'm calling this to your attention is that some subscribers in the St. Louis area and some others familiar with that grand old town are apt to wonder about my ability to get my act in order — in this case or in any other articles, past and future.

Please be assured that I'm not being critical of anyone on your staff. As I said in the beginning it all is on account of my sloppy handwriting. I'll try and do better next time.

Keep happy,  
 Dick Shadburne  
 Dallas, Texas

*[Note: Dick is very kind to take responsibility for the mistakes in last issue's Scatter Shooting, however, I believe most of the blame probably belongs at the editing end. Had we not been in such a hurry most of these errors would have been readily apparent. Thanks for keeping us on track!]*

Editor's Note: When correspondent Dick Shadburne was asked what he would like to contribute to the last issue, he requested we re-run his guest editorial which originally appeared in issue Number Twelve.

### Guest Editorial

Judging from the Letters column — letters from every direction in the laud — there seems to be the most heartfelt agreement that Russ, Mike and the others on the *Gazette* staff have succeeded in giving us "issues which would not only be enjoyable to read today, but which will stand the test of time. We see each issue as a time capsule which we are sending to the future, telling a part of the story of how our forefathers carved this town out of a rocky little valley west of Thomasville."

The *Gazette* is setting a pattern, in addition to bringing us West Plains history, so that those who come after us will be able to find out something about the way of life in West Plains today — what made us laugh and what made us cry. As time races on, we know that fewer and fewer of us oldsters can say: This is the place where I was born and where generations of my family lived and died. This land, this house, this town, are part of me, and I am part of them.

Now we are a mobile people. Many of us leave the place of our growing up. For good. Oh, we may return once in a while, but on each succeeding visit old friends are fewer, and finally we find no reason to go back. We grow away. We come to dress differently. We speak differently. We think thoughts other than those that sustained our fathers.

This, however, cannot be said of most West Plains people. The atmosphere of our town and its people is unique. Those of us who were born and raised there, or who have ever lived there, want to return and to hang on dearly to the tap roots of the West Plains tradition. The *Gazette* is furnishing the present generations who live in West Plains the inspiration to continue the tradition. It must not, repeat, *must not*, be allowed to wither and die. 30

Dick Shadburne  
 WPHS Class of 1915  
 Dallas, Texas

Thank you for notifying me about my subscription. I have been wondering about it but neglecting to ask. I have all the issues so far and wouldn't want to miss any future ones.

I especially enjoyed the photo of the group of ladies from Pomona. It has two of my aunts in it. Mrs. Calvin Cage was the wife of my father's oldest brother and Mary Young was my father's only sister.

I have some old photos of our family including one of Uncle Dick Smith who was my grandmother's brother.

My grandfather homesteaded land northeast of West Plains and I was raised in that neighborhood until 1923 when I moved with my family to Springfield. My brothers and sisters and I attended the Schneider School, which used to stand near the small Baptist Church on the White Church road. Our parents and uncles and aunts, also attended the first Schneider School built on Schneider land across the road from the other one. It was on a wooded hill, (which has now been cleared by bulldozers) a well was dug in the valley nearby for the school's water supply. The well had long been filled in by flood water when I was a girl.

I would like to know if anyone has a photograph of the Schneider school building. I attempted to paint a picture of it for my children but could not remember how many windows were on each side.

My nephew, Don Smith, mentions sometime having a Schneider School reunion, but has made no move to ask if anyone would be interested. He owns the big old school bell that rang across the hills and valleys calling us to school.

Sincerely,  
Mary E. Holt  
Springfield, Missouri

P.S. By the way, I was 13 years old when I left West Plains in 1923.

*Note: The following photo is the best we could come up with of the Schneider School — maybe some of our readers can help out.*



Schneider School, April 21, 1911. Schneider School was located about five miles northeast of West Plains approximately where Junction Hill School is now. Standing from left are, Ona Chamberlain, unknown, unknown, Ellen (Russell) Ridenour, Lura (Nolte) Bell, Mary (Smith) Hart, Elsie (Russell) Smith, Shellie (Seay) Roberts, Maude (Songer) Taylor, Stanley Mahan, John Nolte, Art Songer, Herbert Chamberlain, Alfred Smith, Tony Meinechie (Schneider School teacher), Garce (Chamberlain) White, and Addie (Seay) Shue. Kneeling from left, Chester Chamberlain (not positive identification), Henry Smith, unknown, Pearl Russell, unknown, Carrie (Mahan) Gilliam and Catherine (Cole) Meyers. The building was erected in 1904 and was used until Junction Hill School was consolidated.

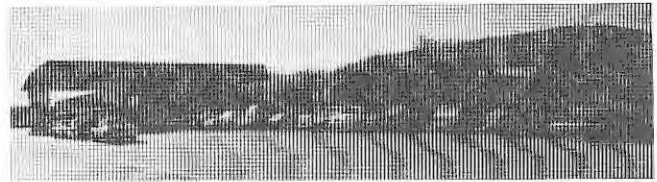
Thanks for mailing me the No. 29 Summer 1987 *Gazette*. I enjoy everyone. Lot of folks I don't know, but the magazines still mean a lot to me. I was born on Broadway, May 1, 1900, when my dad was Sheriff of Howell County.

Ada Maxey  
Pomona, Missouri

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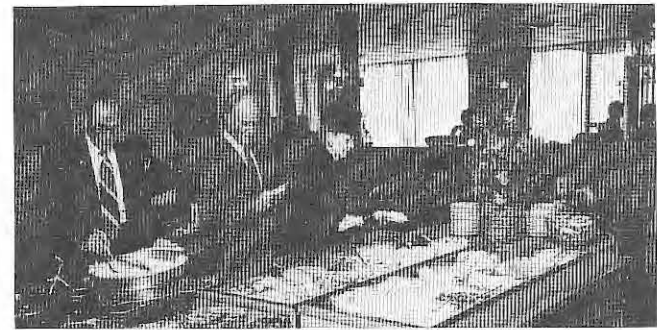
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I would like to renew the subscription of the *Gazette* for my sons, Leon DeLarm and Dale DeLarm. Also, I want to thank you for such a nice write-up of the "Langstons" as I am one of the clan. I really enjoy reading the magazine.

Lorena DeLarm  
Macon, Missouri

I'm enclosing a picture that I found here. It is Mrs. Fred Pease and her son Langston, taken in 1901 it says. I don't think the date is right. I think 1905 would be more correct. I don't have Langston's address but maybe you do have or you could add it to your collection.

My husband, Charles Jackson, and I recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of our wedding which took place in All Saints Church in West Plains on September 8, 1937. Our three daughters, Marian Bliss, Mary Frances Rowe and Peggy Ketterhagen had a lovely reception for us on September 5th.

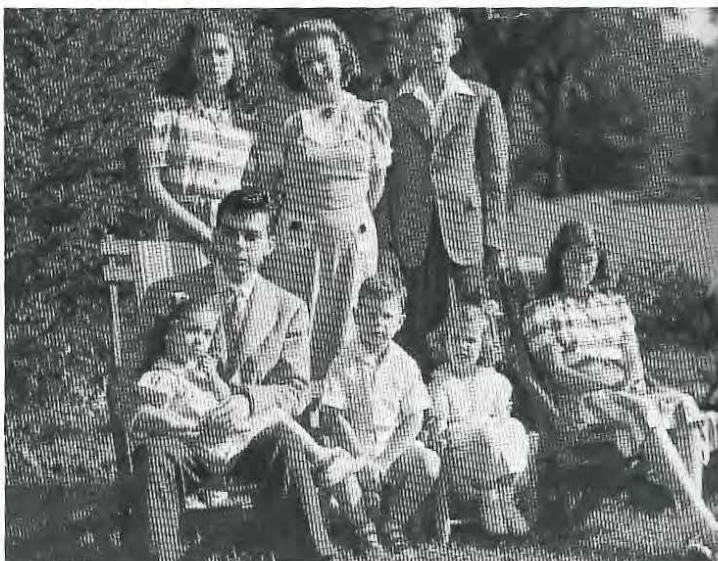
In connection with this, we also had a family reunion. All eight of my nieces and nephews and one niece of my husband, came from all parts of the country: California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Virginia, Maryland and Canada. Together with our three daughters this was the first time the eleven grandchildren of my parents, Lillian and Will Mantz, had all been together. The eight older ones had been together in 1940. Also enclosed is a picture of that meeting and pictures of the same group at this time.

I continue to enjoy the *Gazette* and wish that it could come more often.

Sincerely yours,  
Mabel Mantz Jackson  
Burlington, Wisconsin



Front row: Mike Kettenhagen, Peggy Jackson Kettenhagen, Mable Mantz Jackson, Charles Jackson, Mary Frances Jackson Rowe, Kenyon Toblett brother in law of Charles Jackson. Back row: Martin Walt, Dorothy Mantz Walt, Richard Griffith, Ben Mantz, Barbara Schwegar, niece of Charles Jackson, Dorothy Walt Waugh, Jane Logan Reid, Bob Rowe, Alice Stoker Mantz, Bob Stoker, Marian Jackson Bliss, Arleen Wilson Kelly, Mary Mantz Griffith, Mary Mantz, Mary Frances Toblett, sister of Charles Jackson and Bill Mantz.




Back row: Alice Mantz, Dorothy Elizabeth Walt, and Martin Walt. Front row: Ben Mantz, Jane Logan, Bill Mantz, Aileen Wilson and Mary Mantz. This photo was taken in 1940 and includes all of the grandchildren of Lillian and Will W. Mantz except the three children of Mabel (Mantz) and Charles Jackson, who had not yet been born.



Back row: Alice Stoker, Dorothy Waugh and Martin Walt. Middle row: Jane Reid, Ben Mantz, Bill Mantz, Aileen Kelly and Mary Griffith. Front row: Marian Bliss, Peggy Kettenhagen and Frances Rowe. This photo, taken in 1987 at the golden wedding celebration for Mabel (Mantz) and Charles Jackson in Burlington, Wisconsin, is the same group as the photo above shows with the addition of the three daughters of Mabel and Charles Jackson.



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The photo at left is the photo of Mrs. Fred Pease and her son, Langston, which was sent to us by Mabel Jackson. The two photos above are courtesy of Terril Shull. Shown in the middle is Verness Shull, son of Lenora (Willgus) and W.A. Shull, at age three months. His gown was made from his mother's wedding dress. Above right is Meta Hudson.

## West Plains Glass Company



West Plains Glass Co. is celebrating its 25th year in business.

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Henderson is manager and their son David, is assistant manager. Mary Henderson is head bookkeeper, Tammy Henderson is assistant bookkeeper, and Deborah French is sales clerk.


Bob Cooper has 18 years experience in auto glass installation. Robert Henderson with 24½ years experience, and Curt Williams with 13

years are commercial and residential glass installers.

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My ancestors Nancy Callahan Reeves daughter of John Callahan and Sarah Hill was of Pottersville district and I was very pleased to see in print in issue Number 25 my own grandfather Reeves' picture. James Reeves, killed along with his wife, Tabitha Mitts Hollingshad, in a car accident in April of 1955, was a cousin and I understand a long time Howell County Baptist Preacher. I would very much like to see a story and history printed on him. He and his wife are buried in the New Liberty Cemetery.

Sincerely Your Most Interested Fan,  
Mildred Reeves Hall  
Gustine, Texas

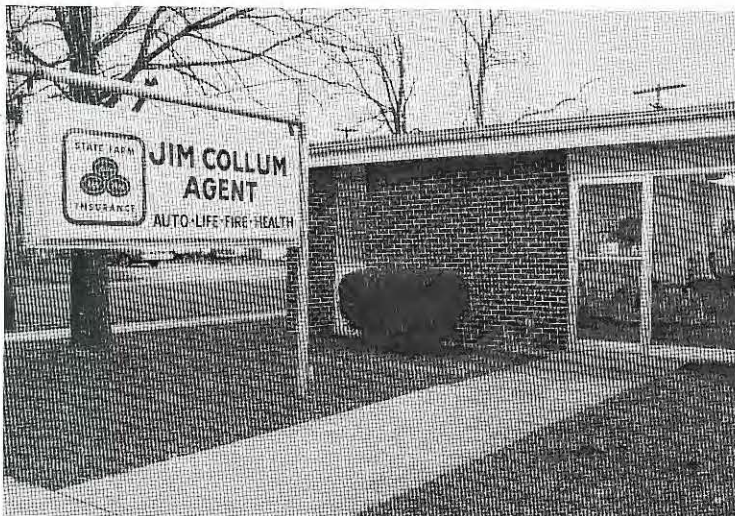
P.S. I don't have issues Number One and Two and would buy them from anyone interested in selling.

We are in receipt of your letter to Mrs. Pauline Jolliff Schuchman regarding renewal of her subscription to the *West Plains Gazette* for 1987.

Mrs. Schuchman, who was my mother, passed away May 3, of this year. She enjoyed the *Gazette* very much, having spent a number of years living there. Her father was Gus W. Jolliff who was Fire Chief for the city of West Plains from shortly after the tragic fire of 1928 until he retired in 1940 or 41. There was a special article regarding the history of the Fire Department, written in 1978, which may be of interest to some West Plains residents.

I also have many memories of West Plains, as I lived there with my parents when I was a small child. My mother married Conrad McMillin, son of Will and Maude McMillin, my grandparents, who lived on Missouri Avenue for many years. Will McMillin was a former State Representative, and also a County Superintendent of schools for Howell County. He then was in the insurance business for many years, with his office next to one of the major banks on the west side of the square. My father, Conrad was sixth of the McMillin's seven sons. He had just started a new dairy in West Plains with his brother Jim McMillin as a partner, when he was tragically killed in a head on collision with a truck while making deliveries in the rural area around West Plains. Conrad was only twenty-four years old and left Pauline, his young wife and two small children, Con Jr. age five and Patty Lou, age four. I am that "Patty Lou."

Yours very truly,  
Patricia L. McMillin Pratt  
Elsberry, Missouri



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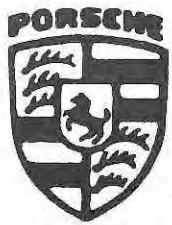
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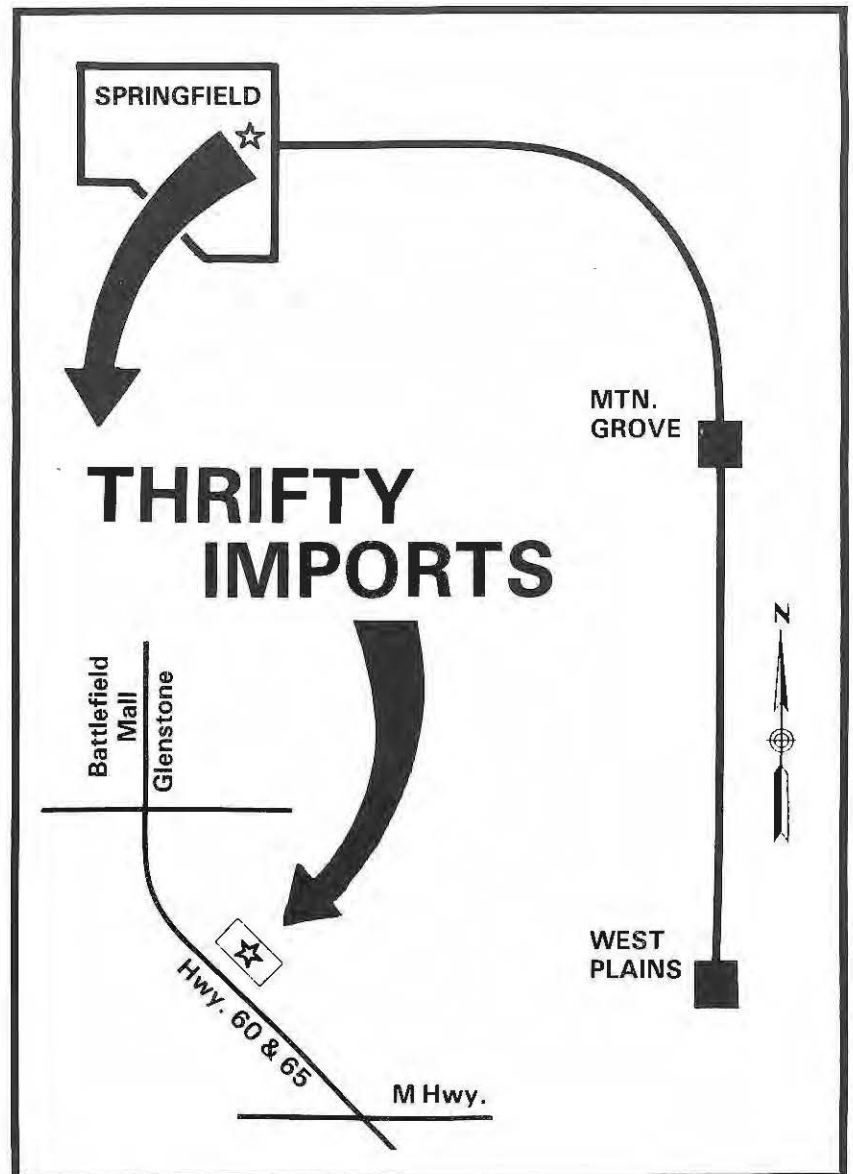
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# The History of We

*Since much of the history of our town has already been covered in past issues of the Gazette, I've pieced together some of these fragments and bolstered them with new information when possible.*

*I extend my gratitude to Dorothea Reavis who has made this job infinitely easier by her well-researched articles on the history of Howell County which have already appeared in the Gazette, starting with the year 1839 in issue Number One and continuing through 1911 in Number Four. (We had always intended to continue this history in segments, and I sure wish now that we had!) Dorothea and I also brainstormed one afternoon in an effort to make sure nothing important was omitted. Her help has been invaluable.*

*There are many others who have*

*helped along the way, not necessarily with just this issue, but also in every issue leading to it. Dick Shadburne, Joe and Toney Aid, Pauline Pond, Herman Quick, Olive Kingsbury, Shirley Piland to name a few. And of the course the past editors of the Gazette: Russ Cochran, Mike Cochran, Jim Cox, and Mark Lewis. Thanks guys!*

*Others are residents of West Plains who have passed on but left a rich legacy of history for us to use. The Williams Sisters, Catherine Castner, Alice Carey Risley, Joe Jones — they were all historians who paid careful attention to detail. The most recent addition to this list is longtime Gazette friend Hal Thornburgh. Hal passed away this fall, and he is greatly missed. I could always save up a few questions for him, and when he drop-*

*ped by for an occasional visit at the office, he always seemed to know the answers.*

*There are many, many others who went out of their way to loan us photographs and information or look up things and dig through old records — that list is very long.*

*To anyone who contributed any effort in helping with this Gazette or any previous ones, thank you very much. We couldn't have done it without you.*

*This is beginning to sound like some sort of extra-long acceptance speech at an awards banquet, but in this case the star hasn't even been introduced yet, (and I'll let her speak for herself). Now, without further delay, I present to you, West Plains . . .*

*- editor*

## Antebellum West Plains

The first real evidence we have of human occupation in this area are the Indian artifacts, mostly arrowheads, which are still found in and around West Plains.

The Indians who lived here were generally nomadic. There is little evidence of major Indian activity in the immediate area of West Plains.

While native American habitation dates back several thousand years, white men moved here only recently in terms of world history.

Actual settlement of the territory which would later become West Plains began in 1839. At that time the present-day Howell County was part of Ripley County.

There were no roads in the surrounding territory, only trails made by wild animals. One of these paths led from Thomasville to what is now West Plains.

In the summer of 1839, a hunter named Adams became the first white settler within the current

limits of Howell County and West Plains. He settled at the spring later known as Town Spring presently flowing from underneath the Public Library in West Plains. With his nearest neighbor living 20 miles away, Mr. Adams soon became tired of the solitude and sold his improvement — a small shack and three to four acres of cultivated land — to a member of the Howell family who settled here in October, 1839. The Howells became the first permanent settlers of the county which in 18 years would bear their name.

Two brothers, George Washington "Wash" Galloway and James Galloway, also moved here from East Tennessee with their new brides in 1839.

Within the next three years, the families of Eli Tabor, Nathan McCammon, Aaron Hutton, Abraham Smith, Johnathon Dexter and probably others settled in the area.

In 1848, the area was surveyed by the government, section lines were established, and the favorable reports of the surveyors induced considerable immigration.

### Schools

As the population increased, there became a great need for schools. With no sawmill, and probably few tools, the first one-room schools were extremely primitive. But the people of the community did the best they could with what they had, and the children's educations were soon underway.

The first school built at West Plains was built by Jonathan Dexter and was located just south of the former home of George Sessen in the northeast part of town. The 16' x 20' building was constructed of hewed logs and had a large fireplace in one end.



# st Plains, Missouri

## West Plains Founded

By 1848 the population had increased so much that there was a need for a post office. The area had been included in the newly created Oregon County, and land was selling for a "bit" (12½ cents) per acre.

On December 7, 1848, Josephus M. Howell was appointed postmaster of the first post office established in what is now Howell County. The post office was kept in his home one mile east of the present location of the square and was named "West Plains" by Circuit Judge John R. Woodside of Oregon County, for the plains west of Thomasville.

In 1848 there was very little timber growing in sight of the spring in West Plains. All the valleys and hills were covered with tall prairie grass called blue stem. From any of the hills around, a man could be seen for several miles down in the valley. West Plains was a much more appropriate name then, than now.

The country continued to increase in population, and in the Legislature of 1856-57 a bill was passed forming the present county of Howell.

## Local Government

Benjamin Alsup, James Ellison and Joseph H. Russell were the first county justices. Joseph Howell was

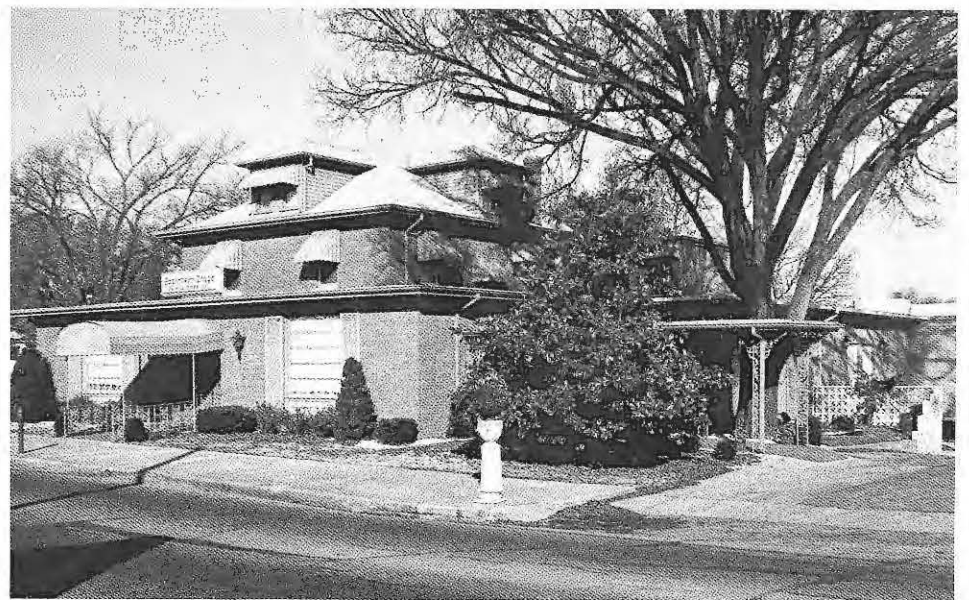
the first sheriff, and Joseph Harris the first clerk. Judge Ellison soon resigned his office and John McDaniel was appointed to fill his place. The county was attached to the 15th Judicial circuit over which Judge Albert Jackson presided. Judge John R. Woodside was the first circuit attorney. The first circuit court was held in a little log

cabin one mile east of West Plains, and there was but one case on the docket.

## Population

June, 1860

Howell County . . . . . 3,169  
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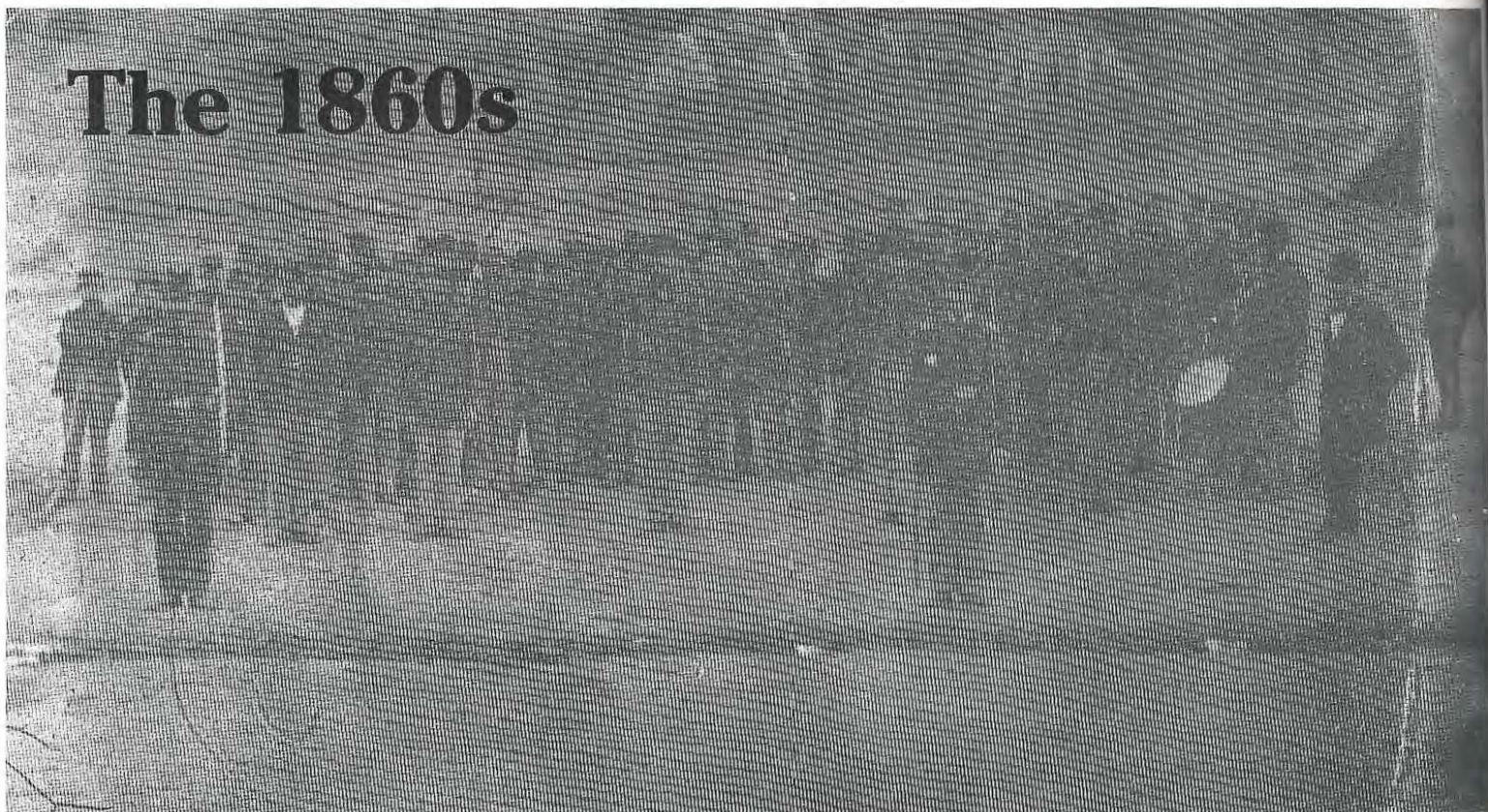
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# The 1860s



This rare tintype of a group of Union soldiers is from the collection of Ovidene Harris. The location is unknown, and none of the men are identified. However, it is believed Col. William Monks may be in the group.

## The States at War

On April 12, 1861, the South fired on Fort Sumter, starting the War Between the States. For a few months, West Plains residents managed to remain neutral and turn a deaf ear to the reports of fighting in the East.

Then Governor Claiborne Jackson issued a proclamation calling Missouri to arms. State Representative John R. Woodside, who represented both Oregon and Howell Counties, hurried back from Jefferson City and began to recruit soldiers for the Confederacy.

Notices were published announcing a public meeting in West Plains for the purpose of recruiting men for Confederate service. A pole had been placed by Durham's Store on the corner of the square at East Main Street for the purpose of displaying the Confederate flag. The Unionists immediately placed a pole on the West Main corner of the square at McGinty's Store to fly the American flag.

The big rally was held July 1, 1861, and many persons were in

town to hear Judge "Wild Bill" Price of Springfield speak on behalf of the Confederacy. A large speaker's stand had been erected just east of the Town Spring, with seating for hundreds of people. The Confederates raised their Stars and Bars, marking the first time the flag had ever been displayed locally, and it drew lots of attention. The Union men raised the Stars and Stripes and each side rallied around their own flag.

The Confederates had warned the Union men to remain silent or they would be shot full of holes. Nevertheless, while there was a lull in the speaking, William Monks walked to the speaker's stand and announced there would be a Union meeting near South Fork at Black's Store on the following Saturday, and invited all to come hear Union speeches and the reading of the Constitution of the United States. Many men stood, with rifles in hand, demanding the other side lower their flag.

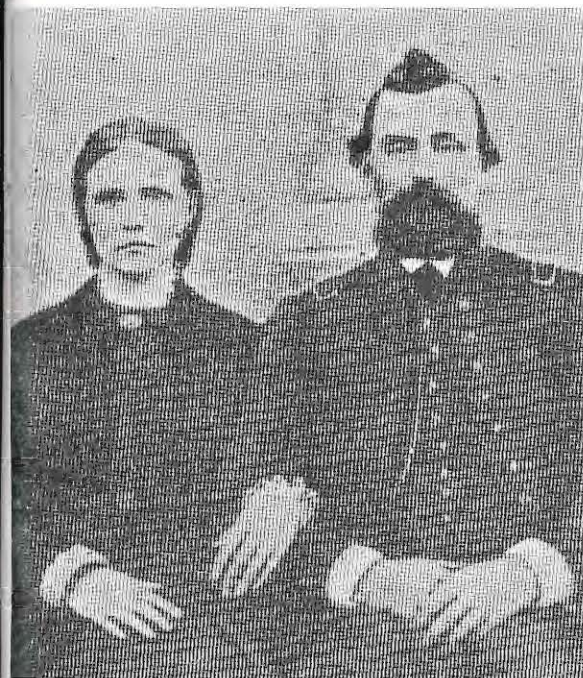
It appeared that blood was soon to be shed on the street of a town that, four years before, did not exist. Finally, it was agreed that both flags would be lowered at the same

time, and the excitement, for that day, came to an end.

As a result of this meeting, three companies of Confederate soldiers were recruited to be commanded by Capt. George Washington Galloway of West Plains, Capt. William Howard of South Fork and Capt. Michael Forshee of Gunter's Valley. These three companies first saw service in the battle of Wilson's Creek near Springfield, August 10, 1861, where they lost several men. When the six-months' term of enlistment for the State Guards was up, a company was organized by Nicks and Captain Howard for the regular Confederate service. This organization went South and served in the Battle of Corinth. There were no organized units recruited in the county for Union service.

On Saturday, July 6, 1861, the Union meeting was held, as announced, at Black's Store near South Fork. Union speeches were made and William Monks read the Constitution of the United States.

The next night, on July 7th, a group of Confederate men rode up to the home of William Monks, who lived on a farm between South Fork and Moody. At least nine of



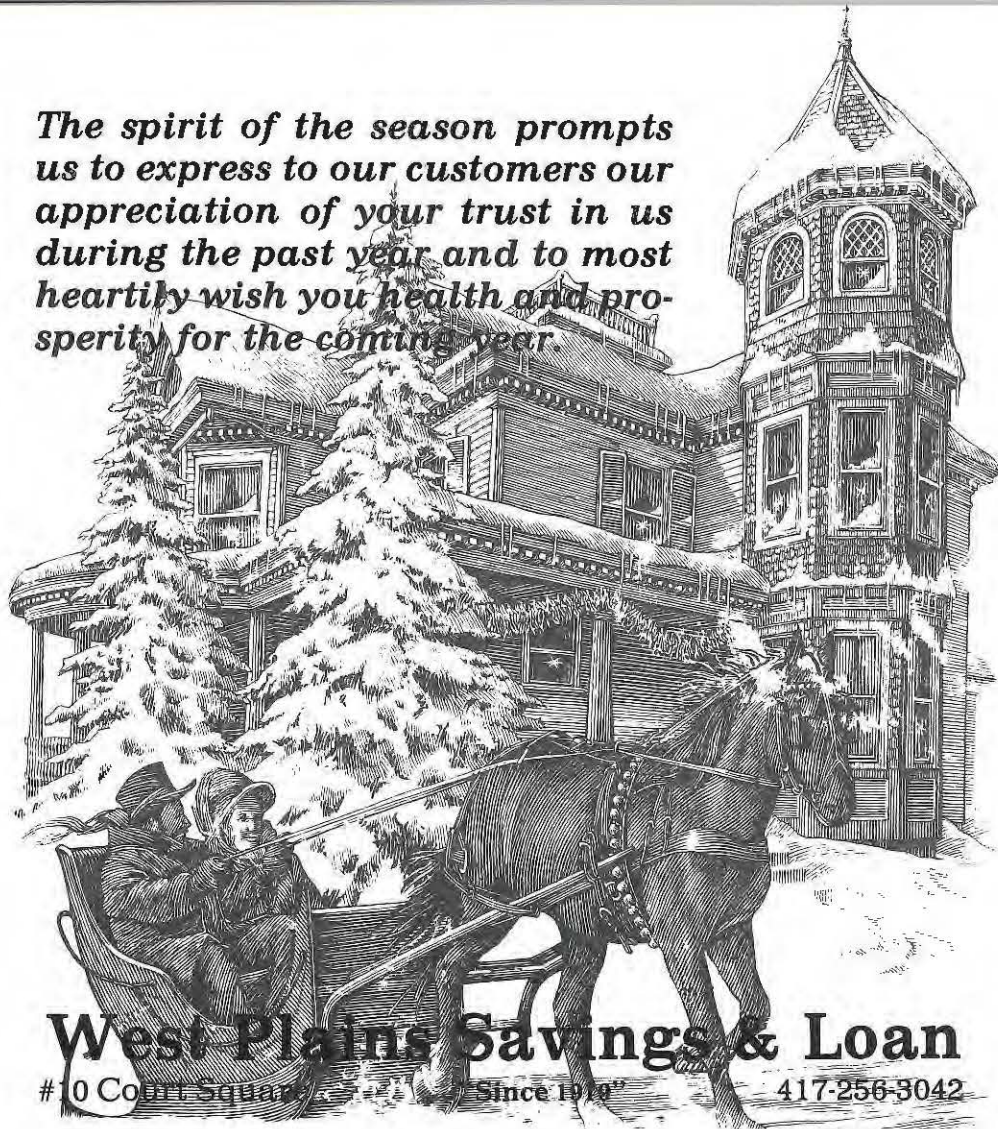
**Capt. and Mrs. William Monks.**

the soldiers were personally acquainted with Monks and some were neighbors. Michael Forshee, William and Alfred Nicks, Garrett Weaver, Wilburn Baker, Jesse Reeves, Nathaniel Barnett, James Fore, Joseph Teverbaugh, and sixteen others were in the group. The soldiers arrived at about 11:00 p.m. Their purpose was to arrest, imprison or force Union men into the Confederate army to fight. The Union leaders were to be hanged. They did take Monks prisoner, but he managed to escape and spent the next four years recruiting soldiers into the Union Army, eventually becoming their leader when he was made Captain of Company K of the 16th Missouri Cavalry.

Sometime in 1861 the important records of the county officers were removed from the courthouse and hidden in a cave where they remained until the end of the war.

In February, 1862, a squad of Confederate soldiers took refuge in the small wooden courthouse in the center of the square. A company of Federal troops, coming into town from the north, stationed a small cannon on the hill now traversed by Washington Avenue, and riddled the courthouse with solid shot and grape. The Southern troops got safely away with the exception of one man who was killed in the flight. This and one brush

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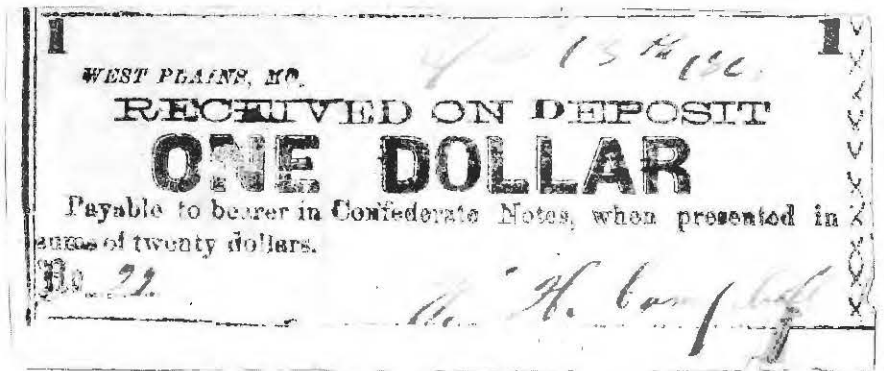
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An example of private scrip issued in West Plains. Scrip was issued by local merchants, and this particular one was backed by T.N. and G.H. Templeton. Scrip came into use in the early war years as a means of making change, due to the hoarding of silver.

between "bushwackers" of both sides which occurred on South Fork, near the place later known as the Hylton farm, are the only instances known when northern and southern troops actually established contact in Howell County.

A regiment of Federal troops under General Davidson spent some time here while on their way south and Provost-Marshal McNulty with a considerable force camped for several months on the line of hills in the southeast part of West Plains. The nearly uninhabited country did not seem of enough strategic importance to hold permanently, however, and the soldiers moved on, leaving behind the graves of twelve of their number. These twelve were later transferred to a national cemetery. Neither side maintained a permanent post in this county during the war.

Extreme hardships were endured by Union sympathizers who were forced to leave their homes, in the dead of winter, by the Confederates. The Union refugees were allowed to take only what they could carry. The remainder of their possessions were confiscated by the Confederates. Hundreds of homeless Howell Countians fled to Rolla, Missouri to find every existing shelter taken. Others went to Springfield, Salem and Pilot Knob. Dozens of persons died from exposure to the winter weather.

Nearly all the Southern sympathizers were also eventually forced to leave. Many of them went to Oregon County and Batesville, Arkansas.

By 1863, West Plains was a ghost town. The curtains swung in the breeze, doors stood open and weeds were waist high in the streets. A Mr. D. Pennington passed through town in the summer of 1863 and reported the only living thing he saw was a cat.

The following spring, West Plains was burned to the ground by a small group of renegades led by a man named Watson. Southern Missouri was perhaps the most desolate spot in our entire nation during the Civil War. It was overrun by both the Union and Confederate Armies, making it unsafe for anyone to remain here. One of the few to stay was Rhoda Galloway, wife of Confederate Captain "Wash" Galloway. She and her small children remained in their log home (located where Ozarks Medical Center now is) defending their property. She later told many stories of how terrible her plight was during the war years.

At the close of the war the refugees from the county began slowly to return. They found only ashes where they left comfortable dwellings; their fields were fenceless and grown up with young timber. The outlook was desolate, but with hard work and determination, they were soon surrounded with the comforts of home. It was like a new country.

## Reconstruction

The scars of the war were everywhere. Almost every family had lost two or three young men on the battlefields. Many women

returned as widows and were forced to provide for their children without the assistance of an adult male.

In 1865 a few families returned. A few more came in 1866, but the country did not begin to settle rapidly until the spring of 1867. During that and the three succeeding years almost all of the old settlers returned. Many new settlers came in 1868-69 and new farms were opened.

## Local Government

The county was re-organized by the State government in 1866. Peter Lamons, Joseph Speers and Richard Haven were appointed county justices. W. D. Mustion, sheriff, and W. Z. Buck, clerk. Since the courthouse had been burned the first courts were held in a little log cabin. The records of the county which had been preserved during the war by being hidden in a cave, were kept in the clerk's office, a little 10x12 box shanty, which, together with all the records, was destroyed by fire in 1866. (Records since the fall of 1866 are preserved and can be found in the courthouse.)

## Trade and Commerce

In 1868, E. F. Hynes and others purchased a press and material and established a small newspaper called "The Type of the Times," which survived only a few months.

Capt. William Monks was the first to build a house in West Plains after the war. After Monks built his log cabin, two other families, in 1866, built cabins and Stephen Woodworth put up a store where the Masonic Temple is now located. John Rice had a store on the west side of the spring. At this time there were only 78 families living within the boundaries of Howell County.

The settlers who had lived here before the war were finding that their former neighbors, who would have endured any hardship to help one another before the war, were suddenly 'cool' if not downright angry. Open hostilities began to flare up all over the area. The Ku



**These men are Union veterans from West Plains. This photo was published in the *Honor Roll* in 1920. Front row from left: David W. Reese, O.R. Seiberling, W.B. Ripley, Gresham Hull, John G.W. Richardson, John W. Mustion, Thomas O. Bugg, George F. Clark.**



**This photo is of the Confederate soldiers living in West Plains at the time of publication of the *Howell County Honor Roll* in 1920. Front row: John A. Gunn, John Welch, Jeff Williams, Frank Pool, and J.G. Meltabarger. Back row: John J. Barger, Jacob Stubbs, Thomas Creek, Thomas B. Miller, John Yates, Thomas M. Lamons, and C. Yakey.**

Klux Klan became very active. As a whole, the settlers refused to live peaceably together. The Governor of Missouri appointed Capt. Monks as head of 'Martial Law' in Howell and Oregon Counties. Monks used whatever force was necessary to bring peace to the area and became known as a notorious person by all whose sympathies were with the confederacy. Monks was commissioned as a Colonel. Attempts were made on his life as long as he lived. He died of natural causes in 1913 ending the career of one of the most colorful pioneer settlers. He was a farmer, preacher, orator, lawyer, soldier, postmaster, politician and at times

just plain 'onery'. He also authored *A History of Southern Missouri and Northern Arkansas*, a valuable firsthand account of the early years in West Plains.

By 1868 people were beginning to be somewhat more tolerant of their neighbors. As more people returned to rebuild, a new spirit, of cooperation emerged as the settlers forged ahead.

One incident, however, marred this new peace. On March 1, 1869 Sheriff Elihugh (Hugh) Cordell was murdered while arresting a horse thief, making him the first Howell County lawman to give his life in the line of duty.



# The 1870s

West Plains in 1872. This is the earliest known photo of the town.

The 1870s began on a positive note. In October 1870, B. F. Olden and Sam A. Risley established "The South Missouri Journal," which was later changed to "The West Plains Journal" and became the first permanent newspaper of Howell County.

In 1870, West Plains also boasted of four retail stores, one whiskey dealer, one shoemaker, one tavern keeper, two wagon makers, a blacksmith, a brick mason, one school teacher and three physicians.

In 1873 Cornelius Bolin announced that he had bought a piano for his daughter, Alice. This was the first piano in the region, and few believed it would survive the 100 mile wagon trip across the hills from Rolla. When it did arrive, the whole town turned out, and a one-time music teacher, the only in-

dividual in the region who could play the instrument, proudly rendered "My Old Kentucky Home." The excitement of the assemblage knew no bounds.

The Bolin Family figured quite prominently in the history of West Plains immediately after the War Between the States. Cornelius's brother, Columbus Thomas Bolin, brought much growth to the area. Among other things, he built the first steam-powered flour mill in West Plains.

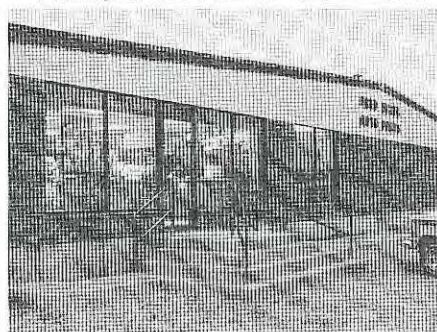
In 1874, West Plains had eight stores, one hotel, one printing office, four churches, two schools (one private and one public), one steam flour mill, one good jail and one miserable courthouse.

The 'miserable' courthouse was located on the south west side of the square. The building was made of logs with cornerstones for the

foundation and was open underneath. The town hogs made their headquarters underneath the courthouse. Court sessions were often interrupted by gales of laughter when a defense attorney would suddenly stop in the middle of pleading his case to swat off a flea. In 1876, the attorneys met with the county court and requested that the courthouse be underpinned. According to the old court records, the county court ordered that the courthouse be underpinned at once.

With all the gold in Fort Knox one could not have obtained a store-bought dress. The only meat for the table was wild game. Butter, lard, beef or milk could not be bought in the stores. Coffee had to be transported overland by wagon, making it scarce and expensive. It was sweetened with honey or

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Mail deliveries were supposed to be made twice a week, if the creeks weren't up or the mail contractor's time hadn't expired before the new one materialized. At times, the mail might pile up at Houston for several weeks.

In the summer of 1875, there were only three houses west of Washington Avenue. The square was covered with hazel brush crisscrossed with paths. The school was only a short distance from the square but the ladies had difficulty walking to the social events held there because of the stumps and rocks.

## Population

1870

West Plains .....300  
Howell County .....4,218

In 1869-70 the county received many new settlers who came mainly from Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. For about four years, the emigration averaged about 100 persons per month.

*by Allene Moore Chapin*

The West Plains Square was a peach orchard on the Thomas Howell farm when the Chapin family came in 1851 from Overton County, Tennessee to settle in Howell Valley. In the wagon train were Mr. and Mrs. John Arnett Chapin, his mother, Sarah Harrison Chapin, her other sons, Silas, Elias, Josiah, Franklin, and her daughters, Mrs. Mary Jane Chapin Garrett Cox, Elsie (Aly) Chapin Davis and Catherine (Katy) Chapin Davis.

J.A. Chapin served on the first grand jury of Howell County which met in a log house (the jurors camped in the nearby brush). He established the Howell County public school fund and served as sheriff and collector from 1875 through 1878. Since that time there has been a member of every generation of his descendants in office here.

Chapin's son, Hugh Kyle Chapin was sheriff, collector three terms and later, county clerk. Hugh's son, J. Fent Chapin also was county clerk. In 1948 a great grandson, John Gid Morrison, became county

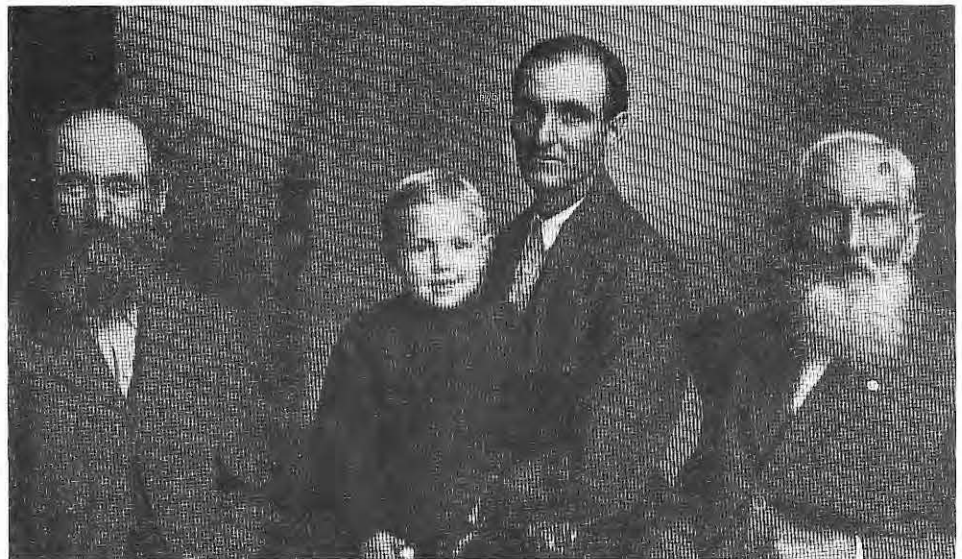


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**P.S. "Tim," Russell, Orville, and J.A. Chapin, representing four generations of service to Howell County.**

clerk, and during those years, Dick Moore, the husband of John Arnett Chapin's great niece, Lois Chapin Moore, was prosecuting attorney. Another great grandson, Russell E. Chapin was office manager (an appointive office) of the Agricultural Stabilization Service. Like his great grandfather, Russell was interested in schools and during reorganization in the 1950s, served on the

Howell County school board.

The fifth generation of the family to serve in Howell County is Travis Morrison, former state representative, and presently chief operating officer of Ozarks Medical Center.

J.A. Chapin lived to be 93 years old, dying in El Paso, Texas where part of his large family of 17 children settled. He was born in Sangamon County, Illinois in 1829.

# The 1880s - The Railroad Arrives

## Population

1880

Howell County . . . . . 8,814

In the 1880s, Howell County continued to show signs of growth. George Carter built the first brick building in West Plains, a drug store, in 1881. Also in 1881 Gregory Morton Holloway built at least one house which still stands today. It is at the top of Aid Avenue, and was for many years, until his recent death, the home of John Milstead.

To add to the upbeat mood of the new decade, everyone was talking about the possibility of a railroad coming through the area.

The importance of the railroad cannot be understated. It was probably the single most significant event leading to the prosperity of West Plains. Until the railroad came, West Plains was isolated. It was at least a three day journey by wagon to the nearest railroad at Rolla or to meet steamboats coming up the White River as far as Norfolk in Arkansas.

Continued economic development depended on a means of getting farm products to outside markets in a timely fashion and in large quantities. There were also timber and mineral resources waiting to be taken to outside markets.

Even though the seeds were sown for a railroad in southern Missouri in the early 1850s, inter-

ruptions, such as the War Between the States and railroad companies defaulting, caused a 30-year delay in the rails reaching West Plains and then they almost bypassed us.

Many early leaders of West Plains were instrumental in getting the railroad through Howell County. Imagine their dismay when it was learned that plans called for laying the tracks from Willow Springs to White Church, Peace Valley, and on to Thayer, bypassing West Plains.

O. H. P. Catron, the Bolin brothers and Judge B. F. Olden were part of a group of local citizens who journeyed to the offices of the railway company in Kansas City to plead the case of West Plains. When they returned, it was with good news — West Plains would be a railroad town. All of their earlier work had not been in vain.

The surveyors came and platted the railroad right-of-way. The depot was built in the middle of Washington Avenue near Dr. Shuttee's wheat field so travelers could have easy access to the business district. In 1882, Sam Henry had established a lumberyard, and in 1883, the railroad was bringing in other supplies, and more brick buildings were built. The West Plains Bank was established in 1883 and the cornerstone of the courthouse was laid on July 4 of the same year. This three-story brick structure was completed in about six months and cost more than \$16,000. It was a beautiful

structure which served the county for over forty-five years.

Many pioneer families came during this time, and they started building many of the large Victorian style homes in town.

West Plains became a fourth class city in 1883.

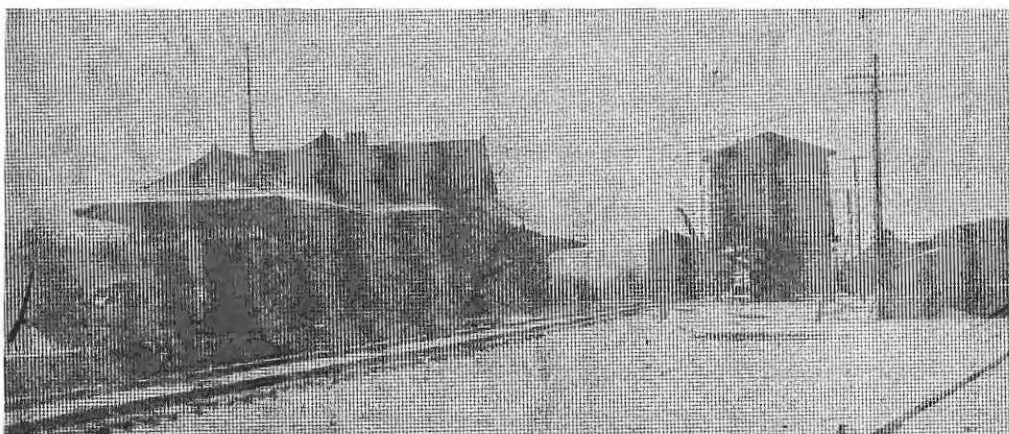
The outside world became even more accessible when telegraph services started in 1884. Telephone lines were installed in the late 1800s.

There were four newspapers in town: *The Howell County News*, *The Howell County Gazette*, the *West Plains Journal*, and the *West Plains Quill*.

## Churches

At first schoolhouses were used for church services, too. But as soon as possible, the settlers built churches. Most of the oldest denominations established in West Plains built their churches in the 1880s.

Due to the efforts of Rev. John B. "Uncle Jackie" Collins the first to be built was a home for the Methodist Church in 1867. A two-story building was built on Washington Avenue with the second story belonging to the Masons. The building was used by all faiths until it was sold in 1884. (It burned in 1903.) The Masons moved to the third floor of the courthouse and the Methodists built on a lot adjoining the old church at the corner of Washington and West Cleveland, the church commonly



Depot at West Plains on a winter day many years ago. Photo by Gleerup.

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**Above: breaking ground for the courthouse. Below: laying the cornerstone of the courthouse, July 4, 1883. This was the 3-story brick structure which served the county for nearly 50 years. The buildings in the background were on the east side of the square.**



referred to as the Washington Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church.

A different church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was organized in 1881 and built its first church in 1883 at the southwest

corner of Webster and Franklin Avenues. When this group needed more room they chose to build on Missouri Avenue at West Main, the location of the present First United Methodist Church. Their second building was completed in 1891.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized in 1879, and on November 22, 1885 they built their church. On February 15, 1886 the First Presbyterian Church was organized. This branch of the denomination completed its


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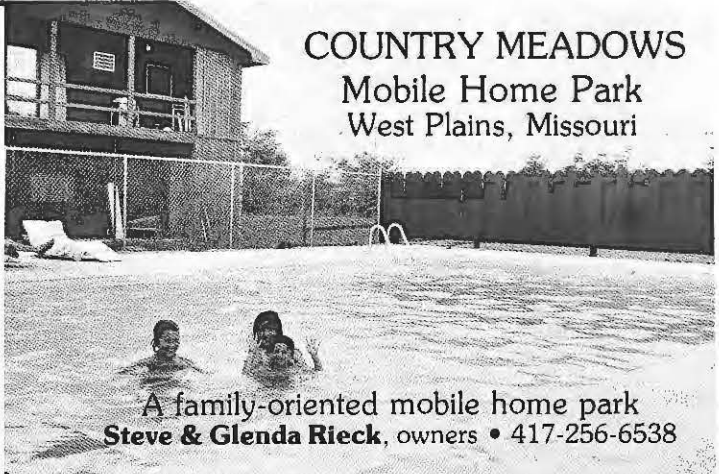


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**West Plains in 1883. This photo was taken from the east, and the lane in the foreground is one block south of the present East Main Street.**

church building in 1887 at a cost of \$4,000. (This building is the oldest church in town still in use.) The two groups started working together in 1896 and merged in 1907.

The First Christian Church was organized in 1878 at the home of Colonel Monks by Adam S. Wright. In 1883 construction was begun on the first church to house this congregation. This building was located on West Main on the site of the present church which was completed in 1925.

The First Baptist Church was organized on August 5, 1884 with 24 members. The First Baptist Church along with the First Presbyterian Church was formed after a revival at the original Methodist Church on Washington. Other established churches experienced large membership increases. In 1888 a lot was purchased and the foundation laid for the present church. It was completed in October 1889, and with many additions and remodelings, it still serves the Baptist congregation.

All Saints Episcopal Church was organized as a mission on January 18, 1887. After the cornerstone was laid in September 1888, the "little church around the corner" was completed in time for the first service to be held on January 16, 1889. Theirs was the first pipe organ in town.

These churches were the first to be built and established in West Plains. Many others soon followed, earning West Plains the nickname "the town of churches."

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Washington Avenue in the early 1880s. The new railroad bed can be seen in front of the original depot (the building that appears to be in the middle of the street).

## Civic Matters

During this period, the streets of West Plains were either ankle deep in dust or knee deep in mud. In 1884, the City Council passed an ordinance which stated, "All able bodies male inhabitants of the city (having resided here one month) must work on repairing the streets not more than three days within one year, or pay the street commissioner \$1.00 per day instead."

At one point, a deep mud-hole on East Main became so noticeably bad that someone placed a sign in it which read, "No Fishing Allowed In This Here Pond." This Ben Franklin-style of approach to the problem won not only smiles, but

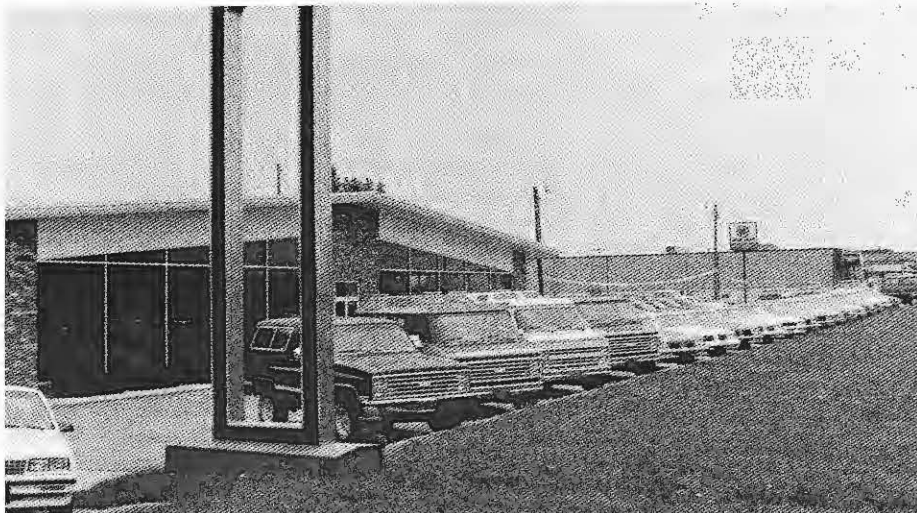
also results, for the street was repaired in a short time.

The need for sidewalks in the growing town was also a point of debate, and became a campaign issue during one city election year. One of the local newspapers came out with a front page article headlined "Give Us Sidewalks Or Give Us Stilts." Sidewalks were constructed in front of businesses and, not long afterwards, were begun in the residential areas, though the latter was accomplished at a much slower pace.

When the civic leaders of the day laid out the streets of the town, they did so thinking they would be used by pedestrians, wagons and buggies. No one dreamed that in

less than twenty years an invention called the automobile would be using the narrow streets, and revolutionizing transportation.

108 Washington Ave. (Upstairs) • West Plains, Missouri



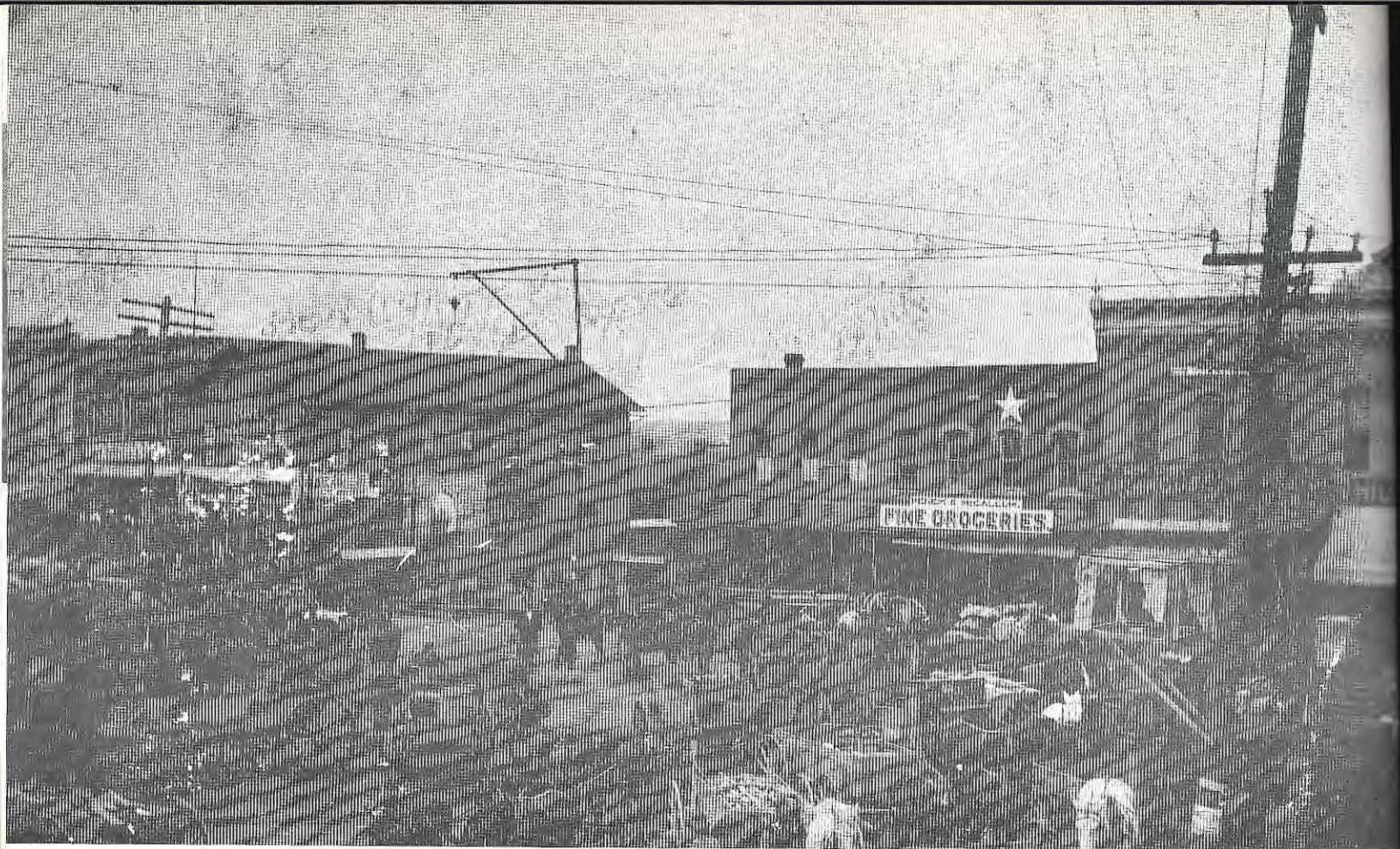
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North side of square about 1890.

-courtesy Rena Wood

An article in 1890 in the *Howell County Gazette* boasted that West Plains had: 2 banks; 1 college; 4 hotels; 2 saloons; 1 railroad depot; 1 sawmill; 7 doctors; 2 nurseries; 2 laundries; 6 shoe shops; 1 cafe; 8 grocery stores; 8 churches; 2 gunsmiths; 16 lawyers; 1 woolen mill; 1 cooper's shop; 2 brick yards; 1 pool hall; 1 dentist; 1 marble shop; 2 notion stores; 2 jewelry stores; 2 flouring mills; 1 broom factory; 3 barber shops; 3 school houses; 3 livery stables; 7 meat markets; 3 harness shops; 3 tinsmiths; 2 drygoods stores; 4 millinery shops; 3 clothing stores; 7 secret societies; 1 second-hand store; 5 real estate offices; 3

hardware stores; 5 blacksmiths; 1 bedspring factory; 1 photography studio; 1 boot and shoe store; 44 brick buildings; 1 candy factory and bakery; 6 combination drygoods and grocery stores; 1 feed store and implement company; numerous boarding houses; 2 foundries and machine shops; 3 planing mills and lumber yards; 1 music store and sewing machine shop; 2 furniture and undertaking establishments; 1 daily, 1 bi-monthly, and 2 weekly newspapers.

The college referred to in the list above was the West Plains College, founded in 1890 and located on East Main. Many young people

from throughout the area attended this institution of higher learning which offered quite a range of subjects.

The college continued until 1913, when the Sisters of Charity purchased it and ran a Catholic girls' academy.

(In 1920 Dr. R. S. Hogan turned this building into The Christa Hogan Hospital. He operated it until 1948 when it was taken over by Dr. C. F. Callahan. Several years later he razed the building and built a one-story clinic on the site, now used by Ozark Action.)

The business boom made it possible for local residents to begin enjoying more luxuries, and in 1893 O. H. P. Catron erected the Catron Opera House on the square. Entertainment of kinds—dances, live performances by touring groups, movies—was provided at the opera house.



West Plains College on East Main.

## Population

1890

West Plains . . . . . 2,100  
Howell County . . . . . 18,618

NO. 137.

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND**

**"An Ordinance Concerning Sidewalks,"**  
Passed and Approved June 6th, 1892.

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF WEST PLAINS, AS FOLLOWS:**

**SEC. 1.—**That section two of "an ordinance concerning sidewalks," passed and approved June 6th, 1892, be amended by adding thereto the following proviso:

Provided, that the sidewalks on West Main street, South Main street, East Main street and Washington Avenue be six feet wide, and the sidewalks on all streets and avenues which are less than 40 feet wide be four feet wide.

**SEC. 2—**And that said ordinance be further amended by adding thereto the following section, to be known as section 13:

That whoever shall within the city of West Plains lead, ride or drive any horse or mule, or lead or drive any other live stock upon or across any sidewalk of such city; or shall run any bicycle, tricycle or velocipede thereon; or shall break, injure or destroy any part of such sidewalks, shall upon conviction be fined not less than one nor more than one hundred dollars. Provided this section shall not apply to any person leading, riding or driving any such stock across said walks in going to or from their inclosures, nor to any person destroying any old walk for the purpose of repairing or rebuilding the same.

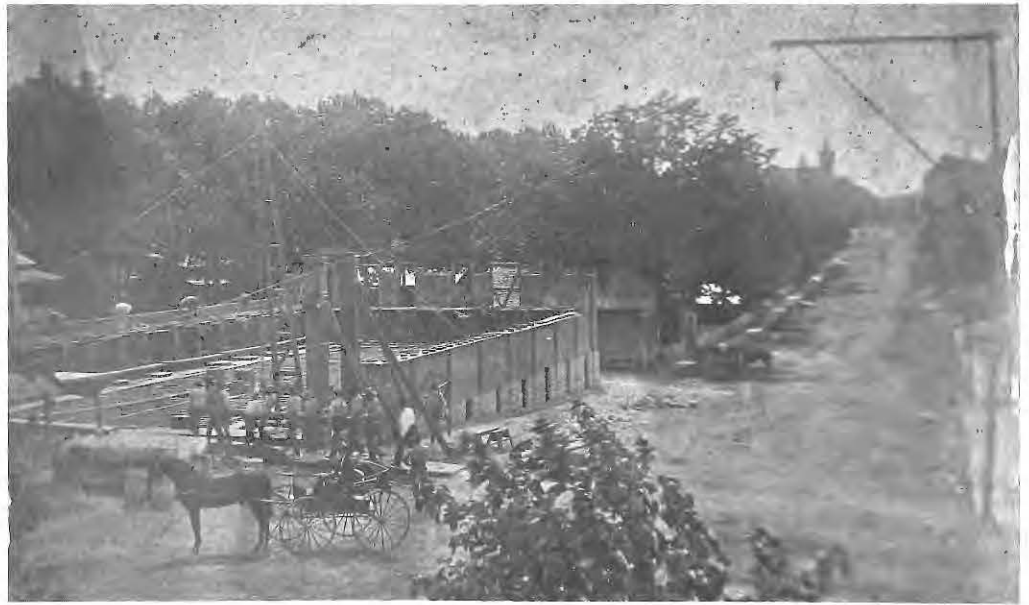
**SEC. 3.—**This ordinance to be in force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed and approved this 5th day of Sept., 1892.

J. C. KERBY Mayor.

GEORGE TURNER, President of Board of Aldermen.

Attest: G. M. WARINNER, City Clerk.



**Above: The Catron Opera House under construction in 1892. Below: The program from the first class to graduate from high school in West Plains in 1891.**

*Fax Mentis Incendium Gloriam.*

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OF THE

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Friday Evening, May 15th, 1891.

EIGHT O'CLOCK, SHARP.

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Joseph Hard,  
Mittie L. Scott,  
Birdie N. Shotwell,  
M. Alice Winkler,  
S. Wayne Langston,  
Gertrude E. Moss,  
Mattie L. Barnett,  
Alma C. Moss,  
Junietta Johnson,  
Nettie E. Henry.

Marshals.

Oscar Jennings,  
Byron Dressler,  
Charley Jennings,  
Sampson Hopkins.

Stephen Pirkey, Supt.

GAZETTE

Clipping from September 7, 1892  
Daily Gazette.

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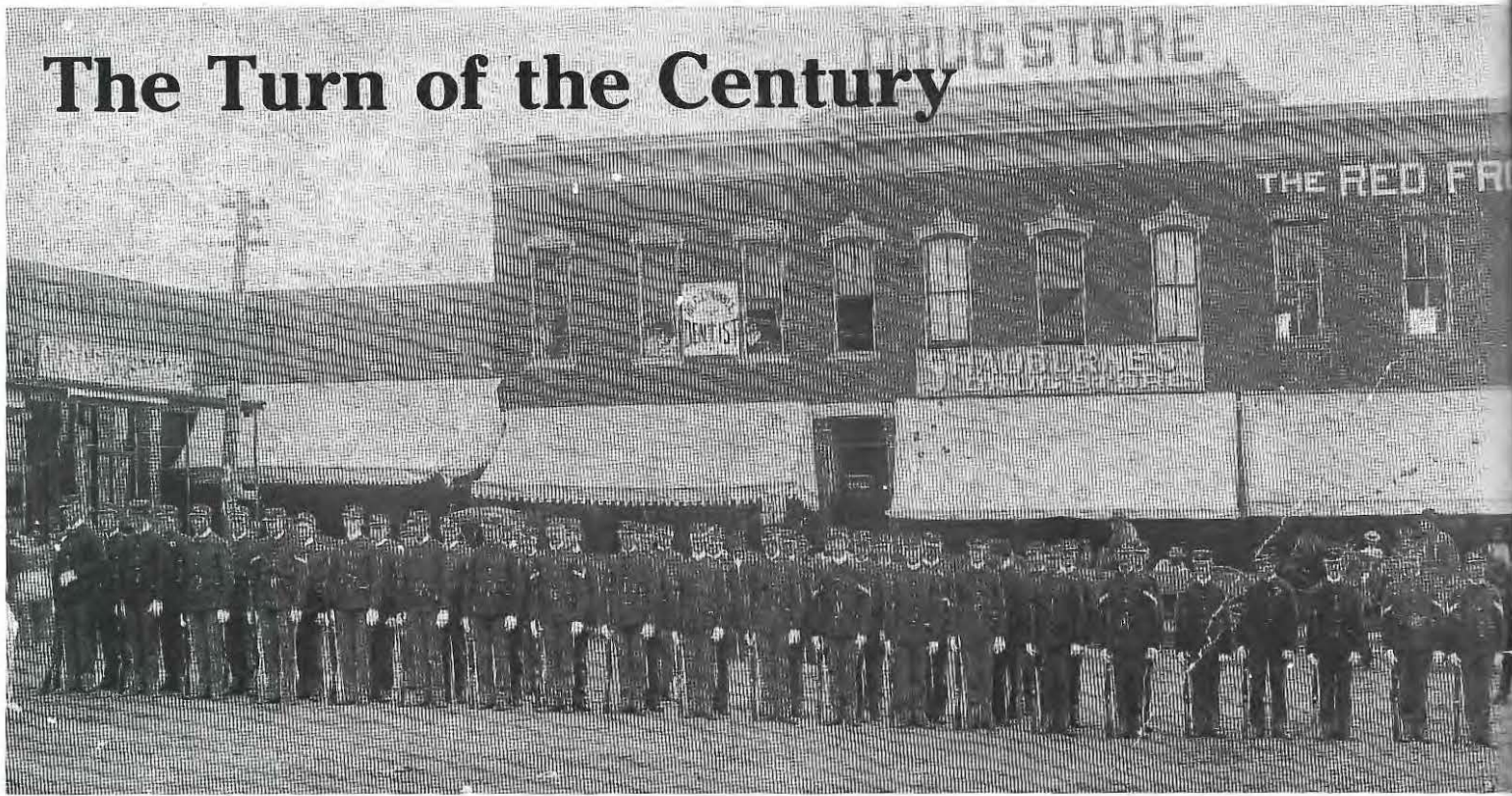
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WEST PLAINS, MO

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# The Turn of the Century



Company K of the National Guard in May 1900 on the northwest corner of the square.

In 1900 the Chamber of Commerce was formed and was from the start very active. In September of 1901, the grand opening of a large new hotel was announced in West Plains. Located just southeast of the Square in the Evans Arcade, it was named the Arcade Hotel and quickly became a landmark. Many famous persons stayed there during visits to the town, among them, some years later, was Mr. Van Arsdale and his famous canine friend, Jim the Wonder Dog.

It was about this same time that

the first automobile was seen in Howell County. Everyone turned out for the big occasion. Naturally, those traveling from a distance to see the new invention came by the normal mode of transportation: on horseback, or in horse-drawn wagons and buggies. When the horses reared and tried to run away from the noisy contraption, first impressions among the spectators were greatly dampened. In fact, the frightened horses created more excitement than did the automobile, which in 1901 was still

approached with suspicion and regarded as little more than a novelty for the rich.

In 1903, the citizens of West Plains were overjoyed by the new waterworks system being installed. The old standpipe was located on the top of the hill south of the Square, which at that time was actually outside the city. From that day to the present, that hill has been known as Standpipe Hill. The first resident in West Plains to have running water was Doctor Shuttee who lived on South Main, down the hill from the standpipe.



The Arcade Hotel, which opened in 1902. This photo was taken in later years. The building at right in the photo (mostly hidden) is Aid Hardware.

According to the *Quill*, the West Plains telephone service began to expand in 1900, and in 1908 the telephone office on Washington Avenue was moved to the Aid Hardware Company building. In that year the telephone facilities were modernized, and the first cable was put up around the Square, replacing the single lines. After the big fire that destroyed the Aid building in 1914, it was moved from the Square to 'Fruitville' on Walnut Street, where it remained 35 years. The switchboard had many locations in the early days, and the telephone exchange had several owners.



Arch Bugg and Altayna Carr on East Main in March, 1905. The Commercial Hotel is the building behind Mr. Bugg. The building at right is the stable and livery of C. Leymaster. In 1906 Leymaster constructed a much larger (73x100 feet) building also on East Main.



Front row: Haydon, Hogan, and Galloway. Middle row: Hogan and Lamons. Back row: Jones, Skinner, Robinson, Coach Toler and Perry. First names are unknown. This West Plains team apparently suffered only two losses during this season. Their record listed on the back of the photo indicated they played the West Plains College team three times, a team from Chapin six times and Mammoth Spring once. The Chapin team won twice and the other teams were defeated in each outing.

In 1902 professional photographer W.T. Glerup moved to West Plains. We are forever indebted to him for capturing the next ten years of West Plains history on film. His photos of this period are some of the best in existence.

In 1905 the World's Fair was held in St. Louis and many West Plains residents made the journey by train to see the sites.

In the spring of 1906, West Plains was in the midst of a construction

boom. The Howell County Bank was building a new two-story brick facility on the north side of the square (where Wiles Abstract Co. is now located). O. H. P. Catron was building another two-story brick building in the Catron Arcade between the Catron Theatre and Funkhouser-Davis Hardware. R. S. Hogan's new 15-room residence, Parkside, was under construction, and C. V. Leymaster was building a livery barn which was one of, if not

the largest brick building in West Plains. The Hill-Whitmire Mercantile Co. was building a new two-story addition on the Square, and many prospering citizens were building new residences. Among them was a young man named Will H.D. Green.

Will H.D. Green was a promising 22-year-old lawyer in 1906. His father, H.D. Green, was a prominent attorney here, and his grandfather was the famous Col. William



"1904—Ball team marches to field" is the inscription on the back of this photo. Perhaps this was an important game since the band turned out for the occasion.

-courtesy Joe Ald

# DON VAN WORMER.

West Plains Boy the World's Champion Typewriter.

Don VanWormer, son of Prosecuting Attorney J. L. VanWormer, of this city, has that has surpassed the world's record for rapid typewriting. The world's typewriting record was held by Miss Nida of Terre Haute, Ind., who wrote 71.4 words per minute, while Mr. VanWormer has a record of 80.6 words per minute. Miss Nida wrote 20,722 words in four hours and fifty minutes and Mr. VanWormer wrote 19,350 words in four hours.

From the April 24, 1930 *West Plains Daily Quill*.

## Population 1900

West Plains.....2,902  
Howell County.....21,834



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Monks. Young Green decided to try his hand at politics, and filed for the office of mayor. He was elected to that post on the first Tuesday in April, 1906, the youngest man ever to hold that office. In fact, he was too young. At the City Council meeting held the following June, Mayor Green announced that it had been brought to his attention that he was not 25 years of age, as required by law, and resigned the office. Two weeks later, James P. Harlin was elected to fill the vacated office, thus serving the first term of what turned out to be a tenure of 32 years in the same office, a national record for many years.

Another promising young West Plains man was Clyde M. Hill. Clyde graduated from West Plains High School in 1902 at the age of 16. After that, he taught in the country school district for one year, and then was hired by the West Plains School Board, teaching in the town's school for two years. West Plains high School had offered a three year curriculum until 1905, when a new facility was built and the course of study expanded into a four year program.

Young Mr. Hill had done a good job as a teacher, and in May of 1906, he was appointed Superintendent of Schools in West Plains. Not quite 21, he was probably the youngest man ever to be placed in charge of such a large school. He served successfully as Superintendent for four years before accepting another teaching job in Vermont.

(Still a young man in 1916, Hill was selected by the Vermont State Board of Education to head a study of that state's public schools. He eventually became Professor of Education at Yale University.)

It was also in 1906 when the county court worked out a deal with the Davidson brothers whereby the old Spring Park on East Main (the spring around which West Plains was founded) was traded for the tract of land now known as People's Park.

The town's major cemetery, located in the eastern part of West

Plains, was called Oak Grove Cemetery until July of 1907 when the townspeople got together to make improvements and established what is now known as Oak Lawn Cemetery.

For entertainment, the residents of West Plains and the surrounding countryside were enjoying the moving pictures and illustrated songs at the Nickelodeon on East Main. The price per viewing was 5 cents. Those who could afford it took occasional railroad excursions. As an example, a round trip ticket to St. Louis was \$15.05.

## Freight Shipments.

Following are the freight shipments for the week ending Nov. 7, 1909, at the West Plains station:

### RECEIVED.

- 1 car sugar from New York.
- 1 car coal from Johnston City.
- 1 car wheat from Kansas City.
- 1 car canned goods from St. Louis.
- 2 cars c s hulls from Memphis.
- 1 car lime from Springfield.
- 1 car wheat from Piece City.
- 1 car pickles from St. Louis.
- 1 car flour from Springfield.
- 1 car brick from Cheltenham.
- 1 car wheat from Mt. Vernon.
- 1 car wheat from Miller.
- 1 car coal from Pittsburg.
- 1 car brick from Mound Valley.
- 1 car hay from Lamar.
- 3 cars wheat from Golden City.
- 1 car emigrants from Ft. Scott.
- 1 car flour from Oswego.

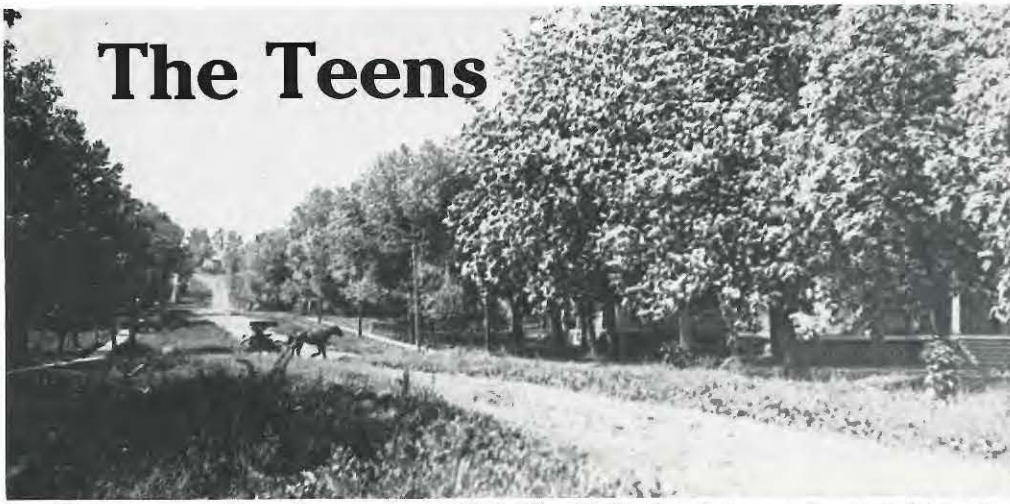
### FORWARDED

- 6 cars hogs to National stock yards
  - 1 car cattle to Rich Hill.
  - 1 car cattle to Kansas City.
  - 1 car sheep to Kansas City.
  - 2 cars cattle to Harrisonville.
  - 4 cars cattle to Imboden.
  - 2 cars cattle to National stock yards.
  - 5 cars iron ore to Carondelet.
  - 1 car flour to Brinkley, Ark.
  - 1 car emigrants to Marlow, Okla.
- C. M. Wayland, Agent.

From the November 8, 1909 *West Plains Daily Quill*.



# The Teens



Looking west on Broadway, circa 1910. The Hollenbeck house is at right in the photo.

In 1911, the Missouri State Capitol Building burned after the dome was struck by lightning. One of Howell County's most famous citizens, Col. Jay Lynn Torrey, tried without success to have the site of the capitol moved to his Fruitville Ranch southeast of West Plains.

Sparked by Col. Torrey's idea to bring the state capitol to Howell County, twenty-seven area businessmen joined with the colonel in touring the state to promote the plan and the area in general. This booster group, representing the West Plains Commercial Club, left West Plains on a Sunday afternoon in mid-March (1911) and headed for St. Louis, in a special chartered Pullman car named "Agra." On Monday, they visited the St. Louis office of the Fruitville Farms, and made their presence and purposes known to the city newspapers. They arrived at Jefferson City on Tuesday and were amazed to find the capitol city located on a succession of hills and hollows. In their

minds, this location held no advantages over a spot in Howell County.

Next they visited the state penitentiary. C. E. Kimberlin, who had taken thirty-two prisoners there during his four years as Howell County Sheriff, assumed charge of the group. In the warden's office, a surprise was awaiting them. Ben Richardson, who was serving a life sentence for killing Howell County Jailer Alfred Henry, was brought out and allowed to tell his story. None of the visitors took his claims of innocence seriously and were relieved to know he was still in confinement.

Leaving Col. Torrey in Jefferson City to promote his cause, the group traveled on to St. Joseph and Kansas City where they were royally received by the commercial clubs of those cities. This was their last stop, and the party arrived back in West Plains at noon on Thursday, with everyone declaring their efforts successful in spreading the good word about Howell

County.

The citizens of West Plains devoted Arbor Day, April 7, 1911, to cleaning the streets and beautifying the city. The day was declared a holiday for school children, and they joined in the occasion by cleaning the school yards and the interiors of the school buildings.

As their contribution on Clean Up Day, the Commercial Club formed the Order of the Overalls. All members of the club were to wear overalls and help clean up the streets of the downtown area. Those who refused to wear the official uniform of the day were fined \$1.00.

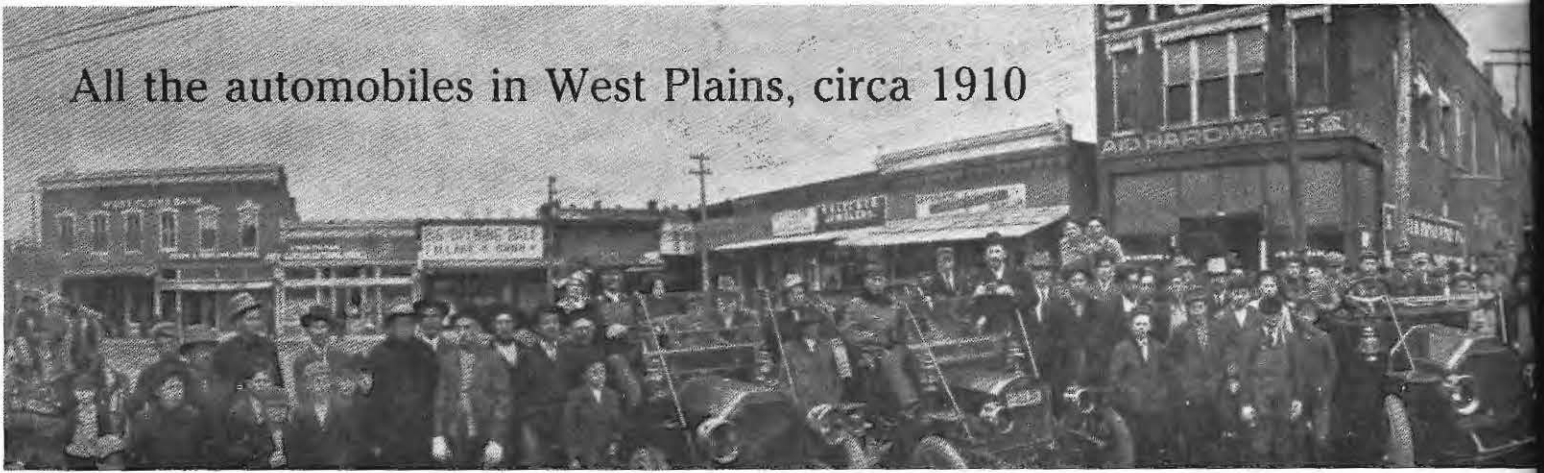
Mayor James P. Harlin, endeavoring to set a good example, got on the job by 7:00 a.m. sharp, and by noon, had raked the entire square by himself. The Commercial Club offered ten-cents per hundred for all cans and bottles delivered to the courthouse on Clean Up Day, and by that evening, the pile of cans, bottles, and trash was higher than the coal house next to the courthouse. The Commercial Club paid for 50,000 cans and bottles.

Mayor Harlin was a beloved citizen of West Plains, and many stories have been told to illustrate his good-nature and personality. Jim Harlin had moved his family into a house on Nichols Drive which his wife termed 'out in the country.' Most of Mrs. Harlin's friends were living in new homes on Grace Avenue, where she also wanted to live. The mayor, however, wasn't in the mood to bother with moving and ignored his wife's wishes. One evening, after return-



Many prominent West Plains citizens can be recognized in this photo. This group is apparently representing the "Order of the Overalls."

## All the automobiles in West Plains, circa 1910



ing home from a business trip of several days, he walked into his home to discover it dark and vacant! Hurrying back into the town to inquire about his family, he soon learned that he was the newest Grace Avenue resident.

Mayor Harlin served for a total of 32 years as mayor of West Plains, a national record which stood for many years. In 1914 he became the first mayor of West Plains elected in a general election. This was the same year that the old aldermanic form of government was abolished.

### Mayors

Samuel A. Risley 1883-1884  
 O.H. Perry Catron 1884-1886  
 John Halstead 1886-1890  
 William J. Zorn 1890-1892  
 James C. Kerby 1892-1894  
 J.A. Truex 1894-1896  
 Gideon B. Thomas 1896-1898  
 Richard Ramsey 1898-1900  
 George H. Cobb 1902-1904  
 Charles F. Funkhouser 1904-1906  
 Will H.D. Green 1906  
 James P. Harlin 1906-1908,  
 1910-1912, and 1914-1922  
 J. Harry Foley 1908-1910

Charles T. Aid 1912-1914  
 Edward C. Bohrer 1922-1924  
 James P. Harlin 1924-1944  
 M. Clay Amyx 1944-1952  
 Harry R. Cole 1952-1959  
 Joseph S. Hull, Jr. 1959-1964  
 W. Glenn Roe 1964-1972  
 Herman Weeks 1972-1976  
 W. Glenn Roe 1976-1980  
 Gerald Elmore 1980-1984  
 Jim Hawkins 1984-1987  
 Harry Kelly 1987-

*Information about the mayors of West Plains was researched by Dorothea Reavis.*



*... the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

*Matthew 1:20, 21 King James Version*

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## Population

Howell County . . . . . 21,065

## History of the Zizzer

(from 1911 Zizzer)

The first paper of any kind issued by the High School was a single sheet called "The Hot Number," edited by Glen Stevenson, editor-in-chief, and Clyde Hill, associate editor, in 1898. It must have been a rare number since Sunday was the only day they could spare to print it. It was intended for a monthly paper, but only a few numbers saw daylight.

In the year 1907 the Senior class planned a small booklet of eight pages as a surprise to the Juniors on Class Day. This pamphlet contained a picture of the High School, the Class Day and Commencement programs, several essays, the names of the Senior Class, their yells and motto, and two or three puns on the Juniors. The Juniors were so pleased with this idea that they decided to publish one the next year. When this 1908 volume was shown to Miss Davidson, one of the faculty, she exclaimed, "Oh, what a zizzer!" So from that time to the present day it has been called The Zizzer.

Each successive year the Senior Class has published a Zizzer, as a souvenir for Class Day. These books increased in size a trifle with each number. The first Zizzer in 1908 was enlarged by the pictures of the Seniors and Juniors. The 1909 volume is practically on the same plan as the others, filled with

the Class Day and Commencement programs several "picked" essays, a Junior alphabet, three cartoons, and some jokes, besides several other short articles.

Last year the class published a very large and better book, more on the order of college annuals. Hunter Jones was the editor-in-chief and Guy Head, associate editor. A prize contest brought many good stories and poems for the Literary Department. In the book is a picture of the High School, the faculty, the different

classes, besides snap-shots and cartoons. The book is indeed a credit to the class as well as the entire High School.

The Zizzer is mainly a remembrance of the "good ole High School days," a book filled with memories of Senior struggles, frolics, and pranks. It is also a proof of the progress and a "booster" to the school. It is contributed to by all the classes, some of the alumni and the faculty. The arrangement and business is entirely managed by the Seniors.


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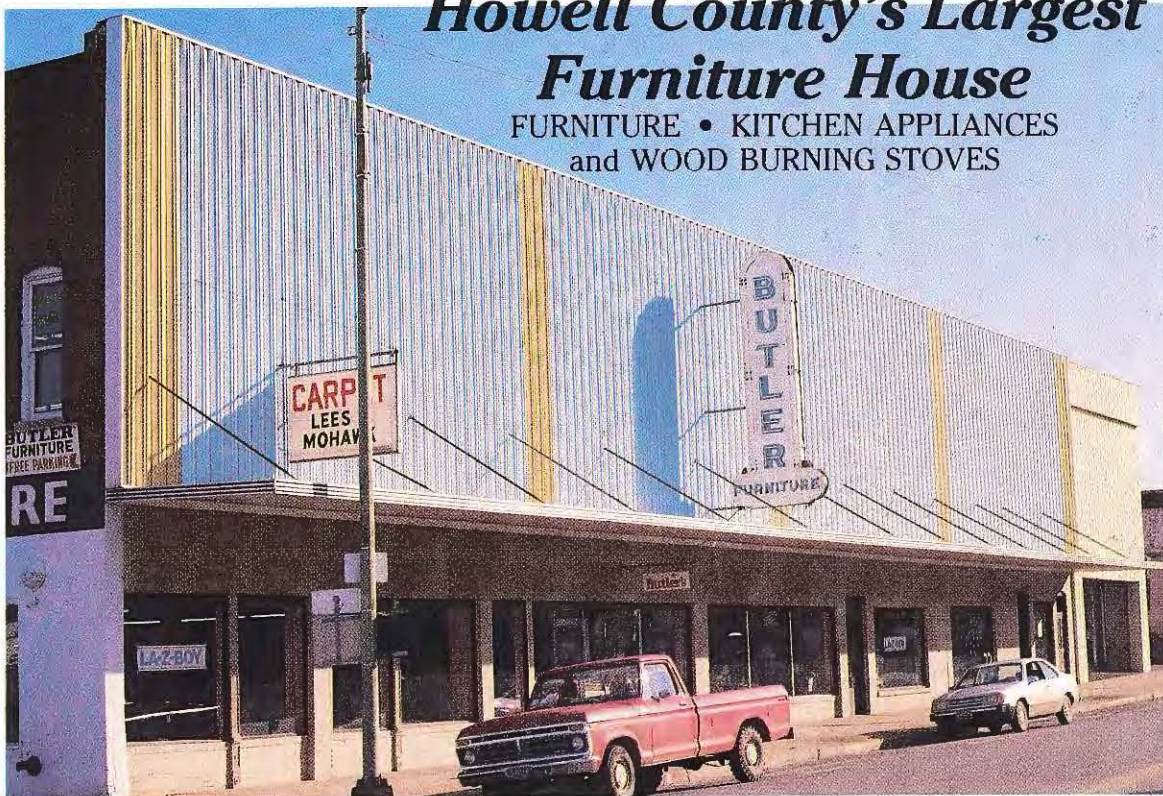
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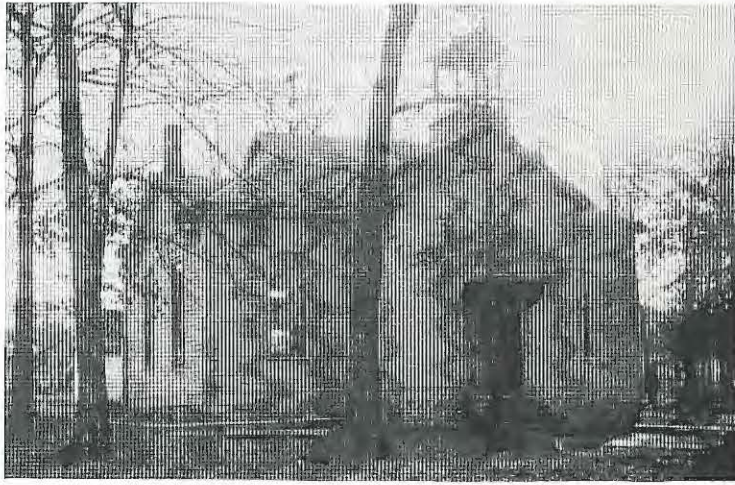
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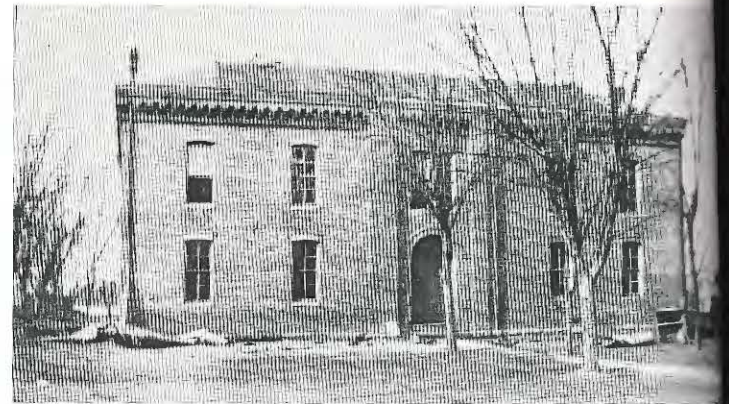


**Bob Butler**

Butler Furniture was founded by the late Robert E. "Bob" Butler and Pearl C. Butler. The store still does business in its original location, but has now expanded to cover a city block.



**East Ward**



**Original Central located just north of Central on Garfield**



**North Ward**

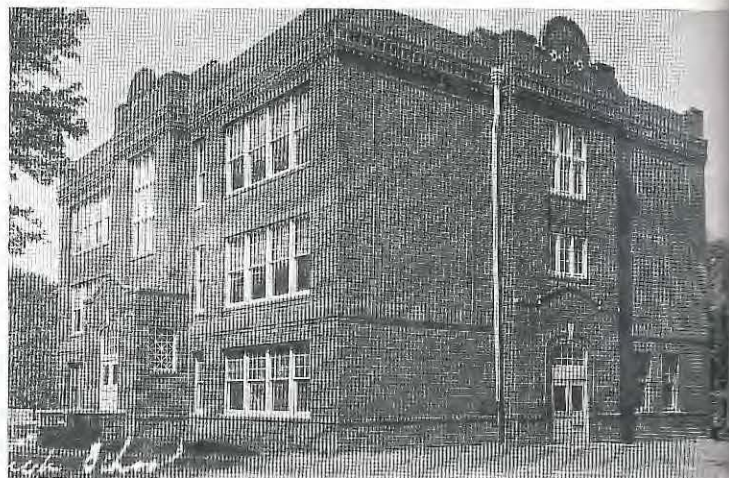


**West Ward about 1901**

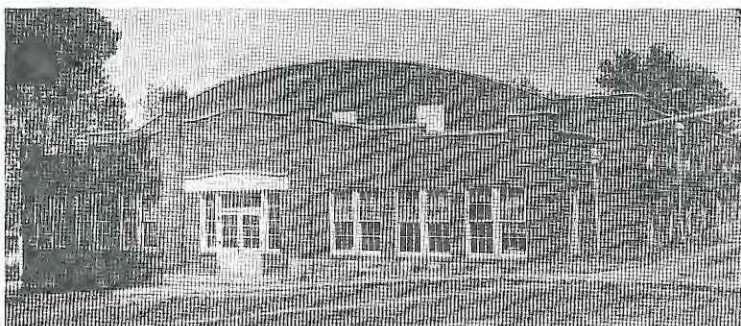
## Where we learned the three R's



**Lincoln School (now V.F.W. Post 1828). This school was for many years the only school for blacks in Howell County.**



**The third Central School (on Garfield). This building, built in 1914, served continuously as a school until 1982.**



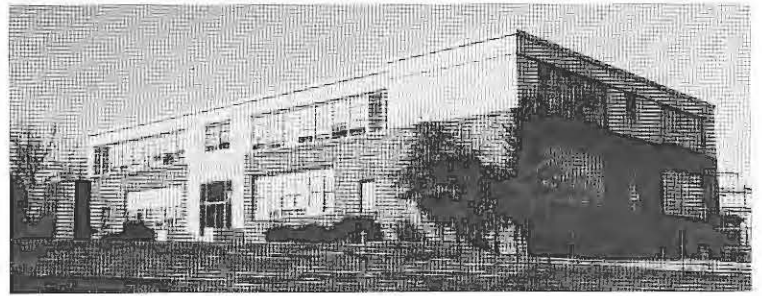
**The gym at the Central School Complex on Garfield. This building was demolished in 1987.**



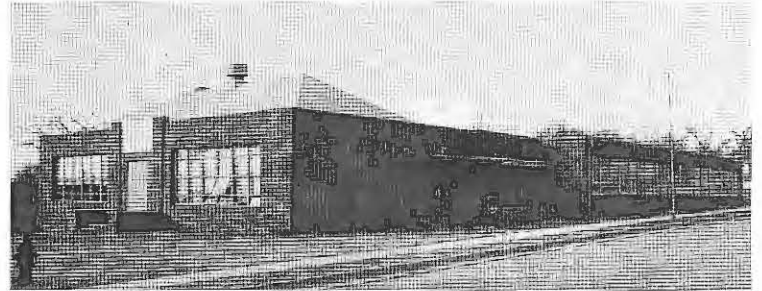
**Originally the Central music building, then kindergarten and now Adult Basic Education classrooms.**



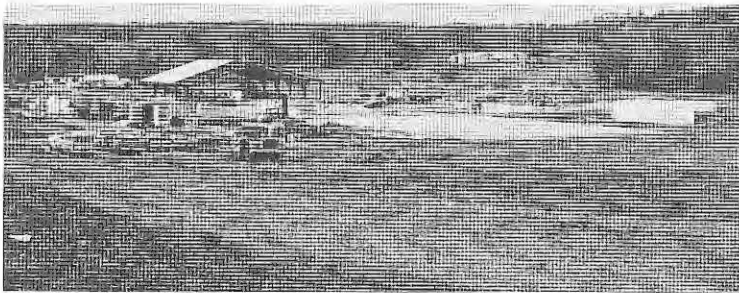
The second Central, Central High School on Walnut Street. This building was demolished in the 1960s.



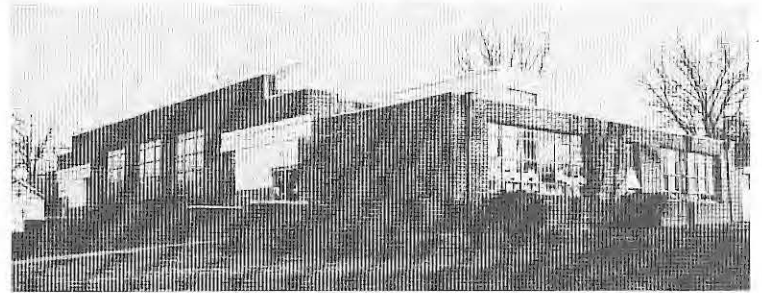
Carmical School



Foster School

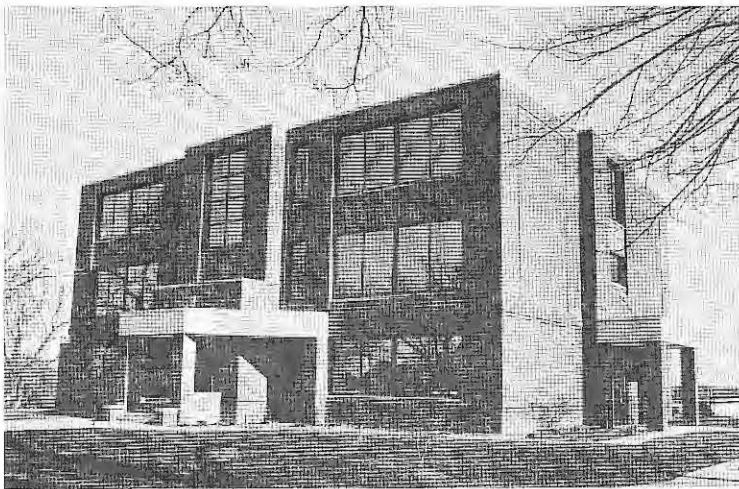


Construction on the new elementary school for grades K-4.

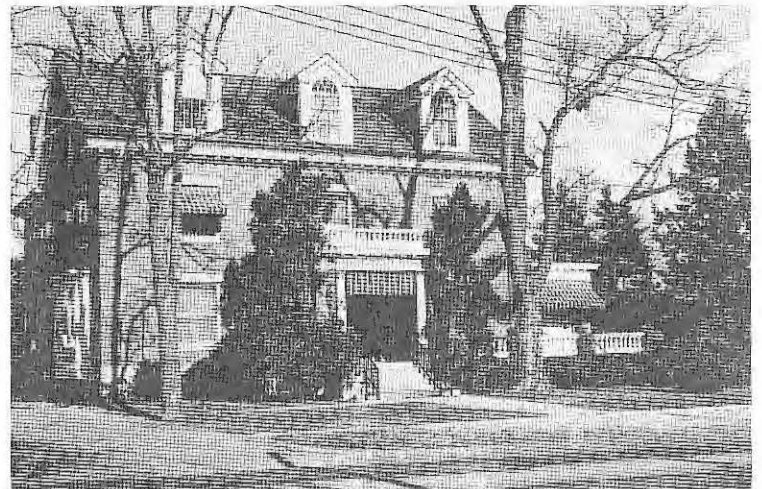


Reese School

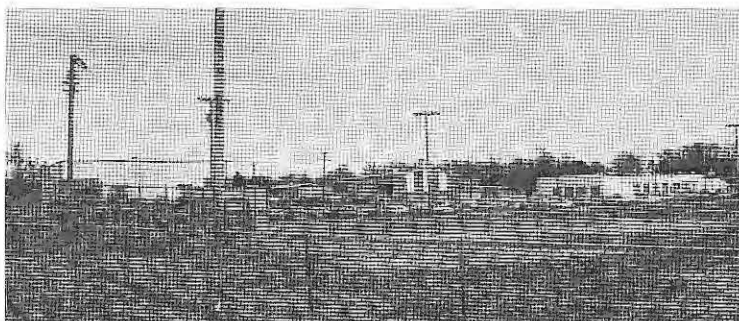
# — in the schools of West Plains



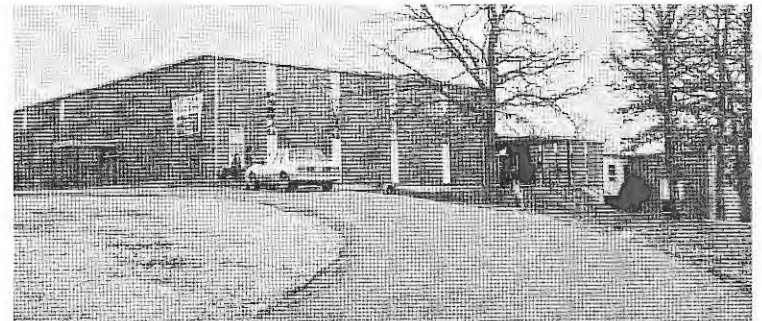
The newly remodeled Central is now again a school. This time as part of the West Plains Campus of SMSU.



Kellett Hall of the West Plains Campus of Southwest Missouri State University on West Main Street.



WPHS Complex. From left: gym, cafeteria, vocational-technical school. More classrooms are behind these buildings.



The West Plains Middle School. This is home to grades 5-8 and would be at extreme right in the photo at left.

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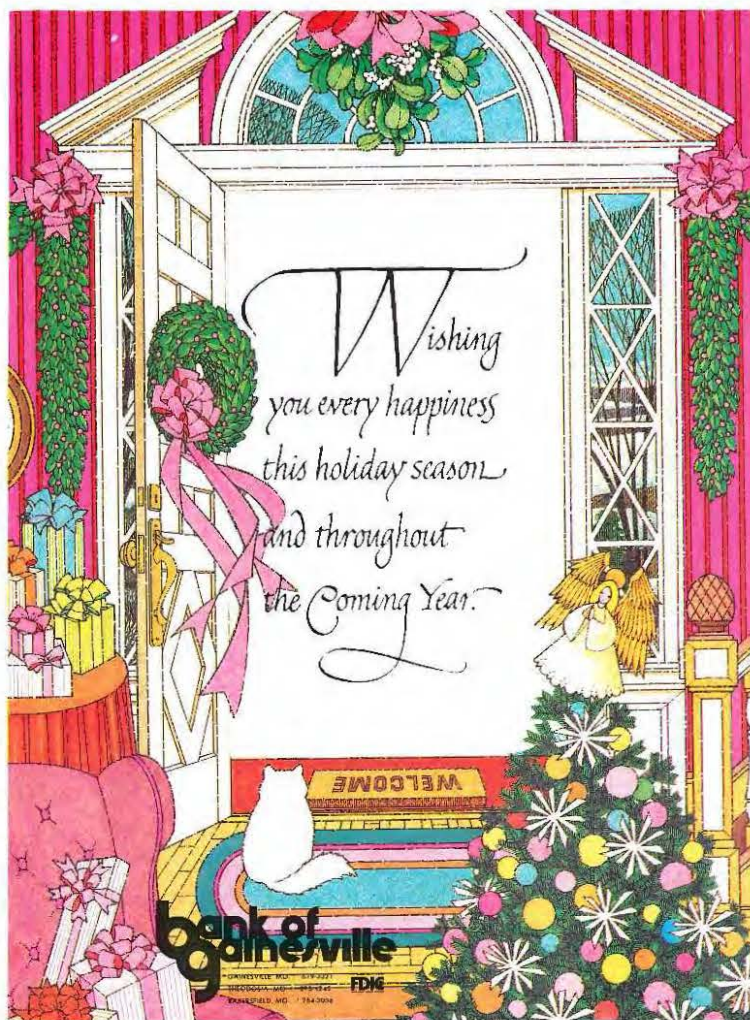
Front row: Dedra Lonon, Clara Zell Cherry, Margaret Keister, and Charlene Briscoe. Back row: Barbara Gunter, Brenda Jewell, Newt Brill, Cheri Ford, and Missi Dancer

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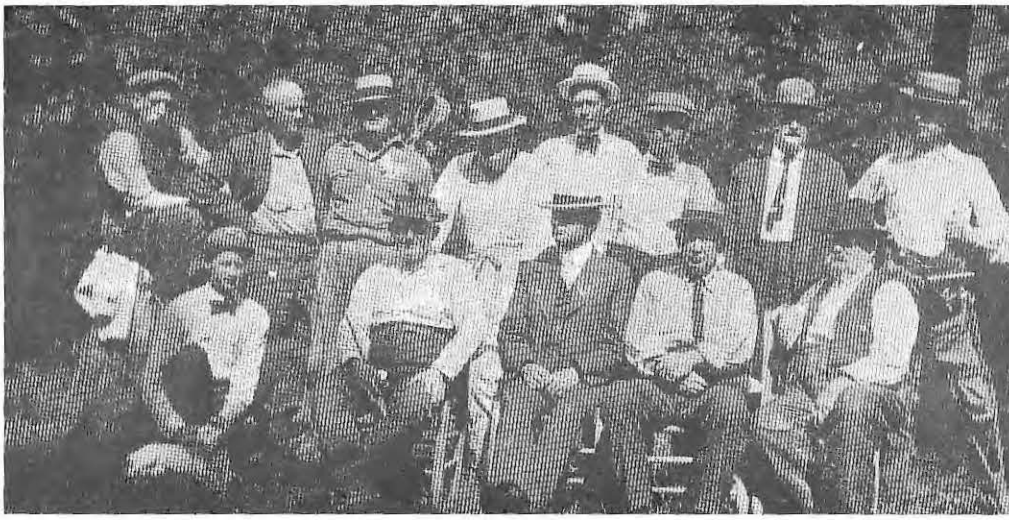
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The Old Timers' Club was active in the teens. According to an old program, they held their seventh annual reunion in June of 1916 at Ebb and Flow Spring on Jack's Fork River. This photo may have been taken at that reunion. The man in the middle of the front row appears to be John R. Reed, president of the group. At far left is C.T. Aid.

About this time another famous West Plains citizen was starting his career. Joe L. Jones moved to West Plains with his parents from Moody in 1912. Recognizing Joe's potential, they sold their family farm just so he could attend high school in West Plains.

After the move, Joe didn't disappoint his parents or anyone else. He distinguished himself in his high school career with the highpoint coming in 1916 when he was editor of the Zizzer yearbook. The leather-bound 1916 Zizzer was perhaps the best one ever.

He had the foresight to include articles on the community's social, religious and business life along with a complete list of the previous graduates of West Plains High School since its formation in 1890.

Joe went on to have a long and successful career as a journalist with United Press International,

eventually retiring as its vice-president.

## Schools

In 1914 Central High School was constructed on Garfield Avenue, and members of the Class of 1915 were the first to be graduated from the 3-story brick structure, which served as a school continuously from 1915 to 1982. (It has this year begun serving as a school again, this time as part of Southwest Missouri State University.)

The 1916 Zizzer reports the number of students enrolled in high school was 200 and the number enrolled in "the grades" was 800.

## City Expansion

The teens were years which saw many improvements in West Plains — the paving of the square in 1914, the building of a city swimming pool in 1915, and hook up of the city's electrical power system to the new hydroelectric generating plant at Mammoth Spring in 1916.

The city scales were built in 1919 on East Dixon where the fire and police stations are now located. A newspaper, the *People's Searchlight*, was published from 1913 to 1919.

On October 18, 1914 the famous attorney William Jennings Bryan passed through West Plains on a train, making a brief stop at the depot. In August, 1916 a circus came to town.

The decade also saw a record flood and several large fires which destroyed buildings such as Langston's and Aid Hardware on the square. The high incidence of destructive fires led to the modernization of the fire department. A 25 x 60 foot brick building was constructed on Washington Avenue in 1917, and a new fire engine was purchased to replace the horse-drawn fire wagon which had been used for many years. Even with the improvements in the fire department, most buildings still burned when they caught on fire. The fire fighters did well to keep surrounding buildings from burning too.

This was also the decade of the First World War. Following the war, in 1920, the *West Plains Journal* published *The Howell County Honor Roll*. A.T. Hollenbeck was the publisher and Joe Jones served as associate editor.

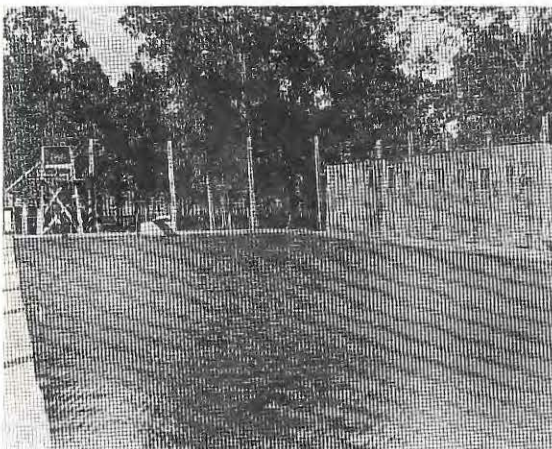
The foreward of the book gives an overview of the role played by Howell Countians in World War I:

*"... Every state, every community, had a fine part in the great national undertaking of 1917-19, but even as one star differs from another in glory, so do the war records of some counties far eclipse the general average.*

*"The citizens of Howell County are proud of the fact that only two other counties in Missouri, and less than thirty in the whole United States, had equal distinction in more than filling the first draft quota by prior voluntary enlistments. No men entered the army through the selective service in Howell County until the last of March, 1918. The number of men in service according to total population was considerably above the average for the whole country.*

*"... The total of Howell County people in service to their country was over nine hundred, sixty per cent more than the average for the United States as figured by the Selective Service Board."*

*"... The only aim of the Honor Roll Association has been to publish a full and fair statement of our county's unusually creditable*



The new city pool, October 10, 1915.



July 4th, 1919. Victory Girls in People's Park—Hogan house to left, bandstand to right. From left: Jacque Dixon (Cunningham), Mary Katherine Peters, Myrtle Davis, Thelma Evans (Bohrer), Mary Hull, Pauline Godby, Marion Mantz (Logan), Edith Ross, Louise Whitmire, Cecile Kellett (Bonham), Charles Bohrer, Helen Rice, Dorothy Mantz (Walt), Linnie Arnold (Bohrer), Lois Thornburgh (Hankins), Alice Rosser, Naomi Bunting (Ingold), Marie Kimberlin (Rothgeb), Catherine Carter (Wunderlich).

part in the Great War, as a matter of permanent record and as a memorial to the gallant lads whose last days were spent far from the green hills which they so loved. It is felt that such record will be a priceless thing in the future, and with that knowledge the publishers feel repaid for a work which has been not at all easy."

Indeed the work is a priceless thing. It includes photos and



The late M.C. Stephens in full uniform in 1918.

biographical information of the men who served from Howell County and histories of the different military companies. Activities of the Red Cross in Howell County are outlined, as well as other "home" activities — Liberty Loan Drives, Council of Defense, Victory Girls, and Four Minute Men to name a few.

To add to the book's historical significance, Howell County veterans of the Mexican War (only one — John Wells); the Spanish War (31, including the most famous, Col. Jay L. Torrey); and the Civil War (169 Union veterans and 185 Confederate veterans) were listed.

Twelve men from West Plains lost their lives in the war along with another 22 from throughout the county. Following is the honor roll of the 34 Howell County men who died in the service:

ALLEN, SHELLEY, Willow Springs  
 BENFIELD, DENNIS F., West Plains  
 BOLES, WAYNE T., West Plains  
 CANTRELL, LONNIE H., Brandsville  
 CLINGAN, DARREL D., Willow Springs  
 COLEMAN, JAMES M., Mountain View  
 COLLINS, SHAFTER, Pomona  
 COON, CHARLEY H., Pomona  
 DAY, MANNARD, Brandsville  
 DUFFY, EVERETT H., Siloam Springs  
 DUNCAN, REUBEN CALVIN, West Plains  
 FINDLEY, BENJAMIN, C., Willow Springs  
 GREEN, ETHMER G., Elijah  
 GREEN, FRANK O., West Plains  
 HAMILTON, FRED P., Hutton Valley  
 HARDEN, LAURANCE, West Plains  
 HOLLOWAY, CLYDE, Willow Springs

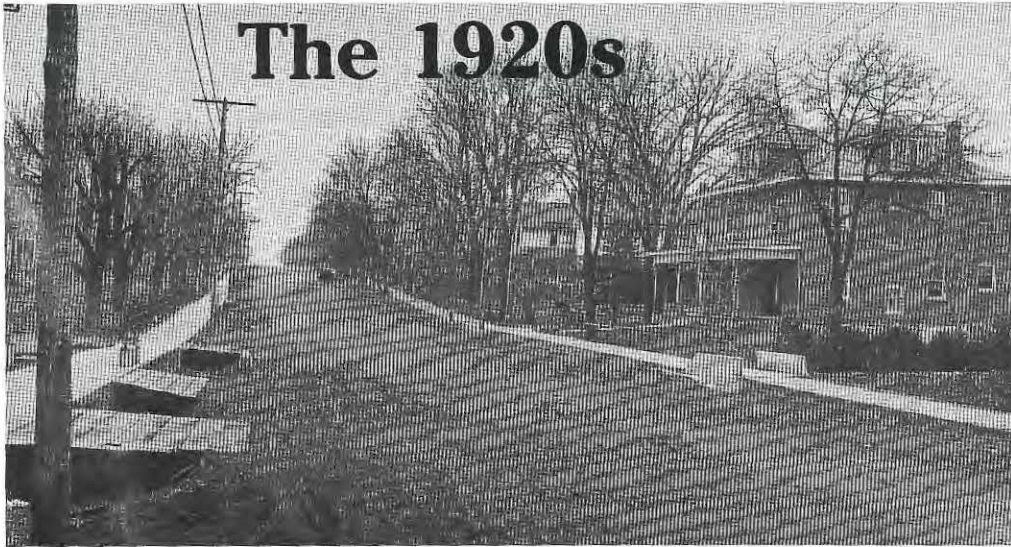
HOLLOWAY, GUY, Willow Springs  
 HUDSON, JIM FRED, West Plains  
 JEWELL, CHARLEY, West Plains  
 JOLLIFF, DAN B., Rover  
 LENON, JOHN, Peace Valley  
 MONROE, GEORGE, Pomona  
 MYERS, WILLIAM E., West Plains  
 McDANIEL, BEN H., West Plains  
 NELSON, FRED W., West Plains  
 PIPER, ALFRED L., West Plains  
 SHAW, EARL, West Plains  
 SLOAN, ERNEST H., Brandsville  
 SMITH, HEARL, Willow Springs  
 SMITH, ISAAC C., Willow Springs  
 SMITH, MARVIN W., Koshkonong  
 SUMMERS, WEBSTER J., Willow Springs  
 THORNTON, HIRAM J., Mountain View

At least five Howell County women entered the service in WWI. Four, including Alice Davidson and Ruth Sessen, of West Plains, served in the Army Nursing Corps. Another, Adah Pitts Smith, joined the Motor Corps of the National League for Women's Service and attained the rank of First Lieutenant.

At least a dozen Howell County men were cited for bravery. Lieutenant Stephen W. Thompson of West Plains shot down the first enemy plane credited to an American flyer and was later cited for bravery because of an encounter with four enemy planes.

The close of the war signaled the end of the decade and the end of an era. West Plains entered the 1920s with perhaps a new sense of worldliness, knowing things would never be the same.

# The 1920s



-courtesy Mike Hogan

This is a photo of West Main Street before it was paved in the early 1920s.

The 1920s began with an effort to get back on track. With increased post-war production of the automobile, there became an even greater need for good streets and roads. Recognizing the importance of the automobile in further economic development, Mayor Harlin became a leader in road-building. This was the beginning of our modern highway system and a time when many good farm-to-market roads were established.

## EQUALITY

by: *Georgie Mathews*

I sat on one of a long flight of cement steps which led from the street to the high bank of our yard. The warm step below felt good to my bare feet. I sat there in my brother's outgrown overalls in happy anticipation as several large pieces of machinery moved to the site near the front of our house.

It was the summer of 1928. A

new "Farm-to-Market" road was to be constructed in front of our house located at the southern edge of West Plains. The road would continue for twenty-one miles south to come to an abrupt dead end. Its purpose was clearly defined by its name.

The sun beat down with increasing heat to cause dozens of new freckles to join the array already covering my face and arms. As I watched I nibbled on the wild strawberries growing within arm's reach on the bank.

One of the machines had a large cab with a makeshift desk. Maps and papers lined one side of the cab. A tall rangy man inside shouted orders to the operators of the other rigs. As each piece of machinery moved by I waved at the operator. Almost all of them smiled and waved back. My excitement grew and I thought, "Wow! This is really going to be fun."

Finally, all the equipment had

lumbered past our house except the one with the cab. When that one approached I waved again. The tall man stopped the rig by the steps and called, "Hi, Red! Want a ride in the cab?"

I could hardly believe my ears! I scampered down the steps and climbed up into the cab. The man pointed to a portable leather-covered seat where I could sit. The crew was working on the two or three blocks just beyond our house to cut a wider road through the red clay soil. I was all eyes and ears as the morning sped by.

After a while I asked, "Do you think you'll get in trouble for letting me ride?"

The man chuckled and wrote some number on a chart. "I doubt



May Milstead on the steps young Georgie (Milstead) Mathews sat on to watch the roadbuilders. This house, built in 1881, is one of the oldest houses in West Plains.



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it, kiddo. I'm the superintendent."

I looked at him with a new sense of admiration. I thought if he was anything like the superintendent of schools he must be about the most important man in the world.

Every night that week I met my mother and father when they came home with happy stories of the "Super" and his road crew. They laughed and outside of my dusty face, hair, hands and clay-covered feet they saw no harm in my adventures.

On Friday disaster struck. When mother came home from work she said that I could no longer ride with the highway crew. I argued, cried, begged — to no avail. Usually understanding and permissive, Mother remained firm. Three ladies had come into the store on Friday to describe my presence on the machinery. They protested that it was not a proper place for a nine-year-old girl. When mother did not relent I decided that it must have been three of her best customers.

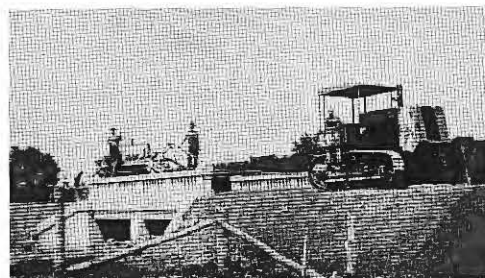
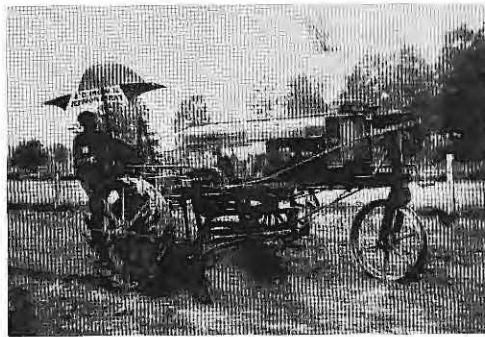
The following Monday morning I sat on the step again as the machinery rolled past our house. I was fighting tears and lamenting the fate that had decreed I should be born a girl.

The rig with the cab stopped and Super called, "Hurry up, Red! We're late."

"I can't go anymore," I managed to answer.

He looked at me a long moment and then said sympathetically, "I'm sorry, kid."

His rig moved on to join the rest of the crew.



The three photos above were taken in 1922 while Highway 63 was being built.

### Schools

The gymnasium at Central School on Garfield was constructed in 1922. It also contained much needed classroom space for the Central complex. (The gymnasium was deemed too far gone for repair in 1987 and was demolished.)

The 1923 Zizzer that the first Zizzer Queen was elected during the 1922-23 school year. Junior Miss Helen Roper won when members of her class sold the most Zizzers.

The 1923 Zizzer also contained histories of track and basketball.

As for public works, West Plains obtained its sewer system in 1927, and in 1928 the local phone company was purchased by the Western Light and Telephone Company.

Also in 1928 the Methodist and Methodist Episcopal Church South merged and the present First United Methodist Church was built on West Main.

### Population

1920

Howell County . . . . .21,102



West Plains farmer and Methodist preacher Abe Taylor circa 1927.

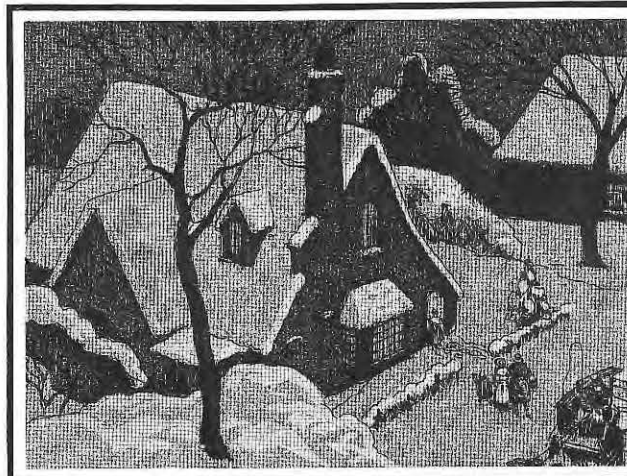
The decade ended with the worst disaster to ever befall West Plains. On Friday, April 13, 1928 approximately 50 persons were dancing to the tune "At Sundown," when the Bond Dance on East Main Street exploded in a blast which

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Looking toward the north side of East Main the day after the explosion.

jarred the city. Within seconds flames engulfed the building, leaving little hope of rescue for victims trapped inside.

When the final toll was taken, 37 were dead and 22 were injured. Three brick buildings were completely destroyed and several others sustained considerable damage. Windows were blown from nearly every building on East Main and court square. The old courthouse, built in 1883, sustained damage which made it necessary to discontinue its use.

The explosion is still too painful for many survivors and family members of victims to talk about. It left the whole community grieving over the loss, a grief which was perhaps made worse by the horrible reality of how the victims died.

Finally, no one was ever able to determine exactly *why* the explosion happened, compounding frustrations and anger. It's estimated from 4,000 to 7,000 persons attended the funeral services.

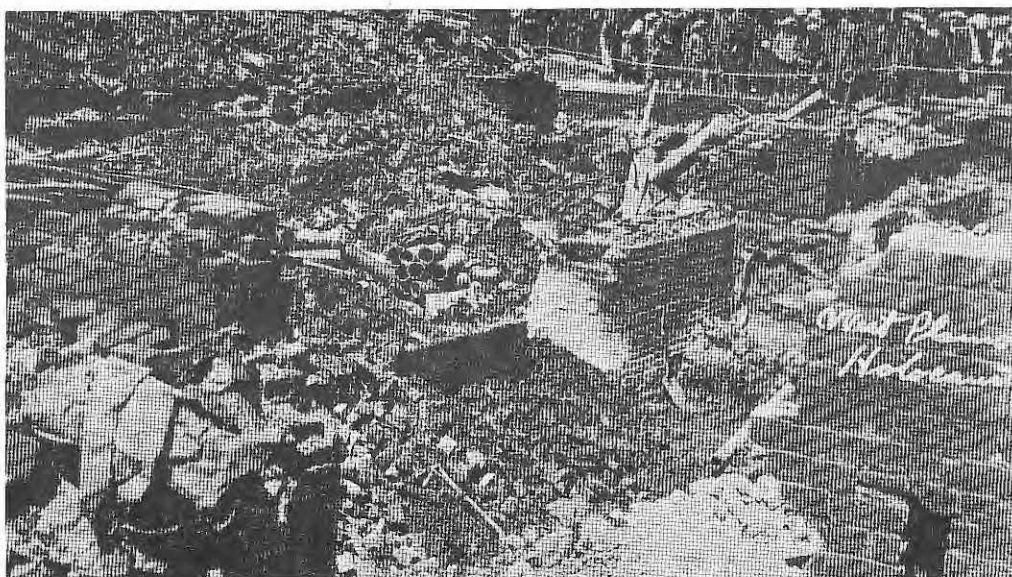
With the sad and tragic episode behind it, West Plains went on to face realities. The city formed and trained a new fire department and purchased a new fire truck, hoping to help guard against such disasters.

Gus Jolliff, Sr., became the city's first fulltime fire chief. He was a professional firefighter having served 22 years with the Shreveport, Louisiana Fire Department. He introduced many advanced firefighting techniques, and made the first real strides in fire prevention and protection in West

Plains. Jolliff retired in 1940.

*The following "Explosion Ballad" was given to the Gazette by Phil Buck from the collection of Mayree Davis.*

In the little town of West Plains  
 In old Missouri State,  
 Was in the month of April  
 They saw the hand of fate.  
 The springtime flowers were blooming  
 The world was bright and gay,  
 And no one dreamed that danger  
 Would come to them that day.  
 Was there the young folks gathered  
 One fatal Friday night  
 And to the dance they wandered  
 With hearts so gay and light  
 And there they spent the evening  
 With not a thought of fear  
 For nothing seemed to warn them  
 That death was drawing near.  
 The dance was nearly over,  
 The evening nearly past  
 When from the floor beneath them  
 There came an awful blast.  
 The building all around them  
 Came tumbling to the ground  
 And though they fought and struggled  
 The toppling beat them down.  
 How quick the scene was shifted  
 From one so gay and bright  
 With our hearts so full of grief  
 To see their friends that night.  
 How sad the tears of loved ones  
 That came at break of dawn  
 To see the great disaster  
 Where 40 lives had gone.  
 We can't explain the reason  
 These awful things must come  
 But we should all be ready  
 To face thy will be done.  
 But though our hearts be weary-  
 Our burdens hard to bear  
 We have one consolation  
 We'll meet them over there.



Thousands flocked to the scene of the disaster.

-courtesy Wanda Prantl

In October 1929 the stock market crashed, beginning the worst economic disaster in modern times. As a result of the crash the 1930s will always be remembered as the years of the Great Depression. But West Plains managed to pull through and grow in the process.

The decade started on January 5, 1930 with the laying of the cornerstone of the Methodist Church on West Main. (The formal dedication was September 18, 1938.)

In December 1931 the post office was moved from the first floor of the Catron Opera House to a new \$70,000 facility on East Main, (the current location of the West Plains Public Library). At that time the office handled approximately 30,000 pieces of mail each day.

Also in 1931 another disaster struck West Plains. On December 19, Howell County Sheriff C.R. Kelly was murdered in the Davidson Garage on West Main. The story was told by Catherine Castner, in the Centennial memories book published in 1952:

*"There had been a wave of burglaries and robberies in this area, and especially the week*



## The 1930s

**Aid Hardware circa 1932.**

-courtesy Rena Wood

*before McCallon's Clothing Store, which was located where Viener's store [now Babe's] is now, had been robbed of hundreds of dollars worth of men's and women's clothing together with Christmas merchandise. That Saturday morning, Sheriff Kelly went into the garage to question some men who had driven there a few minutes before. When he opened the door of their car, they shot and killed him. In backing out and making their escape, Carac Davidson and 'Dutch' James tried to shoot them. There was lots of excitement*

*around this area for the next several days. Several posses were formed to hunt down the criminals. At that time the Missouri State Highway Patrol had just been organized and they helped in the search. Their hide-out was found below Thayer near the Arkansas line. In going through their personal property and effects, together with pictures, it was learned that the criminals were the Ma Barker-Fred Barker-Alvin Karpis gang.*

*Sheriff Kelly was a popular and capable officer. Upon his death, his widow, Mrs. Lulu Kelly (Oliver),*

**This photograph of employees of the West Plains Post Office was taken in 1932 shortly after the post office moved into the new building which is now the West Plains Public Library. Front row from left are Hamlin Griffin, Lindsay Briscoe, L.M. Hyder, Mert Bean, and Carl Ike. Second row, Chester Collins, D.E. Henry, Lee Heselton, Bert Collins, Guy Buck, Authur West, and A.J. Shelton. Third row: J.P. Morgan, assistant postmaster at that time, Jack Shelton, A.T. Hollenbeck who was postmaster at that time, Rex Wood, M.A. Widener, and Jimmy Morgan.**





-courtesy Monroe Forbes

## GULLIC IS HERO IN BROWNS' GAME WITH DETROIT

**Boy From Koshkonong Broke Up  
Thirteen Inning Battle With A  
Hit That Turned Game To  
Brownies 5-4**

Ted Gullie, of Koshkonong, former West Plains high school football and basketball star, now an outfielder with the St. Louis Browns, continues to hold a place in box car letters in the sports news of the day, and his latest victory was in the home debut of the Browns Tuesday, when he was the hero of a 13-inning battle with the Detroit Tigers, which he turned into a 5-4 victory for his team.

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat in telling of the game headlines Gullie

as the hero and mentions him many times in the account of the game. The writeup says:

"To Ted Gullie, elongated Ozark mountaineer, went the honor of breaking up the battle. He turned the thankful trick in the fourth extra round by singling cleanly to left center to drive in Fred Schulte from the second base. Schulte had reached scoring position on a base on balls and Melillo's sacrifice bunt."

The article also says that the Brown's batting was done chiefly by Gullie and Manush, Gullie getting two singles and one triple.

### Gets Triple and Scores

The Browns missed a chance in their second round after filling the bases, but they tied the score in the fourth. Gullie drove to right center and by taking a chance he turned the drive into a triple. He scored a moment later on Ferrell's sacrifice fly to Stone in left field.



Above is a news clipping from the April 24, 1930 *West Plains Daily Quill*.

Above left: Nevada Davidson and Willie Kennard in 1931. They are on the steps of the Lincoln School in West Plains. The small school for many years housed eight grades and was the only school for blacks in Howell County.

At left: the Moonshiners in 1932. Gus Jolliff, at left, and Moon Mullins.

*was appointed sheriff by the governor to serve until a new sheriff could be elected. Mrs. Kelly served several months during which time she worked and cooperated with all agencies to trying to capture her husband's murderers."*

In 1933 Cleora Williams, one of the publishers of the *Quill*, wrote an article about the courthouses of Howell County. She wrote the story on the day after a wrecking crew from the Civil Works Administration began demolishing the old courthouse built in 1883.

According to her article, the 1928 explosion, "left the courthouse with cracked walls, careened door and window sashes, yawning windows without glass and walls and floors pulled apart on the second floor."

The courthouse was vacated after the explosion, and for a period of eight years Howell County's offices were re-located in various buildings throughout West Plains — in the old Methodist Church on Washington Avenue, in banks, the Catron Opera house and other businesses.

All of the county's records and offices were finally moved to their present homes in the courthouse in 1936.



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In 1934 the newspaper headlines told of the depression. West Plains was even visited by the tail end of several severe dust storms which swept through Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas. Work programs were in the news as were the continued reports of thefts and robberies — especially bank robberies.

## Schools

In 1938 construction was started on three new elementary schools. These schools (which are still in use, but only until construction is completed on a new elementary facility) were named in honor of three beloved pioneer teachers, Mary Carmical, Maggie Foster, and D.W. Reese.

On October 27, 1939 WPHS held its first homecoming day. The Zizzers played their arch rivals, the Mountain Grove Panthers on October 31 and lost 21-0. Production of the *Zizzer* resumed in 1939 after several years of tough economic times had forced interruption of its publication.

In 1939 one of our town's favorite "nice guys" received a special award of national significance. Guy S. Buck was chosen as the All-American Father of the Year. He and his wife, Arlene and son Phil (who together nominated him for the award) were whisked



off for a whirlwind tour of New York and a live interview on coast-to-coast radio.

Also at the end of the decade was the possibility of electrification for all of rural Missouri with the coming of the REA.

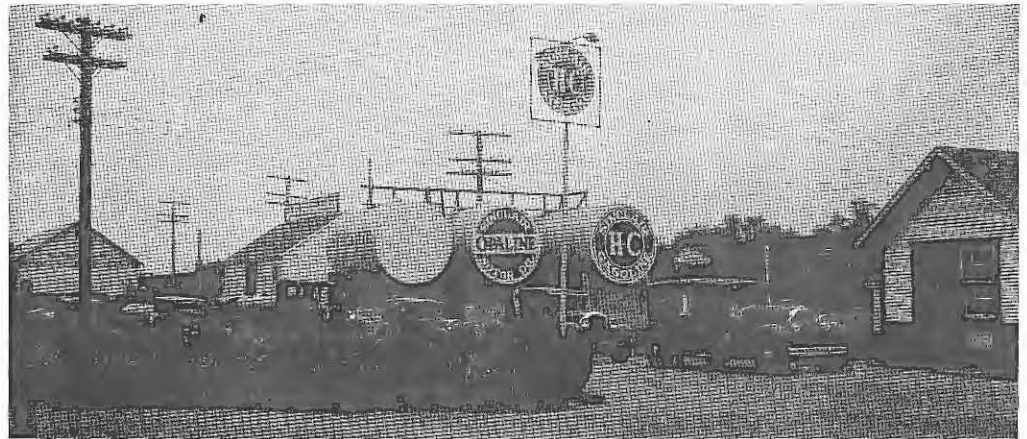
The decade ended on upbeat notes, but the 1940s would bring yet another calamity which would involve the entire world.

## Population

1930

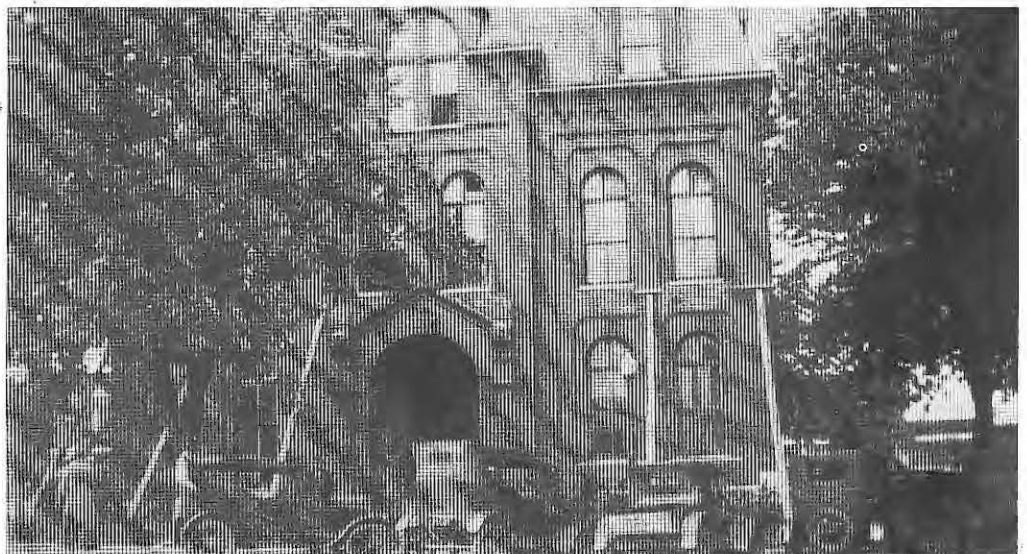
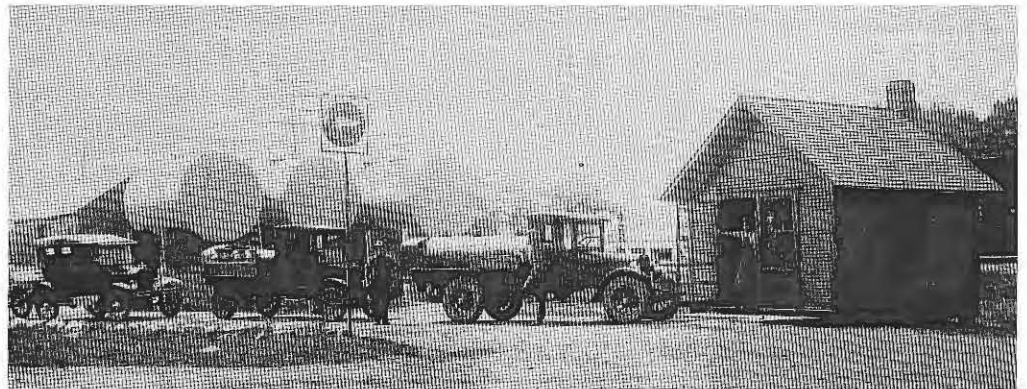
The population of Howell County which hit over 21,000 in 1900 had leveled out through the 1920s and remained at about that figure. It dropped in 1930.

West Plains . . . . . 3,335  
Howell County . . . . . 19,672



-M.C. Stephens collection

The photo above was taken in the 1930s. This establishment was located west of Richards Brothers Feed Mill next to the tracks. Below is the same location several years earlier.



Above is the Howell County Courthouse after the dance hall explosion in 1928. The building was structurally damaged and had to stop being used. It was finally demolished in 1933. At left is the Guy Buck family in New York City.

## The 1940s



-courtesy Mike Hogan

**The Knoerle house (later Hogan house) on Grace Avenue was built in 1892, but this photo was taken in the winter of 1940.**

The newspaper headlines in the 1940s were dominated by World War II. The moment it was learned that the Japanese had attacked Hawaii on December 7, 1941 local plans for the war effort were announced. (Indeed preparations were being made months before because unrest in other parts of the world seemed to make U.S. involvement unavoidable.) Especially alarming at first was the uncertainty of the fate of several West Plains men serving in the armed forces. None, as it turned out, were reported among the dead at Pearl Harbor, but before the end of the war, many West Plains residents would lose their lives.

Unfortunately there is no current list of West Plains men and women who served their country during

the war or of those who died. John T. Kirk, who is commander of the local V.F.W. Post, says he's working on such a list and hopes to someday have a fitting memorial established.

During the war there were of course bond drives and rationing and victory gardens, but the economy was turning around from the depression years because of increased production of war materials and when the war finally came to an end in 1945, there was a new found prosperity.

Longtime mayor of West Plains, J.P. Harlin, retired in 1944. At that time, West Plains had no city taxes but enjoyed the lowest water and light rates among cities of its classification in the entire state.

In 1946 the "Quill sisters," Cleora

and Ella Williams and Fritze Williams Dixon sold the newspaper which had been in their family for over 60 years. Their father, Mills Williams, had established *The Quill*, a weekly paper, in 1885. *The Daily Quill* was established in 1902. (Frank Martin purchased the newspaper from the sisters and continues to publish it today, with his son, Frank L. Martin III, serving as editor.) The *Quill* sisters were famous throughout the country during their tenure as owners of the paper, and their journalistic skills in reporting local news through the early 1940s provides a valuable record of West Plains history.

On July 15, 1947 the first radio station in West Plains went on the air, KWPM-AM has been serving

the area ever since. According to Bob Neathery, who opened the station, the call letters were picked by the FCC to stand for West Plains Missouri. FM was added in 1953. Fritze Dixon, who had recently retired from the newspaper business, went to work at the radio station where she stayed as assistant manager and broadcaster for many years.

## Population

1940

West Plains . . . . . 4,026  
Howell County . . . . . 22,270

### Shoppers Asked To Carry Packages Home Without Wrappings

(From Wednesday's Daily Quill.)

Shoppers can help to conserve paper supplies, which are becoming scarce because of the national defense program, if they will carry home some of their packages without wrapping.

Of course many kinds of merchandise cannot be carried conveniently without wrapping, it was explained by Charles Bohrer, chairman of the Howell County Civilian Council of Defense, but much merchandise is put up in cartons or other sanitary packages and can be carried quite easily without extra wrapping.

Many pounds of paper can be saved each week and each month in West Plains if everybody will observe this conservation practice. Carry 'em unwrapped!

News clipping from December 8, 1941.



Above: Cleora and Ella Williams and Fritze Williams Dixon, the *Quill* sisters. Below: The Dressler sisters, Phyllis, Ruth, Kate, and Edna (Mrs. G.V. "Toots" Carter).



-Rose Lee Carter collection

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**Aerial photo of West Plains. 1. The educational addition at First Baptist Church which housed Mo-Ark College. 2. Old Central High School. 3. Demolition site of Arcade Hotel. This photo originally appeared in Gazette number five dated 1948. It was actually taken several years later.**

*On June 27, 1946 the war department released a list of casualties from World War II. The list is incomplete, but does include over 70 persons who died or were reported missing during the war. Here is the list of names from Howell County, reproduced from the Journal-Gazette.*

*The letters beside the names indicate the type of casualty: KIA - killed in action; DOW - died of wounds; DOI - died of injuries; DNB - died, non-battle; and M - missing.*

#### Howell County

Anderson, Oscar T., Pvt.—DNB  
 Barks, Paul J., Pvt.—M  
 Baser, Raymond M., Sgt.—KIA  
 Bay, Earnest B., T Sgt.—KIA  
 Bengé, Jack, Pfc.—KIA  
 Boyd, Charles C., Jr., Cpl.—DNB  
 Burnes, Chester L., T Sgt.—KIA  
 Callahan, John H., Pfc.—KIA  
 Carey, Ernest, Pvt.—KIA  
 Clark, Eugene O., Pvt.—KIA  
 Collins, Carl W., Pfc.—KIA  
 Collins, Lloyd K., Pvt.—DOW  
 Collins, Trav. W., Pvt.—KIA  
 Cook, Robert L., Tec5—KIA  
 Cooper, Herbert C., Pvt.—KIA  
 Corn, Warren R., Pfc.—KIA  
 Cox, Raymond, S|Sg.—KIA  
 Cummings, Calvin F., Pfc.—KIA  
 Doke, Loyde A., Av C—DNB  
 Edgmond, James A., Pvt.—DOW  
 Erwin, Harold B., Pvt.—DNB  
 Foster, Cleo C., Sgt.—KIA  
 Fowler, Lawrence W., Pvt.—DNB  
 Ghrist, Willard S., Pfc.—KIA  
 Gohl, Rudolph W., S|Sg.—DNB  
 Goss, Dennie, Pvt.—KIA  
 Grant, Horace G., Pfc.—KIA  
 Green, Wesley L., Pfc.—KIA  
 Gualdoni, Charles N., Pfc.—KIA  
 Hogan, John E., S|Sg.—KIA

Howard, Clifford C., Pvt.—KIA  
 Howard, James S., Pvt.—KIA  
 Huff, Floyd E., Pfc.—KIA  
 Hunter, Clyde M., Pfc.—DOW  
 Ingalsbe, Richard D., Pvt.—KIA  
 Jones, Ralph R., Pfc.—DOW  
 Lang, Fred E., Pvt.—KIA  
 Marsh, Ralph D., Pfc.—KIA  
 Matney, Marion E., Tec5—KIA  
 McCormick, Ralph, Pvt.—KIA  
 McCune, James F., Pvt.—DOW  
 Mills, Edward B., Pfc.—DOW  
 Newcomb, Walter R., Cpl.—DNB  
 Peterman, Jack C., S|Sg.—KIA  
 Pinckney, Harold M., Sgt.—DNB  
 Porter, James Q., 1 Lt.—DOW  
 Range, Joseph J., Pvt.—KIA  
 Renfrow, Charles D., Capt.—KIA  
 Roberson, Cecil E., Pfc.—KIA  
 Roberson, James E., Pvt.—KIA  
 Roberson, Melvin A., Pvt.—KIA  
 Roberts, Ralph R., Pvt.—KIA  
 Rouintree, Jesse E., 2 Lt.—KIA  
 Rowlett, Earl H., S|Sg.—DOW  
 Schmidtke, Waldemar, S|Sg.—KIA  
 Schneider, Orval A., Pvt.—DOW  
 Scroggins, Lovel E., Pfc.—DNB  
 Shockley, Marion F., Pvt.—KIA  
 Stephens, Gene C., 2 Lt.—KIA  
 Tate, Thomas M., Jr., 2 Lt.—KIA  
 Taylor, James E., S|Sg.—KIA  
 Tennican, Stanford C., Pfc.—KIA  
 Thompson, Albert B., Tec 4—KIA  
 Tinkham, William E., Cpl.—KIA  
 Vaughan, Ashby J., Pvt.—DOW  
 Wakefield, Maurice, S|Sg.—KIA  
 Walker, Thomas J., Cpl.—DNB  
 Watkins, Selby E., S|Sg.—DNB  
 Watson, Gerald A., Pvt.—KIA  
 Weeks, Keith M., Pfc.—KIA  
 Willard, Eugene B., Pvt.—KIA  
 Williams, Roscoe G., Pvt.—DNB  
 Yount, Pearl D., Pfc.—KIA

## Schools

The music building at the Central School was completed in 1940. (This building eventually served as kindergarten classrooms and now houses the Adult Basic Education program.)

In 1948 the Moark Baptist College was established in response to the need for a college in West Plains. Its first term began May 1948 with an enrollment of 102. The facility built to house the college is the northeast part of the First Baptist Church. The growing church needed more room for services and shared the space with the college.

First Baptist Pastor Kenneth L. Sutter was instrumental in establishing the junior college. When it opened, Clyde Campbell served as president and acting dean, and Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Kemp worked there, too. Dow Felty was president of the board, and other officers were: Sutter, Clyde Williams, M.A. Widener, and Howard Holloway.

Even though the school was short-lived, lasting until 1951, it probably provided the impetus for the eventual opening of the West Plains Campus of Southwest Missouri State University.

# Return of County War Dead May Start Soon

## Bodies of Approximately 80 Howell County Servicemen May Be Returned

The bodies of approximately 80 Howell County servicemen who died during World War II and who are now buried in overseas cemeteries may be returned to this country, according to information received here by the Veterans Administration office.

A recent survey conducted from Washington indicates that approximately 72 percent of the families in the U. S. contacted expressed a desire to have the deceased members of their fami-

lies returned to this country for reburial.

Several requests for information concerning the return of deceased servicemen have been made by Howell County resident Bill Brandt, VA contact representative, said today.

He pointed out that 80 is not the total number of World War II dead from this county, but rather is the number whose remains are recoverable and available for return to the U. S.

It was emphasized that the Veterans Administration does not administer the return program, and the entire procedure is handled by the Quartermaster General of the U. S. Army.

Total number of World War II servicemen in Missouri now available for return under the program is 8,803. The Kansas City Quartermaster Depot is the distribution center for seven

mid-west states, including Missouri.

Local commanders of the United Spanish War Veterans, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars have received communications from the Missouri Military District at St. Louis regarding military burials for the returned World War II dead who are to be re-interred in this locality, it was stated today by Wallace B. Hodge.

It is stated that the bodies will begin arriving in Missouri during October and that it will require from 18 months to two years to complete the entire program.

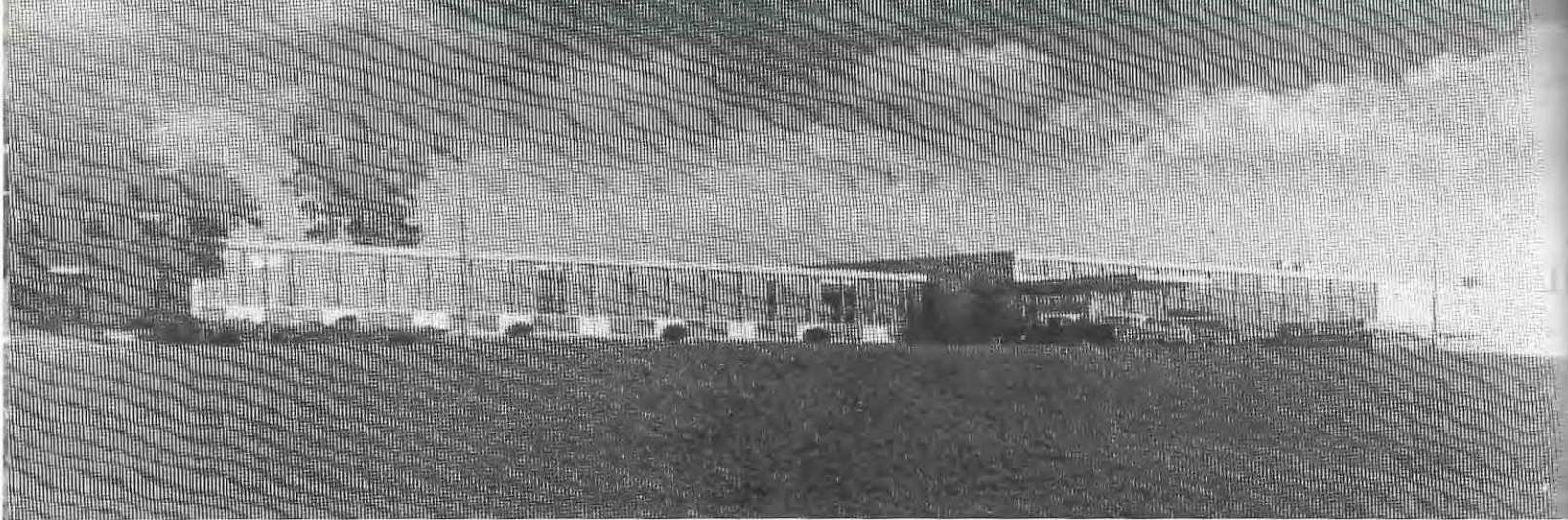
Since there are no combat platoons of the Regular Army stationed in Missouri, the request has been made for veterans organization to furnish burial details in cases where next of kin desire military funerals.

September 30, 1947 news clipping



The WPHS 1948-49 Basketball team. From left: L.C. Bell, Woody Smith, Bob Paris, Bill Virdon, Dean Hedges, Mitchell Rhodes, J.A. DeShazo, Dale Bradford, Roy Hill, Coach Sigler.

# The 1950s



West Plains Memorial Hospital (now Ozarks Medical Center) shortly after it was established in the 1950s. The grassy slope in this photo is now the site of the Doctors' Pavillion (medical office building) which was completed in 1986.

For a look at the 1950s, we take excerpts from the centennial memories book published in 1952:

*"West Plains has grown from what you might say was a 'whistle-stop' into a city of third class, population over 5,000 having a trade area serving over 45,000, with a Commission form of government. Included under this plan is police and fire protection, and a municipal owned water system*

*with four deep wells. We have electric power from Norfolk Dam, distributed through REA and SPA lines with the lowest rate in the whole midwest. We now have some 20 miles of paved streets. Oh, yes, we have today a municipal stock yard, which is the fourth largest in the State of Missouri, as to passage and sale of animals.*

*"We have two banks, the First National and West Plains Bank, with deposits totaling around 10*

*million dollars, along with Building and Loan, National Farm Loan, Production Credit and a Farm Security office, all of which provide adequate financial assistance to our industry, agriculture and retail businesses.*

*"We have three wholesale grocery firms, one wholesale hardware, six wholesale oil plants, one wholesale dry goods, two wholesale auto parts firms, one wholesale electric and plumbing supplies and appliances, these just to mention a few that help service West Plains trade area. We have two newspapers, the Daily and Weekly Quill and semi-weekly Journal-Gazette, that give us everything from births to fishing results. All in all, we have some 250 service and merchandise establishments.*

*"I'd like to interject a note of appreciation and recognition to the back bone of our community and trade area, the farmer. If it weren't for our rural friends, the services that we offer from the city would certainly dwindle to nothing, and our growth would have long since turned to decay. Of course, it isn't all one sided. We help the farmer too.*

*"Agriculture in this area is based primarily on the products of dairy production. Feeder cattle, eggs, broilers, feeder pigs, sheep, and commercial fruit products furnish supplementary sources of income.*



The Gold Medal award, scouting's highest honor, is pinned on Troop 61 member Donald Harbaugh by his mother, Mrs. Lyle Harbaugh, who he saved from drowning during a family outing on Bryant Creek in the summer of 1952. According to Dr. H. Roe Bartle, right, regional scouting executive, only six of the awards, which are comparable to the Armed Services Congressional Medal of Honor, had been given nationwide at the time. Donald earned the Eagle rank in 1954.

With 3/4 million acres in woodlands, lumbering is still a major enterprise.

"With a longer pasture season and milder winters here than in heavier production areas, this section competes successfully with those areas in dairying, beef cattle and hogs."

The Korean conflict from 1950-53 meant more young West Plains residents were off to war. Again, there seem to be no lists of those from West Plains who served or lost their lives.

## Population

	1950	
West Plains	.....	4,918
Howell County	.....	22,725
	1957	
West Plains	.....	5,300

## Schools

In 1955, Central High School, built in 1914 and located on Garfield, became the junior high school when the new West Plains High School was built. Central was renovated that year, forcing some junior high classes to meet at "old Central" on Walnut Street and in church halls around town.

And again quoting from Catherine Castner in 1952:

*"In our elementary schools, about 900 children work consistently with a staff of 30 well trained teachers. They are housed in five modern buildings, conveniently located with reference to the population.*

*"Just a few weeks ago, we received a rating of triple A by state officials, whose job it is to inspect facilities and offerings and suggest improvements.*

*"In the high school 24 well qualified teachers direct the training of over 600 students, with a curriculum offering over 50 units of work. The High School is fully approved by the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges and Missouri State Board of Education."*



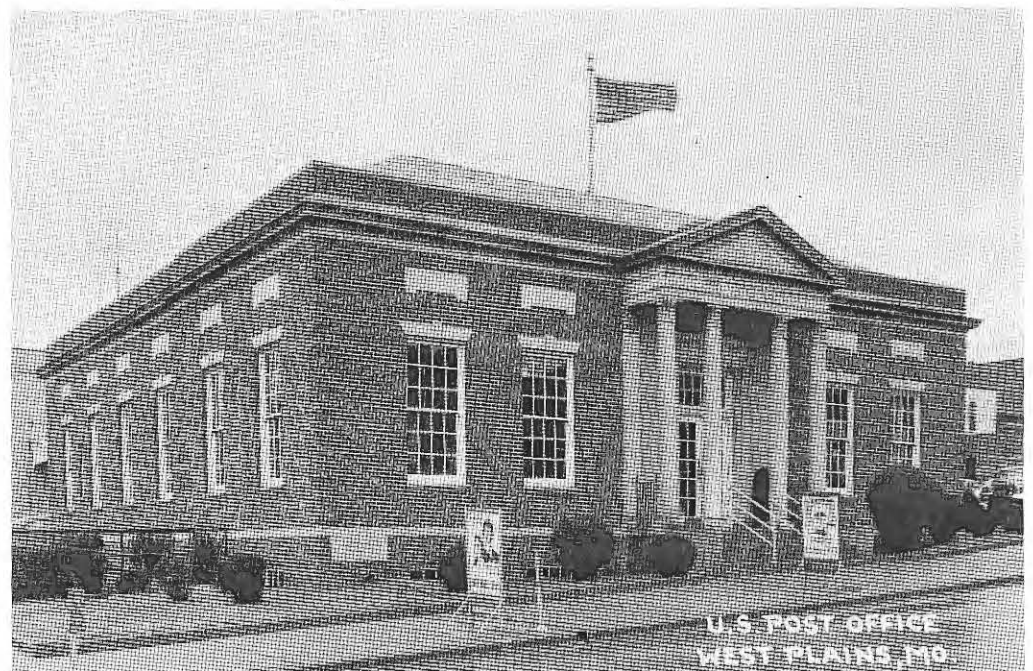
-photo by Champieux  
Van and Dulcie Cochran looked right at home in their 1906 Ford, Woodworth-Cochran Motor Company's contribution to the West Plains Centennial Parade in 1952.

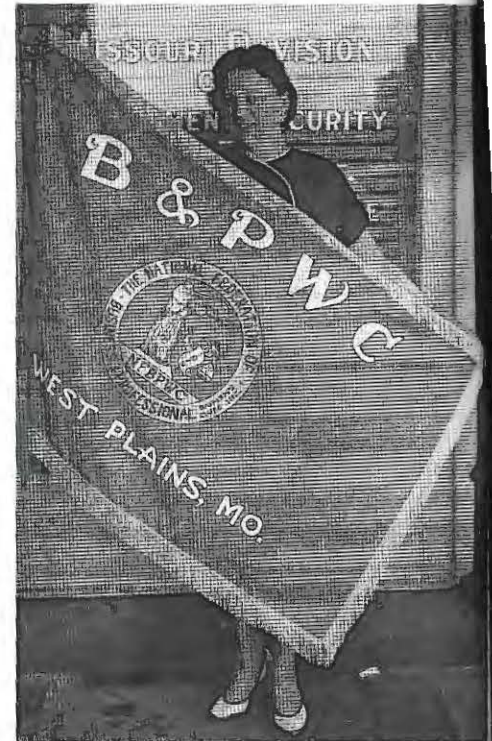
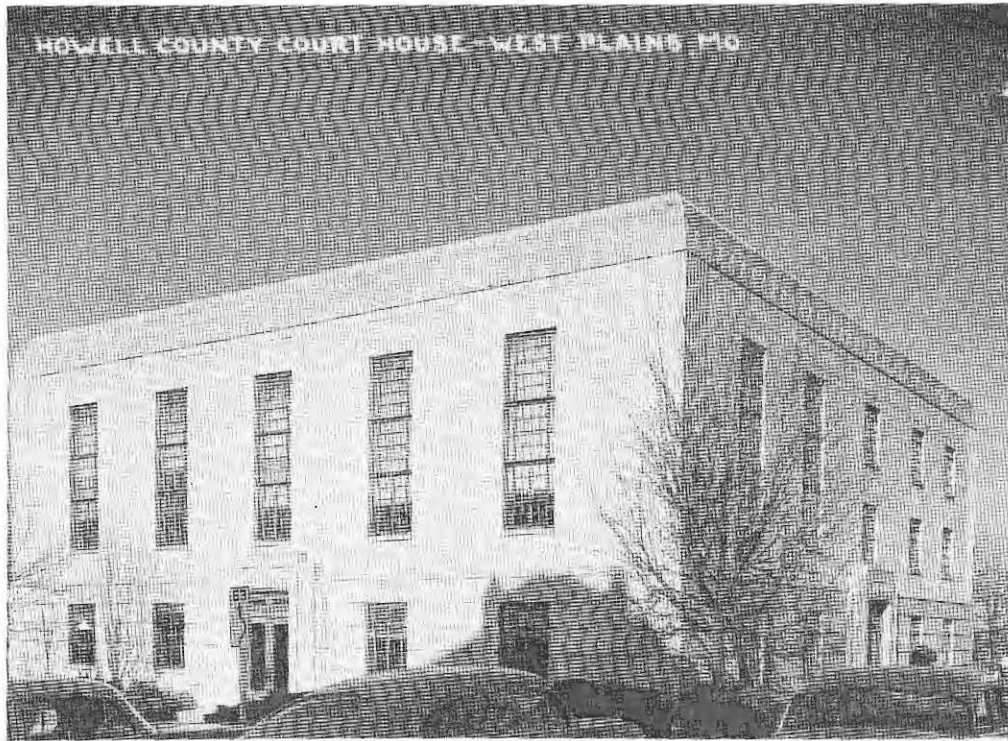
In 1952 a meter ordinance was passed, and parking meters were installed shortly after. Also at that time individual parking spaces were marked. At first five cent fines for overtime parking were imposed. A courtesy envelope was placed on the windshield, and thanks to local merchants, a nickel

was also inside which was to be used to pay the fine. A \$500 fund was established which was to be replenished when violators used the nickels to pay their fines, but violators kept the nickels instead. So beginning in 1957, 25 cent fines for parking violations were issued. This is the rate still in effect.

Below is the U.S. Post Office in West Plains in 1955. This building currently is the West Plains Public Library.

-courtesy Rena Wood





The Howell County Courthouse in 1955. This is the courthouse completed in 1936. The upper righthand photo is Catherine Castner in 1956. She's holding the flag of the West Plains Business and Professional Women's Club. This flag was used by the Pioneer Saddle Club in their flag drill and won first place at the American Royal. Catherine was extremely active in community affairs and holds an important place as one of our town's most prominent historians.



From left: Preacher Roe, Bill Viridon, John Cordell, Ted Gullic, and Fred Nimmo. At the time of the photo, Mr. Nimmo was the owner of Sass Jewelry. The other gentlemen are West Plains's claims to baseball fame. This photo was evidently taken at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon probably honoring Bill Viridon for being named Rookie of the Year in 1955.



## Healthcare

*(The following information is courtesy of Pearl Butler and is taken from a pamphlet titled "The History and Progress of the West Plains Memorial Hospital" published several years ago.)*

On June 16, 1954 Lawrence Champieux, civic leader and promoter, called a public meeting to discuss the feasibility of building a 50-bed, modern hospital for West Plains and surrounding communities. A five member steering committee, composed of Hugh K. Thompson, George Roehrmann, Dr. M.C. Amyx, Mrs. Dean W. Davis, and Mr. Champieux as chairman was elected.

After electing a temporary board of directors, federal funds were sought to help finance the facility. Hill-Burton funds were available, but in order to show an intent to build, a \$10,000 deposit was required. Each Board member contributed \$100, and the group also solicited ninety other contributors.

Architectural drawings were made and a cost of \$700,000 was arrived at, to build, equip, and furnish the hospital. Application was made for Hill-Burton Funds in the amount of \$350,000 which would need to be matched locally.

After several months of widespread community support, most of the money was raised and board president Hugh Thompson issued a call to bid. On January 11, 1957, specifications for a 42-bed institution were furnished to contractors, and D.C. Boss of Enid, Oklahoma was the low bidder. Ground breaking was March 24, 1957, with Mr. Champieux turning the first blade of dirt. Construction began on March 25, 1957.

In September 1958, Charles E. Hall was named administrator, and by February 2, 1959 all hospital equipment had arrived and was installed.

On April 30, 1959 over 1,000 persons attended the dedication ceremony, and afterwards over 3,000 persons toured the hospital.

Upon the death of Administrator Hall in 1961, Robert Gleghorn was



-Harry Boyer Collection

**The original Board of Directors at West Plains Memorial Hospital. Seated from left: Howard Fuller, Pearl Butler, Hugh Thompson, Harry Boyer, and Glen Roe. Standing: J.E. "Good" Hard, John Stein, Gladys Davis, Catherine Castner, A.L. Kissinger, and Willard Hunter. Lawrence Champieux was originally chairman of the board, and instrumental in establishing the hospital. However, after initial planning he was forced to step down because of poor health.**

named as administrator. In less than ten years, more room was needed. On November 30, 1967 the board met with an architect to discuss plans for 24 more beds.

This new wing, which included a four-bed intensive care unit, was completed and opened for occupancy on April 16, 1970, giving the hospital a total capacity of 66 beds.

Within two years it was time to expand again. An architect was contacted in March 1973 to work on plans for an addition which was to include many new services and 38 additional beds. Approval for the project had to be obtained from the state in order for the hospital to participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Approval was received, and the new \$2 million wing opened on May 22, 1978, bringing the total capacity of the hospital to 108 beds.

Also during this time, in April 1975, construction of more cafeteria, waiting room, and office space was completed. On March 12, 1975 Robert Gleghorn resigned

as administrator, and Kenneth Clark was hired to fill the post on May 12, 1975.

Many more exciting changes have taken place at the hospital since the above information was written. A long-range plan has been instituted and a complete remodeling of the hospital is nearly complete.

In 1984 the name of West Plains Memorial Hospital was officially changed to Ozarks Medical Center, and in 1986 construction was completed on the \$1.6 million Doctors' Pavillion office complex which was a joint venture between the medical center and several of its staff physicians.

A cancer treatment center and a blood bank have now become a reality. Soon to be completed is a kidney dialysis center, a psychiatric unit, a regional arthritis program, and the list goes on and on.

There are currently 500 employees at Ozarks Medical Center, and 51 doctors on staff.

# West Plains

FIFTY-THIRD YEAR

WEST PLAINS, HOWELL COUNTY, MISSOURI

## Blast Roaring Through Night Here Friday the Thirteenth 28 Years Ago Still Echoes in Hearts of Howell Countians

Twenty-eight years ago tomorrow — on another Friday the thirteenth in April, the greatest disaster known in the history of the county occurred in West Plains. It was the dance hall explosion of the Bond Hall on East Main St., in which 40 persons lost their lives.

Years elapsed before a building was built back on the site, and one of the adjoining buildings destroyed has never been replaced. The old brick courthouse, its windows all blown out from the blast, was condemned. Windows were shattered in homes all over the city, and it was reported the blast was heard as far away as Thayer.

### City Council, Clerk Of 10 Years Ago Helped Get Factory

The West Plains shoe factory, being honored on its tenth anniversary here this week, was possible only through the cooperation of the city clerk and city councilmen in office ten years ago.

Paul Schwegman, city clerk then, and Dr. M. C. Amyx, Fred Eads, and Claude Richards on the council, contributed a great deal of time and effort in working out the details necessary to bring the factory to West Plains.

Their cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce group working for the industrial expansion of West Plains was one of the major factors in making the project a success.

### Two Principals, Teachers Named At Rural Schools

Ben Pruett and James Decker have been named principals of R-1 and C-5 Schools, respectively, according to Bernard Smith, County School Supt.

Smith also announced the following teachers of rural schools have been hired: Pomona—Bessie Burgess; Noblett—Aileen Turner; Cureall—Myrtle Robertson; C-6—lower grades, Pauline Yardley; Bridges—Louise Ward; R-1—Mrs. Carmen Johnson, Mrs. Madeline Hilburn, and Mrs. Helen Holloway.

There are those who say there has never been a good dance since in the town.

No home in the little city was without sorrow, for those who had not lost relatives, had lost friends or acquaintances.

### Laughter and Gayety

There was laughter and gayety on that April night as young people, many from leading families in the city, went to the dance.

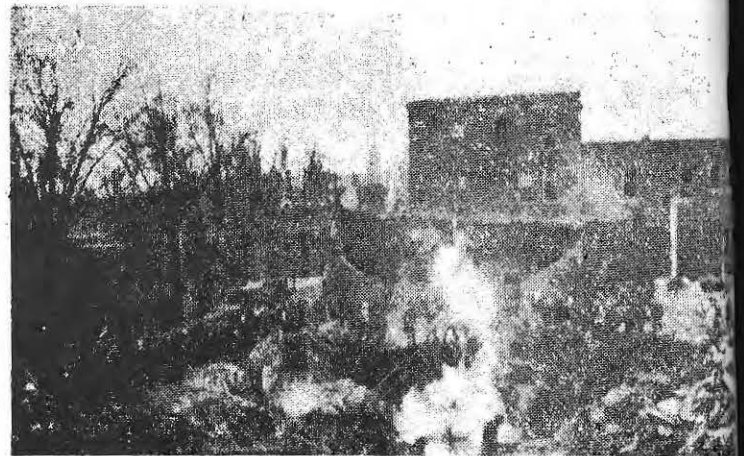
A three piece dance orchestra with Dimple Martin at the piano, played the peppy fox trots and romantic waltzes. A lively crowd had just reconvened following the intermission, some still loitered in the hall outside. It was the hour before midnight.

At first there was only a low rumbling sound, then a second later, a loud thundering explosion. The building was blown 200 or 300 feet into the air, then plunged back down, much as a falling plane plummets to earth with its human cargo. For an instant there was silence, and only spotted fires. Then fire broke out all over and shrieks of those dying in the holocaust penetrated the air.

### Coroner's Jury

A coroner's jury, called the following day, sat for four days, heard the testimony of sixty-two witnesses, and adjourned without fixing the cause or blame.

Dick Green was prosecuting attorney at the time. A headline in the Springfield Daily News the following Sunday said, "Prosecutor Scouts Gasoline Blast Theory in West Plains Explosion". At



IN THE BACKGROUND IS THE ARCADE HOTEL AND the little building which now houses the Salvation Army Headquarters, formerly Ridgeway Cleaners, which were not demolished in the explosion in 1928. The tragedy still brings back memories of heartache and despair to townspeople here.

first Green suspected a nitro-glycerine explosion, but no evidence was uncovered to prove that.

In telling today, of the investigation, Green said, "Today's modern means of crime detection would have been of inestimable help then. There was only the constable, sheriff and myself. In those days there was no highway patrol to assist in crime investigation, nor modern crime laboratories in which to have evidence analyzed."

### Conflicting Testimony

During the inquest there was much conflicting testimony. Some witnesses testified they smelled gasoline, while other said there was no smell of gasoline before, during, or after the explosion. Events prior to the explosion which ordinarily would not have been remembered were recalled and investigated.

A band of gypsies in town a couple of weeks before, robbed "Uncle Wesley" Cordell of some money, and the entire male population of the band, jailed. They had made threats against the town.

A carnival, refused a site within the city, had set up a location near where the new high school is to be built. It rained all week, business was miserable, and the

carnival workers had been quite vociferous in criticism of the town.

A pious mother who disapproved of dancing made the unfortunate remark that her son wasn't going to the dance and she hoped it blew up while he was there.

### Mysterious Men

A radical preacher was refused a room in the courthouse to hold his meeting. He remarked he would blow the town up.

Two men were seen running from the scene of the fire, while everyone else was running toward it.

A lady who lived nearby was thrown from her bed by the force of the explosion, went to the door and saw a man passing by and called to him, by name (so she thought). He didn't deny he was the man she thought he was, yet that man was killed in the explosion. She asked the man what had happened and he answered, "There's been an explosion." She asked if anyone was hurt, and he replied, "Sounds like it, I can hear them screaming." Yet he hurried away from the scene.

Another man reported he collided with two men running from the scene of the explosion, but minutes after the flash. He was in

# Daily Quill

THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 12, 1956

NO. 73

## Girl Scouts to Hold District Rally At Armory April 23

District 4 of the Dogwood Trails Council met yesterday at Harry's Steak House to make final plans for the Girl Scout Rally at the Armory April 23.

The five towns represented at yesterday's meeting, Thayer, Houston, Cabool, Licking, and West Plains, will participate in the Rally from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. All those interested in Scouting are cordially invited to attend.

The program will consist of demonstrations and skits on the various phases of Girl Scout work, a Court of Recognition, and a "nosebag lunch" in the park at noon.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Member of Coroner's Jury Feels Disaster Was Not an Accident

One of the men who served on the coroner's jury following the explosion twenty-eight years ago C. C. McCallon, today, told of some of his impressions as he performed the sad task.

He said his impression then and through the years had been that the tragedy was no accident. Then he told of viewing the bodies which were taken to the Davis-Ross Hardware and Undertaking Establishment which was located in the corner of the square where the Employment Office is now.

He told of seeing a foot, and they couldn't tell to which body it belonged.

McCallon said many of the bodies were not mutilated or burned, but looked as though the victims had suffocated from the intense heat. He said some of the bodies looked as though they had a deep suntan, on the side which was presumably turned toward the fire.

"There were many acts of bravery that night" McCallon said, and told of Glen Moore rescuing a woman who was pinned under some timbers.

## Mrs. Betty Nichols Is to Be Crowned Queen of Shoe Days

Mrs. Betty Nichols, the only woman in the lasting department of the shoe factory here, will be crowned International Shoe Days Queen tomorrow.

Mrs. Nichols wound up the hotly-contested campaign with 6,042 votes.

Running second in the race was Mrs. Berdenia DeWitt of the bottoming department with 5,042 votes.

## Shoe Days Parade Route Listed For Tomorrow

Route of the International Shoe Days parade tomorrow will be: from the shoe factory south on Missouri Ave., to West Main St.; then east on West Main to the Square; around three sides of the square to Washington Ave.; and north on Washington Ave., to Broadway.

The parade will begin at 3:30 p.m.

## Butler Furniture Store To Give Graduation Gifts

The Butler Furniture Co. has a gift for all girl graduates this year at the West Plains High School.

The store's graduation gift is a miniature Lane Cedar Chest and all girls graduating this year may call at the store for their present.

Graduates are invited to take part in the Lane Cedar Chest Co. \$12,500 contest.

## Richards Bros. Store To Give Presents to 'International Queens'

Dwight Richards announced today that Richards Bros. Store here will present the four winners of the International Shoe Days queen contest with boxes of Cinderella Hosiery. The presentation will be made after the crowning of the International Shoe Days queen and parade Friday afternoon at 3:30 p.m.

## WEATHER

High yesterday—59.3  
Low last night—32.1  
Noon today—67.0  
Precipitation last 24 hours—0  
Precipitation this month—1.01  
Precipitation this year—9.87

Third place was Miss Wilma Singleton of the main office. She received 4,616 votes.

And fourth was Miss Martha Owen of the fitting department with 4,529 votes.

The top four in the race, and particularly the Queen, are to receive a number of prizes from West Plains merchants.

The contest netted \$1,054.80 for the Memorial Hospital Fund.

The contest netted \$1,054.80 for the Memorial Hospital Fund.

## Crew of 12 C. of C. Cooks Preparing For Big Bar-B-Que

A crew of 12 West Plains Chamber of Commerce members will begin preparing more than 500 pounds of beef tonight for the big free International Shoe Days bar-be-que to be held Saturday noon on the lawn in front of the shoe factory.

A six-foot roasting pit is being dug on the factory lawn and the fire was scheduled to be started tomorrow afternoon.

A "come one, come all" invitation to everyone has been extended by the Chamber of Commerce and International Shoe Co., hosts at the open air bar-be-que.

Harry Boyer, chairman of the bar-be-que committee, will act as chief "pit" cook.

## Baseball Season To Begin Here At 7:30 Tonight

West Plains High School will play their first baseball game of the season here tonight at Lions Field at 7:30 when they meet Mountain Grove. There is to be no admission charge, and the public is cordially invited.

## Ground Will Be Broken at New School Monday

## P-TA Members Who Worked During Bond Election to Be Honored During Ceremony at New Site

An official groundbreaking ceremony will be held at the site of the new high school here at the corner of Olden St. and Howell Ave., Monday morning at 9:30 o'clock.

Jack McFarland, president of the board of education, will turn over the first shovel-full of dirt during the ceremony.

To be recognized at the ceremony are members of the P-TA who worked to "get out the vote" for the election at which a bond issue for the building program was approved.

The board of education asks that as many members of the P-TA be present as possibly can.

The general public is invited to the ceremony.

The new high school plant is to be completed in 12 months, according to the terms of the contract.

## 22 Districts Are Dissolved; 14 New Ones Formed

With reports from all rural annual school elections in, Supt. Bernard Smith announced today that 22 districts were dissolved in the county at the annual elections and 14 new districts formed by annexation.

Only three suggested new districts failed to be accepted at the annual elections of schools in the county. They were Sims Valley and Trask, which failed in Trask by one vote; Dry Creek and Oak Grove 44; and Oak Ridge and Moody.

## BLAST ROARING THROUGH NIGHT

(Continued From Page 56)

front of the Baptist Church at the time, he testified.

### Burglars Seen

The night before, Ells Seiberling, constable, had surprised two men in the act of breaking into the Aid Store in the back, but they had escaped. Some of those reported fleeing after the explosion fitted the description of the bandits Ells had seen.

A few days before the blast a stranger was seen in the alley in back of what is now the McCallon Clothing Co. The stranger was looking up at the buildings and writing something on a note pad. Someone asked him what he was doing and he replied he was figuring insurance. He is reported to have pointed in the direction of the buildings destroyed in the explosion, and said, "That building will go—whoosh! one of these days."

In testimony at the inquest it was brought out that a tall, lantern jawed, smooth shaved man watched the fire burn, and in a self-righteous manner said, "Well, they shouldn't have been there." The witness said the man was a stranger, but appeared to be a religious person opposed to such places.

### Owner In Trouble

In testimony at the inquest it was revealed the owner of the garage was about to lose his automobile agency, and was reported to have suffered financial reverses. But he was dead and could not tell why he was at his place of business at that time of night, or why he had brought some cars in from his country home and placed them inside the garage that night as was testified to by one of his employees.

A former partner testified at length before the jury but his testimony was of no help in revealing the cause of the tragedy.

Rumor and conjecture were rife, the town was shocked, saddened and scared. Every lead was tracked down, sifted, and finally discarded.

Apartments in the buildings were occupied by four different families. One family with four children was in bed. In another apartment, a family had just returned from church and the mother was reading a chapter from the Bible to her children. In the third apartment a widower had only returned from visiting his lady friend. The widower and his son were standing not far apart, when the blast came—the father lived, the son died.

### Prosecutor In Office

Dick Green was seated in the office of the Green and Green Law Firm, located in the West Plains Bank Building where it now is. His office as county prosecutor was above what is now Eads' Store. Green was sitting by the northeast window, typing. He looked out and saw Ells Seiberling standing on the corner in front of what is now Anthony's Store. He decided to join Seiberling. Before he got across the office, the low rumble had begun, the vibrating explosion followed, and the wall above where he was sitting was blown in. The window pane shattered across the typewriter he had so recently left.

Fire broke out in the office and the library of the firm was greatly damaged, both by fire and water. He learned of that later, because with the first shock of the explosion over, he ran from the office.

Hurrying to the street, he met Seiberling, who had been blown completely around, so great was the force of the surge of air which followed. Seiberling had his gun drawn, thinking bandits had blown the safe of the West Plains Bank.

A. W. Landis came from his office, and the three were the first ones at the scene.

### Drags Victims from Rubble

Electric wires were popping and crackling overhead. Three men were trapped in a second story window above the stairway to the dance hall. Seiberling and Green started trying to help these.

There were calls of "Save me, save me", but not for long. With no thought for his personal safety, Attorney Landis plunged into the debris, dug one woman from a pile of brick, helped several others out, five in all, and was attempting to dig out a sixth victim from beneath a mass of rubble when flames drove him back, and he was forced to abandon his rescue activities.

Altogether 40 persons died from the blast. A dozen others were injured, some seriously. Nineteen were so horribly burned, their identity was never established. One body, partially destroyed, was identified by a scrap of his shirt collar with a laundry mark on it, stuck to his neck. Another was identified by her wedding ring. The body of the owner of the garage was found about ten feet from the back door, lying face downward, with his hands clenched. Some said he held the door knob to the back door in his hand. What appeared to be flash

burns were about his head and hands. His clothing was not burned from his body. There was a hole in his chin and his skull was fractured on the left side. In the garage were seventeen cars and trucks altogether. Rumor spread that one of the trucks was loaded with dynamite, but that was never established.

Additional undertakers will be called from Springfield. All day and the next night they worked while the mournful filed by the bodies trying to identify them. Few of the bodies were in good enough condition to be embalmed, and were simply "laid out".

On April 17, memorial services were held for the unidentified—and one identified—a young married woman whose folks wanted her buried with the body of her unidentified husband.

Gray caskets, unmarked and identical, stood side by side, in two long rows, twenty of them, while the townspeople bowed their heads in the memorial services held in Oak Lawn. A marble monument purchased by the townspeople, was placed on the cemetery lot in memoriam to the unidentified.

A list of the dead includes many names familiar in the town today, including: Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Martin, who sponsored the dances and their daughter, Dimple Martin, Mrs. Kitty McFarland, Mrs. Carl Mullins, Paul Evans, Jr., Charles Fisher, Major Bob Mullins, J. M. Weiser, owner of the garage, John Bates, Charles Merk, Julian C. Jeffrey, Carl Jackson, Soula Gaines, Lev Reed, Hazel Slusser, Ben Jolly, Clinton Clemons, Mary Adair, Frances Drago, Mrs. Wallace Rogers, Robert Murphy, Mrs. Robert Murphy, Ruth Fisher, Marvin Hill, Evelyn Conkin, Olis Holstine, Beatrice Barker, Juanita Laws, Ruby Hodgkinson, Newt Riley, James Loving, Hugh Sams, Icie L. Risner, Mr. and Mrs. James Esco Riley, Virginia Drago Rogers, Boyd Garner, Carson McClelland, and Roy Crain.

### List of Injured

The injured included: H. C. Allen and son, Dail Allen, Mr. and Mrs. Garrett McBride, Carl Mullins, Boyd Gray, Mo Ashley, Mr. and Mrs. William Fitchett, Glen Moore, Bert White, David S. White, Fred Archer, Ralph Langston, Jr., Ernestine Cunningham, Guy Wilson, John Riley, Elias Unger and Elton White.

Members of the coroner's jury were: Charles R. Bohrer, Samuel G. Dreppard, C. C. McCallon, S. J. Galloway, E. E. McSweeney, and

H. T. Green. T. R. Burns was county coroner and Fred Jue was sheriff.

Time has assuaged that first sudden deep grief and horror, but the awful memory of it still lingers among those who lost loved ones, and among those who live here then. Even now, occasionally, you will see someone pausing in front of the parking lot for the Arcade Hotel on East Main across the street west of the post office point, and say, "That's where the explosion was," and the onlooker is silent or his mind flies back to that April night that started with laughter and gayety but ended with horror in an inexplicable mystery.

## Salvation Army Seeks Musical Instruments

Lt. Jack Vaughan of the Salvation Army today announced that he has a number of musical pupils and would appreciate donations of string or brass musical instruments for them to use.

He said the music pupils were learning to use instruments provided by the Salvation Army, but that additional instruments are needed for them to practice at home.

## FFA District Contests Are To Continue

FFA District Contests are continuing in Springfield Friday and the West Plains chapter will have contests in two contests Friday and two Saturday.

The contestants Friday will be Livestock judging—Joe Burden, Donald Kenslow, John Skaggs and Roy Ludwick; Dairy Products judging—Donald Kenslow, Dennis Kenslow, Gordon Thompson, Bill Spears; Parliamentary Procedure—Neal Parrott, Joe Burden, Donald Kenslow, John Skaggs, Roy Ludwick, Royce Hopkins.

Friday evening, Joe Burden will represent the sub-district in the public speaking contest.

Saturday entries from here in the Farm Mechanics contest will be: Calvin Newberry, Hughie McAninch, and William Janzen. A radio skit contest will follow with a cast of Max Cates, Curtis Norton, Darrell Tyree, Bill Spears, John Morrison, and Dennis Kenslow.

## Population

1960

West Plains . . . . . 5,836  
 Howell County . . . . . 22,027

The 1960s brought yet another war. This war would last in to the middle of the next decade and would prove to be a cause of division instead of a rallying point like earlier wars had been.

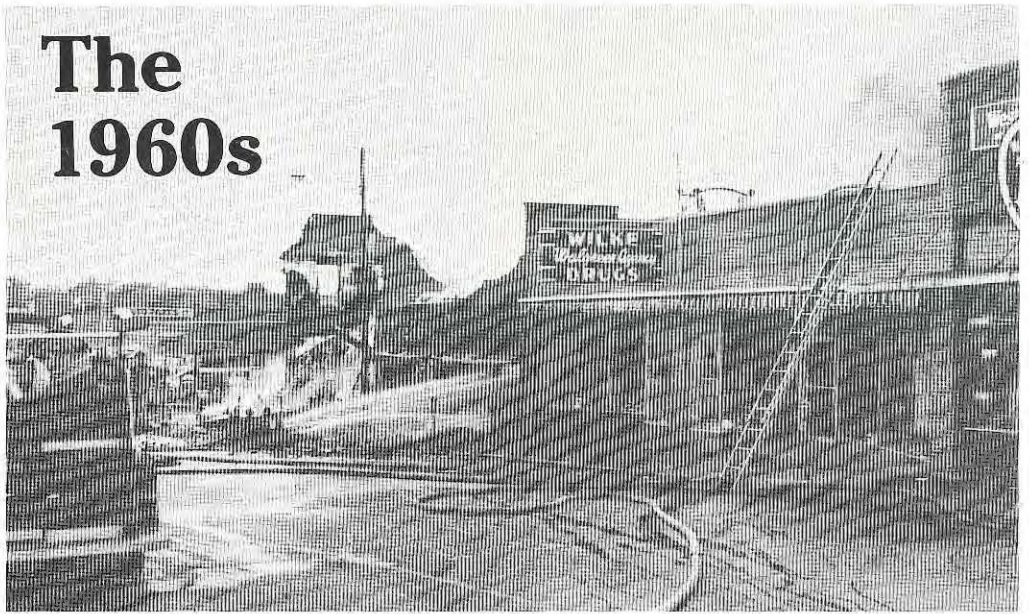
Locally, there would be no violent protests, but the rebellion did filter down in subtle ways. Girls hemlines went way up and, boys started growing their hair long. Authority was questioned as it never had been before.

One direct effect of the war came in 1964 when the Air Force conducted the Gold Fire One exercise in West Plains.

Larry Williams, who still works part-time at the new airport, managed the West Plains Airport for ten years before retiring in 1981.

He says that the West Plains air strip was established in the late 1950s. This strip, located near the present Southwest Mobile Systems plant, was the first to be owned and operated by the city. Before it was established, there were several small, privately owned air strips and very little air traffic in West Plains.

## The 1960s



The Richards Brothers Store on Washington Avenue burned in July of 1962, thirty years after it was opened by Dwight and Claude Richards. Practically before the smoke had cleared, the tent below was set up on a parking lot just northwest of Richards, and the store was back in business. Loyal customers braved heat and cold to buy their groceries in the tent from July to February of 1963 when the store was re-built. That store still houses Richards Brothers and when Wilke's closed earlier this year, Richards began to process of moving their dry goods department to that building and expanding the grocery department.



"Know Your America" Week November, 1962. The B.P.W. club presented a flag to the hospital in celebration of the week. From left: Pearl Butler (B.P.W. past-president); Beulah Sims (Gray lady and past-president); Gladys Davis (Gray lady and past-president); Hospital Board President Hugh Thompson; Catherine Castner (event chairman and past-president); Frances LaFever (co-chairman and past-president); Lida Bozman (past-president); Hospital Administrator Gleghorn; B.P.W. President Dona Ingle; Girl Scouts Sheree Hales, Becky Kirk, Cathy O'Neal, and Judy Easley with their leader Versal Hales and son, Terry.

In 1964 the West Plains air strip was paved with one foot of asphaltic concrete. Immediately after the paving, Air Force officials contacted the city about using the air strip for their Goldfire One exercises for the C-130 Hercules cargo plane.

The large planes, which weighed approximately 175,000 pounds when landing loaded, had cracked two runways in Springfield and a World War II installation air strip in Vichy. The new runway at West Plains was the only one in the area capable of supporting the weight of the plane which might, for example, come in loaded with three International Scout vehicles, 38 men, two 500-gallon drums of gasoline, and a pick-up loaded with medical supplies.

The Air Force conducted the exercise for about three months. During that time, according to Mr. Williams, the planes were here by the dozens. He saw as many as seven on the ground and five in a pattern at one time.

Mr. Williams recalls as many as 74 planes being based at the airport at one time. He also says there was quite a variety of interesting and unusual aircraft to land and take off from West Plains.

One was the Zlinn from Czechoslovakia. Two Czechs had the plane shipped to the U.S. and they picked it up in New York. They then flew it cross country to the



The old standpipes at the top of South Main (Aid Avenue) hill. They were torn down not long after this 1963 photo was taken.

West for an aerobatic competition. They landed at small airfields because their language barrier prevented them from understanding complicated instructions from air traffic controllers at larger airports. Mr. Williams said they stopped at West Plains where they used a few words in English and sign language to communicate.

## Schools

Nineteen schools entered the Fifth Annual West Plains High School Speech Tournament in January 1962.

The West Plains Campus of Southwest Missouri State University (SMSU) had its beginnings in the 1960s. Evening classes began in 1963 with 110 students enrolled at the Resident Center, as it was originally known. Operation was approved on a year to year basis and classes were held at West Plains High School. The desire to have a college in West Plains kept the local campus going for ten years with no state assistance or separate campus, limited curriculum and high fees.


The old Central school building,



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which had been purchased by the First Baptist Church in 1958, was demolished in the early 1960s.

The 1968 Zizzer baseball team place second in state competition, and the 1969 football team reached semi-finals in 1969.

Fifth and sixth graders moved into Central on Garfield in 1969 when the new junior high was completed, and the South-Central Area Vocational-Technical School was also completed in 1969.

## Around Town

In 1962 a city-wide cleanup was initiated. In October of that year the city lounge on the then new parking lot on Jefferson Avenue was constructed.

Well-known West Plains photographer Lawrence Champieux, who took many pictures recording West Plains history especially during the 1952 centennial, died on March 12, 1962.

In 1963 Lesley Fleenor of West Plains was named Miss Howell County Fair. In 1964, while attending college, she was named Miss

Springfield. In 1965 she was Ozarko Queen at SMSU and went on to win the talent competition and take the title of Miss Missouri in that same year.

The Baptist Church dedicated its new sanctuary in 1965, and another of its projects, West Vue Nursing Home, was completed in 1966.

On June 4, 1967 the West Plains Public Library held its open house and dedication ceremony at its present location on East Main.

One popular form of entertainment in the 1960s was stock car races. Ralph McCracken had an asphalt track on Highway 63, and Ed Lyons had a dirt track on K Highway. In 1969 the Mo-Ark Speedway opened north of town.

The city pool was also a popular form of entertainment. The last day of June, 1969 the *Quill* reported that after 15 years of operation there was an alltime record one day attendance of 662.

The mid-60s saw the beginning of the West Plains Housing Authority. Praised by many, put down by others, the Housing

Authority has made its presence known in West Plains by changing the face of our town.

Sid Gordon is the current executive director, a post he has held since February 1966. He says the housing authority had its real beginnings when Fred Eads (a man Gordon refers to as "Mr. Housing") circulated a petition to get it organized. He collected the required signatures, and the Housing Authority was organized in September, 1965.

The two most visible projects have been the "highrises," South Towers Apartments, (containing 97 units) finished and occupied January 1, 1970 and Walnut Grove Apartments (75 units) completed in July 1974. But other Housing Authority projects include construction of Crestwood Circle (the "lowrise"), containing 25 private structures with 46 units. There are also some 243 other housing units owned and maintained by the Housing Authority. In addition, 179 other tenants are assisted in their rent payments to their landlords.

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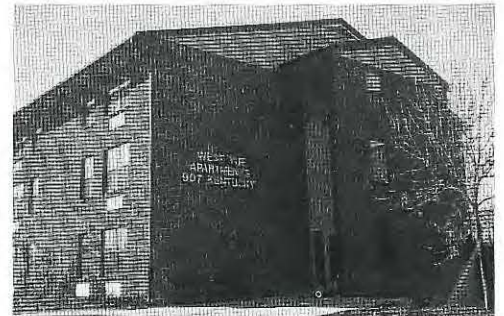
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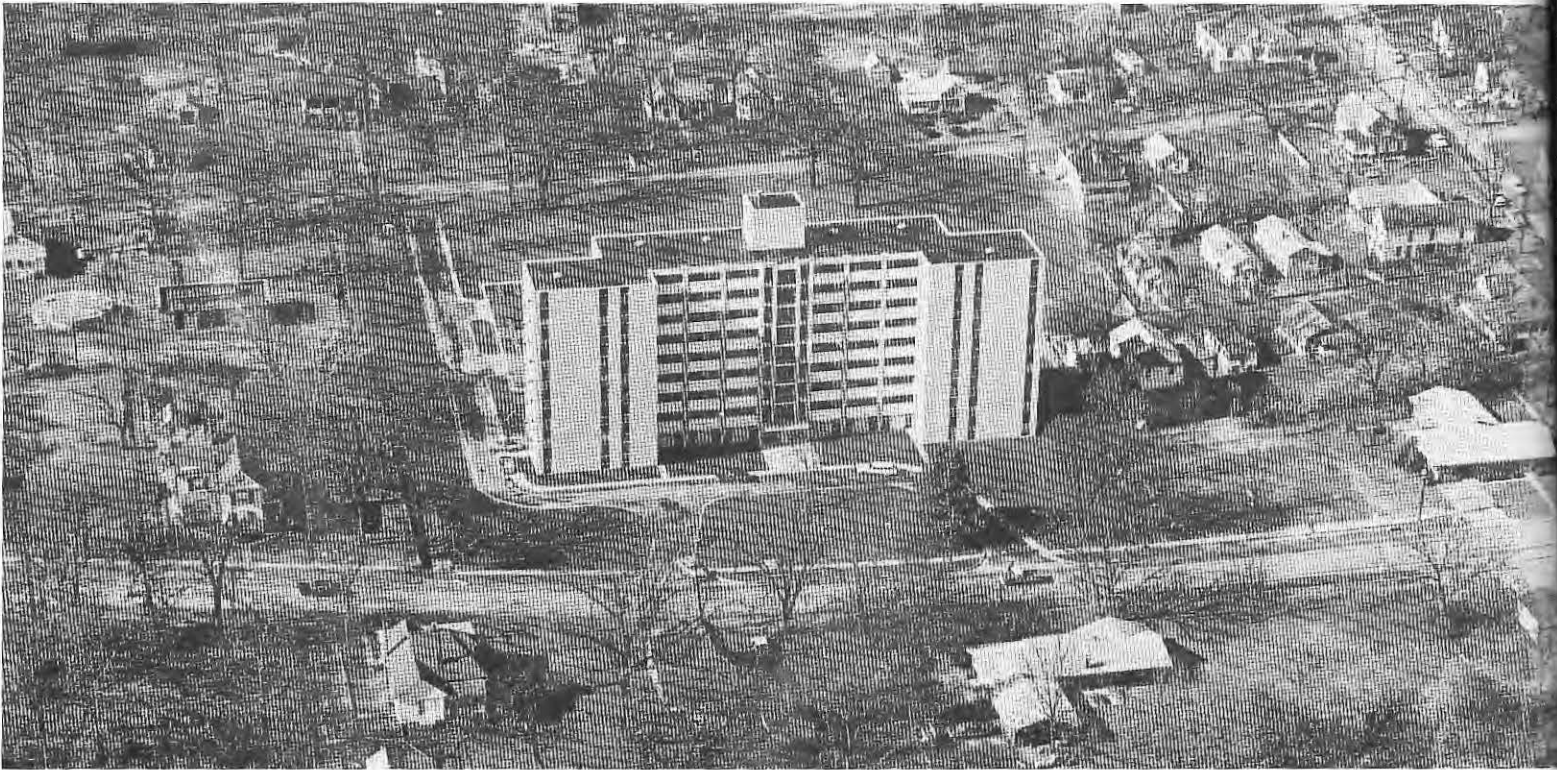
### WEST VUE APARTMENTS

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West Vue Home, Inc., an outreach ministry of the Howell County Baptist Association meeting the needs of the elderly, "with love and respect."



Above: Sid Gordon, Executive Director of the Housing Authority. At right: groundbreaking at Crestwood Circle on Olden Street in 1968. From left: Mrs. Fred Eads, Lida Bozman, Cora Dotson, woman and man unidentified, Richard Chamberlain, Junior Stewart (wearing cap), Mayor Glen Roe, Carr Ward, man in back unidentified, J.E. "Good" Hard, Townsend Penn, Bill Dixon and City clerk Edna Baxter. Below is an aerial view of South Towers Apartments on February 10, 1970.



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# West Plains Daily Quill

63rd YEAR

WEST PLAINS, HOWELL COUNTY, MISSOURI TUESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 30, 1966

## Post Office To Be Opened Officially...



THE NEW WEST PLAINS Post Office, shown here, will be dedicated during ceremonies which will be held here at 2 p.m. on Sept. 11. Approximately 75 postmasters from all

over the state are expected to attend the ceremonies. Music will be furnished by the West Plains High School Band.

## Postman Who Traveled 600,000 Miles In 49 Years To Be Honored

By Jean Davis

After traveling over 600,000 miles by foot and by car and making lifetime friends along the way, a West Plains man, Lindsay Briscoe, will be honored at an open house from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. tomorrow at the West Plains Post Office after serving this office for 49 years as a postal employee.

What will it be like to be retired after following the same career for 49 years? Lindsay Briscoe can't imagine. He received his civil service appointment with the post office in 1917 and began his career as a substitute carrier for Guy Jones who was on leave of absence and also did part-time work as early as 1914 on a Star Route to Gainesville, Siloam Springs and Bakersfield. His full-time services began in August of 1920 and he will retire August 31, 1966.

The April 10, 1951 edition of the Daily Quill contained an article about Lindsay Briscoe telling that at that time he had traveled by foot and by car a total of 238,056 miles since 1920 and at no time was farther than around 20 miles from his home. The article further states that he actually walked 131,664 miles in West Plains between 1920 and 1945 - equal to about 44 trips across America from New York to San Francisco. Changing to a rural route and car driving in 1945 Briscoe had polished off 106,392 miles in five and one-half years. In the early days as a mail carrier he walked for 131,664 miles mostly around the west part of West Plains which is equal to hoofing it around the world more than four times, and with his rural car route distance added he will have traveled around the world nine times. When he began carrying mail here he walked 18 miles a day. For 13 years he made his long day's hike covering 108 miles a week and 5,616 miles a year. Briscoe then started carrying mail through Peace Valley on Rt. 2 toward Mtn. View, and from April 10, 1951 until his retirement he will have traveled by car an additional 370,200.



Lindsay at age 22 shown in the first mail carrier uniform worn in West Plains.

The news clipping on this page shows the new post office and tells of the reception honoring Lindsay Briscoe. The following article was written for the *Gazette* by Lindsay's widow, Mary.



Lindsay Briscoe, age 4.

## Lindsay Briscoe

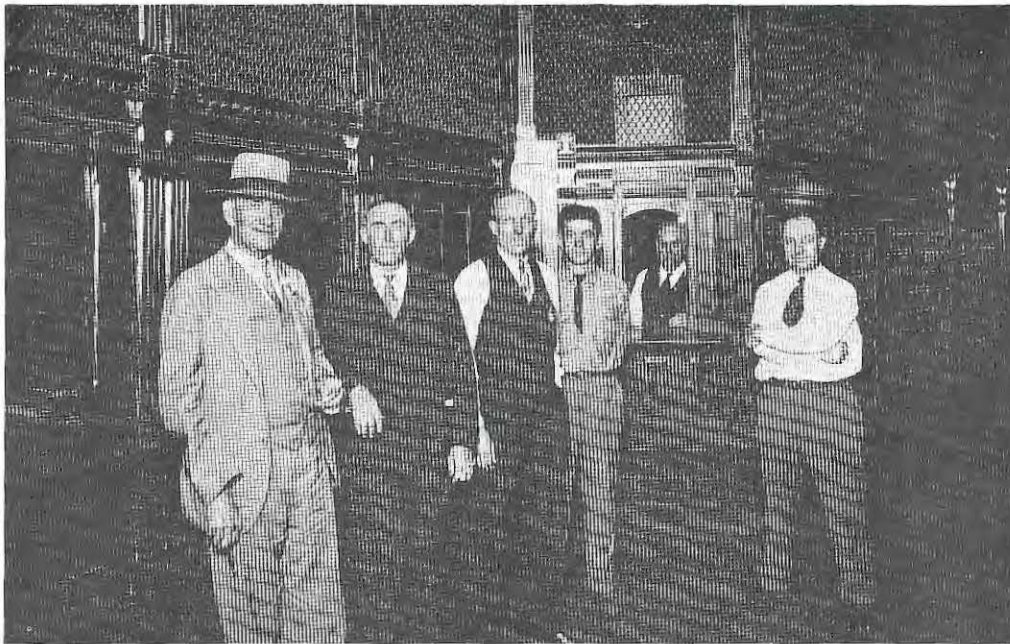
1896-1974

by Mary Briscoe

Often I have been introduced to someone and heard the response: "So you're Lindsay's widow. I knew Lindsay well. What a fine man he was. I remember one time. . ." and what follows is an account of a good deed or something nice Lindsay had done.

Some newcomers to this area will wonder, "Who in the world was Lindsay Briscoe?" For those of you who never knew him — and for those who did:

Francis Lindsay Briscoe was born August 24, 1896, at South Fork, Missouri, the youngest of the three sons of John T. and Mary Frances (Black) Briscoe. His mother died when he was about eight days old. His brothers, Horace and Otis, were cared for by their grandmother Briscoe and Lindsay was raised by his father's sister and her husband, Scott and Mary Elizabeth ("May") Plunkett,



**This photo was taken inside the post office when it was located on the ground floor of the Catron Opera House. The post office moved from this location in 1931. From left: Postmaster A.T. Hollenbeck; J.P. Morgan, assistant postmaster; Mont Widener, clerk; Lindsay Briscoe, city carrier; A.J. Shelton, clerk; and Arthur West, substitute clerk.**

with their children in West Plains.

The first school Lindsay attended was West Ward. He then attended the old Central School at Walnut and Grove and went to high school — only about one year — at Central on Garfield which is now part of SMSU. Although he quit school and went to work, his education did not stop, for he always loved to read — especially history and geography — and retained most of what he read.

Lindsay's first job was delivering the *Quill* for twenty-five cents per week. At about age fifteen he worked at the livery stable on East Main and drove doctors Thornburgh and Shuttee to see their patients in the outlying areas — sometimes sleeping all night in the buggy while the doctor waited for a baby to be born. When he was about 18 he was a clerk and delivery boy at Springer's Store, a grocery and feed store located on the north side of the square in what is now part of the West Plains Music Store. Mr. Springer would let him off when the post office needed someone to "hack the mail" to Bakersfield.

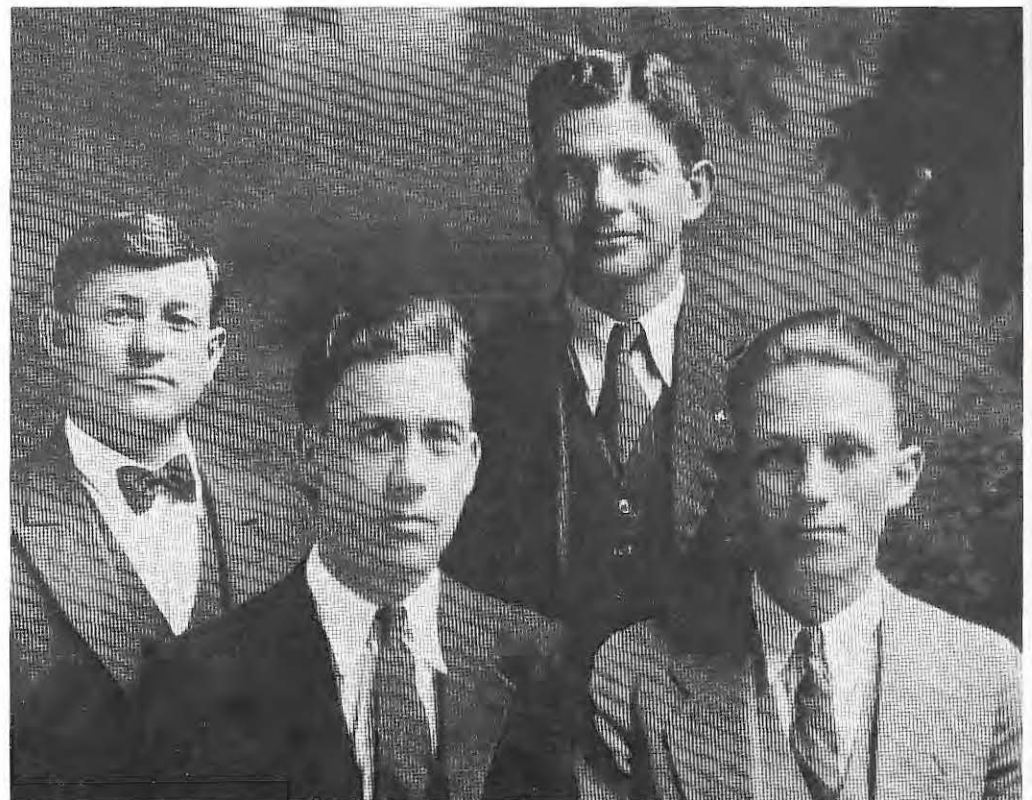
Guy Jones was one of the regular city carriers and was an officer in the National Guard. When the local guard unit was called into service

during WWI, Lindsay became a substitute city carrier. In the meantime, Lindsay had enlisted in the U.S. Army in the spring of 1918 and was called to report in August. He trained in Kansas City at the Rahe Auto School and drove in convoys transporting troops, munitions and supplies. His unit was

sent to Valparaiso, Indiana, prior to shipping out — overseas — and was waiting for orders when the Armistice was signed.

Lindsay became a regular city mail carrier in the summer of 1920. There were two city carriers. Lindsay carried the east side of town and L.M. Hyder carried the west, the dividing line being Washington and Aid Avenues. The approximate outer boundaries were Thayer, Olden, Arkansas and Maple, and there were two deliveries each day. They dreaded the Sears-Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalog days — twice a year — because in "the old days" relay boxes were unheard of. Lindsay enjoyed his work and was rather proud that he had the first complete regulation postal uniform in West Plains.

In the mid 1940s he began to carry the mail on Route 2. (It was also at this time that the Briscoe family stopped putting out a garden because so many of the nice people on Route 2 would give him bushels of fresh vegetables. . . and at Christmas, lots of delicious homemade goodies . . . even big, fat, dressed hens!) He did "extras" for the people on the route. As an



**The Manze Quartet from left: Leonard Manze, Tom Mullins, Lindsay Briscoe, and Clifford Mustion.**

example, if the previous day's mail had not been picked up he would go up to the house and check on them — especially if it was someone who lived alone.

Through the years we kept a few of the notes people had left in their mail box. One example: "Lindsay, please 'honk' as I'm here now at Mag's for a short while, Aunt Martha" to let Lindsay know that if it looked like nothing was "stirring" at her house he shouldn't worry about her. In 1966 when he was forced to retire because he had reached mandatory retirement age, he lacked only about three months working for the Postal Department fifty years.

Lindsay started singing in the choir at the First Christian Church. When "neighborhood singings" were started, he was there. Most of the singers in attendance were members of the Langston Street Church of God. Out of this group came the Manze Quartet. Leonard Manze, Tom Mullins, Clifford Mustion and Lindsay Briscoe sang in every rural church house and school hours in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas (so it is said) and various other places including many pie suppers and War Bond benefits. They lost count of the hundreds of funerals. They even received recognition as the "Good Neighbor of the Day" on "Tom Breneman's Breakfast in Hollywood" show which was aired nationwide. I don't remember the exact year but it was probably in the late 40s or early 50s, because, as I recall, someone on Lindsay's route had nominated the quartet. Many people probably remember listening to them sing on Sunday mornings over KWPM. When Lindsay was in the Veterans Hospital at Poplar Bluff for surgery in 1953, Clarence Renfro filled in for him with the quartet.

Lindsay had gone into the hospital the last of October or the first of November. I did not go to Poplar Bluff with him; since our two youngest daughters were still in school we decided that I should stay home with them. I did go to visit him on my birthday —



**Lindsay and Mary Aldine (Patten) Briscoe shortly after their marriage.**

November 5 — and as I entered his room he was saying to the others, "This is the first time I've missed being with my wife on her birthday." To this I responded, "Don't listen to him, fellows, he's always telling something like that." I never saw such a surprised and pleased look. The doctor was in the room and said that Lindsay got more mail in one day than the whole hospital got in a week. Probably the most difficult part of being in the hospital for Lindsay was being away from his friends and neighbors.

The first time I saw Lindsay was probably in 1916. He was delivering groceries from Springer's Store. In those days the deliveries were made in a small, one-horse buckboard wagon. Mr. Springer had the handsomest delivery boy in town.

In 1916 my folks, John ("Doc") and Nelle Patten, had bought the Knoerle home on Grace Avenue (in recent years known as the Hogan home; it is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Larry Hilburn), and Lindsay sometimes delivered out mail as a sub carrier so we had frequent chats.

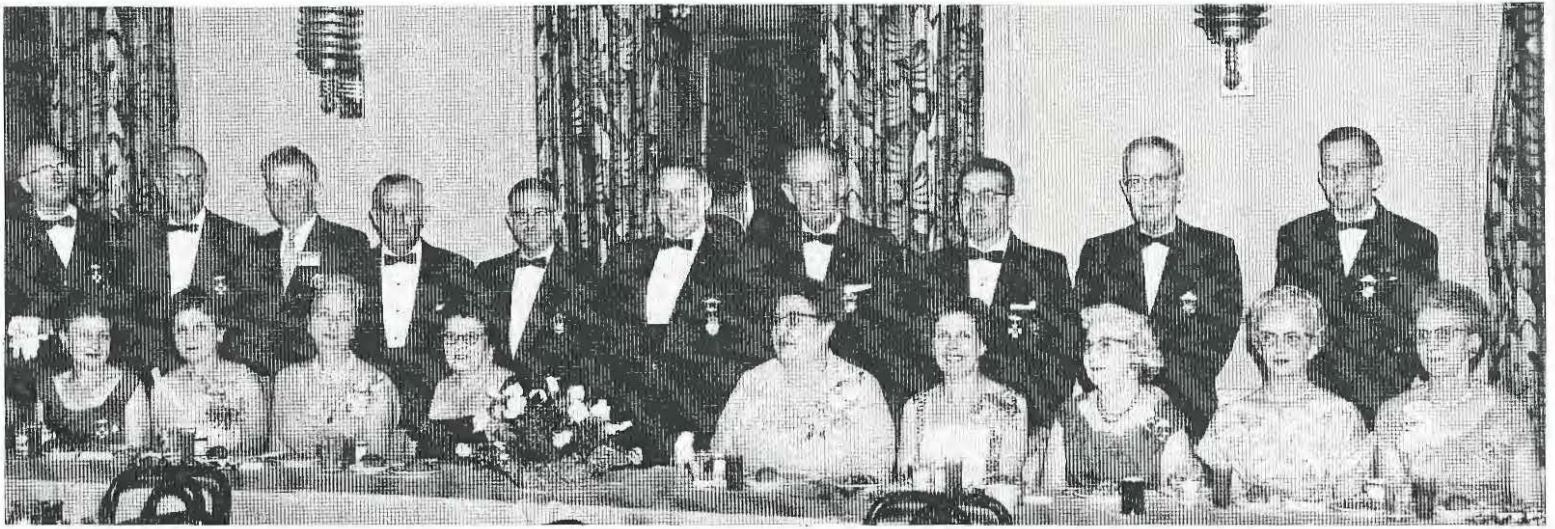
Some of my new friends invited me to attend Sunday School and church services with them at the First Christian Church, and there was that handsome young man, again. . . in the Sunday school class and singing in the church choir. From then on I went to Sunday school and church services there all the time. Each Sunday school class planned its own various activities and in 1917 our class planned a party which they wanted to have at the Patten residence. As

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An I.O.O.F. banquet. Lindsay is third from left.

the plans were finalized, the party was in August, on the 24th, so Lindsay celebrated his 21st birthday at the party at our house.

After living in West Plains for two years, my dad's health began to deteriorate so we moved back to the farm near Mtn. View. Each Sunday morning Lindsay would drive over to our farm (in a buggy, of course — there were very few cars in those days), get me, and we attended Sunday school and church at Center Hill. After dinner with my folks we attended the young folks' "get-togethers" in various homes in the neighborhood. After supper with my folks we attended evening services. Many a Sunday evening he didn't start for West Plains until around eleven or twelve o'clock. It's a good thing

that the horse soon learned the way back to West Plains because Lindsay had to go to work on Monday mornings, and he slept in the buggy on the way home. I don't know how in the world he kept it up for two years! Why, a time or too he even walked over!

After our "whirlwind" courtship of four years, we were married on July 23, 1920, at the L.M. Hyder home on South Hill Street in West Plains. We rented for about five years then moved to our present home at Maple and Shuttee streets, where our nine children grew up. He had quite a way with children, not just ours but everybody's. One was always wanting him to tell a certain story of his that they particularly liked, and he could keep them spellbound.

Lindsay was a member of the I.O.O.F. Lodge. I don't know what year he joined; he was an Odd Fellow when I met him. (Yes, he was an "odd fellow" as long as I knew him. He would almost have to be, wouldn't he, to sometimes walk twenty miles to "go a-courtin'"). He was very active in the lodge and took his responsibilities seriously, serving as an officer in the state as well as the local lodge. He was also an active member of the Wayne T. Boles American Legion post and a member of the Last Man's Club.

Lindsay died on April 6, 1974, and people are still telling me how much they miss him. He may be missed but he will never really die as long as there are folks around who knew him.



In the I.O.O.F. group photo above Lindsay is third from left on the front row. The photo at right is Lindsay in 1971.



## Population

1970

West Plains . . . . . 6,893  
Howell County . . . . . 23,521

The 1970s began with the opening of a museum in West Plains. The former home of Bob and Vesta Harlin on Worcester Street appropriately became known as the Harlin House Museum. The original board of Directors had been working on the museum for many months until it was finally incorporated as not-for-profit on February 26, 1971.

The museum contains the West Plains Hall of Fame with memorabilia of our town's famous sons and daughters. It also houses other collectible items and West Plains artifacts.

The museum hosted its first annual art show in 1976. Each year the juried show attracts more artists from an increasingly large geographic area and the quality of the show continues to improve.

The early 1970s also saw the beginnings of another show — the annual feeder pig show. By the late 60s after a series of ups and downs in the feeder pig industry, West Plains had made great strides in becoming a leader in the field. By the time the first National Feeder Pig Show was held here in 1971, West Plains had become known as the Feeder Pig Capital of the World.

Actor Richard Sanders (Les Nessman on the television series "WKRP in Cincinnati"); Missouri Governor "Kit" Bond; and Arnold Ziffel, the trained pig on the television series "Green Acres" were among the guests to attend the feeder pig shows.

The annual feeder pig show continued through 1980 and in 1981 became a "festival" with many outside exhibitors coming in to show a wide variety of merchandise along with the pig competition.

The 1970s were the peak time for the shows, which were discontinued in the early 80s.

It seems each year Christmas decorations are out on the streets earlier and earlier, but fifteen years



**West Plains Memorial Hospital recognition dinner May 7, 1977. From left: Rollin H. Smith, M.D.; Catherine Castner; C.F. Callihan, M.D.; Pearl Butler; Rollin Smith (hospital board president); Naomi Drury; and Virgil S. Bailey, D.O. The ladies presenting the silver trays to the doctors were all members of the hospital board and made arrangements for the dinner. The recipients were retired physicians who had been on staff at the hospital.**

ago, in 1972, a *Quill* article tells of the lights going up on November 15 — about the same time as this year.

In 1975 the West Plains Senior Citizen's Center opened its doors at 212 East Main Street (former location of West Plains Teen Center and present location of T&T Out-

let). A year later the center moved to its present location just down the street at 310 East Main.

In 1976 the United States celebrated its 200th birthday amidst much fanfare and commercialization. Locally, there were probably fewer red, white, and blue T-shirts sold, but the celebrations planned

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## Schools

Nineteen seventy-three was a milestone year for SMSU in West Plains. In the spring of that year the Missouri Legislature allocated \$50,000 for operations. In July the SMSU Board of Regents announced acceptance of the Kellett family home (built by M.B. Clarke in 1908-1910) on West Main as part of the facilities of the West Plains Campus.

Mrs. Ruth Kellett gave the house and grounds in memory of her husband, Howard C. Kellett, and it became known as Kellett Hall. It provided a sense of permanence to the West Plains Campus which has continued to grow with each passing year as more students and classrooms are added.

In 1972 the WPHS baseball team reached semi-finals in state competition, and the 1974 *Zizzer* reported how the energy crisis had changed things — there were more walkers and bikers. The clothing fads included platform shoes and bell bottom pants.

During the 1978-79 school year, West Plains High School became designated as 4A by the State. And in that year the boys Cross County Team, led by Coach Joe Bill Dixon, began their dominance in 4A Cross County competition by winning first place in the state meet.



Burying the time capsule on Court Square on December 12, 1976. It is to be disinterred July 4, 2076 by the Howell County Court. The Bicentennial Steering Committee members from left are: Cecil Junkins, Toney Aid, Catherine Castner, Dorothea Reavis, Helen Frater, Bev Henry, Lida Bozman, and Harold Boucher. At far right is the late Mr. Britt, longtime West Plains resident.

by the local Bicentennial Committee were indeed memorable.

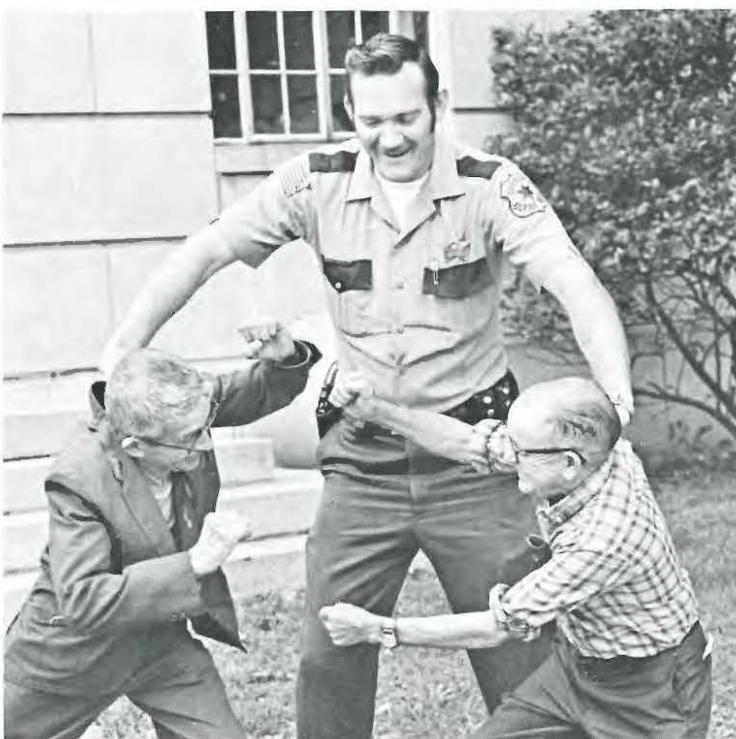
A contest was held to pick a slogan; a time capsule was buried on the courthouse lawn; the city chose an official "Liberty Tree" (a large oak on the property of Mary Briscoe); there was a parade; and art class members from the high school painted fire hydrants to look like "Minutemen."

In 1977 Harry Reavis became the Chief of Police, one year after be-

ing sworn in as a fulltime police officer.

In 1978 Russ Cochran established the *West Plains Gazette* magazine.

In the late 1970s, West Plains made national headlines when the sewer lagoon leaked effluent into the underground water supply. The disaster made necessary construction of a new sewage treatment plant in West Plains. The new facility began operation December 19, 1979.



Above left: Charley Morrison, W.S. Coleman, and Walter Nelson. When this picture was taken at the 1976 Howell County Soils and Crops Conference, Mr. Coleman was 84 years old and had attended all 49 of the conferences. Charley had missed only three of the annual meetings, and Mr. Nelson, who was then 78, had attended about twenty. At left: Sheriff Hubert Holman referees a mock bout between Clyde Mosley, left, and old friend Alf Johnson of Mammoth Springs, 1973.

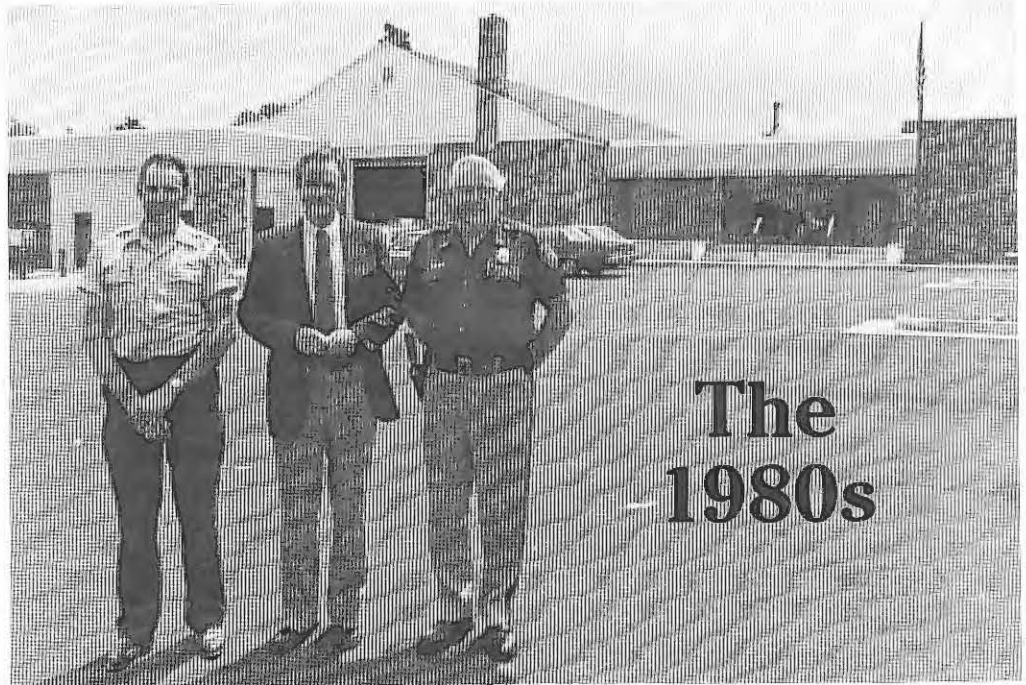
# Population

1980

West Plains . . . . . 7,741  
 Howell County . . . . . 28,807

On May 18, 1980 the children of West Plains received a wonderful gift. This was the date the Butler Children's Park was officially dedicated. Pearl Butler and her husband, the late Bob Butler, had donated the house and three acres to the city three years earlier to be used to create a children's park. The Butlers had saved the grand old house, built in 1906 by R.S. Hogan and later occupied by the Dr. Claude Bohrer family, from almost certain destruction by purchasing it and donating it to the city. In 1981 a wading pool was added to the park and other improvements were also made.

In January, 1981 the South Central Missouri Genealogical Society opened its library over the West Plains Savings and Loan Building. Before then, the library had been located in the back of the Kimberlin Book Store (now Melinda's Hall-



**The  
1980s**

**Fire Chief Hubert Redburn, Mayor Gerald Elmore, and Police Chief Harry Reavis in July 1982 when the new police-fire station opened.**

mark) on the square.

On April 2, 1982 a tornado plowed through the northwest side of West Plains. It followed almost exactly the route of another tornado which had surprised the town on February 21, 1976. The tornado ran its course from Tecumseh to

West Plains, killing four people, injuring dozens more and causing millions of dollars worth of damage.

The 1980s have been dominated by local politics. West Plains had one of the oldest mayor-commission forms of government in the

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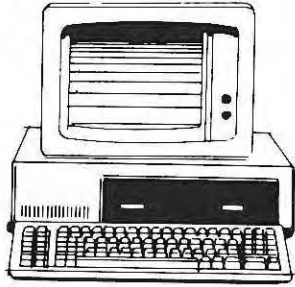
Corner of Cass Avenue  
and Porter Wagoner  
(across from city park)

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state of Missouri. In the early 1980s it was one of the few cities of its size in the state that had not switched to a new form of government, and there were many citizens who said it was time to move on to something new.

April 1985 saw the result of the discontentment as the reigns of the city turned over to new leadership under a new form of government — mayor-council. A city administrator, Charles Parent of the St. Louis area, was hired to run the city. But this form of government proved not to hold the answers many people were looking for, and voters changed the system once again. In November, 1987 Mayor Harry Kelly and commissioners A.L. Kissinger and Gene Jones stepped in to lead the city, once again under the mayor-commission form of government.

In 1985 the Chamber of Commerce honored its first "Citizen of the Year." Ozarks Medical Center Chief Executive Officer, Colin Collins received the award. In 1986 Alvan Squires was the recipient after spear-heading the very successful Operation Jobs campaign to raise money to attract more industry to West Plains.

On March 31, 1984 a new radio station, sporting the call letters KKDY, went on the air in West Plains.

In 1985 Air Evac Emergency Medical Service began operations in West Plains. The helicopter ambulance service has provided an invaluable service to our rural area by enabling critically injured and sick persons to obtain medical care much sooner than was previously



The late Bob Butler and Pearl Butler cut the ribbon to officially open Butler's Children's Park on May 18, 1980. Jimmy Carroll and Bobby Bridges, standing in back, were members of the group present at the ceremony.

possible.

Nineteen eighty-seven has been another bicentennial year; this time our country was celebrating the 200th anniversary of our U.S. Constitution. A local committee was formed, and West Plains became an official Bicentennial City. The local AmVets chapter donated 50 American flags to the county to be flown around the courthouse on holidays.

Also in 1987, the railroad depot in West Plains closed, Mrs. P.S. (Julia) Kriegh retired as the official weather observer for the National Weather service, and young Holly Shelton was named Miss Missouri Pre-Teen.

## Schools

In February, 1981 kindergarten classes were moved to Reese

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Elementary School after a fire destroyed the interior of the former classrooms located on Cleveland Street. A library of approximately 2,000 books was lost in the fire. (This building, originally the music building at the Central complex, has since been re-built and currently houses the Adult Basic Education classrooms.)

Nineteen eighty-two was the year ninth graders moved "down the hill" to become freshmen at WPHS instead of at the junior high. Junior high became middle school, housing grades five through eight. The fifth and sixth graders moved to middle school from Central, on Garfield leaving the halls of that school empty in the fall term of 1982 for the first time since its construction in 1914.

For a time the fate of Central was uncertain, but SMSU purchased the building and beautifully remodeled the structure for use as a home of its nursing school (established in 1983) and for classrooms and administrative and student affairs offices. The fall term saw students once again filling the hallways, but for the first time those students are college students.

The cross country teams continued their winning ways. The boys have dominated Class 4A competition by finishing in first place at state competition three times since 1980. During those years they failed to place in the top three spots only once. (Zizzer Chris Zinn won top individual honors at state in 1982, 1983, and 1984.) The girls cross country team also gained recognition by winning first place at state in 1985 and second in 1986.

In 1984 a new sports empire was born when the WPHS Zizzer volleyball team won the State Class 4A Volleyball championship. Amazingly, they continued to win the state tournament each year through 1987. In the process they have compiled an impressive set of statistics, while continuing on a winning streak of over seventy games in a row.

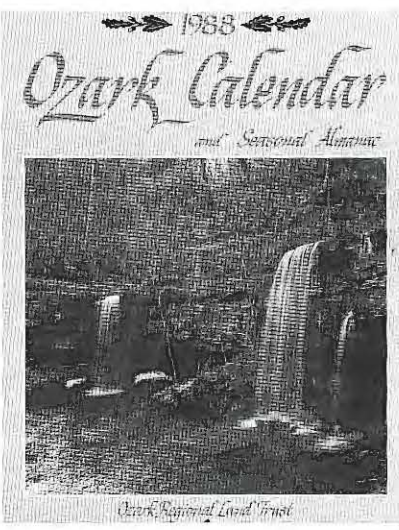
In 1986 the golf team won first place at state competition, as did the boys track team.

The high school music department also continued to excel, as it had in the past, in the 1980s. In 1982 the Concert Choir was invited to participate in a two-week musical tour of Great Britain. They raised the money and went. This year a similar situation presented itself, and the choir spent two weeks in Austria and Hungary.

In 1986, the WPHS band went to perform at the official unveiling of the newly refurbished Statue of Liberty.

In November 1986, after several failed bond issues in earlier years, voters approved a tax levy increase to build a new elementary school. Construction on the new building (to be located on Allen Street) began as soon as improvements were made to South Fork School, which is also part of the West Plains R-7 School System.


The new building is scheduled to be completed for the fall term of 1988. When it is, Reese, Foster, and Carmical Schools will be vacated, and grades K-4 will meet under one roof for classes.



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(Continued from page 1.)

lots of subscriptions and get distributors to place the magazine at local outlets.

Even a magazine like *The Ozark Mountaineer* has 35,000 subscribers and also sells many issues to the local heavy tourist traffic. But the *Gazette* never had more than about 1500 subscribers and presently has less than 850 subscribers. Our print runs for the earlier *Gazettes* were around 5000 copies, and we now print only 3000 copies, and still have plenty of them left after local sales have dried up. We have finally sold out of issues #1 and #2 and a few others. If I sell every remaining back-issue, I will then just about break even with the *Gazette*.

So, it was never a venture that was intended to be profitable. But there were always hopes. I was wrong in thinking that, even though West Plains did not really have the population base to support such a publication, there should be many thousands of folks scattered all over the country that thought of West Plains as their home town and who would subscribe to the *Gazette*. My reasoning was that if you add up the number of graduates from West Plains High School over the years in the 20th Century, that alone should amount to over ten thousand former Zizzers who would subscribe. Then there are all the folks in surrounding counties, especially Ozark County, where most of us fish and hunt and swim and play in the summer. Then there would be all the other folks in other states who came from a small town like West Plains. People from little towns in Texas, Kentucky, and Ohio, who would see their own home town reflected in the photos and articles in the *Gazette*. And then of course all the state and public libraries and all the local historical societies and genealogical societies would see a value in our *Gazette* family histories and **surely** they would all subscribe. Why, if everyone in all these categories would subscribe. . . gosh, we'd have so many coming to the *Gazette* party that we

couldn't find a place to put them all! We'd be a hit with all those folks, and they would just **love** the *Gazette* and probably buy gift subscriptions for all their friends and relatives.

That was the dream. The reality is that we have around 800 subscribers right now (of this number, twelve. . .yes, 12. . .of them in Ozark County). Local over-the-counter sales have dwindled to the point where we are lucky if we can sell a total of half of the print run of 3000 copies, **including** the 800 subscribers.

I have a grand total of perhaps 25,000 back issues which I hope will eventually sell. I'm not gonna throw them away, and maybe someday, with the help of Aid Hardware, they will all be sold. Several issues are now sold out, many others are in short supply, and in the future, individual issues will, one by one, go out-of-print. We have more of the recent issues than the older issues. Someday a complete set of all 30 issues will be a nice collector's item for anyone interested in a 30-volume history of West Plains.

West Plains was good to me when I was growing up here. I was born here fifty years ago in the Cottage Hospital (on Webster Avenue) and have lived most of my life here. The days of my youth, which I value highly, were spent swimming at Dawt and Hammond's Mill, reading my comic books which I bought at Kimberlin's or Wilke's or the Model Drug Store, and going to almost every movie that played at the Davis, Avenue, and Butler Theaters. I have an unusually strong feeling of maternal love for West Plains and am thankful for the privilege of growing up here. I moved my family back here so that my four children could have the same pleasure of growing up in West Plains. She's my home, my mother-land, and her people are all part of my family. Each of these 30 issues is a permanent love letter to, from, and about West Plains.

I am happy to be remembered as the publisher of the *Gazette*, knowing that long after I am gone from

this world and after my children and grandchildren are all gone, there will still be sets of the *Gazette* sitting on bookcases, valued "time capsules" from the past. These 30 issues are like 30 permanent footprints I am leaving behind, and that makes me feel great. . .quasi-immortal!

Notice I said in the opening line that this is the last **regular** issue of the *Gazette*. We have now fulfilled all our subscriptions, since we have not accepted subscriptions beyond this issue. But if a fantastic group of old photographs turns up (see issue #29, for example), or for some other special event or occasion, I reserve the right to do a special issue. If such a special issue is ever done in the future, we will notify all former subscribers and advertise locally.

If your *Gazette* collection is not complete, see the special offers on the inside back cover of this issue for filling in the gaps in your collection. It would be a big help right now if we could sell a lot of back issues. If you are a really big *Gazette* supporter, you should consider putting together a complete set of all 30 issues for **each** of your children! That would help us a lot.

The bottom line is that the *Gazette* was an experiment that was only a partial failure. As a business, it was and is and will always be a loser. . .a failure. As a historical legacy, as permanent footprints in the sands of time, it will never be a failure. I have a letter I received from a lady who saw the only photograph she had ever seen of her mother in the pages of the *Gazette*. How much is that worth?

Like Garrison Keillor, who left Lake Wobegon, the *Gazette* is leaving now. We might be back some day, and then again we might not. But it has been a great ten year run. I opened the first issue with a dedication to my grandmother Polly. She never liked to say "good-bye." She would always say, "Say Au Revoir, not goodbye!" So, until we meet again,



# THEY'RE GOING FAST!



**Number 3**  
Class of '79  
Dr. Bohrer/Parkside  
Methodist Church  
Howell County



**Number 4**  
Cap Newberry  
Pomona Oil Well  
Ozark County  
Log Cabin Homes



**Number 5**  
Porter Wagoner  
Galloway Family  
WP Centennial  
Baptist Church



**Number 6**  
Sam Freel  
Langston Brothers  
Cordell Family  
Dorothy Robertson



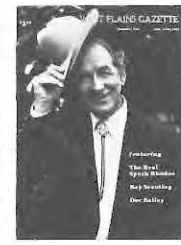
**Number 7**  
Norfolk Lake History  
Jan Howard  
Joe VanWormer  
Oregon County



**Number 8**  
Harlin Family  
Richards Family  
Koshkonong  
Hugh & Pauline Pond



**Number 9**  
Civil War, Part I  
Ella Horak  
Guy Buck  
Hoopower



**Number 10**  
Speck Rhodes  
Dr. Bailey  
Scouting  
Episcopal Church



**Number 11**  
Bill Virdon  
Civil War, Part II  
Feeder Pigs  
Mr. & Mrs. Kreigh



**Number 12**  
Dick Shadburne  
Mrs. Poole  
Hunter Family  
Ozark Rivers



**Number 13**  
Alexa Whitmire  
Myrtle Centennial  
Carl Ferguson  
Hutton Valley



**Number 14**  
Olive Kingsbury  
Reavises  
Grand Gulf  
Hootin' and Hollerin'



**Number 15**  
Brandsville  
Christmas  
Lewis Simpson  
Barnett Family



**Number 16**  
Herman Quick  
Bob Neathery  
Railroad  
Coats Family



**Number 17**  
Sheriff Kelly  
James Burkhart  
Judge Woodside  
River History



**Number 18**  
Class of '35  
Central School  
Thayer History  
Norfolk Ferries



**Number 19**  
Jim the Wonder Dog  
Victory Girls  
Pinebrook Inn  
Southfork



**Number 20**  
Bess Torian Patenske  
Judge Evans  
Alice Cary Risley  
Elledge Family



**Number 21**  
Louis & Lida Bozman  
Mountain Home  
Mantz • Catron  
Sessen Family



**Number 22**  
Quill Sisters  
Dr. Thornburgh  
Nettleton Hotel  
Willow Springs History



**Number 23**  
SMSU  
Charley Morrison  
Dr. Gum  
St. Mary's



**Number 24**  
Thornburgh Family  
Lizzie Carter  
Myrtle Telephone  
Football



**Number 25**  
Chris Zinn  
Poltersville  
New Madrid Fault  
Springer Family



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First Christian Church  
Cora Dotson  
Evergreen

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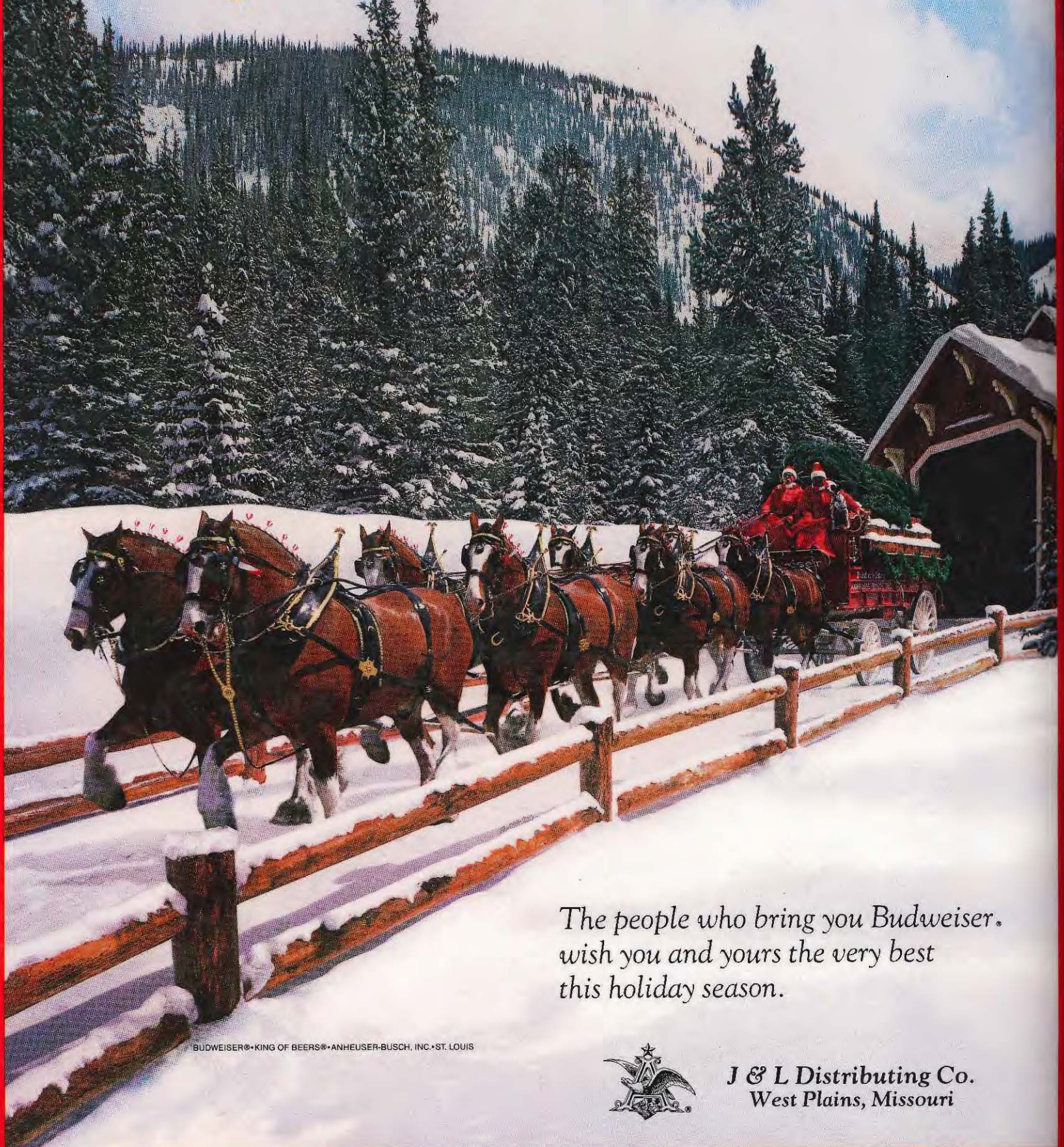
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