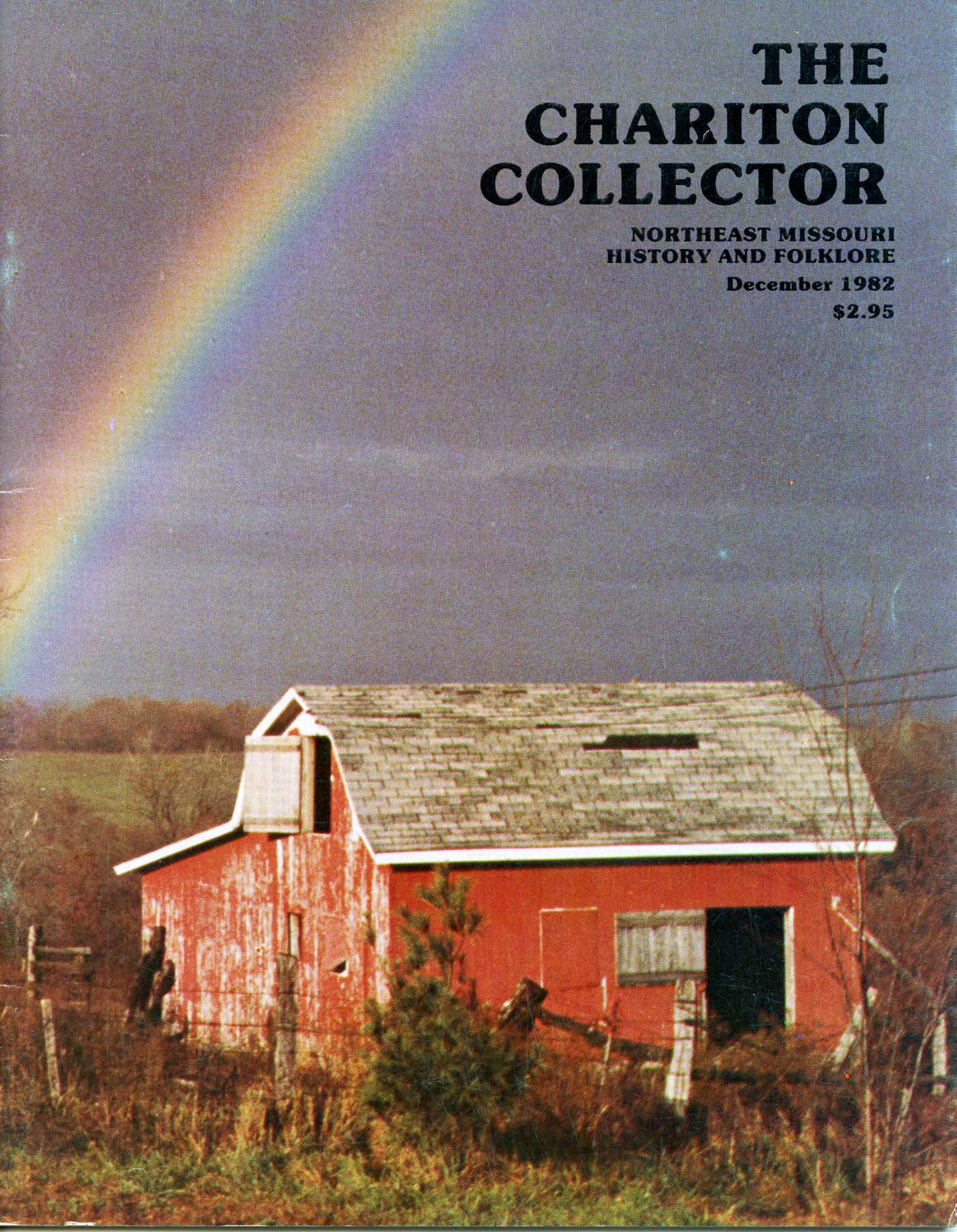


THE CHARITON COLLECTOR

NORTHEAST MISSOURI
HISTORY AND FOLKLORE

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THE CHARITON COLLECTOR Kirksville Senior High School, Kirksville, Mo.

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Editor's Comment

We the editors of Vol. 3 No. 1 of the 1982-83 Chariton Collector would like to dedicate this issue to both the supporters of this magazine and our advisors, past and present.

During the production of this and past issues of The Chariton Collector, the editors and staff have consistently strived to deliver a magazine that will both increase your knowledge of local history and spark an interest in your personal history.

It is our sincere hope that you will enjoy this issue of The Chariton Collector and will look forward to upcoming publications.

We would also like to pay tribute to the previous advisor of this magazine, Mrs. Carol Trowbridge. Carol helped to secure this magazine as a permanent part of our school's available courses. She also was an intricate part of the production of the first four volumes of The Chariton Collector and its foremost benefactor.

Thank you,
Alva Lewis, Mark McIntyre
Co-editors

Cover Picture

The cover picture was photographed by Dr. John Morgan on his farm, which is located north of Kirksville.



This photograph appeared on a Graysville area postcard around 1905. The geese were commonly kept for pillow-making. See story on Graysville which begins on page 2.

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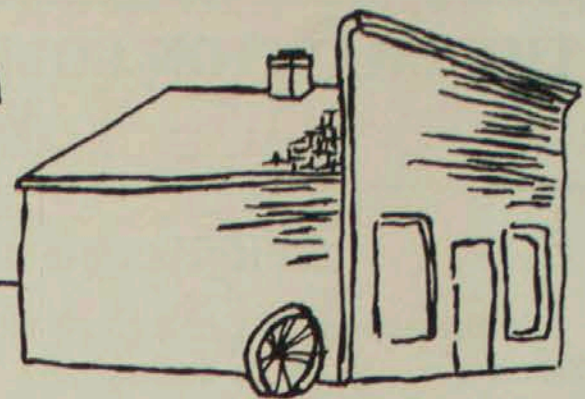
Mary Grossnickle

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The Chariton Collector is published by the Local History Class of Kirksville Senior High School. This special class attempts to preserve the history and local folklore of Northeast Missouri.

GRAYSVILLE

anytown USA?



If traveling north on Rt. 149 in Putnam County, the town of Graysville may seem as though it were a roadside park. But don't plan on stopping for a bite to eat unless you have brought your own. Over 100 years old, the town is no longer a thriving place of business for its citizens, but a fading reminder of a prosperous era.

Originally Millersburg, the town began in 1867 in the southwest corner of land owned by James Mullenix. In that year, James T. Miller founded a store which marked the beginning of the town, thus giving it the name of Millersburg. No record remains to clarify a transaction by which land was acquired, but it is known that Mullenix did live out the remainder of his life in the town itself.

In the first few years that followed, minor establishments were gradually added including a blacksmith shop and another small store, but the first major step forward was in the founding of the post office in 1875. Due to the fact that another post office in the state was named Millersburg, it took on the name of Graysville after its establisher, E. Gray. As time passed, the more commonly used name of Graysville was slowly accepted as the name of the town itself.

As with many small towns in our country, Graysville had its roots, a life-line so to speak, upon which it survived. From the days when citizens would arise in the morning to wagons rumbling down the road, to the times when large trucks replaced them as transports for coal, mining was that base. Graysville was indeed a mining town, for today you can talk to its citizens and hear vivid tales of when coal controlled the lives of its people. Yet that control did not always lie in the hands of the miners. In the struggling first years of its

existence, the town was kept alive by a resource that is overshadowed in the remembrance of its past. For at least 40 years after the first store was founded by J. T. Miller, timber was that abundant resource which drew people to the area and kept the town alive. Combined with small-time farming, timber was the supplier of jobs and money for Graysville's people. Coal, an industry which had yet to be discovered, would prove to be the turning point in its history.

Since its beginning, Graysville had gradually grown, but nothing did, or ever would have such a profound effect on it as the mining boom of the late '20's. The mines affected the whole way of life as those people knew it. Before, the town was basically close-knit where everyone was acquainted, and in many times related, but as the mining grew, the population also grew. This meant people

came from all over the midwest drawn by the jobs which brought money. These people saw the opportunity in many different ways. They saw food for their hungry children, money to spend in a tavern for a good time, or a chance at starting a life for themselves that they couldn't find elsewhere. Whatever the reason, the people did come, bringing their own ideas and beliefs, causing the town to begin changing. What was a small-time, quiet village, suddenly became a bigger, livelier place of considerable action. Graysville at no time became big as city-folk know it, but rather big by its own standards. The sudden population explosion happened just as it sounds. . . very sudden, making the town a place with its own character. New people that came with the mines added spice to the town, giving it distinctions of good and bad, friend and foe, which set the personality of the town. Yet everyone came to accept this change, working side by side in the coal dust from sunup to sundown.

When the boom hit, life changed in Graysville. Rolling countryside quickly became cluttered living space. With the people coming in, it wasn't long before little shacks and huts were everywhere. In some instances, people even put up a tent and placed a stove in the middle. These people were basically out to survive with the thought of making a little money on the side. Yet the money didn't come easy. The miners worked long and hard days, usually going and coming from work by the light of their hats. These men, usually 12 to 15 to a mine, were on their own most of the time, working by the ton as long as there was someone to buy coal. As the life long residents Ailey Sparks and Herbert Casady put it, "Boys became men awfully quick in those mines." These boys were nothing more than teenagers, but they found out about life working for 75 cents a ton in dirty shale pits. That was generally a starter's pay in those days, from that, you worked your way up to the demand.

Mining was no easy job, especially since it was alive only in the winter months. Being strenuous labor already, this only made the job worse and the days longer. "A miner in Graysville was usually a hard worker and not always ready to put down his pick when the day ended," explained Ailey Sparks, "because you knew that when the days grew longer and warmer your income stopped along with the mines." Luckily, most men found some type of work during the summer which would hold them over till the mines opened again.

Mines were indeed everywhere in the area. In fact, where there was a hilltop there was a mine. Each mine had its differences. In most, the coal was dug by the miners and loaded for a horse to pull out. Yet in a few mines such as the old "steam hoist" in Graysville, steam power provided a means for the coal to be brought out. During those early years, "Licksillet," a flat on the Chariton River, was the place where the coal was taken from Graysville in some cases. A small railway connected the two mining centers, by which horses would pull loaded cars the six mile distance. From there coal was shipped by river to its destination. The usual



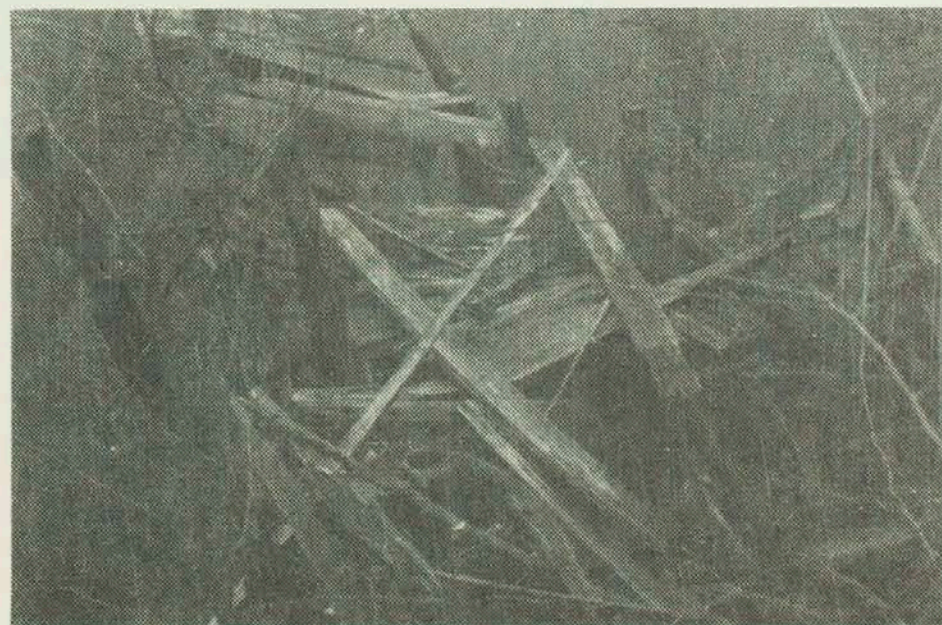
way was the everyday horse and wagon if the coal was headed elsewhere. That rumbling of horse and wagon gradually converted to the roar of trucks as the years went on, an easier and more practical way of transportation. The era of automation helped mining greatly, producing a "boom" all across the country. Graysville was no exception. The miners were up to three dollars a ton and the town became well known in northern Missouri for such a small place. Even though those times had been hard ones, the lively way of life had appealed to the people. A reminder of those days sparks a gleam in the eye and a smile on the face of most any citizen today. A longing for the Graysville of yesterday comes out in each who can remember those times.

Just as automation had boosted Graysville, it also condemned it. The big machines of modern strip mining and the money hungry businessmen which controlled them, led to the town's down-fall. The shovels and picks were replaced by dynamite while machinery became miners. Farmers and landowners were pressured to sell out in many cases, and Graysville was put under the arm of big business until the coal, which had been the support of the town for so long, finally gave out. When the miners left, the town went with them. Stores no longer had business and thus shut down as did schools and all else that was associated with the people of that era.

The town of Graysville has seen many stores since the first one which marked the towns beginning in 1867. Although as many as five stores have existed at one time during Graysville's past, one store, which still stands, was the town's largest and most important store throughout the coal boom and for years afterward. Faye Haynes and her husband owned and managed that store during that era and although the store is no longer in business, she is still today, the owner of the store and a citizen of Graysville. The store stands on the corner of Graysville's main street where all of the town's businesses have been located. The street incidentally, is dirt, and the whole scene resembles a crossroads through which

Top photo: Miners during the coal boom. Bottom photo shows the existing remnants they left behind.

By R. Veach
D. Mehlenbacher
J. Morgan



This retouched photograph appeared on an area postcard around 1905.



Top photo: Saturday afternoons of socializing and relaxing weren't strange to this main store which has withstood most of the century. Bottom photo: Ailey and Laholma Sparks, longtime residents of a fading town.

cars pass on their way to better things rather than a place where business exchange once took place. The building is narrow and it's evident that additions were built on as the demand for more room arose. The front is tall and flat with a small overhang giving it the look typical of buildings of the "Old West". All of its features combine to give it a unique look all its own.

In contrast to a store of today, Graysville's stores were in fact, general stores. In the times when trips to a larger town were impractical due to poor means of transportation, it was necessary for the stores to supply its citizens with all the goods which were essential to everyday life. The people of Graysville were able to walk into any store at the time and buy anything from groceries, to shoes, to automotive parts. If any desired product was not carried in stock, ordering it posed no problem. The store owners were willing to acquire any product as long as there was a customer willing to buy it.

Most citizens bought goods on credit and would pay off their bills monthly. In many instances where farmers were involved, the store owners would extend credit throughout the year until farmers could harvest their crops and make a payment. While payment of that type may sound unusual by today's standards, those people had a special trust in each other and in their friendships which enabled that system to work smoothly.

For those citizens who did own stores or other businesses at the time, life had its luxuries. "There was good money in running a store," said Mrs. Haynes. This was true particularly in the winter months when the mines were running and the demand for goods was high. In the summer months when the miners left, however, the stores depended on produce for support. Many of the local farmers would sell their eggs and cream to a store or in many instances, trade their produce for clothes or any other needed product the store had. Many of the remaining farmers in Graysville miss the days of being able to sell their extra dairy and vegetable products for a

little extra "chewing tobacco" as Ailey Sparks put it during an interview.

Graysville hasn't had a store in business since the early 1970's. From the end of the coal boom in the 1950's up to that point, a few stores were in business at different times. None, however, had a large enough flow of customers to keep them open. Since then, Graysville's people have had to travel to Unionville or another neighboring town for their groceries. Most of them wish that another store would open and carry all the supplies they were so used to having near them. Even Mrs. Haynes expressed a wish for someone to open up a place of business in her old store. They feel that way because a store would add much more than convenience to their life. For many farmers, it would mean a place to sell their eggs and cream for a little extra money again. For some of the men, it would be a place to go to on a Saturday afternoon to "see the boys" and waste time. It would give Graysville that spark of life which it has been lacking for the past few years. Graysville would be a town again, and in the minds of many of its remaining citizens, that's all they want.

Listening to old stories, the Graysville tavern seems no different than any other of its time. It has been around as long as any present citizen can remember and has been closed for about ten years. According to old timers Earl Hogg and Edwin Ray, a man could find just about any kind of entertainment in the rowdy little building. Between the dancing, drinking and just plain having a good time, the tavern served as a place of non-stop excitement for the miners and citizens alike. As with other centers of the little community, much was lost with the fading mining boom and this Graysville "hot spot" was put on a "back burner" to cool.

All the tavern is used for today is private storage and the building itself is not in good shape. Yet, when you listen to the stories about it and look around inside, you can almost begin to see the people dancing and hear the music of those days when the tavern was the only place around where one could really have a little fun.

When walking through Graysville and talking to its people, it is obvious that certain buildings have played a major role in the lives of its citizens. While the stores, tavern and other businesses were centers of trade for many years, such buildings as the church and school house supplied Graysville's people with the learning experiences which have set them apart. These two places are important in the memories of those few remaining citizens who have lived their lives in the small town.

Although Graysville has no functioning school today, it has had a total of three schools at different times. The first one was built in the early 1900's and consisted of a small, one room building with only a few students. As Ailey Sparks said, "If there was a seventh grader, there was a seventh grade." When that building fell into ill repair, it was torn down and replaced by a better building capable of holding more students. That school house, however, burnt to the ground only a few years after its completion and was thus replaced by the third and last school. The third school was a white stucco three room building with a basement. It was closed due to the consolidation of county schools to Unionville in 1965. The building itself was eventually torn down in the early 1970's

leaving nothing but memories of the school and all that it entailed.

Although no material evidence remains of the days when the bell would ring calling the kids to school, many stories are still around of what it was like to go to school in those times. "The big events of the year were the candy supper and the Christmas program," said Mary Kay Veach. The candy supper was an annual event where the girls would bring a box of candy to be auctioned off at school. One of the boys would buy the box from his favorite girl and they would sit together and eat the candy. The Christmas program was another annual event where the kids would build a stage, put a curtain around it and have their own play.

These along with other minor events throughout each school year kept the children content and the school running. It gave them a togetherness only experienced in rural life and although the building is gone, the school exists in the minds of the people who attended it and knew what it was really like.

The church was also another interesting place in the history of Graysville. A church, in most places, serves as a place of worship and learning in a community. Then again Graysville was not just any place. The church was established sometime during the 1850's or 60's. It was founded by an area pioneer, John Henry Ray with one Civil War pension check of twenty-five dollars according to descendants Thelma and Pearl Casady. Originally a United Brethren or non-denominational church, it prospered, as far as anyone knows, at least up until the mining boom. Gradually a declining congregation became almost non-existent. Rumour even has it that gambling became a favorite pastime in the old white building. Yet the church did manage to recover. Still in the original building, which stands to this day, it made its comeback during the 1950's as a Baptist church, ready once again to serve the people of Graysville.

The church and school shared responsibility in providing for the town in many ways. They contributed to the towns personality and character and the way of life of the people who live there today.

With all of this, Graysville could be most any town, with the exception of one thing. . . its people. Although many are gone, a few original citizens still remain, living on the same land that their parents lived on. These people are the base of the town, the ones who keep it alive in its original tradition.

Graysville has been seemingly left behind in the constant forward progression of the times. A page out of history, this town survives in today's world thanks mainly to its people, who preserve a life known to their ancestors. Being far from any town of considerable size, many things taken for granted by much of the world have overlooked this community. Running water, inside restrooms and cable television are such examples, with the first two being added only in recent years. Yet, families like the Spark's, Casady's and Mrs. Haynes overlook such conveniences. Those things are irrelevant to their way of life. These families share with many longtime residents of the town, in taking life as it comes, not worrying about tomorrow.

This is not, by any means, to say that Graysville's people aren't caught up with the rest of the world in life, but probably that they have been lucky enough to see it differently.

Life As A Milliner



"To be a milliner, one must be able to visualize," these are the words of Jeanette Underhill. Jeanette (Jack) Underhill was definitely born with this gift. In her opinion, to be able to visualize and use your imagination is a must in the milliner trade. Each hat has to be an original creation with its own style, personality, and adaptability to the wearer.

Jeanette was born in Edina, Missouri, on March 20, 1890. She is the daughter of John C. and Elizabeth Jack. Her father was a rancher on a large stock farm near Edina for 32 years. He later moved to the Kirksville area, where he was hired as head of maintenance at what is now the Northeast Missouri State University.

In the early 1900's, when Jeanette was about 10 years old, she and her family moved to the Kirksville area. She became interested in the millinery as a young girl. During recess, Jeanette relates that she would go to the "girls side" of the

The photographs above show Jeanette modeling the hats that her skillful fingers created.

playground and make hats from the leaves and twigs growing on nearby shade trees. Her creativity and dexterity were evident at an early age.

Jeanette began her living making hats during the Edwardian period. The hats of this time were always elaborately trimmed, especially in the summer, when flowers, lace, tulle, chenille, and feathers might all form a decoration for one single hat.

A milliner has to keep up with the styles of the times because in this trade, the styles seem to change every year. The hats complimented and completed the high-necked, beautifully detailed long gowns of this time. For example, during the 1940's, World War II period, skirts were short and hats were small, often decorated with sequins and net. Styles

change with the times, adapting to the way of life.

She learned her trade from Mrs. Hastings, Mrs. Witherford, and Mrs. Laura Underhill. George Underhill and his wife, Laura, were the proprietors of Underhill's Ready To Wear and Millinery Store. The business was located on the west side of the square in downtown Kirksville. Jeanette took classes under Laura Underhill and later went to work for the Underhills. Jeanette also met her future husband, Garnett, who was the son of George and Laura Underhill.

In the early 1900's, before going to work for the Underhills, Jeanette was in business with her sisters, Letha and Geneva. Together they ran the Jack Sisters Novelty Store, where they sold such specialities as fine china.

Jeanette and Garnett were married on August 20, 1916, by Rufus D. S. Putney, rector of the Trinity Episcopal Church. They later had one child, Mrs. Ralph (Jolean) Pink. Jeanette and Garnett took over the Ready To Wear when Garnett's parents retired. It was located in the building where Four Seasons Sports is now operating.

The Underhills owned over 17 houses at one time in the Kirksville area. Many were located in the vicinity of the 500 block of South Franklin Street.

Jeanette and Garnett Underhill retired in 1971. Garnett passed away soon after retirement.

Mrs. Underhill now resides in a private room at the Kirksville Manor Care Center. She has been a resident there for seven years. Jeanette's skillful fingers have created many, many examples of exquisite needlework. She is a lovely lady with a quiet, gracious manner. Many people enjoy conversing with her.

The Underhill family played an important part in the development of the city of Kirksville. Jeanette is 92 years old, but she is still young at heart.

By Pam Anderson Jeannie Croarkin Alicia Troester



Photo above: This is Jeanette today, living a peaceful life at Manor Care. Photo below: This is Garnett and Jeanette's first home. It is located in the 500 block of South Franklin Street in Kirksville.



A Personal Politician

Even the best of politicians hesitate sometimes. In silence they sat behind the perfectly built turkey blind, as they patiently awaited the sight of a turkey. "Shag" Grossnickle was in charge of the calling of turkeys and W. O. Mackie had the honor of holding the shotgun. "Shag" first sighted the seven turkeys and then nudged Mackie. W. O. turning with the shotgun sat in awe—losing all thought of triggering the shotgun. When he recovered from the first impact of the sight of the beautiful birds, he fired but did not hit his target. Senator W. O. Mackie did not, however, hesitate when it came to the welfare of his people.

William Oren Mackie was born on April 3, 1898, in Mt. Ayer, Iowa. He was born the son of Ella Mae Mackie and W. O. Mackie. Until the age of 4, he lived in Mt. Ayer, Iowa. His family then moved to the town of Mt. Moriah in Harrison County. He moved to Kirksville in the fall of 1914 after completing grade school and one year of high school in Mt. Moriah. W. O. then attended Northeast Missouri State University, which was then known as the Normal School, during the terms of 1914 and 1915. In the following year, W. O. taught at the Stinson School, west of Kirksville. He then enrolled in the Kirksville Senior High School, graduating with the class of 1918. On June 20, 1920, William Orin Mackie married Mabel Harlan from Chariton County, in Missouri.

In 1920 W. O. opened a clothing store in Keytesville, Missouri, and operated it for five years. After returning to Kirksville in 1925, Mackie traveled for three years for a wholesale grocery company. In 1928 he joined with the Missouri Stores Company, which was starting a chain of grocery stores in northern Missouri.

W. O. bought the assets of the Missouri Stores Company in

1933. At this time, the company had 23 stores in operation. Some of the stores were known as Mackie's Markets later changed to Mackie and William's. For 40 years he operated stores in northern Missouri and southern Iowa.

"I don't know anybody 84 years old who has a more vital interest in government, politics, money or people than W. O. Mackie. He started poor—he manages his resources well. His judgment is sound and reliable, his sense of humor is unmatched by any person within my acquaintance," stated Russell Roberts.

In 1956 William Oren Mackie was elected to the office of

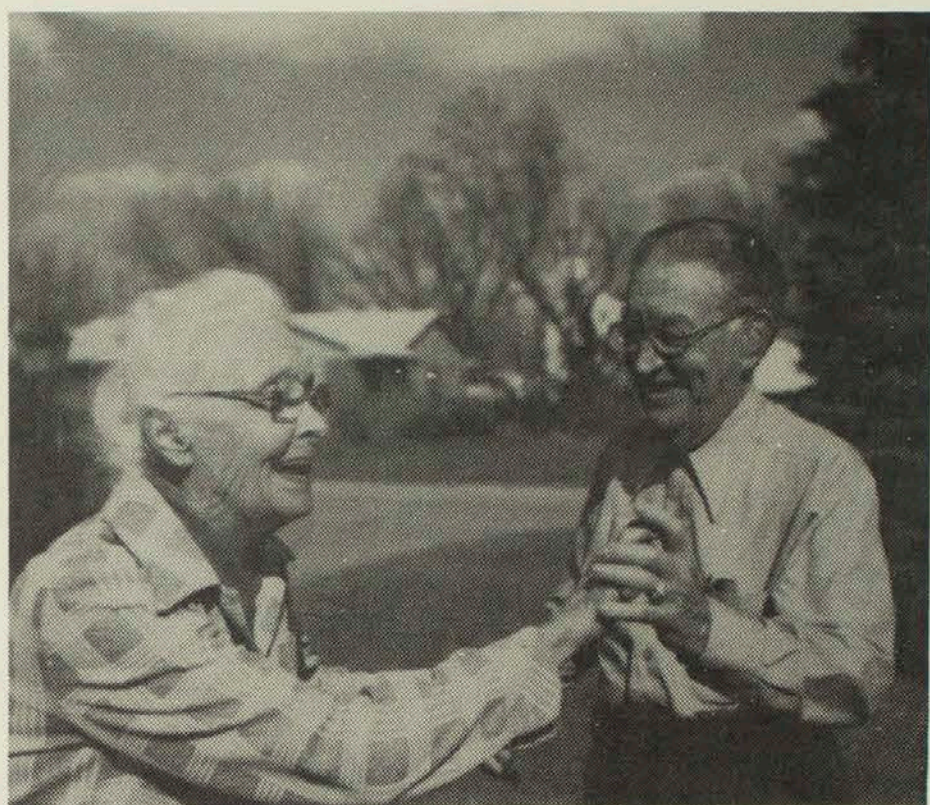
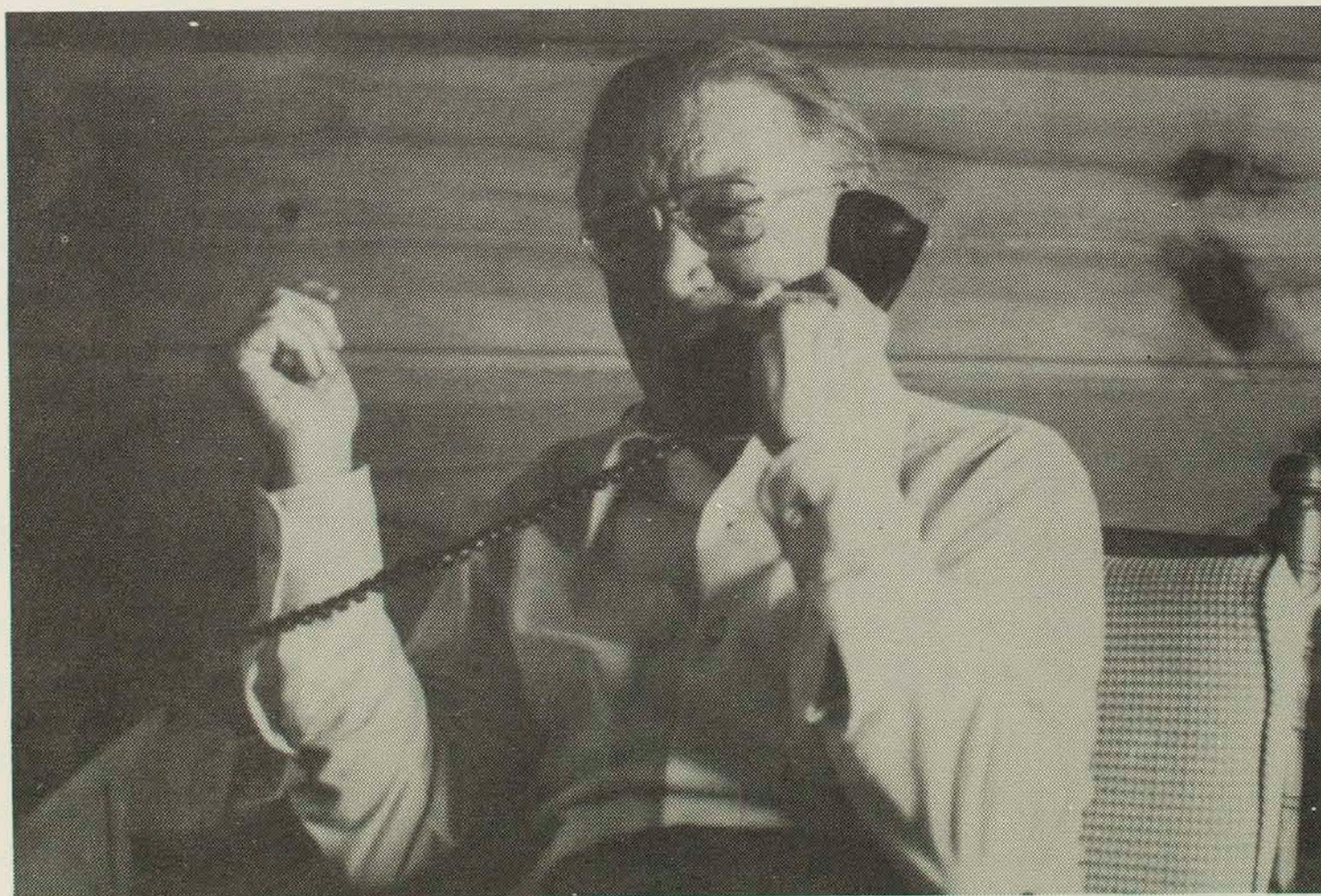
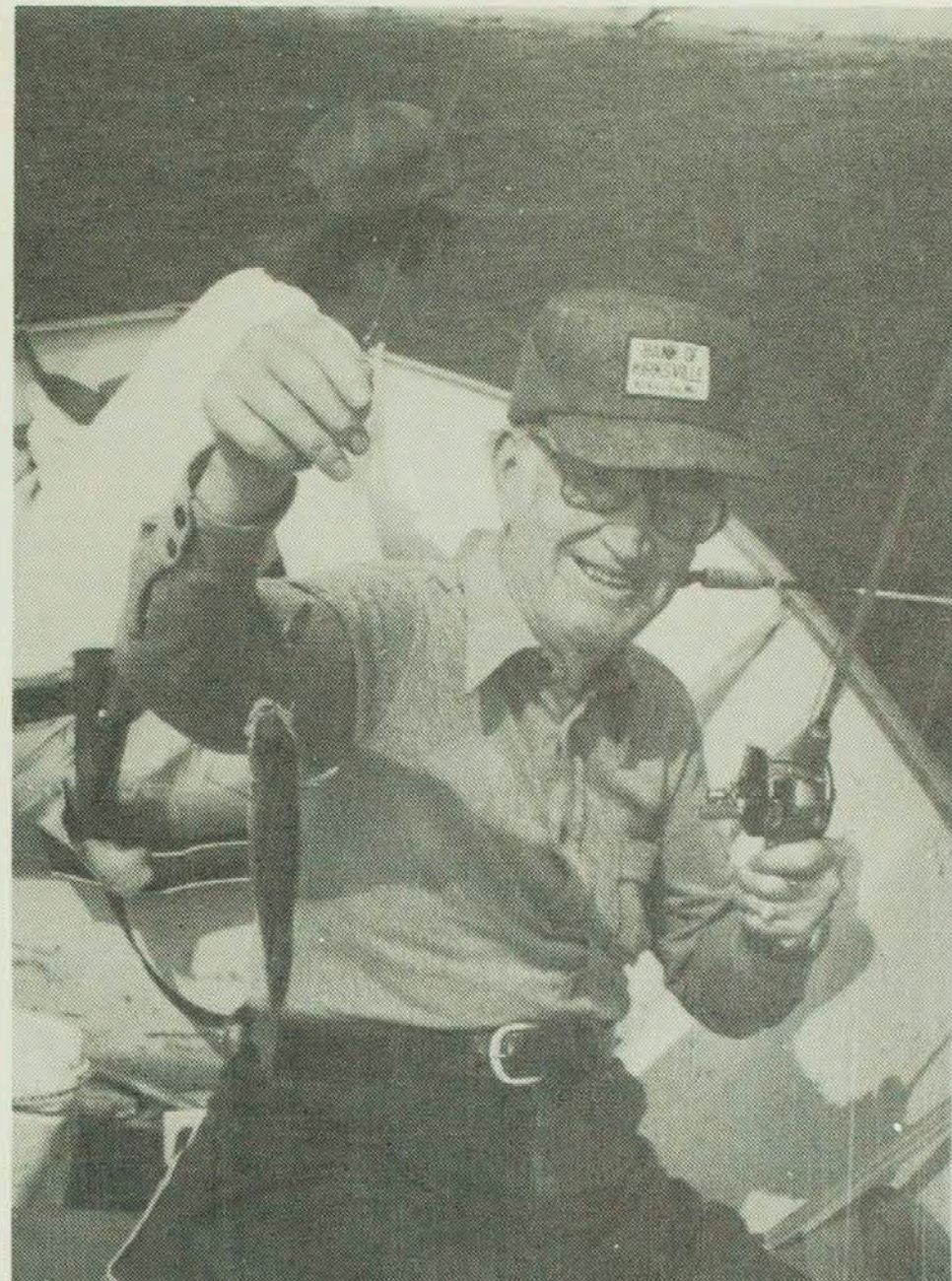
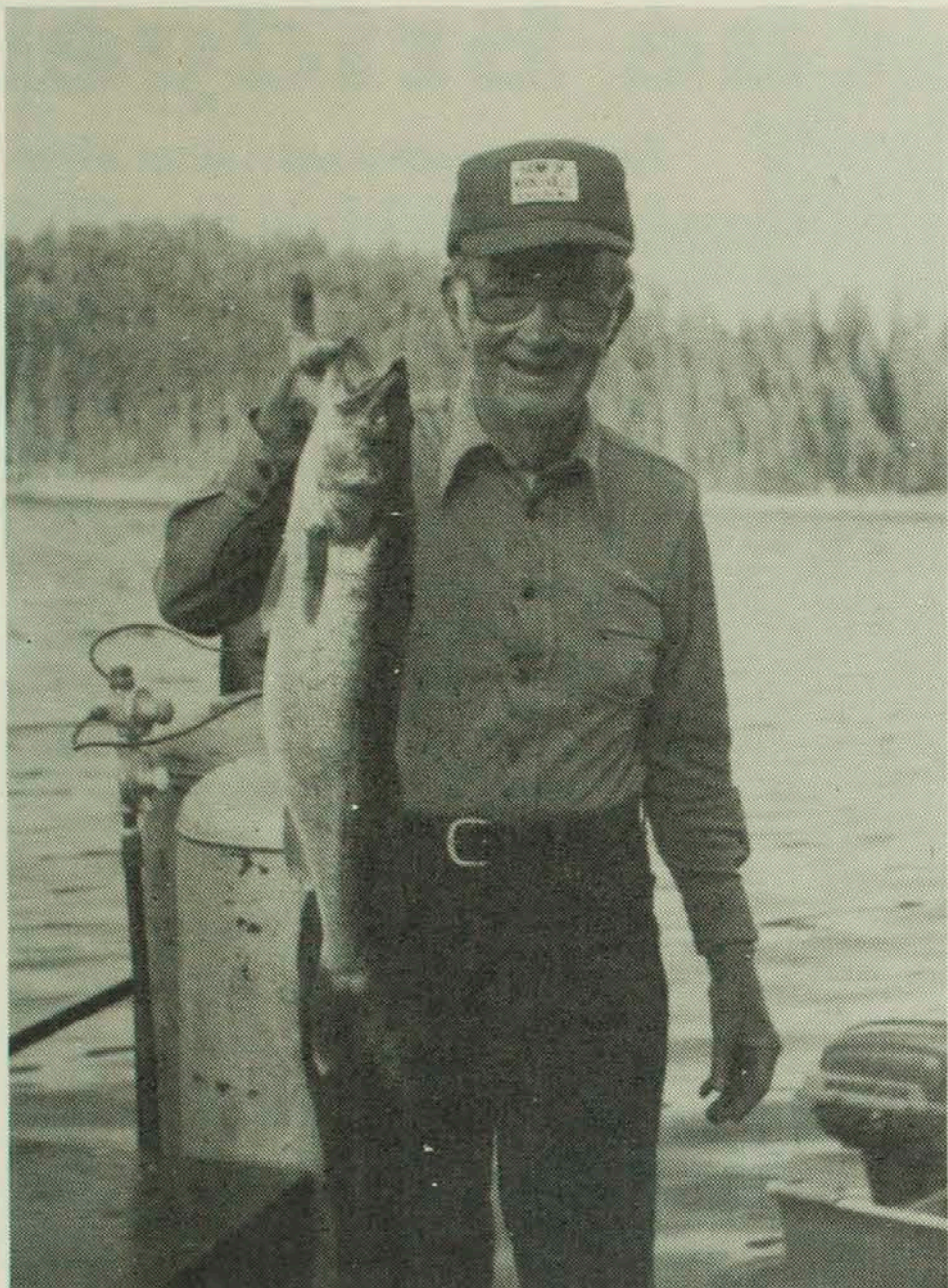


Photo above: Senator Mackie with Mabel, his wife of 62 years. Photo left: W. O. Mackie on his 80 birthday, as active as ever.





state representative of Adair County. After serving one two-year term as a state representative, he decided to run for the state senate. In 1958 he was elected to the state senate where he served two four-year terms. When asked why he ran for the offices, W. O. off-handedly replied, "Some of my Democratic friends talked me into it."

'Shag' Grossnickle comments, "I was always particularly impressed with W. O. Mackie's desire to help people while he was in the legislature, both as a Representative and as a senator. He was always eager to go out of his way and do what he could for people when they needed assistance. He drew no line. He would help people, especially the ones less fortunate, with eagerness."

W. O. built and was half-owner of the Highway Lumber Company, which is now operated as the McFarland and Jones Lumber Company. He also built and was half-owner of the Northtown Shopping Center. Mackie was president of Chamber of the Commerce, the Rotary Club, Shrine Club, and the Northeast Missouri Fair Association.

Mackie has always been active in many civic projects in Kirksville. He was chairman of the drive to sell the stock for the Kirksville Industrial Developmental Corporation (KIDC) and helped to promote the passage of a \$575,000 bond to buy the land and build the dam on Forest Lake at Thousand Hills State Park.

W. O. downplayed his part in the project saying, "Without the help of Governor Smith and the kindness of the heirs of Dr. George Laughlin's estate, we would not have had a state park."

Photos above: Mr. Mackie, the fisherman. At one of his favorite fishing spots, Lake Ontario, he shows off his prize catches.

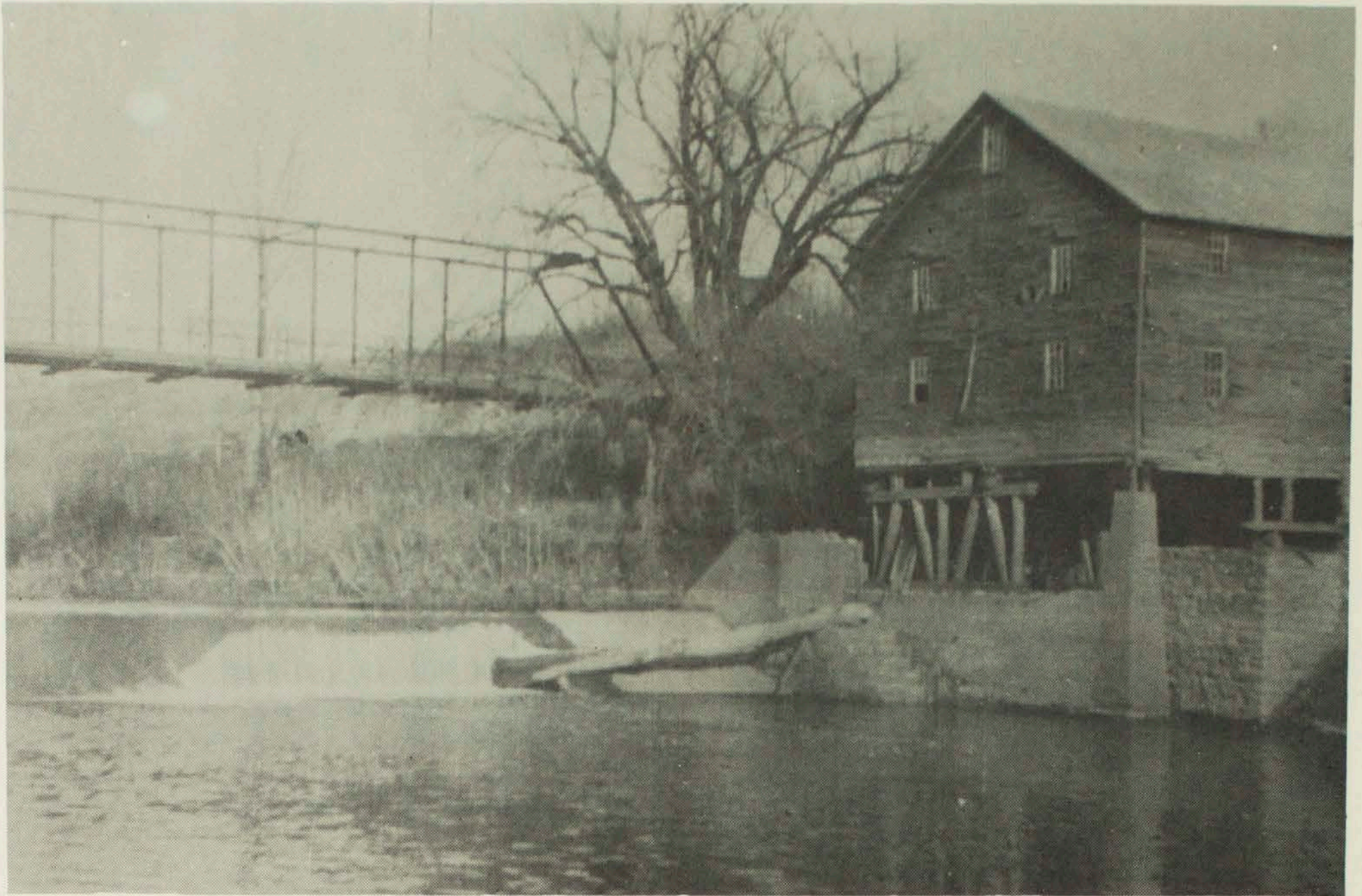
However, business and holding office never caused him to give up the opportunity to go hunting. He has always fished on the Chariton River, in different lakes around the area, and in Canada. He hunts quail, turkeys, and ducks. Senator Mackie worked with several people in the 1960's to restock wild turkeys in Adair County. Alan Brohn, who was the biologist for the state of Missouri at the time, did not think that the turkeys would do well in our area. The reason for this being that we do not have enough timberline for the the birds to survive. The turkeys did exceptionally well due to the fact that there is an abundance of corn and beans in the northeast Missouri area. They started with 14 hens and 9 toms and as a result, all of northeast Missouri now has an abundance of the birds.

Although W. O. is now retired, he has had many accomplishments. He succeeded in business, he was a senator and a representative, and has a family. W. O. has two children, Maxine Farrar of Braymer and William E. Mackie of Austin, Texas. He presently has five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. W. O. Mackie is a contributor to the northeast Missouri area, and will continue to play a key role in community life.

**By Lorinda Scott
Carrie Stone**

Water Under The Bridge

Photos courtesy of Kenny Weber



In the shadow of the Chariton River Bridge at Yarrow stood a landmark in Northeast Missouri folklore, the Yarrow mill. Some nine or ten miles southwest of Kirksville, the mill served the farmers of the district for 90 years grinding grain, ripping logs into lumber, carding wool, and later furnishing electricity for the town of Yarrow. In actuality there were two mill houses, the original being destroyed by an ice flow in 1874. John Domey was the first owner of the mill and a nearby store from 1851 to 1856 when he sold it to Doctor Johns, who was the proprietor until 1861. By this time the town of Yarrow was beginning to thrive and a post office was set up in a portion of the store, which was owned by George Miller. Doctor Johns operated the mill until he sold it to John Williams, who ran it until 1890. It was during Williams' term of ownership that the original mill house was broken up and swept downstream by the unwielding Chariton current. Work on the mill began the next year, 1875, but was not finished until the summer of 1876.

Michael Weber, an immigrant from Alsace-Lorraine, France, as a child came to America with his family. He bought the mill and equipment in 1890. Weber is the most remembered owner, partly because he owned it so long and partly because he brought national attention to the mill and surrounding community of Yarrow.

With his knack for understanding scientific innovations he

Photo above: This was the earliest photo of the location that could be found. It was taken before 1900.

bought and installed an electric generator in Yarrow in 1910. This generator furnished electricity to the stores and households of Yarrow from 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at a rate of 1 cent per light in each house per night. This wasn't an extravagant fee considering that most households had only one light.

In order to let the people know that the power was going to be shut off for the night the operator would dim the lights to inform the people that they only had ten minutes of power left to finish whatever they were doing.

The brake for the stopping of the mill machinery was a large fence post which was pressed against the flywheel. The mill ground thousands of bushels of corn, wheat, and barley, but very few of the people who had grain ground could pay for it. So the miller took one eighth of the total bushels ground for payment but only mills run by water could do this because other mills run by steam and gas extracted one sixth because of the higher operating costs.

Weber's mill was unique in the fact that it was the only mill in Northeast Missouri equipped with machinery to extract burrs from barley.

Grinding grain and generating electricity weren't the only

uses of the mill, because it also carded wool into great fluffy piles that gathered in storage areas in the mill.

A sawmill was operated in the immediate proximity of the mill. It provided boards for the growing community of Yarrow, and railroad ties for the Iowa and St. Louis line. Most importantly, it provided props for the mines up river in Novinger, Stahl and also Connelsville.

The mill proved to be the meeting place as well as part of the economic lifeline of the village. People dancing there on the starry nights of autumn weren't an uncommon sight. Also, men gathered there to swap ideas and talk about the latest news. They talked about subjects ranging from the Spanish-American War to the Great Depression.

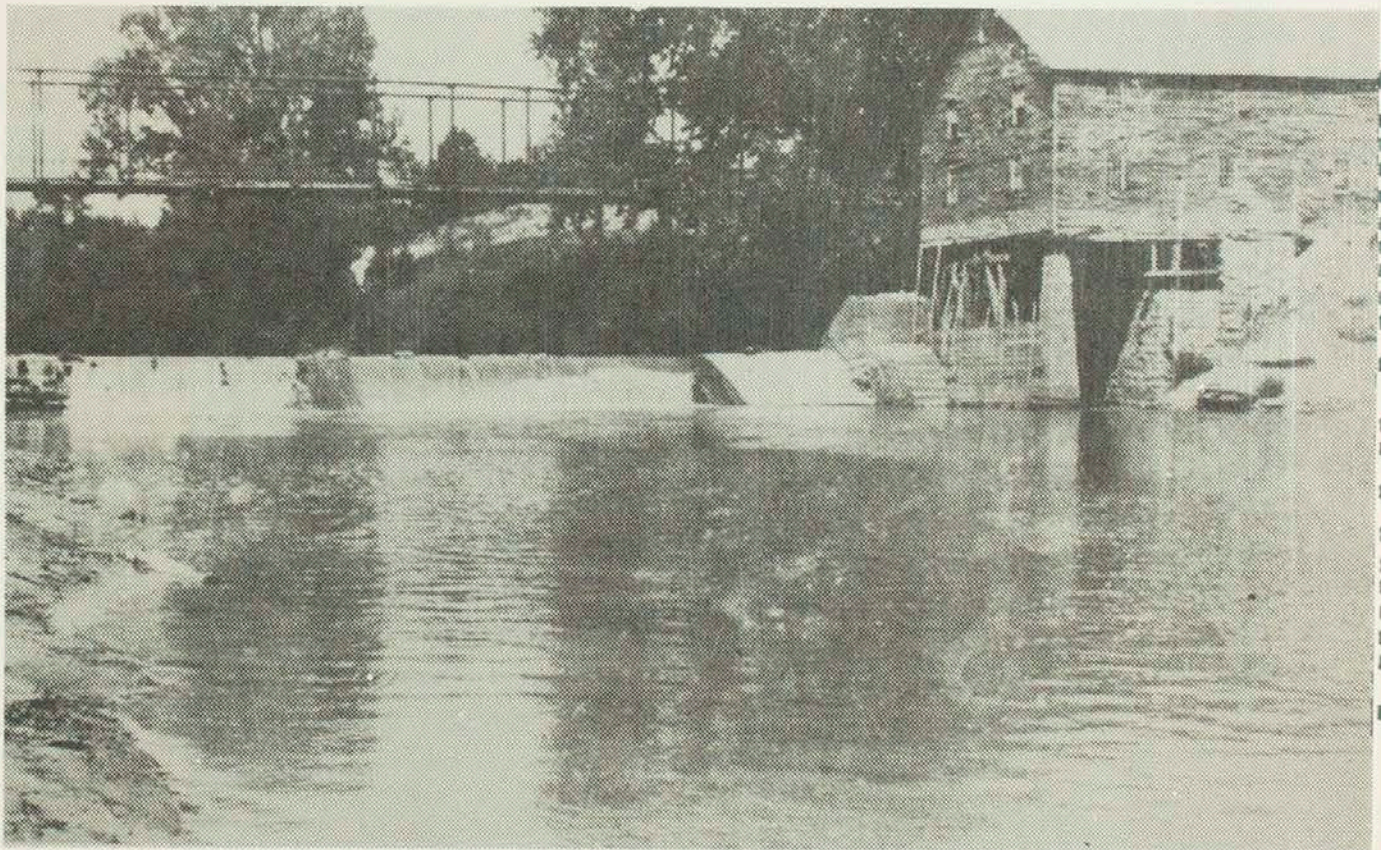
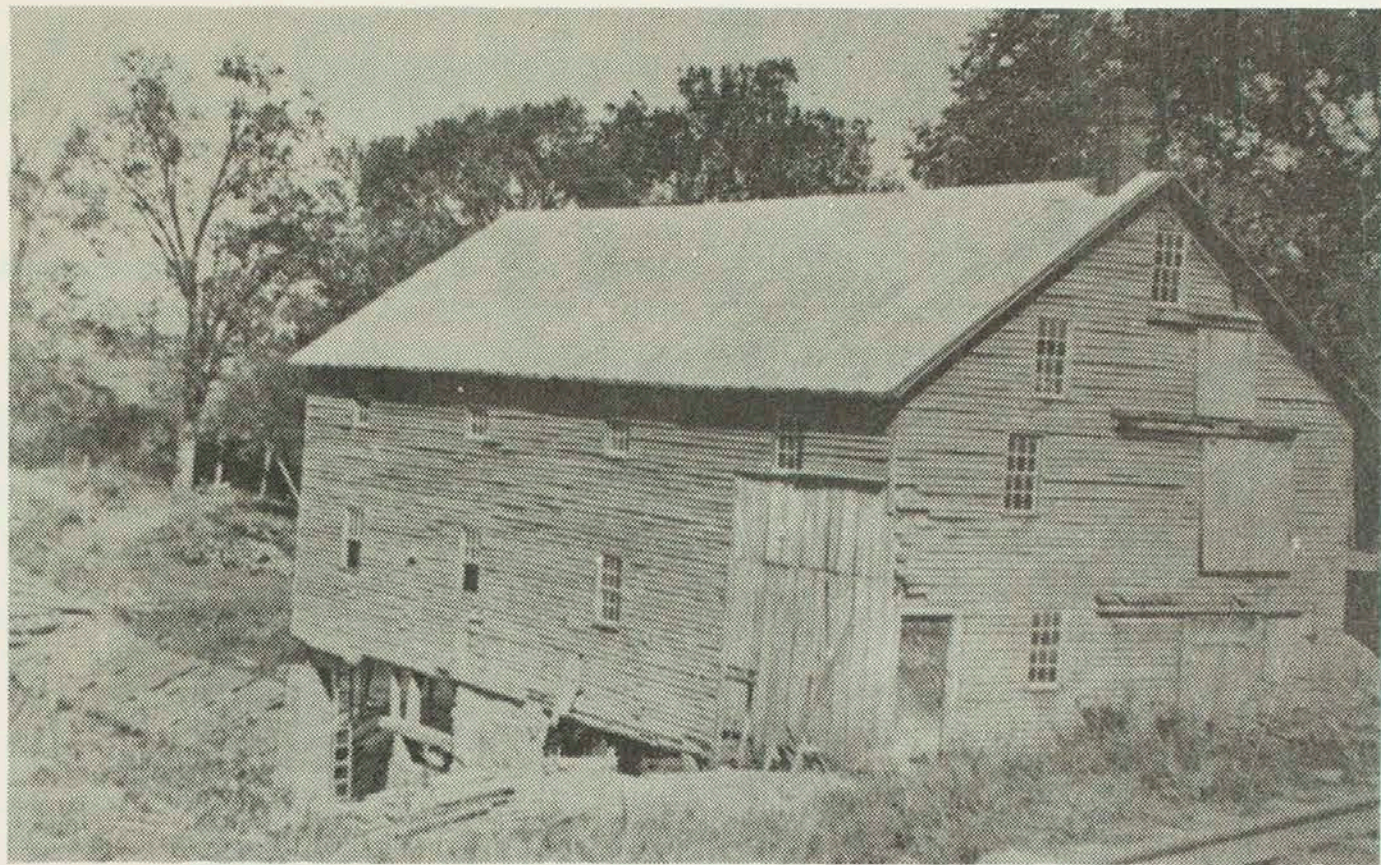
Michael Weber died in May of 1936, leaving the mill to be operated by his children. A mechanical failure caused the mill to be closed permanently in June, 1937, a little more than a year after Michael's death. The morning of March 3, 1941, marked the final end of Weber's mill, for at about 3 a.m., an ice flow on the Chariton weakened the supporting southwest column, allowing the mill to drop half of its structure into the icy waters of the river.

So ended 90 years of history. The remaining part of the mill was left to fall into or be washed away by the Chariton. The equipment had been removed before the mill fell in, and now some of the equipment still remains in private collections. All that remains of the mill today is a cleared spot and a few cement pieces of the foundation and the dam. The dam was removed in 1951 when the Army Corps of Engineers straightened the river.

For many people the memory of the mill will be remembered in a fond way. Although the mill is gone forever the towns of Yarrow, Novinger, Stahl, and Connelsville will never forget the good deeds it did for them and other people of the area.

Top photo: Front view of Weber's Mill which sat on the west side of Iowa and St. Louis railroad tracks. Center photo: This photo shows the mill, dam and the bridge as it looked in 1920. Bottom photo: This photo was taken the day after the mill fell into the river, March 3, 1941.

**By Rich Anderson
Gary England**



The Chariton Liberty Tree

By Mark McIntyre and Al Lewis



The Liberty Tree located on Clifford Scriven's farm is more than 200 years old. This picture, taken more than 50 feet away, shows the immense size of the tree.

It is difficult for most people to realize just how important trees have been to the development of our country. Wood was our first fuel source. Crude cabins constructed of logs supplied many a settler with shelter from the elements. Cut wood has been used for everything from railroad ties to framing for modern homes. Wood pulp is an important part of everyday life as it provides such necessities as paper and cardboard. One tree in Boston, Massachusetts, is even a national monument.

This is the historic Liberty Tree; a symbol of the brave resistance to the English Tyranny. This inspired the planners of our 1976 Bicentennial Celebration to include trees as part of our nation's heritage. The planners then drafted a plan that would stress the importance of every tree; but would also give special recognition to trees that were 200 years old. They then urged each state to look for trees that would meet the age requirements. Such trees would then be designated with the official title of "Liberty Tree" of the Bicentennial Celebration.

Each state then asked its counties to search for trees that might meet the age requirement. Any such tree would then be tested for its age by a representative of the State Forester's Office. This task was simplified by the fact that all tree species don't live past 200 years. Any tree that could live beyond 200 years would then have its diameter measured. Each type of tree has an average growth rate. The tester then multiplied the diameter by the growth rate. If the result was greater than or equal to the average accepted value, the tree was considered to be 200 years old.

Adair County was fortunate enough to find two such trees; one located in Kirksville and the other near Novinger. The tree that we are concerned with is located near Novinger on the farm of Clifford Scrivens; just up the hill from the east bank of the Chariton River.

Mr. Scrivens' tree is a Chinkapin Oak. It is around 100 feet high and has a circumference of about 60 inches. Clifford's tree was 200 years of age in 1976 and is 206 years old now. He received a certificate that honored his tree's historic age, which is considered to be one of the oldest in our state.

The fervor of our Bicentennial Celebration and the history of our great nation has been recorded in history books, for all to study and to learn. But history has a way of overlooking the little things that make the major events possible. So next time you are driving through the country, stop and admire the trees along the way. Remember how important the common tree has been to our daily lives and its part in our history.

Follow The Green Line

By Mindy Upton

FOLLOW THE GREEN LINE . . . This may be the slogan for his business, but it's also a principle he has followed throughout his life; because for 50 years Ruby has been engaged in the agricultural business.

In his early years, Ruby held two jobs. He taught in country schools in both Sullivan and Adair counties and also worked for Stamper's Feed Company. Ruby taught school for three years, first at the Rye Creek School near Novinger and then at the Chapel North School north of Green City. Ruby quit teaching because \$80 a month wasn't enough to get married on. "I liked teaching, it was a lot of fun," said Ruby.

In 1931, while working at Stamper's, Ruby was led to believe that he would become the manager of the unit in this area after the man who had been running it retired. When the time came, Stamper's thought Ruby might be a little young for so much responsibility and, instead, hired a man who had had more experience in the field. "I resented it, so I quit," Ruby said.

On July 5, 1931, Ruby opened the Ruby Green Produce Store; which was located on North Elson Street in the building which is currently *Too Tall's Old Place*. Even though Ruby opened his produce store in the middle of the depression, business was good. "There was a lot of business during the depression," Ruby said. "We were in the egg, poultry, and feed business at that time, and most every farmer had a flock of chickens and usually the proceeds from the chickens bought his groceries."

During the years of the Great Depression, Ruby's business increased every year. This was because the store didn't believe that its customers would have a lot to spend, so the store retained only a modest inventory of basic goods. Ruby said, "You understand that when you start from nothing, everything is an increase." Therefore, net profits didn't increase during this time, but there was gross volume increase in business.

The Produce Store sold a variety of goods ranging from poultry and eggs to furs and hides. The store purchased its produce from farmers. When people butchered their own beef, the Produce Store bought the beef hides. Ruby also purchased a variety of furs including skunk, opossum, raccoon, muskrat, and mink. Most of the furs came from farm youngsters who hunted and trapped. During that time furs ranged in price from 50 cents for an opossum hide to \$3 for mink. Ruby also purchased wool from farmers within Adair County.

The Produce Store remained in operation until Ruby sold out in 1964 and focused strictly on the seed business. When asked why he went out of the produce business and opened the Ruby Green Seed House, Inc. Ruby replied, "I've wondered about that many times and it may seem funny to you, but I think it was the opportunity to sell out and finally have enough money to buy a suit of clothes without worrying about having money for my business."

During his 50 years of business, Ruby has had good years but he's also had bad years. The worst years for Ruby were 1932 and 1937. The Produce Store failed financially both years for several reasons. In 1932 they shipped poultry to New York and lost money in the process. In 1937 they bought flour, hoping the price would go up, but it went down instead.

Weather and market conditions determined the best years

from the standpoint of profit. The length of the seeding season also has a great deal to do with the amount of profit brought in. Ruby said that his best year for profits was in 1974.

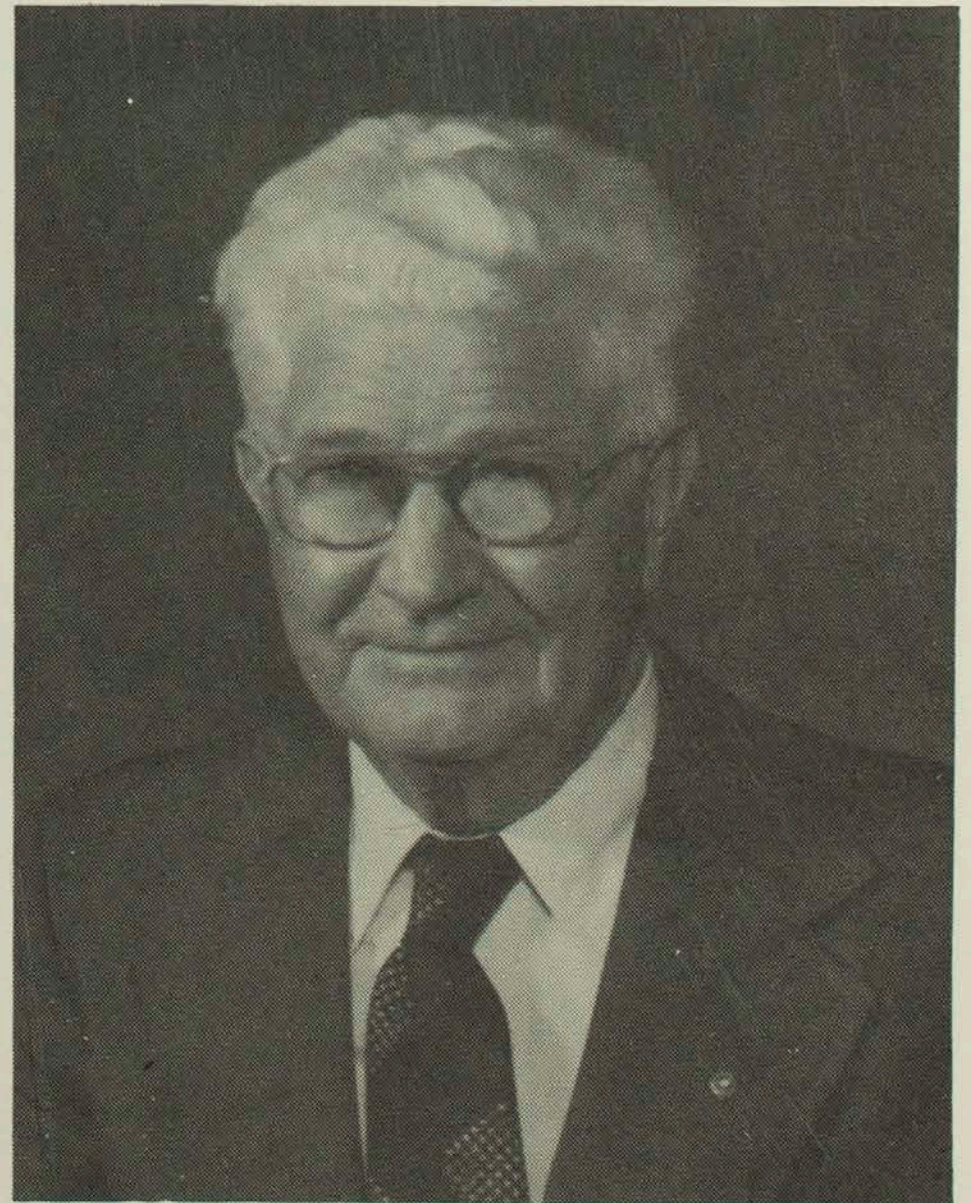
Ruby has had two grain elevators in Kirksville since the beginning of the Seed House. The first one is the elevator still in use today, located on the north side of Elson Street near First Street. The second is where the M.F.A. is now.

Soybeans are Ruby's biggest single sale. The first car of soybeans was shipped out in 1939 and by 1945 he had shipped out 175 cars. Most of Ruby's business is conducted within a 100-mile radius of Kirksville. "That is the economical area for us to work," Ruby said. "The bulk of our business is within this area."

"We change as conditions change and requirements change," said Ruby. The biggest change in the past 50 years was the development of hybrid seed corn. It took the experimenting out of the farmers' hands and put it into the hands of big companies that were able to do the research and blend the breeds of corn in a way that produces good seed corn.

Ruby is now making a substantial addition to the cleaning capacity of the seed house. These improvements will double the capacity for cleaning seed. "The seed business will change, but it will still be a solid business," Ruby said. "We'll progress with the changes."

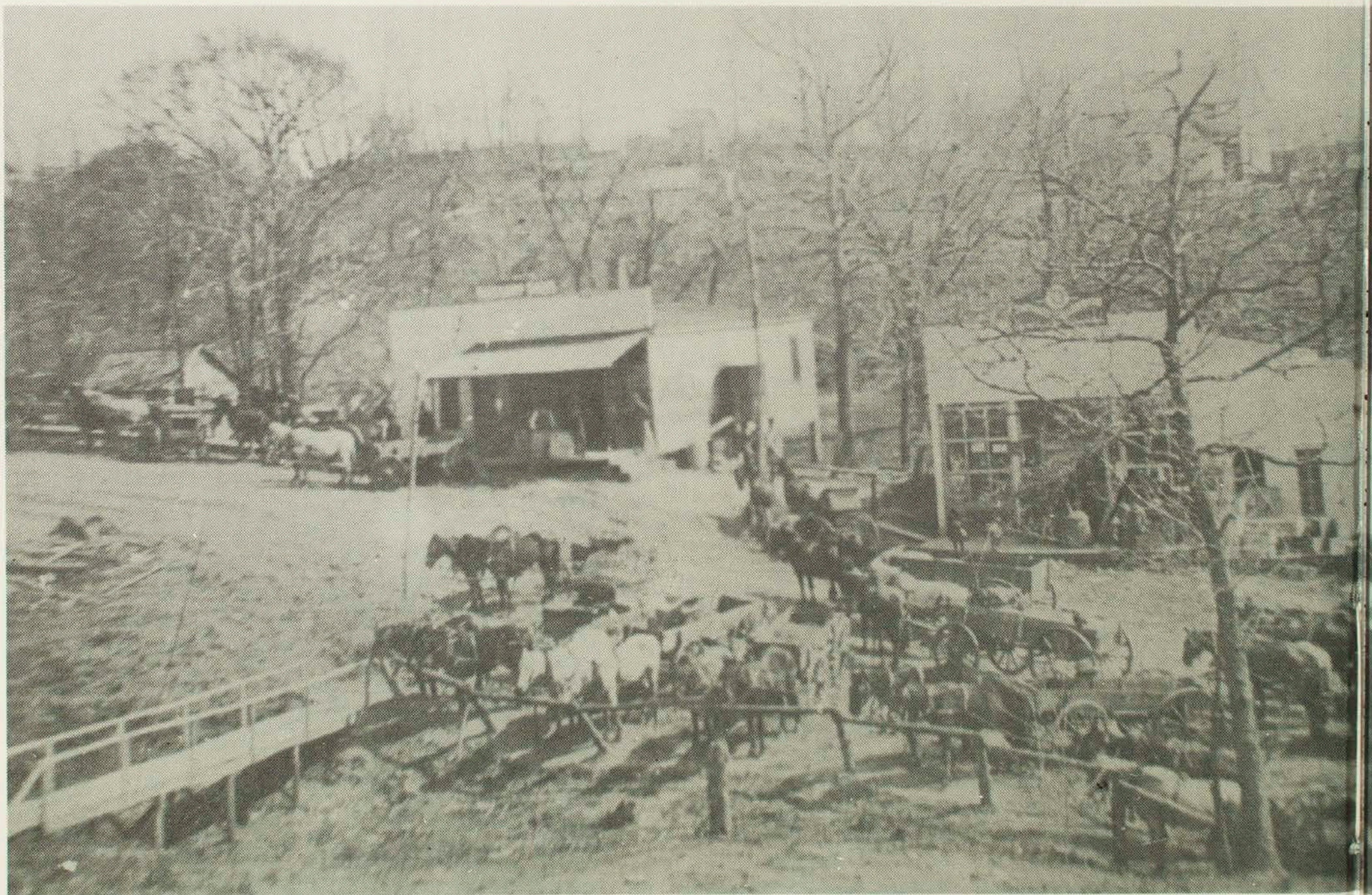
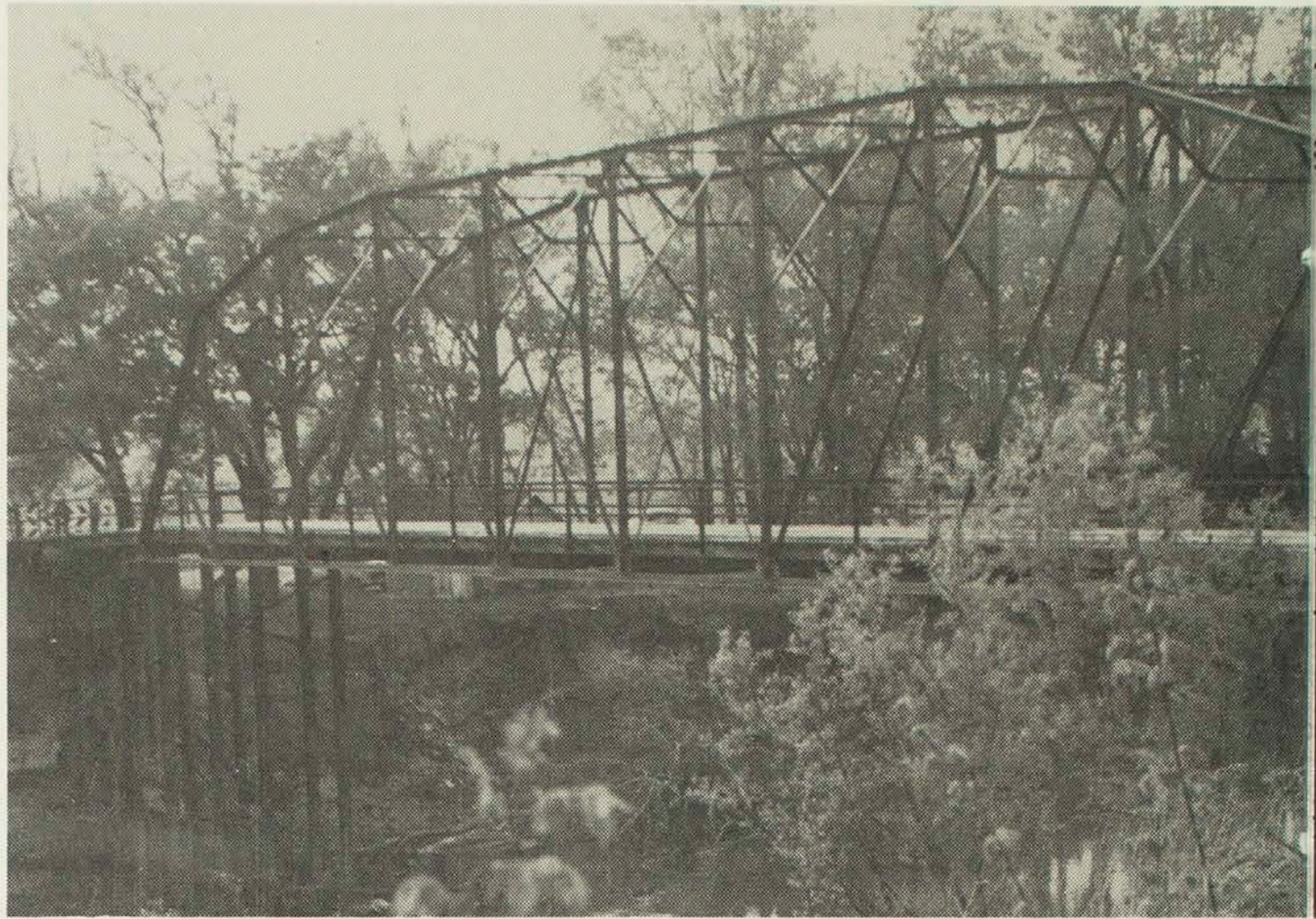
Photo below: Ruby Green, who has been in the agricultural business for over 50 years.

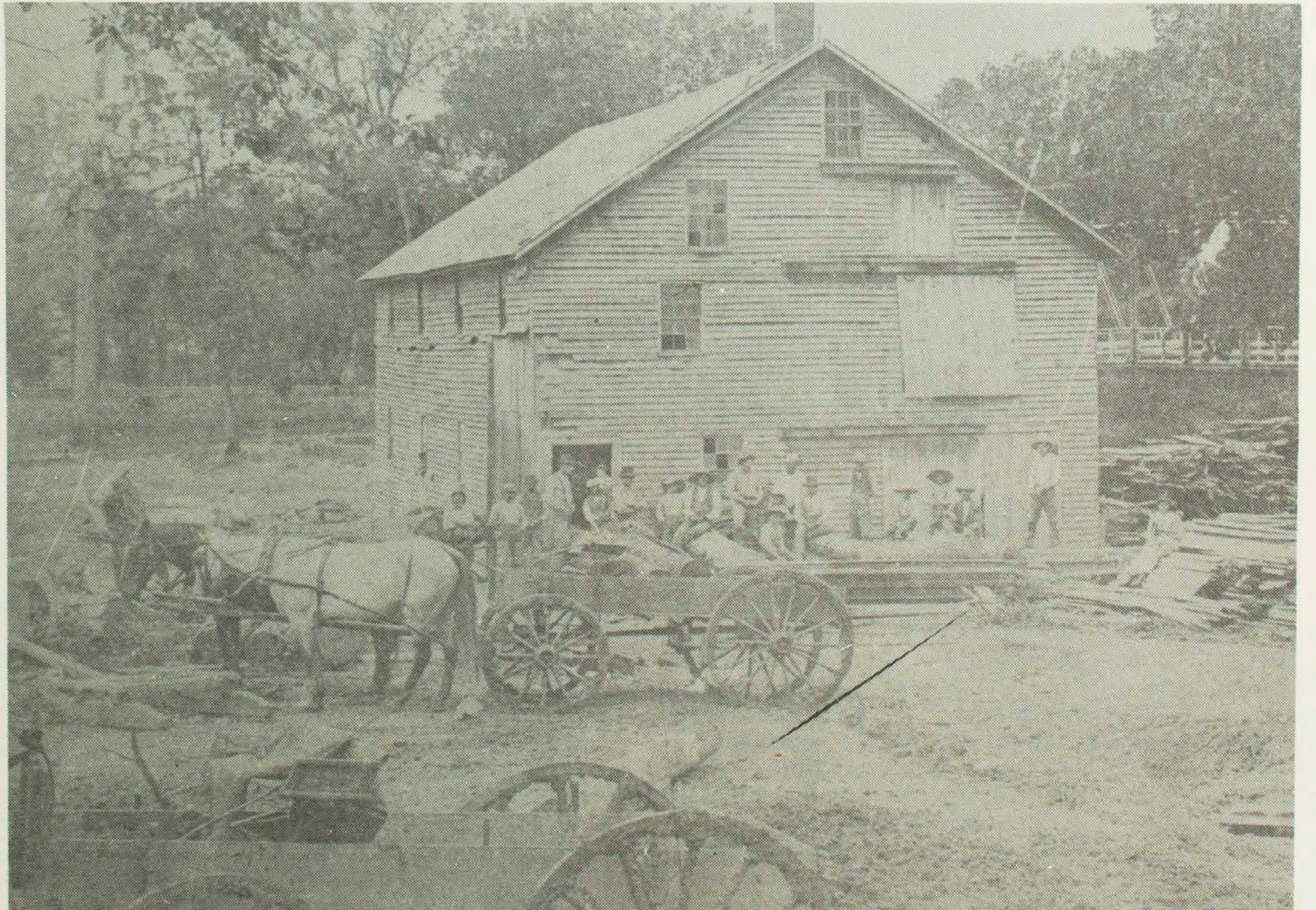
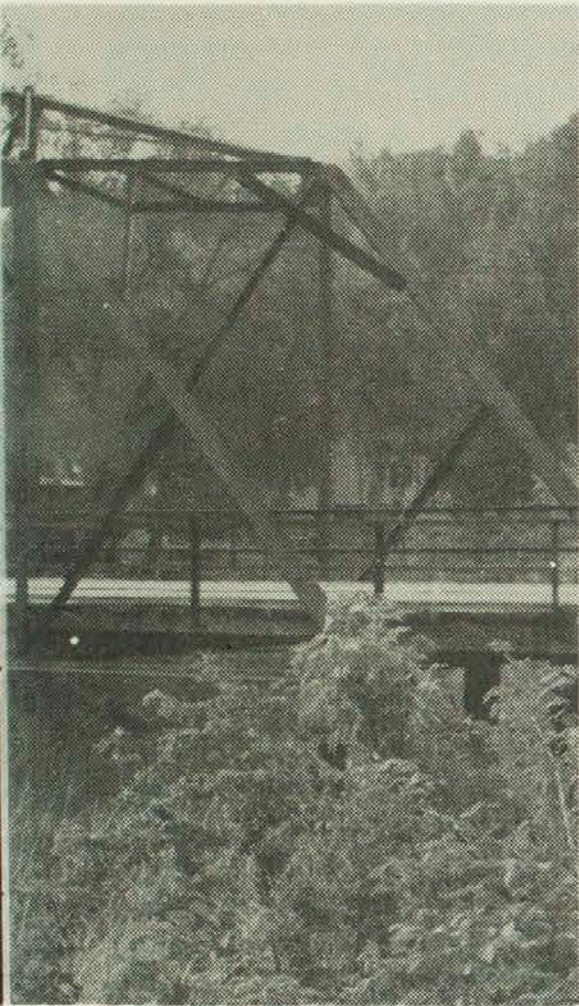


Scenes from the Past

By Al Lewis and Mark McIntyre

Pictured in the top left photo is the present day bridge over the Chariton River at Yarrow, Missouri. This photo was taken in 1960 just after completion. The bridge was built on the same location as the old bridge. The old bridge fell in when a heavily loaded truck attempted to cross it. The old log cabin in the top right photo was located on a hill east of Yarrow, Missouri. It was assumed the cabin was built prior to 1850. Below left: A view of Yarrow, Missouri looking south. This photo was taken in the 1890's before the railroad was built. Below right: The Weber Mill, at Yarrow, Missouri, about 1895. Eventually the Iowa & St. Louis Railway would build their main line near the front of the mill.





The Passing of an Era

Who says cowboys are only found in Texas and roaming the prairie? Cowboys are found right here in our own area. Estille Edward Thomas, better known to his friends as Cowboy Thomas, or Tommy, has drawn world attention as a cowboy. He was the youngest of three children born to Joseph Benjamin and Lusetta Barnett Thomas on April 6, 1886 near Lancaster, on the Missouri-Iowa state line. His mother died when he was less than four years old. Later, his father married Georgia Folly Coe, who was from the Novelty area.

Because Tommy lived near Lancaster, he, along with the whole town, was aware of William P. Hall's wintering headquarters in Lancaster. Hall provided him with his first job; it was Tommy's duty to carry feed and water to the wintering animals. At this early age, Tommy developed his life long love for horses, and it was even said Tommy thought like a horse.

In the year 1900, Lou Hall took Tommy and Tommy's 16 year old brother, Orville, to New York with a herd of horses. Part of these horses were on order for London, while the rest were to go to Capetown, South Africa, to be used in the Boer War. After the delivery to Capetown, Hall returned with wild African animals which were sold to several famous circuses. Orville was on his way to go with the horses to London, and it was Lou's wish that Tommy accompany Lou to Africa. But Tommy turned him down saying, "That was too much water to travel over. I don't like water. Never learned to swim and I didn't like the thought of being in the middle of the ocean with a lot of lions and tigers. It just didn't appeal to me."

It was at this age Tommy showed signs that he was destined to be a man of the outdoors. In the early 1900's Orville went to work on the railroad, and soon learned to be a telegraph operator. He was stationed in Maxwell, Nebraska. Tommy thought he, too, would like to learn the trade. The pay was good, fifty dollars a month, but Tommy didn't like being shut up in a little room all day.

Soon after this, Tommy took a job at a nearby cattle ranch. Being the youngest and least experienced hand, he acquired the name of "kid operator." But no sooner had he received this unfitting name than he proved to the crew that he meant business. On the second morning of his new job, the cocky-looking boy was led into the corral. The boss challenged Tommy to prove any ability he might have at breaking horses. "I knew right then, the boss was trying to dump me. All were standing around to see me get bucked off. While a couple of the crew held the reins and the horse steady, I proceeded to saddle up. When I finished I took the cheek strap in my left hand, and pulled his head to me as I mounted, and got my feet planted in the stirrups. He made a couple of straight leaps, and since he wasn't very big, I thought I'd make it look good, so I took off my hand and started fanning him all over. I kept spurring and fanning him till he raised his head and stood still. I then rode over to where the boys were standing and dismounted. I kicked the horse in the belly and said, 'damned knot head couldn't buck off a wet saddle blanket.' From then on, they never tried to trick me, and stopped calling me 'kid'."

Tommy returned to Missouri a few years later, married

Altha Wardlow and was blessed with two boys and four girls. He set up residence with his family near Lancaster and farmed; but wasn't content at this, so in 1927, Tommy moved his family to Ardmore, South Dakota. He sent his two sons, Charles and Dick, by immigrant car, and the rest of the family came in a Model-T Ford. Their new farm was located near the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Tommy spent one year farming and the rest of his time rounding up wild horses and selling them to Eastern dealers.

Tommy said that one day when he was in town, the talk was of an upcoming horse race. It was a short race from the west side of the reservation to the city limits of Olrich, about 15 miles. "I think the purse was something like \$500. I had a horse that I was sure could win hands down. The horse's name was Rex McDonald, which was half thoroughbred and half Percheron. Immediately the racers started training. But hell, old Rex had plenty of training; sometimes forty miles a day." Tommy used Rex to round up the wild mustangs. Since Tommy was so sure of Rex he decided to place bets like everyone else. He had only one problem; he had no money to bet. He decided to go to the bank for a loan. When the banker heard his purpose for borrowing the money he said it was against the bank's policy to loan money for gambling. "Now I knew that was a lot of nonsense because they loaned money to farmers all the time and farming in South Dakota was the biggest damn gamble anyone could take." Finally the banker agreed to loan Tommy \$300 from his own personal account, with 10 percent interest, of course. The next day Rex had the day off to rest for the following day's race. The day of the race Charles was selected to ride Rex, since he was lightweight, and could still maneuver a horse well. Tommy gave Charles some last minute pointers, and then the race was on. Now, all

Photo below shows Tommy with a stallion. This prize horse, owned by Leonard Louis Lancaster, was ridden by Tommy during parades.



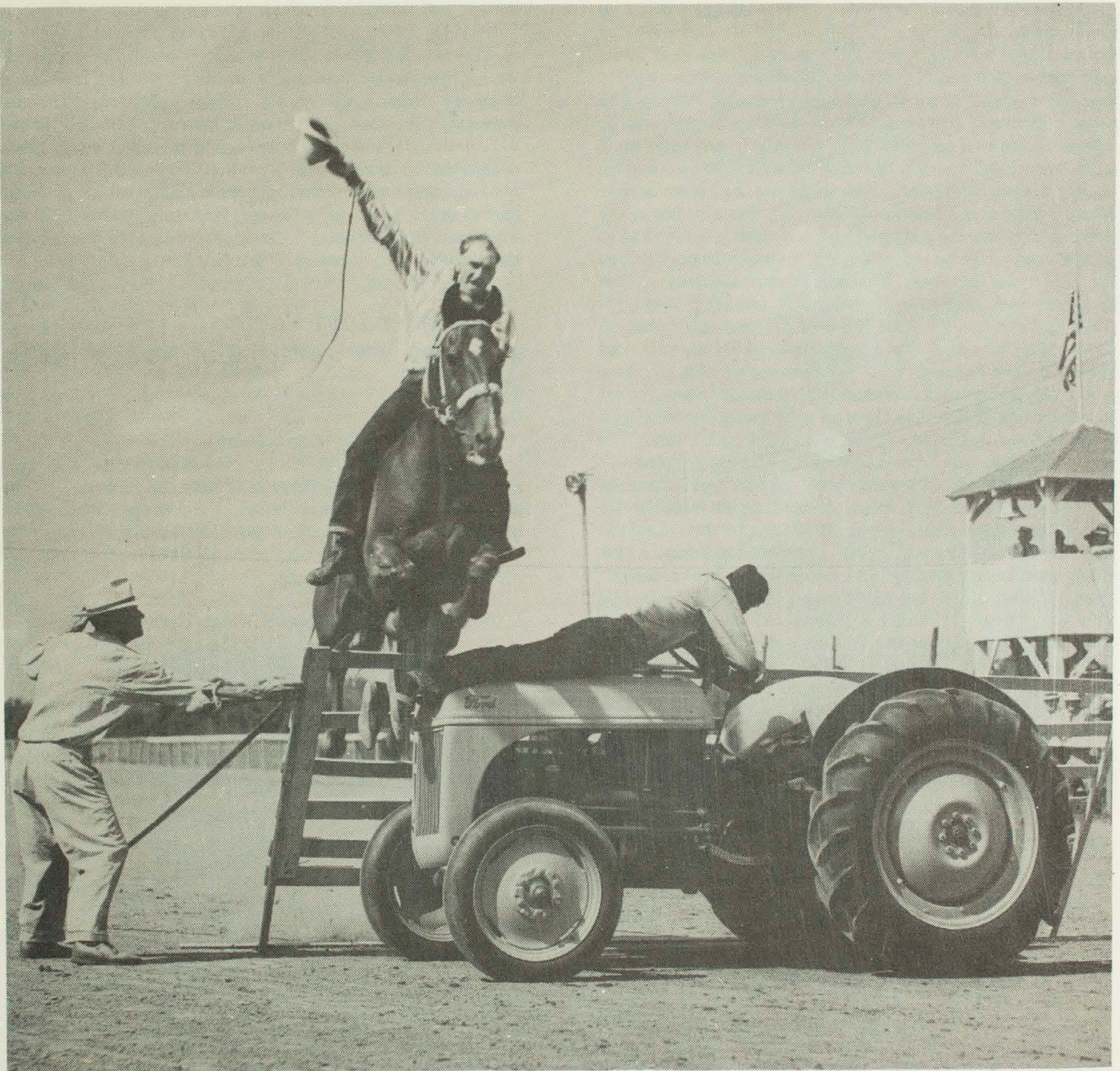


Photo above: Tommy displays his horsemanship.

Tommy could do was wait and see if Rex would come through. "We waited for what seemed like forever," Tommy said. "Dick stood with me, and my wife sat on the running board on the Model-T. Finally, a man pulled up in a car and said the horses were about six miles away. The tension began to rise, and the crowd started to shift toward the finish line. A minute or so later a cloud of dust was spotted coming over the hill, and it was Rex. It was five minutes before another horse was even seen, so Charles slowed Rex down to a slow walk when he crossed the finish line. The first thing Charles said was, "I lost my hat back there somewhere." But Tommy said he would buy him another hat. Ironically, on the way home that night they found Charles' hat. Now he had two hats: an old one and a new one. The prize money couldn't have come at a better time. Tommy bought a ranch in Ardmore, Oklahoma for \$3,000 and still had a tidy sum left.

Now Tommy and his family set up residence, farming and

selling wild horses. Tommy commented, "This land was never really made for farming, just grazing horses." But one day George V. Adams, or Vic as he was called, met Tommy and was in need of wild horses for a rodeo he was putting together back East. Tommy told Vic they could purchase horses from the Montana Indians cheap and finally an agreement was reached. For three to four dollars a head, Vic purchased 165 horses. Now they had the horses, so the only thing left to do was drive them to Iowa. Early one morning George, his wife Vivian, Tommy, and his two boys started out on the "would-be" adventurous trail drive. Vivian drove the buggy, the boys rode with the herd, and the men rode up ahead to scout the land. Tommy said, "It seemed the farther we went the more it rained. And after the rain, the mosquitoes got fierce, there were swarms of the damn things."

About mid-summer they came to the Missouri River at Chamberlain, South Dakota and spent the afternoon looking for a suitable place to cross. They found a ferry dock and a man that owned a flat bed ferry. His rates were a dollar a head for any kind of livestock. They tried to get him to give them a discount, since there were so many horses, but he wouldn't knock off one cent. That was nearly half what some of the horses were worth, and they couldn't afford it anyway. So now the only thing left to do was swim the horses across. About a mile and a half down the river was a break in the cliffs, so this was the assigned place to cross. Charles had to paddle a boat since he couldn't swim, Walt and Tommy guided the herd from horseback. The horses were hesitant at first but when they heard the shouting and hollering, they ventured into and finally across the river. Vic had made plans to pay a dollar and have the buggy, the cooking utensils, and guns sent over on the ferry. The conductor and Vic sat alone on the flat boat as they made the trip across the river. Vic sat forlornly, and all this time the man kept trying to strike up a conversation. Finally he said, with a smirk on his face, "Too bad you had to leave the horses behind since you couldn't raise the money." But Vic obliterated the man's smirking face with this comment, "You mean all my horses? Hell, they're already over there. The rest of the outfit and the entire 165 head are waiting for me about a mile downstream. I just didn't want to risk getting the guns wet so I spent a dollar." Then Vic took off his hat and showed him all his teeth. Vic later told Tommy, "I could have knocked his eye balls out with a stick." After passing and surviving this barrier, the trip into Iowa was fairly easy going. When they arrived in Iowa, these horses became the backbone of the first traveling rodeo in the United States, known as the George V. Adams Traveling Rodeo. Tommy worked in this rodeo and it was in this rodeo he acquired his famous trait of riding Roman style. This feat required standing up, balancing yourself on two

horses, and riding them around the arena.

In 1948 Tommy moved back to the area and took up residence on a ranch which was known as Cowboy Corner. It was located between Memphis and Baring at the junction of Highway 15 and Route W, which leads to Rutledge. His purpose may have been to "retire," but retire isn't really the word for it. Once back in the area, Tommy acquired the name of Cowboy Thomas. His neighbors called him this as a result of his using horses to help them move and corral cattle. In his earlier years in the rodeo Cowboy was known as "Wild Horse Thomas." While in his retirement years Tommy worked constantly with horses and raising cattle.

Vic later told Tommy, "I could have knocked his eye balls out with a stick."

A parade or rodeo didn't seem as entertaining without Tommy leading the way. He now began traveling to the surrounding towns for this purpose. It has been said that the old seasoned cowboy could make the young greenhorn cowboys blush in their tracks. But Tommy wasn't out for praise or position. Rather, he liked to take pride in his story-telling of the old days when he was young.

On April 6, 1981, for Tommy's 95th birthday, he was once again seated on one of his horses. The amazing sentiment was that he was seated in one of his earlier bucking saddles, which had been restored in every detail. But the cowboy's days were numbered. This old cowboy had led the kind of colorful life millions only dream of, or see in western movies. But on October 25, 1981, Estille Edward (Cowboy) Thomas was peacefully taken from this life and on to his reward. The funeral



During his horse drive, Tommy helps to move 165 head of horses across the Missouri River at Chamberlain, South Dakota. These horses were later the backbone of the first traveling rodeo in the United States.

Story by Bobby Poston

arrangement and procession were quite fitting for Tommy. Cowboy's body was delivered to and from the funeral home by a wagon drawn by two sorrel mules. This procession was escorted by many mounted riders, and a multitude of friends and associates of Tommy. Inside the funeral home, a pair of Tommy's old boots made up one of the many potted flower arrangements. His newly restored saddle sat idle at the foot of the casket. Several other western artifacts were present; and all contributed to a western setting.

Cowboy's daughter, Leona Drake, of rural Baring, commented that the death of her father . . . "marked the passing of an era." Truer words were never spoken. For several years until his death, Cowboy lived with Leona. During his life he was living history, but even now, after his death, this same history lives on. Hardly a story that is told among his friends fails to include, ". . . and remember the time Tommy and all of us . . .". With memories that burn this strong, whose memory could die? The seasoned figure of a cowboy, the West carved Tommy into this living legacy.

MEMORIAL
ESTILLE E. "COWBOY" THOMAS
April 6, 1886 - October 22, 1981

PLACE AND TIME OF SERVICES
Norman Funeral Chapel
Lancaster, Missouri
Sunday, October 25, 1981 - 2:00 p.m.

CLERGYMAN
Rev. Roy Starbuck

MUSIC
Don Robb
Bob Welsh
Margie Tippett
Mrs. Julia Mollick, Organist

PALLBEARERS
Paul Welsh
Sam Hurliman
Lowell Saner
Charles Ballew
Jim Shaw
Warren Gardine

HONORARY PALLBEARERS
Arnold Barber
Vic Perry
Burrell Snyder
Vic Adams
Monroe Veatch
Everett Smyser

INTERMENT
I.O.O.F. Cemetery
Lancaster, Missouri



Residents of Lancaster mourn Cowboy Thomas as his funeral procession passes by. Inside the funeral home were articles from his western past, such as a saddle, cowboy boots, and a horse drawn wagon was used to carry his body.

CAROUSEL HORSES

What is the first amusement park ride you rode on? For many of us it was a horse on a carousel. As children, most of us fell in love with these lifeless animals, but as we grew older we lost interest in the merry-go-round and its horses. However, there are still a few people like Harold Baker who care about the carousel horses.

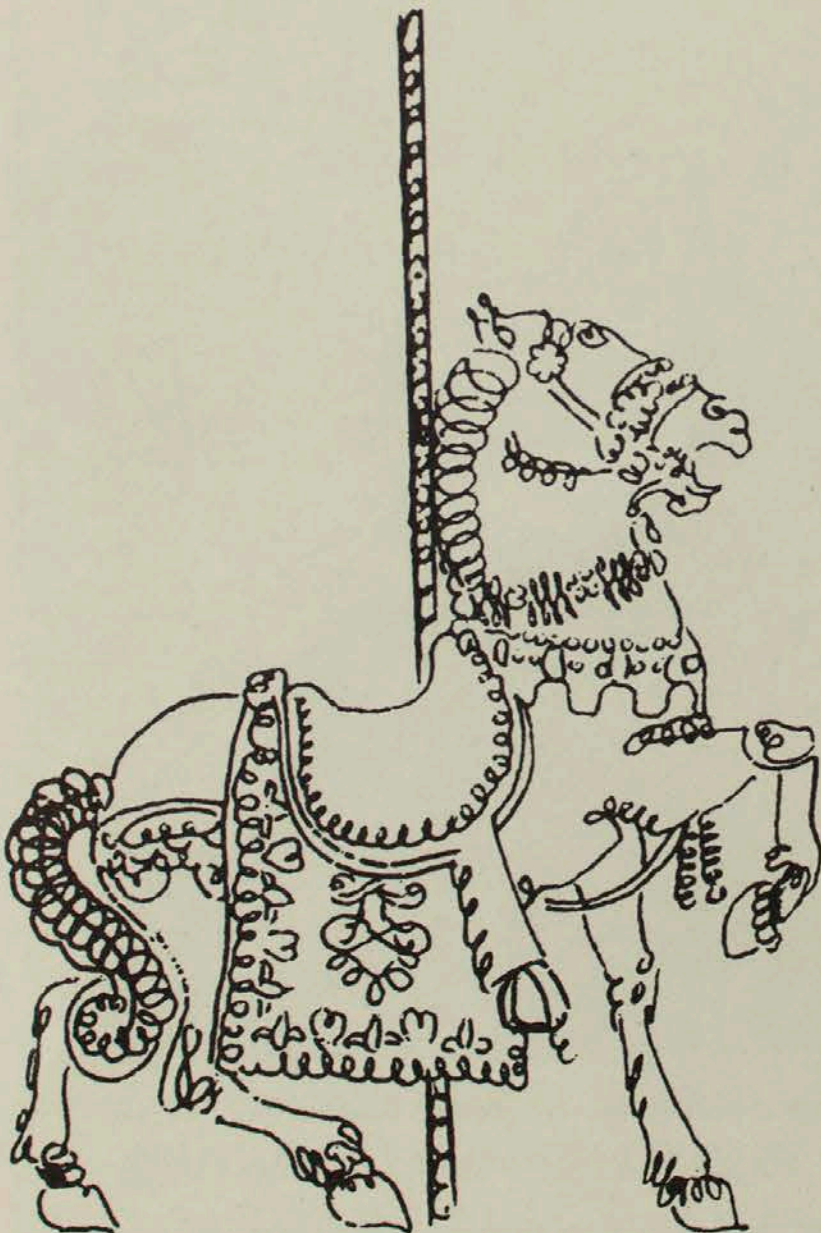
Harold first started collecting carousel horses and many other American antiques about 25 years ago. When he started, there were only 12 collectors in the United States, today there are more than 3,500. Since his collection started it has grown to approximately 35 horses. His oldest horse dates back to 1876 and has never been restored. "I just never had the heart to restore him," Harold said. Most of his horses were carved from 1900 to 1930 when the carousel horse was in its prime. Most horses are of bass and linden wood and were carved by European immigrants.

Have you ever wondered why a carousel horse's head faces to the right? The reason is the American carousel spins counter-clockwise, therefore, the right side is seen more than the left side. The right side also is referred to as the romance side; it has fake jewels on it to make it look more attractive to someone who might want to ride it. You can tell an American horse from an English horse by the way the head is turned (the English carousel spins clockwise).

Because he likes to carve, Harold doesn't collect the newer horses, made of fiberglass. In the early days of carousels all horses were made of wood. From 1927 to 1930 the wooden horses were phased out because they were hard to maintain due to the Great Depression. So the manufacturers of the lifeless animals made iron horses, which weren't successful because they felt cold to riders. A few people were even killed when the horses they were sitting on were struck by lightning. After this, the manufacturers tried putting rubber saddles on these horses. This didn't work either, because of the wear and tear on the rubber material. Today all carousel horses are made of fiberglass because fiberglass is easy to maintain. But Mr. Baker doesn't collect the fiberglass or iron horses.

Harold takes great pride in his restorations. The legs and ears are the parts of the horse that most often need replacing. The legs will break or rot and the ears are easily broken off. Most of the horses he gets are in disrepair; sometimes a leg will have been nailed together because this was cheaper than making a new leg. Almost always the ears are broken off; Harold remedies this by carving a new ear or ears out of bass or linden wood. The ears are especially hard to carve because of their small size. The first thing Harold does to restore these creatures is remove all paint with a propane torch, a putty knife, and a wire brush. Some of the horses have up to 40 coats of paint on them. After the paint is removed, Harold takes the horses apart down to the frame. He replaces broken parts and injects the rotted places with "Penta," a preservative and diesel fuel; this prevents further corrosion. When he has the frame the way he wants it, he puts the body and legs back on. After the glue dries, Harold paints the entire horse. It takes Harold about two weeks to do a restoration, if he works steadily.

Mr. Baker considers each horse to have its own personality and considers the carousel horse to be one of the earliest forms of American folk art. He mentioned he would have liked to have seen what each horse has gone through and where it has been.



By Ken Thomas Mark Wray

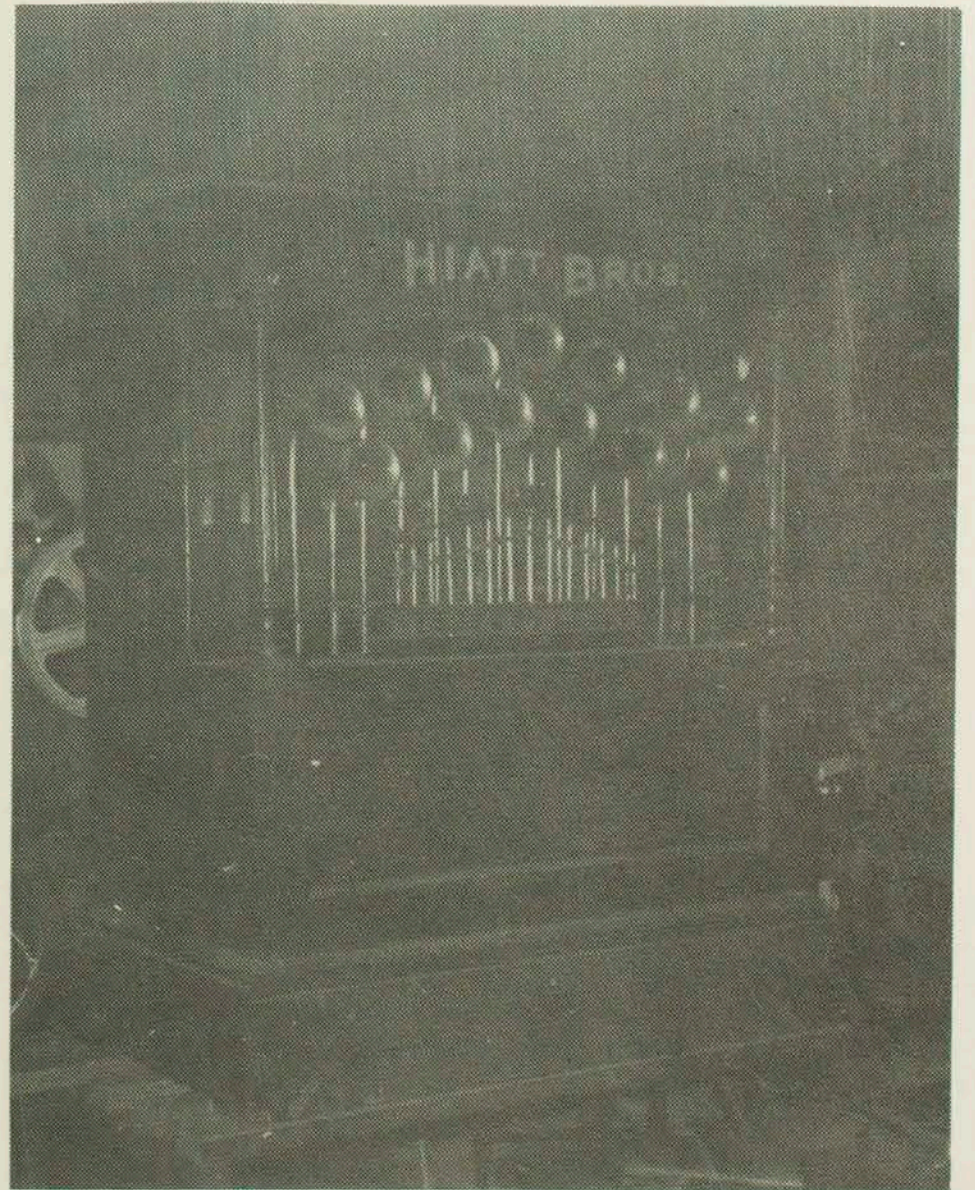
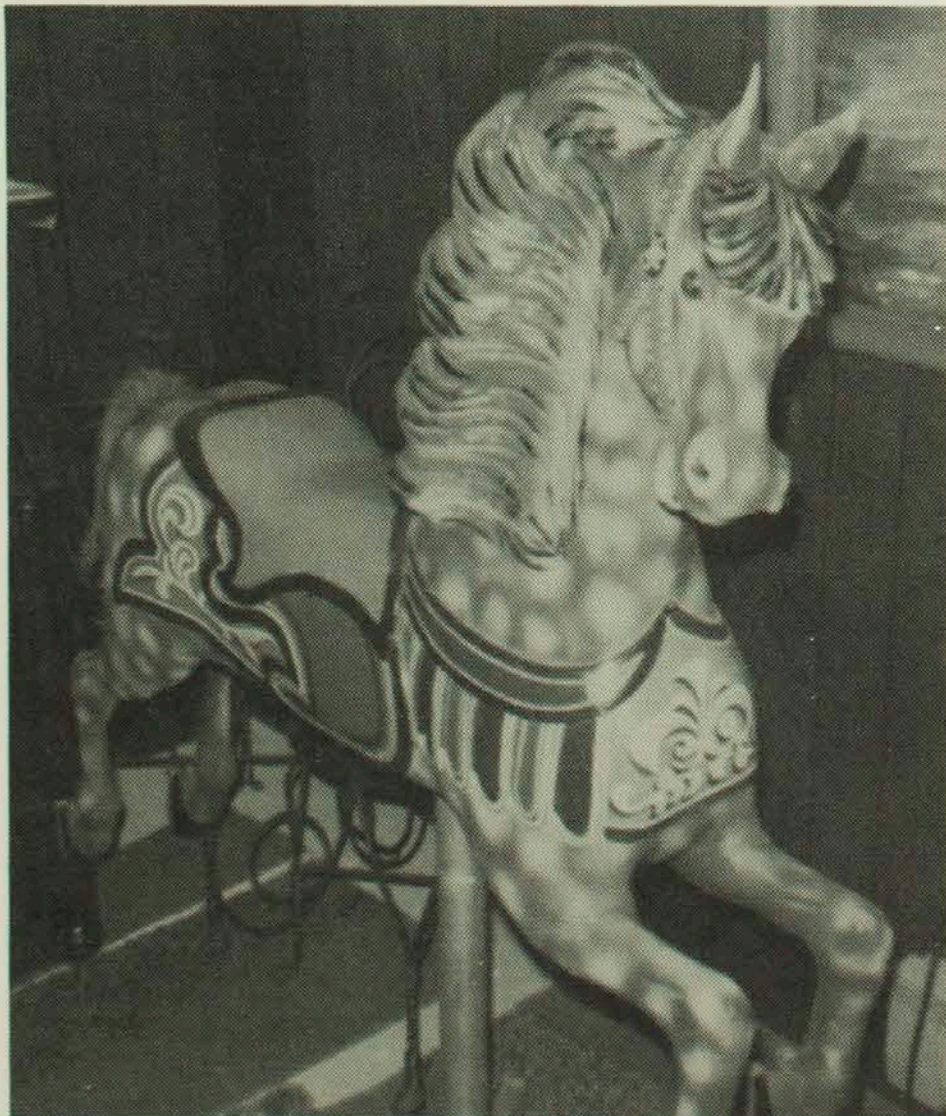
Harold considers his carousel horse collection and restoration a hobby. He says he can't do the same thing too long; he'll work on a horse for a while and then he'll do something else. Harold says, "Restoring the horse is just something I like to do, but I do get tired of it sometimes."

He won't sell a horse, but he may trade to get a horse he doesn't have. Always looking for another horse, he travels all over the country. He particularly likes the Southwest and he especially likes New Orleans, Louisiana. He usually finds about one or two horses a year.

Mr. Baker doesn't limit himself to the collection of just carousel horses; he also collects assorted and various antiques. He lives on a Christmas tree farm and that keeps him busy most of the day. He's used to being busy; he operated Baker Sign Company for 42 years which explains why he can paint so well. He continues to use his painting talents to paint pictures of carousel horses on velvet. He also has in his possession a 1914 Wurlitzer Band Organ which he calls his "Pink Lemonade Machine." It plays eight songs on a roll which lasts about an hour.

Harold sees something unique in everything. He also has the skill to make something that looks like junk to you or me into something of beauty. Harold Baker is truly a remarkable man.

Photo below: A completely restored horse shown from the romance side in Mr. Baker's home.



Top photo: Harold and his restored barber pole in front of the workshop. Bottom photo shows Mr. Baker's Wurlitzer Band Organ.

Who Was J. R.?

By Matt Dodson

Who was J.R.? Where did he come from? What did he do? Where is he now? Although many people, I will venture to say even a majority, will contend that J.R. is a calloused oil tycoon named Ewing on the TV show "Dallas."

This would be true in a fictitious sense; however this story is concerned with the identity of John R. Dodson who was the great-great-great-grandfather of this writer.

John R. Dodson was born December 22, 1792 in Wayne Co., Kentucky. His direct lineage was John Dodson shown by the annals of Virginia as a settler in the Jamestown colony in 1632; Charles Dodson, Sr., born in Richmond Co., Virginia approximately 1649 and died 1705; Thomas Dodson, born 1681 in Richmond County and died 1740; and George Dodson, Sr., born 1702, died in Pittsylvania County, Virginia; and George Dodson, Jr., born 1737, died 1825, who fought with the Pittsylvania County militia during the Revolutionary War and signed the Pittsylvania petition according to Gwathmey's Historical Register of Virginians in the Revolution. Thomas Dodson, born in 1767 in Patrick County, Virginia, and moved in 1791 to Wayne County, Kentucky was J.R.'s father. Thomas Dodson was a Baptist preacher, a miller and a blacksmith.

In 1812 when John R. was 20 and his brother George was 23, they enlisted with the famous Kentucky Riflemen who during the War of 1812 went to New Orleans where, with General Andrew Jackson, they proved to be such a living wall of fire to the British. The war continued into October 1813 when John R. fought in the Battle of the Thames with a company of Wayne County men under Capt. Micah Taul.

In Wayne County, Kentucky, August 25, 1916, J.R. married Sarah Burnett who traced her ancestry through the Mayo family to Pocahontas of Indian fame. Near Monticello, Kentucky their 11 sons and 1 daughter were born. They were James, 1817; Isham B., 1818; Simeon W., 1820; Thomas, 1823; George, 1825; Jemima, 1827; Obadiah, 1828; Marcus M., 1831; John Ezra, 1833; Job, 1836; Francis M., 1838; and Socrates R., 1840. Job Dodson was the great-great grandfather of the writer.

Now it is not known for sure why J.R. moved his family to Missouri in 1841. But it was not because of Horace Greeley's advice to "Go West, Young Man" as this advice wouldn't be given for many years. Several of J.R.'s sons saw service during that war, some in the Union Army and some in the Rebel Army.

We can assume that since it was the custom in those days, J.R. may have received a land grant as a stipend for military service rendered. At any rate it is listed as several hundred acres with Adair County Abstract Co. and it was located south of Highway 11, west to and including some of Sugar Creek State Park and bordering Kirksville on the southwest corner. This included the farm house now occupied by Dr. and Mrs. J. S. Denslow's Thousand Hills Farm.

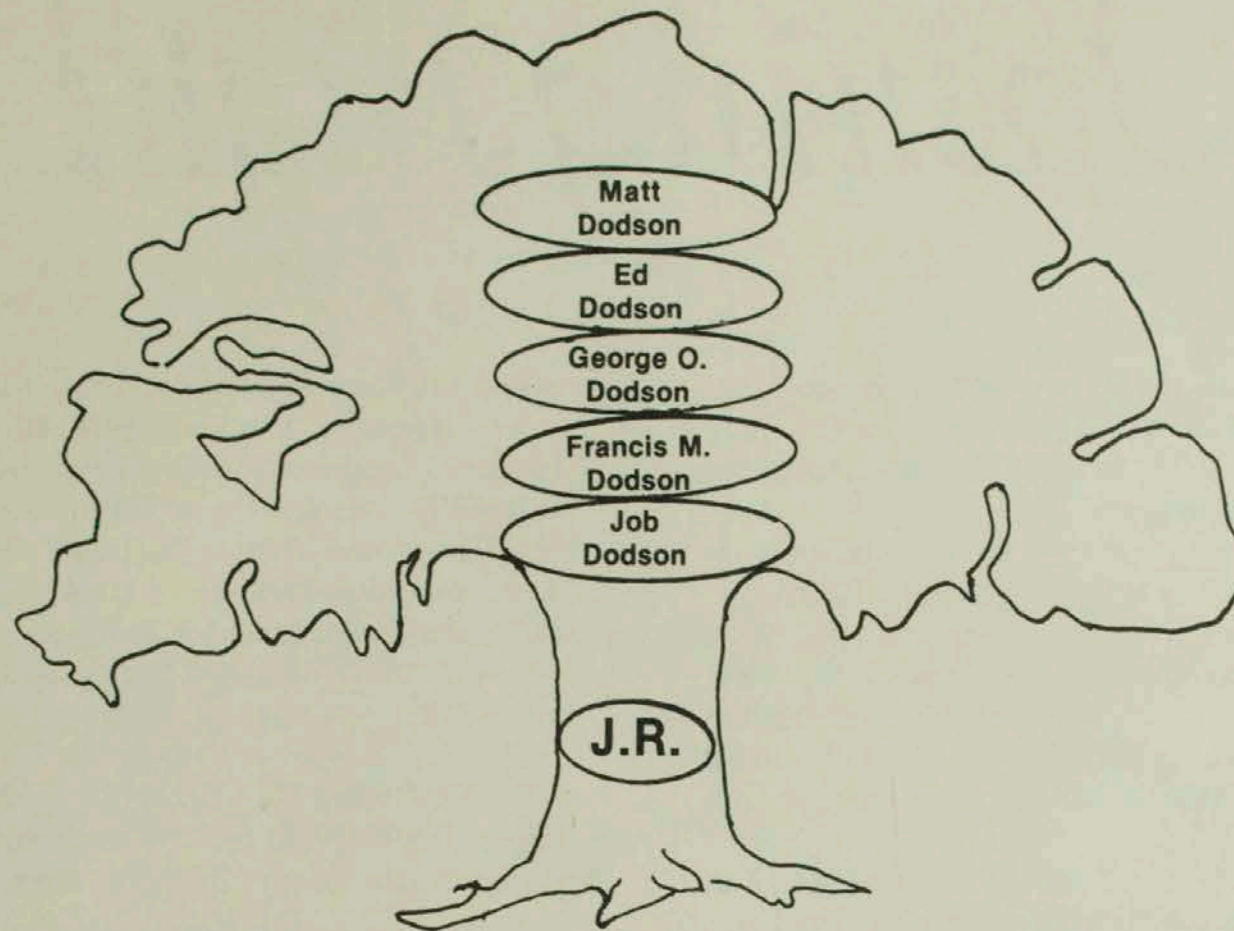
John R.'s father, Thomas, as we mentioned, was a preacher,

a miller and a blacksmith; probably J.R. inherited some of that knowledge. One could imagine he said some prayers on the trip and especially when getting his wife and children across the Mississippi. Some blacksmithing was no doubt required to keep them wagons rollin'. It is not known at least by this writer but, to raise that number of children to adulthood in those days when the mortality rate was so high among infants, J.R. and his wife both must have known "a heap about doctorin', nursin', shootin', and trappin' varmits" for food and clothing. They probably even knew something about farming. Several shoe lasts with a sign saying "Dodson the Cobbler" were discovered in an attic of the Denslow house.

At this point, it needs to be mentioned that most of J.R.'s sons played some role in the history of Adair, Sullivan, and Putnam counties. P.M. Dodson, born September 9, 1852, son of Simeon W. and Rosana (Stukey) Dodson, and grandson of J.R., was born on a farm five miles south of Kirksville and farmed until 1898 when he sold his farm and moved to Kirksville. There he was in the livery business for three years before he went into real estate. In 1911, when the Violette history was published, he was still in that business. His office was over the McKeehan Drug Store. He was a democrat and a member of the Modern Woodmen of America.

Photograph below: A portrait of Francis Marion Dodson at the age of 26, with his sister Mary, age 19. The picture was taken in 1892.





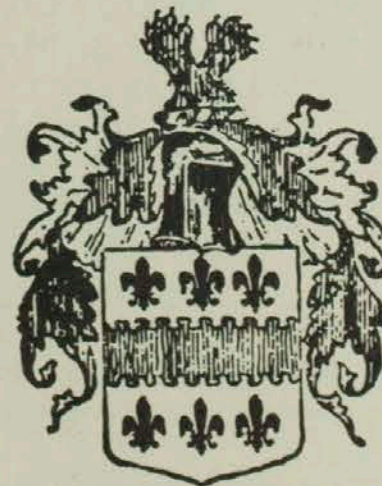
DODSON

Eli B. Dodson, son of James and Matilda (Kanatsa) Dodson and grandson of J.R., was born November 6, 1858, on the old Dodson homestead one mile southwest of Kirksville. The farm owned by Eli consisted of 373 acres and joined the southwest corner of the corporation of Kirksville.

On May 11, 1890 he was married to Grace Lowther to whom two children were born: Roy B. born March 6, 1892, and Kenneth T. born June 30, 1899. This union produced one of the more colorful characters in the personage of Roy B. "Cap" Dodson who in 1924 started the first airport in the county just north of Kirksville and who continued to teach and fly for nearly 40 years. Roy held a membership in the Orville and Wilbur Wright Flying Club and was an instructor for pilots during World War II. Dr. Ed Bestman managed the airport from 1930 to 1933. Roy's father Eli was born in the home where Dr. and Mrs. J. S. Denslow now reside. That home was purchased by Mrs. Denslow's parents, the Laughlins, from the Dodson's.

Isham B. (Isom) Dodson was born in Wayne County, Kentucky, December 7, 1818, and died in Kirksville in 1879. He came to Kirksville in 1841 and soon rose to prominence. He was sheriff from 1847-1851 and was state senator at the time of the passing of the Drake constitution. He was a major in the 18th Missouri Cavalry and was married to Nancy Murphy. They had two children.

We have given an account of a son of J.R., Isham B. Dodson and a great grandson Roy B. Dodson who are involved in J.R.'s life. Many of the sons and grandsons moved on to other counties and states. Obadiah B. Dodson immigrated to Texas in 1852. John Ezra Dodson went to Texas also and Marcus Dodson moved to Colorado. It is not known whether either Obadiah or John Ezra founded Dodson, Texas, but there is that possibility. Another of J.R.'s sons we will mention is Job



The Dodson Coat-of-Arms denotes an Agrarian background. It is of English descent and the fleur-de-lis indicates a French origin.

Dodson since he is direct lineage of the writer. Job Dodson moved to Sullivan County and had two sons and a daughter, John, Francis Marion, and Mary. Job Dodson was a first lieutenant in the 11th Missouri Cavalry and farmed in Putnam County until 1895. He is buried in the Green Castle cemetery.

J.R.'s descendents have made up nearly every occupation in a community. We know doctors and lawyers but no Indian chiefs. There was a captain in the U.S. Air Force, a scientist at Alamogordo, New Mexico, and a neuro-surgeon in Florida. We don't know any butchers, bakers, or candlestick makers but surely there were some. There have been barbers, undertakers, lots of teachers, a postmaster, an employee with the U.S. Treasury Department, a mock-up engineer at McDonald-Douglas, and a printer.

Where is J.R. now? Most of the Dodsons of the past have been buried in the Highland Park and Forest-Llewellyn cemeteries. J.R.'s grave we have not seen: it is in a family cemetery, "The Dodson-McFerren" in the Northwest Cor., Sect. 28, Benton Township, located near the junction of First Street and Highway 11. The grave is at present unmarked.

Opening Night

It was a cool Friday evening in March and the air was filled with a sense of anticipation and excitement as the long awaited grand opening of one of the most elegant playhouses in the state was about to take place.

That was the atmosphere generated by the audience 56 years ago on March 26, 1926, when the Kennedy Theatre in Kirksville, Missouri, opened its first season with the play *Let's Get Married*, starring Richard Dix, and a three-act vaudeville show. The Kennedy Theatre, fashioned after theaters in Kansas City and St. Louis, was a half-million dollar venture financed by Mrs. J. M. Kennedy and her son, Sam.

Entering the auditorium in the Kennedy, it is easy to imagine what that Friday night 56 years ago, was like. An usher, dressed in a tuxedo, would have shown you to your seat. As you walked down the aisle, you would have begun to appreciate the size and elegance of the theatre: the 15-piece orchestra warming up in the orchestra pit, the hum made from an audience of nearly 1,200 people and the dome ceiling almost 50 feet high. As the usher seated you, you would have noticed that the seats were leather and the decor was highlighted by elegant molding. Then, as the curtain was raised and the orchestra began its opening number, you would have noticed the stage, a stage equipped with the latest stage equipment, lights, draperies, and props, suitable to accommodate the best road attractions.

One major obstacle you might have had to overcome during the performance was hats. Some were tall; some were wide. Seeing over and around them was a job in itself. After the play, you might have gone to a little place around the corner

called the Kennedy Inn for a bite to eat.

The Kennedy was truly a community theater with entertainment produced locally as well as entertainment produced nationally. Among the locally produced performances were the Charleston Dance Contest, which lasted four days, a dance recital presented by Mametta Ewalis School of Dance, and a junior high school production of the play, *Seeking a Servant*. The Kennedy Theatre also hosted performances by many other community groups.

On November 7, 1929, the Kennedy family sold the theater to Fox Interests. In the late months of 1953, Fox Interests installed a movable wide-vision screen, which is still present.

Picture below: An artist sketch of the Kennedy theatre as it appeared in 1936.

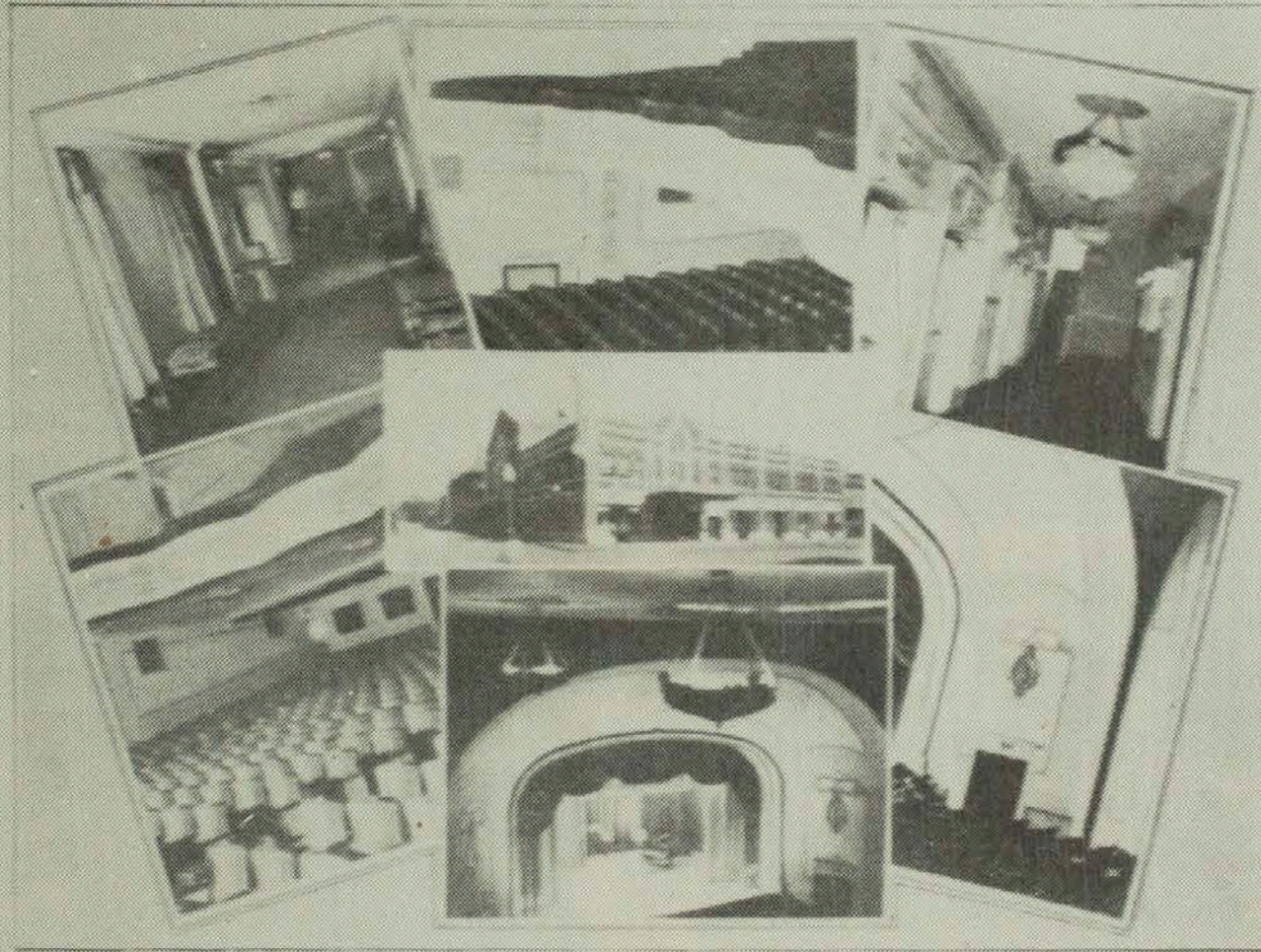


The modern Kennedy as seen through the eyes of a photographer in 1982.



1000 COMFORTABLE CHAIRS

THE BEST
OF ENTERTAINMENT
AT LOWEST POSSIBLE PRICES



Recent Installation of \$10,000 Biophone
for Talking, Singing and Sound

PHOTOPLAYS

\$25,000 Robert Morton Organ

Standard Stage Equipment
for Presentation of Best Road Attractions

This advertisement was taken from the KCOM yearbook. It shows and describes the elegance of the Kennedy Theatre.



This screen could be moved so that the stage could be utilized for plays.

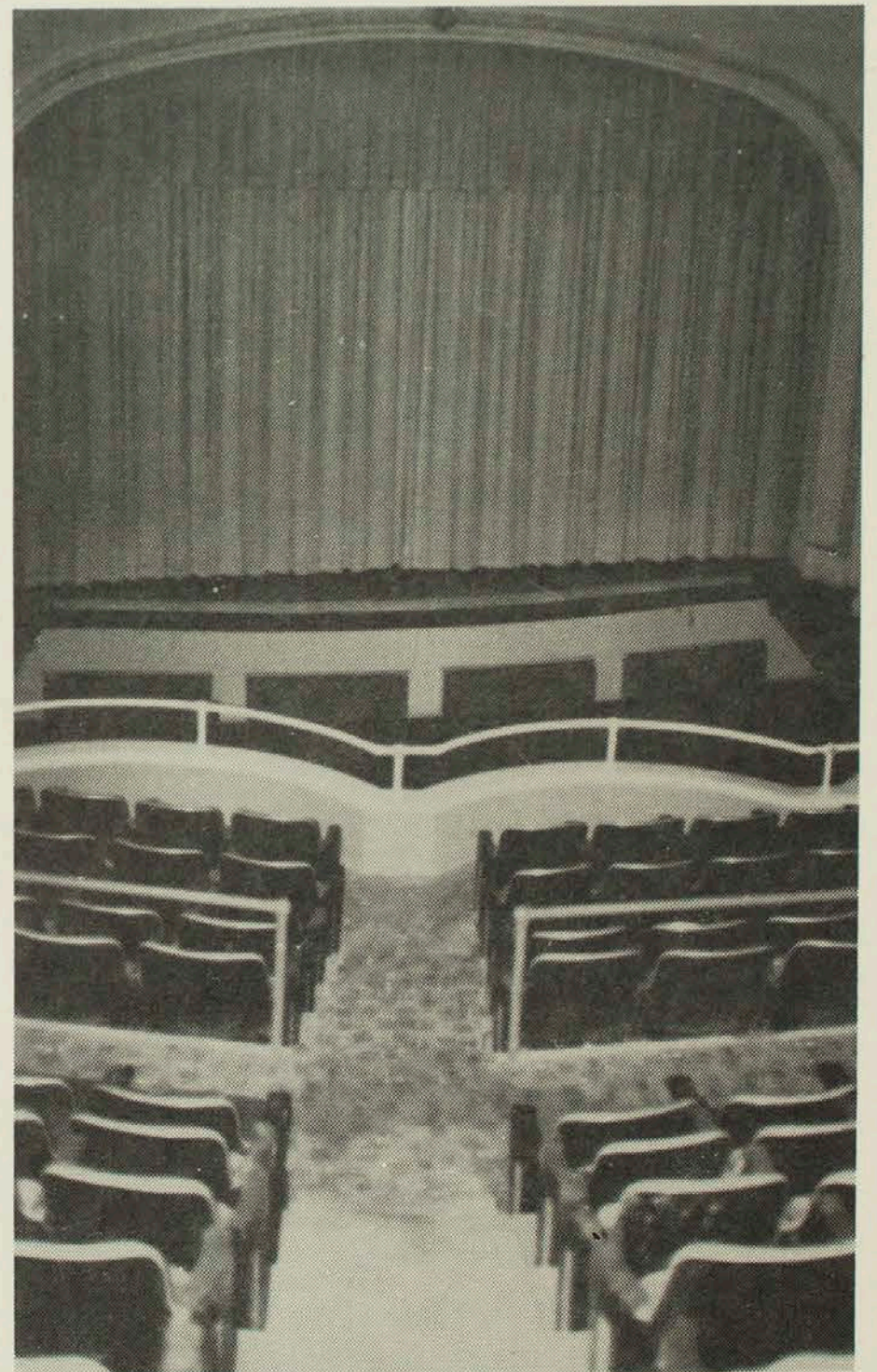
As times changed, so did the Kennedy. In the late 20's and early 30's, talking pictures were becoming more popular. On March 4, 1929, the Kennedy introduced its first "talkie". Among the first talking picture shows were *The Goose Woman*, starring Jack Pickford, Louise Dressler and Constance Bennett; *The Road to Glory*, starring Everett Horton; and *Monte Carlo*, starring Lew Cody and Gertrude Olmstead.

During the drought years of the 30's, people would go to the Kennedy just for the air conditioning. The superb heating and cooling system earned the theater the name, "Kirksville's only cool spot," boasting ice-washed air and a temperature never exceeding 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Kennedy Theatre, which has a marquee made in France, had its last live performance, a lolly pop concert sponsored by the local merchants, in 1976. The Kennedy was also used by KCOM to hold graduation before they began using Baldwin Hall.

On a cool Friday night in October, 1982, as you, dressed in your tennis shoes and blue jeans, go to the Kennedy to see a movie, you may have noticed, as you walk through the hall into the auditorium, that the Kennedy has lost much of its elegance. The musicians no longer play and the ushers have all gone home. The paint is peeling, the plaster is cracked and the orchestra pit has been boarded up. But, as you sit down and the midnight movie begins, like so many before you, you have become a part of the history of the Kennedy Theatre.

Photo at top; Taken in 1976, this is a picture of the last live performance, "A Lolly Pop Concert," at the Kennedy. The photo at right shows a spectator's view of the stage; the stage appears close, even though you are in the farthest seat.



by David Cenedella & Ron VanWynsberg

GENERATIONS OF LEATHER & LACE

By Amy Mock, Jim Kline and Wendy Seigal

The first major industry to be established in Adair County was in 1907. During this year, the Kirksville Business Men's League received an inquiry from the Friedman-Shelby Shoe Company, and a representative committee was sent immediately to the company headquarters in St. Louis. There they learned that the company would only build under certain conditions, which required that the city furnish a free site, free water for five years, and a \$60,000 cash bonus. In return, the company proposed to construct a 60 x 300 foot four-story building and employ 300 workers producing 1,800 shoes a day. Employment would eventually be increased to 600 people producing up to 4,000 pairs of shoes daily.

An outcry went up among the citizens of Kirksville. They said that \$60,000 could never be raised because the conditions were unreasonable. But a small group of men realized, as was stated in a 1908 Daily Express, that the factory "marked the dawn of a new era of industrial development in this good town." These men bought an area of land in the southwest part of Kirksville, and divided it into 380 lots for \$200 a lot, making an approximate total of \$76,000. By doing this, they secured the cash bonus and also the land.

The next evening, after the contract had been signed, there was a large celebration which included a bonfire on the square, the blowing of all steam whistles throughout the

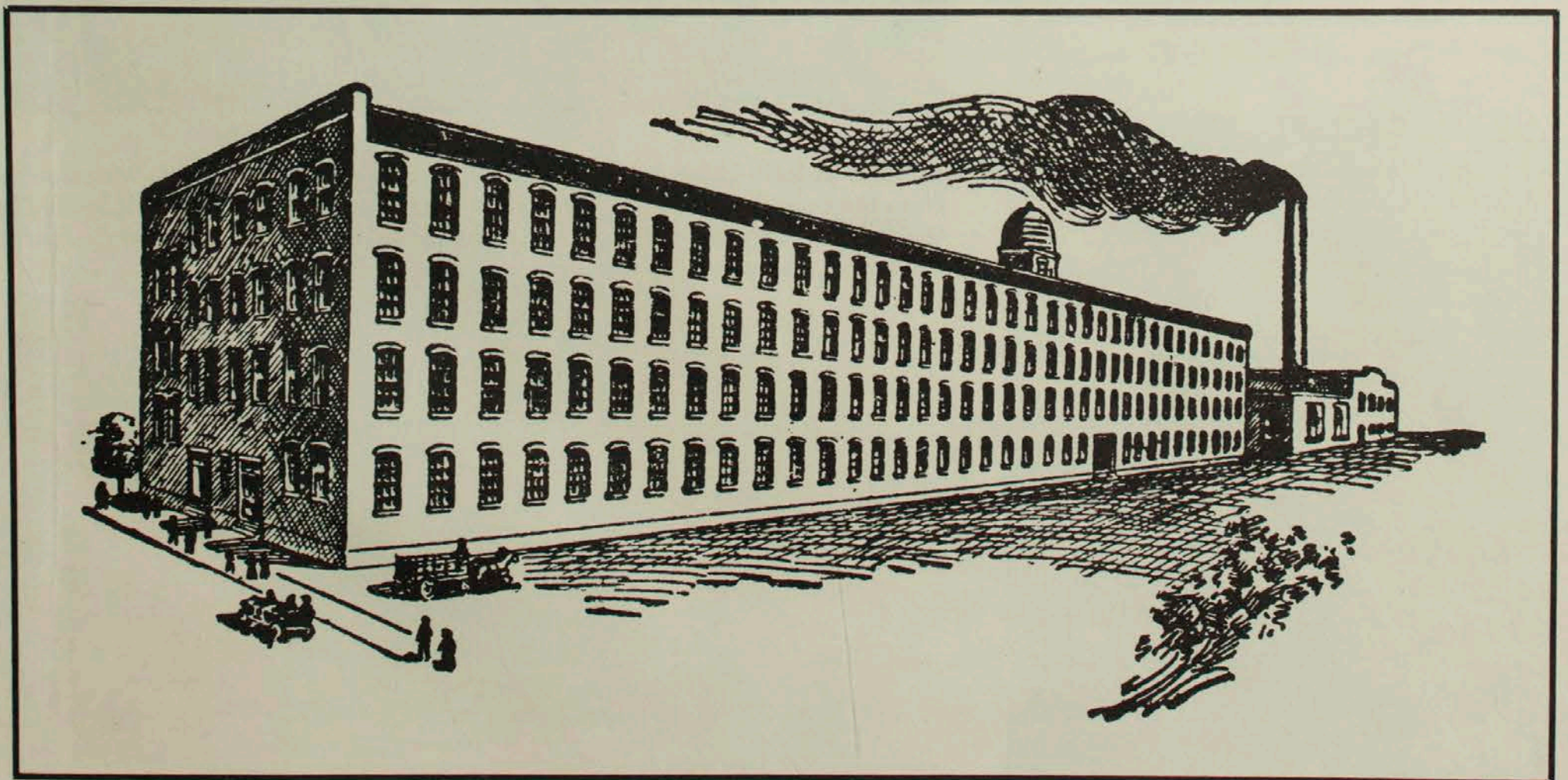
town, the shooting of fireworks, and the performance of a band.

The building was then constructed as planned. The construction of the building was very unique and interesting in that the exterior was constructed entirely of brick, but all of the building supports were constructed of solid wood beams instead of the steel beams of modern buildings. It also generated its own power by an enormous steam-operated generator located in a concrete building beside the factory. Coal shipped in by train was used to operate this generator. The factory whistle could be heard from all over town. The citizens relied on the whistle as a means of waking in the morning, and making it home in time for dinner.

On opening day in May of 1908, the shoe factory had a force of only 35 workers. The officers of the company were: A. Friedman, president; W. H. Shelby, vice-president; Lester Friedman, secretary; and A. I. Stix, treasurer. Within six months, 300 people were employed producing 1,800 to 2,000 pairs of shoes daily.

The company produced men's and boy's shoes that were said to be well made and medium priced. Many styles of shoes

Drawing below: The Friedman-Shelby Shoe Factory seen as it was when it opened in 1908.



were made by the factory as years passed. Style trends continued to wield an important influence on shoe sales in all categories and price ranges. Flexibility, softness, lightness, and slim lines exerted the strongest influence on shoe styles. During World War II, however, all casual shoe production ceased and army boots were produced. After this, the slim "Continental" look continued to be most popular for men. Lighter construction and special techniques were used to achieve the desired flexibility and softness in the various styles, which included plain and moccasin toe oxfords, slippers, and the classic wing tip.

Although all shipments in and out of Kirksville were by truck, the plant used products from other countries. Leather was brought in from as far away as France, Germany, and India. Through the company's distribution system, the finished shoes were eventually sold not only in the United States and the North American continent, but also overseas, including Japan and Africa.

The Friedman-Shelby Shoe Company had succeeded the Friedman Brothers Shoe Company in St. Louis in January of 1907. At this time, it produced the Friedman-Shelby line of shoes. It was next owned by the International Shoe Company, who bought the Kirksville factory in 1916. They produced the Peters, Robert, and Johnson & Read brands of shoes. It was last owned by the Florsheim Shoe Company, producing the Florsheim line of shoes.

The "old shoe factory" was last operational in 1973. In July of that year, production was moved to a newly built factory located on the south side of Kirksville. The old building was then purchased by Baldwins, Inc. and is now used as a warehouse for Baldwins' distribution of supplies.



Photo at left: Steam was produced to run the generator by this water pump from the outside reservoir. Photo at top shows the shoe factory as it looked in the 1940's. The photo below it is an interior view of the shoe factory's fourth floor as it appears.

