



THE CHARITON COLLECTOR

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HISTORY AND FOLKLORE

Winter 1987

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THE CHARITON COLLECTOR

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COVER PICTURE

Beautiful sunsets occur frequently at Hazel Creek Lake near Greentop, Missouri. This photograph was taken by Cathy Mitchell in October, 1987.

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The first congregation of the East Center Church pose outside their newly constructed building in 1887. The church is featured in Lisa Winkleman's story on page 5.

FLOYD CREEK

Sperry, like most of the small communities of Adair County, was once a small, thriving trading center. These little towns began to die with the improvement of the highway system or with the residents moving to Kirksville for better jobs. Although very few people remain in Sperry, it is still surviving.

There is a bit of odd history about Sperry. From August 15, 1854, until July 9, 1883, Sperry was situated south of its present location and was known as Floyd Creek or Floyd's Creek. A postmaster, whose name is not known, had a post office in a store there and named it after a nearby stream. The postmaster then moved his post office to its present location, which is 11 miles northeast of Kirksville on Route T, and he took the name of Floyd Creek with him. Then in 1914 the name was changed to Sperry, and the reason for the name change has passed into obscurity. The current residents of Sperry did not know about this history of Floyd Creek which could be why the reason is obscure.

As a trading point in the late 19th century, Sperry was important enough to have a post office. It also had two garages, two general stores, a rural school, a church, a telephone switchboard, Odd Fellows Lodge for men, and Rebekah Lodge for women. Then on February 15, 1907, the post office was discontinued, and all mail was sent to Kirksville.

The two general stores were located in the northwest and the southwest corners of Sperry. The store in the southwest corner was a two-story house; the store was in the downstairs while the Odd Fellows Lodge was upstairs. The stores would buy almost anything from their customers, and a person could buy almost anything there. The residents sold eggs, cream, and in the winter months they even sold rabbits to the stores. The

By Shelly Hoffman

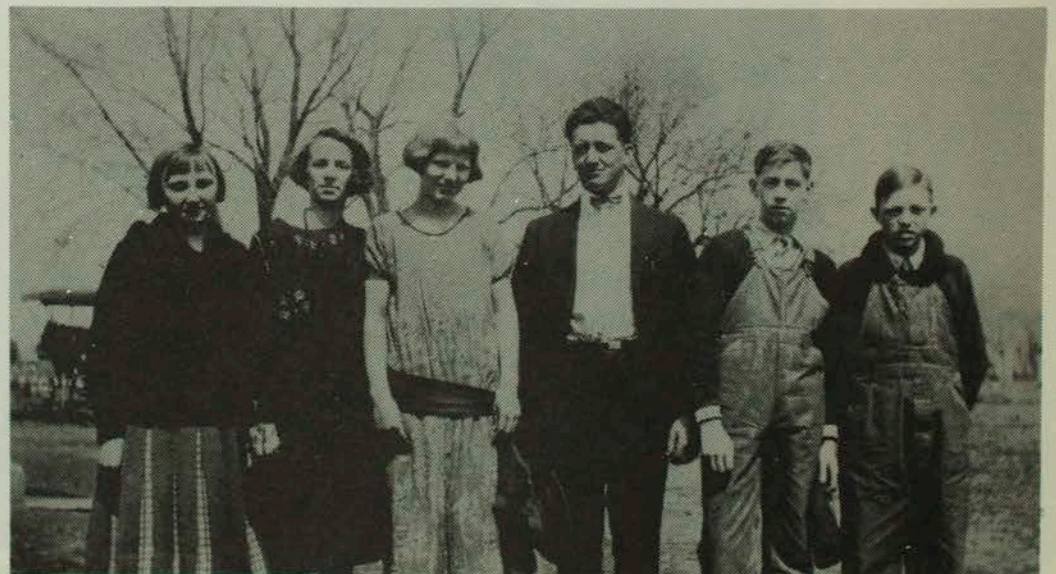
stores sold everything from kerosene to groceries. One general store sold feed to the farmers. When Roy Terrell owned the store, Mr. Terrell would pick up eggs and deliver feed to his customers. Vic Adams, a long-time resident of Sperry, said Sperry was a good place to advertise if you had anything to sell because everyone in the area surrounding Sperry went there. A person could buy horses, hogs, and cattle at Sperry.

According to Mr. Adams, the rural people went to Sperry two to three times a week for supplies, and they also went to Kirksville every two or three weeks. The people only went when they could not buy what they needed at Sperry. When they went to Kirksville, they spent the whole day, and most went to see the banker or to buy clothes.

In 1869 the New Prospect Baptist Church was established and had eight charter members. They were Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Brassfield, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bell, Mrs. Jane Harris, and Mrs. Elizabeth Moots. The church seats approximately 175 people and has a full basement. There was not a church building at Sperry in 1869, but there was a schoolhouse. Services were held in the schoolhouse until 1881, when the church was built. The original building was still used for school.

The Sperry community had an excellent rural school system, but in 1967 became a part of the Kirksville R-III school

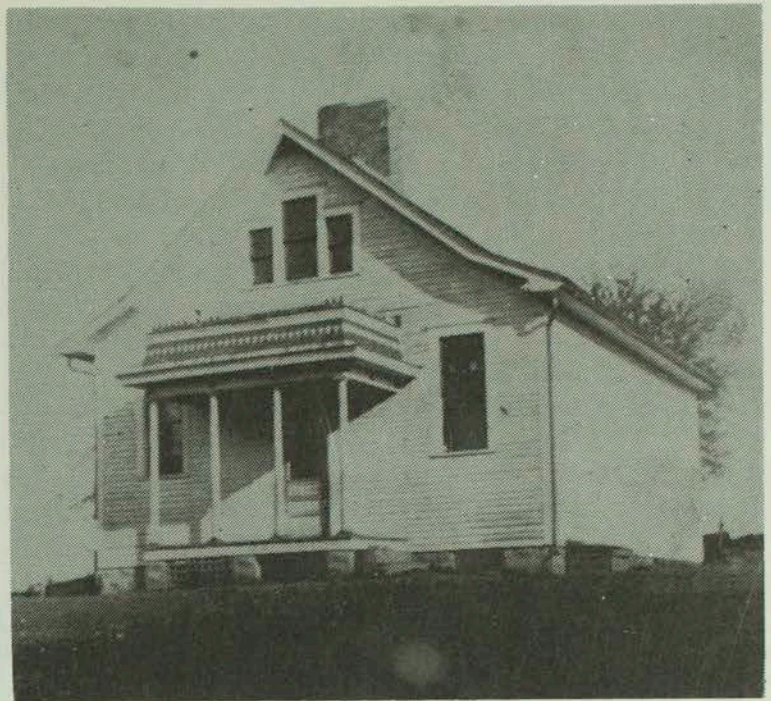
Sperry School had eight grades. These students graduated from the school in 1925: (left to right) Olive Clark, Louise Shoop, Thelma Phelps, Hayward Duffie (the teacher), Kermit Kennedy, and Kenneth Clark. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Mildred Ambrosia)



district. There have been two schoolhouses in Sperry because the first one burned in 1948. According to Mrs. Mary Adams, current resident of Sperry, the stove in the basement of the school caught on fire while school was in session, and one of the little girls was really upset. Mrs. Adams said, "I asked her if she was all right, and she replied, 'Yes, but I lost one of my gloves.'" The school term was finished in David Wright's basement, and the schoolhouse was rebuilt the next year. The school term was eight months, lasting from late August to April. The school had only eight grades, and the high school students went to Kirksville. A bus picked up the high school students, but the younger children had to either walk or ride a horse to the school in Sperry. About 30 children attended each rural school at Sperry and the other surrounding schoolhouses. Each school district was three miles square which accounted for the small attendance at each school, with the largest class at Sperry having 42 students.

Everyone in Sperry had a telephone in his home, but there were several people on one line. Each household had a different ring. The townspeople had to go into Sperry if they had to call long distance, but not to call the other local residents. The cost for the yearly upkeep of the switchboard was about \$2-\$2.50.

There was much entertainment in Sperry. Debates for the adults were held at the school, and the adults would discuss almost anything. The debates at the school eventually faded out, and literaries were held. Literaries were a gathering of the townspeople at the school and plays were acted, poems were recited, and songs were sung. Literaries were held once a month, and refreshments were served afterwards. The PTA eventually took the place of debates and literaries, and the schoolhouse would be full of people at the PTA meetings. Young people



This was the original schoolhouse in which debates and literaries were held before the PTA was organized. The building burned in 1948. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Mildred Ambrosia)

would have party games but they did not dance because most of the townspeople were church members who did not believe in dancing. Earlier times would only have party games and usually singing without instruments, but sometimes they would have a harmonica for music. Pie suppers were a social event at Sperry also. People would walk over a quarter of a mile to go to a pie supper and to see their friends. Playing ball was a significant part of the children's social life in Sperry. They mainly played on Sunday afternoons after Sunday services.

People were people at Sperry, especially during the Great Depression. "They meant far more to each other than they do today," said Mr. Adams. Everyone in Sperry and the surrounding communities like Adair, Brashear, Clay, and East Center were good neighbors. If a person needed help, then his neighbors would assist him. "The townspeople of Sperry were good people who enjoyed life," remarks Mr. Adams. They made their own entertainment if need be. Mr. Adams tells about a prank he, as a child, pulled on John Church. "John, what's happened to you?" said Vic. "John replied, 'Well, our best cat was out there and somebody with their old Ford car ran over it.' When he, Mr. Church, left, we, a bunch of kids, got to thinking that when he goes to church tomorrow, Sunday, and tomorrow night that everyone would gather a bunch of cats in sacks. We put them cats in between the screen door and the front door and behind the door. We put them on their back porch and the building where they kept their wood. We put the cats in their corn crib and the oat grainery in the barn and in the mailbox. Then we hid until he came home. Mr. Church came home and he opened the door and three or four cats would jump out everywhere. 'Cats here, and cats there, and cats everywhere!' said Mr. Church. The next day when the mail carrier came three or four cats jumped out of the mailbox. It was great entertainment!"

With the improvement of the highway system, Kirksville was more accessible to the people of the rural communities.



The Sperry Baptist Church appears today as it did when it was built in 1881. The church's steeple has been struck by lightning three times. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Mildred Ambrosia)

More and more people began moving to Kirksville for better jobs, and the rural towns started dying. Although never large, about 12 homes, Sperry now has only five homes. Will Elsea owns the feed store, once a general store, which is directly north of the church. The Sperry Baptist Church has approximately 32 members, and Sunday school and services are held weekly with Mark Morehouse as the pastor. The church, feed store, and the residents are all that remain in Sperry now, but because of the church, Sperry remains on the map.



These students attended the Sperry School in the fall of 1914. (Photo courtesy of Raleigh Siegle)

ADMINISTRATOR'S SALE

I will sell at public auction at the home of the late John Q. Adams, nine miles northeast of Kirksville, ten miles northwest of Brashear and three miles southeast of Sperry on

THURSDAY, MAY 31st

The following property:

HORSES

- 1 Large Brown Work Horse, 7 yrs old.
- 1 Large Sorrel Work Horse 6 yrs. old.
- 1 Bay Driving Mare, 5 years old.
- 1 Bay Mare 8 years old.

JACKS.

- 1 dark Jack, 4 years old, large bone.
- 2 dark Yearling Jacks.
- 5 Jenettes, some in foal.

CATTLE.

- 1 Cow, one year old with heifer calf.
- 1 Cow, 9 yrs. old with male calf.
- 1 Cow, 5 years old with male calf.
- 1 Cow, 4 yrs. old, coming in profit
- 3 three year old heifers, coming in profit.
- 2 two year old heifers coming in profit.
- 1 yearling heifer.
- 1 four year old Roan Bull.
- 2 yearling Bulls, 1 red and one roan.

All are Scotch red and roan, Shorthorns, either registered or eligible to register. Papers will be furnished with each.

SHEEP.

- 95 head of Ewes with lambs by side.
 - 3 Yearling Wethers, ages from 1 to 4 years old.
- These are all extra good Shropshire sheep unclipped. Will be sold in lots of 10.

IMPLEMENTS.

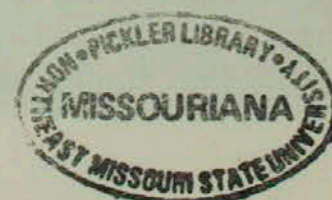
- 2 Cultivators and 1 Harrow.
 - 1 Mowing Machine and 1 self dump hay rake.
 - 1 Set Heavy Work Harness.
 - 1 set light Harness.
 - 1 set Trotting Harness.
 - 1 Saddle.
 - 2 Steward clipping machines, 1 good as new.
- Many other articles too numerous to mention.

John Q. Adams was one of the two veterinarians of Sperry, Missouri. This sale bid described his machinery, livestock, and other equipment that were auctioned in 1917 just outside of the town.

TERMS:—Under \$10 cash. Over \$10 a credit of six months will be given, at eight per cent, purchaser to give bankable note. No property removed until terms are complied with.

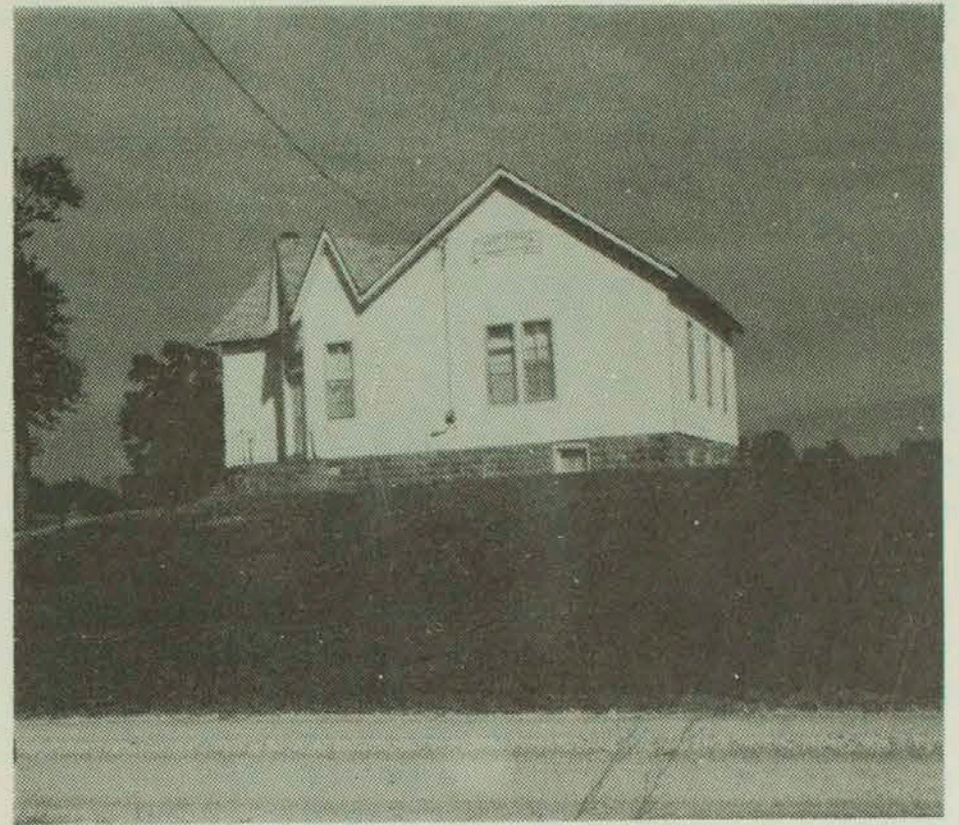
A. W. Jameson,
Administrator

T. B. HALE, ED YOUNG, Auctioneers, H. B. YOUNG, Clerk.
LUNCH WILL BE SERVED BY THE LADIES OF THE BETHEL CHURCH.





Mr. and Mrs. Charles McClanahan wanted a church in their new community. Here they are pictured with the first two of their twelve children, Sarah Elizabeth and Robert.



Major remodeling to the church was completed in 1913. Since then the basement has been reinforced and new siding added. However, the rustic charm of the rock road and outdoor facilities have not been modernized.

The Little Church That Could

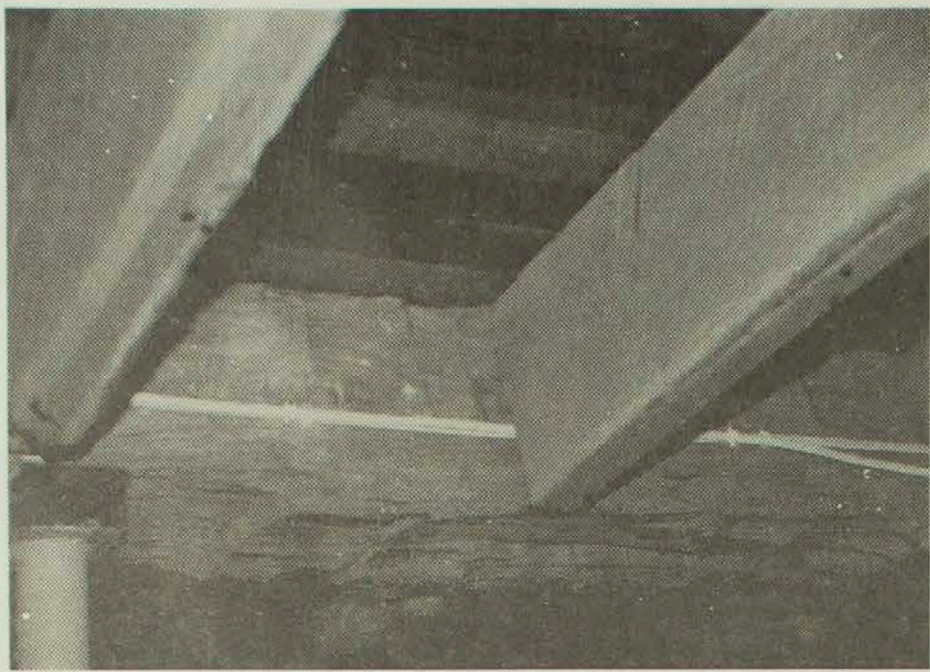
One hundred years ago, the Methodists of East Center were taking turns having church services at their homes. Later, after a schoolhouse was built, they held services there; however, Mr. and Mrs. Charles McClanahan and the other members were upset with sharing a building with other denominations and by also having church in a schoolhouse, which prevented the congregation from having extra church activities. In 1887, the members decided it was time to have their own church.

Mr. McClanahan jumped in with both feet. He and two other members, Mrs. John Dye and Thomas Bullock, carried a petition to the surrounding families to obtain funds to build a new, wonderful building. Wonderful because it would be their own church and could hold more church activities like Bible study, evening services, and carry-in dinners. Charles McClanahan and Mary Ellen, his wife, donated the land six miles east on Route P for both the church and cemetery. On April 11, 1887, the deed to the land was purchased for one dollar from the McClanahans. The name of the church was to be East Center Methodist Church. At last, their dream of having a church was going to be a reality!

The excited worshipers immediately went to work. The men and older boys began work on the building itself, while the children helped by running errands, getting whatever they needed. The women helped by having hot meals, the best that the farms could supply, and coffee for the men as they worked. The men and women pledged their time to work whenever they had time off from the fields and chores.

Finally in October, 1887, after working hard through spring and summer, the church was finished. It was a small building, 26 by 36 feet, mounted on oak blocks with walls 12 feet high. On each side of the building were three windows, and facing west towards the road were double doors that lead into the church. Across from the doors, viewing in, stood the pulpit and the furniture was crude and made from logs, just like families made when first building their homes long ago. In the center were two box stoves that heated the church and since there was no flue, the pipes ran straight through the roof. It was a small church, but it was theirs.

Feeling as though he had succeeded in his purpose at the church, the Rev. J. T. Kinsey felt reassured when leaving his



The ceiling in the basement of the church is not covered, exposing the original ax-hewn beams placed when the church was remodeled in 1913. Mr. McClanahan used an ax instead of a saw, because no one had a saw.



The interior of East Center Community Church continues today to provide a friendly, inviting welcome to all.

charge to the Rev. C. G. Hill, who took over September 10, 1887, and served two years.

Now that the congregation had a new church, Della Roberts, the church song leader, thought it was time for some new music. She decided the church should have an organ and immediately asked for donations. To her surprise, the funds were quickly raised. However, one member, who thought instruments were sinful in church, left and never came back.

A number of families came and went but the church attendance prospered, for awhile. Slowly the attendance and the church building deteriorated. People thought the church was going to collapse, until the Rev. C. H. Werner came to the church's aid.

When he first visited the church, in 1913, it was ill-kept. Windows were broken and the roof was in need of repair. It was not unusual to see someone inside with an open umbrella on a rainy or snowy day. One might guess that the church was once painted white, but one certainly could not tell by glancing, and the furniture was the original.

After talking with the members, the Rev. Werner decided it was time to either remodel or rebuild. He held a meeting at the church to decide what was to be done. Werner pointed out that the church should not only be important to Christians, but to non-Christians, too. The men at the meeting did not think that the improvements should exceed \$400. At the next meeting, \$550 was pledged and donated. Even people who did not belong or go to the church were getting involved. Everyone in the community was helping with the addition to the church.

On October 27, 1913, the Rev. Werner broke the ground for the new addition and work began. It was not unusual to see 20 to 30 men and boys working laboriously on the basement.

The plans for the remodeling were drawn by Oty Myers, a member of the community. The plans included a large basement for a heating plant, kitchen, and dining room, and also a large Sunday School room was added. The congregation



The McClanahans sold land to be used for a church and a cemetery for one dollar. In 1907 the family posed for this portrait: (sitting) Sarah, Robert, Mrs. McClanahan, (standing) Eula, Mark, Leo, Elmer, and Edith McClanahan.

wanted something modern, convenient, and attractive and that is exactly what they received.

By Thanksgiving, 1913, the basement was finished and the church held a Thanksgiving dinner. The enormous dinner consisted of roast turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberry sauce, baked beans, pickles, pies, doughnuts, and coffee. After dinner, at 3 o'clock, the cornerstone was presented to the church by D. Hayden of Kirksville. The ceremony was conducted by the Reverends Werner, Moore of Macon, and Miller of Kirksville. An oyster supper was served later that evening.

To enhance the evening services, Dr. Halladay had carbide lights installed; until then, kerosene lamps were used. Dr. Halladay also provided living quarters for the Reverend and his wife, which was unheard of at the time.

With the money donated to the improvement of the church, the committee purchased new pews which gave the church the final touch. These pews are still in use today. They also purchased a piano and the organ, bought so long ago, was moved downstairs for the children's Sunday school classes.

Now the large basement served more than one purpose. That next fall, an agriculture course was held, the young men's Bible class held a lecture for over a thousand, and courses were held on household economics. Also, the women of the church organized a group called the Ladies Aid. They held bazaars and quilting bees, served food at auctions, and organized oyster and ice cream socials. They made money to supplement the minister's salary.

The cemetery lies directly east of the church. The first grave, unfortunately, was the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dye. The second grave was the young son of the McClanahans. Vera Winkleman, granddaughter of the McClanahans said, "One day, their son was watching his father repair the roof. At the same time his mother was making lye soap. While watching his father, the young boy was backing up, no one knows why. Anyway, he didn't see the boiling kettle of lye and tripped and fell in it. Somehow he survived most of the night, but didn't make it to morning. It's terrible that such a tragedy had to happen to them or the Dyes."

An unusual aspect of the cemetery is some of its inhabitants.

Mr. and Mrs. McClanahan are buried there, along with 11 of their 12 children. In 1979, Howard and Vera Winkleman and Lawrence and Imogene McClanahan moved all of the children's grave markers from where they were first laid to rest to the East Center Cemetery.

Since 1913, the many members of East Center have kept the church in better upkeep. In 1948, electricity was installed which increased the night-time attendance. In the 1950s, the basement was reinforced and new siding was put on the church. Two years later, the ceiling was lowered and a gas furnace replaced the old stoves in 1960. New carpet was installed in 1975 and new steps leading to the front door were poured in 1977.

In 1979, American and Christian flags were donated. The American flag was donated by Olive McClanahan in memory of her husband, Marlen McClanahan. The Christian flag was from Mrs. Fortney in memory of her husband, William. Mr. Fortney's children donated a wooden cross, hand carved by his son, Leon.

In 1981, the congregation bought East Center from the Methodist Conference for \$3,000. It was rumored that the Conference was going to demolish the church. Now the church is called the East Center Community Church and they usually just have Sunday school. East Center has had Sunday school ever since the church was built in 1887, unless bad weather, lack of heat, high water, or snowbound roads have prevented it.

To celebrate the church's 100th birthday, the members have held many dinners and sing-spirations. The first of these celebrations was on June 21, 1987. The church had a supper, history reading of the church, and a sing-spiration. On September 20, 1987, a carry-in lunch and sing-spiration was held. Bill Snyder brought his covered wagon and gave rides. On November 29, 1987, a Thanksgiving supper was held reminiscent of the one that was held in 1913, when the church was being remodeled.

In its 100 years, the East Center Community Church, with its ax-hewn beams and pews purchased in 1913, was very much a turning point in the spiritual, moral, and social lives of the many people of East Center Community. All the love and tenderness that has been bestowed upon it from its members, past and present, is still apparent today.

By Lisa Winkleman

SHOWDOWN AT STAHL

An on-going family feud came to a tragic end on January 27, 1894, when Ephraim Bransteter fatally wounded William A. Lloyd with a revolver in Stahl, Missouri, a town of 45 people located on the O.K. Railroad, approximately 15 miles west of Kirksville. Neither family was living in the town at the time, but it was the site of the showdown stemming from a misunderstanding concerning rented land in Stahl.

This Adair County town was one of the centers of the mining industry which was developing in Northeast Missouri during the turn of the century and, like most mining towns, was mainly self-sufficient. Stahl consisted of a post office, railroad depot, and two general stores where, according to long-time Stahl resident Alberta Novinger, "You could get anything you wanted: produce, hardware, even had men's clothing and dress suits." A quiet, industrial town, Stahl became the site of a final, violent clash between the Bransteter and the Lloyd families in 1894.

Nineteen years before this clash, there was a manslaughter charge brought against Peter Bransteter and his son William concerning the death of John B. Young, a farmer from the Polk

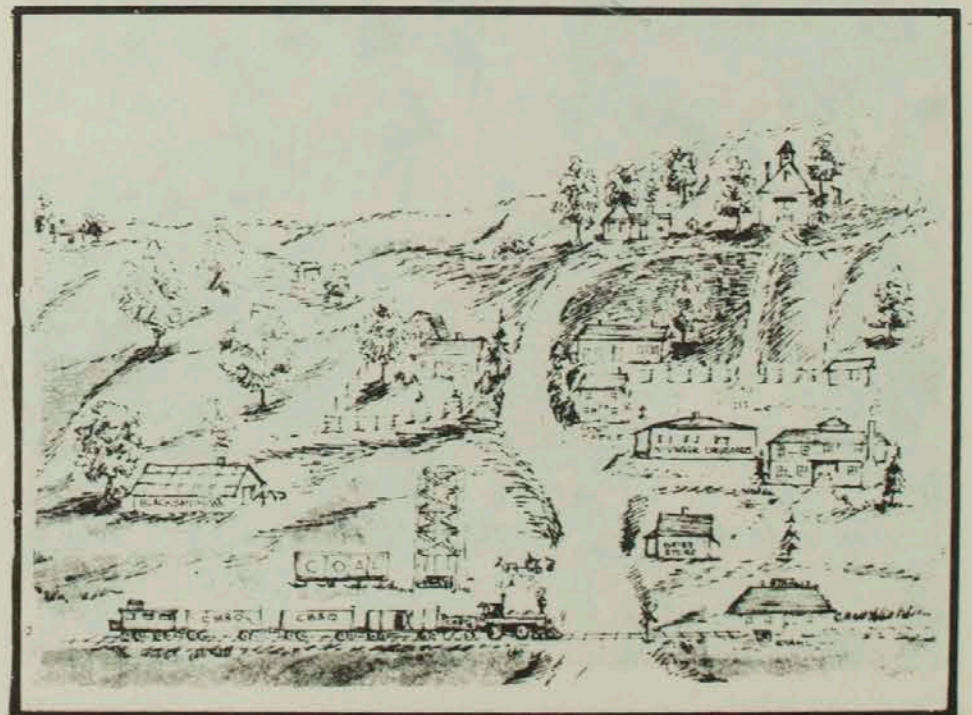
township. Mr. Young's son reportedly found his father hanged in his home, and the Bransteters were brought to trial for this murder; the townspeople felt that the tension between the Bransteters and the murdered man could have been a motive. After a long and arduous trial, the Bransteters were acquitted and the real murderer's identity remained a secret until a few years later when the son of the dead man admitted to the offense on his deathbed.

Subsequent to that incident, the Bransteters led quiet lives without conflict until their dispute with the Lloyds. The Lloyds were renting land in Stahl to the Bransteters and had a misunderstanding concerning this land. The disagreement was brought to court as a petty lawsuit which was decided in favor of the Lloyds. The lawsuit left both parties with ill feelings toward each other which were further aggravated when three Lloyds attacked some Bransteters with clubs on their way home from church on Sunday, January 7, 1894.

After the church incident, both parties decided to solve their problems, permanently. Two designated men, William Lloyd and Ephraim Bransteter, complete with backup brothers, two



Mrs. Alberta Novinger (right) has lived in Stahl since 1921. Mrs. Hazel Wilson (left) and Glenn Riley (center) attended a one-room schoolhouse in Stahl. They provided much of the information about the town's early history.

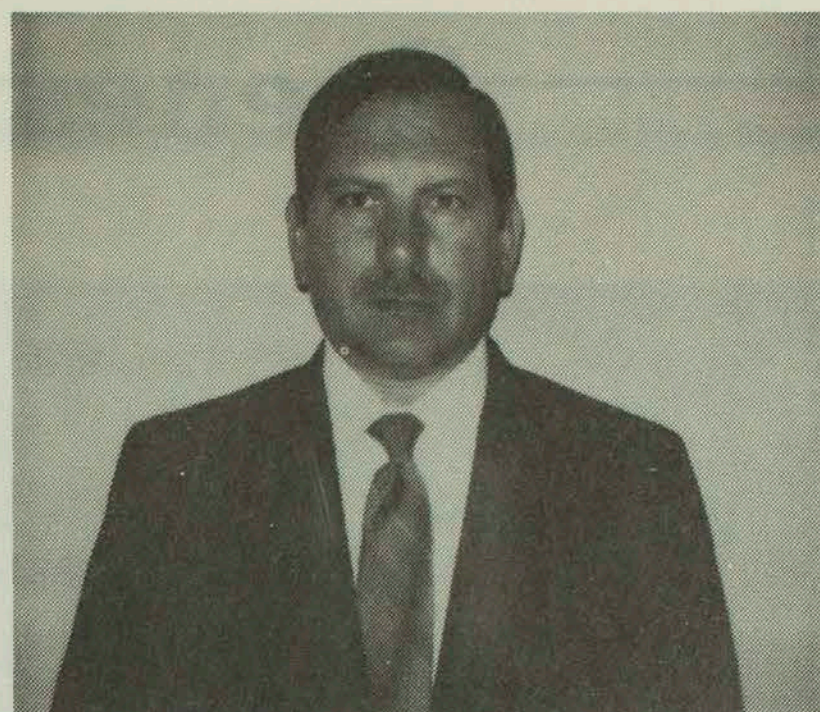


This drawing of Stahl was done by Glenn Riley's son, Glendale. Mr. Riley explained that his son's picture might not be completely accurate as "he drew that from memory."

for the Bransteters and one for the Lloyds, were to meet in Stahl (neither family lived in Stahl at the time). William A. "Wig" Lloyd arrived in Stahl from his home in Sidney, Missouri, on Saturday, January 27, 1894, accompanied by at least one of his 15 siblings and a black snake whip. He was met there by Ephraim Bransteter and two of his brothers. Everyone involved was armed with a revolver. At first, words were exchanged while each tried to prod the other into making the first move. This all took place on the front porch of Moore Brothers Store, one of the general stores in Stahl.

Ephraim Bransteter invited William Lloyd to take a walk with him, to which Mr. Lloyd declined. Ephraim Bransteter continued to verbally goad William Lloyd until he ultimately struck Mr. Bransteter with the butt end of the snake whip. Ephraim Bransteter then fired at "Wig" Lloyd, missing him and allowing Mr. Lloyd the chance to run into the store. Once inside the store, William Lloyd drew his revolver and prepared to shoot Ephraim Bransteter, but he was not quick enough. Mr. Bransteter fired a shot which left "Wig" Lloyd lying dead with a head wound on the floor of the Moore Brothers Store. As Ephraim Bransteter began running towards the woods, William's brother, James Lloyd, fired three futile shots at him.

Immediately, a posse was formed, and the search for Ephraim Bransteter began. On Sunday evening Sheriff Rupe and Marshall Pratt spotted Bransteter in a ravine west of Greentop. Mr. Pratt fired at him and missed, and Mr. Bransteter again disappeared into the woods. Ephraim Bransteter continued to



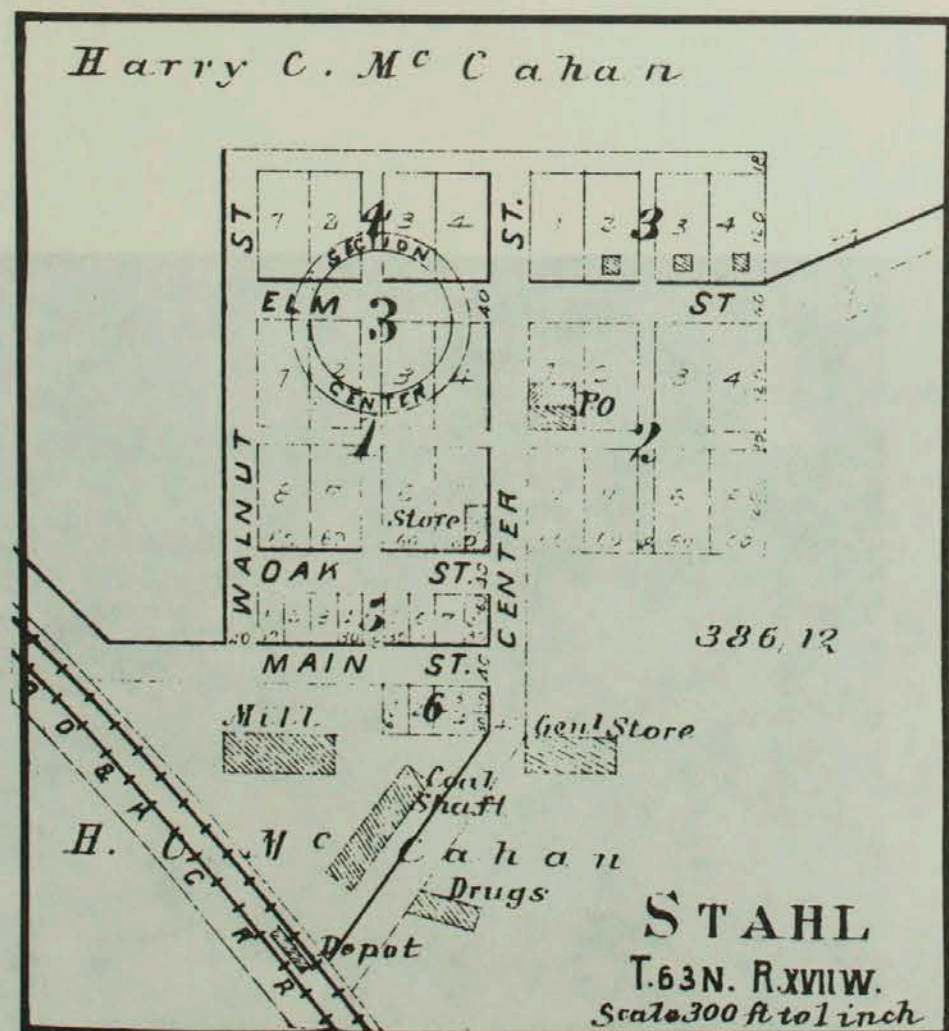
Gary Lloyd, a descendant of "Wig" Lloyd, supplied much of the information concerning the shootout which occurred in Stahl on January 27, 1894.

evade pursuers until word reached him that the sheriff of Lewis County had been telegraphed to bring his bloodhounds to track down Mr. Bransteter. After Ephraim Bransteter's friends informed him of this development, Mr. Bransteter surrendered to Sherrif Rupe at Jack Young's house ten miles north of Stahl.

Ephraim Bransteter entered the Kirksville jail at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 31, 1894. He joined his brother Charles, who had already been arrested as an accomplice, and James Lloyd, "Wig's" brother, who fired at Mr. Bransteter. The Bransteter-Lloyd case did not reach trial until July 23, 1894, in a special session of the circuit court. The jury listened to four days of contradictory testimony before reaching a verdict on Thursday, July 26, 1894. Ephraim Bransteter was charged with manslaughter in the fourth degree and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary.

The Bransteter-Lloyd feud, shooting, and subsequent trial were a reflection of the conflicts occurring in mining areas at the turn of the century. In small mining towns which were beginning their booms (Stahl reached 500 people by 1907 according to Glenn Riley, former Stahl mailman), an influx of strangers may have created feelings of tension and economic competition. In any event, for a short while at least, Stahl, Missouri, was the site of the explosion of tempers, as well as gunpowder, resulting in the death of William A. Lloyd.

After the incident, Stahl once again appeared to be a small, peaceful town to outsiders. Only the inhabitants of the town, described by historian Maxine Montgomery as "just country people," realized the violence and anger which had spurred the showdown at Stahl.



This map, taken from the ATLAS-ADAIR COUNTY MISSOURI 1898, shows the Moore Brothers Store (labeled Genl Store) where "Wig" Lloyd was shot by Ephraim Bransteter in 1894. (Photo courtesy of Pickler Memorial Library)

By Cathy Mitchell
and
Brian Riley

Scenes from the Past

Football uniforms have changed greatly since the early 1900s. Because of the number of injuries, many innovations and improvements have been made to the equipment that football players wear.

In the early 1900s the players' uniforms, pictured to the top right, were very primitive compared to today's standards. They wore pants similar to the ones worn today, a heavy wool sweater, and leather boots with removable metal cleats. The only padding was a double-layered leather piece that was strapped across the shoulders. Leather blocking pads were optional and some players chose to wear them under the shoulder pads to help protect their ribs. Because of the number of injuries to the nose, some players chose to wear a steel nose guard. Several players who played football for NMSU in 1901, in the photo to the far right, have their nose guards hanging around their necks.

Not until the World War II era were major improvements made to the players' uniforms through advancements in technology. Hard plastic shoulder pads, similar to but much more primitive than today's, were commonly used. The helmet was simply a leather cap with a small amount of padding to protect the ears and head as shown in the bottom left photo. The jersey was no longer made of wool but had been changed to a cotton material, and numbers were added to identify the players. Pads were added to the pants to protect the thigh and knee areas. The heavy boots were replaced with light-weight leather gym shoes.

Improvements to meet today's safety regulations have been made. The helmet is the most improved article worn by the football player of today. In the 1950s hard plastic headgear was introduced and it was not until the latter part of that decade that the face mask came into use. More padding was added to the shoulder pads for comfort and protection. The jersey and pants are now made of nylon which allows the air to circulate to keep the player cooler. Removable hip and tailbone pads protect the hip area. The shoes are still a gym shoe, but most have plastic cleats that are not removable. In the photo to the bottom right, players who currently play football for NMSU show the many improvements made to the uniform.

Throughout the years, the football uniform has undergone many changes. With the latest technology and interest in safe sports, future developments will continue to be made.

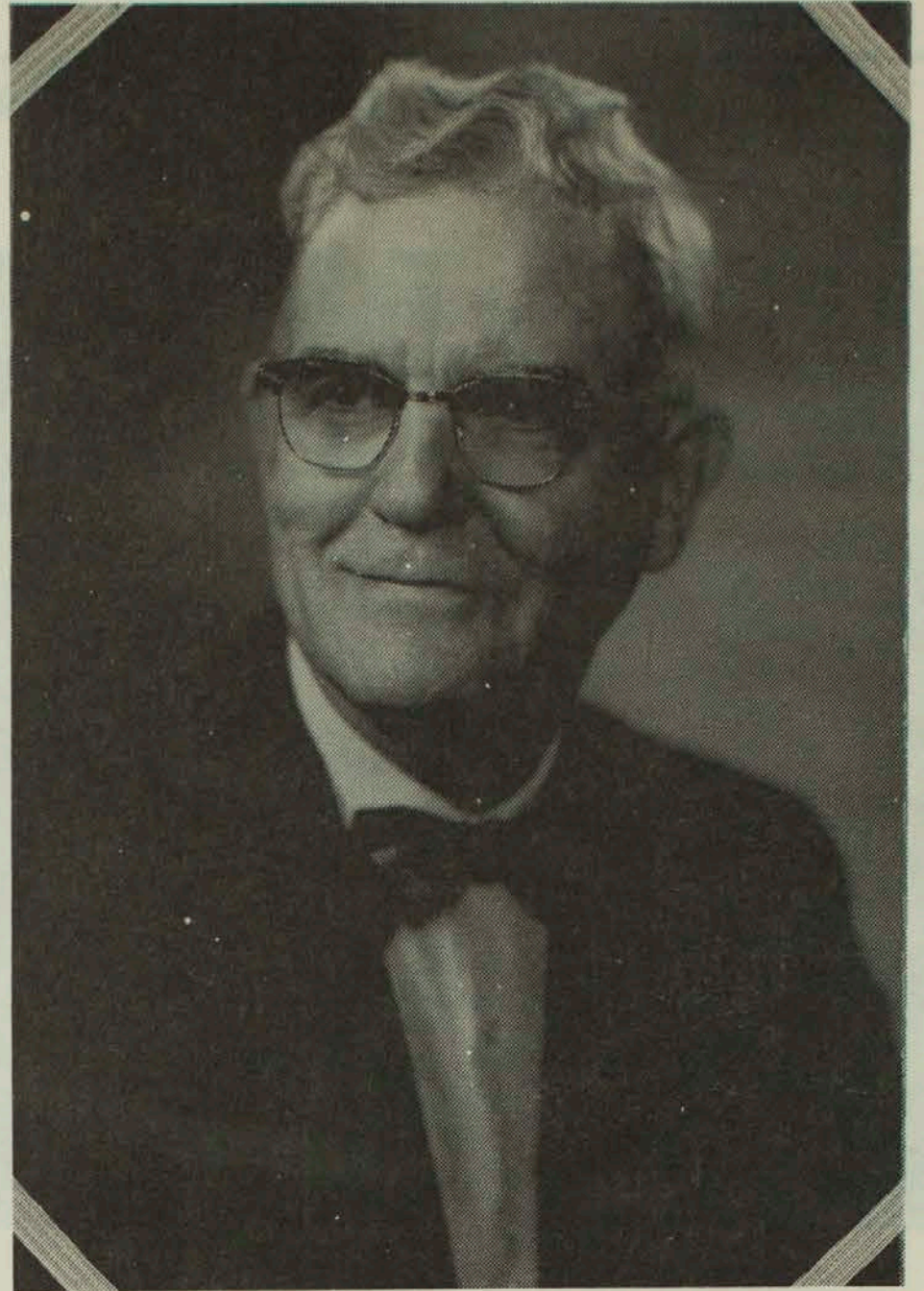




The

Common

Touch



Dr. Claud D. Davis arrived in Kirksville in 1923 where he resided until his death on July 8, 1986.

Dr. Claud D. Davis was a man of many accomplishments. His activities were numerous, yet in all the busyness of his life, he never lost the common touch. During an afternoon in 1982, "Doc," as his close friends commonly called him, could have been found laughing and talking with a group of men in the front of his optometry and osteopathic office. They might have been discussing medicine or hunting. "Doc" would probably have told a joke. He was tall and well-built, one who seemed no stranger to the outdoors. He would be wearing a white lab coat, glasses, and a bow tie, which he was rarely seen without.

Claud Davis was born December 9, 1890, on a farm near Perry, Missouri. Young Davis was the last of four children born to Franklin and Kitty Davis. Growing up on the farm gave him an appreciation for the outdoors, and as a young boy he bought his first gun. The gun became his closest companion. William Cundiff, who shared an office space with Dr. Davis, commented, "I suspect he wore two or three barrels out on that (first gun)." Dr. Davis continued to collect and trade guns for the rest of his life. He was an excellent shot both in regular hunting and trap shooting. If there was a shooting match in the area, he would attend and often win. He could use a variety of shop tools and often repaired his own guns.

In 1912, young Davis left home to attend Bradley University in Illinois, where he majored in optometry. In 1914, before he completed his schooling, he returned home to marry his

By Cathi Fredricks

sweetheart, Ethel A. Wells. June Morgan, Dr. Davis' great-niece, said, "If there ever was a real lady, it was Ethel." Their marriage lasted over 50 years until her death in 1967. It was at Needles University in Kansas City that Dr. Davis continued his optometry studies in the years 1915 and 1921 when he graduated with a degree in optometry.

In the past an optometrist was also a jeweler; therefore, a few years after his optometry training, Dr. Davis and his wife Ethel opened a jewelry store in Perry, Missouri. Because times were hard, he found it difficult to keep the store open; he closed the store in 1923 and enrolled at the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville. He continued to work as a jeweler at the Kirksville Optical Company on Washington Street and then Miller Jewelry Company on Franklin Street. He also worked with Ray Gardner after 1925. In 1927, he graduated from the college with a degree in osteopathy.

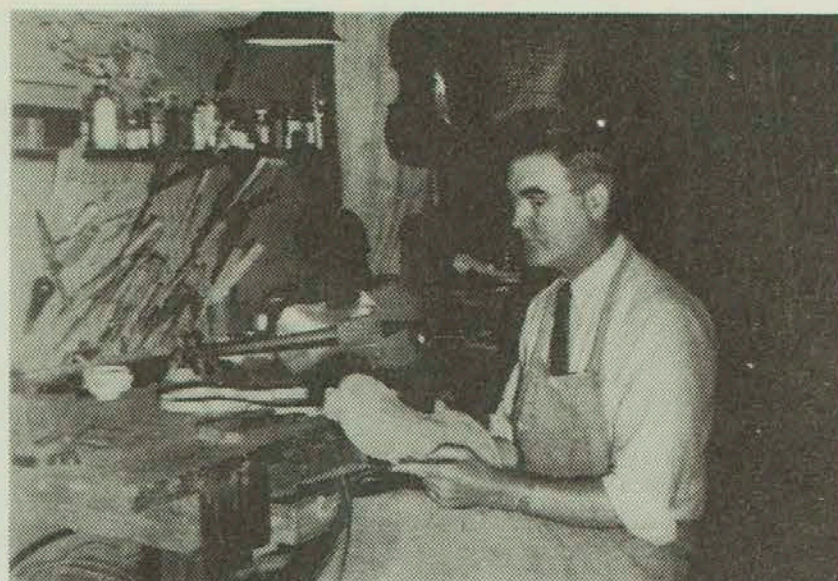
Dr. Davis went to Texas to begin a practice, but he found it "too sandy" for his liking and returned to Kirksville within

five months. In Kirksville, he worked both as an optometrist and osteopath. His first office was at 104 E. McPherson in the store behind Troesters Clothing. His second office was at 117 S. Franklin. Then in 1944, he opened his office at 110 S. Franklin where he remained until his retirement in July 1984. During the earlier years of his optometrical practice, he often ground his own lenses. In the past, osteopathic doctors were trained to use both the stool and table when giving treatments; Dr. Davis used both. Mrs. Mabel Willbanks, owner of Rinehart's News Agency, said, "He gave a very thorough treatment." He knew at least 90 percent of his patients on a first name basis, and many of his patients had been coming to him for 30 or 40 years. No exact records were kept of the number of patients he served.

Not only did he work full-time in his office, but during Dr. Davis' first few years as a doctor, Mr. Cundiff said, "He was an anesthesiologist for a number of guys who used to practice at the old Bigsby hospital." Dr. Davis also did numerous tonsillectomies for those who could not afford to pay.

Never again did Dr. Davis work full-time in a jewelry store after he opened his office on Franklin Street, but occasionally he was asked to repair watches or glasses and to do some free-hand engraving. His work was requested because of its quality.

No matter how busy "Doc" was, he always found time to read. He took the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* daily, and he never missed an article in either it or the *Kirksville Daily Express*. He subscribed to countless magazines and medical journals, including the *U. S. News and World Report* and the Na-



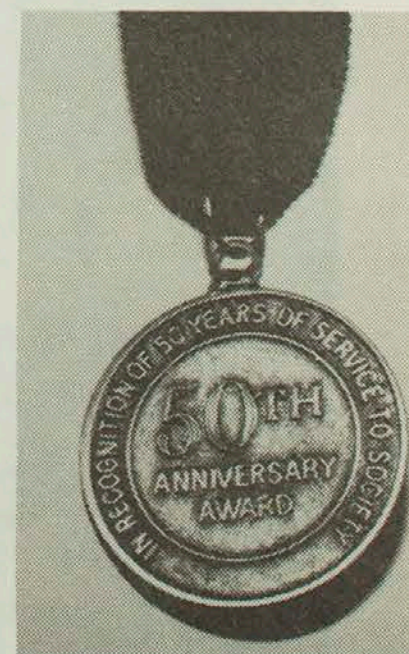
Dr. Davis received a human interest prize of \$25 from the General Motors Chevrolet Company. These pictures of Dr. Davis in his violin workshop appeared in their national magazine.

tional Rifle Association's magazine. He read each of the medical journals and kept up with medical advancements. For light reading, he bought detective stories from Rinehart's News Agency. Very few people were as well-informed as he.

If he were not working, reading, or hunting, Dr. Davis involved himself in a number of other hobbies such as violin making, cabinet making, and music. Intrigued by violin making,



Revisions such as the use of a medical antiseptic to improve the violin's finish and the use of wooden swabbing applicators as pegs to strengthen the neck were done to violins such as this one made by Dr. Davis.



As an alumni, Dr. Davis received the Golden Medallion Award from the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine for over 50 years of medical service.

he was determined to make a violin of his own. He continued to make violins for a number of years, adding a few revisions to give an improved sound. Often he would give the violins to young people who could not afford to buy one. One recipient was a girl who lived in North Carolina; she went on to major in music in college. In addition to constructing musical instruments, he also played the violin, alto horn, and trumpet. He played the alto horn for the Fair Band, local talent that played at the Northeast Missouri District Fair. The other two instruments were played for his own pleasure.

Dr. Davis, with his innumerable abilities and knowledge, always had time for the little pleasures of life. He enjoyed driving his car, which he continued to drive until he was 95. Also, he loved a home-cooked meal, playing cards with his close friends, and feeding the fish, squirrels, and birds. He would wear his overalls over his dress shirt and bow tie when he would count the cows at his friend's farm. Mrs. Lena Tuggle, a close friend, said, "He had a strong but pleasing personality." Others mentioned that he had the respect of all who knew him.

Mrs. Morgan said, "What really stood out to me was that he never was one to dwell on the past." This outlook on life made him an impressive man. Dr. Davis enjoyed life by living one day at a time, accomplishing all that was necessary but taking time for a daily walk and sharing with friends. He gave of himself one hundred percent and encouraged others to do

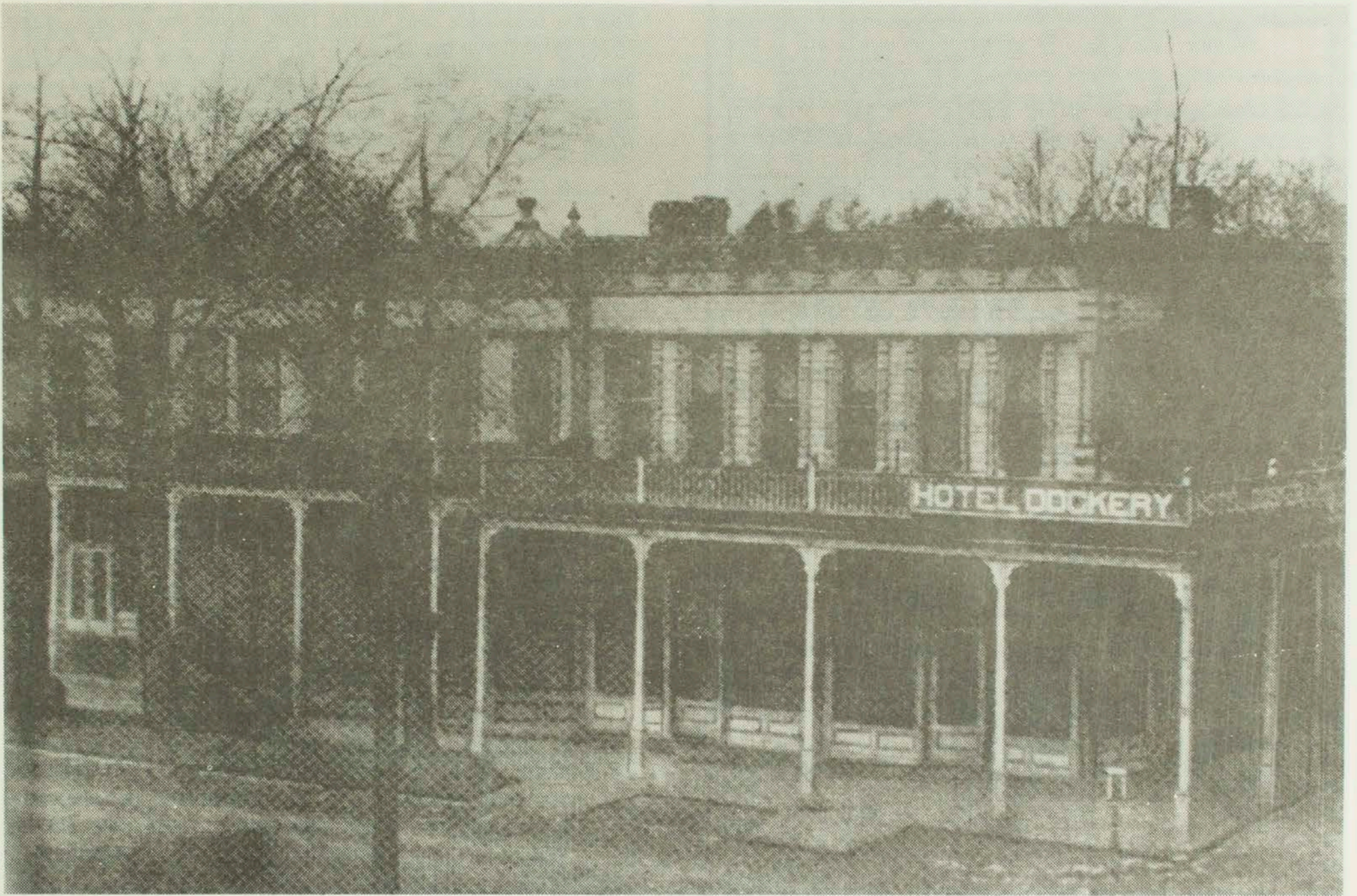


Even after his official retirement from his optometry office at the age of 93, "Doc" continued to practice until he was 95 in his home located at 1312 S. Highland.

the same. He was responsible for encouraging one young man to finish his education. Because of "Doc's" influence, that young man went on to be an excellent lawyer. People like Dr. Davis take charge of their lives but never lose the common touch that encourages others to be their best and enjoy all that life has to offer.



"Doc" Davis (second row, third person from the right) played the alto horn in the Northeast Missouri District Fair Band. The band was local talent that played for the Fair when it first began.



Completed in 1904, the Hotel Dockery provided rooms for patients who traveled to Kirksville for osteopathic treatments. (Photo courtesy of Harriet Beard)

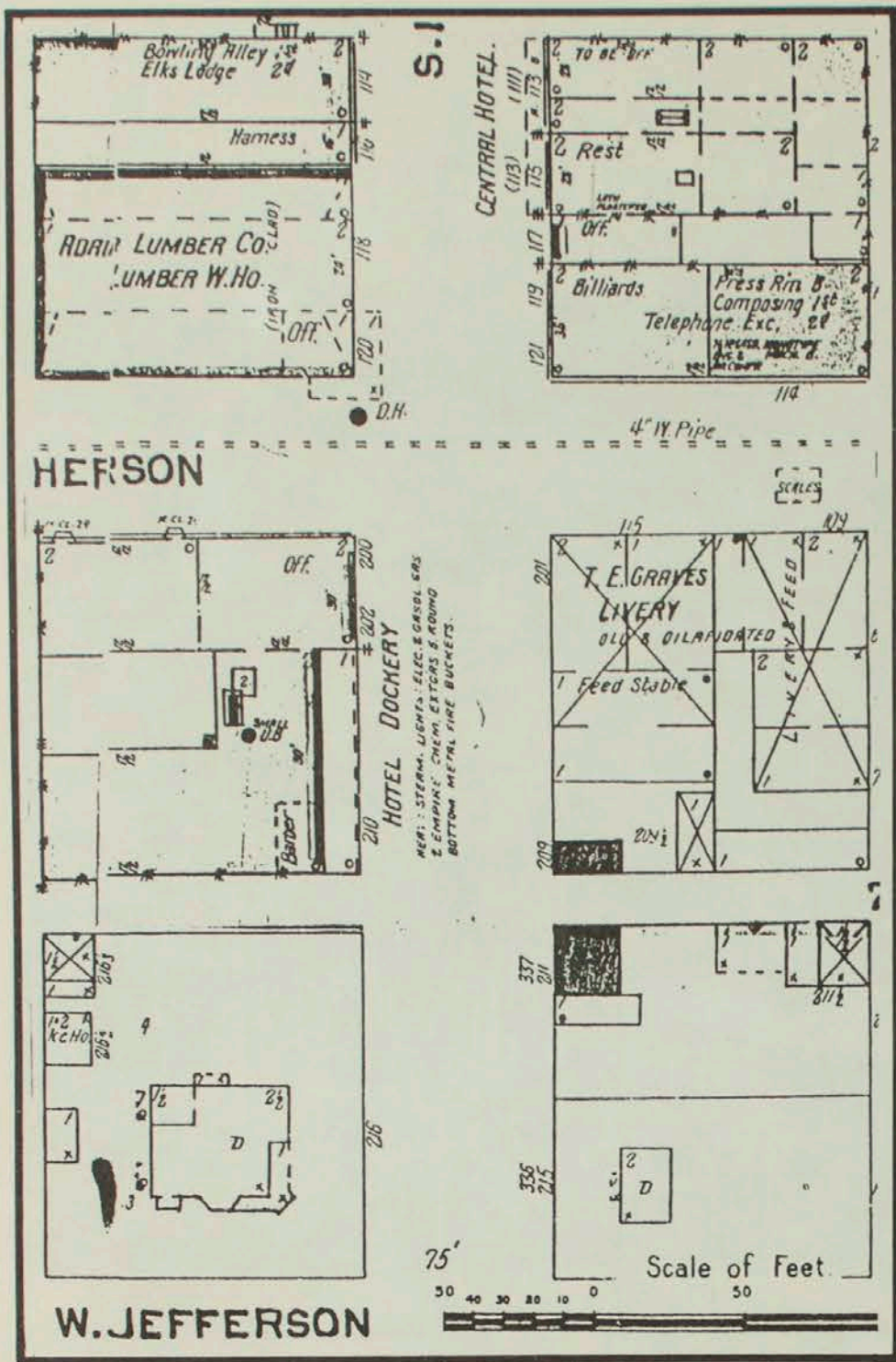
From Riches To Rags

The Dockery Hotel, originated in 1904 by Thomas Jefferson Dockery on the corner of Elson and McPherson Streets, was once an elaborate building that housed Kirksville's visitors. When Mr. Dockery acquired the hotel through an unpaid mortgage, it was called the Leslie Hotel. He then finalized the building plans in 1904.

At the turn of the century, a problem of room and board existed for patients requiring the skill of the osteopathic doctors in Kirksville. During this time, several hotels were built to

accommodate this need. Some examples of these hotels were the Pool House, which was later known as the Stephenson Hotel, the Ivie Hotel, the Central, and the Steele.

Of those listed, the only establishment remaining is the Dockery. Mr. Dockery's acquisition of this hotel came in 1895, and he re-opened the facility in its enlarged state on December 21, 1904. The renowned businessman of Kirksville had a few influential guests at his hotel. William Jennings Bryan spoke at the hotel on August 2, 1907, while on his presidential cam-



This fire insurance map, dated 1906, shows the location of the Hotel Dockery at the corner of McPherson and Elson Streets. The map reads "Heat: Steam. Lights: Elec. & Gasol. Gas. 2 Empire Chem. Extgrs. 6 Round Bottom Metal Fires Buckets." (Courtesy of Pickler Memorial Library)

paign. A circus troop also stayed at the hotel. The camels in the show slept in the lobby.

Before Mr. Dockery died, he gave several of his landholdings to his three daughters: Ardella, Estelle, and Leota. Ardella, the oldest, received the house at 904 East Harrison Street. Estelle received what is now called the Bamberg Building, which is on the east side of the square. The Dockery Hotel went to Leota, the youngest daughter. Leota married Dr. George A. McCole and moved to Montana where she lived with her husband until she died.

After Mrs. McCole's death, her husband wanted to sell the hotel rather than move back to Kirksville to supervise the facility. At this time, Pete Anesi was interested in buying buildings for tax depreciation purposes. Through a mutual acquaintance, Mr. Ernest W. Scott, ownership was transferred to Mr. Anesi in 1947 for the sum of \$37,500.

The Dockery Hotel was a very beautiful building when first opened. The front veranda, which faced the morning sun, covered the entire front portion of the building, 150 feet, while extending from the building 14 feet. The facade, as well as the veranda, was decorated in galvanized tin, which still remains but is in a deteriorated condition. The two-story structure is made of brick and has two bay windows on the second floor. In the rear, between the sides of the building, was a small flower garden. The interior of the hotel was very elaborate in its design.

The Leslie Hotel as it appeared before T.J. Dockery's ownership. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Harriet Beard)



The office in the northeast corner is 30 by 54 feet and has a black and white checkerboard Tennessee marble floor, as does the southeast corner where the barbershop was located. The rest of the hotel floor, in addition to the mill work, is made of oak.

The ground floor has two oak stairways leading to the second floor. The stairway in the front is just a straight stairway, but the one to the rear is a spiral staircase that leads to a large glass skylight on the second floor landing.

There were 75 guest rooms in the hotel, only 10 of which had a bath. Each, however, did have a coal stove for heat. Later, a boiler and steam pipe system were installed and radiators were put in each room.

Throughout the 32 years of Mr. Anesi's ownership, the actual hotel business exchanged hands five separate times. He rented the hotel business for \$200 a month. During his ownership, he made several improvements, including a new boiler and furniture, and raised the rent to \$250.

Mr. and Mrs. Larry Whitney, Walt and Brad Beard, and Charles and Carl Baldwin bought the building in 1979. In 1985, they had a Quincy architectural firm, Pippin, Stone, and Bach, inspect the building, which was determined to be structurally sound. The new owners wanted to build offices on the first floor and apartments on the second floor.

The present owners were anxious to start work on the renovation of the Dockery, and following extensive research they were able to place the building on the National Register

of Historic Buildings. Renovation will be attempted when a good use is found for the building.

Until recently, the Dockery Hotel served as a bus depot and a taxi service, but today the hotel is closed and restricted to the public. The hotel today is bare, except for the new boiler put in by the Whitneys, the Baldwins, and the Beards in 1981. When Kirksville widened the streets, part of the front gallery was removed and the facade was altered. Later, the gallery was enclosed and turned into a sleeping room. The front veranda is still in good shape in places; however, the edges need repair. Weather has been a factor in its wear. But that is to be expected since it has shielded the Dockery Hotel for 83 years.

**By Kim Crosley
and
David May**

The Dockery Hotel in 1987 is showing its years of wear.



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