

THE WESTPORT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

An IRC §501
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charitable
organization



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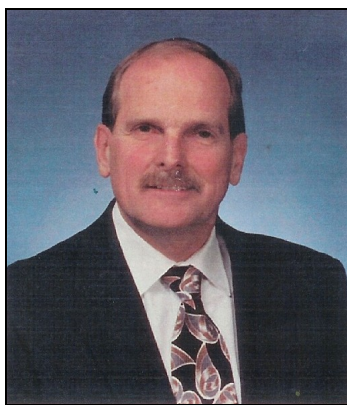
THE WESTPORTER
Jan Fortney, Editor



The Westporter

November 2011

Saturday—November 5 at 2PM—Westport Library Speakers Series— Gary Jenkins and film *Negroes to Hire*



Gary Jenkins will be showing a short version of his video "Negroes to Hire" which explores the history of slavery in Missouri. It takes its name from

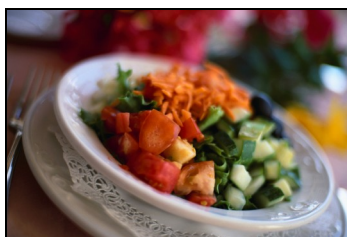
an advertisement in the Liberty Tribune where Clay County slave masters let it be known that they had slaves who could be hired by others. The program will take place at the Westport Library, 118 Westport Road, Kansas City, MO.

The film is based on WPA oral histories compiled between 1936 and 1938 and Jenkins' own extensive research. A local teacher, Jimmy Johnson, tells the story of his great-grandfather's experience as a Platte County slave who escaped to Quindaro. He later became a soldier in the First Kansas Colored Regiment and a landholder after the Civil War.

Jenkins will talk about his experience as a documentary film maker from his early work to show his mother's life to his present work on the Lane Trail, the story of the Underground Railroad along the Western Frontier.

Jenkins is a former Kansas City, Missouri police officer who went to law school at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and now practices law in the area of Estate Planning. His first commercial documentary film was the story of the founding of the Kansas City Free Health Clinic.

Quarterly Luncheon—Saturday, November 5



The quarterly luncheon of the Westport Historical Society will be Saturday, November 5 at the Westport Branch of the Kansas City, MO Public Library.

- **12 noon—social gathering**
- **12:30PM—Luncheon** at the Westport Branch of the Kansas City, MO Public

Library, 2nd floor, at 118 Westport Road, Kansas City, MO. Handicapped accessible via elevator.

- **2PM—Speaker Gary Jenkins** will present the program and film.

Menu:

- Caesar salad
- Swiss steak
- Au gratin potatoes
- Vegetable medley
- Apple crisp w/whipped topping

Parking: available at the library lot and at the Harris-Kearney House, just one block

south of the library.

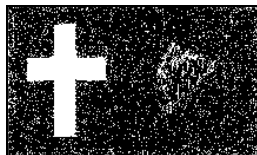
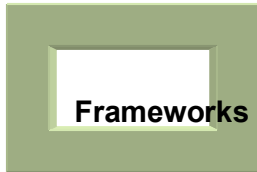
Reservations: due by Wednesday, November 2 at noon with your payment of **\$15.00**. Please make checks payable to the Westport Historical Society. No walk-ins will be accepted.

Please telephone us now at the Harris-Kearney House, 816 561 -1821 or 913-648-0952 with your reservations. You will want to participate in this excellent program and luncheon.

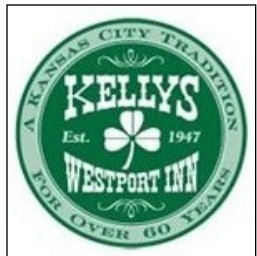
Come and join us as we Discover History!

Christmas 1861 at the 1855 Harris-Kearney House November 25-26—Friday & Saturday—6-9PM

Corporate Sponsors:



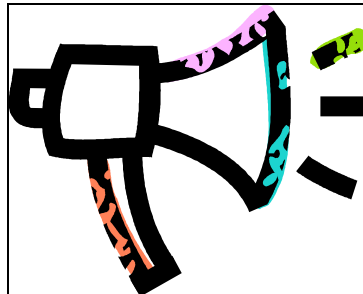
Kelly's Irish Brigade



Please support these fine corporate sponsors!

Visit Col. John and Henrietta Harris at their Greek Revival Mansion on Christmas Eve 1861 for a Holiday Candlelight Tour of Kansas City's oldest brick residence. It is a somber time, but the families of Westport come together to celebrate during the first Christmas Season of the Civil War. Join the holiday preparations as you learn about Christmas on the frontier. Tours begin every 15 minutes and refreshments will be served. Admission is \$8.00 for non-members, \$5.00 for non-member students. Discount tickets available for members and military. Call 816-561-1821 or 913-648-0952 for more information or to make reservations.

Westport Historical Society
4000 Baltimore, Kansas City, MO 64111
www.westporthistorical.com
westporthistorical@gmail.com



Around Town

Beverly Shaw would like to thank those who have contributed to the Westport Library series this year. Our speakers have been **Susann Shinkle** talking about the George Caleb Bingham paintings at the Nelson Gallery, **Ruthie Wornall** entertaining us with stories of *50 Good Men of Kansas City*, **LaDene Morton** sharing the story of the Brookside area, **Barbara Peterson** giving us a PowerPoint tour of the Black Archives of Mid-America in Kansas City, **Alisha Cole** highlighting the contribution of lady doctors in the 19th century, **Tim Westcott** leading us along the Western Line of the Underground Railroad, and **Gary Jenkins** showing his documentary *Negroes to Hire*. These programs would not have been possible without the encouragement of **Mary Roberson** at the Westport Library. We are also grateful to **Ruby Draves** for creating the posters which are displayed at the library and also at Pryde's and Westport Frameworks courtesy of our board members **Louise Meyers** and **Richard**

Heaviland. Board members **Doris Yonker** and **Tom Platt** have delivered the posters so that they can be on display. Last but not least are the members and friends who attended the library programs. Let's do it again next year!

The special observance of the 200th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin McCoy, the father of Westport, with the Union Cemetery Historical Society was a wonderful afternoon on October 1, 2011, featuring tombstone talks by volunteers in costume portraying the movers and shakers of early Kansas City and Westport. Westport Historical Society provided the refreshments afterwards, and we would like to thank **Cooper Weeks** and **Dodie Murphy** for their cash contributions and **Sharon Smart**, **Shirley Christian**, **Alana Smith**, and **Beverly Shaw** for cookies. **Alana Smith** brought rack cards for our Candlelight Tours in November and made many new contacts. It was estimated that about 100 people attended this event at the Union Cemetery.

The Westport Historical Society would like to extend condolences to the families and friends of former members who have passed away. **May Cantrell**, longtime Westport resident and supporter of the veranda sales at the Harris-Kearney House, died on September 23, 2011. Former board member **Harry Conwell** died on September 11, 2011 and is survived by his wife **Irene** who also served on the board. **William Lippert** died on September 7, 2011 and is survived by his wife **Marjorie**, both of whom served on the board.

Wiedenmann Family Came to Westport Area in 1850's



Kansas City History
KC Star, July 20, 1988
By Dory DeAngelo

Wiedenmann Street is only one block long, but its name is the only memorial to one of the early families to settle in Westport.

At one time the Wiedenmann family owned a large part of the area that is now the West Plaza neighborhood. The Wiedenmanns operated a store on the northwest corner of Westport Road and Pennsylvania from the 1860's until 1927. The building is now Kelly's Bar. Wiedenmann Street is a block west of the Old Westport Shopping Center and just off Southwest Trafficway.

The Wiedenmanns and the Vogel family intermarried, and although the Vogels also owned vast acreage in early Westport there is nothing to commemorate their contributions to the area's growth.

Mary Katherine Wiedenmann immigrated from Wittemberg, Germany, in 1854 with her seven sons and three daughters. In the obituary of her grandson, Christian, who died in 1933, the family history was recounted. It stated that when she came to Westport she was a widow. However, in earlier newspaper accounts it was stated that her husband, John, joined the family in Westport in 1855. Why she came ahead and why the Wiedenmann family settled in Westport is not known, although the area attracted many German families.

The Wiedenmanns were hard workers. The

sons were known to be good carpenters. They made ox yokes and freight wagons for the caravans moving on the Santa Fe Trail. And they started acquiring land. Their farming soon made them prosperous enough to open a store. (Their holdings were still considerable in 1900. According to that year's Kansas City Atlas they owned land from 43rd to 47th, Wyoming to Mercier.)

In 1862 the family opened an outfitter and supply store at 501 Westport Road for those travelers moving west and for people living in Westport.

According to a 1938 *Kansas City Star* article, the 1862 day book of accounts of the store noted that several of the area's historical figures owed the store money. Seth Ward ran a tab of \$4,535.50, and John Wornall owed a modest \$50.80 and squared his bill by turning over a yoke of oxen to the store. The Rev. Thomas Johnson, superintendent of the Shawnee Mission, paid for his \$559.10 in purchases with a sack full of coins.

Louis Vogel also arrived in Westport in the mid 1850s with his family. He acquired 200 acres and farmed from 39th Street south. The 1900 Atlas showed the Vogel holdings at that time from 43rd to 48th streets and from Wyoming Street to State Line Road.

Fred Wiedenmann, one of the sons and a Santa Fe trader, married the daughter of Louis Vogel and lived in the house built in 1857 by his father-in-law at 1303 W. 43rd St. The house was in the middle of the Vogel farm and on the Santa Fe Trail. There was an orchard and springhouse. In the days of the Santa Fe trade it was a natural camping place for the wagons. Fred Wiedenmann was quoted as saying that he had seen as many as nine wagon trains camped on the Vogel farm.

By 1923, Roanoke Parkway was being cut through the farm and it already had been divided into lots for home building. But the old house still stood. There were some efforts to preserve the Vogel/Wiedenmann homestead and turn the home into a tea house. However, the house was razed in 1924 to make room for a gasoline station.



2012 Membership

It is that time of year when we ask you to renew your commitment to the 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum and the Westport Historical Society. In a couple of weeks, you will be receiving an end of the year report and an invitation to renew your dues. Please review, decide which membership level is best for you and return the form along with your check (**we no longer accept credit cards**) to the Harris-Kearney House at 4000 Baltimore.

Also, included in this newsletter is a membership form if you would like to send in your 2012 dues, today. You can also find the membership form and sponsorship opportunities on our website at www.westporthistoric.com

Thank you for your continued support,

**The Board of the
Westport Historical
Society**



Westport 2011 Calendar

Kelly's Irish Brigade, The Westport Blue and Gray Social Society and the 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum present the 2011 and 2012 Westport Historical Society Calendar of Events.

2nd Saturday of each month the Westport Historical Society presents the Library Speaker Series

at the Westport Library at 2:00pm

HKH = Harris-Kearney House
WL = Westport Library
SP = Swope Park

Nov 2—Wednesday—Paid reservations for Quarterly Luncheon DUE BY NOON.

Nov 5—Saturday—Quarterly Meeting, Elections and Luncheon. Social gathering at 12noon with luncheon at 12:30PM. (WL)

Nov 5—2nd Saturday Library Speaker Series—Film *Negroes for Hire*—Speaker Gary Jenkins. (WL 2PM)

Nov 9—Wednesday—Harris-Kearney House is dressed for Christmas.

Nov 25-26—Friday & Saturday—Holiday Candlelight—Christmas 1861. Tours begin every 15 minutes from 6PM to 9PM. (HKH)

Dec 18, 2011—Feb 29, 2012—House museum is closed for the winter. (Open for Private Tours, only)

Westport 2012 Calendar

Feb 11—2nd Saturday Library Series at the Westport Library. Chris Edwards and *Bloody Bill Anderson*. (WL 2PM)

Mar 1—Thursday—House museum reopens for the season.

Mar 17—Saturday—St. Patrick's Day parade and Irish Events (HKH)

Jul 21—Saturday—Party in the Park at the Battle of Westport Visitor Center and Museum

Oct 27—Saturday—Celebrate Old Westport

Nov 23 & 24—Friday and Saturday—Holiday Candlelight Tour, *Christmas 1862* (HKH)

Living History Events and dates to be announced

Additional information? Call 816-561-1821.

19th Century Christmas Traditions

Did you know . . . in the house, besides the customary mince-pies and plum-puddings, there was a large cake called the YULE CAKE, overspread with greens and ornaments?



windows and began to sing CAROLS and the master of the house rose to let them in and then many a carol were related?

Did you know . . . the beautiful tradition was for the people to dress their houses with green boughs on the first of December in order that the house remain unrippd by the frosts and cold winds of winter and that the return of spring would renew the foliage of their beloved abodes?



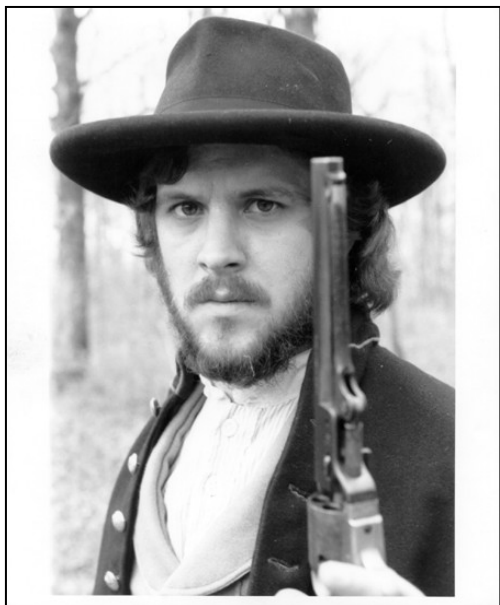
Did you know . . . on Christmas Eve an immense candle, called the YULE CANDLE, was gaily decorated, and for which a candlestick used at no other period was brought forth, and it was lighted to burn slowly for many days?

Did you know . . . about midnight the village singers, with varied instruments that formed the choir of the church, burst forth beneath the



Did you know . . . garlanding of the household meant that the kindly gatherings and gracious feelings of the holiday were kept alive throughout the season?

**Westport Library Series at
The Westport Library, 118 Westport Rd, Kansas City, MO**



JAMES CHRISTOPHER EDWARDS

February 11, 2012 at 2PM, Westport Library.

Chris Edwards is a classically trained musician who has experience playing a wide spectrum of music ranging from country to rock and roll, and from classical to jazz. He received his master's degree in history from the University of Missouri in 2007 with an emphasis in the Civil War in Missouri. Chris has served as an adjunct faculty member in the music departments at Columbia College and University of Missouri-Columbia where he taught folk and classical guitar.

Chris recorded his own CD entitled, "**Blood on the Border,**" which is a musical and narrative story of Quantrill's Confederate Missouri Guerrillas during the Civil War. This project documents true events as experienced by a guerrilla, Bud Pence, who narrates the story. Some of the characters involved in the story include other guerrillas such as Frank and Jesse James, "Bloody" Bill Anderson and William Clark Quantrill.

For the past thirty years, Chris has studied guerrilla warfare in Missouri during the Civil War and the exploits of the James/Younger Gang. Because of his knowledge and expertise in this area, he has been interviewed by A&E Network ("The Real West") and TBS Network ("The Un-

told West") for their television programs about the James/Younger Gang. In 1995, Chris was invited by the James family to serve as a pall-bearer at Jesse James third burial.

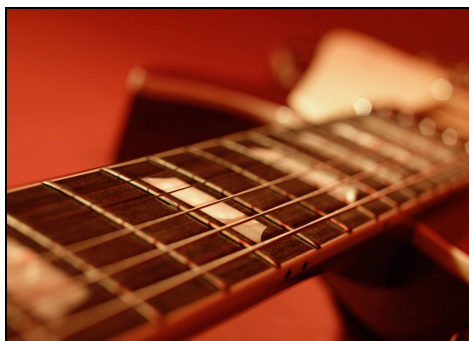
Chris began playing the guitar at the age of seven and has studied classical and flamenco guitar. He later became interested in folk music and then rock and roll. He has played in contemporary rock bands and as a solo act for more than thirty years.

In 1973, Chris studied classical guitar with the internationally known Hector Garcia at the University of New Mexico. Chris has played as a studio musician for many artists who released albums.

Chris's future plans are to continue expanding his career as a professional musician by composing music, recording, and compiling songs for a new album. He is also preparing an educational multi-media production about Missouri guerrilla Captain William T. "Bloody" Bill Anderson to be completed in 2010.

For more information contact:

Chris Edwards
435 E 80th Street
Kansas City, MO 64131
Ph# 816-377-0888
Email : jedwards66@kc.rr.com



Do you have a few hours to spare this summer? Volunteer at the Harris-Kearney House as a docent. Call Alana Smith for more information at 816-561-1821 or 913-648-0952.



WANTED!

Our resident gardener is preparing for spring plantings and the inclusion of a herb garden. If you have crowded herbs that need a new home, please consider thinning them out and donate your plants to the Harris-Kearney House Museum. Your donation may be delivered to the museum up to April 15, 2012.

In addition, if you would consider donating for the long-awaited herb garden, please forward a \$30 donation to the museum.

Updates on New Plantings and Construction at the Harris-Kearney House Museum—July 2011

—Photos by Tim Westcott

Two Park University History Majors, Brady Hanssen and Alfred Hoppert, and University

The service day was the second year that Park University History Majors assisted in improving the grounds around the Harris-Kearney House Museum.



Horticulturist Patty Urbang planted over 200 Iris's, 100 Daylilies and 6 Rose bushes along the parking lot on October 1, 2011. In addition, three crap apple trees were removed to allow the remaining trees to grow and the area for the new herb garden, to be planted in the spring, was prepared.

The Board of Directors of the Westport Historical Society are pleased to announce the completion of the summer construction project that re-stabilized the veranda, installed new second floor ceiling, stuccoing of the first floor wall, and painting. The project improved the outside look of the museum and blended all the outer surfaces.



Thank you for your continued generosity and participation in the 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum and the Westport Historical Society.

Christmas Poem

The following poem presents us with a picture of an old time Christmas.

Come bring with a noise,	
My merry, merry boys,	
The Christmas log to the firing;	(YULE LOG)
While my good dame, she	
Bids ye all be free,	(NO CLASS DIVISION)
With the last year's brand,	(PIECE OF LAST YEAR'S YULE LOG)
Light the new block, and	
For good success in the spending,	(THE COMING YEAR)
On your psalteries play	(OLD STRINGED INSTRUMENT)
That sweet luck may	(GOOD FORTUNE)
Come while the log is tending.	(BURNING)

Author unknown.



Renew Your Commitment to the Westport Historical Society Today!

**Membership Application
Westport Historical Society**

Your Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____

Email: _____

Membership Categories

_____ \$700 Life Membership

Annual Memberships:

- _____ \$300 Sponsor
- _____ \$150 Business
- _____ \$100 Patron
- _____ \$80 Supporting
- _____ \$45 Family/Spouses
- _____ \$35 Individual
- _____ \$15 Student, age 10-22

Tax deductible contribution to the Westport Historical Society Endowment Fund \$ _____

Tax deductible contribution to the Westport Historical Society Capital Campaign \$ _____

Total membership and gift contributions to the Westport Historical Society \$ _____

**Send your Membership Application to:
Westport Historical Society
4000 Baltimore
Kansas City, MO 64111**

**WESTPORT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

4000 Baltimore
Kansas City, MO 64111

Phone: 816-561-1821
or 913-648-0952
westporthistorical@gmail.com

**We're on the web:
www.westporthistorical.com**

To Preserve, Protect and Promote the History of Westport and Early Kansas City.

Looking for a very special holiday gift? If you or someone you know is not a member, please consider a membership in the Westport Historical Society for that special holiday gift. Memberships are \$15.00 for students, \$35.00 for individuals, and \$45.00 for a family. The membership includes invitations to special events, the society's quarterly newsletter, free guided tour of the museum house, and a 10% discount on gift shop items.



Buy a **combination ticket** for tours of the 1855 Harris-Kearney House and the John Wornall House for only \$10.00. This is a \$2.00 savings. Tickets may be purchased at either location and expire one year from date of purchase.



Help Wanted. If you have an expertise or special skills in the areas of carpentry, gardening, sewing, cleaning, research, talking, or fund raising, please let us know. We need YOU. Call Alana at 913-648-0952, 816-561-1821 or Beverly at 816-225-7944 for more information.

2012 Membership Dues. The executive officers and board of directors of the Westport Historical Society would like to ask you to consider renewing your support for our organiza-

tion. Your 2012 dues will insure that we can keep the museum open and allow us to make needed repairs and updates. Your dues also support the events and exhibits presented by the historical society. Membership applications may be found on our website at www.westporthistorical.com, within this newsletter, or you may pick one up at the 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum.

Book a Tour. The 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum is booking group tours for the summer and fall. Church groups,

social groups, educational groups, family groups, and all others are invited to call Alana at 816-561-1821, 913-648-0952, or e-mail at westporthistorical@gmail.com for more information and to schedule a tour. Group rates are \$5.00 each for groups of 10 or more. Of course members are always invited to take a free tour of the house museum.

Living History Groups. Our living history groups are **Kelly's Irish Brigade** and **The Westport Blue and Gray Social Society**.

**Westport Historical Society
4000 Baltimore
Kansas City, MO 64111**