

The Westporter



February 2020



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FOR CLEAR HINDSIGHT IN 2020

During the new year, it is most important that we face the challenge of preserving our area's rich heritage and maintaining the character of the beautiful 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum.

The Historical Society is funded entirely by grants and the contributions of its members. In order to continue our work, the Board of Directors would like to encourage you to join the Westport Historical Society. Your membership dues go a long way toward helping us continue to offer free programs and cover annual operating expenses. If you aren't members, we hope you will consider joining.

If you are past members, we hope you will consider rejoining. A membership application may be found in this newsletter, on our website www.westporthistorical.com, or at the museum. If you are current members, thank you for viewing the society and museum as worthy of your financial support.

Finally, we hope everyone (including life members, who, of course, owe nothing in annual dues) might consider a contribution to our "2020 Capital Campaign." Although we are aggressively applying for grants, the foundations which help non-profits want to see evidence of successful local fund-raising. In essence, the \$25, \$50 or \$200 you might donate to us can unlock the door to thousands more in grant money.

If you wish, please combine your membership dues and any donation on one check and mail it to 4000 Baltimore, KCMO, 64111.

You may mail a check and your membership form, or you can visit our website www.westporthistorical.com and pay online.



The 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum and Westport Historical Society are a §501(c)(3) charitable organization

Thank you to our friends & sponsors for your continued support and generosity



THE NAME OF BRIDGER

THE JIM BRIDGER BUILDING at 504 Westport Road

In 1850, Cyprien Chouteau, brother of Francois G. Chouteau, purchased the west half of Lot 9 from the Ewing Brothers. In 1851, Chouteau brothers constructed the building which stands on the property today, and is one of the two oldest remaining commercial buildings in Kansas City.

During the 1850s, the second floor of the building was home to *THE BORDER STAR* newspaper. In 1866, the building was purchased by the famous mountain man, wagon master, trader, and scout, Mr. Jim Bridger. He started a mercantile which was run by his son-in-law, Albert Wachsmann, a former Captain in the Union Army. Later, they also opened a dance hall on the second floor.

Over the years the building has held many and varied names, but now the building on Westport Road once again boasts the name of BRIDGER! The business is a bottle service night club, but not a mercantile.



In Memoriam 1925 - 2020

Long-time Westport Historical Society member and supporter Laura Lee (Pare) Wiedenmann of Overland Park, Kansas, passed away on January 22, 2020 at the age of 94. Laura was born in Marshall, Missouri on September 22, 1925 to Oscar and Ruby Pare. She grew up in Marshall, Missouri and graduated from Missouri Valley College in 1947. After moving to Kansas City, she worked for Mid-Continent Airlines as a flight attendant. Later, she worked for the Squire Magazine and Braniff Airlines. While in Kansas City, Laura met her future husband, George Robert Wiedenmann Jr. and they were married on January 29, 1950. The union was blessed with four children and a loving marriage of 57 years. Laura is preceded in death by her husband George. She is survived by her children; Karen Bulk (David) of Overland Park, KS; Lynn Heinze (Jim) of Apple Valley, MN; Kurt Wiedenmann (Nancy) of Philomath, OR; and Laurie Bywater (Rick) of Olathe, KS; 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Laura was a member of Alpha Xi Delta Fraternity, Kansas City Chapter of Clipped B's, Daughters of Old Westport and the Westport Historical Society. A Celebration of Life will be held on March 14th at 2:00 pm at McGilley's at 123rd and State Line.

Visit Our Supporting Business Partners



Lifetime Members

- BEER KC Restaurants:
Char Bar, Beer Kitchen
- Mayor & Mrs. Richard Berkley
- Ann Creveling
- Ann Duer
- Jim & Caren Hall
- Cynthia Higgins
- Marty and Terry Jarvis
- Kelly's Westport Inn
- Collins, Westphal & Kelpel, Inc.
- Crosby Kemper, III (Honorary)
- Dorine Lowell
- Olga Marr (Honorary)
- Patricia Cleary Miller
- Steve and Marianne Noll
- Allin & Donna Phister
- L. Thorton & Erin Phister
- Thomas Platt
- Ray & Sandy Sutton
- Torosian Fndn. / Jean Kiene
- Cooper Weeks
- Doris Yonder

Sponsor Members

- Westport Land & Mgt, LLC

Patron Members

- Judith & James Budde
- David W. Jackson
- Midwest Genealogy Center
- Sharon Smart
- Mr. and Mrs. Dan Smith

THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS SPONSORS

The Westport Historical Society would like to say “thank you” to our business partners for being a part of our family. We are truly grateful for the support and commitment each has shown to us in the last 12 months.

EARLY WEST PORT AND OUTFITTING WAGONS

John Calvin McCoy established a store, in what is now present-day Westport, in 1828. As it was many miles to the Independence Landing at Blue Mills, McCoy found a natural, limestone outcropping four miles north of his store and had his goods delivered there. In 1832, McCoy planned West Port and the place where he landed his goods, he called West Port Landing. Mr. McCoy was a surveyor and his knowledge of Woodcraft enabled him to see that this landing would enable West Port to be the gate to the west, hence the name. Shortly after, other merchants came to the area. Among the most recognized were Lucas and Cavanaugh, John A. Sutter, A.G. Boone, Street and Baker, W. M. Chick, and Alfonda Van Biber.

The city continued to grow rapidly and very soon more merchants arrived, among them were the Ewing brothers who opened a large store. The Indians also came to West Port to trade. They exchanged furs and peltries for supplies which were stored in warehouses near West Port Landing as they arrived by boat on the river from St. Louis. From the warehouses, the supplies and goods were transported by wagon and oxen over the 4 miles uphill to the stores in West Port. The Mexicans used the same merchandise as the Indians, so in 1848, F. X. Aubrey established a fast winter express to transport merchandise between West Port and Santa Fe. The first trip consisted of 20 wagons with eight mules each and spanned 5 days and 20 hours, one way.

This trip demonstrated that there was a possibility of rapid transit. By 1849, outfitting wagons for commerce was a booming business. In this year, Jose Charves brought two wagon loads of silver containing 103,000 Mexican Dollars encased in skins to West Port. This shipment was received by partners Albert Gallatin Boone and William F. Bernard.



About this time, the westward migration began and 1849 and 1850 were boom years for the outfitters as over 40,000 immigrants were outfitted. This movement stimulated the manufacture of wagons, harness, ox yokes and ploughs. Other traders came to West Port from Mexico and this helped to increase the Santa Fe trade. Charles E. Kearney bought-out Mr. Boone in 1853, and Kearney and Bernard enlarged their business outfitting over 11,800 wagons, with mostly goods of their own manufacture, until 1859. At that time, Joab and William Bernard purchased Kearney's share of the business. Their outfitting business did well until the outbreak of the Civil War, and by the end of 1861, trade slumped by half and then virtually ceased.

~taken in part from *WESTPORTS of the Western World* by Thomas Flynn

Some of the items purchased from the West Port outfitters for the trips down the trails were:

| | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Wagon cover | Oakum | Ox yokes and shoes | Chamber pot |
| Brake Chains | Hand tools & saws | Nose twitcher | Lanterns |
| Rope, Tar Bucket | Nuts, bolts, washers | Knives and whetstone | Candles & matches |
| Wagon jack | Nails, staples | Extra links | Buckets |
| Extra axles, spokes, tongues | Whips | Plow, shovel, scythe | Hoes |
| Bedding & tent supplies | Cooking utensils | Clothing & Shoes | Non-perishable food |
| Horses & mules-harnesses | Oxen, cattle & cows | Medical supplies | Weapons & guns |

~taken from the Westport Historical Society Files

DID YOU KNOW . . .

- In the late 1800's another Westport was the largest coastal town north of San Francisco?
- Westport, Connecticut became a town in May 1835?
- Westport, South Dakota was scripted on June 28th, 1880?
- Westport, Kentucky was founded in June of 1797?
- Westport, Maine became a town in 1828?
- Westport, Minnesota was established on January 8, 1883?
- Westport, Oregon was founded in 1850?
- Westport, Pennsylvania began as a post office stop in 1850?
- As a result of the railroad being built in Western, Tennessee, the town of Westport was formed in 1860?
- Westport, Washington was incorporated as a town in June, 1914.



SEEKING YOUR HELP

The Westport Historical Society would like to find information on the descendants of John and Henrietta Harris of Westport, MO. The Harris' had seven daughters and one son. Below is a list of the Harris children, their spouses and finally, their children. If you, or anyone you know, can give us phone numbers or addresses of descendants, we would be very grateful.

Sarah Ann married Peter Behan in 1837. Children: Katherine, Henrietta, John, Laura, Silas, Julia, Susan Ann, Hugh Gary, Peter.

Henrietta married Joel Lipscomb in 1840. Children: Nathan, Louisa, Frances, John, Rodney, James, Zachary.

Mary Frances married Seth Ward in 1860. Children: Hugh, John, Mary Francis.

John, Jr. married Anna Wood in 1864. Children: Jorrine, John, Arthur, O'Verta.

Juliet Ann (Julia) married John J. Mastin 1852 in. Children: John Mastin, Jr. (died at age 11).

Josephine (Jo) married Charles E. Kearney 1851. Children: Mary Louise, Julia, Elizabeth, Charles, Jr.

Susan married William R. Bernard in 1853. Children: Annie, Nettie.

Elizabeth (Lizzie) married Thomas Mastin. 1866. Children: John, Jack, Theo, Thomas.

To begin our search, obituaries for a Harris daughter and granddaughter are included in this edition of the Westporter:



House Open March 6

The 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum closes for the winter season. We will reopen on Friday, March 6, 2020.

The House Museum is still available for group tours, events, and meetings in January and February 2020.



Mrs. Susan Harris Bernard (Harris daughter)

June 27, 1834—April 9, 1895

Mrs. Susan Harris Bernard, wife of Judge William R. Bernard, of Westport, who for many years was the presiding Judge of the county court, died on April 9, 1895 at the home at the corner of Thirty-ninth and Pennsylvania. She was 61 years old and was born in Westport. She is the sister of the wives of John Mastin (Juliet), Tom Mastin (Elizabeth), Seth Ward (Mary Francis), and Col. Kearney (Josephine) and was the daughter of the late John Harris (Henrietta). She left two daughters Mrs. Henderson Warfield (Nettie) and Miss Annie Bernard. The funeral was held Thursday morning, April 11th at ten o'clock at the Methodist Church in Westport. Rev. Charles Moore preached the funeral. (*KC Journal*, Wed., April 10, 1895). Mrs. Bernard was buried in Section 30, Lot 6, at Union Cemetery, along with her husband, her parents, a sister, two brothers-in-law, and other relatives. There is a large monument on the John Harris lot.

Mrs. Susan Ann Behan (pronounced Ben) Price (Harris granddaughter)

March 23, 1859—July 13, 1938

Mrs. Susan Ann Price, 79 years old, a life-long resident of Kansas City and a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. John (Henrietta) Harris, who were connected with the early life of Westport through their historical Harris House Hotel, died July 13, 1938 at the home, 3922 Walnut Street after an illness of several weeks. Mrs. Price was born in 1859, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. (Sarah Ann Harris) Peter Behan. The famous Harris Hotel, owned by her grandparents, housed nearly every famous person who visited Westport from 1852 until 1922 when the hotel was demolished. Mrs. Price was educated in the public schools, here. She was married to Robert Campbell Price, who for many years, before his death in 1911, was a water inspector for the city. Mrs. Price's only interest outside of her home was the Hyde Park Christian Church.

A son, Edmund S. Price, three daughters, Mrs. Julia Platt, Mrs. Anna Plessens, and Mrs. Theo. E. Cooling, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren, survive. Funeral services were held at 2 o'clock, Friday July 15th, at the Stine & McClure chapel. (*KC Star*, Wed., July 13, 1938) Susan was the sister of the famous Johnny Behan, the first Marshall of the Territory of Arizona.



FAMILY WEDDINGS IN THE 1855 HARRIS HOUSE

Mary Frances Harris married Seth Ward in the parlor of the Harris House in 1860. A family reception followed the wedding. This was the second marriage for Mrs. Ward. Her first husband, Charles McCarty died as the result of an illness.

In 1866, Elizabeth (Lizzie) Harris married Thomas Mastin in the fashionable parlor in the home of her parents, Col. John and Henrietta Harris. Immediately following the ceremony, a lavish reception was provided to the guests.

Historical Resource Library

The library at the 1855 Harris Kearney House Museum contains many books and files which may be used as reference material for those seeking information on early Westport, the Town of Kansas, and many of the residents who lived and worked in early Kansas and Missouri. If you would like to do research using our sources, please call the museum staff to make an appointment: (816) 561-1821



If someone you know is not a member, please consider a membership in the Westport Historical Society for that special gift!

| | |
|------------|-------|
| INDIVIDUAL | \$40 |
| FAMILY | \$50 |
| PATRON | \$125 |
| BUSINESS | \$150 |
| SPONSOR | \$300 |
| LIFETIME | \$800 |

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.



Restoration Romances:

Sun-Baked Bricks By Dave Baumgartner

The exterior walls of the Harris-Kearney Home were constructed with sunbaked bricks from the Missouri Clay found on the original property. These bricks were made by slaves and have held firmly and faithfully for 164 years.

Next to wood, Missouri Clay was the perfect building material to be found in early day Westport. Bricks were easily made with clay and water mixed together and added to a brick-size form, then baked for several days in the sun until hardened enough to be used in the building of a wall.

Constant, long term exposure to the elements, the presence of growing ivy, and poor, early restoration attempts can cause sun baked bricks enough harm that some must be repaired or replaced. The exterior crust of such damaged brick will exhibit a flaking-off of material as shown by this 1855-56 sun baked brick.

The restoration of the Harris-Kearney Home in 1973 addressed this situation that existed on the back (southwest) walls by removing each damaged brick, one-by-one, turning it around so that a "fresh" crust segment faced the exterior, and returned it to it's place on the wall. Obviously, some bricks had to be replaced entirely. This was done just as were the original sun baked bricks made and set in place.



NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR TWO AWARDS

The CROSBY KEMPER Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation, known as *THE CROSBY*

recognizes projects, programs, or polices that make, or have made significant contributions to historic preservation in conjunction with an entity or property in the states of Missouri or Kansas. This award acknowledges noteworthy accomplishments in the promotion and advancement of the National Historic Preservation goals with respect to cultural and natural heritage resources and historic preservation, especially those which add benefit for the state(s) and the public.

Eligibility

Any state or local agency, tribal government, non-profit organization, business, or person(s) is/are eligible to receive the Crosby Kemper Award.

Nominations must be related to stewardship, actions, activities, or undertakings of Historical Preservation projects, programs or polices.

Nomination forms and information are available upon request at westporthistorical@gmail.com. Nominations are due to the Westport Historical Society by May 1, 2020.

The Westport Historical Society's SHINING STAR COMMUNITY AWARD

is designed to celebrate businesses, civic organizations, and/or individuals who make a significant contribution to enhance the well-being of the Westport community and its neighborhoods. The award recognizes tireless efforts and dedication to improve our community. Nominations are open and due to the Historical Society by May 1, 2020. For more information regarding a nomination for this award, please contact the Westport Historical Society at westporthistorical@gmail.com



Our Education Partner in our Time Traveler Program

May 1 through June 27, 2020

Westport Historical Society is launching their Time Traveler program, a unique experience for Home Educators to explore the past and present through activities, projects, speakers, and field trips. To sign up, contact the program by email to: timetravelwestport@gmail.com.

Program participants meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

The March 17 meeting will be a field trip to the UFDC Headquarters and Doll Museum.

The April meeting will be held at Harris-Kearney House Museum.

2020 Calendar

House Opens for the Season on March 6, 2020

May 1 - June 27--- **Doll Extravaganza**

July 3 - 29----**Music Programs and Concerts**

September 4 - Oct 31--**Quilt Extravaganza and Exhibits of Tammy Reid's Quilts**

September 12---- **Lost Arts Fair (during the Westport Arts Fair)**

November 14----**Westport Historical Annual Meeting and Luncheon**

December 5 and 6----**Christmas Open House**

House Closes for the season on December 19
House Opens for the Season on March 5, 2021



Thank You!

WHS Needs Volunteers!

Do you have a few hours to spare? Do you enjoy learning about history and sharing what you know? Would you like to be a part of an Historic House Museum and Historical Society?

Whether you would like to be a docent giving tours or if you would just like to help out at special events such as field trips, ice cream socials, or music programs — we always welcome folks who would like to volunteer!

Whatever your skills or talents, we have a place for you!

Call Alana Smith for more Information at (816) 561-1821 or (913) 648-0952.



COMING SOON: Announcements Regarding the New Music Program will be on our website, on Facebook and in the Mansion House News.

Thank you for your generous support!

Westport Historical Society
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