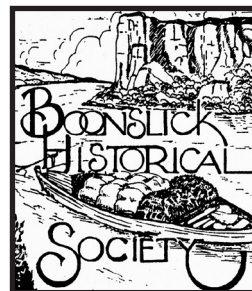


Go to www.boonslickhistoricalsociety.org to view our Fall 2020 quarterly - then click on Boone's Lick Heritage, Vol. 19, No. 3

News & Notes

Boonslick Historicial Society • P.O. Box 426 • Boonville Mo. 65233 • Winter 2021



Since 1937

—Greetings & Happy New Year from the President—

The year 2021 is off and running and many of us feel there's real hope that life may soon return to a degree of normalcy as the months progress.

This special "one-off" newsletter has been designed to bring members up-to-date, and particularly give each of us an easy way to pay dues, an action which normally would have been taken care of at the fall meeting.

The COVID 19 pandemic resulted as you'll recall in the cancellation of our spring visit to the new State Historical Society site in Columbia, in addition to a planned

summer visit to the historic Oakwood mansion in Fayette. Clearly there was no reason to even consider a fall dinner gathering!

But soon our board will be able to meet and lay the groundwork for what might be possible for gatherings in 2121. And our intrepid journal editor, Don Cullimore, along with the publication's graphic designer, Cathy Thogmorton, will soon be bringing the quarterly back in print (see below).

This is also a good opportunity to send a shout-out to our board

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BOONE'S LICK

HERITAGE QUARTERLY

—Looking Ahead—

We plan to be back in print with the spring 2021 (March) issue of the Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly. Our apologies for the necessary interruption in magazine production during the fall and winter of 2020. With the arrival and planning of widespread distribution of effective COVID-19 vaccines, we hope magazine production and everyday life will be able to return to a more normal state this year.

Don Cullimore,



Thogmorton, and Larry Herrington. We are grateful for their service.

On page 8 is a brief mention of our foray into radio, and, with some good ideas from Mary Jane Criger, we'll look at some other media outreach ideas in local print and radio.

Several events coming up:

- April 11, 2 p.m, Pilot Grove Cemetery Walk by the Cooper County Historical Society.

- Rededication and remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the Howard County Memorial Bandstand 2 p.m., April 17, courthouse.

- Watch for dedication of the new glass shed housing the South Howard County's Conestoga Wagon on New Franklin parkway.

My best to all as we now hope to "Win Through to a Better Day" (FDR 1932).

Jim Steele

News & Notes

News & Notes is a special newsletter published by the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233. Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, normal means of communication via in-person gatherings and the BHS quarterly journal have largely been impossible. As such, this publication is being produced as a stop-gap measure to inform members of pertinent information.

Jim Steele, President

As noted on Page 1, our quarterly journal will resume with the spring issue in March. We encourage our members and others interested in history to contribute articles or other information of historical interest, including family histories, pertaining to the region. Please address all contributions and correspondence related to the periodical to the editor, Don B. Cullimore, 1 Lawrence Dr., Fayette, MO 65248, or email to: Don.cullimore40@gmail.com, phone: 660-888-3429. Editorial guidelines may be obtained from the editor. Publication deadlines are February 1 for the March (Spring) issue; May 1 for the June (Summer) issue; August 1 for the September (Fall) issue; and November 1 for the (Winter) December issue.

The Boonslick Historical Society was founded in 1937 and meets several times a year to enjoy programs about historical topics pertinent to the Boonslick area. Members of the Society have worked together over the years to publish historical books and brochures and to mark historic sites. They supported the founding of Boone's Lick State Historic Site, marked the sites of Cooper's Fort and Hanna Cole's Fort and have restored a George Caleb Bingham painting on loan to The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art at Central Methodist University, Fayette.

Membership dues are \$15-Individual, \$25-Family, \$50-Sponsor, \$250-Patron, \$500-Life. The dues year is January through December. Receive our publication, Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly, and attend annual Society events highlighting the region's history. To become a member, send a check made out to the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233.

OFFICERS and BOARD MEMBERS 2021

Jim Steele, Fayette, President
Brett Rogers, Boonville, Vice President
Sam Jewett, Boonville, Treasurer
Carolyn Collings, Columbia, Secretary
Don Cullimore, Fayette
Sue Day, Pilot Grove
Mike Dickey, Arrow Rock
Larry Harrington, Fayette
Sue Thompson, New Franklin
Cathy Thogmorton, Fayette

Remembering Old Friends



From left: Braxton Rethwisch, Judy Lay, Martha Holman

Three longtime members of the Boonslick Historical Society passed away during the winter months. They were Braxton Rethwisch of Fenton, Martha Holman and Julia (Judy) Lay, both of Fayette.

• **Rethwisch** died Nov. 29, 2020, at the age of 78 after an extended illness. He and his wife Judith (Judy) were BHS family members. They hosted the 2013 summer meeting of BHS at their historic 1883 Victorian home, The Elms, a classic example of French Second Empire-style architecture, in Fayette. Braxton retired in 2016 from Central Methodist University, his alma mater, after a lengthy career as an admissions counselor.

• **Holman** died Jan. 7 at the age of 95 after an extended illness. She and her late husband William (Bill) were BHS family members. Her father, D. C. Rogers, was active in politics and served as

mayor of Fayette in the 1930s. The main city lake is named after him. Martha was a 1947 graduate of Central College (CMU) and had a long career as a math teacher.

• **Lay** died Jan. 27 at the age of 84 after a brief illness. She and her late husband William (Bill) were BHS family members. An attorney, Bill was also an avid historian of the Boonslick Country. The family made a gift of his Boonslick History papers to the Society in 2015. Judy was a graduate of Drury College and taught elementary school for a number of years.

Editor's note: More detailed obituaries of the three members will be published in the spring issue (March) of Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly. Editor, 1 Lawrence Drive, Fayette, MO 65248, or email documents or digital images to: don.cullimore40@gmail.com.

Don't forget to include your e-mail when you renew!

Show-Me History

Editor's Note: Missouri became the nation's 24th state when it was founded Aug. 10, 1821. Special events and activities will mark the bicentennial this year and the BHS will attempt to note these happenings in the weeks and months ahead. At this point we're including below a listing of 10 selected towns that illustrate the state's rich history, all of which add to the commemoration of this milestone birthday. This is a somewhat shortened summary of those locations picked by editors of the AAA member magazine "AAA Explorer." For information on securing AAA membership call 800-222-7623.

1. Ste. Genevieve: Missouri's first European settlement

Among the first Europeans to call the region home were French-Canadian fur trappers, farmers and miners who settled Ste. Genevieve. Although the founding date has been debated, many experts say it occurred in 1751. Flooding on the Mississippi River in 1785 forced the town to move about 3 miles inland, so none of the original structures remain.

2. Great Outdoors: Missouri's first parks

One of Missouri's first state parks, Big Spring, was dedicated in 1924 near Van Buren. The park later combined with nearby Alley Spring and Round Spring state parks to become part of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, the first national park area to protect a wild river system. Floaters treasure the park's spring-fed Current and Jacks Fork rivers that wind through a landscape of rugged hills and towering bluffs.

3. New Madrid Earthquakes: Missouri's first natural disaster

A series of earthquakes centered in New Madrid rocked much of North America 10 years before Missouri became a state. The first, on Dec. 16, 1811, was followed by hundreds of quakes over three months, some of which were felt hundreds of miles

away. Despite 200 years of tornadoes and floods, this sequence of earthquakes is the most significant natural event to have occurred in the Show-Me States.

4. Route 66: The Mother Road

For a bicentennial road trip, follow the 315-mile stretch of the Mother Road that has attracted millions of travelers from around the world to the Show-Me State.

5. Arrow Rock: Home to Important Missourians; Natl. Historic Landmark

When their expedition passed through central Missouri in June 1804, Lewis & Clark noted a beautiful spot for a town. Arrow Rock was founded there on the banks of the Missouri River in 1829. J. Huston Tavern, which opened in 1834, is Missouri's oldest continuously operating restaurant. It is closed temporarily for construction, so check before you visit.

6. Fort Osage: Guarding history

A few days after passing Arrow Rock, the Lewis and Clark Expedition rounded a bend in the Missouri River. William Clark noted in his journal that it would be a good spot for an outpost. Under Clarks's direction, Fort Osage was founded four years later, and today it is a National Historic Landmark.

7. St. Joseph: Missouri's road west

Missouri was just five years old when Joseph Robidoux established a fur trading post in 1826 that was later named St. Joseph after his patron saint. For much of the 19th century, it served as a transportation and economic hub, and seemingly everyone came through town – those traveling the Oregon Trail, gold seekers on the California Trail, steamboats, railroads, the Pony Express, and an outlaw named Jesse James.

8. St. Charles: Missouri's first Capitol

For the first five years of statehood, Missouri's Capitol was in St. Charles. The historic two-story brick building still stands, looking almost exactly as it did when 14 senators and 43 representatives took their seats for the first legislative session in the summer of 1821. While most business focused on setting up a functioning government, noteworthy decisions made at that first Capitol building includes outlawing dueling in Missouri and repealing the bachelor tax, a legislative effort to encourage marriage.

9. Jefferson City: Missouri's current Capitol

All along, the plan was to move the state capital to a place more centrally located with good access to the Missouri River, which was the major means of transportation 200 years ago. Jefferson City fit the bill.

10. Saint Louis University: Missouri's first university

Founded in 1818, three years before Missouri's statehood, Saint Louis University (SLU) is the oldest university west of the Mississippi and the country's second-oldest Jesuit university.



This is a 1940s linen postcard view depicting the J. Huston Tavern in Arrow Rock which has been an occasional gathering place for BHS events.

Fayette WPA Swimming Pool Still an Iconic Landmark

Historic City Facility Evokes Fond Memories

By JIM STEELE

ON A COOL SPRING DAY on the first Tuesday in April 1934, Fayette voters went to the polls to elect the usual slate of city officials to serve for the next two years. No one who cast a ballot that day could have known that the election results would have historic and far-reaching ramifications for the local community and Howard County.

Fayette Attorney D.C. Rogers, a 1915 Central College (now Central Methodist University) graduate, had already established himself as a mover and shaker locally and statewide. In the city election of 1934, he handily defeated the incumbent mayor to assume the city's top elected position.

Immediately, the pages of the Fayette newspapers carried word of Roger's far-reaching ideas for the city, including a major beautification effort and, more importantly, hopes to establish Fayette's first city park and to have a state-of-the-art pool as its centerpiece.

News accounts indicate there was near-unanimous backing for the plan and soon a number of residents had agreed to serve on several different planning committees.

The rest is history.



D.C. Rogers

Today, the pool is particularly significant in that it continues to serve as a long-lived recreational facility built by a partnership of public entities during the Great Depression.

Funding came from Fayette, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Howard County, and the State of Missouri.

The pool is distinguished by its Art Deco styling, as well as the unusual above-ground design. It was the concept of Wesley Bintz, a nationally-known civic engineer from Lansing, Mich., who brought to the project his patented "Bintz Pool" design. The facility opened on July 4, 1936, and remains in use in its original function.

The pool's greatest period

of significance runs from 1936 until the 1960s when air conditioning and the availability of other forms of entertainment became commonplace.

While there were several summers in later years when the pool did not open (or had to close early due to maintenance issues), it nonetheless continues today to exhibit a high level of integrity, and has seen no major alterations since its construction. It is a rare intact example of Art Deco design.

The building is also a commemorative property, although not exclusively so. The entrance hall was built to serve as a World War I memorial and a plaque has been preserved as part of the pool's second floor observation area.

LAND IS ACQUIRED

The decision to create an official city park in Fayette came more than a century after the town was incorporated. After discussion began the year before, the Fayette Board

of Aldermen agreed in 1935 to begin acquiring land for a park. This came at the urging of the Chamber of Commerce and other interested citizens, including Rogers. On June 18 of that year the Fayette paper reported that the "park proposal that has been under lively discussion by the Chamber of Commerce and is the subject of various petitions being considered at length by the aldermen."

Although the initial park plans did not include a pool, the decision to build one apparently was made early in the process. Rogers, just the week before, had served as keynote speaker for the opening of a new pool in Slater and it was noted that a delegation from Fayette also had been invited to the opening of one in Higginsville. It is likely that those events encouraged Fayette leaders.

Another deciding factor appears to have been the availability of federal assistance. Depression-era government aid

programs were being widely utilized in Missouri at that time, on projects which ranged from hand-dug ditches for water mains to skyscrapers for public offices. The main federal sources of construction assistance for communities in the mid-thirties were two FDR New Deal agencies — the Public Works Administration, or PWA, and the Works Progress Administration, or WPA.

The WPA focused primarily on providing employment for workers who would otherwise be on relief roles — projects, therefore, tended to be labor intensive. As of December of 1935, nearly two-thirds of most WPA project budgets were devoted to wages. On the average, WPA funds covered more than 80 percent of the total cost of a project, with 86 percent of funding going to cover payroll expenses.

In 1935, the year the pool was started, Missouri ranked 11th in the nation in the number

of WPA workers, with more than 100,000 Missourians on WPA payrolls.

Rogers, who was active in the politics of municipal administration on a statewide basis, would naturally have been quite familiar with such programs. At the time the park project was being planned, he was the president of the Missouri Mayor's Association and was instrumental in arranging a large meeting of that group in Fayette just weeks after the park project got underway.

Another well-known Fayette civic leader (and local college professor) was Dr. B.I. Lawrence who, also served as an officer in Howard County's Company M of the Missouri National Guard. He, too, was a strong supporter of efforts to develop the park and the pool.

The keynote speaker at the meeting was M.S. Murry, the new head of the Missouri WPA. It's logical to assume that Rogers would have pur-

sued the subject of federal aid for the park project during the time Murry was in the area, especially since he had recently attended the opening of the PWA-funded Higginsville pool.

Whatever the influencing factors, it's known that by the fall of 1935, pool construction had become a key part of the park project and the WPA had committed to help with funding. **CONSTRUCTION BEGINS**

On Nov. 15 of that year the Fayette paper reported that 40 men had started on the "park and swimming pool project, 20 on each job." (An additional 20 men were put to work extending a nearby water main.)

Noted in the paper: "Plans are to proceed at once with the building of the swimming pool. Blueprints will soon be submitted to the council for approval and the actual work begun."

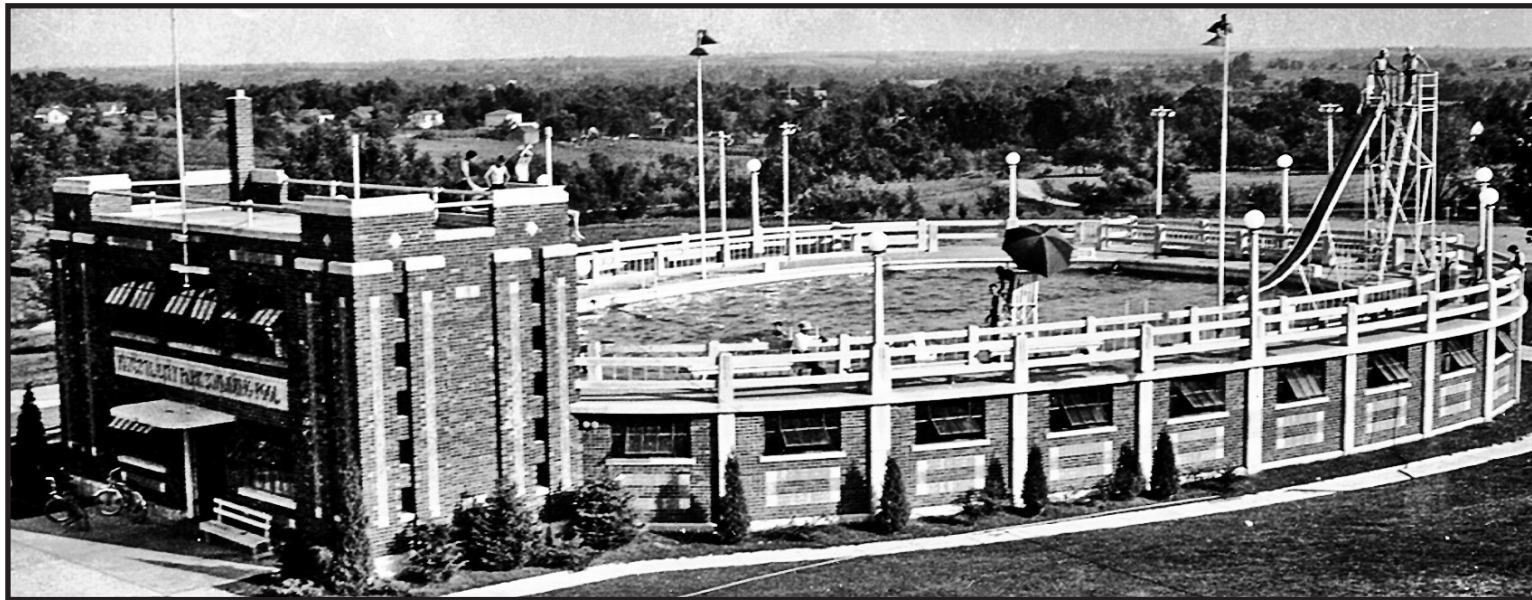
A week later, the city council and other officials heard

what was described as "an interesting and intelligent discussion of swimming pools," by "nationally known swimming pool designer" Wesley Bintz.

Bintz apparently made quite an impression and was hired that same evening, with the newspaper featuring a long complimentary account of his presentation. The report included a fairly detailed discussion of the pool design and noted that officials who heard the proceedings were elated over the fact that Bintz contacted the city at such an appropriate time.

It appears that everyone involved was impressed with the above-ground design for the pool, which was said to make it much less expensive to construct. Bintz was confident that he could stay within the approximately \$16,000 budget (about \$303,283 in today's money) set for the pool project,

(Continued on Page 6)



OLD FRIENDS visit the pool about 15 years ago. The late Roger Daniels was one of the first lifeguards in 1936. The late Martha Holman, daughter of D.C. Rogers, was a lifeguard in the 1940s.



Early photos depict pool's history - Top, WPA workers near completion of the pool in summer 1936. Above, swimmers enjoy the high dive.

HISTORIC POOL (Continued from Page 5) and still end up with a facility big enough to suit the needs of the community. The article noted that earlier estimates had rarely been less than \$20,000, and that the PWA pool in Higginsville had run nearly \$40,000. Even the pool in Slater, which was constructed of used materials, had cost around \$12,000.

Bintz was an experienced pool designer who designed and supervised the construction of pools in several states. He later published a promotional booklet which included photographs of more than a dozen of his more notable above-ground pools, including the one in Fayette, as well several in other states. Promotional literature put out by Bintz in the mid-1940s shows that he was still designing pools much like the one in Fayette, and listed several advantages of building a pool above ground.

Bintz not only designed the Fayette pool, he also played an active role in its construction. His contract specified on-site supervision as well as building plans, and he was required to make at least eight trips to Fayette while the pool

was under construction. City council meeting records from that period show that he took the responsibility seriously. He appeared before them at least six different times to update the aldermen on the project and discuss various options.

As 1935 gave way to a new year, construction moved along quickly at a pace that would be unheard of today. With the coming of summer months, it was evident that the pool's completion would come none too soon as that summer turned out to be one of the hottest (if not the hottest) on record. The official opening-dedication ceremony took place on Independence Day - July 4, 1936.

THE FAYETTE POOL TODAY

Today the pool is believed to be one the few extant Bintz designs still in use anywhere in the nation a fact that's a source of pride for local historians and those committed to historic preservation.

One who has led many local historic preservation efforts over the years is Fayette resident Pam Hutsell. She is credited for leading initiatives to preserve the pool and maintain it in accord with recognized historic preservation

standards. As the result of these efforts and participation of like-minded citizens, a grant was received several years ago from the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office which permitted tuck-pointing and window improvements for the head-house building which serves as the entrance to the pool.

City funds and donations, along with the aforementioned grant, have made it possible for the pool to continue in operation for most summers. Eighty-five year-old machinery, such as pumps, filters, electrical wiring, drains etc., obviously have required replacing and upgrading, in addition to replacing windows and repairing leaks in the pool basin. City workers and volunteers have contributed much time and effort over the years.

Generally the structure is little changed in its basic design and appearance from opening day in July 1936. Gone, however, are the huge high-dive and the long, curving slide - no doubt in response to safety and liability concerns.

In those early days of the pool's operation, relatively few Central Missouri communities had such an outstanding recreational attraction and so Fayette's facility with its clear, sparkling water drew huge summer crowds from Howard County and beyond. With relatively few family fun sites available and home air conditioning virtually non-existent, the pool was indeed a popular venue. But with the advent of TV, electronic games, nearly universal home air conditioning, plus the Internet, social media, and various shifts in popular culture, swimming pool usage by area youngsters and adults has, to a large degree, fallen-off from the large numbers observed in earlier years.

When the pool was forced to close for an entire summer recently there was a cry in some quarters to destroy it and build something entirely new. One editor continually referred to it as "the relic."

Nonetheless, the pool still has it aficionados. Many of the mechanical issues have been addressed by appointment of a better qualified public works director. Equally important, two citizen groups are working on preservation and improvement efforts.

One group is known as Friends of the Historical Fayette Memorial Pool and the other is an official city group known as the Ad Hoc Pool Committee that's spearheading construction of a splash park adjacent to the pool.

Boonslick Country COVID-19 Recollections

Help Us Document this Time in History

Note from BHS quarterly journal editor Don Cullimore:

We noticed that the Boone County Historical Society, the State Historical Society of Missouri and the Missouri Historical Society are asking members to help document current events related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As record-keepers of local history, the Boonslick Historical Society also invites its readers to help us document the impact of the coronavirus on communities in the Boonslick region. We encourage readers to share with us their stories about the coronavirus disease and how it has affected them, their families and friends.

The Boonslick Historical Society Board and editorial staff of the magazine are keenly aware that a historic event is taking place. The coronavirus pandemic of 2020-21 will be written and spoken about by for generations to come.

We ask that readers share their stories through a written, physical journal or a digital record (flash drive or an emailed document) and to donate these stories to our historical society to be preserved for future generations. Future Boonslick residents will want to read first-person narratives of this unique time; they will want to know what this time was like.

Personal journals may include daily activities, letters to family members, poems, saved emails, videos, or photographs documenting this event. If your submission is a creative work such as a photograph or a poem, you will have the choice of donating your copyright or maintaining copyright.

CHALLENGE:

Write in your diary every day if you can, or at least once a week. It can be long, or it can be short. It can be funny, or it can be angry. Whatever you write about, it's your story. A physical journal may be helpful since our current digital technology may be obsolete in 50 to

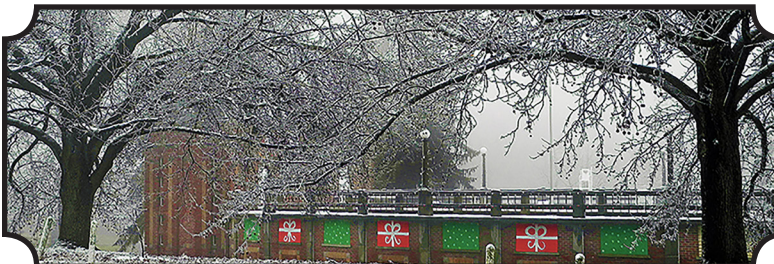
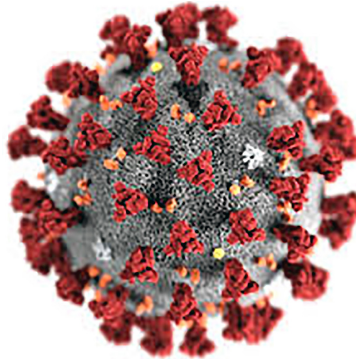
100 years, but either way we won't collect your ongoing diaries until this crisis is over so we can capture your whole story. It might be June at the earliest before you feel your journal of this time is complete.

GUIDELINES:

However you choose to keep your diary, paper or digital, please date each entry clearly, and add your location if you are comfortable. But, What to Write?

- How did you spend your time today?
- What did you work on?
- Who did you talk to today? About what?
- What are you happy about?
- What worries you?
- What's it like to 'shelter in place'?
- Are you telecommuting or video conferencing? For work or school or for fun?
- What do you wish you could do right now?
- How has COVID-19 impacted your life?
- What and who are you thankful for right now?

To share your stories, photos and videos for a Boonslick Country COVID-19 digital archive, send hard copy information or print photos or to: Don Cullimore, BHS Editor, 1 Lawrence Drive, Fayette, MO 65248, or email documents or digital images to: don.cullimore40@gmail.com.



Fayette's historic WPA swimming pool, located in the city park, is shown during last month's ice storm. The pool is distinguished by Art Deco styling, plus an unusual above-ground design — the work of Wesley Bintz, a civic engineer from Lansing, Mich. His patented concept was popular during the 1930s and '40s. Fayette's facility opened on July 4, 1936, and remains one of the last extant Bintz pools still in operation. This coming Fourth of July will mark its 85th birthday.

Jim Steele photo

Welcome New Board member

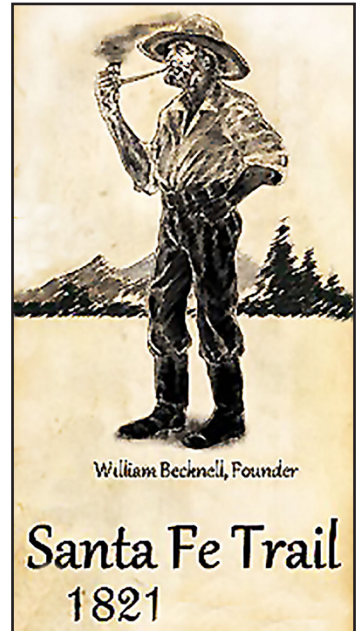


Noted New Franklin community leader Sue Thompson has accepted an invitation to join the BHS Board for a two-year term beginning this year. She replaces Jacque Schaller who has stepped-down following the death of her mother and numerous civic obligations. Sue is a retired teacher who is active in the South Howard County Historical Association where she also serves as a museum docent. Several years ago she spearheaded construction of the Santa Fe Trail monument and currently serves on the Boonslick Area Tourism Council. Sue and her husband, Kerry, are active members of the New Franklin UCC Church. They have three sons and six grandchildren.



LOCAL HISTORY is one of many features found on Fayette's low-power FM station, KPIP 94.7. A new series has aired for several months now and is titled "Local Voices, A Glance Back." It focuses on Howard County history and was initiated by KPIP news director Rachel Steele who in turn has enlisted her father, Jim, to write and air

the program. The Boonslick Historical Society is credited for source material. For example, a recent three-part series has told the story of rural electrification (REA) coming to Howard County. Appropriate music and historical voices are included. The series airs from 12 to 2 and 4 to 6 p.m. Mondays and is repeated at the same times on Fridays.



NOT ONLY is this Missouri's bicentennial year, it's also the 200th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail. The South Howard County Historical Society (SHCHS) is preparing banners to recognize New Franklin as the eastern terminus of the trail. There will be 15 banners which will fly both in the downtown area and along the NF parkway. Donations are solicited at \$100 each. For more information call Jacque Schaller - 573-673-3157



Since 1937

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

THANKS FOR YOUR 2021 PAYMENT! Checks payable to Boonslick Historical Society. Please fill out form and enclose with your check in the self-addressed envelope provided. We particularly ask you to include your email as we're endeavoring to build an email base for the society. Emails will be sent sparingly and will not be shared. Questions? call Jim Steele at 660-537-0484 or email jsteele@woodcreekmedia.com. Membership dues are \$15-Individual, \$25-Family, \$50-Sponsor, \$250-Patron, \$500-Life.

Amount _____

