The Historic City of Jefferson is preparing for Santa with Victorian stockings hung with care, with glass baubles wired among lit candles on the pine branches, and with cups of eggnog to bring in the holiday as members listen to HCJ member Kenneth Winn inform them of 18th and 19th century Christmas traditions carried on by Jefferson Citians and by the nation itself. You won't want to miss the December HCJ Membership Meeting to be held on December 14 at 7 pm at the home of Craig and Ruthi Sturdevant at 1201 Moreau Drive.

Historian Kenneth Winn will present his program “Inventing the American Christmas,” as he highlights older traditions among German and French immigrants. These same traditions and customs were transformed by Victorian Americans, and later by their twentieth-century descendents, to create the holiday season that we celebrate today.

Among other topics, Winn explores the surprisingly recent transformation of many of our holiday customs. Indeed, on Christmas Day in 1826, for example, the Missouri House of Representatives, then in its first session in the new state Capitol in Jefferson City, met as usual. Representatives discussed a bill to cover government expenses, appointed commissioners to select seminary lands, and passed legislation amending an election law. However, they did acknowledge the day with a glass of eggnog, thereby moving the traditional toast out of the family home setting to the political rotunda.

Elsewhere across Missouri, and indeed across America, stores opened for business and farmer's farmed. Scrooge could have kept Bob Cratchit at his desk on Christmas Eve without reproach. However, people did not neglect the holiday. Some, like now, attended religious services, over ate, and visited friends; while others celebrated by exploding firecrackers or shooting their rifles in the air. However they acknowledged the day, whether with spiritual devotion or with an exchange of gifts, the celebration of Christ's birth rested lightly upon them by today's standards.

But Santa was on his way. Within a few decades of the polite eggnog toast by Jefferson City politicians, both Missouri and America had changed. Santa Claus had vanquished his rival saints, and taken on his familiar look of cheerful corpulence. Folks sent out cards and Sears & Roebuck created the busiest shopping day of the year, “Black Friday.”

So, unpack the ornaments and untangle the lights, and join fellow HCJ members for our traditional end-of-year Membership Program on Tuesday evening, December 14. Members may bring prospective members as guests, but due to space limitations of 60, reservations must be made. Please RSVP by December 7 by calling 635-8667 so we’ll know how much eggnog to stir up.

Submitted by Kenneth Winn
Changing Attitudes,
Visionary Developers Lead To
Preservation Success Stories

The Warwick Village transformation that is happening right now under the stewardship of Hank and Linda Stratman is a blessing for those of us in the preservation movement in Missouri’s capital city. This once quaint and charming little outpost on what used to be the east edge of town had fallen into serious disrepair and neglect. Were it not for the vision and vitality of the Stratmans, it would only have been a matter of time before the wrecking ball would have been called in. Chalk one up for historic preservation in Jefferson City.

The Historic City of Jefferson (HCJ) took note of the Stratmans and their plan to restore Warwick Village and held an open house there before the rehab project got underway. It gave the community a chance to see the “before” of a successful preservation effort. Having seen the progress made halfway through the Stratman’s five year plan for restoration, I am amazed at not only what they have done, but at the perseverance they have shown. Preservation is not for the faint of heart and the Stratmans are definitely stout-hearted.

Fortunately, like Warwick Village, many of the buildings in Old Town that once housed the shops, groceries and single-family dwellings are still standing. Most are not in good shape. But the City has developed a plan to revitalize the area and convert apartments back into single family dwellings. Progress is being made and attention is being paid to preservation.

The downtown façade improvement program has resulted in the dismantling of ugly old aluminum awnings and the 1890s look is coming back, adding charm and tourism potential. And in the very heart of the east side, two visionary women have taken old buildings in squalid surroundings and turned them into successful restaurants. Juanita Donehue led the way transforming an abandoned mercantile building into a steak and seafood place, with nice apartments above. She was followed by Debbie Brown, the proprietor of what is now a popular lunch and night spot called Prison Brews.

Developers Larry Kolb and Steve Rollins have taken an entire block on the City’s south side and brought it back to a 1930 look that has brought a sparkle and shine to the area. Proof that old can be new again—and productive.

HCJ salutes these developers and others, including the Stratmans, for having the vision and creativity that is required to make these projects work.

HCJ was founded in 1983 when Elizabeth Rozier and others sprang into action to try and save the old City Jail, an 1842 stone building that had served as the police headquarters and lockup for 140 years. The City built a brand new police station around the old City Jail, presumably to allow the very solid structure to remain standing. But one night the City Council voted to demolish the old Jail and by dawn the next morning, it was literally a pile of rubble. The small band of preservationists were incensed, and the incident remains infamous in local preservation annals. They vowed that something like this would never happen again and the Historic City of Jefferson was formed.

But in Jefferson City right now, we are celebrating historic preservation successes that would not have been thought possible even five years ago. We know there will be more battles to fight, but the climate has changed and the community is coming to believe that the past is prologue to the future. The HCJ slogan really says it best: “Looking back...Moving forward.”
Oral History Program Update

Historic City of Jefferson is progressing with its Oral History project. Volunteers who were trained in interviewing skills either suggest people to interview or interview from a list of suggestions. New suggestions are always welcome! Janet Maurer is dutifully putting each interview on a gold CD, one that is guaranteed to have a long life, and is making copies as well for the interviewees. As soon as we have a large enough accumulation to make our collection enticing to the community, CDs will be placed in various libraries for the public to check out and enjoy.

If you have suggestions of persons or organizations or companies whose histories would make interesting listening, please contact DJ Nash at djnash@embarqmail.com or at 636-8558. Also, if you are interested in interviewing, please let her know.

Cole County Courthouse:
Perfect Backdrop For “Lawmen” Program

Historian Mark Schreiber entertained an audience of about 50 HCJ members in the Division One Courtroom of the Cole County Courthouse on Aug. 15 with a program entitled, “Legendary Lawmen of the 70s.” Schreiber, who worked in law enforcement in various capacities in the 1970s, related colorful tales about working with Sheriff Wyman Bassinger, Judge James Riley, Warden Donald Wyrick, Prosecutor and later Judge Jim McHenry, and many others.

Judge Jon Beetem was among the spectators at this event. He sat in the jury box with other attendees as the crowd flowed over from the main gallery.

At the conclusion of Schreiber’s talk, Chamber of Commerce President Randy Allen asked for time to update HCJ members on the important topic of the strategic planning process that is going on now in the community.

Left: HCJ members Cathy Bordner and Karlene Diekroeger at the information table.
Right: Mark Schreiber speaks to crowd in the Cole County Court Room.

Thomas Lawson Price Society Christmas Reception
Sunday December 19th, 3:00-5:00pm
Home of Darryl and Connie Hubble

This event is for TLP Society members. Please RSVP by calling 634-3526. HCJ invites you to become a member of the TLP society by calling 635-8667 for more details or going to our web site at www.historiccityofjefferson.org
Will History Repeat itself?

Recollections on the Demise of the Old City Jail

The old Jefferson City Jail occupied the corner of East McCarty and Monroe Streets for 140 years, and was recognized as one of the oldest remaining jailhouses west of the Mississippi River. When it was built in 1842, Jefferson City was only three years old. Before it was demolished on February 2nd, 1982, there were no buildings still standing in Jefferson City older than the jail. The historic building’s demise caused a shock wave of stunned disbelief and disappointment throughout the city’s citizens who, to this day, are saddened by its loss.

Now in 2010, another historic old jail is threatened with demolition. Will history repeat itself? The Cole County Jail and Sheriff’s Residence attached to the Cole County Courthouse will soon become obsolete when the new Cole County Justice Center opens. Built in 1934, the Cole County Jail is on the National Register of Historic Places and has received the City of Jefferson’s Local Landmark Award. Yet, the Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation has placed the jail on its 2010 Most Endangered Historic Places list.

The approaching 30th anniversary of the destruction of the old City Jail brings to question the lessons to be learned from that tragic loss. Patrick Steele was the director of the Missouri Heritage Trust (MHT) from 1980 to 1983 and on the front lines of the battle to save the historic jail. “It was largely a lack of organization,” he says. He led the effort of a loosely organized but passionate group of historic preservationists. Some of those prominent early activists included Elizabeth Rozier, Dick and Mary Ann Caplinger, Joseph Summers, and Carolyn McDowell.

The city fathers began planning a new police department in the late 1970s. Carolyn McDowell, who was on the City Council at that time, recalls, “There were 3 options for the old jail; one had the jail incorporated into the new PD; another had the old jail adjacent and separate but preserved as a cultural center or museum; the third option was to move it or demolish it.” The construction of the new police department commenced in 1980, keeping all the options on the table but being built around the old jail.

City Council minutes from December 1980 show that the Cole County Historical Society (CCHS) proposed a means through grant money to restore and preserve the old jail. A resolution was passed stating the city’s commitment to preserving the jail. It is unclear why no action was taken at that time. The following February there were lengthy discussions with representatives from the CCHS, the Departments of Natural Resources, and Public Safety. A plan again was put forth offering grant money from the National Historic Preservation Fund. Again, the council took no action. In May of 1981 the CCHS requested an extension, but the issue was not mentioned again until December that year. It is unclear if this offer expired or was withdrawn.

The sun had just risen as the 140-year-old-jail fell. This photo was taken from Monroe Street looking northeast.

By Jenny Smith

Built in 1842, the old City Jail was the oldest standing jailhouse west of the Mississippi and the oldest structure in Jefferson City.
Patrick Steele first presented his proposal of a lease agreement with the city in December of 1981 involving funds from the MHT and up to $25,000 in private pledges. The group proposed to the city to let them lease the jail from the city while they made the renovations. Their vision was that it would serve as a city museum and visitor’s center. (Note: to this day Jefferson City does not have a city museum.)

When the issue was taken up again February 1st, 1982, Patrick repeated the offer and asked that the MHT be given the authority to direct the renovations. As the hour was late, he and the other preservationists present at that meeting left before the final vote was taken.

“I felt very confident that we had succeeded,” Mary Ann Caplinger recalls. Patrick added, “All of us felt the vote would go our way, but just in case it did not, we had a contingency plan in place. Our attorney would file a stop-order injunction to halt the action.” That was to be filed the morning after the council vote, if necessary. That next morning on Tuesday, February 2, Mary Ann and other historic preservationists happened to be across the street at the Top of the Round restaurant. With utter shock and dismay, they witnessed the bulldozers that had started at the break of dawn, and had in a matter of minutes, knocked the building down to a cloud of dust. “I will never forget the betrayal I felt as I watched,” Mary Ann lamented. Patrick agreed, “Disappointment would be an understatement.”

The City Council came to a vote at 10:30 pm the previous evening, February 1st. The vote was 5 to 4 against the lease agreement. Voting against the lease were Randy Halsey, Clarence Blume, Darrel Gordon, Vincent Borgmeyer, and Edward Kliegel. In favor of the lease were Vernon Scheulen, John Hequemborg, Thomas Brant and Sydney Wade. Opponents argued that the old jail blocked the view of the new jail. Presiding over the vote was Mayor George Hartsfield who made no secret of his desire to have the jail moved or demolished. Since the demolition took place a mere nine hours after the vote, questions still swirl around in the brick dust: How were the bulldozers poised for action so quickly after the vote? How could the council be so sure of the vote outcome? Was their intent, even before the vote, to thwart the contingency plan? Was saving the jail considered frivolous or overly sentimental, standing in the way of change? Certainly not considered was how the destruction appeared to some of the public—like a family member throwing away a family heirloom without considering how dear it could be to others, but more importantly, without even telling other family members of their plan. The old jail, like a family heirloom, was a tangible connection to our past and a part of our identity as Jefferson City.

“The city was not up front with us,” Patrick says. He felt it was not just the Mayor, but the Housing Authority and a compliant city council that robbed the community of its history. “They just did not understand the treasure they had. It was an arrogant disregard of our history.”

The preservationists were presented with a false premise:

(Continued from page 4)

Patrick Steele called for the establishment of HCJ after the loss

It was Mr. Steele who urged local preservation efforts to get organized. A native of Pennsylvania, Patrick received his degree in art education and began his career teaching art in Inner city Indianapolis. He started two local historic preservation organizations there before moving to Washington DC, taking a job with the National Advisory Council for Historic Preservation. His territory was the Midwest. That eventually led him to become director of the Missouri Heritage Trust during which time he led the effort to save the old City Jail. He admits that the loss of the jail took its toll on him and he moved shortly after that to Hermann where he worked for a Restoration Contracting Company. He is married to Ann Steele, a Westphalia native where they now reside. Patrick is employed part time with Osage County and running for Osage County Clerk this November. Historic preservationists in Jefferson City owe a debt of gratitude to Patrick and the small group who fought for our history. We lost the jail, but our cause has gained legitimacy from their efforts.

(Continued on page 6)
The members of the Thomas Lawson Price (TLP) Society were treated to a rare glimpse into the life of a German immigrant woman in the 19th century. Henrietta (Jette) Giesburg Bruns, the dutiful wife of Dr. Bernard Bruns, moved with him in 1837 to Westphalia, MO. Over the span of almost 50 years, her life in America was chronicled in letters to the family she left behind in Stromberg, Germany.

Many years later in the 1970s, a descendent of Jette Bruns, Lynn Oswald, contacted Dr. Dolph Schroeder, professor of German Studies at the University of Missouri to translate four of Jette’s letters. This eventually turned into almost 250 letters!

Dr. Schroeder (shown above), now 94 years old, spent 17 years of his early life in Germany and speaks fluent German. Even so, the letters were a challenge to translate because they were written in old German with many phrases, vernacular, and references that are no longer used. Ten years after undertaking the project, he published “Hold Dear, As Always” containing the unedited, unabridged transcripts of Jette Bruns’s letters home.

Jette described a difficult and sad life in the new land. Raised in the upper class household of a tax collector in Stromberg, Germany, she was accustomed to servants and cultural pursuits, both of which she gave up to follow her husband to the new world. She gave birth to 11 children and outlived all of them except three. When Dr. Bruns died in 1864 she was left destitute, and reliant upon a small pension from the government for her husband’s service to the country as a physician during the Civil War.

Dr. Schroeder, an entertaining and articulate speaker, wove the story of the letters into the larger framework of early German settlement of the Westphalia area. Quite coincidently, Lynn Oswald, who started him on this journey, is the newest member of the HCJ’s TLP Society. HCJ welcomes her and appreciates her generosity and commitment!
HCJ is almost as happy as Flora Herndon that Habitat for Humanity helped her restore this 120-year-old stone house. There was help also from Jim Price, Old Munichberg residents, and the United Church of Christ. It was a distressed but stable structure in a historic neighborhood; a perfect GH candidate!

**September:** 1125 W. Main, Owner: Jill Hartke

This humble 100-year-old house was renovated by Chris and Traci Estes. See the ‘before’ photo below. It was owned by Chris’s grandmother, a cook at the Governor’s Mansion.

**October:** 150 Booneville Rd, Owners: Jon and Marcia Burton

The Burtons did a complete and beautiful overhaul of this 74-year-old home that was host to president Harry Truman in the 1950s.
Inventing the American Christmas
Presented by Kenneth Winn
Tuesday, December 14, 7:00 PM
Home of Craig and Ruthi Sturdevant, 1201 Moreau Drive,
HCJ members only, RSVP to 635-8667
Registration Required...Limited Seating Available

Looking back Moving forward

Web Master—Tony Smith  Golden Hammer Awards—Deedie Bedosky
Newsletter Editor—Jenny Smith  Development—Lois Heldenbrand
Membership—Sam Bushman  Homes Tour—Mary Ann Hall
Oral History—D.J. Nash  HCJ Foundation—Stephen Stark

OUR MISSION STATEMENT
To proactively preserve our historic resources and create an environment that makes preservation a central focus for the future development in the City of Jefferson.

Yesterday and Today is the official newsletter of the Historic City of Jefferson, published quarterly.
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