

Carondelet Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Perpetuating the Heritage of Carondelet

Vol. 40, No. 3

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Autumn 2013

Rare Book Donated to The Bouchein Library

A rare book published in 1878 features an account of the first five years of the kindergarten movement spearheaded by Susan Blow at the Des Peres School (the Carondelet Historic Center). The 564 page *A Tour of St. Louis; or, the Inside Life of a Great City* was published in 1878 and printed by the Globe-Democrat Job Printing Co. Its authors, J. A. Dacus, Ph.D., and James W. Buel, were described as “Members of the St. Louis Press.”

Almost half of the “Public Schools” chapter is dedicated to the then new kindergarten movement. The section chronicles the early growth of the program: “From the modest beginning of one room, two teachers and a few pupils, it has grown to forty distinct Kindergartens, one hundred and fifty teachers and fifteen hundred pupils.”

The text notes that at the conclusion of the 1873-1874 school year, “unprejudiced educators of St. Louis and the

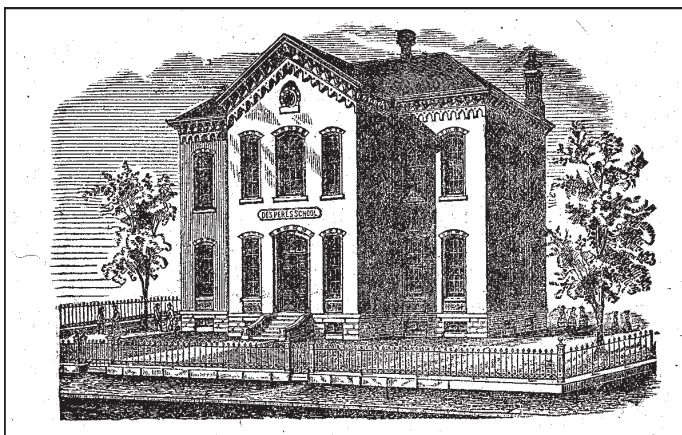
parents of the children submitted into the experiment, declared unanimously in favor of the new education.” The book indicates that there were still widespread doubts about the potential of the kindergarten program. “Cynics had said of the Carondelet experiment, ‘This is all very brilliant, no doubt, but these are all picked

children of educated parentage, and the teacher (Susan Blow), an exceptional character, possessed of unusual talents.’ ”

In the fall of 1874, the program was expanded to Divoll School, which served a wealthy community, and Everett School, which served “the poorer classes of society.” The reported success of Froebel’s methods at both schools provided the evidence to support expanding the program. “In

each of these Kindergartens several young ladies were

See Book, page 6



An illustration from *A Tour of St. Louis* showing the Des Peres School as it appeared in 1878.

Celebrating the Library

Travel writer, author, and lecturer Tom Weil will present “Libraries I have known,” at the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Historic Center’s Fred Bouchein Library on Sunday, October 27, at 1:00 p.m.

As part of the program, Tom Weil will formally donate his collection of over 600 books on St. Louis and local history to the library. For years, Weil has collected books and materials on St. Louis and related subjects such as Missouri, Illinois, Westward expansion, waterways and Lewis & Clark. Many of the items are rare and offer unique opportunities to research St. Louis History.

A fourth generation St. Louisan, Weil is making the

donation in honor of his family. About 150 years ago, his great grandfather, Adolph Kalter, arrived in St. Louis from Mannheim, and some 125 years ago his grandfather, Maurice Weil, Adolph’s future son-in-law, came here from the same area of the Rhineland in Germany.

Weil is a long-time supporter of libraries. He commented, “The Bouchein Library is an important St. Louis resource for the area’s history and culture. I’m glad to enhance its holdings by contributing The Tom Weil St. Louis Collection.” He continued, “The library has been established, financed and well-managed by many public spirited citizens and by dedicated Society volunteers. I believe this sort of civic enterprise deserves continued support.”

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Perpetuating the
Heritage of
Carondelet*

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Kunz Exhibit

The exhibit of the Art of Victor Kunz attracted over 200 visitors, including many who had never toured the Carondelet Historic Center before. The exhibit resulted in four new members.

Sets of limited edition postcards of Victor Kunz' artwork are still available. Each set of postcards - Scenes of St. Louis or Scenes of Carondelet - is suitable for framing. Six cards are in each set and the price is \$4.00 per set.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, October 27
Rededication of Library
Lecture by Tom Weil
1:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 9
Historical Sing-Along
2:00-3:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 10
Movies & Popcorn
1:00 p.m.

Monday, November 11
Veterans' Day Commemoration
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Ceremony 11:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 1
Movie & Popcorn
1:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 8
Christmas Open House
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 14
Historical Sing-Along
2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Change of Address Requested:

If you have moved, please notify the Society of your new address. In that way you can save the Society volunteers hours and postage.

Carondelet Historical Society

Membership Application

Name _____ Telephone # _____

Address _____ Zip _____

_____ Individual	\$15	_____ Victor Kunz Art Gallery Benefactor	\$50
_____ Family	\$25	_____ Fred Bouchein Library Benefactor	\$75
_____ Business	\$40	_____ James Eads Engineers	\$100
_____ Life	\$250	_____ Susan E. Blow Educators	\$125

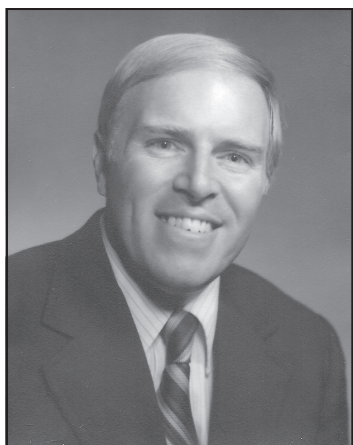
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Volunteers are the Backbone

To secure the Society's future, the Board of Directors has established an investment committee, which is charged with accepting and investing funds in debt and equity securities. The committee has defined its investment objectives as, "The Fund will consist of donations which will be invested in debt and equity securities, with the interest and dividend income and capital appreciation used to provide, sustain, support and assist the Carondelet Historical Society." Lois Waninger's bequest is providing the initial \$100,000 for the Society's long-term investment fund. Society treasurer Rich Fernandez is the board representative on the Committee.

Volunteers and members Dave Bouchein and Louis Perkins are serving on the committee. The decades Bouchein and Perkins have spent honing their skills in the fields of business management, budgeting for organizations, and banking makes their advice invaluable to the Society.

Dave Bouchein



Though Dave Bouchein grew up in St. Louis Hills, he is rooted in Carondelet. His grandfather, a policeman, patrolled Carondelet on foot. Eventually, his grandfather rose to the rank of Lieutenant. He and his family called Carondelet home, living in the late Victorian brick townhouse at 7415 Michigan Avenue and later in the early 20th

century two-family flat at 5811 Michigan Ave. Dave's father, William Bouchein, and his uncle, Fred Bouchein, both attended the historic Des Peres School, the site of education pioneer Susan Blow's kindergarten and today the Carondelet Historic Center. William Bouchein went into banking, handling the stock transfers for St. Louis Union Trust.

Dave grew up at 6273 Walsh Street, on the east side of Francis Park, and graduated from Nottingham School in 1951. At that time, nearby "Southwest High School was packed," so Dave chose to follow in his father's footsteps and become a Cleveland High School Dutchman. While attending Cleveland, he noticed another Cleveland High School student on the public service bus, Marla Wagenfuehr. Though Marla grew up in the Southampton neighborhood, like Bouchein, she was rooted in Carondelet. Her maternal grandparents, the Seiferts, lived at Loughborough Boulevard and Idaho Ave. and her paternal grandparents on Tennessee Avenue at Bates Street. Dave remembers, "Every date ended up at Steak & Shake at Gravois and Hampton." Dave ordered the double steakburger, with fries and a vanilla shake. In 1955, he went to Washington University and earned a degree in engineering. And then married Marla.

See Bouchein, page 7

Louis Perkins

The childhood education of Louis Perkins, retired Senior Vice-President from Southern Commercial Bank, revolved around the cultivation of cotton in the Missouri Bootheel.

"Everybody knew everybody in town," Perkins recalls describing his home town of Hornersville. "The town was like Mayberry," referring to the fictional small town that was the backdrop of the old Andy Griffith television show. "It probably had a population of 950."

Cotton governed their school year. Late May through June, everybody "chopped cotton." He explains that the cotton seed was planted in rows close together, and as it grew, some of the plants had to be "chopped" or "blocked" out. With a hoe, they chopped out a hoe's width of plants, then passed two or three plants, then chopped out another hoe's width. This job was completed about the end of June. After Independence Day, the children went back to school for another eight weeks. School stopped again in early September, when the school children were needed to help pick the cotton. That took another six weeks.

Perkins was in the last class to graduate from the town's independent high school, before the school merged with a neighboring town's school. "There were 31 in my graduating class." Because the school was small, the class offerings were limited. "But we had an excellent math and science teacher." He mentioned that though his sister's graduating class had only 40 students,



See Perkins, page 7

They called Carondelet Home

Two civic leaders loomed large in Carondelet during the early decades of the 20th century. Despite their great success in businesses, their high profiles with local institutions, and their generosity, both the names Thomas Mellow and Edward Foristel have been fading from the community memory.

Though their religions, social circles, beliefs, professional careers and styles differed, their stories and characters shared some traits. They both came from humble means, achieved substantial financial success, and both worked to help their Carondelet community.

Thomas Mellow

During the 19th century and early 20th century, many of the men who built industries in Carondelet also made Carondelet their home. Thomas Mellow, who rose from a moulder to owning and operating a large foundry, was one of those factory owners who lived in the same community, shopped at the same neighborhood stores, and attended the same churches as his factory workers.

Mellow was born in Cornwall, England in 1858. According to his obituary, his education consisted of only elementary schools. In 1881, when he immigrated and settled in St. Louis, he had no trade nor craft. In South St. Louis he learned the skill of being a moulder in the City's iron mills. He returned to England to marry his childhood sweetheart, Louisa Spargo. By the 1900 census, he was widowed and living with his three sons and two daughters at 6626 Alabama. Only six years later he opened his own foundry, Liberty Foundry, at 7600 Vulcan. Including Mellow, the foundry employed ten moulders. An advertisement from 1907 boasted, "All the molders are good first-class mechanics, who are able to turn out the high class work for which the company receives orders daily." They expanded to manufacture steel castings. Following World War I, the foundry was producing furnace and boiler parts.

After he prospered and married Maude Bebee, Mellow and his family lived at 6633 Vermont Avenue. He was a generous supporter of the Carondelet YMCA and served on its board and the board of the Metropolitan YMCA. He held offices with state and national boards of



A portrait of Thomas Mellow published in a souvenir booklet from Mellow Methodist Church in 1941.

the Anti-Saloon League.

South St. Louis native Betty Sattley Treiber recalled Mellow's visit to her grandparents home at 6214 Idaho. She reminisced that on Sundays, "...once in a while, before we had a chance to decide what we were going to do for the afternoon, someone would notice a big black limousine pull up to the curb in front of the house. Goodness! Mr. Mellow was coming."

"Not only was he an important man at Haven Street Church but he was Pop's -- and for a time Dad's -- boss at Liberty Foundry," Treiber wrote.

"Mr. and Mrs. Mellow were very gracious people and spent a short time paying their respects before leaving for their next stop. He made a point of visiting at regular intervals and kept in close contact with his employees. Mrs. Mellow was my Sunday School teacher at the Haven Street Church."

In addition to his financial support of the Haven Street Methodist Church, Mellow taught Sunday School and held the office of Superintendent of Sunday School for as long as he was physically able. In 1941, the congregation of the then 84 year-old Haven Street Methodist Church changed their name to Mellow Methodist Church.

After Thomas Mellow passed away in 1946, his sons and sons-in-law managed Liberty Foundry. By 1951, the foundry employed over 300 workers, many of them Carondelet residents.

Edward Foristel

Edward Foristel was the eldest son of the six children of an Irish-born policeman and his Maryland-born wife. While working to help his parents, he earned his law degree at night school. He became a power in the Republican party, provided dynamic leadership at Sts. Mary and Joseph Parish, could be flamboyantly generous, and won huge payments in famous cases.

The biography of Foristel, who was born in 1881, crisscrosses Carondelet. The city directories indicate that the Foristel family was living at 6721 Pennsylvania Ave. in 1883, 8405 Pennsylvania Ave. in 1885, 6720 Minnesota Ave. in 1895, 6707 Minnesota Ave. in 1899 and later at 6827 Michigan Ave. and on the 4900 block of South Broadway. According to his obituary in the *Post-Dispatch*, Republican Committeeman from Carondelet Edmond Koeln helped young Foristel get a job as a police department telephone operator. "Meanwhile when young 'Eddie' was not sending out signals of fires and robberies he was pouring over law books at his telephone board," the *Post-Dispatch* stated. He graduated and was admitted to practice in 1903. He began by trying small cases in the police court that was on the second floor of the Carondelet Police Station at Pennsylvania at Robert Avenue.

He networked with policemen, doctors and nurses. This circle helped him develop his practice with cases of personal injuries and accidents. When Koeln was elected City Collector, he appointed Foristel as his attorney in 1908. He received substantial fees for this work including, according to the *Post-Dispatch*, \$100,000 in 1927 for collecting \$2,379,990 in delinquent taxes from six banks.

Foristel became known as "A shrewd and original campaign planner, he made himself invaluable in ferreting out opponents' weaknesses and advising the Republican City Committee" the *Post* obituary stated. Neighborhood lore credited Foristel with mentoring Mark Eagleton (father of

the late Senator Thomas Eagleton) in politics. The *Post-Dispatch* obituary documented the early relationship between Foristel and Eagleton. "After the War, he joined with Mark Eagleton, returned Marine, who specialized like-wise in personal injury damage claims."

The *Globe-Democrat* obituary noted some of his more famous or lucrative cases. According to the *Globe-Democrat*, his work included the reorganization of the United Railways Company, the estate of the former brewer Ellis Wainwright, and the case brought by Mrs. Elizabeth Edgar Pulitzer to break the will of her aunt.

After he was financially successful, he remembered that years before his mother had admired a house on Michigan Avenue in Carondelet. The *Post-Dispatch* obituary recalled, "after he had accumulated money, he bought the house, placed a new automobile in the garage and took his mother there, saying, 'This is your home now.'"

In 1920, Foristel married Mae Walsh, who had been his officer manager. They had two sons and three daughters. In 1921, he built a new home, in the then popular Mediterranean style, on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi at 4900 South Broadway. He built a second adjacent home, at the same time, for his sisters. At income tax hearings, it was disclosed that he had paid his three brothers and two sisters \$40,000 annually for several years.

When he was still getting his practice established, he began hosting an annual Christmas party for the children of Carondelet. Eventually as many as 1500 children attended Christmas and Independence Day parties he held at his home on South Broadway. Foristel distributed thousands of dollars worth of food, clothing and toys through these parties. He played a significant role at Sts. Mary and Joseph Parish. (*CHS Newsletter* Summer 2013)

The scale of his fees, sometimes 6% rather than the normal 3%, brought scrutiny to his practice. The St. Louis Bar Association had presented a complaint concerning his conduct of a lawsuit. During a hearing against him for an income tax claim in April of 1933, Foristel became ill and was hospitalized. Then followed a lengthy stay at a "health resort." Foristel suffered a relapse in June of 1934 and the 53 year-old passed away on July 10, 1934. His funeral was held at Sts. Mary and Joseph Parish with burial at Mount Hope Cemetery in Lemay.

The *Carondelet News* stated, in the August 23, 1935 issue, "It was very evident that Mr. Foristel's passing a year ago has left a strong imprint on this community. He was well regarded. His interest in children was outstanding and his loving kindness to many in need and distress and his vast charities to all classes of people have built for him a monument of gratitude, appreciation and veneration. There is a growing appreciation of his worth as a citizen and man."



A photo showing the original appearance of the home Edward Foristel gave his mother at 6827 Michigan opposite the Carondelet Library.

Book *from page 1*

received as assistants, their only compensation being the privilege of learning, Miss Blow personally superintending their theoretical training.”

Ten kindergartens, with about 40 teachers, welcomed students in the fall of 1875. The authors stated, “All varieties of social life had now come under the influence of different grades of teachers... an increase in the average attendance being decidedly perceptible.”

The next fall, 1876, witnessed 28 kindergartens, with a corps of 120 teachers. Attendance at each kindergarten averaged about 40.

The book documents substantial opposition to the Kindergarten

program. “A very vigorous attempt made by the opponents of Kindergarten education to repress it roused a perfect fever of excitement...” Thousands of taxpayers signed petitions protesting the kindergarten movement. The chapter, however, concluded with the appellation some had given kindergartens, the “Paradise of Childhood.”

The work also features profiles of over 100 prominent businesses, including Henry T. Blow’s Collier White Lead and Oil Works.

A copy of *A Tour of St. Louis; or, the Inside Life of a Great City*, is being donated to the Society as part of the Weil Collection.

Keeping Things Going

Since the last newsletter, many volunteers have been busy cleaning and painting throughout the Center. Others have been filing clippings in the library and developing files on subjects or individuals in local history. Others have been developing exhibits. The Society’s loyal volunteers include Bob Blankmann, Ken Bolte, Kyleen Brumit, Diane Chafin, Bob Cloud, Rich Fernandez, Rhonda Forbes, Kyra Goldman, Oscar Harper, Dolly Heichelbech, Gloria Hooch, Joann Hoppe, Alma Migner, Emma Prince, JR Remelius, Kay Stanford, Joanie Villar, and Norm Woldow.

Our Members Are Generous

Since the last newsletter, Marcia & Robert Kern and Eleanor Szymanski have made donations to the Society’s Five Year Capital Fund Drive.

Virginia Altrogge, Margaret Jean Barrow, Dorothy Krehbiel, George & Sally Mitchell, Kate & Mike Ortinau, Joseph Steins, James & Nancy Weckback, Esther Lee Yaeger and the Cleveland High School Class of 1952 through Wanda Johnson have made contributions to pay for the ongoing operating expenses of the Historic Center.

Donations were made in memory of:

Marie Kness by Donna Grieshaber
by Dolly Schroeder

While informally speaking to a small group of Carondelet Historical Society members and friends, President John Remelius noted, “Another way to strengthen our service to this community is a charitable bequest. Please remember the Carondelet Historical Society in your living will or living trust.”

Bequests

Since the day that the Carondelet Historical Society opened the front doors of the Historic Center in the old Des Peres School, members and visitors have benefitted from bequests. Before the Society acquired the historic school building, it had been converted into a warehouse and its windows and doorways had been filled with concrete blocks. A bequest by a Society member financed restoring the front entrance and milling reproductions of the original doors that open onto Michigan Avenue.

Large or small, bequests have been critical to the operations of the Society and Center through the years. Bequests have paid gas bills so the Center could be open for tours and researchers throughout winter. Bequests have paid for library supplies. And bequests have financed many of the renovations to the Historic Center.

Society President John Remelius has spearheaded an effort to recognize members and friends who have made bequests with a memorial plaque that will be displayed in the entrance of the Historic Center. From 1981 to 2013, the following friends and members left bequests to the Carondelet Historical Society: Dorothy Bauer, Fred Bouchein, Viola Brettelle, Hubert Chartrand, Ethelyn Cline, Hildegard Eiler, Father Edward Feuerbacher, Victor Kunz, Willis Potthoff, Isabelle Rolland, Russell Schrempp, Herman Telthorst, Violet Telthorst, Elisabeth Winterhoff, Lois Waninger, Candace Warden, Larry Wilms, Doris Wolff.

Goings On

Sundays at the Movies

Thanks to the anonymous gift of a large screen television to the Historic Center, J. R. (John Remelius III) will be hosting free afternoon movies on the first Sunday of each month. The 1943 film *This Is The Army* starring Rosemary DeCamp and Ronald Reagan plus appearances by Irving Berlin, Joe Louis and Kate Smith as themselves will be shown on Sunday, November 10 at 1:00 p.m. J. R. said they will be showing "Old-fashioned movies, musicals and cartoons featuring early animation," with popcorn. He is also inviting requests for the movie choices.

Veterans' Day

The Society will host a commemoration of Veterans' Day on Monday, November 11 at 11:00 a.m. In addition to Society members and friends, Board member Norm Woldow is reaching out to veterans who have recently moved into the neighborhood and are not familiar with the Society. There will be tours introducing the veterans to the collections and the Wall of Honor. He is asking veterans to bring photos of themselves, preferably in uniform, to add to the Center's Wall of Honor. A brief program will include traditional patriotic songs that were popular with community gatherings and choruses.

Following the program, there will be a showing of the 1943 movie *Stage Door Canteen*, featuring cameo appearances by Katharine Hepburn, Edgar Bergen, Helen Hayes, Tallulah Bankhead and Ray Bolger.

Work in Progress

After many delays due to unseasonably rainy weather, work began in August on repairing and reconstructing the roof of the historic school building. As part of the roof reconstruction, eaves have been built to extend over the facade, duplicating the original eaves. This will make it possible to install replicas of the original brackets at some time in the future.

The large loading dock that was built onto the north side of the building when it was used as a warehouse during the 1950s has been removed. The debris from removing the eyesore filled two dump trucks. The site of the dock has been paved, and will allow off street parking for buses.

Decorative fencing has been installed to secure the area where new air conditioning units are now in service.

Bouchein

from page 3

"It was spit and polish all the time," Bouchein says recalling his stint with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. After the service, he pursued a career with manufacturing companies.

Bouchein worked for Cupples Products, producing the aluminum extrusions, or frames, for the metal and glass panels of the exterior walls of skyscrapers built across the country. Later he worked for Johnson Tin Foil (Alumax) on South Broadway in Carondelet. He adds that they also produced tinsel for Christmas trees. His career included many small manufacturing companies with 100 to 150 employees. "I had to wear a lot of hats. I had to manage and do budgets. We designed, manufactured, sold and serviced products. We sold worldwide." During the 1980s, Bouchein was President of Fulton Iron Works at the railroad tracks and Walsh Street.

For twelve years, Bouchein served as the Board Treasurer of Manor Grove in Kirkwood and with their endowment fund committee. He currently serves as Board Treasurer and on the investment committee of an arts center in Tubac, Arizona, south of Tucson. In recent years, he has volunteered with the Historical Society auditing the books.

Dave and Marla Bouchein's favorite date is still Steak & Shake with Dave ordering the double steakburger, fries and a vanilla shake.

Perkins

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half a dozen students went on to earn advanced degrees.

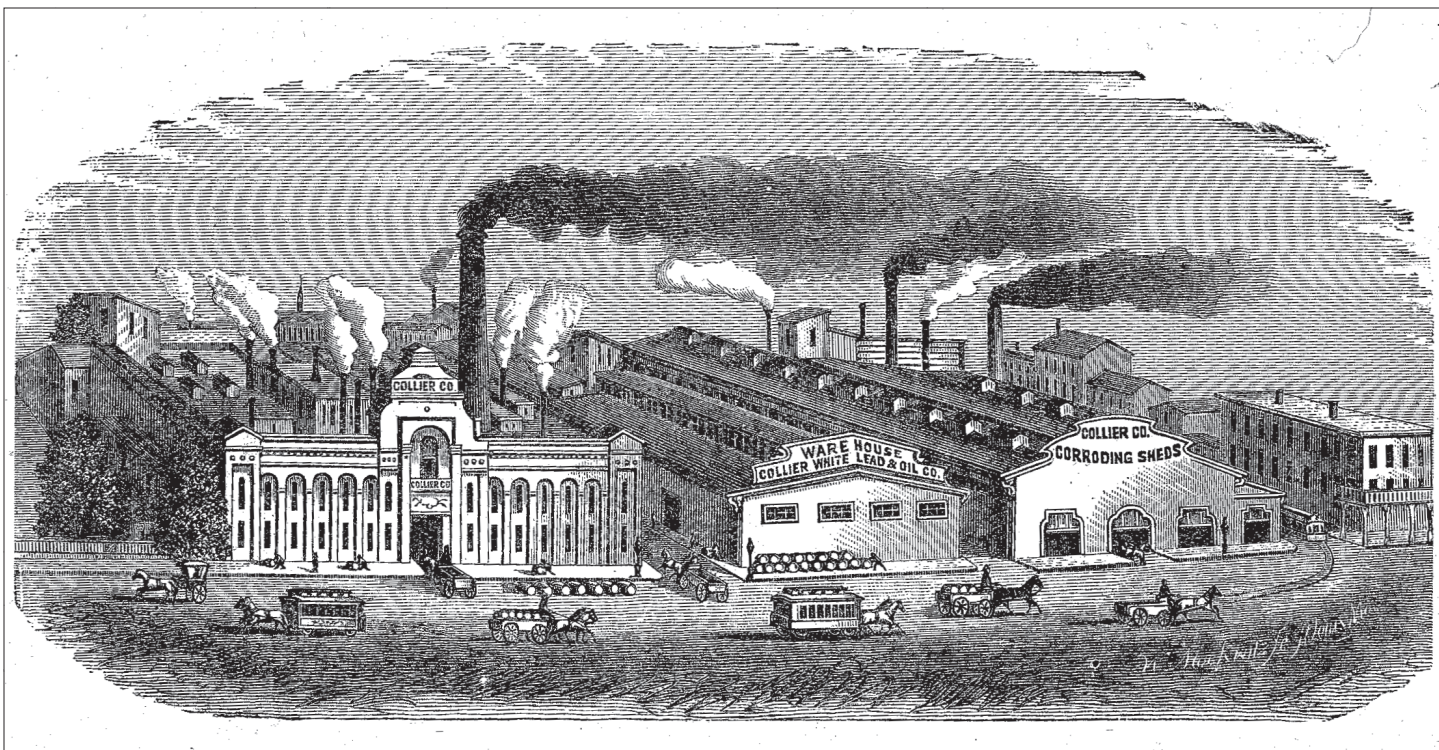
After high school, Perkins earned a B.A. in economics from the University of Missouri, then joined the Navy. During his four years, he was aboard a carrier in the western Pacific. After the Navy, it was back to the University of Missouri. There he earned a B.S. in Finance, met a co-ed named Benita from Dallas, Texas, and married her.

While working as a State Bank examiner, Perkins heard of an opportunity at Southern Commercial Bank.

The bank was "...unique. It had the flavor of a small town bank." Mr. Hawkins, then President of the Bank, "had his desk not in the back. His desk was in the lobby, where he could see the people coming and going." Describing the way the bank operated, he said, "there was a comfort level there."

After almost 35 years at Southern Commercial, Perkins retired last January.

Perkins feels very fortunate and commented, "If I had written out a path I would have liked to follow with my life, it could not have been better than how it has turned out."



Collier White Lead and Oil Works as shown in *A Tour of St. Louis*, published in 1878. Henry T. Blow organized the company in 1850. The authors of *A Tour of St. Louis* credited Blow with “prophetic foresight.”

Researched and written by NiNi Harris
Layout by Lynn Josse

Hours

The Carondelet Historical Society will be open for visits or tours on Wednesday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Visit any time we are open. To schedule a special tour, call (314) 481-6303.

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