



2024 Scholarship Recipients Named

Those who attend the Washington Historical Society's annual meeting look forward to the presentation of the scholarship recipients and their projects. This year's meeting was held Thursday, April 11.

The society's education committee judges the scholarship entries.

The Stanley and Marjorie Wilke Memorial Fund Scholarships are awarded based on local history projects. Their son Wayne and wife Tina established the scholarship.

Two \$1,000 scholarships are awarded, one to a graduating senior from St. Francis Borgia High School and another from Washington High School.

The 2024 recipients are: Jack Dunard, St. Francis Borgia High School, and Ethan Roewe, Washington High School. Dunard wrote the essay, "Washington Town and Country Fair History." He will attend the University of Missouri-Columbia. Roewe made the slide presentation, "The Calvin Theater." He plans to attend Westminster College.

The Ruth Stumpe Brent Tofle Family Scholarship awards one \$1,000 scholarship to a person of any age from Washington or the Washington School District enrolled



Ethan Roewe received the Stanley and Marjorie Wilke Memorial Fund Scholarship for Washington High School. He is pictured with members of the society's education committee. From left are Karen Marquart, Laurie Riekhof, director Katie Dieckhaus, Roewe, Ruth Ann Smith, Nancy Wood, Mary Beth Rettke, Walt Larson and Ruth Wood. Jack Dunard, not pictured, received the scholarship for St. Francis Borgia High School.



Emelia Narup received the Ruth Stumpe Brent Tofle Family Scholarship. Members of the society's education committee are pictured with her. From left are Karen Marquart, Laurie Riekhof, Katie Dieckhaus, Narup, Nancy Wood, Ruth Ann Smith, Mary Beth Rettke and Ruth Wood.

in an undergraduate or graduate program in the coming academic year. Preference is given to candidates attending the University of Missouri-Columbia and who have demonstrated an interest in the

mission and goals of the Washington Historical Society.

This year's recipient is Emelia Narup, a Washington High School senior, who will attend the University of Missouri-Columbia.

A Story of Buildings And Many Additions

By Suzanne Hill

I heard years ago that the former Peerless Box/Brewing Co. building still stood on East Front Street between Jefferson and Market streets.

Something didn't add up. Old photos didn't resemble the current building. The Peerless building had small single windows, while this one has quite large ones.

People believed government bombs stored there during World War II exploded, destroying the building. Not so.

The story of buildings and additions follows.

It's unknown when the building known as Degen and Breckenkamp Co. was built. The company was formed in 1880.

The Sanborn Map of 1893 shows a brick building housing a lumber warehouse, a lumber and flour warehouse and a planing mill. (A planing mill produces wood molding for doors and windows.) A frame flour mill stood at the very corner of Front and Market streets to the east of the brick building. The Detmold Pipe works moved somewhere in this complex, probably in 1897, from the village of that name.

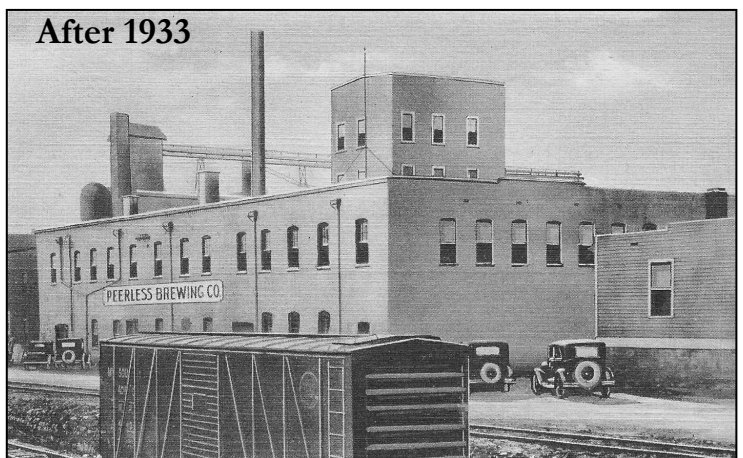
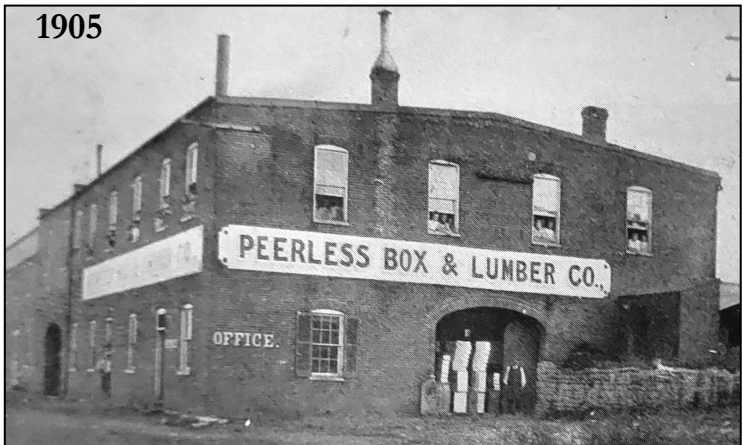
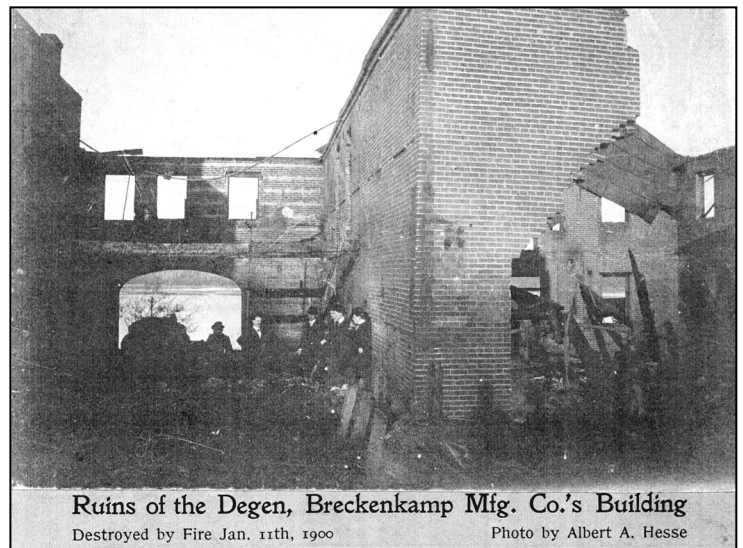
Degen and Breckenkamp buildings were destroyed by fire on January 11, 1900. The next day's Franklin County Tribune noted that the flour mill had been destroyed and with it, the Detmold Pipe Works. The fire started where corn cob pipes were manufactured and spread to the brick building, according to the June 4, 1942, *Missourian*. It was the worst fire in Washington at the time.

When a new building was erected in 1900, the Detmold Pipe Works returned so it could fill orders. Despite it not being finished, the pipe factory resumed work the week of Friday, Feb. 9, according to the *Tribune*.

All issues of the 1900 Franklin County Observer are missing. I found one Tribune article about rebuilding with sparse detail. Fire photographs show an archway still standing, a feature present in early photos of the Peerless Box Co., leading me to believe that some of the building had been saved. (See top two photos.)

Detmold consolidated with Missouri Meerschaum Co. in 1905. In September 1907, its machinery was moved to the Missouri Meerschaum building.

Missouri Meerschaum sold the building to the Peerless Box and Lumber Co. for \$5,250 in November 1907. John J. Ernst was president. In the company's first year, it



1942 Gambles Fire



made 1,445,000 boxes. Five new machines were added in the first year with the company expanding the plant and seeking additional business.

A 28 x 50 addition was built in 1909 and a 70 x 50 two-story addition in 1914 or 1915.

Soon after the United States entered World War I in 1917, International Shoe had a government contract to produce large numbers of Army boots. Peerless produced boxes for International, so its business grew, too.

In 1923, a brick and stone two-story addition of 33 x 100 feet was built on the south side of the Peerless building. New machinery was installed. International Shoe also built an addition about the same time, reflecting growth for both industries.

Peerless employed 55 workers then, producing boxes for International, as well as Union, Hermann, Owensville and Boonville shoe factories. The company also produced boxes for area pipe and cap factories. In 1920, nearly five million boxes were manufactured there.

In November 1930, the Washington Citizen noted that the International Shoe Co. started purchasing shoe boxes from St. Louis. Peerless was forced to cut capacity and employees.

Ernst likely felt the pinch in company profits. He started the Peerless Cap Co. in early 1931 with Louis Siegel, Dr. W.F. Hemplemann and Adam F. Rau. Siegel had 27 years' experience in cap manufacturing.

Prohibition would end Dec. 5, 1933, and John J. Ernst believed that Washington needed a brewery. The John B. Busch Brewery had sold its brewing equipment. July 28, 1933, the Peerless Brewing Company, Inc., began offering stock for sale. Ernst was the president and treasurer.

Peerless began converting the building to a brewery in November 1933, adding a solid concrete floor and bricking up first floor windows and doors. A four-story brew house was built on the southeast corner of the building, occupying about 25 x 40 feet. The company's Cardinal Beer entered the market on June 1, 1934.

June 29, 1934, the Peerless Box and Lumber Co. was sold to Moser Paper Box Co. in St. Louis.

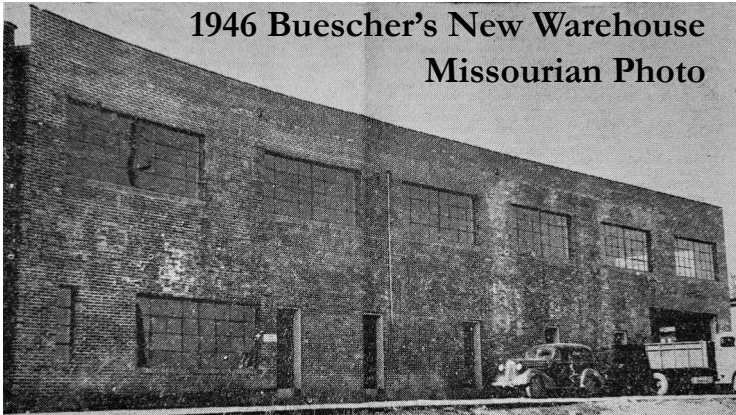
The Peerless brewery was never successful. It went bankrupt and equipment was sold at public auction on March 17, 1939.

Gamble-Skogmo Inc. signed a long-term lease for the building in early 1940 as a warehouse for its stores. It sold automobile accessories, light hardware and other items. Thomas Danz of Union owned the building.

The warehouse caught fire May 29, 1942, with a fire

Continued on Page 4

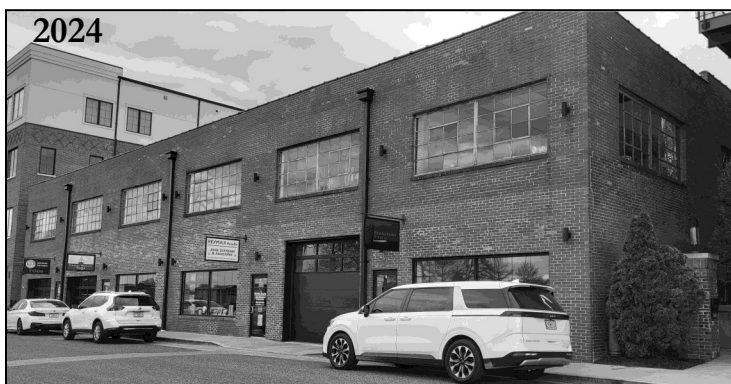
1946 Buescher's New Warehouse
Missourian Photo



Camera angle makes above photo appear curved.



Bricked-in windows seem to be first floor remains of the Peerless building.



2024

Buildings and Additions

Continued from Page 3

alarm ringing at 9:30 a.m. Over 3,000 government-owned auto tires burned. Firemen were concerned about explosions of alcohol, lubricating oils, paints and ammunition.

The Missourian noted that “rifle and shotgun shells went off in rapid succession over a considerable period of time.”

The roof burned and caved in. Part of the front brick wall fell forward into the street. The building was a total loss. The four-story brew house at the southeast corner collapsed and fell to the west, saving the mill to the east from the fire. Danz had no insurance on the building.

The Washington Citizen newspaper of that day stated in the headline, “Gamble Warehouse Demolished by Fire Tuesday with Total Loss of the Building and Merchandise.” The paper also stated, “It was thought to be the ‘biggest loss sustained and most stubborn to fight in the history of the city. Ironically, another fire had occurred at the same site in 1900.’”

George Buescher of Buescher Wholesale announced plans for a new office, warehouse and factory on the site in June 1945. Architect Francis Goodrich designed the new building. It would extend 126 feet facing Front Street and 95 feet deep, two stories high and 100 percent fireproof.

Missourian articles from 1945 and 1946 didn’t say whether some of the old building was incorporated into the new one. The west wall’s first floor appears to have multiple smaller bricked-in windows from the brewery era. It’s possible that the east wall also had been part of the Peerless building from photograph comparisons. Those photos are not included in this newsletter.

The company moved into its new Front Street quarters in October 1946. The general office was on the first floor. Buescher’s Pipe factory, established in 1943, moved into the building. Various Buescher industries were under one roof. In September 1947, Washington Products Co., a new plastic products industry leased the second story. Buescher’s would be a major distributor for that company. In May 1952, Buescher’s announced its warehouse would move to Eighth Street.

Other businesses then occupied the building throughout the years. Ritepoint took over the entire building in 1952. In 1959, Wonder Maid, a women’s garment factory, moved into the second floor. In 1961, Wonder Maid announced plans to occupy both floors of the Buescher building. Others occupied the building after Wonder Maid moved to Washington’s east side.

In 2019 the Washington City Council approved a



The arrows point to areas that seem to be first floor remains of the Peerless building. The top arrow shows the difference between bricks. The lower one shows the brick top of a now-bricked in window. The second floor shows different bricks and large window.

“Small TIF” for developers of the now-Mroz property at 18 E. Front Street. Plans were to rehabilitate four commercial units at street level and six residential units on the second floor.

The Washington Historic Preservation Commission approved design plans in March 2019. New commercial, aluminum frame windows were installed below existing windows and a new garage door was added. Laser work was done to stain bricks that didn’t match the building. Interior renovations were made.

Old Bridgeview Brewery brought brewing back to this renovated site, opening to the public in early 2021. While the second brewery at the location, it’s not quite the same building.

Train Display Recreates Washington's Early 20th Century Missouri Pacific Railway

The growth and development of Washington, Missouri, owes much to the railroad. This is why we have been working in partnership with Iron Spike Model Train Museum to bring an artistic depiction of the former coal chute at the west end of downtown to the Washington Historical Society History Museum.

The idea was originally developed through conversations between former Museum Director Marc Houseman and Iron Spike founder Don Burhans.

Over the last couple years, Don and his team artfully recreated the western portion of Washington's railroad to portray the coal chute, water tower and other railroad features constructed in service to the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

The display depicts the 1926 coal chute (*photo below*). This chute improved the process of loading coal into elevated bins. Rather than elevating entire train cars, coal was emptied from the cars directly into a pit under the tracks. Electric powered buckets carried coal from the underground pit to the bins above. The chute provided a necessary refueling station for coal-powered trains, but their use began to fade in favor of diesel engines in the early 1930s.



Iron Spike workers built this display for use at the Washington Historical Society. This is their rendition of the 1926 coal chute using prefabricated models.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

BY

KATIE DIECKHAUS



Though it was quickly rendered useless, the massive structure remained a fixture along the railroad tracks in Washington, Missouri, until it was blown out with dynamite in March 1953.

We are excited to announce that the completed model train display was delivered and installed this month. We are now in the process of designing the remaining exhibit space to include photographs of the 1926 coal chute and historic context about the importance of the railroad to the area's economic development.

We do this in the loving memory of Marc and Don while honoring their enormous contributions to their respective organizations and the Washington community as a whole.



This concrete coal chute was built in 1926. The previous one was a frame structure. This was destroyed with dynamite in March 1953. When diesel engines took over from coal ones in the early 1930s, chutes were no longer necessary.

Washington to Be Sold At Auction Tuesday, May 7

By Walt Larson

"It is therefore ordered by the Court that said administratrix sell fifty acres lying in the north west corner of the said north east fractional quarter of section twenty two in Township forty four north of Range one west on the second day of the next term of this court to be held on the first Monday of May next to the highest bidder on a credit of Twelve months."

Franklin County Court Records—February 7, 1839

One hundred and eighty-five years ago, on **Tuesday, May 7, 1839**, (the second day of the assembly of the court) the proposed village of Washington, Missouri, was auctioned at the Franklin County courthouse door for the sum of \$1,210. The property had been appraised at \$20 per acre, or a total of \$1,000.

William Owens in 1831, purchased the northeast quarter of section 22, township 44, range 1 west from Scudder and Elizabeth Smith. Ten acres of the normal 160 acres of the quarter section were under the Missouri River. The Owens purchase was 150 acres for \$650, or a rate of \$4.33 per acre. The original price of the 50 acres sold at auction was \$216.50.

The buyer at \$1,210 was Lucinda Owens, widow of William Owens who had been murdered on November 16, 1834, and administratrix of his estate. In a sense, Lucinda bought the property from herself and her children.

William Owens had some other costs in preparing the 50 acres as a village, such as surveying, preparing a plat of the property and laying out streets. However, it was a number of years in the future that streets would actually be marked, as for years the streets only existed as paths and

***Happy 185th Birthday
Washington, Missouri***
May 7, 2024, falls on a Tuesday
May 29, 2024, falls on Wednesday

cart trails. A number of lots had been sold on bond by the time of Owens' murder, but titles had not been provided.

William Owens died without a will which meant that all of his properties were held in probate. Lucinda Owens, as administratrix, was required to report yearly to the county court on the status of all receipts and expenses. It took four years until Lucinda could petition the court for an order to sell part of the estate.

"It is therefore ordered that all persons interested in said estate be notified that application as aforesaid has been made and unless the contrary be shown on or before the first day of the next term of this court ... further ordered that a copy of this order be published in some newspaper printed in this state for six weeks successively, the last insertion to be at least two weeks before the next term of this court."

Franklin County Court Records—November 14, 1838

After meeting the advertising requirement in a St. Louis newspaper, the court issued the February 7, 1839, order shown in the first paragraph at the beginning of this article.

One hundred and eighty five years ago, on **Wednesday, May 29, 1839**, Lucinda appeared before Joseph R. Hardin, Justice of the Peace, and filed a plat of Washington, Missouri. May 29 is the official founding date for Washington.

Upcoming Events

Friday, May 23—Haunted History Tour, 7 p.m.

Friday, June 21—Haunted History Tour, 7 p.m.

Sunday, June 23—Ice Cream Social, noon to 4 p.m., with Four Rivers Genealogical Society

Thursday, Sept. 12—Fall Dinner Auction, 6 p.m., open to the public.

Thursday, Dec. 5—Christmas Event for members, 6 p.m.

Watch for more information on the Haunted History Tour and other events via email or regular mail. Details for events scheduled later in the year will be included in upcoming newsletter editions or emails.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

IF YOU CAN FILL THESE POSITIONS, CALL TINA SEALS AT 636-239-0280

A handyperson is needed for odd jobs around the museum and AME Annex. Position is for an "as-needed" basis, not a weekly commitment.

Are you a retired teacher? Do you like working with children? Consider joining our education committee.

We need people to serve on our events committees. You may help with just one event per year or more, if you wish. We need help with our spring dinner, golf tournament, fall fundraiser or Christmas social.

Research Puts Some Rumors to Rest

By Suzanne Hill

Research can put some rumors to rest, but sometimes it brings new questions. That's the case with the Front Street buildings I wrote about in this edition, beginning on page two.

One rumor included government ammunition or bombs exploding when the Gambles used the former Peerless building as a warehouse. Gambles stored rifle and shotgun shells in the building for sale in its stores. They went off in the 1942 fire.

After George Buescher's new building was completed in 1946 on that same site, he leased sections to other businesses. Ritepoint, a manufacturer of ballpoint pens, mechanical pencils and cigarette lighters, moved into the Buescher building upon locating in Washington. When he vacated that site to move elsewhere in town, Ritepoint took over the entire building, according to the May 8, 1952, edition of *The Missourian*.

Ritepoint made M52 point detonating fuzes to explode 60mm and 81mm mortar shells during the Korean War. The company had manufactured "the world's most revolutionary lighter (cigarette lighter), which has the visible reservoir and is built like a fine watch," according to the March 3, 1953, *Missourian*. Ritepoint's experience qualified it to produce fuzes, "which is a higher-precision ammunition assembly."

While fuze parts were made in St. Louis, Hermann and Washington, they were assembled, packed and shipped at the Washington plant.

In March 1953, an explosion of 75-gallons of gas-heated chemicals took place in the degreasing room. Seventy-five gallons of gas-heated chemicals exploded. Firefighters quickly brought the fire under control, but steel girders softened and concrete sagged. It was the third fire in as many buildings on the same site. Damage was repaired.

The Korean War ceased after an armistice on July 27, 1953. In 1954, Ritepoint's momentum diminished because it was then doing strictly defense work. The government sent a stop order in March. Production was limited later in the year.

Recently, someone asked if there was an ammunition factory in Washington on the riverfront during the Korean War. She was told her grandfather had worked there. I had seen the answer when researching Buescher's building. Yes, it's true.

OUR MISSION

The Washington Historical Society is dedicated to the curation, preservation and interpretation of the history and heritage of the Washington, Missouri, area.

Through maintenance of an archival collection, public museum and the development of educational programs, the WHS seeks to ensure the accessibility of that heritage.

WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Katie Dieckhaus, Director
Tina Seals, Administrative Assistant
Chris Eckelkamp, President
Roy Morman, Vice President
Bryan Bogue, Treasurer
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Suzanne Hill
Bridgette Kelch, Mary Beth Rettke
Katie Schonaerts, Frank Wood

YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

A quarterly publication of the
Washington Historical Society
Suzanne Hill, Editor

OLD FASHIONED

FREE ICE CREAM

Ice Cream Social

Washington History Museum
314 E 4th Street, Washington, MO

June 23, 2024

12 PM - 4 PM

Games ★ Contests ★ Prizes

WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Four Rivers GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



WASHINGTON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

PRESERVING YESTERDAY
TODAY... FOR TOMORROW

PO Box 146

Washington, MO 63090

Fourth and Market Streets

Phone: 636.239.0280

museum@washmohistorical.org

www.washmohistorical.org

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday—Saturday: 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

Sunday Noon—4 p.m.

FOUR RIVERS

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Tuesday 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

Wednesday—Sunday 1—4 p.m.

MUSEUM & LIBRARY CLOSED

December 23—March 1

FIREHOUSE MUSEUM

Hours by Appointment

Admission is FREE

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WASHINGTON, MO 63090
PERMIT No. 72

Evenings at The Museum

Second Tuesday of the Month
Houseman Hall, 7 p.m



May 14—Dee Dann, Folk Artist, Her Life and Art

David Menke

**June 11—Dr. Ruth Harris, First African American
Stowe Teachers College President in 1940**

Vanessa Garry

**July 9—Franz Schwarzer: The History and Legacy
of the Zither King**

Anne Prinz

Aug. 13—Restoration Projects in Washington

Bridgette Kelch and Tyler King

Sept. 10—Architecture of A.A. Fischer

Katie Dieckhaus

Oct. 8—Odd Fellows in Washington

Odd Fellow Members

Nov. 12—Mayflower Ancestors

Lovis Brodbeck

Dec. 10—Daughters of the American Revolution

Katherine Kratky

Let's Go to The Movies

Join us the first Friday of
each month for Flashback

Fridays at Cinema 1+ to view a classic movie. The movies are shown beginning at 10 a.m. For \$15 a person, you can watch a movie with soda and popcorn included. A portion of the proceeds benefit the Washington Historical Society

June 7—Charade

July 5—The Girl Can't Help It

August 2—The Third Man

September 6—Stagecoach

October 4—Arsenic and Old Lace

November 1—Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

December 6—Vote for your pick

