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Story of Rolla, Missouri

By DR. and MRS. Clair V. Mann



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The Story of

ROLLA

Missouri

To 1974

By Dr. and Mrs. Clair V. Mann

As edited by Sally White

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

Dr. and Mrs. Clair V. Mann spent more than a dozen years collecting and researching material so that they could tell the "Story of Rolla." Dr. Mann compiled the material into some 1,500 pages in 14 volumes. He died (Nov. 30, 1974) before it could be published in any form.

Dr. and Mrs. Mann came to Rolla in the 1920's. Dr. Mann was on the faculty of the University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy and both he and his wife were active in many local organizations and participated in local events. Dr. Mann was an engineer but he enjoyed collecting information and compiling it into written form. Mrs. Mann shared this interest and assisted him in his avocation. Together they published "The History of Missouri School of Mines," "Yesterday Lives Again," (a history of Phelps County) and a history of the Frisco Railroad.

The Rolla Bicentennial Commission was created early in 1975 and it decided to publish the edited version of Dr. and Mrs. Mann's "Story of Rolla" as one of its major projects. The proceeds will go to Mrs. Mann.

This edited version of "The Story of Rolla, Missouri" is all material taken directly from the manuscript or added by Mrs. Mann, except for a few editor's notes included for clarification and so marked.

The original manuscript contains lists of councilmen, public school teachers, histories of most of the Rolla churches and organizations, etc. There is a wealth of detail included.

Sally White, Editor

Prologue

The year was 1844. The time was probably in late spring. The place was in the good old State of Missouri, in today's County of Phelps. The site was a meadowed valley enclosed by gently sloping hillsides--a few hundred feet northeast of the former State Trachoma Hospital. The spot was in or near the corner of what would be 7th and Spring Ave.

With a dismaying crash, the rickety, travel-worn covered wagon, drawn by two sturdy but weary oxen, lurched--then came to a sudden stop. The oxen gave one last good tug, found it useless, then settled back to enjoy a much needed rest. To this spot they had come, all the way, from Gallatin County, Ill., in a period of three months or more.

This rest they would now get--for the right, front wagon axle had broken square off. The weary 20-year old wife and her three scantily clothed children barely escaped being ruthlessly dumped out on the ground.

With a bound, the deeply tanned, stockily built young husband--who had walked beside the team for many, many miles--sprang back and knelt to

assess the damage this accident had done; done to his plans, his family, and their future.

After some moments of inspection, he arose, hands resting on hips, gaze still on the broken axle. The wheel had dropped into a small ditch through which a steady stream of cold water from a nearby spring was flowing.

Young John Webber (for it was he) could never at that moment, in wildest dreams, have foreseen that on one day, in the not too distant future, the city limits of a town called "Rolla" would envelop the scene of this accident. But his favorite swear word of "Bug-Godlins" came quickly from his lips. After that, he addressed wife Eliza Jane in this fashion:

"Liza Jane, I reckon this old wagon has carried us about as far as it aims ter go. Mebbe we've cum fur 'nough west anyhow. Guess we'd jest ez well camp here fer a spell, an' mebbe look into takin' up sum uf this wild land fer a farm. Ol' Col. Ben Wishon, where we stayed last night, seven miles back, has lived thar now fer six years. He says the lands hereabouts is fresh surveyed by Guv'ment surveyors, an' we can

squat there en hold a bit uv land fer a year er two, without havin' to prove up an' plunk down the cash fer it.

"Look over thar at thet spring, yonder. Fine lookin'. Water's clean an' cold. An' jest see how the grass grows down this meadow. The cow an' ol' Buck an' Roan will do fine on it--an' I can git a plow back thar at the Maramec Iron Works, where we stopped tother day, an' can then plow up sum uv this sod an' plant some corn an' garden. I cn' git them corn an' garden seeds at them Iron Works, too.

"Let's git out an' make camp. You tie out ol' Peggy and milk her, while I rustle some wood, start a fire, an' turn Buck an' Roan loose to nibble on this grass. Tomorrow I cn' walk back to that Wright Light cabin we passed a mile back, or even go on to the Wishon's store and blacksmith shop. Mebbe one or tother cn' let me have whut it takes to fix up this dinged axle."

But just then, wifey Liza Jane excitedly exclaimed, "Look, John--oh, look! Just see that big deer buck cumin' up to the spring for a drink. Git him, John! Git him!"

Taking a quick look, John grabbed his trusty long-barreled rifle, and exclaimed, "Bug-Godlins!

Yeah! An', bug-godlins, looks like Almighty God has sent us our supper! He did--effen I cn' do my part!" The rifle cracked, the deer fell--and the John Webbers--John and Eliza Jane, the three children, John Osborn, Elizabeth Jane and William Elijah--were soon enjoying their first deer-steak supper, with cupsful of cold spring water. After which, they spent their first night on the spot which--fourteen years later--would be called Rolla.

This happens to be as good a story as we can **improvise**--to explain and justify the selection of this spot for the Webber family's future home. Why did they stop here? There was no freshwater stream within three miles. There was no other seemingly important attraction in the area. The only reasonable explanation is that some kind of accident made the choice imperative. One of the oxen may have become ill--or something else happened.

But whatever the cause of the choice, the Webbers were here!

Thus it was that the family became the original permanent settlers of Rolla. All that now remains of them, besides memories, lies at the foot of a handsome granite monument in the Rolla Cemetery, erected by Rolla's Masonic Lodge.

From the date of the foregoing episode, presumably in early summer of 1844, it would be some 18 months before the Webber log cabin would be visited by two young and ambitious United States Army lieutenants--members of the Army's "Topographical Engineer Corps." These two--Lieuts. James W. Abert and W. G. Peck--were, on order of Capt. John C. Fremont (on his way to California to take it away from Old Mexico) making a horseback inspection of a 35th parallel railroad route that, inside a few years, would go right through John Webber's farm, so as to connect St. Louis and the far East with San Francisco and San Diego on the Pacific coast. How they proposed to build such a railroad--through lands that

still belonged to Old Mexico--is not understood. Young Abert would be back to this spot in 1871 (26 years later) to teach in a "Missouri School of Mines."

It would still be 13 years before there would be any official "Phelps County" (created 1857), with a commission of three men meeting at the Webber home to choose the site for a "county seat"--which would be located at the nearby "Bishop Mansion," erected in 1855 on the block bounded by 7th and 8th, Park and State Streets.

It would be 14 years before John Webber and two fellow pioneers would wrangle over the name the town should have--and compromise by discarding Bishop's "Phelps Center"--Webber's "Hardscrabble"--and adopt Coppedge's name "Raleigh," provided that it be spelled as he spoke it--"R-O-L-L-A," (May 11, 1858).

Sixteen and one half years would elapse before the State Legislature would officially charter the town of Rolla, include Webber's farm within its limits, and name John Webber as one of the first seven Rolla Town Councilmen.

Founding of Rolla

Three major factors contributed to the founding of the town of Rolla--construction of the railroad, formation of Phelps County and donation of 50 acres of land by Edmund W. Bishop.

In the year 1852 the railroad from St. Louis had reached to the town of Franklin (now known as Pacific). From Pacific, the main branch followed the Missouri River to Jefferson City then on to Sedalia which was the terminal throughout the Civil War. The "Southwest Branch" was planned to take off from the already constructed main line at Pacific and head for San Francisco along the 35th parallel.

By June, 1855, plans were ready, the route through Missouri was staked out, the construction contract was awarded to the A.S. Diven Co. This concern would extend the road from Pacific to the Gasconade River, through the "Phelps County" that was to be.

The J. Stever Co., a subcontracting firm, was sent ahead to clear right-of-way and to grade roadway for the last section of this part of the road--the portion lying between

Leasburg on the east, through Rolla in the center, and to the Gasconade on the west. The Stever outfit included Jacob Stever, E.Q. Harding, James Lea (for whom Leasburg was named), Major William Morill and Edmund W. Bishop (founder of Rolla).

The Stever Co. arrived in the Rolla area after midsummer of 1855. Where Rolla now is, there was nothing but oak forest and thicket--except that the Webber family and their log cabin had been here since 1844. Presently the company built a two-story office building, with a structural framework of oak logs cut locally. The framework was covered with sawed boards, placed lengthwise, vertically. It was later to be known as the Bishop Mansion; then, after 1915, the Baysinger Mansion.

Pacific Railroad bonds of 1857 were slow to sell. A mild financial panic was on. The "Southwest Branch" was out of ready cash for paying sub-contractors like the J. Stever Co. It occurred to Edmund Bishop, 37-year old railroader and partner in the concern, that now was a good time to get out of railroad contracting.

A better deal for him would be to hand over whatever contract assets he had to the other four partners--in exchange for such lands as they owned inside present limits of Rolla--plus their two-story office building and its contents--dishes, furniture, and so on.

His partners agreed. Bishop then shrewdly bought additional lands close in, and dreamed of a thriving city that could one day mature. The new County of Phelps was on the way--promoted, probably, at least in part, by high railroad officials like Thomas Allen, president of the Pacific railroad--who could well appreciate the issue of bonds from a new county as a gift to the railroad--such as the older counties along the route had already given.

Later, Bishop offered to donate 50 acres of his newly acquired land to the County--the County Court accepted--and the future town of Rolla was about to be born.

Phelps County was created by act of Missouri's Legislature dated November 13, 1857. The act named a commission of three men to choose a county seat. These men--Cyrus Colley



COURT HOUSE, ROLLA, PHELPS CO., MO.

(of Pulaski County), Gideon R. West (Maries County) and George Jamison (Crawford County) met at the John Webber home in December, 1857, and made their choice. It would be the area occupied by

the John Webber home, or the Railroad Office of E. W. Bishop and the J. Stever Co.

The founding act required the first County Court to meet at the John Dillion home, six miles

east of today's Rolla. The Court consisted of William C. York (who lived just west of Newburg, at York's Station), Hiram Lane (home near today's Vichy Airport, on that 6 x 9 mile strip later given up by Phelps County

This building is thought to be the one built as a temporary Court House for use a short time before the brick Court House was completed. Note original County Jail in background.



to Maries County) and John Matlock (lived in the Dry Fork area several miles southeast of Rolla).

When the County Seat Locating Commission (Colley and Jamison but not West, who refused to attend) reported its choice of a site was the area where Rolla today exists, a loud protest was voiced! Some 600 citizens, mostly from the east side of the county, signed a petition of protest, citing the choice was made by only two members of the commission.

The matter went to the Circuit Court, then to the Supreme Court. But before the Supreme Court made a decision, the Legislature itself (January 14, 1860) took action, confirming the location at Rolla.

For a month or two, early in 1858, the Court continued to meet at the Dillon home. It later began to meet at the Pacific Railroad Office which by this time was a two-story log building alongside the Frisco railroad tracks on the lot today occupied by the Herrman Lumber Co.

Early court business included the location and opening of roads from the county seat to

various places--toward St. Louis, toward Springfield, toward Jefferson City, Hartville and, interestingly, toward Lake Spring and Salem.

It is in the foregoing road order, dated July, 1858, that we find the first use of the name "Rolla" in Court records. However, the name was used earlier in a deed of railroad land to the County, dated May 11, 1858.

The second County Court consisted of Lewis F. Wright, John G. Hutcheson and Thomas R. Freeman. Wright lived on Little Piney Creek, eight miles south and five west of Rolla. With his four sons, he was destined to be lined up beside a road and shot to death by Union "militia men" some six years later. Hutcheson lived some five miles north of Rolla in the south Macedonia area. Freeman--destined in two years to lead the most formidable of all Confederate guerilla bands in south Missouri--lived just outside the southeast corner of the county.

On April 26, 1859, this Court ordered William C. York, former presiding judge, to have the town of Rolla platted and surveyed--ordered him to cause

Mr. Bishop's 50-acre donated tract to be so platted and surveyed--streets, blocks and lots laid out. The work was done and approved by the court on May 31, 1859.

A temporary framed Court House (one-story, floor dimensions 20 x 30 feet) was now completed and in use at the southeast corner of 3rd and Park Streets. The present brick Court House was begun in mid-summer of 1860. It was built by contractors Malcolm and Lynch, under the supervision of E. W. Bishop and was built of the very first "mud-sand" brick ever made in Rolla. War broke out before the building was entirely complete, and Union forces, for a while, used it for storage of horse feed. Then it was converted into a Union hospital.

The Southwest Branch's train first pulled into Rolla on December 22, 1860. Regular passenger service between Rolla and St. Louis started on December 31, 1860. The outbreak of the Civil War, in April, 1861, prevented further extension of the road during Civil War days.

In further action, the State Legislature enacted and

Governor Claiborne Jackson signed into law a special charter for the city of Rolla on January 25, 1861. In the Act, Daniel R. Parsons was named as Mayor. The Council consisted of seven members--E. W. Bishop, John Webber, Andrew Malcolm, Henry Andrae, F. Hartje, John Dunivin and E. G. Evans. This first Rolla Council had its first meeting on February 4, 1861 in the old "Tiffany House"--second house west from Main Street on the south side of 4th Street. This old house was demolished several years ago.

At the second meeting of the town Council which took place February 9, 1861, the first six ordinances were proposed and passed.

No. 1. Fixed times for regular council meetings, pay for mayor and councilmen and fines for non-attendance.

No. 2. Fixed procedures and dates for town elections, manner of filling vacancies in offices of mayor and councilmen.

No. 3. Outlined the duties of the respective appointive town officers.

No. 4. Defined and fixed penalties for commission of crimes and misdemeanors.

Ordinances Nos. 5 and 6 provided for the public printing of the Act of Incorporation, and for the printing of the foregoing four ordinances.

Because of the nature of Ordinance No. 4, a short summary is of interest:

- (1) A fine of \$5 was fixed if any person should disturb any church or legal meeting--and it covered also public use of indecent language.
- (2) A fine of not less than a dollar was imposed on any person who rode or drove horses faster than a trot or pace, except in emergency.
- (3) If any negro or mulatto violated any provision of the foregoing ordinances, they would be punished by not less than ten stripes to be laid on their bare backs by the town marshal, instant!
- (4) A fine of not less than a dollar was imposed on any person who publicly used offensive, indecent language, sang any obscene song, or threatened,

quarreled, challenged, fought or was found in a drunken condition.

- (5) A fine of not less than a dollar was levied against any person who kindled any fire outside of a house, or dumped fire-containing ashes in an alley after nightfall.
- (6) A fine of not less than a dollar if any person should move property of another owner from where it was to some other place, whether the act was malicious or not, if it annoyed or injured the legal owner.
- (7) If any person injured town or public property, he drew a fine of not less than \$5, plus the cost of any needed repair.
- (8) A fine of not less than one dollar if a person willfully or mischievously fired a gun or pistol inside corporate limits--or detonated firecrackers or other explosives.

All violaters of the foregoing ordinances were committing misdemeanors in addition to the fines, and were subject to appearance and sentence in the Mayor's official town court.

This building, near 4th and Main Streets, was originally known as Tiffany House and was where the first meeting of the Rolla City Council was held. The photo was taken as the building was being demolished in the 1960's.



Civil War - Military

The 1860 Presidential Election is what actually "triggered" the Civil War. Because Abraham Lincoln had been elected, South Carolina believed that he would initiate "Abolitionist" slavery policies. So that state held its convention and passed its Act of Secession on December 20, 1860--the first Southern state to do so.

A fair idea of what Phelps County and Rolla residents felt may be had by taking a look at the presidential vote of November 1860. This is how the vote was split among the four major candidates: 430 for John C. Breckenridge, the Democratic candidate for the "all out" slaveholders; 254 for Stephen Douglas, the "compromise" Democratic candidate running on a platform of non-intervention in the slave question; 199 for John Bell, Democratic candidate who led those who upheld preservation of the Union and obedience to the U.S. Constitution, and 37 for Abraham Lincoln, Republican candidate whose party condemned continued African slave trade, opposed giving legal status to slavery in those territories such as Kansas and Nebraska which were not yet

full-fledged states, and wanted many public improvements such as the Pacific railroad.

Clearly the 920 voters in the county sympathized with the South--though there was a significant block that wanted the Union preserved.

Perhaps, more within Rolla than elsewhere in the county, the general sentiment after the South Carolina secession was--that Rolla people should "keep cool heads"--not take sides nor become angry with their neighbors who thought differently than they.

The citizens and government of Missouri at this juncture were deeply concerned about the questions of secession from the Union. Wherefore, the state government at Jefferson City arranged for the holding, on February 28, 1861, of a state convention to consider the matter and make a choice. To constitute the state convention, delegates were to be appointed from the several "districts" of the state. Rolla was in that district for which the town of Houston, in Texas County, was headquarters. The several counties or communities in this district were to meet and elect delegates to the district

convention to be held in Houston on February 11. The district delegates then chosen would go on up to the state convention.

Phelps County's meeting to elect delegates to the Houston convention was also to be a forum to express the people's sentiments respecting secession. It met in Rolla on the same day as Rolla's first town Council meeting, February 4, 1861.

A committee was formed to formulate resolutions expressing the combined opinion of members present. While this committee was deliberating, there was a free discussion among the citizens and speeches from the floor by several prominent citizens.

The report of the Committee on Resolutions is an interesting document. Although it was adopted unanimously by those attending the meeting, it was completely repudiated three months later. The report can be summarized as follows:

- (1) The committee felt that this meeting owed the rest of the state an expression of the combined opinion of members present on the area's sentiments concerning secession of

Missouri along with her sister states.

(2) The committee deeply deplored the alienation of one section of the Union from the rest, because of sectional feeling...“We solemnly and earnestly protest against the tendency, in our judgement too fashionable now, to act hastily and precipitately; and we call upon all true lovers of their country, and those who would look after the true interests of Missouri, not to hurry her into the policy of dissolving her connection with the United States Government, to whose fostering care we are all indebted, in great measure, for the unparalleled prosperity of our state for the past forty years.”

(3) The committee believed that the Federal Constitution was sufficient to secure the rights of every state--and while sympathizing with the Southern states in their grievances, deplored their action in seceding. (On this date, the Southern states of South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida,

Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas had already seceded. Arkansas, Virginia and Tennessee would soon follow--the last on June 8, 1861.)

(4) The committee further believed that all the border states (including Missouri) should remain in the Union; branded all who were disunionists as enemies of Missouri, as well as of the nation; condemned secessionists' state seizure Federal arsenals and other property; demanded that, if the state convention approved secession for Missouri, then the people of Phelps must be allowed to either approve or reject that decision.

A final committee recommendation was that this meeting elect three delegates (with three alternates) to the Houston district convention. The record says: “Every resolution was received by demonstrations of applause, and after a few remarks, the report of the committee was adopted unanimously.”

From February 4th to May 7th, 1861, affairs in Rolla continued with not much change--that is,

until South Carolina trained its guns on Fort Sumter, fired them and reduced the fort. Gen. Beauregard fired the first gun on April 13th, and Maj. Anderson surrendered on the next day, April 14. The following day, April 15, President Abraham Lincoln declared that “insurrection existed,” and called for 75,000 3-month volunteer soldiers to be apportioned among the several non-seceding states of the Union.

The bombardment of Fort Sumter quickly jelled secession opinion in Rolla. Many of those who had unanimously approved the resolutions of the county convention on February 4th now publicly declared their adherence to the Southern cause. It all came to a head on May 7, 1861.

That was Rolla secession day. On that day there came riding on horseback into Rolla from Salem and Dent County some 80 select citizens. They were armed with diverse weapons including shotguns, pistols, rifles, swords and even bowie knives. They said they had come to help Rollaites exterminate those 2,000 or so German soldiers that were reported marching on Rolla from St.

Louis (Union troops). "If these ruffians did so march, they would surely make havoc of our peaceful citizens, and destroy in one fell stroke every beautiful structure in town, and every private domicile not leaving one stone to stand upon another. With fire, sword, guns, rapine and murder, they would make general havoc hereabouts. All the men would be killed, the women violated." ... Thus did these fiery horsemen orate in order to terrorize the town, its women and children. Thus would dire calamity befall our infant city.

Then followed 38 days of terrorism in Rolla. These horsemen would have been far more accurate had they said that the very devil himself lived in their midst, and would during the next five weeks exhibit some of his choicest wares! Forthwith, two terrorizing groups were formed. One, the Rolla "Minute Men," was led by one of Rolla's town councilmen, Henry Andrae. The other gang, a drum and gun squad, was commanded by Henry Van Fleet, the town's chief livery stable operator.

These two groups went about town, from house to house, in order to learn which side the

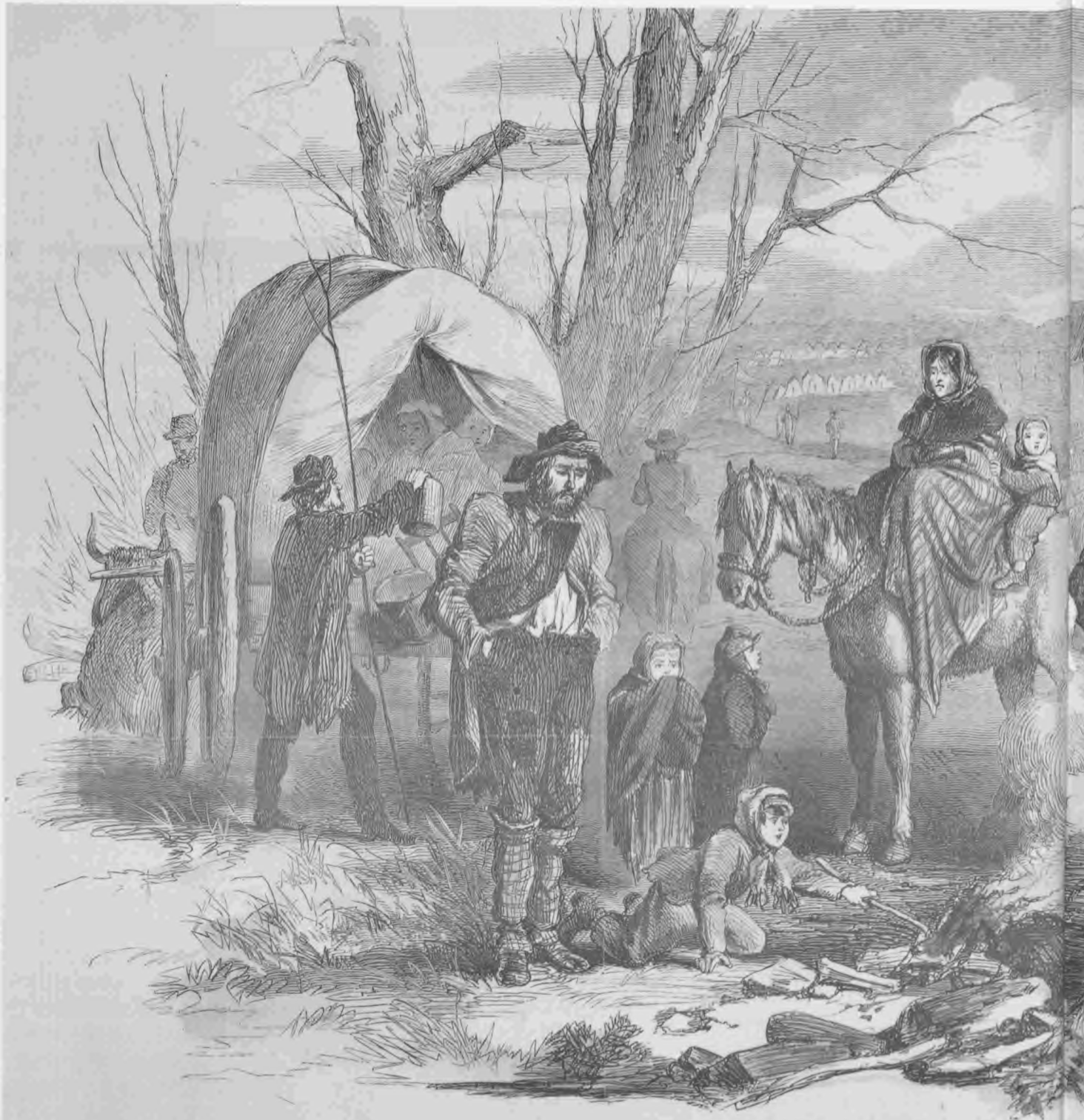
occupants favored. If secession minded, the occupants were not molested. But if the family favored the cause of the North, they were variously intimidated. Drums were beaten, guns were discharged, and the homes were even invaded in order to deliver threats. No wonder the women were frightened or that numbers of neutral families moved away.

Here in Rolla, this 38-day period of terrorism within the town came to an abrupt end on June 14, 1861, the day the first Federal troops arrived under command of Capt. Thomas W. Sweeney, but at the time led by the little German schoolmaster who came to be known as Col. Franz Sigel, later Brigadier General Sigel.

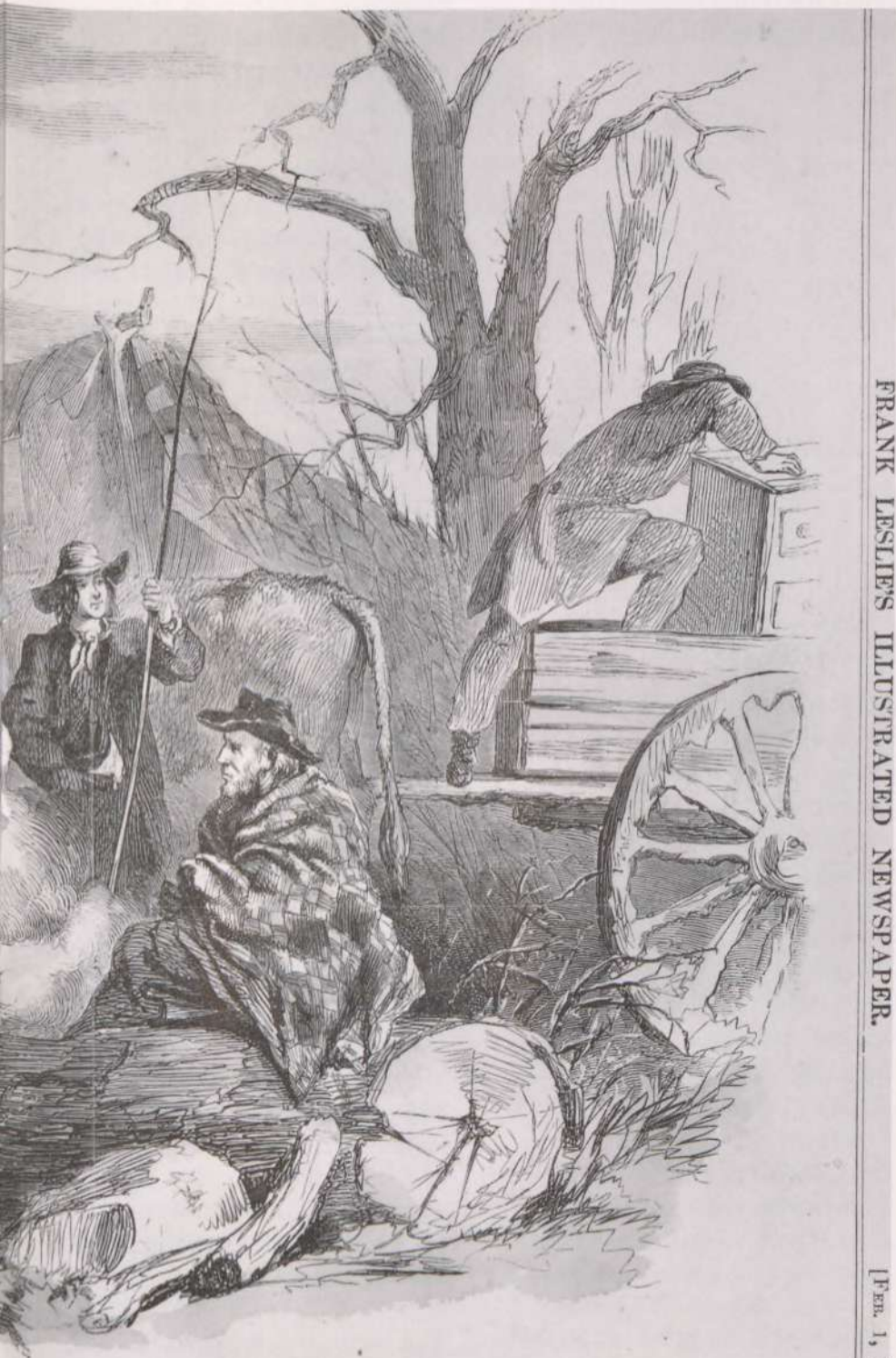
Probably for lack of an inspired, interested local pen, history has not accorded to Rolla a place of sufficient importance in the conduct of America's Civil War. While many other Missouri rail ends (Pilot Knob and Sedalia) and population centers such as Jefferson City, Springfield, Cape Girardeau, Ironton, Potosi, Farmington, Poplar Bluff, Pacific, Union, California, Tipton, Lexington, Arrowrock, Linn Creek,

Marshall, Osceola, Bolivar, Carthage, Neosho, Hartville, Houston, and Cassville--and many other communities--were occupied or overrun by guerillas or bona fide Confederate troops, Rolla, among these many, remained firmly in Union hands for the entire duration of the war. The rugged country south of Rolla may have been a potent factor in this situation, although it did not halt or much hamper the fierce activity of guerilla bands.

To Rolla, from St. Louis, over the old Southwest Branch of the Pacific Railroad, came the multiplicity of weapons, ammunition, food, clothing and goods required both for the highly important military expeditions that went out and through town in diverse directions (chiefly southwest, south, west and northwest), but also provisions for civilian needs. From the viewpoint of the town's news editor in late 1862 came the remark that "Since 1861, Rolla has grown more in its two years under military rule than it would have grown otherwise in fifty years." That's how important to Rolla and its history, is the story of its military occupation throughout the war--1861-65.



THE CAMPAIGN IN MISSOURI—THE DARK SIDE OF WAR—REFUGEES FROM SOUTHERN MISSOURI, DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMESTEADS BY ARTIST.—SEE PAGE 167.



FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER.

[FEB. 1, 1862.]

REBELS, ENCAMPED NEAR GEN. SIEGEL'S DIVISION AT ROLLA.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL.

Sketch which appeared in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Feb. 1, 1862. The framed print was presented to the Rolla Public Library by Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Routh Feb. 1, 1974.

Various news reports and authorities have, from time to time, stated that throughout the Civil War some 20,000 troops were stationed at Rolla. There may have been that many (at one time) during some point in 1861, or just before Gen. Curtis took off from Rolla for the Pea Ridge campaign. However, official war records report that the more usual number of troops stationed in or in-and-out of Rolla during any one month varied from just over 1,000 to about 12,000 (for short periods).

There were two permanent military installations in Rolla during the Civil War. Fort Wyman, built during the fall of 1861 on the hill in the southwest part of town where Ft. Wyman Grade School is now located, and Fort Dette, built in 1864 and located on what is now the campus of the University of Missouri - Rolla north of Norwood Hall and east of Parker Hall.

The more temporary camp areas where the troops lived in tents were located for various periods of time all around the Rolla area. One area was on Salem Ave., another east of the railroad extending through the present high school grounds to the intersection of 7th and Maple Streets. During the winter of 1861-62, an extensive

camp was set up west of Rolla beyond what is now Buehler Park. Some soldiers heaped stone walls and embankments of dirt around the base of their tents to help keep warm. Remnants of some of these stone walls are yet visible, 100 years after they were laid.

Headquarters and the post commandant's office was located, for most of the war period, on the block bounded by 6th and 7th, Cedar and Walnut Streets, where there still exists two of the cistern-like "wells" used by the commandant's office. Several such "cistern wells" still exist in downtown Rolla. They were partly filled by rain water--the rest by water hauled in from springs and creeks.

Military units stationed in Rolla were relatively mobile. Many forays were made into the countryside to attempt the capture of bushwackers and guerilla bands that frequented the rugged terrain south of Rolla to the Arkansas border. Troops were sent from Rolla to fight the Confederate army at major battles around Springfield, at Pea Ridge in Arkansas and to frustrate General Price's attempt to capture Jefferson City in 1864. Many units stationed in Rolla for a time were called east to reinforce Union armies fighting

at various points in the South. At times, but particularly during a war, it becomes expedient or necessary to set up what is tantamount to a Court, which may extend its jurisdiction not only over the armed forces, but also, in times of emergency, over the civilian population. Such an agency was established in Rolla practically from the beginning of the Civil War. In so far as can be learned, the last official act of the first town council occurred on June 17, 1861, just after Union troops entered Rolla. This ordinance absolutely prohibited sale of any form of liquor inside Rolla until and unless specifically permitted by the council. This was because of the influx of so many soldiers, who needed to remain sober. The ordinance is signed by E. W. Bishop, Council President pro tem, and H. S. Clark, Clerk. The post commander and the military provost marshal practically took over the functions of the town council. Use of the street was practically monopolized by the military so it had the job of maintaining both streets and county highways. At one time, the provost marshal considered the levying of a local tax sufficient to take care of these items which the town council would have handled had not the town been under military rule.

Civil War - Civilian

The infant town of Rolla had been growing for less than five years before the railroad arrived and it received official status as a town. Just a few months later the Civil War began and Union troops came to the area in large numbers.

One of the early business ventures was the establishment of a newspaper, The Rolla Express. This paper, edited and published by Charles P. Walker, was first started at Vienna, in Maries County, early in 1860. Then, on July 30, 1860, the editor moved the paper to Rolla--continuing also at Vienna as the Central Missourian.

The routine paper had four pages in the form of a tabloid. Besides news of local happenings, Walker carried a very liberal account of national events--all the principal presidential and state convention proclamations, all the principal campaigns and battles, legal notices, merchants' ads, and his own editorial opinions.

Walker was warmly "Northern" in views, and for two weeks had his office padlocked by the drum and gun squad who controlled the town before the

Union troops arrived. He was later commissioned a major and recruited new troops in Rolla until he undertook more arduous tasks--the leading of scout parties and raids out of Rolla. These duties took him away from the print shop, so he took Henry Lick in as partner.

For a short period of time, after the troops came back to Rolla from the early fighting in Springfield, he printed a Daily Rolla Express. In early 1863 the paper ran into financial trouble and publication ceased on May 9 of that year. It would seem that the paper was revived and was printed on some regular basis after that date, but no records or copies of the paper have been located until the post-war issue dated July 31, 1865. Much of the material on which we base this story of Rolla in the Civil War days is contained in Walker's "Rolla Express."

What was the town of Rolla like? The following is a description of Rolla, age approximately five years, in 1862. For some time the area near the Court House, centered about 4th and Main Streets, was called "Old Town." Here were the business stores of Chestine Miller, L.H.

Green and Co., Frank Deegan, and John Butler--all selling dry goods or groceries or both. Butler's place was known as the "Red Store." It was just to the west of the angle at 6th and State Streets, next west of the Rolla Express office, which at that time was in the Joseph Campbell house immediately at that street angle.

Rolla's "New Town" was the area west from the railroad to Rolla Street, and between 7th and 8th Streets. Here were the two earliest stores--Faulkner & Graves and Campbell & Co.--both now used as army commissary headquarters. Here, next to the railroad, just south of 8th Street Mr. McElhaney, of Springfield, built a store especially handling iron goods. Chestine Miller had a store farther on south, west of the railroad but near 7th Street. P.T. "Tom" Metler had a "retreat" or saloon on the north side of 8th, west of Faulkner & Graves. This was called the "Arcade." S.W. Harding owned the block bounded by 8th and 9th, Pine and Rolla Streets and in it had his bakery and a general store "in the hollow." On 8th, north side, in the Harding Block, W.J.C. Taylor opened a book and news stand,

and served ice cream and lemonade. Daniel Chamberlain opened a picture gallery opposite the depot--possibly the southeast corner of 6th and Olive Streets. He made "superb pictures, just like nature."

Over in Old Town, in the Masonic Hall, Dr. W.G. Harrison and Henry Webster had their drug store. The veteran doctor, E.E. Robberson, of Springfield, with a young partner named Smith, opened a second drug store--perhaps in the long-time stand at southeast corner of 8th and Pine Streets. Also in Old Town was the meat market operated by J.S. Shute--thought to have been at the northwest corner of 4th and Main.

As for hotels, these were mostly clustered about 4th and Main Streets, in Old Town. Here were the Rolla (Dunivin) Hotel, the Pennsylvania House and the John Webber Hotel. Lamb's Hotel was in the E. W. Bishop mansion block, bounded by Main and State, 7th and 8th Streets. Tiffany House was the second west from Main Street on the south side of 4th. There were still other businesses, but these were the principal ones, and will serve as samples.

Rolla's lawyers of 1862 included George Harington, James Chauvin, Elijah Perry, William G. Pomeroy, Edward A. Seay, Samuel G. Williams and a few others. The practicing doctors were J.D. Hudspeth, J. Thraikill, and E. Hovey, dentist. James Dyer was the town barber. John G. Myers sold and repaired clocks and watches, dispensed jewelry. Daniels & McGee had the livery stable. J.M. Garbere was carpenter, made coffins and furniture, sold trunks. Shuts and Stone had a blacksmith shop. L.A. Wilson and T.L. Bayly had the town's third drug store. R.S. Mitchell was the dagurreotype man. And Allen R. Richardson with partner Edward L. King, made collections and dealt in land sales.

Available records seem to indicate that there was no public school in Rolla during 1862, although there was a "village school" taught by a Mrs. Berry, which on June 16, was taken over by her successor, Mrs. R.T. Lathim. A private school "for females" was advertised to open on April 29, 1862 with a Miss Hillock as teacher. The school was to be in the traditional public meeting

place, "over Thraikill's Drug Store," in the old Masonic building, northeast corner of 4th and Main. Fees for the primary branches were to be \$3 for an eleven week term. For intermediate branches, \$4. For higher branches, English, \$5, German, drawing, embroidery, \$5.90. As of May of the same year, a Miss Matthews, graduate of Michigan State Normal School, proposed to open a similar school in the same place. There is no concrete evidence that either ever opened--though they may have.

St. Patrick's Catholic Church was under construction and its corner stone laid on June 21, 1862. It was "but a few steps from the Rolla Express office," then at the street angle at 6th and State. Ladies of the Catholic Church were active in raising necessary construction funds--one of their events being a Grand Ball held on Dec. 17, 1862.

On April 27, 1862, Rev. F.S. Beggs held one of his first Methodist services at the Court House. He presently organized the Rolla (North) Methodist Church Corporation, and became the church's first



Methodist Church. This was the second church built in Rolla at the corner of 9th and Main Streets on land donated by Edmund W. Bishop.

pastor. On June 28, it was announced that E. W. Bishop had donated two city lots as a building site for the Methodist church. They were the east half of the block bounded by 8th and 9th, Main and Park Streets. The town editor said that many townsmen would gladly contribute, were such a church really to be established. As of the same date, a Rolla Sunday School had been established under the charge of the Methodists (especially the Albert Sydney Long family who had recently arrived in Rolla from the Maramec Iron Works). It was open to

members of all denominations. It had a good library of books and it was better for the boys and girls of town to attend it than to run loose on the wild and dirty streets.

The actual Methodist church building was commenced in 1863, after a Rev. Smith--a Methodist official from St. Louis--had visited Rolla and made a survey of the premises and possibilities.

As of January 6, 1862, Rolla citizens became irked because the then postmaster, operating also a dry goods store, had the habit of waiting on store

customers before handing out letters and the mail. They wanted a change. By May 6th, a change had been made, and Robert P. Faulkner was the postmaster. His office on that date had mailed some 6,000 letters, at a profit of \$73. The town newspaper, then and at many other times, carried long lists of letters unclaimed--both by soldiers who had been in Rolla and by secessionists who had fled. The exact location of the post office as of this date is uncertain.

Until late December, 1861, the government had used only the



Fraizer's Wagon Factory on 8th Street. The original building was built by the Union Army and was used to manufacture wagons during the civil war to transport supplies from the railroad to points further west and south.

general commission stores of Faulkner and Graves and of Jos. Campbell & Co. at 8th Street and the railroad, for handling of commissary in Rolla. There were many complaints that there were not enough buildings to contain the tons of hay and grain used for horse feed, no room for soldier's food or supplies or for arms and ammunition. In early 1862 a Capt. M.P. Small took charge.

With soldier and civilian help, he had necessary logs cut and hewn from the oak forests, and with them erected two warehouses alongside the railroad at 9th Street. Each one was some 20 feet wide and 100 feet long. A third building of like dimensions was built for special

handling of grain. Another building of the same size was constructed on the southeast corner of Elm and 9th Streets and later became the second public school house in the Rolla public school district. (The first having been a log house 16 x 16 feet down along Elm Street, somewhere near 3rd).

The army also had a post bakery somewhere near Main and 2nd Street, which, when there may have been as many as 20,000 troops encamped in and around Rolla at one time, had a daily capacity of 6,000 loaves of bread.

Heavy wagon traffic out of Rolla to the south and southwest created an urgent

need for wagon repair. Blacksmith shops were needed for such work and also to care for placing horseshoes on the hundreds of mules and horses around camp. After the war closed, these shops remained as some of the useful remnants of army occupation. In the latter 60's and all the 1870's they blossomed into the widely known and patronized wagon establishments of "Gerrish Wagons" and Strobach's "Star of the West" line.

Road, street and sanitary conditions in and around Rolla were not the best. With mud everywhere, it was no wonder that the eight principal roads out of Rolla--together with the network of local roads joining

camp to camp and camp to town--were well nigh impassable. All county road forces had forsaken their road maintenance duties. Whatever maintenance was to be done had to be cared for by the army. The eight roads were vitally

important to military operations. They included the roads out of Rolla to Lane's Prairie, Vienna, Springfield, Jefferson City, Salem (two roads), Houston, Hartville and St. Louis. All were plentifully supplied with ruts and mud.

Rolla's streets were better named "bridle paths" than streets. There were no curbs, no ditches serving as gutters, no sidewalks and but few culverts, no paving, not even gravel. The newspaper said that a suspension footbridge had been

The original Grant Hotel was converted from Union Army two-story log buildings which had been used to store and issue uniforms and supplies. These buildings, on the northwest corner of 8th and Pine, were demolished in 1876 and a new brick hotel erected called Grant House.





Footbridge over Frisco Railroad track on Main Street between 3rd and 4th Streets.

placed over the deep railroad cut at 4th and Main Street (Wolfe's Avenue) but that an additional and much needed improvement was the grubbing out of the black jack stumps on "Broadway and Fifth Avenue," as the editor jocularly called Main Street. But town government had disbanded-- whatever was to be done was an army job.

During July of 1862, sanitary conditions claimed editorial interest. Dead hogs and dogs lay around inside town, and became an odiferous nuisance which must be abated. At that time the weather was dry and thirsty people and soldiers thronged about the Dunivin-Webber drilled well near 4th and Main Streets. A public well was being dug at 8th and Walnut Streets. This had been dug to a depth of 14 feet--probably one of the many military wells of its kind in the area. In May, Post Commandant S.H. Boyd had the little Army Cemetery enclosed with a fence, built by carpenter George C. See. It was

and is in the southeast corner of the old Rolla Cemetery.

The army established a number of hospital facilities in Rolla during the war. Shortly after their arrival they occupied the old wooden temporary court house and fitted it up for a hospital. At the same time they used the partially completed brick court house for storage of hay, grain and feeds for military stock but later refitted it for additional hospital facilities. During the later war years a row of log buildings set in a half-moon circle from 10th and Cedar Streets to near 7th and Maple streets, were all used as hospitals. The more frequent ailments that developed during the war years included colds, flu, dysentery, measles and typhoid fever.

The majority of people in Rolla during the war years were soldiers, the merchants and professional men and their families. A large minority, however, consisted of refugees

from the surrounding countryside who had been run off their land by bushwackers and guerilla bands. The town seemed full of these men or widows and their families who had been chased out of South Missouri and had fled to Rolla rather than be impressed into guerilla bands or Southern Army units. The people were usually dirty, without shoes, dressed in ragged clothing. They had been hunted like wild animals and even with blood hounds. Many of the men were glad to join Union troops in order to be taken care of. The historian of the 13th Illinois regiment describes some of the typical refugees as being so soaked with whisky that--were one of them to be picked up and twisted a bit--the liquor would drip out. He further says that the town population, at that time, was largely made up of "apple women, mustang ponies, contraband negroes, fugitives from the outskirts of civilization with now and then a secessionist 'not smart enough to run away and too worthless to be hung.'"

1865 - 1880

Scarcely had the Civil War come to an end before great calamity descended upon Rolla. The town's business houses and homes had been hastily built, and by one commentator the village was described as a "shanty town." There were few, if any houses or stores built of brick or fire-proof materials--the court house and jail being exceptions.

Thus it was that on June 20, 1865, a great fire broke out in the drug store of Jeremiah S. French and Co., on the north side of 8th Street just east of Pine. It destroyed all buildings on both sides of 8th, from Pine on down to the railroad track--except only the wooden frame wholesale warehouse of Faulkner and Graves. In all, some 45 buildings went up in smoke. The frantic efforts put forth by town citizens and Union soldiers were of no avail.

The loss in dollars amounted to some \$290,000--but real damage was that many of the merchants whose stores had been destroyed were unable to rebuild and so they departed for other regions.

Then too, as the war ended, some 2,000 refugees left and the Union troops were withdrawn

and mustered out. This withdrawal meant, of course, that stores and merchants, whose business had been largely patronized by soldiers, now lost that market. Some merchants left because of the fire, others because of the business decline. As there was no more use for many of the buildings the army had constructed for war purposes, numbers of them were torn down for the lumber they contained. This was especially true of the old "Greek Cross" fort, Fort Dette, whose heavy 12 x 12 timbers, resawed or left unaltered, were bought and used to rebuild numbers of the buildings the fire had destroyed.

To complicate matters, the terminus of the railroad moved on west. All during the Civil War, the old Southwest Branch of the parent "Pacific" railroad had its terminus in Rolla. That meant the huge shipments to Rolla of all manner of military and civilian supplies--and the reshipment of the same out of Rolla by wagon trains--ceased.

Heavy damage to the "Pacific" railroad property by Confederate forces during the fall of 1864 created severe financial problems for the company and the State of

Missouri had to foreclose and operate the various lines for a time.

The state sold the Southwest Branch to Gen. John C. Fremont at auction and during 1866-67 his company extended the line from Rolla to Arlington, 14 miles west of Rolla. Thus Rolla was crippled as a great shipping point and so lost both in prestige and in business.

Between 1867 and 1876 financing of this branch of the railroad changed hands several times while moving ever further westward. In September of 1876 the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway Company took possession and it has been a part of the "Frisco" railroad system ever since.

As if the foregoing problems were not enough, a serious epidemic of cholera and smallpox broke out among the Swedish workmen employed to extend the railroad from Rolla to Arlington. If, until now, there had not been incentive enough to persuade people to leave town, this condition furnished it because smallpox and cholera cases developed right in Rolla. The town's reported population of 6,000 souls, here during war

time, now dropped to some 1,500.

To care for the stricken small-pox and cholera patients, the city and county joined hands on a 50-50 basis, and built a "pest house" or quarantine hospital on Fort Wyman hill.

Politics in Rolla were in a turmoil considering that this was a town whose inhabitants, following the war, were half "Union" and half "Rebel." And, by State law, the "rebel" faction was denied the privilege either of voting or of holding any civil office. How could these people live alongside each other in peace? Well, they did--but they went through a terrific ten-year period of political adjustment. These political issues were involved to a lesser extent in the local and county affairs and to a much greater extent in state and national politics.

Since Rolla is the seat of county government, we must at least mention the County Court--the county's business agency. For this period in county affairs, political issues were not in the foreground, not dominant. The County Court, of course, for the years 1865-75, had to be constituted of men who endorsed and supported the state-wide "Radical Republican" anti-secessionist views--but there was not too much personal feeling in the selection of county court judges or of circuit court judges and clerks.

Following the years of military regulation, the town was ready to resume control of its own affairs. It began with an Amended Charter of 1865. Much of this charter was composed of provisions in the original charter. However, there were several important changes and additions. These included the following areas (in summary): Boundaries were increased from one square mile to an area exactly one and a half miles square; the name was changed from the "Town of Rolla" to the more dignified "City of Rolla;" voters were required to be registered at least two weeks prior to elections and to have lived inside the city limits for at least three months prior to the election; no gift or office within the power of the city to bestow, could be given or awarded to any person who had openly participated in the late rebellion or who had given aid or comfort to rebels or who had encouraged the cause of secession; the number of councilmen was increased from seven to nine and elections were for two years--half the number each year, and the last change provided for both a "register" (city clerk) who would record proceedings of the council, and for a "recorder" who was, in effect, the clerk of the Mayor's municipal court.

The city's charter was amended again in 1874 and the recorder office was abolished. The number of councilmen was also reduced from nine to the original seven.

The City Council maintained several standing committees which, in general, indicate the nature of city business. There were committees on health, fire, streets, and finance. There were city marshals, attorneys, assessors, collectors, treasurers, street commissioners and engineers. Of course, a most important item was the assessment of property, levy and collection of taxes and expenditure of the funds so collected.

The Health Committee periodically toured the town looking for dead dogs, hogs, and ill smelling water pools and mud holes. The Fire Committee tried to eliminate those old-fashioned mud-and-stick chimneys and defective stove pipes--frequent causes of house fires, along with live ash piles.

Grading of streets was a first-order item for the Council. A culvert was built across the natural "Happy Hollow" ditch which still crosses 6th and Rolla Streets. Great concern, and many special ordinances, regulated the building of the old-time plank sidewalks both over in "Old Town" (around 4th and Main) and in "New Town" (centered around 8th and Pine). Deep ruts and dangerous mud holes were numerous. On one occasion, in March, 1876, a number of angry citizens drove posts in bad mud holes and nailed to them signs reading "no bottom here" and "dangerous here."



This photo, taken Dec. 12, 1870, looks north from 8th and Rolla Streets. 1] is Fraizer's Wagon Factory, 2] Rolla City Hall, 3] Dr. Rowe's Residence, 4] Dr. Smith's residence, 5] the Malcolm residence and 6] City Marshall John McMasters on his horse "Bob."

Streets had to be conditioned and maintained, but there was not enough general revenue to care for this. Therefore, the several city charters provided that every able bodied citizen might be forced to work on the streets, not to exceed three days a year. An individual poll tax was also provided for. These regulations were difficult to enforce, particularly the requirement for work on streets. Numbers of the wealthier men,

including doctors and lawyers, refused to do this, complaining that their health would not permit.

Street lights would help--so the Council had twelve kerosene lamps made to be mounted on street poles at places designated by the Council. Then they contracted with a "lamp lighter" to light and care for the lamps.

Town moral problems were of

considerable concern. More than once, special ordinances were passed to eliminate bawdy houses and to penalize those who operated them. The record of the Mayor's Court, from 1864 to 1874, contains frequent cases in which groups of women were fined \$10 each--with the fines remitted if they agreed to leave town. Many drunken men were picked up on the streets, and fined from one to ten dollars. The licensing of saloons was an

important and troublesome issue--particularly so in the period 1877-1900.

A special Fire Brigade was established during the 1870's. In late December, 1871, 44 men organized a Rolla Fire Company and elected the following officers: president, Dr. William E. Glenn (MSM professor); vice president, David W. Malcolm; secretary, John O'Brien, and treasurer, Alex H. Orchard.

William Heller, Jr., was named Fire Chief, J. Peel was company captain, Perry Collins, 1st. lieutenant and W.C. Buskett, 2nd lieutenant.

This group procured and cared for the fire fighting equipment--crude, indeed, compared to present day facilities. These men had hooks

and ladders, axes, India rubber buckets, hand-drawn hose carts and hose and a hand pump in lieu of a decent fire engine.

The only water available was that stored in cisterns. There were no water mains, very few wells. Sewage was disposed of in the old-time out-houses which adorned the back yards of all stores and residences. There were very few indoor water closets draining into cess pools.

In February of 1875, the Council took possession of a new Town Hall--a two-story building on the corner of 7th and Rolla Streets. In December a fire bell tower was added complete with fire bell supplied by members of the Fire Brigade. To finish off the job, one of those kerosene street lamps was

placed on top of the tower and another at the corner of the town hall.

The Phelps County Court created the first Rolla Public School District in August, 1864, under the name of "The School Directors of the Town of Rolla." The Court named the following seven men as the town's first school board: Robert P. Faulkner, Daniel Chamberlain, Andrew Malcolm, Frank Deegan, John M. Dunivin, A. Demplewolf and Daniel R. Parsons.

An item in an issue of "Records of Rolla High School" says that the first term of public school, under this board, was held in the old "Faulkner House" on the north side of 8th Street adjoining the west line of the



Street work gang on Pine Street near Schuman property. Date unknown.

Frisco railroad. In May of 1865, an advertisement in a Rolla newspaper described a Rolla school known as the Phelps County Seminary or the George Allen School which offered instruction from primary through the high school level. It was held in the former army commissary building. This school may have operated or substituted for any public school programs for the years 1865 through 1869.

Although specific details of the early public school system program are vague, newspaper references seem to indicate that both elementary and high school curriculums were provided in some measure for white pupils and an elementary program was available for negro

students in a separate facility.

Rolla College, offering college level courses, was in existence from 1867 through some period in 1869. Classes were held on the second floor of the old Masonic Lodge at 4th and Main Streets.

In early April, 1869, the first Teachers' Institute was held in Rolla. Some 25 teachers from Phelps County and surrounding counties attended. It was sponsored by the Phelps County School Commissioner and the State School Superintendent. The consequences of this institute were tremendous. Members of the school board were greatly impressed by the meeting and hired one of the principal speakers to direct the Rolla public schools. This man,

Professor E.G. Clark, made significant changes in curriculum and teaching staff.

In 1871, a public school building was constructed. This was what is now the Rolla Building on the campus of the University of Missouri - Rolla. Public school classes were held on the first floor and the two top floors were leased to the new University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy.

Unfortunately, the school board was having financial difficulties. Public school opened in the new building in January of 1872 and closed in March because of a lack of funds with which to pay the teachers. It was used for classes again in September of 1872 and through the early months of



1875 when the building was sold to the School of Mines. Classes resumed in the fall of 1875 in the old Commissary building at 9th and Elm. The negro school which had occupied the building from 1871 through spring 1875 was moved to the Robert Case "Yellow House" at 3rd and Main Streets.

The University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy was established by the State Legislature on February 24, 1870 as a federal land grant

school. It was to be located in some county of southeast Missouri. To be eligible to bid for the school, the county had to have active mines. Phelps County had them at Maramec Spring--the Maramec Iron Works. That county which offered the most in cash, land and other property could have the school.

Five counties entered bids. The electors of Washington and St. Francois counties rejected the proposition at the polls. The bid

of Madison county was thrown out because it was irregular and inadequate. Iron and Phelps counties were left to compete. With its bid of \$130,500 Phelps County won over Iron County with its bid of \$113,500. Of the Phelps County bid, \$75,000 was in bonds, which were later voided because the proposition was not submitted to the voters. The University formally located the School in Rolla on December 8, 1870, and the Legislature confirmed the location on March 10, 1871.

Building erected in 1871 by the Rolla School Board and used jointly by the Rolla schools and the University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy through the spring of 1875.



Professor Charles P. Williams, of Pennsylvania and Delaware, was hired as the first director. The school opened in rented quarters in the top two floors of the Rolla Building in November, 1871. Originally, it was planned that the school would be located on Fort Wyman Hill, south of Rolla. However, funds were not available to build a building. When the Rolla School Board offered to sell the Rolla Building to the School of Mines in 1875, the offer was accepted. This was the only building of the School of Mines for 14 years.

Because a detailed history of the School of Mines has been published elsewhere, this document will not recount its history in much detail--only as it has direct application to the history of the town.

In addition to the Catholic and Methodist churches, other denominations were organizing and establishing congregations in Rolla during these early years.

A second Methodist Church for Rolla's negro citizens was established immediately after the close of the Civil War in 1865. The first three trustees, Arch Harrison, James Sullivan and Lewis McAdam, (all newly emancipated slaves) purchased a lot at the northwest corner of 1st and Main Streets for \$40. These three men, with the aid of other ex-slaves, planned and built their first church out of logs.

This church came to be called

Elkins Chapel and was so called in honor of its first pastor, Peter Elkins, an officially ordained Methodist minister and circuit rider who came to Rolla in October of 1865. One of the major services provided by Rev. Elkins was the performance of marriage ceremonies for the ex-slaves in the Rolla area and the subsequent legal registration of the children of these citizens at the Phelps County Court House.

The Presbyterians formally incorporated on Jan. 10, 1868. In September of that year, the church trustees purchased the lot at the immediate northeast corner of 6th and Olive Streets and on it built a wood framed edifice measuring 32 x 54 feet.

Printed records concerning the First Baptist Church of Rolla state that it was organized at a meeting held on Feb. 27, 1870, in the old Masonic Hall. As of Oct. 12, 1874, this congregation held its meetings in the same hall. However, plans had been drawn for a building at the southeast corner of 7th and Olive Streets. Work started in October of 1874 and the new church was completed and dedicated on Oct. 27, 1875. The floor plan measured 33½ x 61 feet. The outstanding feature of the structure was the steeple--rising 90 feet from ground level.

As early as 1873, members of the Christian or "Disciples" church of Rolla were planning a church edifice in Rolla and by July had secured \$500 in subscriptions. On October 25, 1877, the society bought the old

Masonic Hall, a two-story building, at 4th and Main. The Christians re-named the building, calling it the "Christian Chapel." From 1877 they shared its use with several other churches, including the South Methodists and the Episcopalians.

Congregations of the South Methodist Church were active and inactive several times during the early days of Rolla history. In 1875 a group was officially organized and during 1876 was endeavoring to "gather together a congregation." During the early 1880's the group built a church at the southeast corner of 8th and Main Streets, but because of financial difficulties, it was finally sold and the congregation was dispersed.

As early as Dec. 30, 1869, members of the Episcopal Church held services at the Masonic Hall which were conducted by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Charles F. Robertson, assisted by Rev. G.K. Dunlap of Grace Church, Kirkwood. Bishop Robertson continued to visit Rolla and hold services here up to 1886. Although members of the congregation were quite active, holding festivals and musical programs in an effort to launch a church building fund, the first Episcopal Christ Church was not built until 1882.

Building a healthy business community was of great concern to the merchants, professional men and citizens of

Rolla. A favorite method, much used in Rolla in these trying post-war days, was to organize a local stock company, with each one of the dozen or so

“Townbuilders” signing up for as many shares at \$100 as he could handle. In this way,

sufficient capital was subscribed to start the enterprise. After it got going, it often happened that three or four of

the more ably financed men would take over the entire stock and the enterprise. This was true of the flour mill project, of

the later Beddoe flour mill, the woolen mill, the Grant Hotel project and the Rolla Bank.

The table which follows shows the variety of businesses in Rolla and the number of each kind as the record stood at the end of the year 1871.

Auction house 1	Bakeries, confection stores . . . 3	National Bank 1
Book stores 1	Blacksmith shops 4	Nurseries 2
Brick yards 3	Cooper (barrel) factories 1	Packing house 1
Barber shops 2	Dry goods stores, etc 10	Plow factories 2
Cabinet makers 2	Harness shops, saddlers, 2	Plasterers 2
Carpenters, boss 4	Insurance agencies 4	Painters 2
Clothing stores 3	Jewelers, watches, clocks 2	Printing shops 2
Cigar factory 1	Livery stables 3	Planing mill 1
Cutlery makers 1	Livestock dealers 3	Restaurants 4
Drug stores 2	Millinery shops 8	Shoemakers 4
Flouring mills 2	Physicians (doctors) 7	Saloons 6
Grocery stores 9	Real estate, insurance agents . . 3	Tailors 2
Gunsmiths 1	Tin shops, hardware 1	Wagon shops 2
Hotels 5	Wool carding shop 1	Meat markets 4
Lawyers 10	Wholesale gro-hdw-dry goods . 1	Tobacco factory 1
Lumber yards 3		

The first bank in Rolla was established by J.A. Pierce of Mt. Pleasant, Missouri, in March of 1870. The firm of Faulkner, McCain & Co. felt that Rolla's bank should be "home owned" and they purchased Mr. Pierce's bank in June of the same year. A meeting of Rolla's "Townbuilders" was called and stock in the new bank was sold. Necessary papers for incorporation were sent to Missouri's Secretary of State and the new bank opened July 4, 1870. By October of the same year quarters were rented in the new Malcolm building, east of the northeast corner of 8th and Pine Streets. The bank was reorganized as a national bank in August, 1871.

Officers of the bank were: President, Cyrus H. Frost, secretary, David W. Malcolm, and treasurer and cashier, Robert P. Faulkner. Directors were Hugh McCain, Isaac Hoskinson, David and Andrew Malcolm, Robert P. Faulkner, and S.G. Williams. It was known as Phelps County National Bank.

Organized promotion of agriculture and county fairs in Rolla began with the incorporation of the Phelps County Agricultural,

Mechanical and Horticultural Society in February, 1869. Edmund W. Bishop was the leading promoter. At a February, 1870, meeting, the sum of \$5,000 was raised or pledged for use in clearing and grading the Society's property for use in holding fairs. The directors had purchased a land tract of 35 acres in an area which now includes Buehler Park, the Missouri State Geological Survey, the State Armory and the U.S. Forest Service offices. The first annual fair was held on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 27-28, 1870. It was held in Bishop's "Theater Building" the old Civil War teamsters' stable on the block bounded by 5th and 6th, Main and Park Streets. Individual admissions were 25 cents--\$1 for family groups. A long list of premiums was advertised. Special exhibits were: horses and mules; cattle, hogs and goats; clothing; grains; fruits; vegetables, and butter. A special exhibit was Milton Santee's collection of minerals.

Rolla's early fraternal orders included the three Masonic orders--the Blue Lodge, the Royal Arch Chapter and the Eastern Star. The Odd Fellows

Lodge had the regular I.O.O.F. chapter for men and the Daughters of Rebecca auxiliary for women. Other lodges were the United Workmen (A.O.U.W.), the Knights of Labor (K.L.) and the Knights of Honor (K.H.). While not a lodge, the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) and its women's auxiliary, the Women's Relief Corps, were also prominent organizations.

Social and cultural organizations were springing up in goodly numbers. Among the more prominent were The Rolla Library Association, the Harmony Singing Society, a Rolla Brass Band, the Home Circle and the Germania Club. These groups existed to provide both public and private literary, musical and dramatic events and dances.

Sporting events during this period included baseball games, horse racing and hunting. Several circuses made stops during these years to provide spectator entertainment.

Rolla had four newspapers during the years 1865-1880. These included the Rolla Express (see Chapter III) which, after a succession of different editors, finally expired for good

in 1875. The Rolla Herald was founded in 1866 by James M. Graham whose policies were in opposition to the "radical republican" element in Rolla. He stirred up the opposition to such an extent that he found it expedient to sell the paper in 1869 and leave Rolla. The Herald was purchased by W.T. Niles and Horatio S. Herbert.

Mr. Niles sold his interest to P.B. Van Deren in 1869 and Van Deren, in turn, sold out to Herbert in 1873, who continued as sole proprietor of the paper until 1885.

The Rolla Eagle was founded in 1870 and lasted only until 1876. It was published very irregularly by a succession of editors. Its contents varied from emphasis on politics to poetry to religion.

The Rolla New Era was established in 1875 by Wallbridge J. Powell who continued as owner, publisher and editor until 1897. Powell was a native of England who came to Rolla in 1872 and for two years served as editor of the Rolla Express. As editor of the Express he became highly disgusted and angered because the Rolla and Phelps County

Republicans--while demanding his political and editorial support--at the same time gave their paid advertising and financial support to the Rolla Herald, the mouthpiece of the Democrats and his hostile opponents. Nine months later he founded the New Era and breaking away from both the Republican and Democratic politics labeled the paper "Independent."

Among the accounts of local happenings found in the pages of these newspapers were descriptions of storms, tornados and accidents caused by horses, machines and railroad equipment. For instance, a great hail storm hit Rolla Oct. 29, 1875. Hail as large as hen's eggs broke hundreds of window panes and skylights including the stained glass windows of the newly-built Baptist Church.

A local twister descended upon the neighboring town of Licking in 1880. The storm demolished the new Methodist Church, dedicated only that morning, the Licking flour mill and many residences. They needed help. A committee consisting of E.W. Bishop, A.M. Millard, H.

Bascom Brown, A.S. Long and Sid J. Lang gathered together generous supplies of food and clothing and \$385 in cash and sent it promptly on its way.

Among the many accidents reported for the period 1871 through 1880, there are two that are rather spectacular. In August, 1874, Mrs. Nancy Ames quarreled with her husband and, in a fit of anger, went to the Frisco Pond, got into a boat and rowed to the middle of the pond. There she jumped in and would have perished had not Jasper Dobson watched her and gone to the rescue. As he pulled her out, she begged, "Oh, let me alone." She recovered, to live a happier day.

In December, 1875, a "Miss" or "Mrs." Reid, riding a train from Newburg to Rolla, jumped off at the old "high bridge" that originally spanned the creek which flows past Bridge School. Had she fallen off the bridge, she would have dived 125 feet into the creek bed. But the ties and timbers of the bridge caught her. The train stopped, picked her up and took her on to St. James.



Skyline of Rolla as seen from Frisco Pond in 1885. Identity of the figures is unknown.

1881 - 1890

During the eventful years, 1881-1890, besides the usual or normal things that happened, there were at least seven major or outstanding events. A first was the highly destructive fire of July 4, 1881. A second resulted from the fire. This was the temporary disruption of the public schools for a year. The third was the erection of a new brick school building, to be known as the "Central School," opened in 1882. A fourth was the hanging, in 1882 of George Bohannon. The fifth was the creation of the Western Conservatory of Music, which functioned during the 1880's. A sixth, and most significant event, was the terrific battle, both in Rolla and throughout Phelps County, between the "temperance people" who wanted to rid the area of saloons, and those who favored saloons. This battle culminated in the seventh major event, which was the total disruption of Rolla's city government and

the final repeal of its special state charter as of 1889-90. On the evening of July 4th, 1881, a group of Rolla's most respectable young men gathered on Pine Street, perhaps one hundred feet south of 8th, and decided to celebrate by firing a few rockets. One of these lit on the roof of a boarding house above the Culbertson shoe shop, on the south side of 8th, midway from the railroad to Pine.

A brisk wind fanned the live spark of the rocket into a raging fire. This soon spread to the flimsy wood store buildings on both sides of 8th Street from Pine Street to the railroad. The frenzied efforts of the Rolla fire brigade were fruitless. When the exhausted men had to give up operating the hand pump drawing water from a cistern at 8th and Pine, Miss Lola Shaw (who told present writers about it all) and another woman manned the pump. They, too, had to desist.

On the next morning, July 5, all the business houses on both sides of 8th Street were just piles of smoking ashes and rubbish. Only one building escaped--the brick building at immediate southeast corner of 8th and Pine which was used for years as a drug store. In addition, the fire destroyed the old Civil War "Commissary" log house which for years had been used for Rolla's public schools.

This great loss posed some mighty problems for early Rolla. Where would the schools now go? Fortunately, the citizens had already passed necessary legislation to erect a new brick school on the block bounded by 5th and 6th, Main and Park Streets. But this would take time to build.

The schools would be hurt for the 1881-82 year. Such students as were able and so minded could attend a private school conducted by Miss Ellen Van

Deren--or go to the School of Mines, if qualified. There seems to be no record of the public school being held in temporary quarters.

The new \$8,617 two-story building was constructed of brick and had eight rooms. It was completed on Feb. 4, 1882 and dedicated on Feb. 6. As the dedication ceremonies ended the first classes in Central School were opened. These were the teachers, the rooms and the number of pupils enrolled in each room.

Millard Godwin, Principal, salary \$62.50 per month, 36 pupils (high school); Letitia Gallaher, Room 5, \$32.50 per month, 34 pupils; Maggie Finley, Room 4, \$32.50 per month, 42 pupils; Sarah Minium, Room 3, \$32.50 per month, 42 pupils; Ida Smith, Room 2, \$32.50 per month, 31 pupils; Mary Van Wormer, Room 1 (primary), \$32.50 per month, 71 pupils.

Another brick building, with a main room (24 x 36 feet) and vestibule (10 x 12 feet), was completed at the northeast corner of 2nd and Pine Streets on Nov. 9 of this same year. This was the new Lincoln School for negro students which opened for classes Monday, Dec. 4, 1882.

During the same year, a new Elkins Chapel Church for negroes was built at the corner of 1st and Elm Streets with the parsonage next door. The old log cabin church had burned in 1878 or 1879.

It was while all these fire and school events were transpiring that the public execution of George Bohannon occurred. It all began on Monday, August 15, 1881 (shortly after the great Rolla fire) when a neighborhood social day was held in Poole Hollow, some miles west of Rolla. There was music and dancing and liquor. William Light and his "fiddle" provided the music. The liquor was served in a cave on the premises. Bohannon, evidently warmed up by liquor, followed when Light went for a rest or a short walk. Bohannon provoked a quarrel, stuck a revolver against Light's breast, and pulled the trigger. Light exclaimed, "Boys, look there," and died. Light, aged 21 years, left a widow and one child.

A coroner's inquest pronounced Bohannon guilty. He was brought to Rolla and confined in one of the two basement dungeons of the old county stone jail. The figure of a man, full size, which he carved in the plaster is still there. In the circuit court trial which followed, Bohannon, on Dec. 23, 1881, was sentenced to be hung. Charles C. Bland was circuit judge, Alexander Orchard, sheriff. On appeal, the State Supreme Court granted a stay of execution until Jan. 20, 1882, then gave permission for a new trial under Judge Bland. The case was argued from Feb. 25 to 28, when Bohannon was finally convicted and ordered to be hung on Friday, April 21, 1882.

On the previous day, Rolla's Mayor Pomeroy appointed a special police force of 20 men. He ordered all saloons to close on the fateful day, and ordered that no drinks should be sold within one half mile outside city limits. The national bank and other businesses closed for the event.

The gallows were erected in the hollow immediately west of the Rolla Cemetery. It was estimated that some 3,000 people had assembled to witness the gruesome event. Some had come from points fifty miles distant.

At the appointed hour, a double file of 50 armed police stood by the old stone jail, while Sheriff Orchard led the prisoner out. The sheriff and Bohannon rode in a closed carriage. News reporters from various towns followed on foot as the procession moved to the place of execution. The Rev. W. P. Bond, of the Presbyterian Church, opened the program with a half hour of exhortation. Bohannon said, in reply, "I am not guilty, but am willing to die. Goodby." The mask and rope were adjusted, and Sheriff Orchard released the trap--saying as he did so, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" His morale was utterly broken--he never recovered from this most distasteful act--even though it was decreed by law.

The spectators ended the ordeal by cutting the hang rope into six inch lengths for souvenirs. Part

Early photo of Frisco train near Rolla.



of our present story was personally related to us by three persons who were present.

Following a concert in the spring of 1882 at the Baptist Church, two MSM professors, Robert W. Douthat and George D. Emerson, decided that so much talent and interest in music deserved some institution designed to provide further training. They toured the streets of Rolla asking for moral support and financial aid and got it. They were able to rent the South Methodist church building for a headquarters.

The Western Conservatory of Music was opened for business as of Sept. 18, 1882. There was a board of directors and Prof. Douthat assumed the role of manager. The first faculty consisted of four teachers of voice, piano, organ, violin and guitar.

By 1883 management was turned over to Homer Scott who

was also a talented musician and teacher. The Conservatory was moved to the two-story brick Goettelmann building that stood on the northwest corner of 5th and Main (present site of Pershing School).

In 1885 the Conservatory was incorporated and had its status officially established as a fine arts college, with courses accredited for admission to regular college programs. The faculty was increased to seven.

Through the years, many concerts were given by Conservatory pupils which were attended by citizens of Rolla who grew to have a greater appreciation of good music. Many young people in the area received musical training there. Arrangements were even made to house students attending the institution from some distance from Rolla.

Unfortunately for the Conservatory--and for

Rolla--the year 1888 found the institution unable to continue. Financial resources had been drastically reduced. The Conservatory was moved to Carthage for a time then to Kansas City and it was finally located in Chicago where it had some measure of success but, finally, expired.

The demise of Rolla's charter government began with a controversy spawned by a series of newspaper debates between proponents of prohibition and those who favored the continuation of saloons in Rolla.

In November of 1887 a group of anti-saloon advocates petitioned the County Court to hold a "local option" election. Meanwhile the state local option law was challenged as unconstitutional and the issue went to the courts and a decision on holding an election was postponed until the issue

was resolved on a state basis.

The election was finally conducted on June 12, 1888 and though the majority of voters in Rolla favored the local option principle, "wet" voters from the other townships in the county opposed the principle.

Prohibitionists within Rolla then tried to get rid of saloons through City Council ordinances raising the price of licenses and requiring a \$500 bond be furnished. Saloon owners took the matter to the county and were then issued licenses by the County Court.

The Council responded by refusing to grant any licenses at all and later, raising the license fee from \$75 to \$300 for a six month period.

The pro-saloon faction then contended that the June election was null and void because of the neglect of registration regulations. They asked the circuit court to oust members of the Council whom they said were not legally elected because of the registration irregularities. Judge Bland of the Circuit Court agreed with them and issued the ouster order.

The last meeting of the Charter Government Council was held Sept. 13, 1888. This issue was referred to the Appellate Court which did not rule on the election question but upheld the Council on the licensing fee issue.

On December 20, 1888, a group of citizens gave public notice that they would request the forthcoming State Legislature to repeal Rolla's special charter. They proposed to reorganize the town as a Fourth Class city.

The Legislature did repeal the charter on April 5, 1889, and the town was without legal government. Meanwhile, the State Supreme Court upheld Judge Bland's ouster order on grounds of registration irregularities.

As early as Dec. 5, 1889, group petitions were taken to the County Court asking it to incorporate Rolla as a "Fourth Class" city. But no action was taken by the Court at that time.

A second effort was made on Oct. 2, 1890, and on Nov. 13, the Court incorporated Rolla as a "City of the Fourth Class."

Because of the fire, considerable building took place in downtown Rolla during

the decade and, in most instances, brick and stone were used as precautions against fire. A considerable number of new residences were also added to the town.

In March of 1884, 30 Rolla merchants and citizens formed an organization called the Rolla Board of Trade. Thus was formed perhaps the very first "chamber of commerce" Rolla ever had. However, the many stock companies used to launch new enterprises in prior years served the same purpose.

Among the items reported by the newspapers of the era was the announcement of the installation of the first telephones in Rolla. In 1887, Luman F. Parker, attorney, led off with telephone service when he had a telephone line strung from his office to the Court House. In August, 1890, David Malcolm had a phone installed between his residence and the National Bank of Rolla. A third such phone, intended for public use, was installed with lines between Dr. Rowe's drug store and the Court House. The editor said that these phones "worked like a charm." The phones mentioned were the first ever installed in Rolla. They did not serve outside the city.



*Episcopal Church, right, 10th and
Main Streets, completed in 1882.
Presbyterian Church, below, 6th and
Olive Streets, completed in 1868.*





8

MSM Campus in 1889. Left to right, Chancellor's Residence, Chemistry Building and Rolla Building.

1891 - 1900

The first administrative group under the new Fourth Class government consisted of a mayor and six councilmen elected from three wards. City boundaries had been reduced from the mile and a half square to the contiguous platted subdivisions actually laid out and recorded.

The new Council was faced with much the same work and problems that had been handled by their predecessors. Streets and fire fighting equipment were still major problems. A petition was presented to the Council asking for a vote on a special jail bond issue of \$9,000. The city jail in the old City Hall was considered unfit for detention of human beings. At the election so held on January 28, 1893, the bonds were defeated by a vote of 214 to 302.

The highlight of action by the new Council in its first decade was the establishment of a power plant in Rolla. By April, 1896, the desire for an electric power plant on the part of townsmen had become so great that the Council ordered a special vote on the question: "Do you really want an electric plant that would cost \$10,000? Will you approve a bond issue

of that amount?" The vote was 171 "Yes" and 71 "No."

By December 24, 1896, the Rolla Electric Light and Power Company had been formed by W.L. Maples and Herman Graber of St. Louis and local citizens who bought stock in the company. The city awarded the franchise to this company.

Already this company had installed numbers of street poles for wiring and soon the wires were up. A skilled electrician, C.W. Campbell, was employed. Service was to start by Jan. 15, 1897. For city corporation service on streets, a rate per individual arc light, burning until midnight, was \$5. Burning all night was \$6. Incandescent lights, both for the city and for private homes, of 16 candle size, cost \$1 for all night or 60 cents up to midnight.

By Jan. 14, the engine and generator for the electric plant had arrived and were ready for the grand opening on Monday, the 18th. A grand initiating ball had been planned to take place in the Grant Hotel on the corner of 8th and Pine, so poles were up and wires were strung from the plant which was on the lot corner immediately east of the

Frisco right of way and the south line of 8th Street. The hotel itself had been wired for 30 lights.

The great night arrived. All the notables of town were there. The Grant Opera Room was gayly decorated with an electric light display. Mayor Millard F. Faulkner closed the switch--the lights came on! And were greeted with cheers. But it was now time for the grand march. And so James A. Spilman called for couples to form, and himself took the lead. Pausing for a rest, delightful viands were served. Then dancing resumed--and continued until 2 a.m. Mr. Maples served as grand host. The newly arrived young lawyer, Charles L. Woods, was the last to leave. "It was the most delightful affair ever given in Rolla." It must have been good, for there had been several "Most delightful ever" affairs in Rolla before this!

A period of controversy soon began to arise. Rates were considered to be too high. By October of 1897 the power plant had several weaknesses. Heretofore, the required water for the boiler was supplied by the old Rolla Mill pond. But now the pond had dried up. The

Power Company decided to drill a well on the power plant lot. Then, in November, the original boiler, engine and dynamo proved to be inadequate. New equipment was installed at the end of January, 1898.

However, the demand for city ownership of the plant increased in fervor. The Power Company was not sure it wanted to continue operation, so offered to sell the plant and all the rest of the system for \$5,250. The city approved a \$6,000 bond issue in March, 1898, by a vote of 160 to 22. The City took possession of the plant. For more than 30 years

following, the City had good reason to wonder if they had not purchased a "white elephant." The actual transfer occurred the week of August 18-25, 1898.

During September, city workmen enlarged the power house and installed another new engine and boiler. By October, 1899, nearly all the stores in town, and half the homes were using electric light.

Once again the federal census was taken in 1900. This might be a good spot to report the census figures for Rolla over the years. Figures are estimated before 1870.

Year	Phelps County	City of Rolla
1860	5,714	600
1870	10,506	1,354
1880	12,674	1,582
1890	13,027	1,592
1900	14,194	1,600
1910	15,976	2,261
1920	14,941	2,077
1930	15,308	3,670
1940	17,437	5,141
1950	21,504	9,354
1960	25,396	11,132
1970	29,481	13,571

Notable events during the decade included the development of the Rolla Telephone system. In May of 1891, long distance telephone lines were

Walbridge J. Powell residence at 6th and Pine Streets [late 1800's early 1900's].





Brick Grant House at 8th and Pine Street built in 1876. The hotel was operated for many years by Hiram Shaw and was sometimes known as Shaw House. Later was converted to apartments, then commercial.

being strung from Rolla north to Vichy, Lane's Prairie and to Vienna. Going south were lines to Houston and Cabool. In July, 1891, the Rolla-Licking line was up. A group of business officers, or directors was chosen, including Albert S. Long, W.S. Nichols, Tom Bland, Thomas M. Jones and Taylor Grisham. Noel A. Kinney was the general superintendent. In 1898, the Rolla-Salem line was built. And in 1899, the Rolla system "was assuming large proportions," going out into the country area surrounding Rolla as well as

into most of the stores and offices in town. The Rolla State Bank was opened in September of 1894. Now there were two banks in Rolla. Joseph Campbell Sr., was the prime mover. He had lately completed construction of the two-story "Campbell Block" at the southwest corner of 7th and Pine Streets. The post office occupied one of the first floor rooms and the new bank took the other. The second floor was office space. In 1896 the officers were listed as: president, Joseph Campbell Sr.; vice president,

B.L. Knapp; cashier, James B. Sally and assistant cashier, Charles M. Knapp. Directors included the above plus Robert A. Love, Joseph A. Smith and Thomas J. Jones.

A terrific set-back occurred for Rolla's Baptists on October 10, 1893, when the beautiful church, erected in 1875, went up in smoke. It was after midnight when Mr. Coffman, nightwatchman, discovered that the building was on fire. He sounded the alarm and forthwith the fire brigade

arrived with hand pump, buckets, hook and ladders. A crowd of citizens assembled. But nothing could be done to save the building. It was too far gone. With a tremendous crash, the 90-foot spire tumbled and soon after, the whole building was a pile of ashes.

The cause of the fire remained a secret. Some supposed it was the work of an arson. Others thought that careless tramps had found a way into the basement, to sleep there, and in some way had set the fire. With their meeting place now destroyed, the Baptists for the

time held services at the Court House, meanwhile soliciting funds for a new building. A new brick structure was planned and built, being completed in the winter of 1894.

In July of 1890, the Blue Lodge (A.F. & A.M. No. 213) decided

The second Baptist Church Building built in 1894, at 7th and Cedar Streets. This was a replacement for the original church building destroyed by fire in 1893.



to construct a new Masonic Hall at the southeast corner of 7th and Pine. By April 3, 1891 the basement walls were completed. Brick work was started in May, and on June 11, with appropriate Masonic ceremonies, the corner stone was laid.

That occasion called for much rejoicing. At 2:30 p.m., a formidable street parade took off from Odd Fellows corner. It was headed by the Rolla Cornet Band, followed by Rolla's mayor, Joseph Campbell, the city council and some 200 Free Masons. At the building, Judge Charles C. Bland gave a history of the Rolla lodge. The corner stone, of Italian marble, was placed in the northeast corner of the building. In the "Memorial Box" behind the corner stone were placed a Bible, a membership roll, the Lodge's Constitution, Bland's history of the Lodge and photographs of the three former Lodge halls.

With similar ceremonies, the completed Hall was dedicated on Jan. 19, 1892. Unfortunately the building lasted only until Sept. 17, 1904, when it was destroyed by fire.

The "Gay Nineties" were indeed gay in the city of Rolla judging from the social and

cultural events reported by the local press. There were, of course, some notable events in terms of fires, storms, a diphtheria epidemic in Oct. of 1891 and a few scandals.

In January of 1898 the County Clerk absconded with \$5,700. Arrest of his paramour, in St. Louis, failed to disclose his whereabouts. Some years later, rumor placed him as a street car conductor in Salt Lake City, but nothing was ever heard of him.

School conditions were becoming crowded. During the 1897-98 school year, the primary department was moved into quarters in the Goettelmann building at 5th and Main.

Miss Myra Blanchard, primary class teacher, had hardly moved into the new quarters with her 95 primary pupils when school board member, F.E. Dowd, accused her of submitting to hugs and kisses by a Mr. Matson--while still in the school room.

At a meeting of the school board, Mr. Dowd demanded that Miss Blanchard be discharged. But the rest of the board members, after investigating, decided that the charges were false, and so exonerated Miss Blanchard. Miss

Blanchard did not so lightly consider the matter.

She, teeming with anger, found a chance for adequate revenge. A week after the incident, in September, 1896, she was riding up Pine Street with her father when she espied Mr. Dowd coming out of the Grant Hotel at 8th and Pine. Grabbing the horse whip, she jumped out and began whipping Mr. Dowd. Trying to escape, he ran across Pine and down 8th to the brick McCaw building, half way down to Frisco tracks--Miss Blanchard following with the whip.

Mr. Dowd did not long retain his place on the school board, and presently disposed of his abstract office and other Rolla business interests. The news reporter gleefully said, "Mr. Dowd won't ever outlive this disgrace. Miss Blanchard is a pure and honest girl. Goody!"

The town of Rolla suffered a blow with the demise of Edmund Ward Bishop, founder of Rolla, on April 24, 1895. Through the years, Mr. Bishop served the community faithfully--as a city councilman, as member of the school board, as director of the National Bank of Rolla, and as originator and

member of such agencies as the Rolla Bible Society, the Rolla Library Association, the Knights Templar and other antisaloon groups of town, and as a Republican delegate to all the state conventions held during his lifetime. He and Mrs. Bishop were Missouri delegates to the Philadelphia National Centennial anniversary of 1876.

He was one of the half-dozen men who managed to shape up the Phelps County donation so that the School of Mines might

come to Rolla. He donated the lots whereon the Episcopal and Methodist churches are built. And the School of Mines first building--the Rolla Building--was constructed on a lot carved from his estate.

As a final tribute, it seemed that always--whenever some great crisis confronted Rolla, or when large sums of money were to be cared for--the town turned to Mr. Bishop. Whenever he was a candidate for city councilman, or member of the school board,

he polled more votes than any other person. He was morally clean, vigorously active, honest to the core. However--when he was laid to rest in 1895--his grave bore no marker until a handsome monument was built above him in 1955 by the Phelps County Historical Society.

Rolla will forever be indebted to Edmund Ward Bishop--first, because he founded the town--and second, because he so devotedly and effectively served it.



Livery Stable located at the site of Rolla Public Library. Jeff Hawkins is in the buggy, others unknown.

1900 - 1909

City improvements made great strides during the first decade of the new century. During 1904 numerous sidewalks were ordered. 650 loads of gravel were applied to the streets. Twelve new railroad crossings were urged, and a balance of \$732 was paid on the \$1,000 purchase of the power plant lot. A new fire truck, hook and ladder outfit, fire bell and tower were needed by the fire department--so some 60 citizens donated the necessary amount for these facilities.

On Sept. 5, 1904, the fire brigade, led by the town's brass band--all in uniform--staged a lusty street parade. And on Nov. 17th, the Council laid down the limits for a fire district within which only fireproof buildings could be erected. It was bounded by 6th and 9th from Rolla Street east to the Frisco railroad.

On Monday, May 7th, 1907, work began on the new one-story brick city hall and power house on 8th Street next to the east line of the Frisco railroad. Water main trenches were also started. By Nov. 7th, the City Council was meeting in the new hall.

The old power units were now

overhauled. A new 150 h.p. Hamilton Corliss engine driving a 100 k.w. Westinghouse dynamo was installed and tested. The old machinery was retained for emergency. Fred Seele, operating engineer, while testing, lost a finger when his wedding ring caught in a drive rod. He was thrown to the floor and would have been killed had he not been dragged away by former Mayor Koch and a Mr. Fulford.

The water and sewer bonds voted in 1906 were sold at a premium of \$966, the total proceeds being \$48,966. The sewer portion of \$10,205 amply covered the sewer contract let to the Electric and Steam Engineering Co., of St. Louis. Actual sewer work began on April 28, 1907, when the sewer pipe arrived and was distributed. A disposal plant was built on premises bought from Albert Neuman for \$125. This tract was located somewhere near the present Green Acres Park.

The waterworks system involved the drilling of a deep well, the laying of water mains, the installation of booster pumps to convey the water to a storage tank or tower on the hill north of the School of Mines, and the provision of fire hydrants. The

deep well contract was awarded to H.W. Steinmetz on Jan. 17. March 14th found the well down 180 feet--when drilling tools were lost. New tools were in place on Aug. 15, but were again lost. The first well then had to be abandoned. A second one was under way by Aug. 22 and by Oct. 31 was down 462 feet. It was finally completed the following spring at a depth of 926 feet.

During the spring and summer of 1909, 8th Street was paved from Pine Street to the Frisco tracks and Pine Street was paved from 6th to 10th Streets.

The prohibition question rose again in 1901. The City Council evidently gained the idea that a drought in the saloon business along 8th Street was in order. On March 28, the Council reduced the number of saloons to two and raised the annual license to \$500.

Rolla's telephone system was formalized in 1901. By June 13th, 1901, the telephone plant was operating both day and night--except on Sundays when it was operated from 8 to 10 a.m. and from 2 to 4 p.m. Resident rates for phones were \$1.25 per month. In that same month there were 110 phones

installed in Rolla. And by September of the same year, Bell Telephone Co. had connected the Rolla system to that of St. Louis.

Three new buildings on Pine Street provided considerable downtown excitement during 1902. The new "Schuman brick" store on the southwest corner of 8th and Pine, while yet under construction in January, suffered damage from a hot fire which started in and consumed the wood frame "Boston

Clothing" store immediately to the south. The fire also spread to Ed Koch's cigar shop and the dental office of Dr. Arthur E. Wood. It turned south and started a fire on Faulkner drug store roof, but this was extinguished. The main fire was on the lot owned by Mrs. David W. Malcolm, so the new brick building that replaced the one destroyed by fire was known as the "Malcolm Building." The new Schuman Building was ready for occupation by June 15th of that year. By August,

the old "Central" drug store, directly across the street, had moved into it, and John W. Scott began his sixty-year era of service there.

A new Rolla bank entered the field as of Dec. 11, 1905. This was the "Merchants and Farmers Bank." Its rooms were in the new Masonic Hall Building. President was A.S. Long, vice president, J.M. Diehl, cashier, Joseph H. Smith and assistant cashier, W.J. McCaw. Directors included

City Marshall McMasters on 8th Street looking east from Pine. This area was known as "whiskey row" [seven saloons from Pine to the railroad]. The photo was taken about 1900.





Electric light, power and waterworks plant, 8th Street east of Frisco tracks.

Long, Diehl, Smith and Dr. E.W. Walker, Edwin Long, Will Ellis and T. Francis Johnson.

The two Schuman brothers, Charles and Richard, were Rolla's "phenominal builders and boosters." They had built what is now Scott's Drug Store, and a large two-story brick building used for a dairy store at 6th and Pine. Now they had taken over the original Rolla Flour Mill, had installed the latest milling machinery and in 1906 were making 120 barrels of flour per day. Their favorite brands were the "Silver Moon" and "Beats 'em All." Their products were marketed both in Rolla and in other towns along the Frisco railroad. In October of 1906 they bought the A.S. Long two-story brick building at the northeast corner of 8th

and Pine, where until some time about 1930 they operated a clothing and department store.

After being defeated several times at the polls, a bond issue for a new school building was finally approved in 1909. The two-story building with a full basement was located between 5th and 6th and Cedar and Walnut Streets. The four-room structure was completed in December of 1909 and named the East Side Ward School.

Rolla continued to have an active social and cultural life. One of the highlights was the result of Rolla's "Man of Music" John W. Scott's ardent activity. With the symphony orchestra he assembled and trained, and with a town chorus of fifty voices, he gave a "grand concert" on Nov. 26, 1901,

probably at the Grant Opera House. At the School of Mines, the newly organized MSM Minstrels gave a first performance on March 28 of the same year. For this, Scott's orchestra played the music, a male quartet sang, and Kurt V. Moll was vocal soloist. The whole town, for admissions of 15 and 25 cents, enjoyed a presentation of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

One of the outstanding events of the decade was the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, otherwise called the "Louisiana Purchase Exposition." The Frisco Railroad ran special trains from Rolla to St. Louis. There was a "Rolla Day," when hundreds of Rolla folks attended. The fair had been opened by U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, in far away Washington, D.C.,



East Elementary School

First street paved in Rolla on May 31, 1909 [Eighth Street].



pushing an electric button. John Sousa's band was a feature. The Missouri Mining and Metallurgical and Geological displays were the most valuable of any at the Fair. They had cost \$65,000. At the close of the Exposition, the 25,000 specimens were given to the School of Mines. Director George E. Ladd had been superintendent of this portion of the fair.

Rolla's first automobile was brought into town in July of

1904. It was the property of Dr. S.L. Baysinger, Harry O. Bland and J.A. Spilman. Edwin's Long's "Packard," sometimes spoken of as Rolla's first auto, has to bow to the Baysinger vehicle for the "first" title.

One of the more spectacular events of the decade was the murder-suicide of 1901. Monday, September 23, was the 19th birthday of Miss Mollie Powell, daughter of editor Walbridge Powell. She was at

home in the evening when a young instructor at the School of Mines called to press his suit for her hand in marriage. She refused, and in desperation, the young man, J.S. Crowell, shot and killed her. As a citizen posse hunted him, he hid in Robert Love's huge barn, near 10th and Cedar Streets. There the posse surrounded him.

Seeing he could not escape, he shot himself. All Rolla mourned the beautiful girl.

Charles Schuman Grocery around 1900.



1910 - 1920

Events in Rolla during the early part of the decade were not particularly noteworthy. Details for the year 1913 are meager because issues of the Rolla Herald, from which most items in this account are taken, seem to have been lost.

About the only city improvement to be undertaken during the years immediately following the sewer, water system and paving of downtown streets projects was the beginning of a sidewalk down Rolla Street to the cemetery. Money for the project was raised by various groups. By July of 1910, 912 linear feet of the total 2,700 had been completed.

Due to the efforts of Miss Lola Shaw and Dr. W.H. Adams, veterinarian, a drinking fountain to quench the thirst of farm horses was completed near 6th and Pine Streets. Cost of the project was \$65. It proffered its first drink on Sept. 30, 1910.

Rolla's lawyers met in July of 1911 and organized a local bar association. C.C. Bland was named president and Charles L. Woods, secretary. A total of 15 attorneys attended the meeting.

Two organizations which had languished over the years were

reactivated. The Phelps County Agricultural and Mechanical Society was rejuvenated. It purchased the old fair grounds, owned at that time by Dr. S.L. Baysinger, and planned to hold a county fair in October.

A group of Rolla women also reactivated the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) which, like the mechanical association, had become inactive.

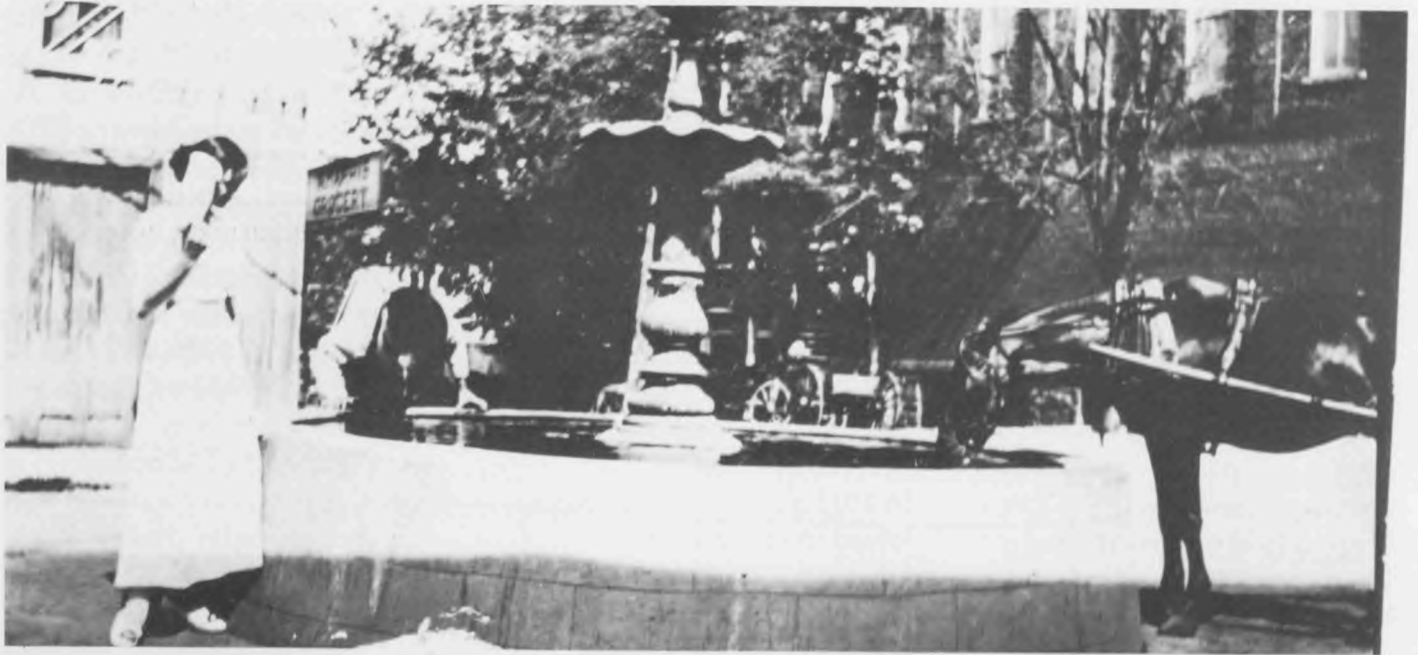
In 1912, Rolla's church pastors joined in organizing a ministerial union which they called the "Mens Christian Union." One of their first projects was a church census of Rolla. These were the results: The number of persons visited, 1833; professed Christians, 802; persons in churches not organized in Rolla, 40; professing Christians not church members, 144; church goers not Christians, 427; neither church attendants nor Christians, 124; adults attending Sunday School, 116; children attending Sunday school, 471; adults not in Sunday school, 194 and children not in Sunday school, 293. Church members numbered 618 which was broken down as follows: Methodists, 158; Baptists, 124; Christians, 117; Catholic, 80;

Presbyterian, 66; Episcopal, 65 and Church of God, 8.

A new Post Office building was constructed at the corner of 9th and Pine (northeast corner, now the site of the library) and opened on March 8, 1915. Mrs. Lizzie Cornwall was postmistress in the new building until January, 1916, when B. H. Rucker, a Democrat, took her place. Her term was characterized as "fine and efficient." Rucker was said to be a very popular choice.

The Rolla High School building was constructed during 1915 between 8th and 9th Streets on Cedar. A first bond issue failed because voters were not satisfied that an appropriate site would be chosen. They were satisfied with the Cedar Street location and a \$27,500 bond issue was finally approved. The building was officially dedicated on Dec. 13, 1915. On that date the High School had 107 pupils. This building still stands and is now the public school system Administration Building.

In 1916 the City Council passed a lengthy ordinance requiring city auto registration. The yearly fee was \$2.50. The first



Horse drinking fountain at 6th and Pine Streets, completed Sept. 30, 1910, at a cost of \$65.

eight persons to register were: Charles L. Woods, Frank J. Fullerton, F.W. Webb, Dr. W. Adams Livery Co., W.J. Mitchell, Edwin Long, Frank H. Farris, and Dr. E.W. Walker.

A new category of business was getting a good start in Rolla. Salesmen for autos were these: For Fords, J.A. Spilman; for Maxwells, Clark C. Bland, son of Judge Bland; Clark made real news when he drove his Maxwell the 55 miles from Houston to Rolla in three hours and 35 minutes! He sold the

Maxwells for \$750 each. A rather sad note, Rolla's celebrated "horse man," H.B. Perry, shipped his fine stallion, "Dugan Gambrel," to Chicago for sale. The horse was the fastest pacer in the Rolla area... but it was not an auto!

Later in the decade, owners of livery stables and blacksmith shops began to convert their property to garages. One of the first was Line's garage on the site of the former Strobach wagon factory.

The Rolla Commercial Club became vitally concerned with

the selection of a major highway crossing the state from St. Louis to Springfield and a second route, running north to south, from Columbia to Rolla and Houston. The question was augmented when Missourians adopted the slogan "Let's Lift Missouri Out of the Mud," and in November of 1916, approved a constitutional amendment authorizing a sixty million dollar bond issue and the establishment of a 6,000 mile state road system.

An "Ozark Trails" group, studying the St. Louis-

Springfield route, proposed two locations. No. 1 was the "southern route," from Springfield to Mountain Grove, thence to Rolla and on to St. Louis. Its length would be 289 miles, and the driving time at 17 miles per hour, would be 17 hours. No. 2, the "northern route," went from Springfield to Rolla through Lebanon, and thence to St. Louis. Its length was 261 miles, and the driving time, at 11 and 1/2 miles per hour, was 23 hours. This was the beginning of Routes 66 and Interstate I-44. The "northern

route" was finally adopted, as the Commercial Club recommended and worked for.

The north-south route had two possible locations between Rolla and Houston. One would be from Rolla through Lecom, Anutt, Lenox and Licking to Houston. The other was to run from Licking through Edgar Springs to Rolla. The latter, backed by the Commercial Club, finally prevailed.

Meanwhile, active members of the Commercial Club such as

J.A. Spilman, David E. Cowan and Prof. E.G. Harris, persuaded the County Court to spend \$2,150 on special county road improvements. The Rolla Good Road District, J.A. Spilman, chairman, bought a "White" 4-yard truck and an "Acme" gravel screen and surfaced a part of the Lecom road (now Highway O) with gravel--the section between Rolla and Dibble Creek.

In July of 1917, J.A. Spilman and other Phelps County road fans visited the State Highway

Stretch of Highway 66 near Rolla before it was paved and became part of the transcontinental highway.



Commission to promote their suggestions as to the routes for the east-west and north-south highways. Following the meeting the two groups were in agreement. The roads would be built following World War I.

The United States entered the war in April of 1917. In the next few months, a number of young men from the School of Mines and the Rolla area had enlisted. The first group left Rolla for Fort Riley, Kansas on Saturday, May 12. The group included Rolla's mayor, Louis H. Breuer and four MSM professors.

The selective service draft was put into effect and the first men so chosen were selected in August. There were 1,056 from Phelps County.

The war precipitated a great Rolla Evangelistic meeting. The war seemingly produced deep emotional feelings in the religious area. By Aug. 30, 1917, members of the Baptist, Christian, Methodist and Presbyterian churches had adopted plans for holding a huge revival meeting. They had arranged for the noted evangelist, John M. Linden, to come to Rolla.

For the meetings, churchmen built a commodious tabernacle

at the northwest corner of 9th and Pine Streets, opposite the Post Office. Dr. Baysinger owned the lot. The churches paid all labor costs. The Frank B. Powell lumber company loaned some 20,000 board feet of the lumber required. The City furnished the necessary water and electric light facilities. The building seated one thousand persons. The first meeting was on Sunday evening, Sept. 9. By Sept. 20, the program was in full swing. Mr. Linden had been the first aid to evangelist Billy Sunday. Every morning Rolla's church and school bells were rung at 9:45 a.m. Prayer meetings were held each night except Monday. All clubs, lodges, church and student groups were made special guests on nights respectively set aside for them. The general choir consisted of all singers of Rolla over 14 years of age. And on Saturday nights, some 200 public school children made up a "Booster Sunbeam Chorus."

The morning of Sept. 20th arrived. This was the day when the first group of draftees--36 of them--were to leave on the Frisco railroad for training at Camp Funston at Fort Riley, Kansas. Rolla gave them a big farewell! Stores closed.

Assembled in marching order, and led by "Chief" H.A. Buehler, of the State Geological Survey, the 36 boys marched up Pine Street to the tabernacle and occupied seats of honor. A choir of 100 persons was there to sing. Four hundred school children were present. Talks were made by lawyer John A. Watson, secretary of the Draft Board, by the church ministers and by evangelist Linden. The boys then marched to the Frisco depot, where a group photograph was taken. They then boarded the train, while tearful citizens voiced and waved "farewell, goodbye!"

The meetings, with evangelist Linden present, closed on Sunday evening, Oct. 14. Mr. Linden was paid no salary, but did accept a free-will offering. Not yet satisfied with closing, the Rolla ministers arranged to continue the meetings for five more days until Oct. 19.

With the meetings ended, the Powell Lumber Co. sold the tabernacle lumber at discount rates. It consisted of two inch stock in widths of 4-6-8-10 inches and one-inch boards of widths of 4-6-8-10 and 12 inches. And Dr. Baysinger sold the tabernacle lot, on Oct. 11, to George Castleman and G.W.

Carney. This was probably the greatest such meeting Rolla ever had.

Liberty bonds were being sold all over the country. Phelps Countians purchased \$50,000 worth of the 1st issue and \$100,000 worth of the 2nd issue by Sept. 2, 1917. Everyone was urged to conserve food supplies. In November, F.M. Mumford, Missouri state food

administrator, designated each Tuesday as "meatless-wheatless" days.

In January, 1918, President Wilson proclaimed that "The final war for liberty has come." Food restrictions were tightened. On Wilson's orders there would be one "wheatless meal" each day. Tuesdays and Saturdays were to be "porkless." Purchases of flour

were limited to 24 pounds, sugar to five pounds. Purchases and use of coal, light and heat were greatly restricted. Because of this, Fred Smith's "Rolla Theater" had to close on Mondays and Tuesdays. J.A. Spilman, county food administrator, warned that those who either hoarded foods or profited unduly from their sale, were subject to fines of

Last group of draftees from Phelps County during World War I. After having a photo taken in front of the recently completed U.S. Post Office [1915] at 9th and Pine Streets, the draftees went to the depot to board the train and were told they didn't have to go.





Frisco water stop

\$5,000. The county Red Cross was commended for doing a great job--making surgical dressings, Christmas packages, collecting and knitting sweaters and sox for the soldiers.

February and March brought renewed emphasis on food savings. The limit for wheat bread was 1 and 1½ pounds per week. Substitutes permissible consisted of flour made of corn, buckwheat, rye and potatoes. Mrs. E.W. Walker headed a drive for purchase of thrift stamps. Schuman Bros. continued collection of scrap iron. Daylight saving time was initiated when clocks were turned ahead one hour on

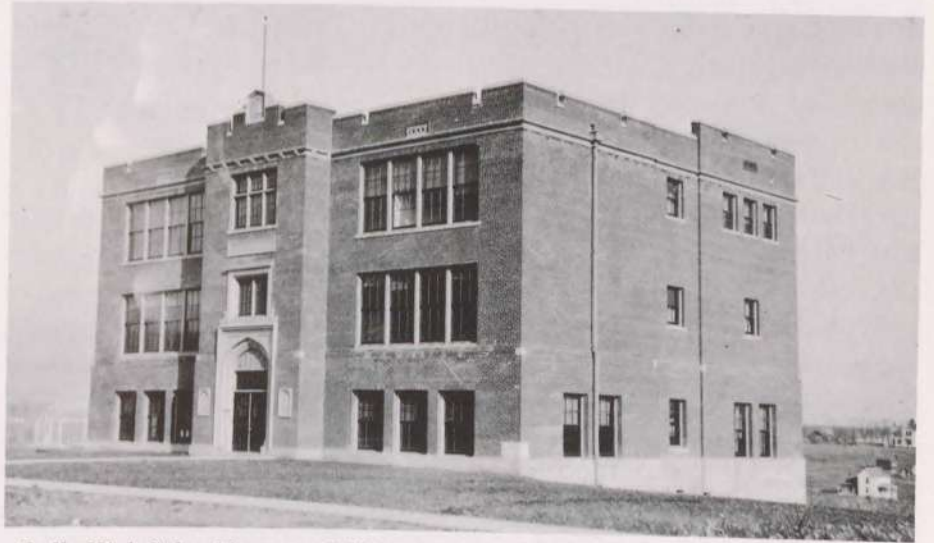
March 31. Those who refused to comply with any of the regulations were branded as "slackers" and had their names printed in the newspapers.

In October the dreaded Spanish Flue epidemic broke out, not only in Rolla, but all over the nation and in army camps as well. Some 60 soldiers in the Student Army Training Camp at the School of Mines contracted the disease. The Mayor prohibited public meetings, as in churches, picture shows, schools and similar groups. The churches, Red Cross and Rolla women did all they could to help the few doctors left in town. A second

siege of the flu broke out in Rolla early in December.

Following the end of the war, citizens of Rolla tried to get back to a normal way of life. According to a list of casualties prepared by Dr. Floyd Shoemaker of the State Historical Society, 52 men from Phelps County lost their lives during the war. On Decoration Day, May 30, trees were planted on the grounds of the Court House in their memory.

In 1920 the City Council was faced with coping with power plant problems which had grown worse during the war years. Late that year the city power plant received a scathing



Rolla High School between 1915 and 1920 [addition was built about 1927]. This is now the Public School Administration Building, between 7th and 8th Streets on Cedar.

description by the student chapter of the American Association of Engineers at MSM. It said that "The city electric light and power plant is BUM!" The document, printed in the MSM Miner, cited these defects: The electric generator designed to carry 400 amperes, was carrying a load of 550 amperes--an overload of 37%. How long could this endure?

The motor on the water pump had its commutator burned out to depths of 1/4 to 3/8 inches and the solder had melted. The old boiler was insufficient. There should be two. In all the plant, there were no duplicate units to provide for

emergencies. Break-downs were imminent, in which case there was no remedy and there would be neither light, water nor power. In prior emergencies, the School of Mines plant had helped out. There was no good reason for such service. The forgoing facts had been gathered by first-hand inspection. The conclusion was that--"The only thing Rolla has for a power plant is a location and a smoke stack."

By 1920 the old Rolla Commercial Club had bogged down, due to lack of promotion and interest. It had, to date, some major achievements to its credit, particularly in

development of county and state roads. It was now felt that such an agency for Rolla was a "must" since most of the things Rolla needed and wanted could be promoted and spearheaded by such a club.

It was thus that on Feb. 2, 1920, 60 Rolla businessmen met and decided to organize and incorporate a "Rolla Chamber of Commerce." The next day, a store by store canvass down town enrolled 130 members. On Feb. 5, these men met again and formally organized. The officers they named were: president, Edwin Long; vice president, C.M. Knapp; treasurer, Joseph H. Smith.

1921 - 1932

The city, for the years 1920-24 (up to September, 1924) continued to operate the city's electric power plant and system. For Rolla's citizens, it was a period of wretched service. The load carried was too great for the generators, which became badly worn. There were frequent stops and break-downs. On such occasions, the plant at the School of Mines was joined to city distributing lines. Then it was vice versa--the school plant would break down, and the city plant had to carry the overload. Students would come out wildly protesting their inconvenience. Many people over town did also.

In August, 1921, with funds provided by a new bond issue, the city bought a second boiler--and a Corliss engine supposed to produce 250,000 watts. It failed to produce the necessary steam and another boiler had to be secured. The Corliss engine was a similar "jinx" only running for a short time. The installation of a new generator, and the removal of the old one in January, 1922, did not help much. The townsmen wanted something drastic to be done--sellout or keep the plant. After a yes or no election of 483 "No" to 211

"Yes," they voted to keep the plant.

Mrs. D'Arline Holcomb and son-in-law, George Silver, proposed to buy the power plant and electric system on satisfactory terms including paying off the old debt and giving the City Corporation free municipal water and light, extend distribution lines for general citizen use, and install modern alternating current 110 AC power generators. They asked for title to the City Power Plant lot.

The electors voted 588 for and 9 no. The deed was signed and delivered by Mayor Charles L. Woods. The new Company put in three new diesel engines and planned to supply other towns in south Missouri with power and light using the Rolla plant as the central generating plant. This arrangement was not satisfactory and not approved by Rolla citizens and lead to the displacement of the Holcomb-Silver Concern and ultimately repossession of the plant and system by the city (some 20 years later).

Soon more water was needed than the old six inch well on the Power Plant lot could furnish.

With many difficulties and unsatisfactory results, several wells were drilled. By the fall of 1925, the increase in homes and population brought on a crisis in the disposal of sewage because the original system had been planned on a too limited capacity and there was no system of plant treatment of sewage. Two elections failed to pass a bond issue, but on a third try the bonds passed by a vote of 543 to 147. Improvements and extensions of water and sewer lines were made, though the exact dates of the completion are not obtainable.

Starting with the downtown area, an ambitious program of street paving was undertaken. Between 1923 and 1929 most of the major streets were paved, especially those connecting the downtown area with the new highways. In order to finance continued paving projects, in 1931 the city passed a tax of 1 cent per gallon of gas sold in town. A poll tax of \$4 per year on every man under the age of 50 was also passed.

By March 1, 1931, the paving of Highway 66 with concrete was completed. To celebrate this great event, the Highway 66 Association staged a mammoth



Parade unit in Highway 66 grand opening celebration.

celebration in Rolla on Sunday, March 15. 8,000 persons were in attendance. The program included a huge street parade-- the greatest ever held in Rolla. There were several cornet bands, a host of floats and covered wagons, autos, the William James single-seated carriage and team, and a scaled down replica of Daniel Boone's log cabin. Mr. Edwin Long drove his "Stevens-Durea"

auto. It was Rolla's oldest automobile. Many notables were present. The event was capped by a colorful pageant held on Jackling Field of the MSM campus. Rolla was on an improved trans-continental highway. It was also on a completed U.S. Highway (63) and the improved State Highway 72 between Rolla and Salem would be completed the next year.

The Rolla Commercial Club, whose members had worked so hard for the highways, and its successor, the Rolla Chamber of Commerce, established in 1920, were organizations responsible for promoting most of the major improvements in Rolla for a number of years.

During the 1920's the Chamber's achievements included the following:

Highway 63 N. at Pine Street - looking south.



(1) They aided in bringing the U.S. Trachoma Hospital to Rolla in 1923.

(2) They carried on a vigorous campaign to obtain a shoe factory for Rolla in 1923-raising the money for construction of the building (area bounded by 7th and 8th on Olive Streets) by selling lots in the Frisco addition and soliciting donations from many Rolla citizens and MSM faculty members.

(3) They also had a part in fixing a few detailed portions of Routes 63 and 66 coming into Rolla.

(4) They aided in extension of sewer and water systems by petitioning the Council, and otherwise promoting action.

The Rolla Hub Club was composed of many of those who belonged to the Chamber of Commerce. But it also included many members of the School of Mines faculty as well as some of Rolla's ministers. It was essentially a "dinner club," designed to promote fellowship, good will and understanding among its members, and in the town generally. It was a predecessor of the three service clubs which, after a few years, absorbed its membership--the Lions Club (its immediate

successor), the Rotary Club and the Kiwanis Club.

Another note of interest in business matters in the town was the merger of the Merchants and Farmers Bank with the National Bank of Rolla in October, 1929.

The prospect of increased traffic from the intercontinental highway brought about further improvements in Rolla. In 1924, a 33-room addition was made to the Ozark Hotel (between 8th and 9th next to the railroad). In November, 1927, the Pierce Oil Co. purchased a five-acre tract on Carney Manor Hill from Charles Schuman. On it the company planned to build an "Eating House" like the famed "Harvey Houses." There would be a gasoline filling station and a dining room seating 160 persons. This "Tavern" was built and completed ready for business, by July 31, 1928.

As of 1930, Rolla's leading citizens had decided that Rolla needed a new and modern hotel. The old Baltimore hotel was out-dated. The old Ozark Hotel was far from being modern. Money for the proposed new hostlery was available. The children of Edwin Long, former mayor and

leading Townbuilder, had inherited the fortune he had built up. He was now deceased. Mr. Long's sons would provide the needed money and the hotel would be named the "Hotel Edwin Long" in his honor. The five-story structure, with basement, would have 65 rooms for customers, a commodious lobby, a coffee shop and special rooms for the National Bank of Rolla. It was to stand on the corner of 8th and Pine (southeast). It was completed on March 10, 1931.

Two other events important to Rolla took place during the decade. By 1926, the high school enrollment had so increased that an addition to the high school building was imperative. In a special election on March 16, 1926, the voters approved the necessary bond issue of \$50,000 by a vote of 597 to 81. A two-story brick building with basement and featuring a commodious auditorium was added to the existing structure and completed July 28, 1927.

In the early 1920's Dr. Sidney McFarland, opened a private hospital in Rolla. It was in the old two-story brick Rolla Hotel building on the south side of 7th Street in the center of the block

between Pine and Rolla Streets. From the start, adequate financing was the crucial problem. In 1925, in an effort to care for this, a plan to sell stock for the hospital was tried. It failed.

In August of 1932, the hospital was moved from 7th Street to the old Baltimore Hotel on the north side of 8th and the Frisco railroad. At the time, it had some 24 patients.

During the decade several

churches had building projects. The Rolla Christian (Disciples)

Church erected a new structure which was completed in 1923. In 1917 the building they had purchased from the South Methodists at the southeast

Air view of Rolla taken during the 1920's.



corner of 8th and Main Streets was destroyed by fire. Since that time the congregation had been meeting in the old Pythian Castle at 7th and Rolla Streets. The new church was on the original site at 8th and Main.

In 1925 the Episcopal Church added a Parish House adjacent to the church which was on the northeast corner of 10th and Main. The Parish House provided room for Church School classes and was also a meeting place for women's church groups and social affairs. It was frequently rented out to various other civic or historical societies for special occasions. The spacious basement, with its kitchen, was for many years a favorite place for important meetings and banquets. The upper room

served as an entertainment center besides space for Sunday School.

In 1925 the Lutheran Church built a modest brick chapel on the southeast corner of 12th Street and Spring Avenue. For a number of years the congregation had met in the Presbyterian Church. Prior to the move to town, headquarters for the Lutheran congregation had been the Elk Prairie Lutheran Church east of town on Haas family land in the county. The new building was formally dedicated on July 11, 1926.

The Rolla Union Mission was another congregation without a building in the early 1920's. By December 16, 1923 the church had erected a modest chapel at

the northwest corner of 3rd and Oak Streets. The church now uses the name of "Pentacostal Church."

One of the more spectacular events reported during the decade had to do with Rolla's weather in early 1924. From January 4th to the 7th, the thermometer stood still at 13 degrees below zero. This was the coldest period for many years. Ice on Frisco Pond froze to a thickness of 12 inches.

At the end of the period recounted in this chapter, on June 30, 1932, the National Bank of Rolla closed its doors for good. The deposits of many Rolla citizens were wiped out along with 12 years' savings of Rolla's public schools. The Rolla State Bank, alone in the county, remained solvent.



One of Rolla's early automobiles. Driver, Luman Long; front seat passenger, Elizabeth Long; back seat, Lizzie Cornwell, left, sister of Mrs. Edwin Long, right.

1933 - 1946

During the period covered by this chapter, two major national events had great influence on the affairs of the City of Rolla.

These were the "Great Depression" and World War II. Both created numbers of Federal regulatory agencies with resulting restrictive and/or financial growth producing projects.

By 1939, the people of Rolla were becoming restive under the operation of the electric and water systems by the Holcomb-Silver concern now called the Missouri General Utilities Co. The company had expanded to provide services to areas outside Rolla. During the next five years, various plans were proposed to enable the city to recover control of the facilities.

Finally, on Sept. 26, 1944, an election was held. The proposition voted on provided for an issue of \$50,000 in general obligation bonds--with the assumption that \$360,000 would be paid from plant annual revenues. The total sum would be paid off by or before the end of 20 years. The voters approved the proposition by a vote of 988 to 43.

The Council, anticipating such

approval, had set up the Rolla Board of Public Works in August. This consisted of: president, Herman E. Castleman; vice president, Prof. F.H. Frame; secretary, R. Eric Schuman and F.A. Cameron as the fourth member. James B. Bronson was to be the manager of the "Rolla Municipal Utilities."

This board took formal possession of all the electric and water facilities which the General Utilities Company had owned or operated on Nov. 1, 1945. An office was set up in the former "Negro U.S.O." just east of the Post Office.

The operation of the water and electric plant by this Board of Public Works, through the years 1945 to 1970, has proved to be a veritable gold mine for Rolla. The plant was paid for years ago. At least two million dollars have been turned over to city projects of one kind or another. These have included expanding sewer or water systems and paying for general city governmental affairs.

During the mid 1930's it once again became obvious that expansion of Rolla's sewer lines and disposal works was a vital necessity. The improvements were to be financed by the issue

of \$42,000 in city bonds, to which was added a Federal grant of \$22,910. At a special election on Sept. 20, 1938, the whole arrangement was approved by a vote of 735 to 21. The work was completed in Oct., 1939. In all, three and one-half miles of sewer main were constructed.

These facilities were hardly completed before the great housing expansion in Rolla took place, during which more than 600 new homes were built in the town. A new disposal plant and added miles of sewer main had to be built. In October, 1941, the Federal Public Works Administration made Rolla a grant of \$293,130 with which to extend city water mains and otherwise extend that system. Along with this grant, the P.W.A. granted \$298,180 for extension of the city sewer lines.

Various Federal grants during the "Great Depression" made it possible to set up extensive street paving projects in Rolla. Beginning in July, 1938, 40 blocks of paving were completed by July, 1939. During 1940 and 1941, an additional five miles of paving, curbs and gutters were added to the street system.

The great expansion of housing facilities in Rolla was due to the construction, in 1940-41, of the U.S. Army's Fort Leonard Wood, some 35 miles southwest of Rolla. Many new families needed residences in Rolla, so as to be near the Fort--which employed hundreds of civilians--besides housing the thousands of engineer troops trained there.

Federal permission was given for the construction of 600 new housing units in the Rolla-Waynesville area--each unit to cost around \$3,300. This resulted in the layout of four major and several minor city subdivisions in Rolla. These were Ridgeview, Great Oaks, Green Acres, Rolla Gardens, Powell's 1st, Powell's 2nd, Murry's 1st, Lakeview, North Park (Stephendale) and South Park. Including all other subdivisions and the rest of Rolla, 512 new houses were built in 1941 and 108 in 1942. The combined cost was \$437,050.

In September of 1941 a special bond election approved expenditures to establish an airport three miles east of Rolla, to build a new City Hall and jail and to improve the city's sanitary sewer system. The new two-story brick city hall was built on the south side of 8th Street next east of the Power Plant. The Federal government gave the city a grant of \$48,000 to help build (grade) the airport. The city bought the necessary airport land which today is

Rolla's Industrial Park whereon the Switzer Co. is located.

During 1941, in anticipation of the needs of soldiers at the new Fort Leonard Wood, the Federal government constructed two U.S.O. buildings. The "Negro U.S.O." building was built east of the Post Office on the north side of 9th Street. The "White U.S.O." was located on the southeast corner of 9th and Rolla Streets. The "Negro U.S.O." is now the office of the Rolla Municipal Utilities. The "White U.S.O." was used by the Missouri State Geological Survey after the war, until that organization moved into new quarters on Fairgrounds Road. The building now houses the UMR placement office and a portion of UMR's Rock Mechanics and Explosives Research Center.

Despite the depression and before the expansion in Rolla just prior to the war, some building of necessary projects did take place. During 1933 and 1934, the old Central School Building was declared unsafe and a bond issue for its replacement was approved. The building was demolished and two buildings were built in 1935. West Elementary School was constructed on the block bounded by 5th, 6th, Main and Park Streets. East Elementary School was abutting the north line of 7th Street and approximately 100 feet east of Cedar. They were opened Sept. 17, 1935.

Later, the influx of families and

school children as a result of Fort Leonard Wood added some 160 new pupils to Rolla's schools. It was decided to add four new rooms to the north end of East Elementary School with a basement for school cafeteria underneath. The federal government and the school district shared the cost of this \$50,700 expansion.

Other physical improvements for the school system during this period included the grading of a Rolla High School Athletic Field in 1934. It came about when 35 workers connected with the Civil Works Administration each donated a day's work on the grading. Rolla business men furnished the noonday dinner--pork roast, wienerwursts, sauer kraut, bread and gravy. The High School home economics class did the cooking. The Board formally approved school football in March, 1946, and hired Harold B. Knapp as football coach. Basketball was already a part of the high school athletic program.

The beginning of school bus transport in Rolla was in the fall of 1940 when five school bus routes were established. These were: Between Rolla, Raymondville, and Edgar Springs; Between Rolla, Vichy and Lane's Prairie; Highway West to the Doolittle area; Rolla, North Spring Creek and Nagogami Resort, and Rolla and Lake Spring.

On November 13, 1939, the McFarland Hospital was



Pennant Hotel sometime during the early 1930's. [Now the Manor Inn]

transferred to the new stone-faced hospital building abutting Highway 63 at the north end of Pine Street. It had a capacity of 45 beds, and had cost some \$25,000. It was named in honor of Dr. McFarland's deceased wife, the Nelle McFarland Hospital. In 1946, Dr. McFarland decided he could no longer run the institution and pay expenses so the doors were closed. The building is now a rest home for retired persons.

In early 1940, construction of the new Rolla Trachoma Hospital, now run by the State Health Department was completed. The two-story brick building, just west of the intersection of Highway 63 and

66, was financed jointly by federal and state funds.

Three new church buildings were added in Rolla during the 1933-47 period. As early as May, 1944, plans had been formulated for a new Catholic Church building at the corner of 16th and North State Streets. It was to be faced with Carthage marble, from quarries at Carthage. Four carloads of marble were delivered at the site as of the May date. But construction was not completed until March of 1947.

The new Baptist Church, at the northwest corner of 7th and Cedar Streets, was started in April, 1942. However, the restrictions brought on by

World War II, caused construction to be postponed until October, 1944. The building was completed and dedicated on Sunday, Nov. 25, 1945, the church's 75th anniversary.

The Rolla Christian Church at the southeast corner of 8th and Main, was completely destroyed by fire on Sunday morning, March 3, 1946. By March 21, it had been decided to re-build on the same site. On that date, \$18,000 had been collected for a new \$50,000 edifice. By August 17, 1947, the basement portion had been completed and was in use. It was to be another seven years before the rest of the building was finished.

In 1945, Ray Rucker and Dwight Hafeli teamed up and built a commodious swimming pool located at East 10th and Iowa Streets. It measured 40 x 90 feet. Its depth ranged from 3 to 10 feet. The bath house measured 20 x 70 feet. Alongside the main pool was a wading pool for children. The pool had a capacity of 600 persons.

The following are a few of the events taking place in the business community during this period.

The Heller Store for Men quit business in May, 1937-- after serving Rolla for 70 years. Successive owners were William Heller Sr., William Heller Jr. and Robert (Bob) Heller.

The J.A. Spilman Hardware Store, operated by James A. Spilman, quit business in April, 1938--after serving Rolla for 40 years.

The Cut Rate Drug Store opened in the old Campbell brick building southwest corner of 7th and Pine, on Oct. 9, 1937. Ralph Tucker, formerly of Poplar bluff, was the owner. It is now the Rolla Drug Store, between 9th and 10th on Pine.

In April, 1940, J. Nean White bought the Modern Cleaner Shop from Robert Gleason and Charles McDaniels. McDaniels took over the gravestone (monument) yard at 14th and Bishop Ave.

In March, 1941, Ted Bell sold out of the Asher & Bell firm,

which from then on was called the Asher Food Market.

During late 1941 and early 1942, the Rolla Junior Chamber of Commerce organization was formed (now the Jaycees). Homer Tucker was the first president.

In May, 1945, Sherman Bishop bought the old Malcolm lot on north side of 8th Street at and beyond 70 feet east of Pine, and started the Bishop Clothing Store.

In October, 1945, William Stoltz opened the Ben Franklin Store at the immediate northeast corner of 8th and Pine Streets--in the old A.S. Long Building.

During the mid and late 1930's funds from the Federal government were brought into the Rolla area through the projects we have mentioned and through other government agencies whose projects were designed to provide relief to individuals and also to improve the area. The Forest Service was involved in a number of these that included work for young men in C.C.C. camps in the area, funds for individuals who worked on street projects in all Phelps County communities, projects of geodetic control and county road surveys, agricultural and land use programs, "white collar" projects, arts and crafts projects and home and community gardens. In June of 1934, a district employment office was opened in Rolla which included the counties of Phelps, Dent, Maries, Crawford

and Pulaski.

War years brought another kind of control by government agencies to Rolla. By February, 1941, the Phelps County Draft Board was set up and later that year, young men from 18 on up began to be selected and sent to various training camps. Records show that between Sept. 1942, and Nov., 1943, a total of 875 were called. In April, 1942, all men whose ages ranged from 45 to 65 were required to register--for call in case of real need.

Many of the boys who were thus drafted never returned. They paid the supreme sacrifice. A list released on Nov. 15, 1945--after the war had ended--showed that during World War I, some 21 Phelps County boys were killed in action. The number for World War II was 59. Both in terms of boys sent to war, killed and wounded--and in terms of money raised for purchase of war bonds, for the U.S.O., and the other war needs--Phelps County and Rolla certainly donated a most generous share.

By January of 1942, all civilians were required to have and use war ration books. Food stuffs--particularly sugar and white flour breads and pastries were strictly rationed. Fines of \$1,000 were fixed for violations. Auto tires were secured with great difficulty. Gasoline use was severely restricted. By 1942, speeds on highways were restricted to not more than 35 miles per hour. Tires had to be

Right, early Ozark Hotel, location unknown. Below, lobby of Ozark Hotel [during 1920's - '30's] located at what is now northwest corner of 8th and Elm.





6th and Pine Streets - looking north.

“registered” by serial number.

Besides the rationing of sugar, flour, coffee, etc., adults over 12 years of age could have only 2 and 1/2 pounds of meat per week. If between ages 6 and 12, they could have not more than 1 and 1/2 pounds. Those still younger, only 1/2 pound per week.

By March of 1944, ration books and stamps were required for procurement of meat, cheese, fats, oils, canned foods, sugar, gasoline, auto tires, shoes and fuel oil. A local Wartime Food Management Committee, named for counties of Phelps, Dent, Crawford, Maries and Pulaski, had the duty of seeing that these regulations were enforced.

In response to the call for scrap metal, by September, 1942, Phelps County had collected and shipped 900 tons--and would pick up 500 more. Among the scrap iron items were two World War I cannon on the grounds of the Old Soldiers Home at St. James. They weighed 3,500 and 3,800 pounds, respectively. In March, 1943, the demand was for tin, fats, oils, even silk hosiery. Housewives were to cut both ends out of tin cans, then flatten the sides by dropping the cans on the floor and stepping on them. Bacon grease (if there was any) was stored in cans and given to authorized collectors.

In June of 1943 a Rolla chapter of The American War Mothers was organized. Mary (Mrs.

Louis H.) Breuer was elected the first president. The national group was organized in 1917 and in 1925 was formally incorporated by the United States Congress--the only women's organization ever so incorporated by Congress. It continues to be an active organization in Rolla.

As early as January 6, 1944, the question was raised as to what should be done in order to re-employ veteran soldiers returning from World War II--which seemed to be approaching its end. In Rolla a Post War Planning Committee was set up with Noel Hubbard as chairman.

Social and cultural activities during the period were curtailed a great deal, first by the

depression then the war. However, the people of Rolla were still active through membership in clubs and other organizations whose programs tended to adjust to the times. (Editor's note: Volume #12 of the "History of Rolla" from which this account is taken, details the history of some 45 organizations existing in Rolla at this time.)

One particular project is worthy of a detailed account before we move on to the next era.

On December 6, 1934, the Rolla Parent-Teachers Association decided that Rolla should have a public library. A campaign was conducted. Rolla citizens were asked to donate books. Students volunteered to gather them. Space was found in the basement of the old Ward School, 6th and Cedar Streets. Mrs. O.A. Henning headed the drive.

By Dec. 13, 1,000 books had been donated. The Herrman and F.B. Powell lumber companies donated lumber for the shelves and cases. Paul Howard, librarian at the School of Mines, assumed charge of cataloguing. Girls from high school classes did the necessary typing. Girl Scouts made up the

pockets for lending cards. By January of 1935, the library was able to open for one weekday afternoon, one evening and on Saturday afternoon. Volunteers served as librarians.

In November, 1935, a plan evolved by Mr. Howard was adopted. Interested citizens were asked to donate 35 cents per month for a library fund. Various Rolla societies contributed. In November, 1936, this fund had reached \$511.79 and of that, \$321.36 had been expended. The donated books now numbered 1,250. Miss Virginia Hell was retained as a paid librarian and an executive board had been set up.

In February, 1938, interested groups proposed that both the public library and a Rolla park board and system be financed by a levy of one mill per annum on each \$100 of city property valuation. In the special election on these issues, in April, 1938, both were approved. The vote on the library levy was 388 "for" and 31 "against."

An official Library Board was established by appointments by the mayor. Board members were: Mrs. H.R. Hanley, Mrs. Frank B. Powell, D.G.

Pinkston, Mrs. O.A. Henning, Dr. C.H. Fulton, Ted E. Schweer, Mrs. S.H. Lloyd, Mrs. Mabel Smith and Sam Hess.

A financial report as of June, 1943, showed receipts for the year ended May 31 to be \$1,806.26. Expenditures were \$1,247.91 and the balance was \$448.35. The one mill levy had become a permanent means of financial support.

In February of 1945, the Federal Government no longer needed the U.S.O. Buildings. The city acquired the "Negro U.S.O. Building for the library (later the library occupied the second floor while the offices of the municipal utilities were on the first floor). By June 4, 1945, the city had completed the purchase and the library was moved in. Many citizens volunteered to clean up the building and handle the books. City engineer, J.F. Kilpatrick (Kil) had city trucks transfer the books from Ward School. In July, 1945, Mrs. Frank C. Winston was hired as the official city librarian.

(Editor's note: Mrs. Leola Millar became librarian on Jan. 18, 1954, and served in that post for more than 20 years until she retired, Oct. 15, 1975.)

1947 - 1958

The period from 1947 through 1958 was one of the most turbulent that Rolla has ever experienced in some ways. Some of the factors were comparatively peaceful. In view of the growth in size, population and complexity, this account will survey the events rather than go into detail.

City government had some rough spots particularly during the 1953-1957 administration. Backed by half of the six member city council, the mayor repeatedly tried to unseat

policemen and other appointive city officers employed by previous councils. It was to no avail, but the squabble continued through the period.

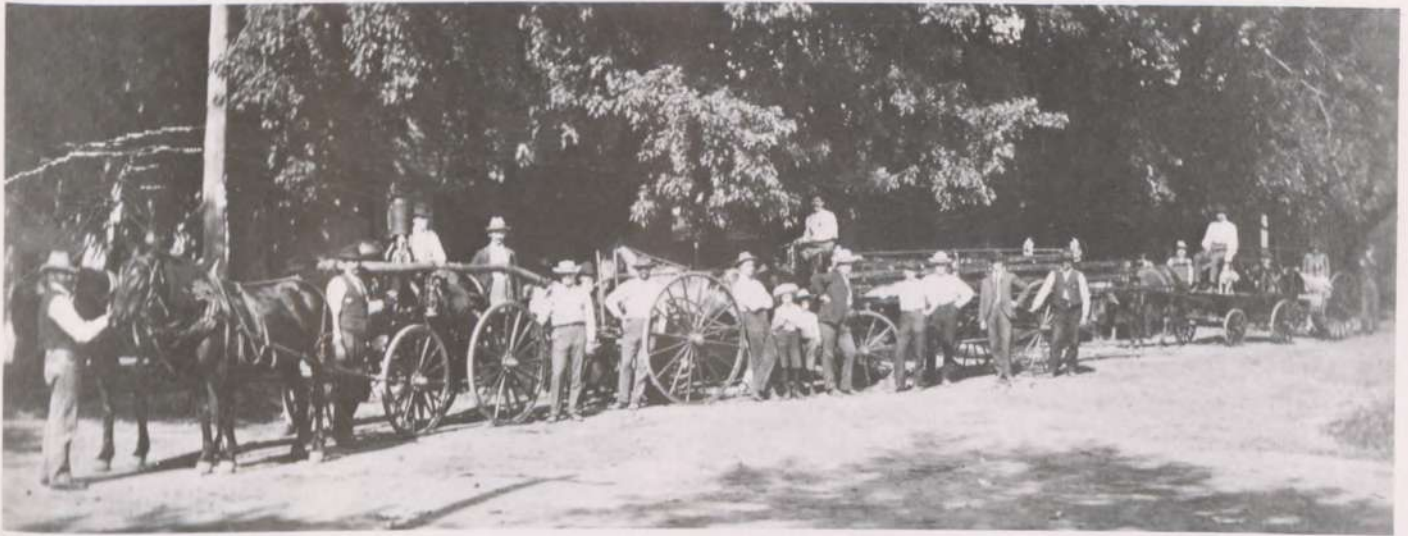
The Municipal Utility system experienced phenomenal growth, and its profits--in part--were used to pay off the city's sewer bond obligation. Two new sewage disposal plants were built. Rolla National Airport at Vichy was acquired from the Federal Government. And the city divested itself of "Fourth Class" government,

replacing it with "Third Class" status under state law.

As early as May, 1952, sentiment around the town seemed to favor the substitution of a regular police force in place of the long-standing election of a Town Marshal as required by 4th class law. Various plans to utilize both were tried. It was not until the new 3rd class plan went into effect in 1958 that a police force was placed on a permanent basis. In 1955 the city had a fire chief and three full-time firemen. During that

Early view of West 10th Street where hospital and UMR golf course are now located.





Members of the Rolla Fire Brigade [volunteers]. The photo was taken around the turn of the century.

year the fire department also purchased a new fire truck and 2,000 feet of new fire hose.

County affairs that had a particular effect on citizens of Rolla included the widening, regrading and gravel surfacing of some 125 miles of county roads. The first grand jury convened in forty years met and made recommendations concerning local crime conditions which had increased alarmingly.

Construction of the Phelps County Memorial Hospital was probably one of the most momentous additions to the local scene. The bond issue had been passed in late 1946 and this money, along with a federal Hill-Burton grant and contributions from local citizens was used to establish the facility. The building was located on West 10th Street across from the UMR golf course. The land was purchased by the Lions Club and donated

to the hospital. The building contained a basement, first and second floors, with facilities provided for a future third floor. It would accommodate from 62 to 72 beds, had two surgical rooms, wards for men, women and newly born babes, a kitchen and a laundry. The building was in the form of a "Tee," the top of the "Tee" extending east-west and the stem to the north from the "Tee."

The building was finally opened in January of 1951. The hospital's first administrator was Ted O. Lloyd.

Turbulence was a major factor in Rolla's public school system during the period. The clash came when the office of Superintendent was vacated by B.P. Lewis. The succeeding incumbent served for six years, then was removed because of "non-cooperation" and alleged "spending of school funds without proper

accounting procedures" according to the School Board. As this officer left, 65 members of the faculty resigned. Two opposing town citizen groups engaged in bitter efforts to elect their respective candidates for the School Board, and thus control school affairs. Another superintendent was employed, but discharged after two years service. The fourth superintendent succeeded in quieting the ruffled waters.

Despite the controversies, a number of physical facilities were added to the school system. A new high school on 10th Street east of Cedar was completed in 1953. The high school gymnasium and the Mark Twain Elementary School were constructed in 1957 and 1958. A cafeteria was constructed at the high school in 1958.

One other major event occurred. In June, 1954, the Rolla School Board voted to end

almost a century of segregation of negro pupils from whites in the Rolla schools. That fall ten negro children were enrolled in the elementary schools and three in the high school.

There were changes in state facilities located in Rolla.

Highway 66 was routed around the north edge of town and a City Route 66 established using a portion of Highway 63 and Kingshighway. The State Geological Survey was moved from the MSM campus where it had been located for many years into facilities in the former "White U.S.O. Building." The State Highway Patrol built Troop I headquarters office and erected its 330 foot radio tower just west of Rolla. It also took over the former U.S.-State Trachoma Hospital and in it conducted a Patrol Training Academy.

Local Federal facilities expanded. The U.S. Post Office at 9th and Pine constructed an addition to the east. The U.S. Bureau of Mines also moved from facilities on the MSM campus to a building on Bishop Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets.

The U.S. Geological Survey expanded from approximately 25 employees to more than 300 and occupied a new building on the northwest corner of 9th and Pine across from the Post Office.

The Forest Service moved back to Rolla, after a period of some years, into facilities on Fairgrounds Road.

Some 24 different churches provided religious services and necessary buildings for accommodation of Rolla's church-going citizens.

Radio station KTTR became the first radio station in Rolla during this period.

Banking facilities were augmented during this period. Since 1932 the Rolla State Bank had been the only financial institution in town. In the early 1950's the First State Bank was founded and three savings and loan institutions started to function in Rolla.

Principal industries during the 1947-1958 period included the Rolla Concrete Materials Co., the Holsum Bread Co. plant, the Monument works, the "Rolla" and the M.F.A. grain stores and elevators. Editor's Note: The Rolla Mill was forerunner of today's Bow-Wow Dog Food Company.

A general listing of Rolla's various business concerns during the 1947-58 period includes all classes of business activity that required city permits to do business inside the city. Retail sales for these concerns amounted to \$9,443,808 in 1953 and \$13,066,577 in 1956. Businesses ranged from clothing and food stores to auto sales, auto service stations, cafes, hotels, realtors, etc. For the year 1949, we have identified some 96 such concerns from their newspaper ads. There were others who did not advertise. In 1957, some 123 businesses carried ads in the

Phelps County Centennial Book. It was during this same period that Rolla's first major shopping center, Hillcrest, was developed.

The Rolla Daily News continued to publish Monday through Friday. Edward W. Sowers was owner-editor-publisher. For part of the period a "Weekly New Era" was published. The Rolla Herald was sold to Larry May and Col. and Mrs. Charles L. Woods on March 15, 1947. Mr. May published it until April 2, 1953, when he leased it to William B. Breuer. Breuer made it a daily on July 6, 1953, and in June, 1956, bought it from Mr. May and moved the plant to 7th and Rolla Streets. (Editor's note: The Herald ceased publication in 1962 and Sowers purchased the plant and equipment.)

"Hotels proper" of the period included the Hotel Edwin Long, the Ozark Hotel, the El Caney Hotel (formerly the Crandall House and Baltimore Hotel), the Pennant Hotel and the Pennant Tavern. Motels included the Schuman Motel, the Grande Courts, the All State, Mansbridge's El Rancho, the Little Piney, Zeno's and some eight others.

Health facilities, in addition to the new Phelps County Hospital, included several medical clinics such as Strickers', the Rolla Clinic, Dr. Andreassen's Clinic, the

Cottingham Clinic and the Barbara Russell Clinic. The two funeral homes had served Rolla for a number of years--Null and Sons and Glenn's. Glenn's had originally been Harry McCaw's establishment, run in conjunction with a furniture store.

The 1947-48 period was flush with building construction. Permits issued in 1957 for down-town business buildings and for residential units totaled \$2,893,204. For 1958 the amount was \$2,600,000. The state of Missouri erected five structures, the Federal Government three and general business at least 27 units. Rolla's churches built twelve structures, including educational units. In 1947, 43 new residences were built, along with 18 businesses. The School of Mines erected at least four important buildings and the Rolla school system four.

Among professional men, there were 12 practicing M.D. doctors, two osteopaths, one chiropractor. In 1957, there were six professional dentists. Our list includes 11 lawyers, two optometrists, three architects, two engineering firms, and added thereto were the city and county engineers.

During the period, there were three Masonic orders for men--plus chapters for Eastern Star, White Shrine and Rainbow Girls. Knights of Pythias and Knights of Columbus each had chapters. The Odd Fellows and the

Damaris Rebekah orders had chapters. The Fraternal Order of Eagles thrived and the High Twelve had a chapter.

The three "service clubs"--Lions, Rotary and Kiwanis--all had active programs. The American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, together with their respective auxiliaries, played their part in Rolla's activities.

Some 25 civic and social clubs existed during the period and were active in various projects and activities. At least 13 were exclusively for women.

Three down-town theaters and one drive-in provided ample movie programs. The Rolla Civic Music Association each year staged some four classical music concerts, for which musicians of noted ability were brought to Rolla. One outstanding concert was given by the famous U.S. Navy Band. Various local music teachers and personages presented their pupils in vocal and piano concerts. The annual Central Missouri fairs and the Lions Club annual carnivals provided popular entertainment. Rolla High School groups appeared in annual "Evenings of Melody." The town "Imperial Band" together with the School of Mines ROTC Band, staged concerts. Finally, townsmen of the Ozark Baseball Club, and youngsters of the "Pewee" or "Khoury" baseball league provided excitement and fun for baseball fans. Lovers of painted

art enjoyed exhibits and lovely girl queens of the swimming art graced the Rolla pools and newspaper pages. Rolla did not lack for wholesome public entertainment.

Two county centennials took place at this time. During 1955 and 1956, the Phelps County Historical Society staged a "Bishop Memorial Centennial" in honor of the town's original founder, Edmund W. Bishop, who arrived in a spot destined to be Rolla in 1855. His grave in the Rolla Cemetery had no tombstone. The Historical Society, in impressive ceremonies, had a handsome monument built of Carthage marble placed over his grave and staged a formal dedication. The Frisco Railroad donated a suitable bronze plate for the monument. Then in 1957, a rousing week-long Phelps County Centennial was held during the week of June 1-8, commemorating the organization of Phelps County in 1857. A Centennial Association took charge, and brought in the John Rogers Company of Fostoria, Ill., to present nightly performances of the centennial pageant, "Yesterday Lives Again." The Historical Society published the Centennial Book of 114 pages, containing the history of Phelps County as written by Dr. C.V. Mann. Miss Joan Lenox reigned as Centennial Queen. Hundreds attended the nightly pageants--many playing parts in the performance. The event was a huge success.



Christmas tree decoration in the Shaw Opera House [Grant Hotel], scene of many public entertainments around the turn of the century.

The Frisco continued as Rolla's one and only railroad. However, its program of finally discontinuing passenger trains began, in 1948, with the curtailing of the run of the famed Blue Bonnett--ending it in Springfield and not in Texas. In 1958, the Texas Special was combined with the Meteor. On the other hand, freight traffic was tremendously increased. Steam engines were replaced by diesel oil locomotives, some 46 being added in 1947. Freight trains which were formerly composed of 40 or 50 cars now grew to trains including as many as 135 cars. For a time, bus service for soldiers, between Rolla and Fort Leonard Wood was maintained--then discontinued.

The one prominent feature of the F.D.R. "New Deal" era

remained to either "bless" or "curse" Rolla citizens. That was Daylight Saving Time. The Rolla Council, time after time, decreed that daylight time should be used to agree with time at Fort Leonard Wood. Then the Council voted it out.

The usual disasters included storms, floods, fires, highway accidents, railroad wrecks, airplane crashes, traffic casualties, snake bites and a few freak accidents. In one freak accident a truck overturned and burned--some \$30,000 worth of shrimp were roasted. In another, a woman, driving at high speed, found herself and her car hanging by one wheel over the side railing of a bridge. She was rescued.

Crimes in the area took a rather alarming turn for the worse and

were cause for much concern. They included an increase in burglaries, thefts, shop lifting, robbery, cattle rustling, bad check passing, marijuana, fraud, con games, jail breaks, vandalism and murder.

One of the more interesting incidents of crime was as follows: A personage who styled himself as "Doctor Cramer" visited the Phelps County Hospital in October, 1958. He was shown every courtesy by the staff. Having toured the rooms, he asked the way to the doctors' rest room, and was shown. Thereafter, he totally disappeared--taking with him a collection of the most valuable surgical instruments and equipment. This is the one time, of which we have record, of a quack doctor practicing in Rolla.

1959 - 1973

The final years of this account of the history of the City of Rolla have been years of quiet, steady progress. The more spectacular events have been those on the national scene in the areas of space, energy and politics.

Major projects undertaken by the city include the construction of a two-story brick addition with basement, built as an east wing to the existing city hall. A commodious building on Fourth Street, between Main and Park, contains a "community hall" and quarters for the city's fire department. New and modern fire trucks have been purchased and the fire chief and staff are on full-time paid basis.

Street work was expanded during this period as steel sheds were erected near the Frisco railroad at 19th Street--to house equipment and office. A hot tar asphalt plant was installed, after which all of the down-town streets were paved or re-paved, with the asphalt. Three outfall disposal plants have been constructed to care for sewage disposal.

A full-time registered city engineer has been employed and a suitably equipped engineer

office and staff have been provided.

In efforts to give Rolla a "face lift" numbers of the older residences have been demolished--many of them by burning. Historic Masonic Hall, at the northeast corner of 4th and Main was one such.

Another was the former "Crandall House" of 1882, or the later Baltimore Hotel, on 8th Street abutting the Frisco railroad. This site was then converted into a public parking lot. As a side issue, Elm Street was then opened from 9th to 8th.

Recreational projects include the acquisition of Ber Juan Park (named for Bert Williams, banker, and his daughter, Juanita). In it a \$300,000 swimming pool and recreational center has been constructed. A city garbage landfill was opened in Lions Park.

The county has made several improvements to the old 1861 Court House. After three separate attempts to vote money for a new building failed, several outside rooms were added to the existing structure. Gas heating has been substituted for the old wood-burning and sheet metal stoves. During the regime of Judge

Lorts, the old jail wing was renovated so as to contain the offices of county court, assessor and county clerk. The former county court room now serves as the county welfare office. Upstairs, the circuit court room has had the ceiling lowered, wall paneled and seating renovated.

During the period 1959-73, the Rolla School District was served by its six-member board, which worked in comparative harmony, and was active. The district was enlarged by the admission of several rural districts such as the Strawhun, Flat Grove, Cornith and Macedonia districts.

Three more schools were added to the system. They are the Junior High School, Col. John B. Wyman Elementary School and the Harry S. Truman Elementary School.

In 1966, the administrators of 12 area high schools chose Rolla as the site for a vocational school that would take in and specially train high school graduates, so that they would then have a "marketable skill." The school opened in 1967 in the former East Elementary Building. In August, 1972, it transferred to the new building

on East 10th Street, at the west floor of Mile Hill.

The total school enrollment on various dates was as follows: 1970-71, 3,686 pupils; 1971-72, 3,997 pupils. In October of 1972, the number was 4,048, not including the Vocational-Tech students--4,507 with them.

A total of 34 Rolla churches were listed in the Rolla Daily News of December 7, 1973. Nine more church buildings or educational units were added during this period.

State and federal agencies continued to grow and prosper. In 1962, the Missouri Geological Survey moved from the 9th and Rolla Street location to a new building on Fairgrounds Road. The Forest Service consolidated its Springfield and Rolla offices into one, at Rolla, in 1973. The Post Office, in 1965, moved to its new building on the block bounded by 7th, 8th, Park and State Streets. (The Rolla Public Library occupied the old post office at 9th and Pine.) As of December, 1973, the U.S. Geological Survey was looking for new and more adequate headquarters.

During this period several new radio stations have been added in Rolla. They are: KCLU and two stations on the UMR campus--KUMR-FM and KMNR, the student station. The original station in Rolla, KTTR, has added a sister FM station, KZNN.

In the field of transportation, many truck lines serve the Rolla area, and Frisco has expanded freight service to the area. The last passenger service is supplied, however, by Greyhound and Continental-American Trailways bus lines. Feeder airline service is available both at Rolla's "National" airport at Vichy and at the Fort Leonard Wood airport.

In 1963, another financial institution was added in Rolla--The Phelps County Bank. Combined assets of all three banks in Rolla was \$43,183, 187 as of June 30, 1973. Combined assets of the three savings-and-loan organizations approximated some \$141,089,000 at the same time.

The Rolla Area Chamber of Commerce has continued to be active in all areas of city life, growth and welfare. Mrs. Gale Bullman served as the Chamber's manager from 1952

through 1965. The present executive director of the Chamber is Col. E.A. Owsley, who has served in that capacity since 1967.

The projects in which the Chamber has been engaged are too numerous to list. Aside from sponsoring annual Christmas parades in the downtown area--the one for 1973 had a total of 80 units with bands, floats and autos--the Chamber's principal activities have centered in promoting bond issues and in otherwise promoting new industrial parks and new manufacturing companies for Rolla.

Chief of the latter was the \$4 million bond issue approved for erecting buildings to house the Schwitzer Division of the Wallace-Murry Corporation and a \$100,000 bond issue to purchase land for a second industrial park on which SOME Co. constructed a plant for manufacture of plastic pipe.

During the 1959-73 period, there was a tremendous increase in construction of privately owned residences. In the Forum addition, the Heritage Heights subdivision, in Ann's Acres, the Wedgewood addition and in the Line-

This house, which stood on the block bounded by Park, State, 7th and 8th Streets, was originally built of logs by the J. Stever Co. in 1855 or 1856 and was used as an office. It was purchased by Edmund W. Bishop in 1857 and became his residence. In 1915 it became the property of Dr. S.L. Baysinger. The new U.S. Post Office, opened in 1965, now occupies the site.



Barnitz addition--we estimate that more than 200 private residences have been built during the period. Their costs ranged from \$10,000 to \$30,000 or more.

Several commodious apartment buildings have been constructed also. These include the Williamsburg, the O.D.K., the Vienna Woods, the Murry and three others in the Schuman addition.

A number of mobil home and trailer parks provide homes for hundreds of families such as young teachers, and workmen. Six of these units reported to present writers a total of 364 such mobile units. The six include Huffman, Loughridge, Waterman, Whitson, Curt Smith and Stately Mansions.

Rolla's Housing and Development Project includes a "high rise" six-story unit in

Forum addition which, nearing completion on Jan. 1, 1974, will provide 100 apartments. To the west from this, across Burgher Branch, is the Homelife Project of 38 apartments, constructed under sponsorship of a Presbyterian Church agency.

Rolla's hotels and motels are closely related to the town's housing facilities. Hotel Edwin Long, the one facility of its kind in town, has been open since the 1930's. In 1973 it has a total of 65 rooms--all singles except three double suites. The Carney Manor (now Manor Inn) is the popular meeting place for convention and Chamber of Commerce meetings. Some 14 other motels provide a total of 686 rooms.

Chief of the health agencies is the Phelps County Memorial Hospital, the original unit of which was completed in 1951.

Since then, a third floor has been added to the original structure. During 1972 and 1973, an "extended care" unit providing some 60 beds has been added to the north--and a new 50-bed unit built outward from the east end of the original building.

In addition to this facility, Rolla has two special nursing homes--the old McFarland Hospital converted to such use and the Schreiner Rest Home south of town.

The town has both State and County welfare offices--a state regional Diagnostic Clinic and a Crippled Children unit.

There are three general medical clinics, eight dental offices, and three optometrist offices. There are 15 practicing M.D. doctors, four osteopaths and two chiropractors.



*Early residence.
Dickerson home,
3rd and Rolla*

Some 15 attorneys practice law in Rolla.

One individual architect and two firms in that field provide architectural service for Rolla. There are four engineering firms, five including the city office. There are eight registered land surveyors and eight general contracting firms.

During the 1959-73 period, there was much less business done by small, downtown concerns than formerly. This was chiefly because of the great expansion of chain stores, discount stores and supermarkets. Small grocery stores, in particular, disappeared. Clothing stores, both for men and for women, still survived--although some of the chain and discount stores also entered this field. Businesses were spreading to the outer regions of the town in shopping centers.

One major addition was made to the ranks of the service clubs, lodges and social and civic clubs during the period. In the early 1960's the Rolla chapter of Optomists was organized and joined the other three service clubs in supporting many diverse beneficial community projects.

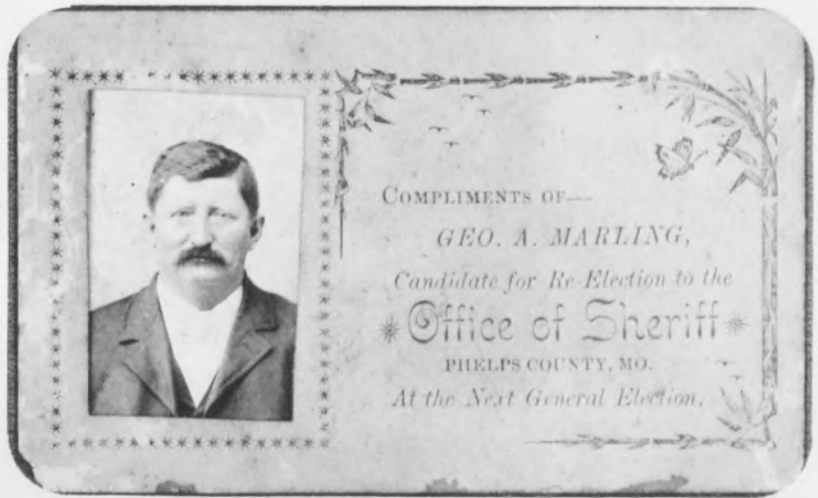
Musical, cultural and entertainment events as well as recreational opportunities continued to be offered without much change. Fewer disastrous fires occurred within the city than had previously been recorded in a like period of time.

On the whole, Rolla suffered very little from problems created by unusual weather conditions. The majority of accidents were caused on the highways and these seemed to be on the increase.

Auto thefts, house and store burglaries, personal robberies were nothing like those in St. Louis--but they did occur in the Rolla area. In one instance a commissioned officer stationed at Fort Leonard Wood attempted some "cattle rustling." He had hauled the cattle part way to St. Louis market when he was apprehended and arrested.

There were one or two murders committed in the area during the period. The "vice problem" grew apace in the Waynesville area, but skipped Rolla. A gang of several persons, including Rolla residents, were arrested and tried for having illegal possession of firearms.

This then is a brief look at events and people in Rolla from the very beginning years to present.



Turn-of-the-century campaign literature.

Ice skating on Frisco Pond around 1900.

