

Coal Discovered In Maries County

According to the August 21st edition of the "Rolla New Era", Maries County residents were abuzz about the discovery of coal in a close proximity to Vienna.

The report, which had been reprinted from the "Maries County Gazette", stated: "From Mr. Jos. Wilson, who came in from the western part of the county Tuesday evening, we

learn that a vein of coal was recently discovered on the old Isaac Helton place, situated on the Maries 8 or 9 miles west of this place. Mart Helton made the discovery accidentally, having carelessly picked up several chunks of something that looked like coal, and upon investigating a little further found the vein cropping out of the bank of the Maries. It seems

to be a good quality of cannel coal, having been tested in a forge, though how thick the vein is we could not learn. It is said that some experienced miners have been to examine the discovery, and that they desire to lease the land. We hope the right parties may get control and proceed to develop the find."



"Swinging Bridge"

by Gary Knehans



Motorists who yearn for a new experience in driving may want to plan a trip across the "Swinging Bridge" near Vienna. It's sure to be a "moving" experience, as the old suspension bridge definitely swings each time it is driven across.

Located two miles west of Vienna on Ballpark Road, the bridge is one of only a few such structures still in use in the state. It was constructed in 1930 by local farmers who needed a more dependable way to ford the Big Maries River. There is one span of about 200 feet,

which is suspended by wire cables and supported by wooden planking. The wooden planks and other parts were supplied by the farmers who constructed the bridge. The cable was supplied by the county court.

Despite the eerie sensation one might experience while motoring over the bridge, it is considered safe, although its record was marred by an incident more than twenty years ago. In January of 1968, Mrs. Jim McKinney was crossing the structure when one of the end

piers gave way, dropping her car into the river. Fortunately, the river was very low, allowing Mrs. McKinney and her five children to escape the vehicle by kicking out its rear window. None of the six sustained any injuries.

Since its subsequent repair, the structure continues to be traveled by motorists, who have the option during low water to cross the Big Maries on a slab bridge. The "Swinging Bridge" did come in handy in May of this year when flood waters made the river impassible over the slab bridge.

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