

NEW HOME FOR THE LATHAM HOUSE AND A REPORT ON THE MARIES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

by Gary Knehans

One of Vienna's oldest houses, the Latham House, a rugged log structure that is almost 140 years old, is scheduled to be moved sometime in the near future to a permanent site on the Old Jailhouse property. This has been the dream of members of the Historical Society of Maries County since the structure was moved in the late 70's to its present temporary site on Ballpark Road.

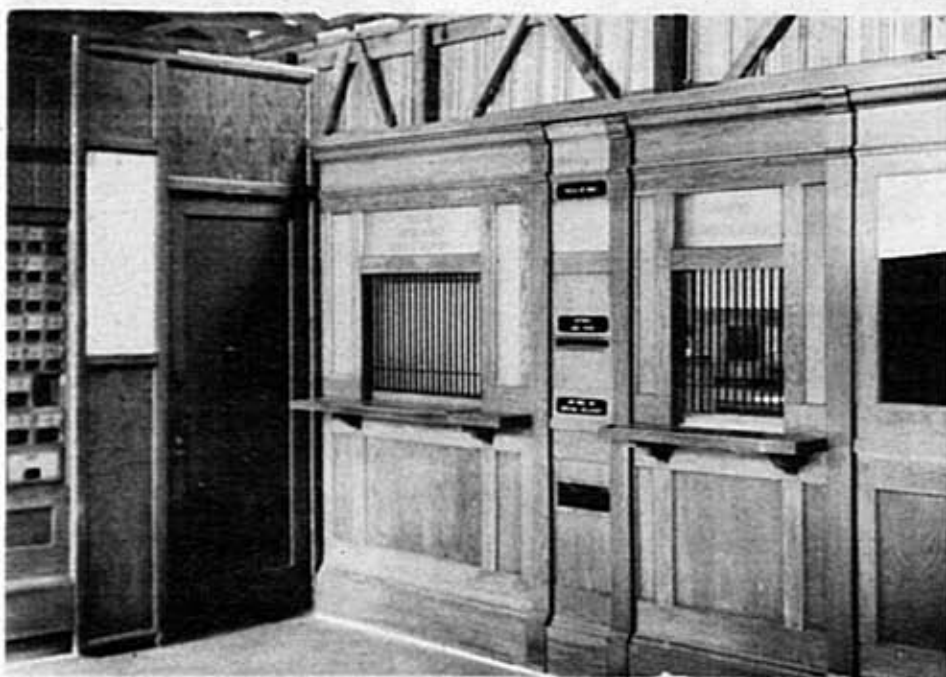
Moving and restoring the historic landmark took several years to complete, as the process required careful dismantling, labeling of the logs, and log-by-log reconstruction. A foundation was constructed of stones taken from the site of an old building

that had already been torn down in Vienna. The house was reconstructed exactly as it was originally. A shake shingle roof and a front porch were added, the designs of which were suggested by the memories of some community elders. The same meticulous work will be required in the Latham House's proposed move to a site just east of the restored Felker House.

A respectable amount of funds already has been raised to fund the moving of the Latham House to a permanent site. However, additional funding is needed. Contributions may be sent to the Historical Society of Maries County, Box 289, Vienna, Missouri 65582.



Latham house. Headed for a new home near the old jail museum.



Old Vichy Post Office counter and boxes. On loan from the U.S. Postal service.

Any county wishing to start an historical organization can look to the Historical Society of Maries County as an excellent model. The society actively promotes the preservation of historical structures and artifacts, does historical and genealogical research, and elevates public awareness of that county's rich heritage.

One of the services of the Historical Society of Maries County is the maintaining of a free historical research room that's open to the public Wednesday mornings from nine to noon at the county courthouse in Vienna. This helpful to both historical researcher and genealogist alike.

The society's newsletter is one of the finest in the state. It regularly features old newspaper articles and obituaries, court and other county records, census records and old store ledgers, long-ago school and church registers, society projects, and memos from members. Yearly subscription and membership is just ten dollars. Payment should be sent to the Historical Society of Maries County, P. O. Box 289, Vienna, Missouri, 65582.

Other publications of the society that also may be obtained from the same address include:

A Pictorial History, Maries County, Missouri, Volume One. This hardbound book features approximately 1000 photographs of people and places of Maries County. It's priced at \$40 plus \$4 postage.

A County/Family History of Maries County, Volume Two. Featured in this are 900 family histories plus stories about the churches, businesses, schools, and organizations of Maries County. This 504 page hardbound book is priced at \$45 plus \$4 postage.

The History of the Post Offices and Postmasters of Maries County. 48 pages, arranged alphabetically, \$7.50 postpaid. Compiled by J. Hoyle Mayfield and others.

Index to Marriage Book "B" 1881-1890. \$7.50 postpaid. Compiled by Wm. L. Schwegler.

Vienna Centennial 1855-1955. 39 pages. \$7.50 postpaid. Published by the Vienna Centennial Committee in 1955.

1880 Federal Census of Maries County, Missouri. Compiled by J. Hoyle Mayfield. Spiral bound. \$15 postpaid.

The Home Advisor 1907, a Complete Transcription of All Local Interest Items. Spiral bound, 191 pages, \$15 plus \$3 postage. Compiled and published by Vienna Tyson, P. O. Box 787, Dixon, MO 65459.

The Home Adviser 1903-04. 300 pages. \$23. Both books postpaid. Compiled and published by and available from Vienna Tyson at the above address.

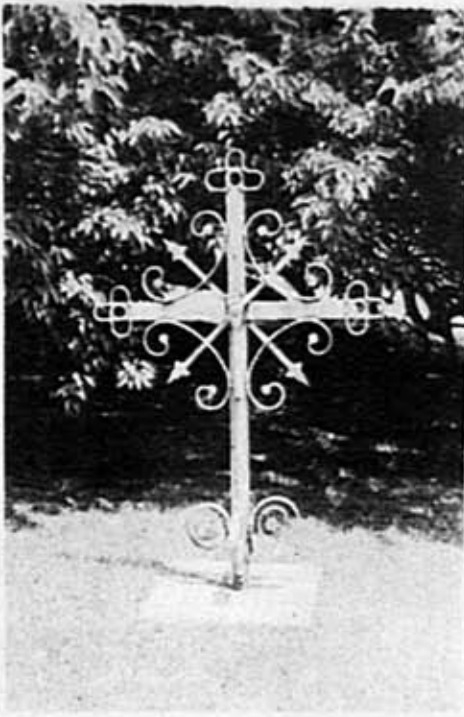
The First One Hundred Twenty Five Years 1850-1975. 453 pages featuring hundreds of photographs and information about the High Gate area. Published and available from Glenis Southard, HCR 2, Box 65, Belle, MO 65013. Soft back copy, \$45. Hard cover, \$52. \$3.50 postage for one book. \$1.50 per each additional book to the same address.

Mozelle Hutchison, Route One, Box 27, Vienna, MO 65582, has the following publications for sale:

The Cemeteries of Maries County. 450 pages, 67 photographs, maps, and selected references. \$35, plus \$4 postage.

Index to Marriage Book "A" 1868-1881. \$7 plus \$2 to mail.

Higgins Plat Map ca. 1920. Photographic reproduction of Maries County wall map. \$10, plus \$4.50 for shipment in protective tube or \$2 for shipment in an envelope.



Metal cross stood atop the old visitation Catholic church that was replaced in 1905.

Society members are very active in preserving Maries County historical structures. Of primary interest are three pre-Civil war buildings still standing in Vienna. These are the OLD JAIL MUSEUM, the FELKER HOUSE, and the LATHAM HOUSE.

At the present time, the OLD JAIL MUSEUM and the FELKER HOUSE are located next to each other a block east of the Highways 63 and 42 intersection. This is the original location of the OLD JAIL MUSEUM. Several years ago, the FELKER HOUSE was removed from its original site and reconstructed just south of the old jail.

OLD JAIL MUSEUM: This structure of limestone blocks, constructed in 1856, served for 85 years as the Maries County jail. Visitors can walk an old staircase to the upstairs cells and get a feel of what it was like to have been a prisoner there. There is still graffiti on the wall that was written by prisoners of many years ago.

Downstairs, in what was the sheriff's quarters, the Historical Society of Maries County has meticulously placed and labeled many fascinating historical artifacts. Every item has a little story attached. Documentation and credit have been given

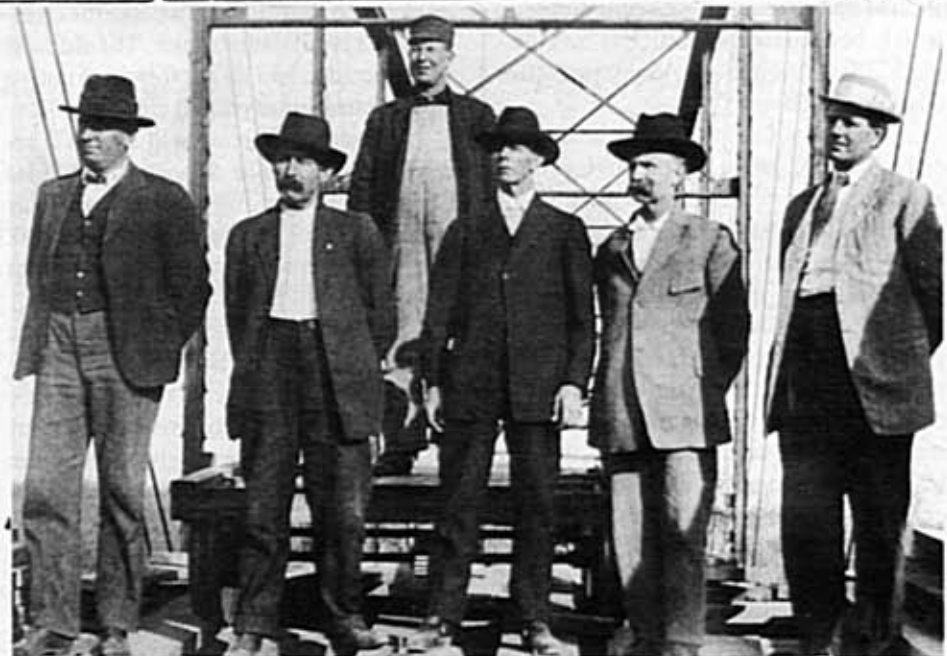
whenever possible.

The museum is open to the public during the summer months every Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 o'clock. A visit there is well worth the time and effort.

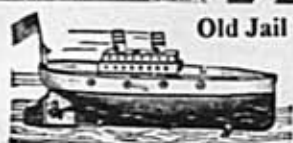
FELKER HOUSE: This log structure was built in 1854-55 by John Felker and his wife Amanda following their return from a cattle drive to California. For 104 years it stood two blocks east of its present location near the Old Jail Museum.

LATHAM HOUSE: Built in 1855 by Dr. Valsain Gaylove Latham, this log house present resides at the entrance to the community park in Vienna. The Historical Society of Maries County plans to move it soon to a site east of the Felker House on the Old Jail Museum property. The society is raising funds for this purpose and welcomes all contributions.

OTHER VIENNA SITES OF INTEREST: The Historical Society building,



Construction on the Indian Ford Bridge in 1912. (L to R) J.M. Birmingham, Wm. Grant, J.O. Bassett, L.E. Love, and L.B. Hutchison.



Old Jail Museum



Vienna's 1st fire truck

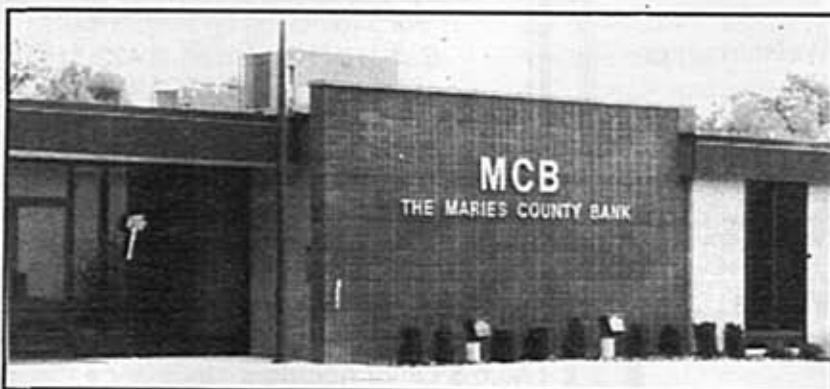


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located on the Old Jail Museum property, which houses various artifacts and displays, including the old Vichy postoffice counter and boxes.

Visitation Catholic Church, located on Highway 42 just east of the Highways 63 and 42 junction, was built early this century by Father John Fugel and members of his parish. The concrete blocks were all made in Vienna by a machine the parish purchased. The first block was placed in position on November 22nd, 1905. The block office across the street, now the home of the Lemberger Company, also was constructed in this manner. It was built to house Father Fugel's "The Home Adviser", a local newspaper published from about 1903 until his death in 1936.

When the present Visitation Catholic Church was constructed, the metal cross on top of the old structure was replaced. Father Fugel asked that the cross, which now is displayed on the lawn in front of the Old Jail Museum, be used as the only marker to his grave when he died. The parish complied with his wishes, but a decision was

made some years later to replace the crucifix with a regular tombstone. The old cross was discarded and all but forgotten until it was rescued some years later.

Visitors to Vienna will find it a rewarding experience to visit the Maries County courthouse, where there is a display of 40 pieces of locally produced artwork that depicts people and places in Maries County.

Some other interesting sites include the rustic "Swinging Bridge", located two miles west of highway 63 down Vienna's Ballpark Road; Clifty Hollow Natural Bridge, located on W Highway near the Clifty Creek Conservation site; Paydown Mill at Paydown on Highway 42; the Spring Creek Gap Glades Natural Area; and John Viessman's rural school houses mural in the Vienna school cafeteria.

The Historical Society of Maries County currently is organizing photos and information for a third county history book. Those interested should address correspondence to Box 289, Vienna, MO 65582.



Farm home of the Samuel Simpson family settled in 1886. (L to R) Tom (youngest of ten children), John, Bill (the oldest), parents Samuel and Angeline Powers Simpson, Tilda (the oldest daughter), Callie, Emaline (nicknamed Babe), Josephine, Tina, Lydia and Dora (called Noot).



Maries County Courthouse



The Old Store at Safe



The Safe Store in Maries County

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Vienna's Old Jail Museum

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