

Later, the members will be meeting here as a S.T.I.N.G. (Sharing Together Ideas, News, and Goals) group on the first Tuesday evening of each month to share progress and make plans for future projects.

Several days a month, members will gather to process correspondence, work on compiling family information files and obituary indexes, reading and filing newsletters and other periodicals from various genealogical and historical organizations, and doing research for others by mail.

The public is welcome to visit

anytime there is someone working there. At this time, the research room is free and open to the public regularly on Wednesday mornings from nine until noon. Phone numbers are posted for those wishing to make arrangements to visit outside these hours.

SCENE FOUR: Summer, 1996. The members of the Historical Society of Maries County will undertake the large task of moving from the room on the first floor of the courthouse to one in the basement near the exten-

sion office. As before, volunteers will be keeping the room open and free to the public every Wednesday morning from nine to noon.

Other counties are only just beginning to recognize the need for a central location in their courthouses where factfinders can come to locate the information they are seeking. The Historical Society of Maries County, Maries County Commissioners, and all the staff members at the courthouse in Vienna are to be commended for their interest in providing these resources to the citizens of the county and of the surrounding area, as well

as to researchers from a great many other states in this country who are tracing their family roots to Maries County.

(Maries County voters will have an opportunity in August to approve a half-cent sales tax marked for capital improvements at the courthouse. These improvements will include a federally mandated elevator, as well as renovation work that will facilitate full usage of the basement rooms in the courthouse for county offices, services, and storage.)

1896 Events In Maries County

"Jos. R. Russell, a respected farmer living about two miles northeast of Wilson's store, accidentally shot and killed himself early last Friday morning. On hearing of the fatality your correspondent hastened to the scene. Several of the neighbors had collected at the unfortunate's residence, and upon inquiry we learned by Mr. Russell had taken down his gun, a rifle of small caliber, for some purpose, and, desiring to ascertain if it was loaded, placed one foot on the hammer and was in the act of blowing into the muzzle when his toe slipped off the hammer and the gun was discharged, the ball striking him in the mouth, knocking out two front teeth and polving its way through his brain. He fell to the floor and expired immediately, having uttered not a word."

"Maries County Gazette" article, reprinted by the "Rolla Herald" on January 30th, 1896.

"Dynamiters have evidently been at work in the river above this place lately. Several days ago some of our people, while at the river fishing, noticed many large fish floating down stream, some dead and others crippled so badly that they could not swim. We have heard it rumored that parties from Rolla had been in the habit of doing this sort of fishing, but we know nothing positive about the matter and it may be that some of our Maries county people have been doing it. But, whoever it is, our citizens should try to put a stop to this nefarious work. It is a shame, such wanton destruction of our fish, large and small alike. We need in this county a Game and Fish Warden who will look after these parties and prosecute them to the full extent of the law, which is justly pretty severe on such infractions."

"Maries County Gazette" article, republished on May 16th, 1896, by the "Rolla New Era."

"One day last week, three young fellows named Wm. Drennan, Horace Edwards, and Joseph Seamon broke loose a boat belong to James Ramsey, a prosperous farmer of the upper Gasconade. Mr. Ramsey was away from home at the time, but his young daughter, who was watching them through a field glass, saw them break the lock, board the craft and head her down the river.

"They were evidently not expert sailors, for after proceeding a short distance the boat struck a drift, was overturned and sank. The boys succeeded in scrambling onto the drift, from which they were rescued by some fisherman from Newburg. They came on down the river, arriving here Friday night, where one of them bought a pair of shoes, having lost the ones he had by the upsetting of the boat. On Saturday Mr. Ramsey,

accompanied by his brother Billy came to town, and finding that the boys had been here swore out a warrant and Sheriff Doyel overtook them a few miles north of town, brought them back and placed them in jail.

"Mr. Ramsey informed us that it was not so much the loss of the boat that he cared for, but he desired to do what he could to break up the practice, which is becoming entirely too common, of stealing boats. It has become almost impossible for farmers or others along the river to keep a boat for more than a month or two at a time, and an example should be set which would teach boat thieves a lesson."

"Maries County Gazette" story, reprinted by the "Rolla Herald" on May 28th, 1896.

"At a picnic near Pay Down, ten

miles northeast of here, Saturday evening, Newt Crider and John Zeigler quarreled, and Crider shot Zeigler in the right eye, almost instantly killing him, but firing two more shots into his prostrate body. The enraged friends and relatives of Zeigler then set upon Crider and shot him once in the back of the head, also cutting him badly in the back and beating his head almost to a jelly with rocks. At last accounts he was barely alive and expected to die at any time. Meager particulars have reached here, and no one seems to know exactly who fired the shot that took effect in Crider's head or who used the knife on him. No arrests have yet been made."

"Maries County Gazette" article, reprinted by the "Rolla Herald" on June 4th, 1896. The story carried a June 2nd Vienna dateline.

LICKING SHAKES AND BAKES

By Gary Knehans

As recounted in last year's edition of the "Old Settlers' Gazette," a devastating fire destroyed a large portion of the business district of Licking, Missouri, in 1895. But, if residents there had sighed a sigh of relief when the new year arrived in 1896, their sense of wellbeing wasn't to be long lived.

An area near the community was struck by a terrible cyclone during the year's unusually stormy period in late spring.

"A cyclone struck the country four miles north of Licking the night of April 28th, and done considerable damage," the "Licking News" reported. "All the fencing between Dave Shalfers and Sherrill was blown down, the Shafer grave yard was torn up in a terrible manner, monuments and tombstones blown down and

broken, trees uprooted and the fencing carried away.

"The roof of Henry Kofash's barn was carried by the great wind to Will Chamber's and landed in his yard. Frank Denison's and Ray Hazzard's barns were uprooted. At the Granger place, the porch was torn from the dwelling, window smashed in, barn carried away, also the smoke house. Walter Dunlap, who lives on the place, says meat and corn were well distributed over the ground. Eighty fruit trees were taken down for D. Shaffer. Chris Kofahl's barns were blown down. Eighteen apple trees (were) leveled for J. D. Harris.

"We have not had full particulars yet, no doubt but we shall hear of further damage being done."

A couple of months later, fire revisited downtown Licking.

"Tuesday night the town of Licking was again devastated by the destroying flames and hundreds of dollars worth of good citizens' property consumed," a "Houston Herald" article announced in the July 22nd edition of the "Rolla Herald."

"The fire originated in an empty building that was being moved and stood near other buildings. Julian's hardware store, Fancher's general store, Vanderbilt's harness shop, Moran's notion store, Marmon's jewelry store, Dr. B. F. Craven's drug store, and the 'Licking News' office were all burned, with very little saved. Besides these, Campbell's and Nichol's brick stores were damaged and the loss of all will run into the thousands. Some of these men are the ones who lost heavily in the big fire a little over a year ago and this loss will be doubly hard to bear."