



Cracker Barrel Country

Jan. 4, 1980
Best wishes to my friend
Harold & Eunice Webbink
It has been a pleasure to work
with both of you on historical
society problems.
Bill Schiermeier



ABOUT THE AUTHOR —

Bill Schiermeier was born in Defiance, Missouri where his father was a General Store Merchant and Postmaster. As a boy he knew the southwest corner of St. Charles County well, and was extremely fond of the area. However, during his later school days, and working years, he lived in St. Charles and St. Louis County. He returned to the area in 1973 after retiring from the McDonnell/Douglas Corp. following 29 years in aerospace engineering with that company, and built a home on acreage purchased in 1958 near New Melle.

Bill is a Past International President of the Society of Mass Properties Engineering (SAWE), and is both a Fellow and an Honorary Fellow of that organization. He is an active Rotarian in the Wentzville Club, a member of the Wentzville Historical Society, the State Historical Society of Missouri, and is the 1979-80 President of the St. Charles County Historical Society. He, and his wife, the former Virginia Jean Stormont of Webb City, Missouri were married in 1939. They have 3 grown children, and 4 grand-children. The Schiermeier's are members of the local Community Club, and St. Paul's Lutheran Church in New Melle.

Mr. Bill Schiermeier writes a weekly feature for The Washington Missourian under the title of "Cracker Barrel News." It deals with the history, habits, and customs of the people in this area. His articles are well received and widely read by the people who are located in this part of Missouri. His writings are crisp, informative and to the point. I feel he is doing a great educational service to our people.

James L. Miller, Sr.
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Book 299

Cracker
Barrel
Country

Written and Compiled by
JW Schiermeier
1978-1979

Book 299

To my friends and readers of the
Tucker Barrel News who have
encouraged me to compile these
historical accounts, and to my
wife Jean for her reviews, for her
insistence on the positive, and
above all, for her patience.

Table of Contents

Objective Preface
Subjective Preface

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Chapters

- 1 This Land of Ours
- 2 New Melle
- 3 North To Boonslick
- 4 East of Town
- 5 The Femme Osage Valley
- 6 West To Cappelin
- 7 The County Line
- 8 The River Towns
- 9 Other Things To Say

Bibliography

Index

Objective Preface

That small segment of Missouri, herein referred to as Cracker Barrel Country, is the southwest corner of St. Charles County, and the eastern edge of Warren County. It chiefly comprises the old Alloway and Femme Osage Townships, and the Western portion of Wardenne Township.

The area has developed slowly over the past 200 years. First came the Virginians and Kentuckians to encounter the Indian natives for a foothold in the beautiful uncharted wilderness. The German immigrants followed. They established churches and small towns, and staked out sizable farms. Farm to market roads were mapped out along the shore lines of creeks and rivers, through the fertile valleys, and over the rolling hills. A single railroad skirted the river's edge to the South.

Small towns of 100 to 300 residents developed a culture all their own, but ceased to grow after World War I. Even the construction of new farm homes and barns virtually stopped after this period.

Thus today, Cracker Barrel Country has been spared the extensive ravages of urban

sprawl. It weathered the 50's and 60's when everything old or small had to be replaced by something new or big. It is with us now in the late 70's, and the coming 80's, to save, and to restore when our people across the land have recognized the charm of 18th and 19th century architecture, and the hand skills of our pioneer forefathers.

Many of the older residents living today in Racker Barrel Country remember how life was in our rural, and small town communities. They also remember accounts related directly to them by their parents, and grand-parents. Scores of personal interviews have been conducted with these first descendants of their 19th Century father and mother for personal stories of the early days, and many of these interviews were made on their own "old homeplace".

The object of this book, therefore, is to bring to light the fine 19th Century structures that still surround us; to describe the various details that were found interesting; to create an awareness among a greater number of people of the rich heritage bequeathed to us, and to future generations, and to honor those who went before us to give us the America we love and cherish today.

With this in mind great care was used to group the material in its proper geographical location, and category.

Columns as they appeared weekly were numbered consecutively. These numbers, and the dates the articles were written, appear at the end of each article throughout the book.

Another feature of the book is the hand written introductory pages. This was followed since so much of the material addresses itself to 19th Century, and early 20th Century, history when hand writing was "in style".

I sincerely hope the book will be easy to use. Become familiar with the eight historical areas, and the titles of articles in each area. Especially pay particular attention to the comprehensive Index for a wide range of references to people, places and subjects.

Subjective Preface

The subject matter in "Cracker Barrel Country" is essentially a collection of historically related articles appearing in the author's weekly Newsletter entitled "Cracker Barrel News".

New Welle was chosen as the hub for "This Land of Ours", and other defined areas fan out from the hub to form the basis for each chapter. The corresponding maps are intended to aid the reader in orientation.

Generously scattered throughout the book are 19th Century homes, churches, stores, cemeteries, and other landmarks; and associated with the old places are the people themselves. All make up the subject matter of the book.

There is also a chapter (Chapter 9), that consists of an assortment of "Other Things To Say". They too, are a part of the overall scene.

In constructing this book it was recognized that all who read the historical

accounts will be more interested in certain areas, and in certain people, than others, and only a few readers may want to read through from beginning to end. To aid the reader, therefore, in selecting any chosen subject, or detail, each chapter is prefixed with a listing of its article titles, coupled with a comprehensive Index.

There is never a "right time" to cease adding material in a book of this nature. Each day something new is learned about something that is now old, and there is a strong desire to keep on adding. However, a halt must come at some point in time. To ease the author's conscience in this regard there is the thought of possible future editions, and the book does lend itself real well to adding new articles at different intervals.

Acknowledgements —

The wonderful cooperation of our people during scores of personal interviews, and their willingness to share with me their family historical documents, plus photos, have made these writings possible. Their names appear again and again throughout the pages. Others helped to review certain incidents, and Bill Zollmann often encouraged me to continue on, and include all of the articles.

Appreciation too, is extended to the Wentzville Union, and to the Washington Missourian editors for accepting and publishing The Cracker Barrel News as a weekly column, and to my good friend Jack Kershner, a very talented artist, for preparing the cover art work.

Cracker Barrel Country has been
printed and published by the
Missourian Publishing Company,
and the beautiful binder was made
by Hazel, Inc., Washington, Mo.
Thanks to John and Jim Miller of
The Missourian, and to Bill Voyles
of Hazel, Inc. for their kind assistance.

Introduction

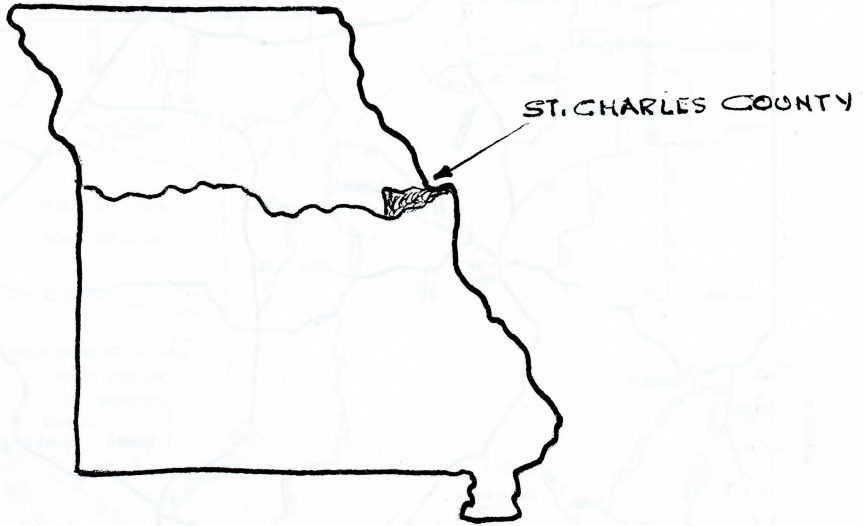
The maps shown serve as an "Introduction To The Area" from which the succeeding historical material unfolds.

Articles in the following nine chapters were written over a period of more than five years, from the later part of 1973 through the very early weeks of 1979. They appeared first as a weekly Newsletter entitled "The Cracker Barrel News" handed out to customers coming into Schiermeier's Cracker Barrel Store in New Melle.

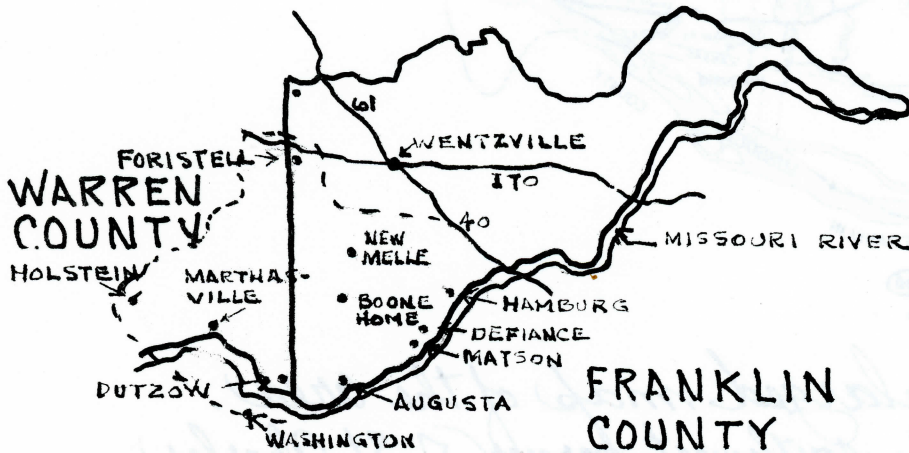
After a brief period I was both surprised, and flattered to hear that the Wentzville Union wished to carry the newsletter as a weekly column. Later the Washington Missourian began publishing "The Cracker Barrel News".

Re-editing five years of weekly columns in favor of a more orthodox book presentation, and to avoid redundancy, was prohibitive, if a reasonable publishing date was to be realized. It was, therefore, decided to present the articles as they appeared in the newspapers.

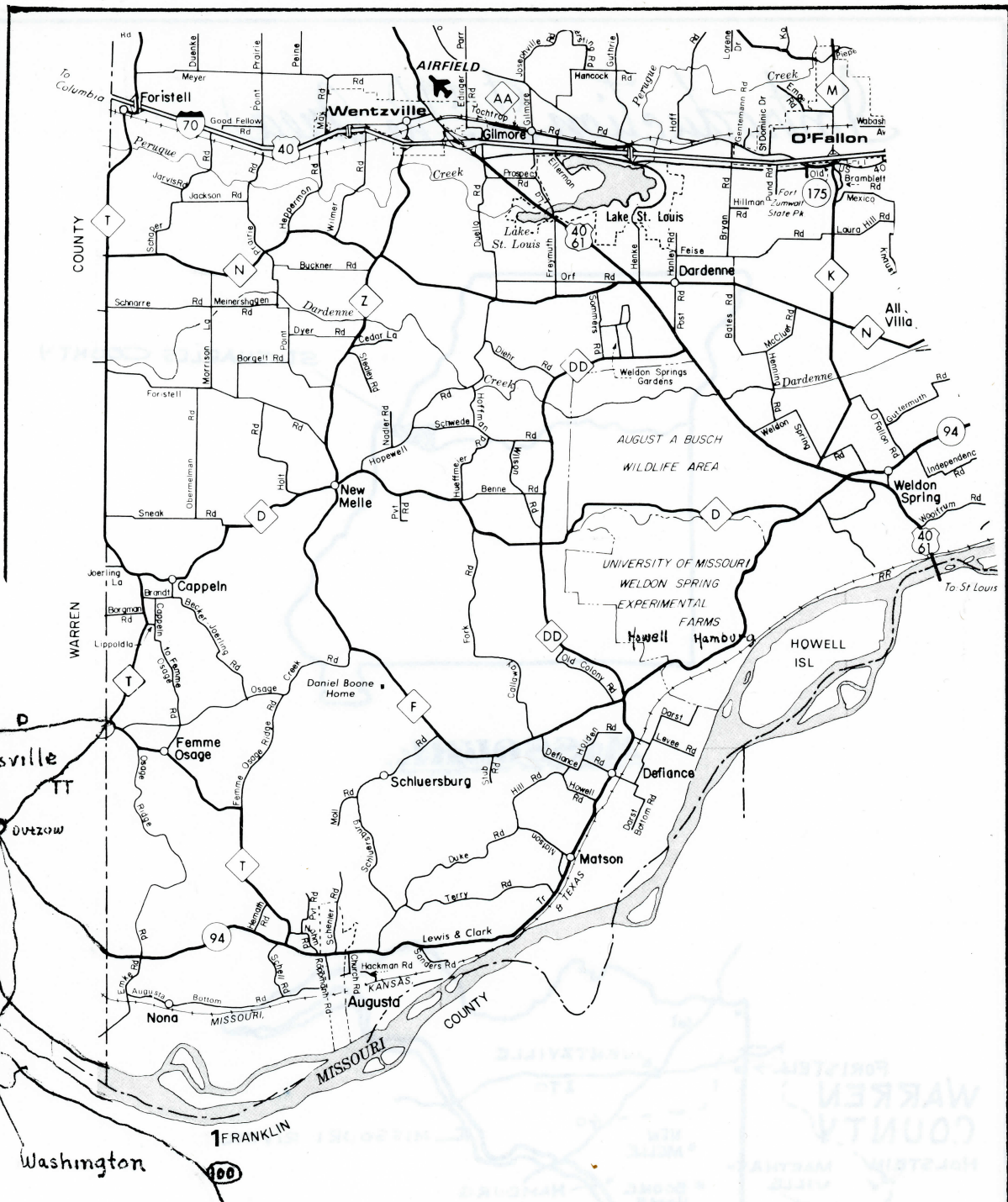
Introduction To The Area



MISSOURI



St. Charles County



*Enlarged map of the area.
 The southwest corner of St. Charles
 County and fringes of Warren and
 Franklin Counties.*