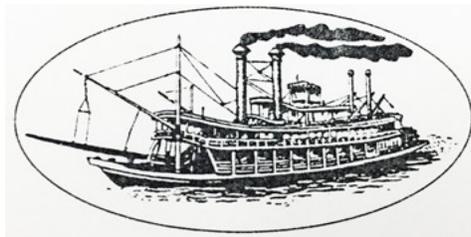


Friends



A quarterly publication of the Friends of Rocheport Society No. 7, August 2020

Still hope for mums, not for chili/ham and bean dinner

Due to restrictions imposed because of the coronavirus pandemic, most FOR events scheduled for the rest of the year have been canceled. The command return performance by ragtime pianist Bob Milne, scheduled for June and postponed to September, has been canceled until next year.

Hall of Fame inductions likewise have been canceled until next year. Moses Barth and Isadore and Daisy Broadus are the new inductees to the Hall of Fame, and will be added to that list although the public ceremony will be held over to next year's induction of two new members.

Plans continue to hold the September 11-13 Mum Flower Sale. It should be easy to observe safety requirements regarding the virus, although that is subject to conditions at the time. Watch for updates on the various Rocheport internet sites.

The October 17 Chili/Ham and Bean dinner at

the Fire Station has been canceled due to the nature of the difficulty of social distancing required of those attending.

The Museum remains closed for the rest of the year, and both the August and November General Meetings have been canceled for the same reasons. The Board continues to meet as needed, usually by email communications or in an open area where spacing is convenient.

Another Good Independence Day Parade



Except for the absence of the Drill Team, the July 4 parade for 2020 was deemed another community success.

Still seeking family information for Barth and the Broaduses

The Friends of Rocheport Society is searching for ancestors or extended family members of its 2020 inductees into the Rocheport Hall of Fame. We would like to find someone to accept the inductions during next year's ceremony.

The inductees are Moses Barth, a prominent merchant in early Rocheport, and a couple, Isadore and Daisy Broadus, who were the community's

unofficial welcoming team until their tragic death in their house fire in January, 1977.

Barth was born on October 24, 1824, in Germany, and died November 29, 1890, in Rocheport. He is buried in the Jewish Section of Columbia Cemetery,



which he helped establish.

Isadore Broadus was born in Rocheport in 1900 and lived his entire life in the house where he died in 1977. His wife, Daisy (Golden or Wages) was born in McBaine in 1890. The couple met while she was visiting in Rocheport.

Throughout their retirement years, the couple had waved from their roadside home to all entering Rocheport from Route BB on Third Street.



Sandbag Democracy

When Disaster Strikes, No Volunteer Is a Stranger in Town.

*By Tom Hirth for the Washington (DC) Post,
August 8, 1993*

ROCHEPORT, Mo. — When Nature becomes spectacle, when flood waters spread out across the fruited plain, we are trained to look for disaster. But after spending a few days on the sandbag lines in Missouri, I'm a lot more optimistic. It's plain to see that we revel in the challenge.

Rocheport is a small town along the Missouri river almost halfway between Kansas City and St. Louis, in the county named for Daniel Boone. It's a historic village from the steamboat days, with old homes and antique shops and stately shade trees. The population is only 255. I am stunned then, when I arrive in Rocheport to find twice that many people working away, like ants, against the flood.

Inside the town's red-brick fire station, the elders of the community are preparing and stacking empty burlap bags. Outside, beneath mountains of sand, younger volunteers including kids, work in teams of three — one holding a bag open, another filling it with a shovel, the third tying it shut. It's one vast tribal ritual, "Jump in wherever you want," someone tells me. Everyone has found a role; no one needs a boss. And, the grown men of Rocheport are having the most fun of all. They get to brute their heavy machinery through the streets.

When a flatbed truck comes to take fresh sandbags to the levees, the volunteers automatically form a line, to pass the bags up from hand to hand. A newcomer, in only a few seconds, can pick up the rhythms. The bags come so fast, they're as much hefted as born along momentarily to the forearms with a rocking motion, so that no one has to take the full weight. It feels like native instinct, like a survival skill we never knew we had, a celebration of the value of cooperation. In two minutes flat—if every link in the chain holds—each of us will move along a ton of sand.

The majority of us, it turns out, are strangers drawn here from neighboring towns and states by appeals on the radio and by our own curiosity. I

end up building a levee with 28 inmates from a nearby prison farm, and they're great guys to work with—strong and good-humored and in no hurry to go home at night.

We pass the sandbags down the line, truckload after truckload, and pile them around a house that belongs to a man we'll never meet. The bags are filled with a fine-crushed limestone that comes out in clouds and sticks to our sweating bodies like pancake makeup, so that by the end of the day we all—the locals, the prisoners and the Good Samaritans alike, the blacks and whites, the Hatfields, the McCoys, and the visiting professors—look the same.

In Rocheport alone, 50,000 sandbags are made from scratch every day and placed by hand against the flood. Yet most of the town, in reality, has been safe from the start, because it's built on high ground. And that's what astounds me: All of this effort is being exhausted in order to save—to try to save—fewer than a dozen buildings. Around each one a private levee rises, just slightly ahead of the waters.

The first place we work on is so dilapidated—with the brickwork about to topple and the window frames falling apart—that I wonder out loud to the man next to me, "is this home really *worth* saving?" But the man lives in Rocheport, and my question is inappropriate. "Well," he says simply, "the fella who lives here, this is all he's got."

By the next day, the Missouri has risen another foot. I go back to check on the house but can't get near; the water is too high. Our levee isn't going to hold, and it's not being reinforced. Still, the man won't leave the house. "He's old," a neighbor explains, "and he's got his mind where he doesn't want to move. But he doesn't understand." So, I put on some boots and wade through the murky water. "Mr. Murray!" I call. "Are you there?" Then a snake swims past, a cottonmouth, and I decide to turn back. In the final tally, while most homes are kept dry, the Murray house and couple of other are not. In terms of real-estate dollars recovered per man-hour expended maybe this has not been a very cost-effective operation. But

there are different standards being used to measure its success.

The older women of Rocheport have served their baked beans and beef stew, their potato salad and cole slaw, to thousands of appreciative workers at the fire house. Local contractors and farmers have set aside their rivalries for once. With an amazing amount of good cheer, this community has renewed itself. In three days on the line I haven't heard one person grumble.

We outsiders, meanwhile, are glad to have sore muscles and burlap burns on our arms. We have come here not so much to help others, perhaps, as to feel good about ourselves; and that was a fight we couldn't much lose.

The people of Rocheport will remember these days for the rest of their lives. They will remember the flood of '93, I'll bet, not for the misfortune it brought, to the few, but for the strength it gave to the many—the knowledge of what spirit and courage they possessed when they came together, briefly, as one. In an age marked otherwise by division, they'll remember an almost ridiculous orgy of good-neighborliness.

Darkness falls now: New volunteers arrive, and the crews keep working away. Dump trucks rumble in from the highway with still more sand. A flatbed comes with 5,000 empty bags, and people scream, "Form a line! Form a line!"

This (we can imagine) used to be a quiet little town. Now look. At any time of the night there are strangers walking through the streets. Yet, passing them in the dark the people of Rocheport never felt so secure.

Tom Hirth is a magazine and book writer who lives in Gold Hill, Colo.

Mary Haines is a Life Member in the Friends of Rocheport Society, and is a source of a growing collection of documents and items regarding the community's history. A resident of Washington, DC, Mary continues her close ties to Rocheport with her contributions. A good example is the feature article about the 1993 flood in this issue.

In her note with the article, Mary wrote: "I enclose an article from the Washington Post from 1993. My family saved it because we, in Washington DC, were surprised and tickled to see an article with a byline from Rocheport. I thought the Rocheport Museum might display the article to showcase that Rocheport made national news the summer of the flood. Very good press for the town!"

Mary's family home was the large, now yellow, house next door to the Community Hall. Many of the items she is sharing with us now are from that home, and are being added to the museum collection.

The Friends of Rocheport Museum is the Society's primary presence in the community. A committee is considering ways to improve the displays and make the museum more appealing to visitors from the Katy Trail, the community, and the general public.

*Generally, the museum is open on weekends from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., from May through October, **although this year's schedule is on hold until the pandemic is deemed safe enough to open for visitors.** The museum contains a treasure trove of historical artifacts, documents, and photographs, many permanent possessions, some on permanent loan from residents, past and present.*

Suggestions for improving the museum exhibits are always welcome. If you would like to help or make suggestions, please mail your ideas to the Friends of Rocheport, P.O. Box 122, Rocheport, MO 65279, or email Rocheport@aol.com.



Now . . . and then . . . at Second and Central



REBUILDING TO BE BEGUN SOON

Rocheport Citizens Optimistic About Reconstruction After Fire.

Rocheport, Jan. 12. While nothing of a definite nature has been done toward beginning construction on the business houses destroyed in yesterday's fire here which caused an estimated loss of \$156,600, the portion of the block destroyed will be replaced with other buildings, according to W. A. Sampson, vice-president of the Rocheport Bank which institution occupied and owned one of the buildings that was razed by the fire.

Mr. Sampson said he was positive that the Rocheport Bank will start the construction of a new building on the old site as soon as possible. The papers, money and other valuables which were in the bank's vaults during the fire were not damaged. This was learned directly after the fire. The bank is doing business temporarily across the street from its former location

A safe belonging to the Harris Department Store which fell to the basement of the building the store occupied during the fire, was damaged little, and the papers and valuables in it are intact, it was learned last evening.

Dr. F. Dimmitt, who owned the building in which his drug store was located, probably will not rebuild, but there are several persons anxious to get an option on the lot on which the structure stood. The Ridgway Grocery will not be re-opening. W. T. Ridgway, proprietor of the store, is disposing of his stock of goods.

Dr. W. E. Angell, who had his office in the second story of the bank building, has his office in his home for the time being. The Bysfield Hardware Store is conducting its business in its building, which was miraculously saved from the flames. The stock has been moved back into the building and E. E. Bysfield, owner of the store and building, says that the building will be repaired right away.

Columbia Missourian January 12, 1922

Friends of Rocheport Society Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail address: _____

Membership Dues: \$20 per household or business. Special Gift Donation: _____

Please make your check payable to "Friends of Rocheport Society"

Mail to: Friends of Rocheport Society, P.O. Box 122, Rocheport, MO 65279

Please check how you would like to receive information from us. Email U.S. Mail

Reminder:

No need to clip the form from this newsletter; just send the requested information to the address shown. Thank you; you are what keeps us going.

Friends



Gene Baumann, Editor
10411 Kings Lane
Rocheport, MO 65279
573-445-1998
Email: Rocheport@aol.com