

Smithville MO Historical Society

P.O. Box 270, Smithville, MO 64089

Kathleen Bird, Editor

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www.smithvillemohistory.org

Preserving the past for appreciation in the future

info@smithvillemohistory.org

Upcoming Events

June 2023 – Library Display

Local Schools are this year's theme for our display at the MCPL Smithville Branch. If you have period items you would like to have displayed, contact us at info@smithvillemohistory.org

Sat. June 17, 2023 – Founders' Day

210 N. Bridge St. Museum tours, rock painting, music by Deena Roe, History Talk with Ron Majors.

Mon Sep. 11, 2023 – History Talk

Smithville Library Community Room at 7:00 pm
Randall Jessee's children will discuss his life and emcee for the first TV broadcast in Smithville.



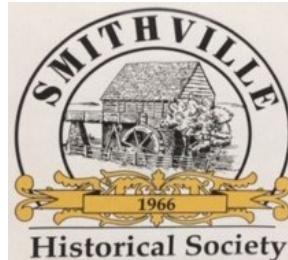
Our April History Talk with Mark W. Kelly on *Lost Voices of Missouri* drew a good crowd. He donated the proceeds of his book sales at the event to the Society

What was News in 1923?

This year we are reporting on interesting items in the 1923 Smithville Democrat Herald, on microfilm at the Clay County Archives in Liberty.

May 4, 1923

Dr. Lash, a government veterinarian, reports that 65 local cattle herds have been tested for tuberculosis. Free tests will be given at the railroad stockyards on Friday. The 1923 Interstate Baseball League opens on Sunday with eight clubs participating. Dr. Thomas's big black horse bolted in front of the E. B. Thatcher place on East Main while he was training



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Eyewitness to WWII Victory in Europe

This month marks the 78th anniversary of the end of world war in Europe. Dr. Arch Spellman enlisted to serve with his alma mater University of Illinois' 27th Evacuation Hospital team. His unit traveled with the U. S. Seventh Army from Italy to Germany. His presence for the victory was bittersweet because a few weeks prior to the surrender he was also an eyewitness to the atrocities at a Nazi prisoner camp. He wrote a 15 page letter to his wife Esther documenting what he saw. We have obtained a copy from the Holocaust Museum and will share excerpts in this newsletter in the future.

WWII Memorial Remembrance

Smithville Fallen Heroes

William B. Bender, age 22, was a Lieutenant with the U.S. Army Air Corp. He survived the war but drowned on Luzon Island in the Phillipines, on Sep. 15, 1946.

Arthur Clay DeMoss, age 22, was a Marine who saw action in the Marshall Islands and Saipan prior to being killed in action on June 28, 1944.

Jesse Baker Mayfield, age 23, was an Army infantryman. He suffered multiple bullet wounds in battle and died in Germany on April 4, 1945.

Robert Edward Lee Patterson, age 30, was a gunner on a B17 bomber. He was killed in action on Feb. 25, 1944

Ernest Howard Porter, age 28, was a pilot with the Air Transport Command based in India, ferrying supplies "over the hump" to China. In March 1945 he was ordered to evacuate Chinese civilians out of the war zone. They panicked, having never been on a plane before, rushing to the back of the plane during takeoff. Lt. Porter was killed in the crash.

Donald E. Rule, age 21, was staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Corps, killed in action on Oct. 5, 1943 in the Mediterranean area.

Junior John Rule, age 26, was a pilot with the 93rd Bomb Group. During a raid on the port of Bremen,

it to drive single. A buggy wheel struck the guide wire for a telephone pole, tossing Dr. Thomas out. He was not badly injured.

May 11, 1923

The High School "Mayflower" yearbook will be distributed tomorrow. Commencement is May 17. The Junior class picnic was held on the James Vernick farm last Sunday. Farmers Bank in Gower was robbed of \$800 by two unmasked bandits. Constable Tom Ravenscroft was on the lookout in case they headed to Kansas City. John Woods and his wife returned home after a winter in Tucson, Arizona. A Wild West Show will be held at Bryant Ford farm next Sunday. A \$10 reward will be paid for any horse, mule or steer that can't be ridden by the bronco riders. A new law signed by Governor prohibits the sale of any substitute for butter.

May 18, 1923

Paving of the Nashua-North Kansas City Road, 18 feet wide with concrete seven inches thick, began May 1 and should be completed by November 1. Seniors Benton Summers, Yates Majors, Wallace Holliday, and Jimmie Strange, who played football, basketball and baseball together are graduating from high school. Mrs. Jennie Bullock, age 72, was killed in a fire at her home. It is thought the fire was caused by her pipe catching her clothing on fire, which has happened several times before. A young man and woman staying at the Smithville Hotel left without paying their bill according to Landlord Featherstone.

May 25, 1923

Our newspaper has recently installed a Linotype typesetting machine "being very expensive...but we believe that our patrons will appreciate our continued efforts to give them a real newspaper." This wonderful machine will turn out 5 to 6 times more work as can be done by hand. Nine young ladies who graduated high school here this year have been employed as teachers at area schools. Wallace Jefferson, age 10, died from injuries received May 12 when the team he was driving to a road drag ran off. A large 40x40 foot barn on the Ben Duncan farm 3 miles west of town was completely destroyed along with a Maxwell automobile and 500 bushels of corn. The family thanks those who went from town with the city's chemical engine to extinguish the house fire. The I.O.O.F. met and has decided to organize a band. Dr. Don Vance's funeral here last Sunday was attended by many from Kansas City and Liberty. In addition to regular grade school, one year of high school will be offered at Paradise next year. Mrs. Vivian Benson is the principal.

Germany on November 13, 1943, five of eight planes on the mission were lost, including 2nd Lt. Rule and all his crew who were lost at sea.



PFC Arthur DeMoss



Lt. E. Howard Porter

Willard C. Sharp, age 37, was a Tec-5 with the U.S. Army Engineers AVN Battalion in the Pacific. He was killed in action on Sep. 14, 1944. His body was returned and interred at Smithville IOOF cemetery.

James W. Stephenson Jr., age 29, a purple heart recipient, was a private first class in the Quartermaster Corp. He was killed in action on April 28, 1944 Operation Tiger in preparation for D-Day when the tank landing ship on which he was traveling was torpedoed and sunk at Lyme Bay in the English Channel.

John C. Seull, age 21, was a 2nd Lt. with the Army Ordnance Dept. He died in the North Atlantic when his ship was torpedoed on Feb. 7, 1943.

Oakley Alonzo Whitmore, age 37, participated in five major campaigns in Europe before being accidentally shot in Frankfort on May 7, 1945, causing paralysis in his lower body. He was returned to the States and died at the soldier's hospital in Springfield, MO on Sep. 8, 1945.

William Clay Woods, Jr., age 31, was a supply officer with the Army Air Force, stationed at Deming, New Mexico. He died on Feb. 4, 1945 of a erebral hemorrhage.

We do not wish to overlook any WWII service member killed in service. If you know of anyone with Smithville connections not listed here, please contact us at info@smithvillehistory.org

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