

An 1882 Mini Mansion's Story....then and now!

Newsletter, Exhibit and Events Archives for Ben Ferrel
Platte County Museum

May 12, 2018 ·

A Brief History of the Ben Ferrel Platte County Museum

Ben Ferrel Platte County Museum,
(the Krause Mini Mansion - built 1882)



The Ben Ferrel Museum, also known as the Krause Mini Mansion, entered the National Historic Register in 1978. The mansion is the headquarters for the Platte County Historical Society. The mini mansion also operates today as an historic house museum with a library/genealogical archives in [Platte City, Missouri](#).



The structure was purchased in 1977 by the Platte County Historical Society and the Platte Purchase Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). A \$38,000 bequest from

Ben Ferrel (a Platte County native), passed to these two organizations upon the death of Mr. Ferrel's wife, Maria. Society members raised an additional \$135,000 to fund the restoration.

The Frederic Krause Mansion entered into the [National Historic Register](#) in 1978. Eight years later (on June 15th, 1985), the museum, though not completely restored, opened to the public.



Between 1882-1883, Frederic Krause built the home from bricks fired in his own brick works in Platte City.

An immigrant from [Prussia](#), Krause eventually settled in Platte City in the early 1860s and soon distinguished himself as both a builder and a merchant.

He owned a meat market on Main Street and operated a livestock farm nearby. During 1882, he and his wife Nancy Duncan Krause welcomed their youngest daughter into a family of five other daughters and one son.

Krause may have been inspired in building this home by his visits to the Governor's Mansion in Jefferson City, Missouri. Krause created a 'mini' or smaller version of the [Missouri Governor's Mansion](#) in several ways: both homes feature slate, mansard roofs, ornate grill work, brick construction and limestone corner quoins. The bronze

fireplace surround in the sitting room closely approximates the shape of a white marble one in the Governor's mansion.



Three videos produced in 2016 and available on DVD showcase the story of the home:

INTRODUCTION WITH ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW (12:47);
WALKING TOUR OF THE MUSEUM (36:32) and
AERIAL VIEWS OF THE MUSEUM (2:11).

The ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW gives viewers a glimpse into the life of Frederick Krause and the history of this mini mansion as well as details about its architecture. Over ninety historic and architectural photos illustrate the narrative, compiled and written by Lisa Wittmeyer. Martha Brenner Noland narrates this segment.

The WALKING TOUR features Betty Soper, the former curator, leading us through the home.

She reveals its history from residents through restoration and presentation of a collection that dates mainly from 1840-1900 and traces a Platte County connection. The third video showcases a drone's eye view of the mansion's exterior.

Purchase information can be found in the **Books** section at the website for the [Platte County Historical Society](http://www.pchs1882.org). <http://www.pchs1882.org>

Visit the museum and experience a mini mansion authentically restored! Each year the museum's exhibits amplify not only aspects of Platte County and regional history but also aspects of the home itself—structure, site and collection. This blog-newsletter is written by Lisa Wittmeyer for Ben Ferrel Platte County Museum.

November 29, 2017

Ben Ferrel Platte Co. Museum Newsletter, December 2017

Ben Ferrel Platte County Museum, (the Krause Mini Mansion - built 1882)



Welcome to our first friends of the museum newsletter! Questions, comments?

Know someone we might add to email list (or request removal)? If yes to any of the

above contact Lisa (816) 304-1627 or lkwittmeyer@yahoo.com

Like to join the Platte County Historical Society (PCHS), or give a membership as a gift? Check the end of this newsletter for details.



HOLIDAY TOURS Dec 7-9th from 12 noon to 5 p.m. We welcomed many visitors on the Thanksgiving evening during Platte City's lighting festivities. We will open also on Dec. 7, 8 & 9th for guided or self-guided tours. All guests will receive an, old-fashioned candy treat. Admission: Adults \$5.00 / children free; PCHS members - free. Each paid entry comes with a complimentary ticket for our raffle;

\$5.00 for each additional ticket. What will visitors see?

Creatively-adorned and light-filled trees and decorations grace every room. Many bright whites and blues capture the Winter Wonderland theme!

Read more in the article "Platte County's Ben Ferrel Museum gets in the Holiday Spirit" from the Nov. 17 "816 North" section of the KC Star

<http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/community/816-north/article185390278.html>



Sue Hurd VanAmburg organizes the holiday event. She joined the Snow Princess portrayed by Lauren Walker in the museum's parlor for this photo.

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS DELIGHT! Spotlight on the Children's Room!

Joyce Taylor has transformed the children's room with authentic Victorian fare. In doing so Joyce shows us how the Krause children might have experienced Christmas as Frederic Krause built this mini mansion in 1882-1883. Joyce was assisted by Hoppy Kincaid in creating the display. Items range from books, toys, games and cards to turn-of-the-century dolls and ornaments.

Look especially for the Christmas stocking with its cinder-spark holes from hanging from a mantle over a century ago! Joyce also has helped create the Antique Holiday Doll Display by the Heirloom Doll Collectors' Club of Greater Kansas City. It runs through Dec. 31 at Platte City's Mid-Continent Public Library at 2702 N.W. Prairie View Road.

Two displays only a few miles from one another!



A Basket-FULL of FLOWERS!

JoKaren Brown created this bouquet for our Victorian Wedding Reception. We liked it so much we displayed it all summer. JoKaren also advises on acquisitions.

Interurban Models Our oldest display case has new glass. Julie Wallis (left in below picture) and Cheri Lomas (on right), updated the display of the Kansas City, Clay County & St. Joseph Railway models (KCCC&SJ).

Julie helps as docent and assists in the library and archives.

For more information about the Interurban, visit this website:

<http://interurbanroad.com/map.htm>



All Decked out for each Season!



Betty Soper not only provides continuing support with her insights about the collection, but decorates the front porch seasonally to include this winter's white poinsettias. We look forward to what she will share in the coming year!

Librarian, Craig Kirkpatrick reports that the inventory of the library is complete! Craig says he now will begin inventorying the hanging files (grey boxes) in the front room of the basement. He also recently transcribed

minutes between 1919-1931 for the Central Protective Association of Rushville (Rushville Lodge No 36). Margaret Ellen Engman of Rushville donated these along with the association's rosters, convention programs, post cards and handwritten, 1917 bylaws. More updates on the archives in the PCHS bulletin.

Tours with a British Accent!

Cheri Lomas' accent intrigues visitors...and most rightly guess that it's British! As a lead docent, Cheri (see picture above), has been an invaluable asset. She brings to the museum not only an interest in meeting new people, but a love of history and reading. Cheri explains, "The more I learn about a subject or place the more I want to know. I become a Miss Marple! This character in Agatha Christie's novels had to know everything!" About the museum, Cheri said, "It was love at first sight." Cheri's favorite artifact is a late-1800s print of George Washington. Washington, explains Cheri, is highly regarded by many in England where she grew up.



Collection Spotlight - Putting the ART in Artifact—

Visitors often linger before the museum's oil painting entitled Stony Point School. Miss Nell Corum of Kearney, Missouri, painted this in 1910 and America Lowmiller (Platte Co) donated it to the museum. The painting shows children arriving at a one-room school house in Clinton County—a scene representative of many rural places at the turn-of-the-century.

The children shown are descendants of homesteaders to Platte County in 1837

2017's Exhibits Retrospective—History as Sharing, a Community Event!

This past season the museum presented two exhibits, one on wedding traditions and another on art in an historical context—both with strong Platte County connections!

Exhibit #1: For "Weddings of Yesteryear" we displayed 10 wedding gowns from the 1870s through 1960s. Anne Simpson Jones, PCHS President, suggested a display of gowns and from this a well spring of interest grew and the exhibit evolved! Miss the exhibit? Check out this Kansas City Star [article](#) & St. Joe News Press [article](#) (and [video](#)):



Exhibit #2: Artfully Missouri:

Paintings by Gale Stockwell, -16 contributors including Park University loaned 36 paintings showcasing town and land scenes of N.W. Missouri. Many visitors like Barb and Don Mather (photo above), shared cell phone



pictures of their own Stockwell watercolors. Martha Brenner Noland, PCHS member, reminisces with Greg Smith about Parkville scenes in the picture to the right top. Zelda Reeber, docent, described the paintings as 'evocative' when chatting with Matthew Clowser from Platte County High (picture on right). Martin Johnson (below, left) became intrigued by the



spring-blooming trees in one of the paintings; through his experience in an orchard he identified by the angle of branches that one was an apple tree. These represent only a few experiences of our guests. Together we discovered how Stockwell preserves history and helps us see regional scenes through his caring artistry. Miss this exhibit? See more by clicking the links to this [St. Joe News Press article](#) & also, this [KC Star article](#)

Wedding or Holiday Fruit Cake! Sixty guests filled First Baptist Church's fellowship hall for a Victorian Wedding Reception in July. Fashion historian Caroline Miller shared about & showed wedding gowns through the decades. Refreshments included several 1800s wedding fruit cakes made by Sue Hurd VanAmburg. Sue shares more here: **Molasses Fruit Cake — 1800s**



recipe:

"One teacupful of butter, one teacupful of brown sugar, worked well together;

Next, two teacupfuls of cooking molasses, one cupful of milk with a teaspoonful of soda dissolved in it, one tablespoonful of ginger, one tablespoonful of cinnamon and one teaspoonful of cloves, a little grated nutmeg.

Now add four eggs well-beaten and five cups of sifted flour, or enough to make a stiff batter. Flour a cup of raisins and one of currants *[editor's note: cranberries can*

be substituted]; add last. Bake in a very moderate oven one hour. If well covered will keep six months." Note from Sue: finish by adding cake glaze.

Looking Ahead to 2018!

Exhibit and Events information will be posted to our Facebook and/or web page in the coming spring/summer! Opening Day April 19, 2018.

Interested in Joining PCHS? Benefits include free museum admission, a magazine-style **bulletin of articles** and more. Please check the PCHS webpage for a membership application or stop by the museum!