Mary Ellen Lohmann, Director, Administration & Communications

CoMo 365 is a bold new project written by historian Matt Fetterly as part of a collaboration between the Boone County Historical Society and CoMo Preservation.

Through daily posts about the historic happenings and buildings in Columbia, CoMo 365's aim is to ignite passion about local history, which will spread well beyond the year of its creation.

The project started in January 2023 and is still going strong thanks to Fetterly's dedication to impeccable research and authentic storytelling.

To date, everything from the Ashland Gravel Road and the Hinkson Creek Bridge to Eugene Field Elementary School and the East Campus Neighborhood has been covered.

CoMo 365 shares interesting details about the historic buildings, places and people of Boone County in a way that only an author like Fetterly, who is truly fascinated with local history, can.

The result is a better understanding of multifaceted, vibrant, sometimes difficult history of the place we call home. Please enjoy the following excerpts from CoMo 365.

**Ashland Gravel Road and the Hinkson Creek Bridge:** On February 7, 1973, the Columbia Missourian reported that the old Hinkson Creek Bridge was permanently closed to motor vehicles and would likely be preserved as a historic site and pedestrian crossing. It is at the site of the original crossing of Ashland Gravel Road over Hinkson Creek and was built in 1888 by H.W. Sebastian & Co to replace—Continued on page 4

**Women of Legacy**
The lasting legacies of local women are celebrated with a special Women’s History Month display. Learn more about their impact both in Boone County and beyond. More on page 6.
Two new exhibitions highlight the distinct ways that local individuals have made a difference in the lives of others—on both a local and a national scale—by answering the call to serve and by training the next generation of leaders.

Heroes Among Us shares the stories of Boone Countians who bravely served in the armed forces overseas as well as first responders who keep our community safe by serving on the frontlines here at home.

A vibrant display of military uniforms and portraits from the BCHS collection as well as treasured items on loan from families showcases the service of locals in conflicts ranging from the Spanish American War and World War I to the Vietnam War and Operation Urban Freedom. A special item from the Niedermeyer family reminds us of the costs of freedom. The flag, now folded into a tight triangle, once draped the casket of Frederick W. Niedermeyer, Jr. He was one of the best pilots in the U.S. air service, until his tragic death in 1922.

Items John Clark received as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam are also enlightening. To try and convince the world that prisoners were treated humanely, POWs were issued clothing and shoes as well as a duffel containing toiletries, cigarettes and matches. Yet the only item that shows light use is the soap even though Clark was held prisoner for nearly six years.

Heroes Among Us also traces the evolution of local fire and police protection, including the Central Missouri Radio Squad Volunteer Fire Department, a portrait of the first Black officers on the Columbia police force and artifacts from the late Larry McCray, who served 20 years in the Boone County Sheriff’s Department. McCray drew national attention after leading the first case to garner a murder conviction without a body, thanks to the new technology of DNA evidence.

A unique component of the Heroes Among Us exhibition is a massive Thunderbolt siren, which adorned the top of the Howard Municipal Building from the 1960s until October 2020. The supercharged electromechanical siren was initially marketed during the cold war. In Boone County the Thunderbolt was the first siren of its kind and was used for tornado warnings throughout its life.

On My Honor showcases how volunteers help young people become stronger, kinder and braver than they ever thought possible. Volunteers lead with their hearts and train the youth around them in organizations including 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Camp Fire. Histories of the groups are lined with stories from locals who dedicated their lives to helping others unlock their potential.

“Mr. 4-H” is one of those. Frank Graham, a 2016 Boone County Hall of Fame enshrinee, spent more than three decades serving the 4-H program and influenced tens of thousands of youth across state. In 1949, Graham was one of eight founding members of the Missouri 4-H Foundation and continued his involvement with the foundation until his death in 2013.

These exhibitions were made possible with funding from Dr. Laurel & Howard Wilson, the Columbia’s Office of Cultural Affairs, Boone County Government, Columbia Convention & Visitors Bureau and BCHS members and donors like you. —Continued on page 4
Tracy Montminy: Mural, Mural on the Wall

Dr. Jo Stealey, Interim Montminy Gallery Director

We are pleased to present another wonderful story about the artist who made the Montminy Gallery possible in 1992.

*Tracy Montminy: Mural, Mural on the Wall* features her mural project that remains prominently featured today in Tucker Hall on the University of Missouri campus.

In 1948, artist and educator Tracy Montminy joined the MU Department of Art. She brought with her a national reputation and over a decade of professional experience, having painted largescale murals at city halls, public buildings and post offices for the Works Project Administration in the 1930s.

During a resurgence of mural popularity in the 1960s, Montminy revisited the idea of a mural course and was granted permission by the University to develop the course in 1976. However, she faced a problem: approached the art department with an idea for a collaborative project.

Eisenstark wanted to promote the newly formed Department of Biological Sciences, a merger of Botany, Zoology and Genetics, plus students and faculty had complained to him about the ugly and cold concrete walls of the south staircase in Tucker Hall. The result was an intricate mural on the staircases that marries elements of art and science and offers an inventive interpretation of the elements of life and its evolution.

The exhibition will be on display March 17-July 15 in the Montminy Gallery as a part of the permanent showcase that celebrates the life and work of Tracy and Pierre Montminy.

A very special thanks to guest curators Kristin Schwain, Professor; Lorina Bradley, Visiting Assistant Professor; and Mary Karcher, PhD candidate Art History of the MU School of Visual Studies.

Hands-On History in the Center, Local Schools

Thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers 2023 is off to a great start providing local families and students the opportunity to experience history in fun, hands-on ways. BCHS volunteers Sarah Poff, Charlotte Bridgeman, Carolyn Doyle and Anna Coleman welcomed 60 visitors of all ages on February 11. Patrons enjoyed seeing 100-year-old valentines, drafting letters to send to family members and making valentines to share. The *I Do* exhibit and scavenger hunt also had many families staying nearly the whole morning.

The traveling trunk program has also been busy—visiting Rock Bridge, Grant and New Haven Elementary Schools—with many more scheduled in the coming weeks.

Educational programs are growing and could use extra volunteers. If you would be willing to help your History & Culture Center better serve the community, please contact MadelineBloss@BooneHistory.org.

Top Left Carolyn Doyle, right, helps a visitor write a letter during the February family event.
Above Rock Bridge Elementary students hang clothes on a line.
Left Rock Bridge students play games on a chalk board.
Help Needed: Flood of 1993 History Exhibition

This summer marks 30 years since the Great Flood of 1993, one of the most costly and devastating floods to occur both locally and in the United States. (At the time it was the largest flood ever recorded on the Mississippi River!) The next history exhibition aims to tell the complex story of the flood—the damage caused, the lessons learned, the lasting changes to our daily life as well as the way our community overcame the challenges, together.

To do that, we need your help. We are seeking items you would loan or donate to BCHS about the flood. We are specifically interested in photos, items salvaged after the waters receded and related memorabilia. Please email Info@BooneHistory.org or call the History & Culture Center at 573-443-8936 if you are interested in sharing your items and your story. Thank you in advance for your help, and please feel free to spread the word.

CoMo 365—continued from page 1

an earlier wooden bridge. Ashland Gravel Road was the main route to the town of Ashland and beyond to Jefferson City. According to the Missourian the 1912 Scarborough’s Motor Guide to Missouri describes the route:

“To get from downtown Columbia to Jefferson City, go south on Eighth Street. Turn left. Jog right. Stop at the toll booth. Cross a steel bridge. Turn right past an unpainted barn, etc., etc. The book describes Ashland Gravel Road as ‘rough and hilly.’ It wasn’t an interstate, but, for a long time it was the only road to Jefferson City.”

Eugene Field Elementary School: On February 10, 1966, the Columbia Missourian reported on overcrowding at Eugene Field Elementary School, saying, ‘they serve lunch in the gym, give speech lessons in the sick bay, and violin lessons in the hall.’ The school was attended by 427 students, who used just 14 classrooms. Field Elementary was erected in 1916 as part of a large expansion project for Columbia Public Schools, it was the fourth elementary school in Columbia.

Pratt’s Addition and the East Campus Neighborhood: On January 3, 1905, the Pratt Family (George, Georgina, J.K., and Charles) registered the addition of eighteen large lots to the City of Columbia in what is now known as the East Campus Neighborhood. The addition is between today’s Rosemary and Wilson streets and contains many fine examples of residential architecture. Wilson Street, originally known Keiser Avenue, was the first street in the immediate area to develop and in 1910 the only street to have any houses, by 1917 it was nearly full. The Pratt Addition is a small, but early, part of the East Campus Neighborhood, notable for its early twentieth century suburban architecture.

BooneHistoryCoMo365.org offers a new post every day. Visit to learn more about the places that make up the Columbia of yesterday and today.

Exhibits—continued from page 2

Special thanks to these individuals and groups for sharing your story and artifacts: Alice Havard; Dolores McCray; Jean Niedermeyer-Gillispie; John Wilke, Boone County Fire Protection District; Toni Messina of the Columbia Police Department; and the Columbia Fire Department.

To those who envisioned, researched, created, wrote, edited, executed and supported this exhibit, we offer our great appreciation—Dr. Laurel Wilson, Carolyn Collings, Nancy W. Thomas, John Wilke, Nancy Russell, Howard Wilson, Alice Havard, Mike Russell, Larry Joe Pauley, Charlie Lee, Chris Campbell, Mary Ellen Lohmann, Brian Flanagan, K.C. Enright, Madeline Bloss, Erin Drake and Suhey Campos.
Volunteer Spotlight: Dolores McCray

The work of the Boone County History & Culture Center simply would not be possible without incredible volunteers. This special section highlights an individual who goes above and beyond to serve our community and help ensure the future of this organization.

How long have you been volunteering?
In about 2009 a neighbor approached me about becoming a board member of the Boone County Historical Society. Thinking it was something that appealed to me, if the board would approve my becoming a member, I would accept.

At that time I also started volunteering at the front desk a couple times a month. Back then if a special event was planned the refreshments were not catered, so I volunteered to help coordinate and serve the guests on those evenings.

Why are history and culture important to you?
After joining the board of directors, my interest in Boone County history was enhanced. Several of the early proprietors in Columbia were relatives of my late husband, Larry McCray.

E.W. Stephens owned and operated a publishing company in Columbia. He and his family were cousins to my late husband’s grandmother.

Also, Weldon Smith the first owner of the Pepsi Cola Company in Columbia was an uncle to my mother-in-law. Mr. Smith’s family have been large contributors to the Boone County History & Culture Center through an endowment fund.

Why would you tell someone else to volunteer at the Boone County History & Culture Center?
I would tell someone to volunteer because there is always something new to be learned each time you volunteer. Whether it be from the exhibits or the many people one comes in contact with as they come to visit our museum. There are usually members of the Boone County History & Culture Center dropping by or volunteering on a project each time, with really interesting and enlightening stories to share.

Has anything about volunteering surprised you?
The most surprising thing to me is the number of residents of Columbia and Boone County that come to visit and state that this is the first time I’ve visited the museum and the village. So come visit, and sign up to volunteer, you just might enjoy it.

Why should someone support BCHS?
Supporting the organization is very important to the future of the museum not only monetarily but in the preservation of the numerous artifacts in the vaults.

Why do you choose to help preserve and share Boone County’s history and culture?
I have been a resident of Boone County for 64 years. History and genealogy has always fascinated me. In the years that I have lived here many things of a historical nature have happened in Boone County. One thing that comes to mind is the floods of 1993. Therefore, if events such as that were not preserved in some way eventually all would be forgotten. Future generations would not have access to past history or the lifestyle of Boone County.

What accomplishment are you most proud to have been part of at the Center?
I can’t say any accomplishments on my part stand out other than being a voice to promote the museum. It is a pleasure to volunteer for an organization that has grown in recognition and professionally since I have been associated with it.

Join Dolores! There is currently a great need for volunteers to serve the Boone County History & Culture Center at the front desk and in the Waters Digital Imaging Lab. All training is provided. To get started, fill out the form online at BooneHistory.org/Volunteer or contact the Center at 573-443-8936 or Info@BooneHistory.org.
Local Pilot Charts New Course

Niamh Johnston
BCHS History Intern, Fall 2022

Marcella A. Hayes Ng was born on July 24, 1956 in Mexico, Missouri. Raised in Centralia by her grandparents, she graduated from Hickman High School in Columbia, in 1974. After high school, she went on to graduate with a Bachelors in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1978. Though initially Ng wanted to be a doctor, she joined the U.S. Armed Forces that same year, having been a part of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps in college. This decision would lead to her shattering the glass ceiling of the U.S. Armed Forces.

After graduation, on November 27, 1979, in Ft. Rucker, Alabama, Marcella Ng became the first Black woman, and 55th woman, pilot in U.S. Armed Forces. She was also the first African American woman to graduate from the army flight school.

Her rapid and pioneering successes in the Armed Forces led her to the 394th Transportation Battalion in Germany, which is where she became the first Black soldier as well as the first female leader in that unit. She was also only 23 years old.

However, she faced several problems when she attempted to continue flying in the 394th. The battalion required her to re-take the test to be allowed to fly in Germany. Unfortunately, Ng was not allowed to fly as frequently as necessary. She also did not receive proper instruction when she was finally able to get in the air. Eventually, though not for lack of trying, Ng was unable to retain her flight status in Germany.

While unable to fly again, Ng did not let that stop her from achieving further success in her career.

Ng attended the Transportation Officer’s Advanced Course (Ft. Eustis, VA), was stationed at Ft. Hood, TX from 1984-87, and was assigned to Seoul, Korea from 1987-89, then later that year she was assigned to Fort Ord, CA.

In total, Marcella Ng served 22 years before retiring in 2000 as a Lieutenant Colonel. In 2022 she was inducted to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Army ROTC Hall of Fame. While she is no longer a part of the U.S. Armed Forces, she has remained an active member of her community in Texas, and paved the way for many more women of color after her.

Above Lt. Col. Marcella Hayes Ng was the first Black woman and 55th female pilot in U.S. She was raised in Centralia and graduated from Hickman High School in 1974. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army. Inset Ng returned to her alma mater, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in 2022 for her induction into the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps Hall of Fame. Photo by Bryce Richter.

Thank you Socket for your support of the History & Culture Center through FREE fiber optic internet service!
Local Trailblazer in the Law

Retired Chief Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court, the honorable Ann Covington was the first female to serve the Show-Me State in several crucial judicial roles. In 1977 Covington completed her law degree at the University of Missouri. She intended to use her skills and training to help others, and expanded her knowledge further with a post-graduate appellate judge course at New York University’s Institute of Judicial Administration.

From 1977-79, she gained incredible experience as an assistant attorney general in Missouri and was well on her way to bettering the life of others in the Show-Me State. Covington worked in private practice until 1987, when Governor John Ashcroft tapped her as the first woman to serve on the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District.

Covington’s career kept breaking barriers in 1989, when she was named to the Missouri Supreme Court. Then again when she served as the first female chief justice from 1993-95. For all this and more, the American Bar Association recognized her as one of the Women Trailblazers in the Law. During her service on the Missouri Supreme Court (1989-2001), Covington was instrumental in leading the effort to revise Supreme Court committee documents to include gender neutral terms. She also ensured that for the first-time women and minorities were involved in all major Supreme Court committees.

Covington has also been active in higher education. She served on the University of Missouri Board of Curators from 2013-15. Covington has served many years as a member of the MU Truman Scholarship and Mark Twain Fellowship committees while also mentoring countless law students.

Her dedication to helping local women reach their full leadership potential was recognized in 2002 when she was awarded the Athena Award by the Woman’s Network of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce. In 2017 she was inducted into the Missouri Public Affairs Hall of Fame. A Columbia resident for more than five decades, we were proud to add her to the Boone County Hall of Fame in 2019. Learn more about Covington’s incredible career in her tribute video. Find it under videos at YouTube.com/BooneHistoryOrg.

Above  The honorable Ann Covington was the first female to serve the state in several crucial judicial roles, including as the first female chief justice in 1993. Inset  In recognition of her ground-breaking career as well as her dedication to helping others, Covington was enshrined in the Boone County Hall of Fame in 2019. Photo by L. G. Patterson.
Work and Leisure in Mid-Century Missouri: Selections from the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Heart of the Nation Collection

We are pleased to present our first ever collaboration between University of Missouri’s Museum of Art and Archaeology and the Montminy Gallery at the Boone County History & Culture Center. In 1946, the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney department store in St. Louis commissioned 14 modern artists to “depict for Missouri, and the rest of the world, the charm, the strength, the beauty, the way-of-life of our mid-western Missouri of today.” The 98 paintings and drawings feature familiar scenes of rural and urban life, agricultural and industrial production, folk life and mass entertainment. While the images seem straightforward—offering a mix of traditional and post-war life and economies—the artists also suggest the uneasy alliance between rural and urban visions of America’s future.

The Missouri: Heart of the Nation collection toured the state and appeared in catalogs, advertisements and other materials distributed by the store. After the two and a half year travelling exhibit ended, its president, Frank Mayfield, donated the entire collection to the University of Missouri. It was housed throughout Jesse Hall until its transfer to the MU’s Museum of Art and Archaeology in 2014. This exhibit—a collaboration between the Museum and the Montminy Gallery—puts the collection’s oil paintings in conversation with one another for the first time in 70 years.

A very special thanks to guest curators from the MU School of Visual Studies Art History program—Kristin Schwain, professor; Lorinda Bradley, visiting assistant professor; and Mary Karcher, PhD candidate. Special thanks also to the MU Museum of Art and Archaeology—Dan Eck, director; Rima Girmius, curator of European and American Art and Matt Smith, preparator. We also appreciate the support of our sponsors—the Missouri Arts Council, the City of Columbia Office of Cultural Affairs and Commerce Bank as well as generous members and donors like you.