

SPRING STREET'S MANY ACTIVITIES WHEN MAIN ARTERY TO CITY

Street Named After Spring Which Was Much Used.

(By Paul E. Beidler)

Everybody is familiar with the fact that Mount Pulaski was founded during the year 1836, just 125 years ago. As soon as possible the three principal men involved in this founding, Jabez Capps, Barton Robinson and George Turley, had the new town surveyed and laid out in block and streets.

Then came the task of naming the streets and why. In this case Spring street is the one associated with this story. It so happened that on this particular street, two blocks west of the southwest corner of the public square, and four blocks south, was a spring from which was flowing a very good supply of water, and this suggested the name. The early settlers went to this spring to get their supply of water for drinking and household purposes until wells could be dug. At that early time, when the women would go to the spring to do their washing, wolves, deer, and other wild animals and birds, could be seen and heard in the surrounding prairie grass.

Spring street became the main artery into Mount Pulaski from the south, people in their various modes of transportation going to Cooke street, and then two blocks to the public square. Now, in 1961, with their hundreds of automobiles, this route is still used.

The north end of Spring street extended from the St. John's Lutheran Church five blocks to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Russell Buckles, with residences on each side. There is one historic fact that could be mentioned here. In the late 1880's there was one-half block of vacant lots on the east side of the street, and it was here that a now famous circus, as a wagon circus pulled by horses, came to Mount Pulaski for a performance. It was Ringling Bros. Circus, just getting started from their headquarters in Baraboo, Wis. As years went by the people had to go to Springfield, Decatur, Bloomington, etc., to see the circus.

To reach Spring street you have to go two blocks west on Cooke street from the public square, then turn south. At this intersection for many years were located, St. John's Lutheran Church, the great big Beam residence, built about 1877 (the largest in Logan county), the old Logan House, and a residence. For some years the old Beam House was known as the Palace Hotel, which was torn away to build the Mount Pulaski Township High School, and used first in 1912. The Logan House was also torn away and the home of Mr. and Mrs. Austin W. Schaffnacker took its place.

Leaving this intersection and going south, Spring street has since had many changes. The property just south of the township high school, has been purchased by the school district, and the home of the late T. A. Scroggin removed from the site for added school improvements.

In the second block you cross the railroad spur going to the Mount Pulaski Grain Co. elevator, and Everett Koehler carpenter shop building and the yards of the Rothwell Lumber Co. Then comes the Illinois Central Railroad tracks (Peoria division). At this point on the west side, now stands the long-vacated water works building, the waterworks plant now being on North Marion street.

Man From Massachusetts

At this point in the story a man named John M. Whitney, who was born in Bolton, Mass., on Nov. 17, 1836, the same year Mt. Pulaski was founded, finally came west. Receiving a good education he left his birthplace in 1865 and after several years of working in various locations, he came to Illinois in 1878, and decided to make Mount Pulaski his home. He built the substantial residence on the west side of

the street, and close to the spring. The house is still occupied, by Hiram Shull.

Mr. Whitney wanted to get into the mechanical line of business, and having purchased most of the block on the east side of Spring street, soon had a good sized frame building erected to take care of his carpenter and mechanical work, and just west of this building and along the street, he put up another structure known as the Whitney Cider Mill. There were hundreds of apple orchards in this area during the 1880's and 1890's, and during the apple ripening season you would see long lines of wagons loaded with apples awaiting their turn to have the cider made. It reminds one today of how grain is taken to the elevators in trucks.

Just north of his residence Mr. Whitney put up a building that was used for some years as a public bath house.

In the main block of his buildings he built on the east side of the block (bordering on Marion street), the building that became known as Whitney Flats and in which six families could be comfortably housed.

Mr. Whitney was of an inventive-type of mind, and used his machine shops to plan and carry out his ideas. The best known in central Illinois, of his inventions was the "Yankee Wind Mill." He sold his invention to the Mount Pulaski Wind Mill Co. and the wind mill was manufactured on the east side of square for many years, giving employment to several people. The business finally came to a standstill because of more use of electricity. Mr. Whitney finally sold out here, and with his wife, returned to Massachusetts.

About The End of The Street

From this point on south, there are a number of residents. The street goes under the Illinois Central Springfield division track, the subway being constructed when the railroad track from the southwest was raised to enable the bigger trains to make the grade in a faster and better way. This was at the turn of the century.

Just before reaching the subway was the road to the west to where the old Vanhise pond was located, the pond being the result of the thousands of wagon loads of clay being hauled from there to the big tile and brick factory at the west end of Cooke street. From then on a number of homes are located. Coming to the end of the street, where a tile and brick factory was located years ago, you turn two blocks west, then south again to U. S. Route 54, if you are going to Springfield and beyond.

This is a long street, in use since Mount Pulaski was founded.

P.S.—While on the subject of Spring street, it must be said here that the spring was finally put to other good use. A platform was built along the west side of the middle of the street and a pump put into play. On the north and south side of the platform were placed troughs to pump water for the horses. It was a busy place for many years until the coming of the automobile, and the diminishing number of horses. The city finally moved the platform from the street, and called it finis.

POT HOLDERS CLUB ORGANIZED IN 1946

The Potholders Club was organized in 1946 with Mrs. Celia Poffenbarger as the first president.

On Christmas and birthday anniversaries potholders are given to each other.

The present president is Mrs. Ernest Edwards; vice-president, Mrs. Arie Deibert; Secretary, Mrs. Hazel Kusterer; Treasurer, Mrs. Herman Wood.

The club meets once a month.

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