

THE VOICE

Grain Valley Historical Society

March Meeting Background

Archibald Gamble officially platted the Town of Sibley in 1836. Gamble, the brother-in-law of the Fort Osage factor George Sibley, named the town after Sibley. Using the Fort Osage landing and planning on ferry operations, Gamble and Sibley envisioned a town made prosperous from river trade, steamboat outfitting, and providing goods and service for overland trail travelers. The town did experience a modest amount of prosperity in the late 1830s and early 1840s.

Sibley never grew into more than a small village as the economic center of Jackson County was Independence. Sibley also suffered from a series of tragic events. In 1844, a severe flood destroyed many of the businesses located at the base of the bluff. The town was also virtually destroyed by Union forces in June 1863, as Sibley was a refuge for Confederate guerrillas during the Civil War. A serious fire in 1878 and a tornado in 1880 again damaged much of the town. In 1887, the Santa Fe railroad crossed the Missouri River at Sibley, and the business center and most of the residents moved about a half mile to the south around the railroad depot. This part of town is often called "New Sibley."

Easter in Grain Valley

My earliest memories of Easter involve a lavender dress with a ruffle at the hem, a white straw hat and gloves. It must have been 1949, because our family was living in a tiny house on Thieme Street in Grain Valley. Actually the house was the two car garage and breezeway, a temporary residence until the house could be added. That house never got build, as my parents literally "bought the farm" that spring.

But back to Easter. My brother and I got live bunnies for Easter. I really don't remember if we liked them or not. After a few weeks, we decided we could never eat them, mother got tired of feeding them and I believe we gave them to "a good home." I don't remember receiving rabbits or ducks or chickens after that year unless they were the chocolate variety.



I do remember many more Easter mornings. They included Sunrise Service and breakfast at the old Methodist Church on Capelle Street. Some years, after breakfast there would be an Easter egg hunt. I was never real excited about finding dyed, boiled eggs but fortunately we each found only two or three eggs!

By the mid-1950s our Sunrise Service moved to Monkey Mountain (not yet a park, it was on Sni-A-Bar property). We entered the property through a farm gate located on old 40 highway about a mile east of Buckner Tarsney Road, on the side of the "mountain." Some of the teens from our MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship) had visited the site

Historical Society Meeting

March 26, 2020

Join us for a pot luck dinner at 6:00 pm followed by our program and meeting. Hope you can attend.

Pam (Austin) Bussell will present our program on early Jackson County pioneers. Pam is a lifelong resident and for many years she volunteered at Fort Osage. She will share information about early Sibley, families and the influence of the Osage Indians on this area.



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www.grainvalleyhistory.com

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Valley News

Grain Valley's Community Newspaper



to find the perfect location for our service. There was a clear view to the East to watch the sunrise and a rock overhand about halfway up the "mountain" which served as the cave. Everyone parked their cars in the pasture and walked to the location.

One year, it must have be about 1956 or 57, it was a particularly cold Easter morning. In the re-enactment of Easter morning, my brother had the part of a soldier guarding the tomb. Our cousin, Larry Graham, was reading the scripture. He read from Matthew 28 about the guard at the tomb, he read about the earthquake and the guard fell to the ground; he didn't read in Chapter 28, verse 11 where the guards were sent to the city to report. Charlie laid on the cold ground until the end of the service. He never let Larry forget how cold he was that morning!

During this time the Sunrise Service had grown to become a community event. For a few years all three churches shared the service.

Unfortunately a couple of real cold Easter's in 1959 and 1960 caused the service to be cancelled and it was never started again.

For a few years, during the 1950's the merchants of Grain Valley would host an Easter egg Hunt at the City Park by the railroad. Progress, also known as 40 & 7 United Super Market, K-Mart and the Blue Ridge Mall, took its toll on small towns, especially Grain Valley. With no city water and sewers, our little town was overlooked by home builders. Several businesses closed and the merchants no longer sponsored the Easter egg hunt, the summer free shows or Santa at Christmas.

During the late 1990s the Grain Valley Optimist Club began hosting an Easter egg Hunt, complete with a jumbo rabbit. From a few hundred eggs to thousands, the hunt grew over the years. This year, I am told the hunt has been cancelled. When they began, it was the only Easter egg Hunt in town. Now, there are so many hunts that the attendance has diminished.

So, maybe everything old is new again. This Easter, I will be attending Sunrise Service on the little hill behind Faith UMC near the three crosses followed by breakfast served by the Methodist Men. It's almost Easter. I hope you can plan to celebrate with your church family and friends. And, be sure to enjoy a CHOCOLATE Easter egg!

