

Many events led to Arthur's founding in 1873

Michael Hoblican Warren was born in 1820 as part of a family of nine who first emigrated from Virginia to Ohio, and later became a resident of Moultrie County on May 19, 1859. He purchased land in Jonathan Creek Township to farm, and approximately 80 acres upon which the west half of Arthur is now located.

When the Paris and Decatur railroad was being built, Warren owned the parcel of land in Moultrie County of what was to become Arthur. The area in Douglas County was donated by Pendleton Murphy.

Warren may have founded Arthur on Sept. 2, 1873, but there were many events leading up to that important day.

Pre-1873

The land that became Illinois has been inhabited by people for thousands of years. Before European immigrants arrived in Illinois, the land was inhabited by a number of Native American tribes including the Illini, which was a confederation made up of around twelve different tribes.

Not until 1673 did the first Europeans arrive in Illinois. This land became part of the United States after the Revolutionary War and was made part of the Northwest Territory in 1787. Illinois then became a State in 1818, fifty-five years before the founding of Arthur.

So, although the history of Illinois' exploration by the French and British began in the seventeenth century, the central portions of the region were not significantly explored until the nineteenth century. In part this was due to the lack of navigable waterways in the area, but also because there was an excess of land available to the early settlers of our country.

Early settlers had the misconception that only land that

grew forests of trees was the most fertile. As a result, the truly most fertile lands of our nation, the prairies, were bypassed until later when waves of immigrants began to fill in the gaps of the frontier and the steel plow had made cutting the tough prairie sod easier.

Our region of Illinois was open prairie covered by prairie grasses which was broken up by groves of oak, hickory, and maple trees along the waterways. The particular area in which Arthur now lies was marsh-like, especially when the spring rains came, and was called the Big Slough by the early settlers who came from nearby settlements to hunt and trap.

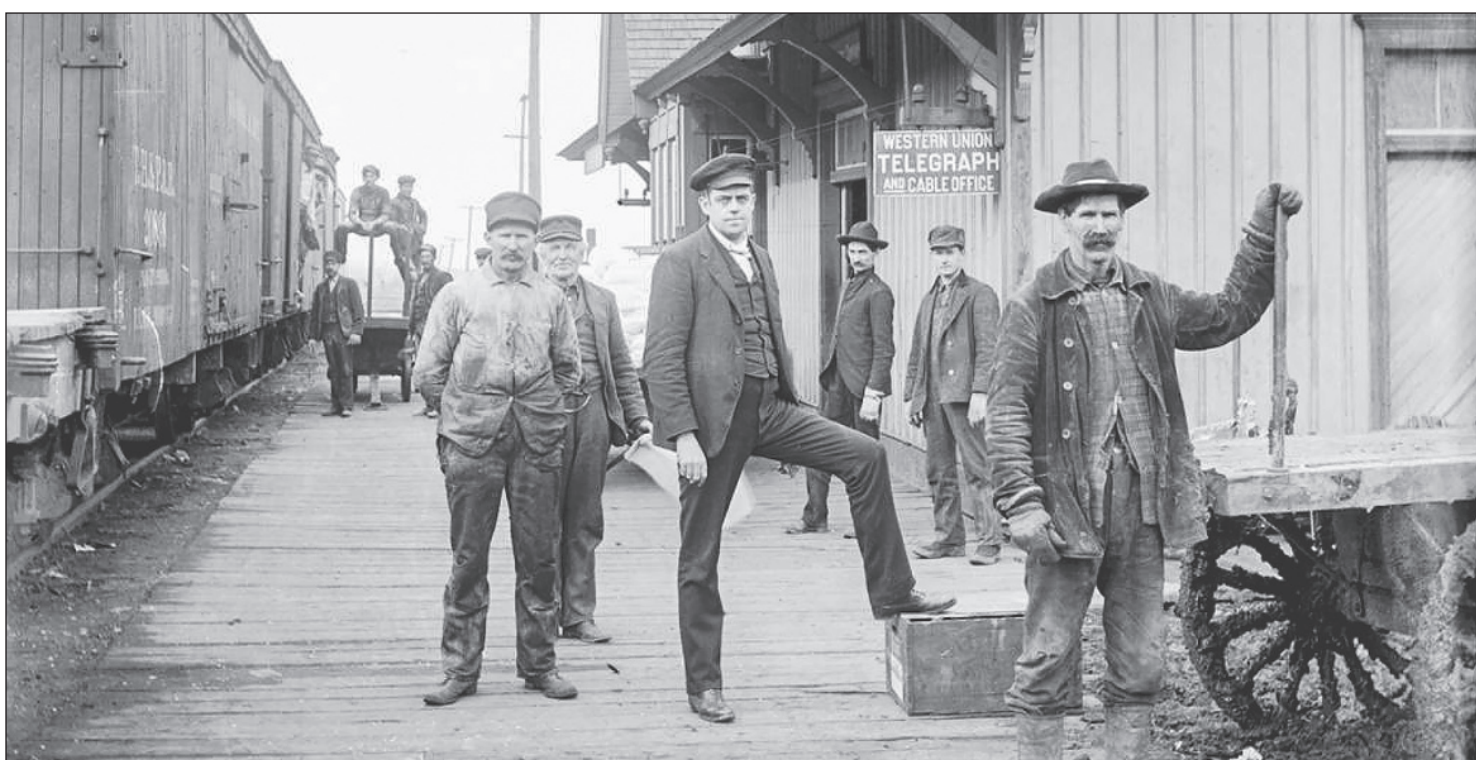
These settlements were connected by a few cross-country trails that would weave back and forth along higher dry ground and over hills and bluffs next to streams.

The territory west of the Kaskaskia River later became known as West Prairie, a name with more appeal than being called the Big Slough.

The first settlers came to this area in the early 1830's. The first recorded family of the area was George DeHart and his sons Samuel and Lucas. George was the railroad roadmaster for Coles County and this was part of his territory. Douglas County was not formed until 1859 as the result of a split off from Coles County.

Other early families were named Campbell, Gruelle, Jones, and Chandler. Malden Jones moved into the area in 1840 and became one of the wealthiest men in Bourbon Township. He was elected to the State Legislature in 1864 and 1866 and knew Abraham Lincoln.

However, population growth at this time remained slow until a better mode of transportation than walking or navigating small rivers came to the area.



The Union Depot was used by two railroads. It was located on west side of Vine Street between the two tracks systems. Each had a separate telegrapher office and freight storage room. They shared a common passenger waiting room on west side of building. This photo was taken on south side of building and was used by Paris and Decatur, (the original railroad that came through in 1872) or Terre Haute to Peoria, Vandalia Line, Illinois Midland, Pennsylvania. The railroad changed hands many times.

The influence of the railroad

As with many towns across the heartland of America, the railroads played an important role in their founding and development. In 1850 a Congressional land grant was made to the Illinois Central Railroad who, in 1856, completed a railway from Chicago to Centralia.

Almost overnight, small towns and villages sprung up about every five miles along the railroad. The town most influencing the West Prairie, as the area was called that encompassed what would later become Arthur, was Arcola. From there trappers and woodsmen, along with settlers who would later build the farms that made Arthur possible, filtered into the West Prairie.

In 1870 the area was excited about news that a railroad going

east to west from Paris to Decatur, Illinois was going to be built, and on October 25, 1872 the first train wended its way over a track laid on the ground except where grades were necessary to keep it out of the water.

Steam locomotives of the time had to make frequent stops to refill their boilers with water. The first water tank location going west out of Arcola was called Chesterville. Then going on another five miles it became necessary to have a passing track, so one was built near a road that had been laid out running at right angles with the track. The road started nowhere and ended nowhere, but there were those who said it was the county line.

The railroad president, a Canadian entrepreneur, Robert Glasford Hervey, named this passing track Glasgow, probably in honor of his family's ancestral

home of Glasgow, Scotland. Now with a railroad running east and west, and a road running north and south, there was talk of a town.

Early settlers from Lowe Township began moving their homes up to the tracksides. They petitioned for a post office in the name of Glasgow, but were informed there was already a Glasgow, Illinois. So, the railroad president, Robert Hervey renamed the passing track "Arthur" in honor of his youngest brother, James Henry Arthur Hervey.

Michael Warren and Pendleton Murphy, who owned the land nearest the track on the Douglas County side, platted out the original town in 1872. Warren entered the plat with Moultrie County for the establishment of the Village of Arthur on September 2, 1873 and deeded over to the Board of Supervisors, "All

the real estate contained in the streets and alleys of the town of Arthur for the use of the public generally."

Warren, who rightfully may be considered the founding father of Arthur, also holds the distinction of raising the largest family in Arthur's history. He fathered four sons and nine daughters, thirteen children in all.

In 1973, during Arthur's Centennial Celebration, the Welcome Center was built to resemble a train depot in homage to the importance of the railroad to Arthur's history. A short distance to the northeast of the Welcome Center was a passenger and freight depot, and across the street to the northwest was a second passenger trains served Arthur daily.

What was it like in Arthur on September 2, 1873?

Weather: The high temperature was 75 degrees with a low of 68 degrees, which was slightly lower than normal. The sky was sunny and clear with no sign of precipitation.

A trip to the general store: Groceries - Wheat \$1.02/bushel, Corn \$.40/bushel, Flour \$3.00/barrel, Molasses \$.15/gallon, Lard \$.06/pound, Butter \$.15/pound, Sugar \$.07/pound, Cheese \$.05/pound, Rice \$.05/pound, Coffee \$.12/pound, Oranges \$.50/dozen.

Dry Goods - Blankets \$3, 6 pary men's socks \$1, 7 yards of blue denim \$1, bleached cotton \$.15/yard, hoop skirt and bustle \$1, lady's gold lock-et \$1.50, silk parasol \$1, men's silver-plated watch \$6.

A trip to the hardware store: Chairs \$1.25 each, Cookstove \$25, Lantern \$1, breach-load-



Stock Brothers ice wagon

ing shotgun \$60, Saddle \$30, Wagon \$65, Buggy \$75.

Three grain offices had opened and approximately 30 new homes had been built or were under construction in Arthur.

Land was selling for \$5 per acre, an average 32-foot by 40-foot, 4-room house would cost \$700 to build, but an average work horse might cost as much as \$150, and a good saddle horse could cost \$200.

The U.S. Flag, often referred to as "Old Glory," had 37 stars.

The unofficial national anthem was "Hail, Columbia." The President of the United States was former Union Civil War General Ulysses S. Grant of Illinois. There were 292 members of the Republican-controlled US House of Representatives.

1873 Coinage: Indian Head Cent; Two-Cent Piece; Three-Cent Silver (Trime); Three-Cent Nickel; Shield 5-Cent Nickel; Liberty Seated Half Dime, Dime, Quarter, Half-Dollar, and Silver Dollar; Silver Trade Dollar; Gold Dollar; \$2 1/2 Gold; \$3 Gold; \$5 Gold; \$10 Gold (Eagle); \$20 Gold (Double Eagle). 17 different coins!

A postage stamp for a half-ounce letter was three cents (Washington). The three-cent silver and nickel coins were useful in purchasing stamps. The \$3 gold coin would buy a sheet of 100 stamps.



INTERIOR VIEW of the Rigby General Store, 118-120 S. Vine St.

Time capsule

Continued from page 1

In 1973, two sizes of envelopes, a \$5 envelope and a \$10 envelope, were sold to the public for placing items in the new time capsule. The money was used to help defray the costs of Arthur's Centennial Celebration.

Stamped on the outside of the envelopes was "Do Not Open until 2023" and, on the front of the envelopes, were hand-written names of those who were to receive these items.

In addition to these envelopes, there are reportedly other items placed inside the time capsule by the Centennial Committee.

From an incomplete listing of items that may be in the time capsule, it is believed there has been something left inside for the following persons or a member of their family:

- Rhonda (Winningham) Aikman
- Jon Aschermann
- Angela Baldwin
- Thomas Baldwin
- Francis Ballard
- Janis Becker
- Richard Bradford
- William & Barb Brown (family)
- Marilyn Sue (Eads) Canupp
- Mary Collins
- Kevin Conlin
- Pat Conlin
- Jake Chupp
- Nancy Clark
- Valerie (Bradford) Cornwell
- Jack Corum
- Carol (Hale) Crist
- Kenneth & Jacqueline Curtis (family)
- De Ann Daily
- Jane Daily
- Gay Davis
- Brett Dillon

- Colene Dillon
- Todd Dukeman
- Van Dukeman
- Terry Ferchow
- Joel Fitzjarrald
- Matthew Fritz
- Cindy Gingerich
- Galen Gingerich
- Jason Gingerich
- Mary Lynn Good
- J C Graham
- Mary Beth Graham
- Cory Green
- James Haney (descendants)
- John & Sue Hansen (family)
- Peggy Harmon
- Gregory Heerd
- Richard Hein
- Orva & Fern Helmut (descendants)
- Dean & Charlene Hendrickson (descendants)
- Carol Herschberger
- Larry Herschberger
- Richard Herschberger
- Eric & Karleen Hilligoss
- David Hoke
- Gene Hoke
- Gordon Hoke
- Justin Hood

- Gale Hopkins
- Ann Huffman
- Jeff Hutchcraft
- Mark Jones
- Doug Jurgens (children, Christie & Kimberly)
- Steve & Joyce Jurgens
- Ron Jurgens (family)
- Albert & Anna Kauffman (descendants)
- Angela Kauffman
- Debbie Kauffman
- Linda Keiss
- C W Kinney
- Danny Kuhns
- Howard Kuhns
- Paul Knobloch
- Judy (Willoughby) Kondrup
- Mr & Mrs Elmer Lash
- Rebecca Laughead
- Eric Lauterjung
- Sally (Stock) McCarthy
- Bill McCord
- David McDonald
- Doug McDonald
- Becky Miller
- Kim Miller
- Lorene Miller
- Chad B. Morris
- Bruce Oye

- Karen Oye
- Lynnette Oye
- Kerry Pate
- Linda Perrine
- Deanne Petty
- Paul Petty
- Robin Petty
- James Plank
- Kay Plummer
- Larry Plummer
- Floyd & Leta Reeves
- Kelly Roberts
- Kenneth Roberts
- Jeff Rohrer
- John Schrock
- Jonas Schrock (family)
- Michelle Schrock
- Michelle (McDonald) Schrock
- Omer Schrock
- Christina Schultz
- Mary Lisa Schultz
- Sandy Snyder
- Cheryl (Hale) Sweet
- Geneva Taylor (family)
- Robert Eugene Taylor, Jr
- Tony Taylor
- Dave Tiffan
- Rhonda Trower
- Leann Tulley

- Melodi Walker
 - Tanya Walker
 - Marilyn Watkins (family)
 - Richard Wetherell
 - Virgil & Wileva Williams (family)
 - Steve Willoughby
 - Martha Yeakel
 - Bernadine Yoder
 - Ervin Yoder
 - Kathy Yoder
 - Nathan Yutzy
 - MISCELLANEOUS:**
 - Arthur Church of Christ
 - Arthur Mennonite Church
 - Arthur United Methodist Church
 - Boy Scout Troop 74
 - First Baptist Church
 - Moultrie County Historical Society
 - State Bank of Arthur
 - Vine Street Christian Church
 - Zion United Church of Christ
- This list may contain maiden names, the names of the deceased, omissions, and a single envelope may include several family member names. There is no guarantee as to the accuracy of this list.