

RANGEFINDER

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PERRYVILLE IS YOUR LABORATORY FOR A WEEK

Experiment with new ways of telling stories

By Duane Dailey
Co-Director Emeritus

Enter Perryville, Mo., with an open mind and an inquiring eye. Your challenge: Show us this town as it truly exists. This week you will learn to apply documentary photojournalism in your reporting.

That means you must not taint Perryville with preconceptions of what a small town should look like. Don't bring your notions of how small town folks engage with one another.

Your job: Observe and report how it is; not how you think it should be.

Of course, you can't rid yourself of previous experiences. Those influence how you see. But, be aware of what you bring. Strive to be open.

Most of all, you must be honest in reporting what you see here, this week. It won't be like any town you know. Look for differences. Learn to recognize those differences.

Collectively, gather photographs that give insights across the social, demographic, and economic levels of this one town in Missouri in 2015.

That requires serious local investigation before you decide on a story. At your first meeting with your faculty, they will ask what you have seen and learned. What intrigued you about this place, these people? Start your research now. Know the town, before you decide on a story to represent the town.

Don't bring a story idea here; unless you have done serious research before arrival.

Your challenge will be to find an interesting situation that represents some aspect of Perryville and nearby farmscape.



Josh Bachman Photograph

Stories can be dynamic or quiet and sublime.

You can hypothesize about what you'll find. But, test that hypothesis against reality. Trust your eyes. Don't be fooled by your own mind. Look deeply. Talk with an inquiring mind to many sources. Don't assume. Don't jump to conclusions. You're a reporter with a camera seeking facts.

This is a workshop in honest reporting. It is not make believe. It's not nostalgic wishful thinking. You have a real job to do.

Together we will snip a week of history out of Perryville. Let us do it well, with honest observations of life. Keep in mind all social, political and economic changes happening nationally. How are those dynamics reflected locally? If you bring fresh eyes, you will astound us -- and the people of Perryville. Seek truth with a camera. It's not easy. Subjects can fool you. In fact, they will! Worse, you can fool yourself. I look forward to seeing this town as you and your camera report it. I hope to see photos that make me gasp. Make me laugh. Or, touch my heart. There will be gritty, beautiful, and emotional moments to capture. Be ready. Learn from every moment.

This week, we will advance the art and craft of photojournalism. We can redefine it. It happens.

It will be intense. It will be utterly exhausting. But, don't forget to enjoy and share your joy. Be willing to change. If you leave unchanged, making photos as you did before, we will have failed you.

Just the Facts

compiled by Louise Hemmerlé and Michael Cali

- 93.6% of Perryville residents are white
- More than half the population is married (53%)
- No homicides in either 2012 and 2013
- Unemployment rate 5.2%
- Manufacturing is the number one industry in Perryville
- Perryville voters tend to vote Republican
- Only one resident identifies as religious but not Christian
- Forbes magazine described Perryville as a "manufacturing oasis"
- The longest cave in the state of Missouri, Crevice Cave (28.2 miles) is located in Perry County
- Education: according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 84.1 percent of the population older than 25 has a high school graduate or a higher degree ; 14.5 percent has a bachelor's degree or higher
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, from 2009 to 2013, the proportion of the population in Perryville living below poverty level amounted to 18.2 percent

A LITTLE HISTORY

Third Time's a Charm



David Rees Photograph

By **Michael Cali** - Rangefinder staff

After the formation of Perry County in 1821, there was a two-story wooden building used for all county business. That was sufficient for a county of roughly 3000 people, according to U.S. Decennial Census 1790-1960. In 1825, however, a contract was won for the first county courthouse by Bernard Layton and had a price tag of about \$1,500, according to the MU Extensions website.

While no illustrations of the first structure exist, it is agreed upon that it was probably a simple building made of wood or wood and brick. The project was completed in August of 1826 and was located on the Northeast corner of the town square.

By the year 1859, the population was nearing 10,000 people and more space was needed. To satisfy this need, the court approved a \$8,000 budget for a new courthouse. The

building was completed and remained in use past the turn of the 20th century but a grand jury decided that the building was beyond repair and it was shut down.

In 1903, a \$30,000 bond issue was put in front of the voters for a new courthouse. The voters approved the issue on September 1 and J.W. Gaddis was selected to build it.

The new courthouse was completed on June 4, 1904 and is the 65-by-92-foot brick building that is still in use today. One of its most prominent features is its clock tower. Perry County Circuit Clerk Beckey Paulus has been working in the building for 17 years. "The clocktower is very cool," she said. "From the top of [it] you can see almost all the way to the Missouri Bottoms where the river is."

While the courthouse is a historic building, it has been without a renovation for years, according to Paulus. "We are working with a decor from the 1950s," she said, "We would like to see it updated but there is not a lot of funding."

• **Business** : Out of the 919 firms located in Perryville, the U.S. Census Bureau calculated in 2007 that 18.8 percent were owned by women

• In Perryville, "It is unlawful for any person to injure or destroy any kind of bird within the city or to throw stones, shoot at or use any implements with the intention of killing or injuring any bird within the city" (Ord. 3668 § 1 (part), 1998: prior code § 6-110)

• The Faherty House, located at 11 S. Spring Street, was originally constructed by Henry Burns in 1825 as a two-room stone house with a basement. It is thought to be the oldest remaining residence in the city. A brick, two-room addition to the house was built in the 1850's. The house also stands on one of the original town lots of Perryville. The restored house features a circa 1830-1890 exterior and interior and is owned and maintained by the Perry County Historical Society

Go Team...

The Missouri Photo Workshop is a vibrant community of photographers and editors; it continues to evolve, following the ideals and goals of these former faculty and co-directors.

In its 67-year history thousands of photographers have been served by those who want to "help grow" the next generation.

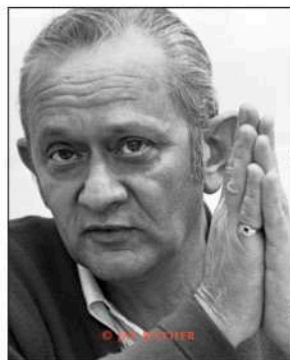


Russell Lee
2-8,10,11,13-16,28,29



Helen Klisser During Photograph

Bill Eppridge
MPW 16, 21, 27, 28-45



Jay Mather Photograph

Howard Chapnick
MPW 18, 20-22, 24-28,
30, 33-35, 40, 44



Bruce Dale Photograph

Bob Gilka
MPW 6-9, 11, 14,
16-17, 20, 22, 24-32,
34-36, 40, 42, 46



Bob Linder Photograph

Cliff & Vi Edom
MPW Founders 1949
Co-Directors 1-38

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WEATHER FORECAST

TOMORROW



77 ° / 49 °

TUESDAY



79 ° / 52 °

WEDNESDAY



80 ° / 56 °

RANGEFINDER EDITORS:

MICHAEL CALI

JESSI DODGE

LOUISE HEMMERLÉ

ADVISORY FACULTY:

RANDY COX

DAVID REES

CORRESPONDENT AT LARGE:

DUANE DAILEY



The Colonnade Room

This quonset hut, surplus from WWII, was erected in 1949 as the American Legion Hall in Perryville. It is used now for dances and wedding parties - and this week for the Missouri Photo Workshop. Inspiration for its current name came from some Perryvillians who heard it on a TV show and liked it, according to LeAnn Lowes, Legion administrator.

Jim Curley Photograph