



# Kirkwood Historical Society

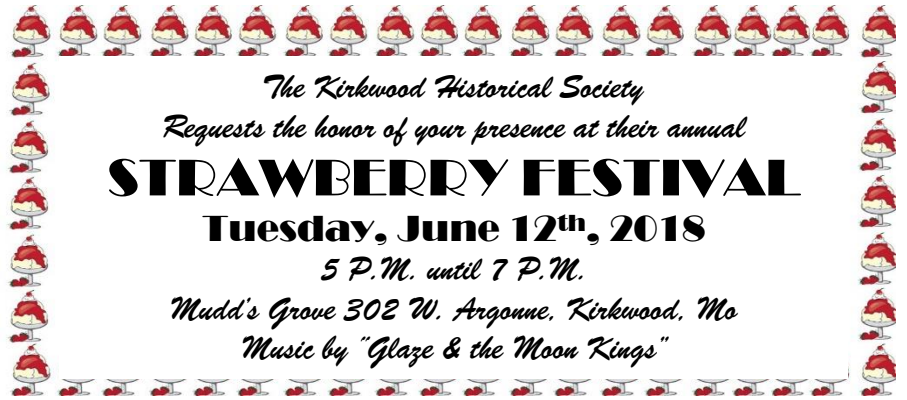
At Mudd's Grove. 302 West Argonne Kirkwood MO 63122

JUNE 2018



## Notable Dates in June:

- June 6<sup>th</sup> - D-Day.
- June 12<sup>th</sup> - Annual Strawberry Festival.
- June 14<sup>th</sup> - Flag Day.
- June 17<sup>th</sup> - Father's Day.
- June 21<sup>st</sup> - First Day of Summer.



*The Kirkwood Historical Society*  
*Requests the honor of your presence at their annual*  
**STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL**

**Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

*5 P.M. until 7 P.M.*

*Mudd's Grove 302 W. Argonne, Kirkwood, Mo*

*Music by "Glaze & the Moon Kings"*

*The following article appeared in the June 1982 issue of the "Kirkwood Historical Review." Credit: Francis M. Barnes, III, editor. This past May, 2018, marks the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Historic Missouri Pacific Railroad Station in downtown Kirkwood. Originally appeared in MoPac Power by (late) Joe G. Collias. Copyright 1980 Howell-North Books.*

## KIRKWOOD HILL

The "hill" was torment and a sty in the eye of the operations department. It was a mistake by the road's first directors and a scourge ever after until the day of electric traction motors and throbbing V-16 diesels.

Kirkwood Hill so named after the suburban city located at its crest, is actually a ridge between the Des peres and meramec River Valleys just west of St. Louis, Mo. Were it not for that ridge MoPac would have a low level freight line the entire 288 miles between St. Louis and Kansas City with grades of no more than 0.5 per cent maximum, and there for only short intervals. The "hill" as it is appropriately referred to, has grades of one per cent in both directions for a distance of approximately five miles on either side of the crest. In the days of big steam operations the MoPac's rebuilt 2010 series 4-8-4's, a prime freight mover on the Eastern Division, were allowed a whopping 7250 tons on the water level miles west of Kirkwood only to have this rating trimmed to 3150 and 2975 tons unassisted on the westward and eastward ascents only.

It only took two years after the completion of the pioneer Pacific Railroad for the directors to realize the choice of a route over the dividing ridge was a serious error, serious enough to cause resignation of the railroad's first president. Early surveys and the one desired by the railroad's first Chief Engineer, Mr. James P.

Kirkwood, recommended a route out of St. Louis along the north fork of the Des peres River to Creve Coeur Lake and thence along the Missouri River west to Jefferson City. Due to personal desires of land interests and the influence of riverboat operators, the advice of Mr. Kirkwood went unheeded and the choice of the Meramec River route was made in spite of the advantages of the all Missouri River route. Ironically, some years later a branch line was built over the very same route Mr. Kirkwood surmised as far as Creve Coeur Lake. Referred to as the Chapman Branch, it was for many years a popular excursion train route to take for a leisurely Sunday afternoon outing.

As the reader may have surmised, the city of Kirkwood was named after Chief Engineer James P. Kirkwood, even though he preferred to avoid the area. Before the coming of the railroad and the subsequent renaming it was termed simply "the Des Peres post office." It is fitting that Mr. Kirkwood be remembered in this manner although the surveying of the MoPac's route was perhaps secondary to a greater achievement for which he is less remembered, the construction of the great Starucca masonry viaduct for the Erie Railroad in 1847.

Railroadwise, Kirkwood consisted of a double track main line with a long center passing track, team tracks, a freight house and a two story interlocking plant that controlled the maze of switches. Until the decline of steam powered suburban service to St. Louis there existed a short turntable and service tracks for turning the Ten-wheelers that brought to commuters home from their chores in the big city 13 miles distant. Dominating all of this was the substantial stone depot which stands today under the protective custody of the Kirkwood Historical Society. Train action was frequent and seldom lacking in activity. If nothing else were in sight there was invariably a hulking 2-10-2 helper engine

lurking in the siding waiting to drop downgrade to assist the next through freight back up grade.

The use of helpers on the hill was an irregular and infrequent operation until the arrival of the 1900 series Berkshire engines in 1930. With their ability to move much heavier tonnage trains over the entire division it became both a necessity and an advantage to employ helpers to get the increased train lengths over the hill, a practice continued until the demise of steam. The 2-10-2's of original Iron Mountain parentage the 1701-14 were used most frequently for this service until the ex-Wabash engines of the same wheel arrangement were purchased and employed almost exclusively at Kirkwood Hill as helper engines.

West bound freights leaving the St. Louis yards had both road engines and helper alike coupled on. Speed was a thundering 45 – 50 miles until the bottom of the westward ascent was reached about eight miles west at Lake Junction where the Chapman Branch to Creve Coeur Lake veered off. From here to Kirkwood the exhausts a pounding off-again, on-again beat as the two machines crawled up grade. This side of the grade was sometimes referred to as the “boulevard” in observance of the many large suburban homes with well kept lawns backing up to the right of way. With many an official of the railroad residing in those same houses it was no surprise to see the well trimmed hedgerows and even flower beds separating the two.

Upon reaching Kirkwood the helper was either uncoupled while the road engine took water or was cut off on the run, a practice management would not admit to but which was repeated daily as the head brakeman descended to the tender's rear footboards and “pulled the pin” whereupon the helper charged ahead and down the descending grade to the safety of a passing track. The road engine, having tipped over the summit and with 100 or more freight cars pushing increasingly harder at the drawbar, soon slammed past gaining speed quickly on the curving downgrade.

Operations on the west side of the hill were as different as the scenery. Whereas the cuts and fills on the east ascent were, and are, tempered somewhat by the well tended look of closely built residences, the rugged terrain that slowed the early builders of the road were clearly visible on the west slope. High fills, deep limestone cuts and constantly curving rails overshadowed by towering Missouri post oaks set the rugged scene. It was rugged enough to force the early builders to bore through two ridges of solid rock resulting in two separate tunnels, one 630 feet long, and the other 440 feet. The approaches to both were through solid rock cuts up to 50 feet in depth. Due primarily to their existence the busy double track main line narrowed to a single track three miles west of Kirkwood and once west of the tunnels again became double track at a spot termed Lake Hill Junction. Clearances within these early built tunnels were none to generous and indeed actually limited the overall size of steam motive

power on the MoPac. The 2201 series 4-8-4's cleared the roof of the easternmost tunnel with their smokestacks by as little as 6-1/4 inches, while cab side clearances were a minimum 8-1/4 inches. These restrictive confines when combined with the hot smoke and gasses of a double header of big steam power down on its hands and knees climbing the one percent grade made a veritable hades for engine crews. Well imbedded in the writer's memory is the experience of being half way through one of the tunnels, a daring feat decided upon in lieu of struggling through the thick underbrush during a hike along the route, and having a passenger extra downgrade thunder into the entrance. Flattened into one of the extra wide niches expressly located for such emergencies, it seemed an eternity before the roaring steel cars ceased passing only inches away.

An interesting sidelight on the restrictive dimensions of these tunnels was the fact that while MoPac power was designed with a relatively flattened cab roof with the tunnels in mind, the steam power of the Frisco Railroad, whose rails generally paralleled the MoPac's own as far as Pacific, Mo. Were more of an arched shape and generous height. Consequently when a wreck occurred in the paralleling area of trackage and trains of one road were detoured over the other as indeed did occur, the Frisco could not operate their 1500 passenger series 4-8-2's through these tunnels and hence would doublehead the heavier trains with two smaller 4-6-2's which were exchanged for the one larger 1500 class engine sent to Pacific for that purpose. The doubleheader of the 4-6-2's then repeated the operation with the next detouring eastbound run.

All these restrictions were eliminated in 1944 when the tunnels were bypassed by excavating new and deeper rock cuts immediately alongside the bores, double tracking and elimination of the restrictive single track also took place at the same time. The National Museum of Transport now sits firmly astride the old single track right of way and the Barrett Station Tunnels are one of their more permanent exhibits.

Our helper engine having followed its long gone freight train downgrade, would take shelter on a spur track a mile west of valley Park, Mo. To await an eastbound freight which would run by and then stop. The helper, having no way to turn around, would then couple tender first to the caboose and after an exchange of whistling with the road engine to signify all was in readiness, would begin the push to Kirkwood. On a cold, crisp winters eve with a wind from the west, their coming could be heard all the way to the summit at Kirkwood as they burst in and out of the tunnels and rock cuts.

Steam is long gone from the hill, as is the freight house, the turntable and the multitude of crossovers and their guardian watchtower. The old stone depot watches over two rows of all welded rails carrying powerful EMD and GE diesels that roar by seemingly unmindful of what

once was. The hill is still the “hill” however and through helper service is a forgotten operation and the speed of the big units over the crest of the hill engenders respect from even the most diehard steam lover there are still times when the trio of units are down on their hands and knees and the incessant roar of their engines can be heard for a long time echoing off the limestone rock cuts before they top the summit, Mopac will long regret that mr. Kirkwood’s advice went unheeded.

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**PROUDLY DISPLAY  
THE UNITED STATES  
FLAG!**

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June 17th - The Kirkwood Historical Society wishes a Happy Father’s Day to all Dad’s to be, Dad’s, Granddad’s and all. Enjoy your special day.

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June 21<sup>st</sup> – Now that summer is officially here and the kids are out of school, thoughts turn to summer vacation. Stay safe and travel with care.

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*FOUR WINDS  
GARDEN CLUB*

A huge vote of thanks to the following members of the Four Winds Garden Club for helping to make Mudd's Gro'e Beautiful. Very special thanks to Carol Ann Miller who spearheaded this event, Joe Godi who oversaw and directed the work and very special thanks to Helen Knocke who opened up the Gatehouse Gift Shop and made a number of sales to our gardeners. Your hard work and dedication are appreciated by all. The following named individuals took part in this event:

Mike Blackford  
Joan Davis  
Mary Alice Engelhard

Leah Haller  
Ginger Johnson  
Roni Pigeon  
Deborah Rogers  
Joan Schaper  
Pat Tomeczco  
Gaynell Tully

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Trees  
By Joyce Kilmer

*I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.*

*A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
Against the earth's sweet flowing  
breast,*

*A tree that looks at God all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;*

*A tree that may in Summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;*

*Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.*

*Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.*

The musical setting for this poem is as beautiful as the poem itself.

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#### HEAT SAFETY:

The long, hot days of summer can bring dangerously high temperatures. The American Red Cross has steps people can follow to stay safe when it's hot outside.

**HOT CARS CAN BE DEADLY** Never leave children or pets in your vehicle. The inside temperature of the car can quickly reach 120 degrees. Other heat safety steps include:

- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.
- Slow down, stay indoors and avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day.
- Postpone outdoor games and activities.
- Use a buddy system when working in excessive heat. Take frequent breaks if working outdoors.
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat.
- Check on animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat. Make sure they have plenty of cool water.
- If someone doesn't have air conditioning, they should choose places to go to for relief from the

heat during the warmest part of the day (schools, libraries, theaters, malls).

**HEAT EXHAUSTION** Excessive heat can lead to sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. If someone is experiencing heat cramps in the legs or abdomen, get them to a cooler place, have them rest, lightly stretch the affected muscle, and replenish their fluids with a half a glass (about 4 ounces) of cool water every 15 minutes.

If someone is exhibiting signs of heat exhaustion (cool, moist, pale or flushed skin, heavy sweating, headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness exhaustion), move them to a cooler place, remove or loosen tight clothing and spray the person with water or apply cool, wet cloths or towels to the skin. Fan the person. If they are conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Watch for changes in condition. If the person refuses water, vomits or begins to lose consciousness, call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.

**HEAT STROKE LIFE-THREATENING.** Signs include hot, red skin which may be dry or moist; changes in consciousness; vomiting and high body temperature. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number immediately if someone shows signs of heat stroke. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the person's body by immersing them up to their neck in cold water if possible. Otherwise, douse or spray the person with cold water, or cover the person with cold, wet towels or bags of ice.

For more information on what to do when temperatures rise, download the free [Red Cross Emergency App](#). The app also gives users the option to receive alerts for excessive heat watches, warnings and heat advisories.

Source: Red Cross.

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