



Ferguson Has a History Museum

Ferguson has a Historical Society and a History Museum. We encourage any people reading this article to join in the conversation or become a member. Contact information is at the bottom of this article.



This is the History House of the Ferguson Historical Society – our museum and Archives. On Saturday, June 8th, between 10 AM and 4 Pm, we held our open house with an 11:00 AM reception for a 50-year member and key historian, Ruth Bindbeutel Brown. It was a wonderful afternoon with over 60 people in attendance. This month's article will fill you in on that day, in case some readers may have missed it.



In case you do not know Ruth Brown, to the left is a photo of her coming into the open house, meeting some of her many old friends. You have probably seen Ruth if you have visited the Farmers' Market or any of many civic affairs. She may have been a speaker on the history of Ferguson at a meeting you may have attended. To say that Ruth is Mrs. Ferguson History is not an overstatement. But more on Ruth later in the article.

The Ferguson Historical Society is a member of Historic Saint Louis – an association of 25 area historic sites, museums and houses that are open to the public. As a group, Historic StL holds an open house in both the Summer and the Winter. June 8th was the Summer open house for all 25 members, including the Ferguson History House.

The open house began at 10:00 AM with a table full of cookies, vegetables, lemonade, and (eventually) a cake. Also included were items for purchase: notecards, coffee mugs and copies of *Ferguson: A City Remembered* (edited primarily by Ruth) and some free handouts. As people began to gather, they were free to visit the many exhibits of Ferguson history on display or to just talk among each other.

The theme of the day for all 25 open houses was “A Summertime Past”. Appropriate for the History House which was built in the 1960’s as housing for the nuns serving the Good Sheperd Catholic Church. The restored 1950’s kitchen was a high point of the display along with the patio area highlighting 1950’s era lawn furniture.



President of FHS, welcoming everyone and giving a brief biography of Ruth Brown and her 50-years of service to FHS. FHS was founded in 1972 and sisters, Ruth and Mary, have been part of it since it’s early days. Both sisters came from a well-known Ferguson family, the Bindbuetels. Frederick Bindbuetel moved to Ferguson in 1888 and founded Bindbuetel Market as well as the Bank of Ferguson (now UMB). The building across the street from UMB is the Bindbuetel Building.

Both women graduated from Ferguson High School. Following college, Ruth taught art in the Ferguson-Florissant School District. Along with being a teacher, Ruth was also an accomplished artist who was instrumental in the layout and design of the current History House Displays. Both women married and raised their families in Ferguson. Ruth married another well-known, long-time Ferguson family name, William Brown. Most people know him as



It was a beautiful day both inside and out.

The ceremony for Ruth (and her sister, Mary Amrein, who was unable to attend) began at 11:00 with Mary Haux,



“Gunner” a man who also taught in Ferg-Flor and was instrumental in the Ferguson Farmer’s Market. Gunner passed a few years ago.



There were individual comments from several in the audience. Left is Erica Brooks, who talked of the work she and Ruth had done for the 100th anniversary celebration of Central School. On the right is Bev Proost, board member, who spoke of the years of friendship and work with the historical society. Others spoke of Ruth’s dedication to the City of Ferguson and her years of historical presentations.



Following this introduction, everyone moved from the main gallery to the archive room for the formal presentation to Ruth. Both Ruth and Mary were awarded emeritus status – we hope that both will come back many times without the burden of having to work.

A special presentation was made for Ruth and her years of service in the collection of documents and artifacts – the organization of these tens-of-thousands of items – and the storage needed. The archiving room was named, “Ruth Bindbeutel Brown Archiving Room”. Ruth, along with the entire audience, was quite moved by the surprise. Best of all – Ruth no longer has to do the hard work, just enjoy the glory.

It was the end of a beautiful day for all involved.



Membership in the Ferguson Historical Society is open to anyone – membership levels range from \$20.00 to \$50.00 a year. If you are interested in joining or have any suggestions, questions, or items to donate to the Ferguson

Historical Society, please contact Jerry Benner at fjbenner@mindspring.com. You are also welcome to visit the History Museum at 1064 Smith (behind the Community Center) by e-mailing the above address. Note: we will need to schedule a date for you, so ask well in advance

“The Ferguson Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of Ferguson Missouri. Membership is open to all sharing our interest.”