



CITY OF MT. VERNON
1100 MAIN CITY HALL
MT. VERNON, ILLINOIS 62864

618/242-5000
FAX 618/244-0746

L&N Water Tower Project Summary Report

November 21, 2024

The historic L&N Water Tower, a tin man-type structure erected in 1914 with a capacity of 150,000 gallons, was dismantled earlier this year. A new water tower is being constructed at the same location, continuing to serve the vital needs of the community.

To preserve the legacy of the original tower, the City of Mt. Vernon supported the creation of a permanent exhibit at the Jefferson County Historical Village. The exhibit features four significant pieces of the water tower: a section of a supporting column or leg, part of the uptake pipe, a piece of the catwalk, and the vent top. The City funded the installation, which included concrete work, four interpretive message boards, benches, a bicycle rack, and landscaping to ensure the exhibit is accessible and engaging for a wider audience.

The exhibit was unveiled during the Jefferson County Historical Society's annual Heritage Festival on Saturday, October 5, 2024. Promotion for the event was conducted using a variety of platforms:

- *This Week in Mt. Vernon* newsletter, sent to 730 recipients.
- Email notification to subscribers of the city's website newsletters.
- Notifications via the My Mt. Vernon mobile app.
- Event listing on enjoymtvernon.com.
- Flyers were distributed to 30 locations, including hotels and attractions.
- Social media posts on the Enjoy Mt. Vernon, Mt. Vernon IL Festivals, and City of Mt. Vernon Facebook pages.

This project ensures that an iconic piece of Mt. Vernon's history remains preserved for future generations.

L&N WATER TOWER



These pieces are from the 1914 Tin Man type water tower which was located near the L&N Reservoir. A few elements of the water tower were preserved for this historical exhibit when in 2024 it became necessary to replace the aging tower.

The L & N Water Tower was a riveted steel structure with six support columns, a riser, a water tank and a conical roof. The estimated height was 150 feet.

*Photographs are from the *Historical Resource Review of the Mt. Vernon L&N Elevated Water Storage Tank*.

SUPPORTING COLUMNS



There were 6 columns, or legs, supporting the water tank.

Each leg consisted of 3 approximately 32 feet 6 inch long segments.

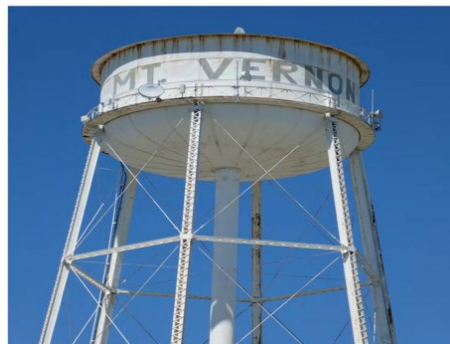
Each segment consisted of 2 - 12 inch wide angled steel beams connected by riveted steel lattice work.

UPTAKE PIPE



Water for the tank was pumped through this uptake pipe. At the time, the tower was first erected the water came from the adjacent L & N Reservoir. When that source became inadequate to supply the growing city of Mt. Vernon, J.C. Lake and Miller Lake north of Mt. Vernon were constructed. After 1972, the water came from Rend Lake.

WATER TANK



The water tank held 150,000 gallons of water and was 25 feet tall and 34 feet in diameter. It was encircled by a catwalk balcony.

'Mt. Vernon' was painted in black block letters twice around the tank. It was topped with a 5 foot high conical cap.

Jefferson County Historical Society

Heritage Festival

2024



Food & Food Vendors

Ham & beans, pulled pork sandwiches, hotdogs, desserts, kettle corn, caramels, honey



Demonstrations & Vendors

Baskets, blacksmiths, woodcarving, black powder guns, spinning, antique tractors, hatchet throwing, crafts, dulcimers, Amateur Radio Club, and Old Coats Advice



Children

Giant pumpkins, stuffed pet adoption, old fashioned games, pig racing game

Jefferson County Historical Village
1411 N. 27th St. Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

618-246-0033

jchsvip14@gmail.com

historicjeffersoncountyil.com

Saturday,
October 5
10 AM - 4 PM

Special Event
**Unveiling of Water
Tower Display**
10 AM

Sponsor



Co-Sponsors

Kevin & Cheryl Settle

Roberts Financial Group



Jefferson County Historical Society
1411 North 27th Street
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
618-246-0033
jcshvip14@gmail.com
www.historicjeffersoncountylvil.com

Contact:

Dana Uhls, Community Relations Specialist
618.315.0148
danaluhls@gmail.com

Date: September 25, 2024

For Immediate Release:

**Heritage Festival at the JCHS Historical Village on
Saturday October 5th, 10am to 4pm**

The JCHS will celebrate the history and tradition of Jefferson County and surrounding areas by giving demonstrations of how things were done in the past. The historical society has been hosting the Heritage Festival since the early 1990's. All buildings and cabins at the Historical Village will be open for tours. Food, crafts, and home goods will be available for purchase. The Village is located at 1411 N. 27th Street in Mt. Vernon, IL.

Food and food vendors will include ham and beans, pulled pork sandwiches, hotdogs, desserts, kettle corn, caramels, and honey.

Demonstrations and craft vendors will include baskets, blacksmiths, old coots' advice, woodcarving, black powder guns, spinning, antique tractors, amateur radios, jewelry, crafts, and dulcimers.

The children's area will include giant pumpkins, stuffed pet adoption, old fashion games, and a pig racing game.

“As part of the Heritage Festival celebration a permanent-outdoor exhibit featuring pieces of the downed L and N Water tower will be opening to the public beginning at 10 am. This is an important part of Mt. Vernon History. The tower stood in Mt. Vernon for over 100 years. It was constructed in 1918 and was taken down earlier this year. The City of Mt. Vernon placed the exhibit at the Village and together with the JCHS invites everyone to come and see it.”, Dana Uhls, JCHS Community Relations Specialist.

The Heritage Festival sponsor is Peoples National Bank. The co-sponsors are Dr. Kevin and Cheryl Settle and Roberts Financial Group.

For more information contact the Jefferson County Historical Society at 618-246-0033.

###

One of the Mount Vernon Hardee's has closed (<https://www.morningsentinel.com/2024/10/31/one-of-the-mount-vernon-hardees-has-closed/>)

Contact Us (<https://www.morningsentinel.com/contact-us/>) E-Editions [Subscribe](#) [Archives](#)
f (<https://www.facebook.com/centraliamorningsentinel/>) ✉ (<mailto:jpeyton@better-newspapers.com>)

(<https://www.morningsentinel.com>)

69 Centralia
RAIN

(<https://www.morningsentinel.com/weather/?zipcode=62801&location=Centralia>)

The water tower lives on – and rises

By Kyle Pruden (<https://www.morningsentinel.com/author/kyle/>) | October 12, 2024 | 0 (<https://www.morningsentinel.com/2024/10/12/the-water-tower-lives-on-and-rises/#respond>)



(<https://bt8550.wixsite.com/max967>)

By Bob Frakes

It Caught My Eye

The Jefferson County Historical Society held its "Heritage Festival" this past Saturday, the 5th. There are several angles here I want to explore. One is a brief history. Candy Luzar, of the JCHS Office and President, explained — A fall festival has been held at the JCHS Village since the first buildings were put in place in the early 1990's. The early festivals were called 'Pioneer Days' and were a two-day event, featuring demonstrations of pioneer crafts such as blacksmithing, spinning, rope making and others. As time went by, the Historical Society changed the name to "Heritage Festival" in order to include activities from other time periods.



I was there for a tent activity for the last few years — "Old coots giving free advice." Fellow "old coot" Gary Price was playing in the Class of 1969/55th reunion golf outing, but others wandered in and out to pick up the slack. Tom Francois was there for awhile, like last year. Carey Lipps stopped in to help out. In addition, several ex-students and locals I know dropped in. This year I promised them a partial solution to their problems on the underside of a card. Turning it over, it read "Make Good Decisions." To a person everyone commented, "That is absolutely right." One person even gave me an idea for next year. You stop by next fall!

ADVERTISING

The JCHS Village is a growing and changing entity. This year, the festival dedicated a new display. You can see in the picture Board Member and Curator Lucy Baker opening a new exhibit — the L&N Water Tower display. It is an interesting story how this came to be. The city had to have a new and larger water tower (and it is coming up as you see) and the best place to put it, by far, was the exact location of the 1914 water tower. The city was asking for a grant to help build the new tower. In order to get the grant, the state had certain conditions concerning the removal of the historic tower. City officials then met with the JCHS to come up with a plan. The result was an outdoor display, which is now in place. The Historical Society was very pleased to partner with the city to be able to add the water tower display to the village.

As mentioned, the tower was built in 1914 to provide water by drawing it from the nearby L&N Reservoir. The L&N thing came from the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, which owned the tracks and ran trains on them at one time. I can recall in the 1950's taking the L&N to St. Louis to change over to the MoPac, Missouri Pacific, for the leg down to the farm at Patterson, Missouri. The train ran through Nashville, Il. and the Metro East area across the river and through the tunnel to Union Station. You switched over for the ride along the Mississippi to then cut down through the Ozarks and over Gad's Hill (where Jesse James pulled his first train robbery) and into Patterson. I was a young fellow and got to enjoy the train rides and the farm, lucky me.

The tower held some 150,000 gallons of water, and when the nearby reservoir became too small to keep up, water was drawn from Jaycee and Miller Lakes, and in 1972 from Rend Lake. There it stood on its six legs for over a century, becoming so common it became somewhat, but never totally, unnoticed. I will say it sure looks odd now to not see it standing there but at least part of it lives on, and a new one is coming up.

The path to it runs behind the village to the west along the creek there and it has been suggested that trail needs to be named. It holds exhibits of several large pieces that have not been able to be saved in their entirety, maybe the "Pieces of History Trail"?

You will find several enjoyable trails at the grounds there and you just might find that area a "garden you could grow in." It is fall with cooler weather, and hopefully some fall colors on the horizon. Why not take my suggestion and venture out and introduce yourself to the JCHS area with an enjoyable and educational stroll. You will find people have poured their hearts into it and the trails are just the start of all what awaits you for your enjoyment and learning.

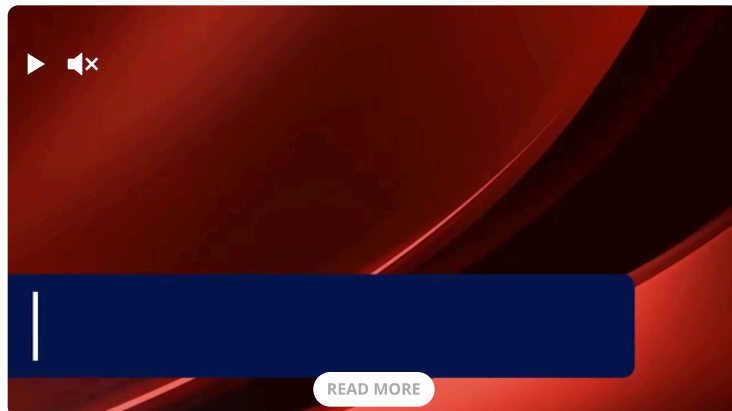
My thanks to the JCHS Office and especially Candy Luzar for providing me with some background for this story. (246-0033/jchsvip14@gmail.com)

It was by the way my 55th graduation anniversary that same weekend. While I was not able to attend many of the activities, I did get some golf in with Terry "TL" Irvin, Paul Hurst, Bruce "DB" LaRue, Jerry Seibert, Jim Carkin, Steve "Lazer" Lacey, Ed Lively, Carey Lipps, Gary Price and Marty Cox. I was in charge of weather for the entire weekend — good job Bob! Good to see y'all.

Questions, comments or answers?

robert_frakes@yahoo.com (mailto:Robert_frakes@Tahoo.com) or [news@morningsentinel.com](http://news.morningsentinel.com)





(<https://bt8550.wixsite.com/max967>)

([/#facebook](#)) ([/#x](#))

(<https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.morningsentinel.com/2024/10/12/the-water-tower-lives-on-and-rises/&title=The%20water%20tower%20lives%20on%20%E2%80%93%20and%20rises%20%E2%80%93%20The%20Sentinel>)

Posted in [Commentary \(https://www.morningsentinel.com/category/centralia/commentary-centralia/\)](https://www.morningsentinel.com/category/centralia/commentary-centralia/), [Commentary \(https://www.morningsentinel.com/category/mt-vernon/commentary-mt-vernon/\)](https://www.morningsentinel.com/category/mt-vernon/commentary-mt-vernon/)