

The History of Keytesville

Although officially organized in 1833, the town of Keytesville has its roots in the small village known as “Old Chariton.” Sitting on the banks of the Chariton and Missouri Rivers, for many years this village served as the center for county business. Repeated river flooding necessitated a location on higher ground. In 1830, Englishman James Keyte, a Methodist preacher and entrepreneur, purchased a large parcel of land. Some two years later he donated fifty acres of it to Chariton County, for the purpose of establishing a centralized seat of county government. James Keyte constructed the first home in Keytesville, as well as the first business—which doubled for some time as the post office. He also constructed a water mill near his home on Mussel Fork Creek. In 1842 Isaac Redding opened Keytesville’s first hotel.

One of the first constructions in the new town was the county courthouse, a brick building which stood until the Civil War, when Confederate raiders burned it in 1864. After the end of the war, a second courthouse was built and served the county until 1973, when it too burned beyond repair. By the 1890s, Keytesville had grown to include two newspapers, two banks, two hotels, a distillery, restaurants, and several merchants. With the Wabash Railroad line over a mile outside of town, transporting goods became an issue, so in 1889 Hugo Bartz and J.J. Moore led construction efforts for a streetcar line that would offer transport for both cargo and people between the town and the rail depot.

Over time, the community of Keytesville has decreased. However, the community retains a strong farming tradition, as well as supporting several local businesses, restaurants, a school, and tourist attractions.

Local Historic Sites

The Log Cabin and Friends of Keytesville Rock Garden

Corner of W. Finnell Drive & N. Park Street

Keytesville Presbyterian Church

Corner of Hill Street & N. Park Street

Keytesville Cemetery

N. Mulberry Street

Price Park with the General Price Monument and Potawatomi Trail of Death Marker

Corner of W. Bridge Street & N. Park Street

Maxwell Taylor Park

Accessible from Vandiver Drive, N. Ash Street,
and N. Water Street

Nearby Areas of Interest

Chariton County Historical Museum

Salisbury, MO

Walt Disney Hometown Museum

Marceline, MO

General John J. Pershing

Home & Museum

Laclede, MO

Swan Lake Wildlife Refuge and Fulbright Museum

Sumner, MO

Check us out on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/gspmuseum

General Sterling Price Museum

Open May 15th to October 15th
Closed Holidays
Monday thru Friday, 2pm to 5pm
412 W. Bridge Street
660-288-3204

Tour Our Two Galleries



The main gallery is divided into several dioramas reflecting life in historic Keytesville. Visitors can tour period exhibits of a parlor, office, bedroom, and kitchen.



Of particular interest is the bedroom display, which includes several items of furniture once belonging to the Price family. Here visitors can look at handwoven bedspreads and an intriguing Victorian hair wreath.

For those curious about the Civil War, the front of the museum features Civil War era flags, tools, uniform accoutrements, and weapons and ammunition. On the walls are several portraits of General Sterling Price along with photographs of his family and a timeline of his life.



Alongside the dioramas, the main gallery also showcases several collections. Bookcases hold many old books, including several family Bibles, some written in German. Visitors can peruse shelves of glassware, including souvenir items from the St. Louis World's Fair, tea sets from England, and Depression glassware. The children's collection includes doll cradles, a child's tea set, and other well-loved toys. The collection of houseware items highlights common household implements, including irons, coffee grinders, sausage stuffers, apple peelers, and wooden butter molds. A small case holds women's jewelry and coin purses, while a larger display highlights delicate fans, composed of various fabrics and feathers.

The second gallery includes some of the museum's more eccentric collections and visitor favorites.

This wing includes an expansive display of arrowheads and other geological samples; a wall display of a button collection compiled and donated by a Keytesville resident; religious artifacts including a traveling preacher's portable



pulpit and an old church pew; school items; and medical equipment and furniture. A series of military uniforms going back to WWI reflects the service of many of Keytesville's men and women. A Victorian winter sleigh fills one corner, complete with bells and heavy lap blankets.



religious artifacts including a traveling preacher's portable



BECOME A FRIEND

The General Sterling Price Museum operates largely on donations and the support of the Friends of Keytesville, Inc. Consider becoming a Friend and help us maintain our town history for future generations. Memberships are available for individuals and couples.