Information Sheet

R Newburg (Mo.).
1203 Photographs, ca. 1870s-1910s.
Forty-one views, copied on 35mm black and white negatives.

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

These are copies of stereoviews, photographs, and postcards from the collection of the William H. Harris family, proprietors of railroad hotels at Dixon in Pulaski County and Newburg in Phelps County, Missouri. Included are views of hotels, businesses, street scenes, and Frisco railroad roundhouses and turntables at Dixon and Newburg.

William Henry Harris was a native of Virginia, born in 1833. He came to Missouri with his family while still young. Harris married Mary Ann Backhues in 1857 and farmed in Osage and Maries counties until after the Civil War. In the 1870s, Harris built three hotels in the new railroad town of Dixon in Pulaski County. When the St. Louis and San Francisco (“Frisco”) Railroad determined to move its division point from Dixon to Newburg in 1883, the Harris relocated and built the Railroad Hotel Eating House in the new town. The hotel opened on 1 January 1884, the same time that the Frisco’s new roundhouse at Newburg was ready for operation. The Harrises lived in the hotel with their extensive family. Two of the sons worked for the Frisco railroad, and a daughter, Martha Elizabeth “Matt” Harris, married another railroader, Jerry Huston, in 1875. The elder Harrises returned to Dixon after one of their sons, William Harris, Jr., was killed in a train wreck in 1884, after which Matt and Jerry Huston managed the hotel. Jerry Huston’s work with the Frisco took him to the roundhouse at Springfield, where he added an “o” to his name to differentiate it from other Hustons. When he moved to Indian Territory and another Frisco project, Matt Houston returned to Newburg to operate the hotel, thereafter known as the Houston House. Matt operated the Houston House until her death in 1920, after which her son, Homer, and daughter, Helen, operated it. After Helen’s death in 1983, the Houston House was sold outside the family and other operators briefly opened it again. A Newburg landmark since 1884, the building still stands, awaiting restoration, in 2007.

This selection was copied from originals owned by the late Carol E. Muennig, a descendant of William Henry and Mary Ann Harris. The collection consists of views of Dixon and Newburg from the late 1870s to about 1910. The earliest images are from stereoviews produced by photographer John W. Hansard of Verona, Missouri. Presumably made sometime before Newburg replaced Dixon as a Frisco division terminal in 1883 and before Hansard relocated to Fayetteville, Arkansas, in 1884, the views show Dixon, railroad tracks on Dixon Hill, and the entrance to the Frisco’s Big Beaver Creek bridge west of Rolla. The stereoviews of are among the earliest known views of Dixon, and show the Frisco’s nine-stall roundhouse, turntable, and coaling chute, as well as the Frisco House, the railroad hotel operated by the Harrises.

The earliest view of Newburg is also a stereoview. Made by an unknown photographer, the view is mounted on a different backing than the Hansard stereoviews. It shows the Newburg House (later the Houston House), and probably dates to 1884 when the hotel opened. The collection contains several other views of the Houston House as well as the boarding house adjacent to it known later as “the annex.” Most of these views probably pre-date 1900. One dated 1899
(A24) features a brass band in front of the Houston House and may show a July 4th celebration. The remainder of the collection consists of photographs and postcards of buildings around Newburg. They include the Frisco roundhouse built in 1883, the Teasdale building on Main Street, buildings on First (also known as Front) Street, and two postcards featuring “birdseye” views of the town (one is a view by M. L. Zercher of Topeka, Kans.). There are also two group photographs of the Harris family, two views of steam locomotives operated by veteran Frisco engineer and Newburg resident, John Weckerley, and another showing a Frisco locomotive (No. 455) and caboose (No. 489).

Negative Sheet C consists of detail views from the original images. They include enlargements showing the roundhouses at Dixon and Newburg, and First (Front) Street in Newburg. The images of a Frisco inspection train in 1947 (C6) and Newburg in 1957 (C8) were not originally part of the Harris family collection.

Shelf List

These are copies of stereoviews, photographs, and postcards from the collection of the William H. Harris family, proprietors of railroad hotels at Dixon in Pulaski County and Newburg in Phelps County, Missouri. Included are views of hotels, businesses, street scenes, and Frisco railroad roundhouses and turntables at Dixon and Newburg.

Negative sheet A

8. Street scene, Newburg, Mo., showing buildings on First Street. Postcard, n.d.
10. Teasdale building, Main Street, Newburg, Mo., n.d.
12. “Newburg, Mo.” Postcard view showing tracks and west First Street, n.d.


15. Group at the Houston House, Newburg, Mo., 1899


20. Harris family group, n.d.


23. Outside at the Houston House, Newburg, Mo., ca. 1894


Negative sheet B

0. Dixon, Mo.¿ showing depot, n.d.


3. Birdseye photograph of Newburg showing Houston House, with roundhouse in background, n.d.


5. Houston House with crowd out front, ca. summer 1893

6. Frisco steam locomotive No. 455 and caboose No. 489, n.d.


Negative sheet C

0. Newburg Meat Market on front street, roundhouse in background, ca. 1883. (this is a detail view from Negative No. 16, Negative Sheet A)
1. Newburg roundhouse, ca. 1883-1884
   (this is a detail view from Negative No. 16, Negative Sheet A)

   (this is a duplicate view of Negative No. 4, Negative Sheet A)

3. Roundhouse, Dixon, Mo., J. Hansard stereoview, pre-1883
   (this is a duplicate view of Negative No. 3, Negative Sheet A)

4. Harris family group, n.d.

5. Roundhouse, Dixon, Mo., J. Hansard stereoview, pre-1883
   (this is a duplicate view of Negative No. 3, negative Sheet A)

6. Frisco inspection train at Newburg, ca. 1947
   (from Mary Alice Beemer, *Newburg’s First Hundred Years, January First 1884-1984*)

   (this is a duplicate view of Negative No. 8, Negative Sheet B)

8. Newburg, Mo., 1957
   (from *Yesterday Lives Again in Phelps County: Our Centennial Book, 1957*)

Index Cards

Big Beaver Bridge (Phelps County, Mo.). A6
Dixon (Mo.). A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A13, A17
   B0
   C2, C3, C5

Dixon Hill (Pulaski County, Mo.). A5
Frisco House (Dixon, Mo.). A13, A17
Hansard, John W. A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6
   C2, C3, C5

Harris family. A20, C4
Newburg (Mo.). A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A14, A15,
   A16, A21, A22, A23, A24
   B1, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7
   C0, C1, C6, C7, C8

Houston House (Newburg, Mo.). A7, A15, A23, A24
   B1, B3, B4, B5, B7
   C7

Newburg House (Newburg, Mo.). A7
Phelps County (Mo.).
Photograph collections—Missouri—Phelps County.
Photograph collections—Missouri—Pulaski County.
Pulaski County (Mo.).
Railroads—Missouri.
St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad Company. A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A9, A16, A18, A19
   B1, B3, B6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teasdale, George.</td>
<td>C0, C1, C2, C3, C5, C6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weckerley, John.</td>
<td>A21, A22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A18, A19</td>
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