

Over the past 80 plus years so much has been written about the 1937 flood that devastated so many towns and cities along the Wabash, Ohio, Mississippi, and other connecting rivers. If you are older than 83 years young, then you might remember it firsthand. Either way, this tragic historical event is slowly being forgotten and may not even be known to many people in this area. It is the mission of the Gallatin County Historical Society to promote and preserve the history of Gallatin County. The 1937 flood was the major cause that helped to eventually create a new town three miles west on higher ground, safe from any future floods. Many lost their lives in the 1937 flood and others were displaced for months and lived in tents set up on that higher ground. The government stepped in as did the local Red Cross to give aid to hundreds of families in need. To our knowledge there is no known marker to commemorate the refugees who lived in these tent cities. The historical society created this project to do just that and we now have two commemorative sites. This project has taken nearly one year to complete, with many people and local businesses working together. We are pleased to present the Tent City Commemorative Stone with plaque that sits on the John Marshall home bank Museum grounds in the Village of old Shawneetown honoring the refugee families. The second commemorative sign has been placed at the old site of one of the most well-known and photographed 'Tent Cities', located at Duncan Lane and Hwy 13 in Shawneetown, IL. Our thanks and appreciation go out to D & R Engraving of Cave in Rock, The Turning Point and Shawnee Hometown Hardware in Shawneetown, Cherry Street Printing in Harrisburg, Emma Lou Scates Mitchell, and the wonderful ladies at the Gallatin County Courthouse all of whom were patient and understanding as we learned the ropes on this project. Someone recently commented that our young people do not know how to work in an historical organization. He was correct, and I reminded him it is our responsibility to teach our young the importance of the past and the lessons that are to be learned. Having these visual reminders of the past is an excellent way to open a dialogue with others to teach, learn and share our history with each other.