

'Window to the Past'

By Peggy Smith Hake
Rt. 1, Box 52,
St. Elizabeth, Mo. 65075

Capt. Robert Melville Marshall was born at Aurora, Ill. Oct. 9, 1858. He was the son of David Marshall (1830-1890) and Mary Burwell (1832-1896), natives of Scotland. His father came to America before marriage and secured a home for his future bride waiting back in Scotland. Mary Burwell came to America and they settled at Aurora, Kane County, Illinois, a few miles west of Chicago. They had two children born at Aurora, daughter Ann Helena Marshall in 1857 and Robert Melville born in 1858. Ann Helena (called Lena) married John L. Blackburn in Miller County in 1876 and raised a large family in the Tuscumbia area.

During the Civil War, David Marshall was in the United States Naval Services and served on board the U.S.S. Fort Hindman on the Mississippi flotilla. His discharge records can be found in the Miller County Courthouse. About 1870, the Marshall family moved to Miller County and settled at Tuscumbia. David became a notary public, conveyance merchant, and by 1879, was postmaster of the village. David and Mary (Burwell) Marshall lived the remainder of their lives in Tuscumbia and are buried in the town's cemetery.

Robert Melville Marshall attended schools in Chicago and then finished his education at Tuscumbia. As a teenager, he worked for six years as a printer for the Miller County Helmet and the Miller County Vidette. The Helmet consolidated with the Vidette in 1876 and had 424 subscribers at that time.

As a young man, Robert left the newspaper business and began working on the Osage River. Later he went into partnership with Capt. Henry Castrop in the purchase of three riverboats. He loved the river life and for a long period of time was owner, master, and pilot of steamboats on the Osage and Missouri rivers. In 1883, Capt. Marshall and William Hauenstein built the sternwheeler, "Frederick" at Tuscumbia. It weighed 82 tons and was almost 100 feet in length. In 1894 the

boat sank at Jefferson City, but was raised and repaired for river use again. Capt. Marshall played an important role in early transportation on the Osage.

On Dec. 15, 1881, Robert Melville Marshall married Emma A. Hauenstein, youngest daughter of William H. Hauenstein Sr. and his wife, Maria Elizabeth Steigleman. Emma was born in February 1860 in Monroe County, Mich., and came to Miller County with her family before 1870. They also settled in the Osage River town of Tuscumbia. William and Elizabeth Hauenstein were natives of Bavaria (Germany) and came to America in 1852.

Robert and Emma were childless and spent their entire married lives in Tuscumbia. Capt. Robert gave up his Osage River enterprises about the turn of the 20th century and organized the Bank of Tuscumbia in 1902. He served as the bank's president for 30 years. Before he began his new life as a banker, the Marshalls made a trip to Europe in 1900 where they visited the Great Paris Exposition. Before returning home to America, they visited his parents' relatives in Scotland, the Marshall and Burwell families.

Capt. Marshall built a beautiful and unique home for his wife. It still stands today to the west of Riverside Park overlooking the mighty Osage as it flows northeasterly through Miller County. The house is a stately, victorian style home with the usual fancy, ornate trims, but what makes it unique is the 'added extras' built into the house. It doesn't take much imagination to realize the house looks very much like a riverboat!

Robert Melville Marshall died in 1954 at the age of 96 years. His wife of 69 years, Emma Hauenstein Marshall, died four years earlier in 1950 at the age of 90 years. Both are buried at Tuscumbia Cemetery and buried beside them is Viola Scrimager (1860-1950) who had worked in their home for 45 years. she was treated as a devoted family member. It is sad to realize that the Marshall family name died away with the passing of Robert Melville Marshall, steamboat captain of the Osage.