

Columbia Mayor Brian Treece's speech on Nov. 11, 2018 at the Bicentennial Celebration of the founding of Smithton.

As a former chair of the City's historic preservation commission, it is my great honor to serve as mayor of Columbia during the 200 hundredth anniversary of our founding.

It was 200 years ago...in 1818...that 35 shareholders of the Smithton Land Co bought 2,700 acres near Garth and Broadway.

Near right where we stand today

But over the next two years, the town was moved down the hill to the banks of Flat Branch,

To be closer to the flowing waters of flat branch creek.

(how ironic that we now gather in the shadow of a city water tower)

It was on the banks of Flat Branch where General Richard Gentry set up the first post-office and Ann Hawkins Gentry became just the second woman postmistress in the Country for more than 30 years.

The Smithton shareholders pledged to donate a great deal to the new town of Columbia, including donating:

- 50 acres in town lots to the local government
- 10 acres to be sold, with the proceeds going to build bridges and all the town roads and alleys.
- 10 additional acres on the condition that the University of Missouri would be established in Columbia.

- And they established two squares: a public square for a County courthouse, and another for a marketplace in the Flat Branch area bound by Cherry and Locust and Third and Waters streets

From there, the banks of Flat Branch became a bustling hub for black commerce that would expand north to 2nd Missionary Baptist Church founded by emancipated slaves and free people of color, to the Sharp End, to Douglas Park and High School as the hub for culture, education, and recreation.

To the East, Columbia's business district continued to grow and thrive all the way to Boone Hospital.

And to the South, the University of Missouri was founded thanks to that gift of a land grant.

As much as we have grown—and grown apart since that time on the banks of Flat Branch—we continue to grow together.

This bicentennial gives us a chance—as a community—to come together, to recognize and remember our shared history, to educate and celebrate for future generations of Columbia.

I am so proud of the steering committee we have put together to help plan this three-year celebration:

I want to thank **Brent Gardner** for getting this effort off the ground.

I had the pleasure of serving on the Historic Preservation Commission and Downtown Leadership Council with Brent. He is passionate about Columbia's history...whether it be uncovering Columbia's legacy of brick streets or engineering the preservation of the Neidermeyer Building.

The Gentry family's Columbia Female Academy, built just 16 years after the founding of Columbia—what is now the Neidermeyer—is the oldest building in Downtown and remains the embodiment of the Columbia's earliest days...and illustrates why that fight to save it was so important.

Brent was the architect for the acquisition of the property that was the site of the founding of Columbia. He also knows how to throw a good party.

I also want to thank **Deb Sheals** for protecting the integrity of Columbia's history. She is a walking encyclopedia of Columbia's architecture and her fingerprints are encased in the restoration of scores of historic buildings in Columbia that help tell our story to future generations.

Through their great work and the work of the entire commission, it is my hope this bicentennial will welcome the opportunity to remember and celebrate the diversity of our community and help us communicate Columbia's history in new and different ways to every audience.

We are honored to have with us today one of the original founders of Smithton.

Robert Barr was one of those 35 original shareholders of the Smithton Land Company who bought the original land to establish Columbia.

Barr was a trustee of the Boone Femme Academy in 1829, he chaired the committee to draft, plan, and select a site for Columbia College in the 1830s and helped Christian College get started in the 1850s.

Mr. Barr helped raise the \$117,900 to bring the University of Missouri to Columbia, for which he was a member of the board of curators and the committee that hired the first faculty and courses of study.

He was also a part owner of The Intelligencer—Columbia's first newspaper, founded in 1830.

These early investments in journalism and education—especially, at the time, the education of women—put Columbia on a firm footing

Not only as the first, oldest, and best journalism school in the country and the home to three strong institutions of higher education,

But our commitment to equity that continues to this day.

And despite being born in 1797, Robert S. Barr looks surprisingly well for his age. (It must be something in the water of Flat Branch Creek.)

Please join me in welcoming back to Columbia Robert S. Barr. (Reporter's note: Here he introduced Richard Mendenhall portraying as a re-enactor Robert S. Barr.)

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