



HUMANITIES

SPRING/SUMMER 2017



MISSOURI HIGHWAY 36 HERITAGE ALLIANCE

THE WAY OF AMERICAN GENIUS

The Peers Store

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The Peers Store has stood steadfastly in the Missouri flood plains for over a century. It is fondly remembered by Marthasville residents today as the Glosemeyer's General Store, long serving the surrounding area and travelers of the Katy Railroad with food and community. MHC is excited to announce that this historic structure will now serve as the pilot project for public programming throughout the German Heritage Corridor.

The Peers Store resides in the heart of the German Heritage Corridor, and at the center of the rich story of German settlement in Missouri. In 1893, George Glosemeyer began its construction in the newly established town of Peers, only a year after the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad (known as the Katy) was laid through the area. Six decades earlier, George's father and grandparents fled civil unrest and economic depression in their home country of Germany. The Glosemeyers were among the first German settlers to the area, which was quickly becoming a haven for German immigrants.

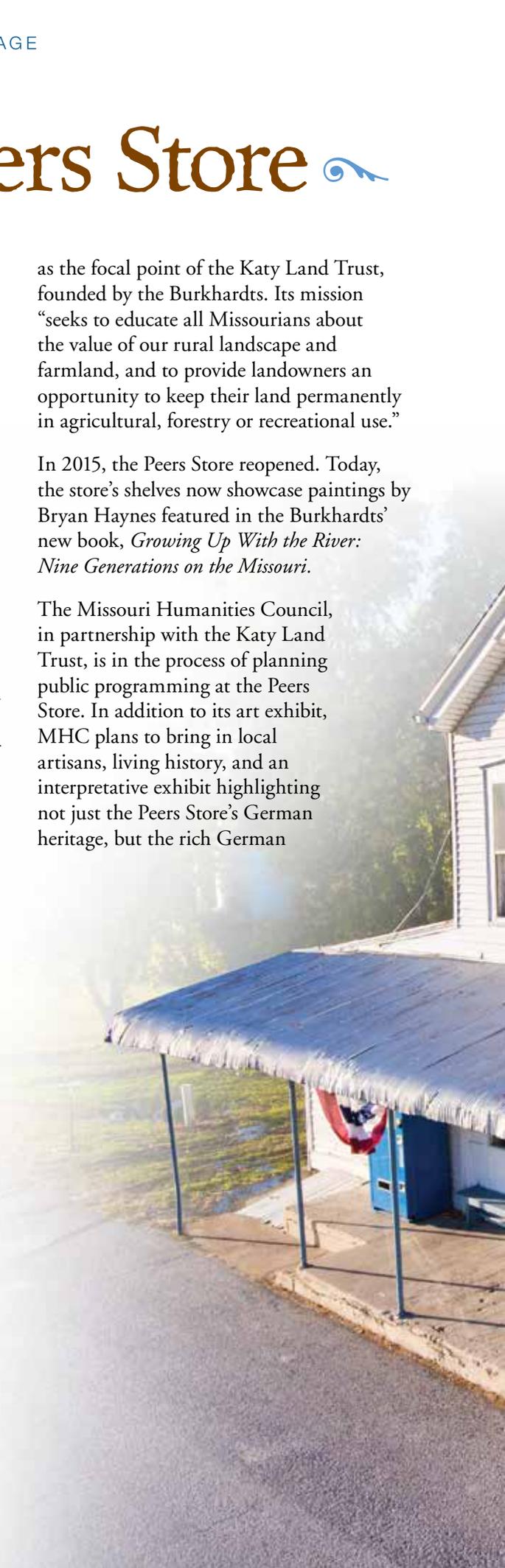
Throughout the twentieth century, the Glosemeyer's General Store prospered along the Katy Railroad. It was the center of life in the town of Peers, operating as the area's general store, coffee house, and post office. The business was passed down to succeeding generations of Glosemeyers, and the family kept it running despite decades of major floods from the nearby Missouri River. However, in 1986, the Katy Railroad was discontinued and the general store went into decline. In 2012, after one hundred and sixteen years in business, the store closed.

Fortunately, in 2014, the building was purchased by Dan and Connie Burkhardt, and restoration efforts commenced. The Peers Store serves

as the focal point of the Katy Land Trust, founded by the Burkhardts. Its mission "seeks to educate all Missourians about the value of our rural landscape and farmland, and to provide landowners an opportunity to keep their land permanently in agricultural, forestry or recreational use."

In 2015, the Peers Store reopened. Today, the store's shelves now showcase paintings by Bryan Haynes featured in the Burkhardts' new book, *Growing Up With the River: Nine Generations on the Missouri*.

The Missouri Humanities Council, in partnership with the Katy Land Trust, is in the process of planning public programming at the Peers Store. In addition to its art exhibit, MHC plans to bring in local artisans, living history, and an interpretative exhibit highlighting not just the Peers Store's German heritage, but the rich German



heritage of the surrounding area. We hope to involve the community in oral histories and family artifact interpretation. As the Corridor expands, the Peers Store will help pioneer future programming.

In the meantime, the Peers Store opened for the 2017 season on April 15. The store will be open every Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4:00 PM through October. Visitors can enjoy artwork in the gallery and live music on the front porch. Special events this summer include State Park tram rides from Marthasville to Peers on May 21 to

celebrate Marthasville's Bicentennial and an Eclipse Party on August 21. The Peers Store will also be included among the stops for the October St. Louis and Missouri Wine Country Bike Tour by Trek Travel Company (TrekTravel.com/Missouri).

For a full list of events and store details, visit KatyLandTrust.org. For further questions regarding the Peers Store, please contact Dan Burkhardt at bethlehemvalley@aol.com. For more information on the German Heritage Corridor, contact Caitlin Yager at caitlin@mohumanities.org.

Photo by Clearly Video.

