CHAD STEBBINS

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Chad Stebbins is a professor of journalism and the director of the Institute of International Studies at Missouri Southern State University. He is also the executive director of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors. Stebbins is the author of "All the News Is Fit to Print: Biography of a Country Editor," published by the University of Missouri Press in 1998, and "Joplin's Connor Hotel," published by The History Press in 2021.

AVAILABLE PRESENTATIONS

JOPLIN'S CONNOR HOTEL

Determined to build "the nest hostelry in the Southwest," Joplin's first millionaire spared no expense on the magnificent Connor Hotel. Opened in 1908, the hotel would serve as the city's main gathering spot for the next 50 years. The Connor hosted hundreds of conventions, outlaws such as "Pretty Boy" Floyd and more reputable guests, including star athletes, Harry Truman, Richard Nixon, Eleanor Roosevelt, Gene Autry, and Robert Wadlow, the world's tallest man. Local residents rallied to save the Connor in the 1970s, but couldn't stop its demolition and tragic ending that caught the nation's attention.

TOM CONNOR: JOPLIN'S MILLIONAIRE ZINC KING

Born in Ireland, Tom Connor lived the classic American rags-to-riches story. He witnessed several of the Civil War's major battles as a newsboy with the 8th Ohio Voluntary Infantry and then spent a decade wandering around the U.S. working various odd jobs before ending up in southwest Missouri. Connor soon developed a knack for knowing which tracts of land had rich zinc deposits. He bought thousands of acres of land containing the ore and was a millionaire by the time he turned 31. Unlike Joplin's other mining kings, Connor never built a mansion for himself, preferring to spend his money on others.

SPEAKER CONTACT INFORMATION

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