

James Cash Penney Statue Dedication
Hamilton, Missouri
Saturday, September 27, 2025

The new statue of James Cash Penney was dedicated in his hometown of Hamilton, Missouri on Saturday, September 27, 2025 as part of the town's annual J.C.Penney Days fall festival and in honor of Mr. Penney's 150th Anniversary of his birth on September 16. The J.C. Penney Memorial Library and Museum Maintenance Trust in Hamilton and the JCPenney National HCSC Alumni Club partnered to raise funds starting in November 2024 to purchase the statue and were successful in achieving that goal!

J.C.Penney Days had a great menu of Mr. Penney related events including a meet and greet for guests at Penney High School (that Mr. Penney helped fund in 1951), tours of his Boyhood Home in the newly named "J.C.Penney Park" on main street in Hamilton, tours of the J.C. Penney Memorial Museum, tours of Penney Family plots at Highland Cemetery and at the Henry Farm near Hamilton which Mr. Penney once owned.

The meet and greet at Penney High School brought together five of Mr. Penney's grandchildren, David Kruger, Mr. Penney historian, statue artists Lee Leuning and Sherri Treeby, John Gresham, national HCSC Alumni Club president and other Club attendees. After a wonderful brunch, a tour of the school was led by Principal, John Schieber, Student Council Sponsor, Eddy Kraber, and the student council president, Danica Green and vice president, Isac Bales-Rodriquez. The school just recently opened new facilities and dedicated a new high school track on this J.C.Penney Days weekend.

The J.C.Penney Boyhood Home was open for self-tours during the entire day Saturday. A local historian, Dennis Cox, lead a detailed tour of the Penney family burial plots at the local Highland Cemetery. While Mr. Penney is not buried here his parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins are in Highland Cemetery. It was fascinating to hear the history behind the Penney family in Hamilton and Caldwell County!

There was also a tour of the Harold Henry farm which Mr. Penney owned at one time along with three other farms in the county. Harold Henry worked on the Mr. Penney's farm as a 12 year old youth and later worked at the J.C.Penney store #500 in Hamilton. When Mr. Penney decided to sell his farm decades later, he offered it to Harold which Harold quickly purchased. Harold sadly passed away earlier this year and his son, Wil, conducted the tour. One of the tour highlights was the grave of Eileenmere, one of Mr. Penney's prized bulls. There is a formal monument where Eileenmere is buried on the farm. Here is a wonderful video about Harold Henry and Mr. Penney's farm entitled "I am Angus." It is well worth watching!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct2ZemBgMog>

The Penney Quilt Store formerly, J.C.Penney Store #500 was open for business and attendees could immediately recognize the polished wood floors and 2nd floor mezzanine style of store for that era. Store #500 whose number was personally selected by Mr. Penney celebrates its 100 year anniversary this year! This quilt store still has the original yellow and black J.C.Penney Store sign displayed on its interior.

The 1947 silver Cadillac that Mr. Penney owned until selling it to the Hale/Mogg family of Hamilton in 1965 was on display adjacent to the new J.C.Penney Park. A classic automobile now in pristine condition was purchased from Mr. Penney on a farm he owned in Gilman City, MO. Later the car was sold to just the Hales family and is now maintained and stored by a son-in-law, Randy Railsback, on his farm in Hamilton.

The annual J.C.Penney Days fall festival featured craft booths, food booths, bounce arounds for the kids, face painting, a farmer's market and more. This event takes place the last Saturday of September each year in Hamilton.

Special guests attending the statue dedication at 4 pm included 5 of Mr. Penney's grandchildren whose homes range from San Francisco and Portland to Massachusetts. David Kruger, author of the book, "J.C.Penney, the Man, the Store, and American Agriculture" attended and did a historical presentation about Mr. Penney's time in Hamilton and then did a book signing for local residents.

Hamilton Mayor Cole Crawford led the statue dedication that included speeches from Bob Lund, curator of the J.C. Penney Memorial Museum and HCSC Alumni Club member, David Kruger, J.C.Penney historian from the University of Wyoming, and Mary Wagley Copp, granddaughter of Mr. Penney. Angela Marshall Hofmann, VP of Corporate Affairs for Catalyst LLC presented a flag that was flown at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. in honor of Mr. Penney's 150th Birthday on September 16 to Mayor Crawford and included a recognition certificate. Mayor Crawford recognized statue artists, Lee Leuning and Sherri Treeby from Bad River Artworks of Sioux Falls, South Dakota with a certificate of appreciation for their beautiful creation of Mr. Penney's statue. And the program concluded with Mayor Crawford proclaiming that the park where Mr. Penney's statue now resides will be formally named "J.C.Penney Park."

(The statue was covered in quilts from the Memorial Museum and the Missouri Star Quilt Company in Hamilton which included a JCPenney Company quilt. It was unveiled at the statue dedication by the 5 grandchildren of Mr. Penney.)

After the statue dedication, the annual PHS Alumni Banquet was held Saturday evening with all PHS classes invited to attend. All of Mr. Penney's grandchildren and other statue dedication participants attended and enjoyed a wonderful catered meal in the school's new gymnasium. The Class of 1966 lead by our HCSC Alumni Club member, Bob Lund, had the most attendees of any class! David Kruger did another book signing to the delight of those at the banquet with many of his books being signed and sold!

On Sunday, the day after the statue dedication, J.C. Penney Memorial Museum curator and HCSC Alumni Club member and Hamilton resident, Bob Lund, opened the museum and led a 2 hour tour for the 5 grandchildren of Mr. Penney some of whom had never been to Hamilton. The museum has wonderful and detailed displays of Mr. Penney's history and heritage in Hamilton and through his founding of the company and beyond until his passing in 1971. Check out this website for museum details:

<https://blog.missouriquiltco.com/hamilton-visitors-guide-jc-penney-home-museum/>

We wanted to say thank you to the Grandchildren of Mr. Penney, many HCSC Alumni Club members and Regional Meeting Groups and other outside donors whose generous donations in partnership with numerous Hamilton organizations and especially the J.C. Penney Memorial Library and Museum Trust made this historic project possible!