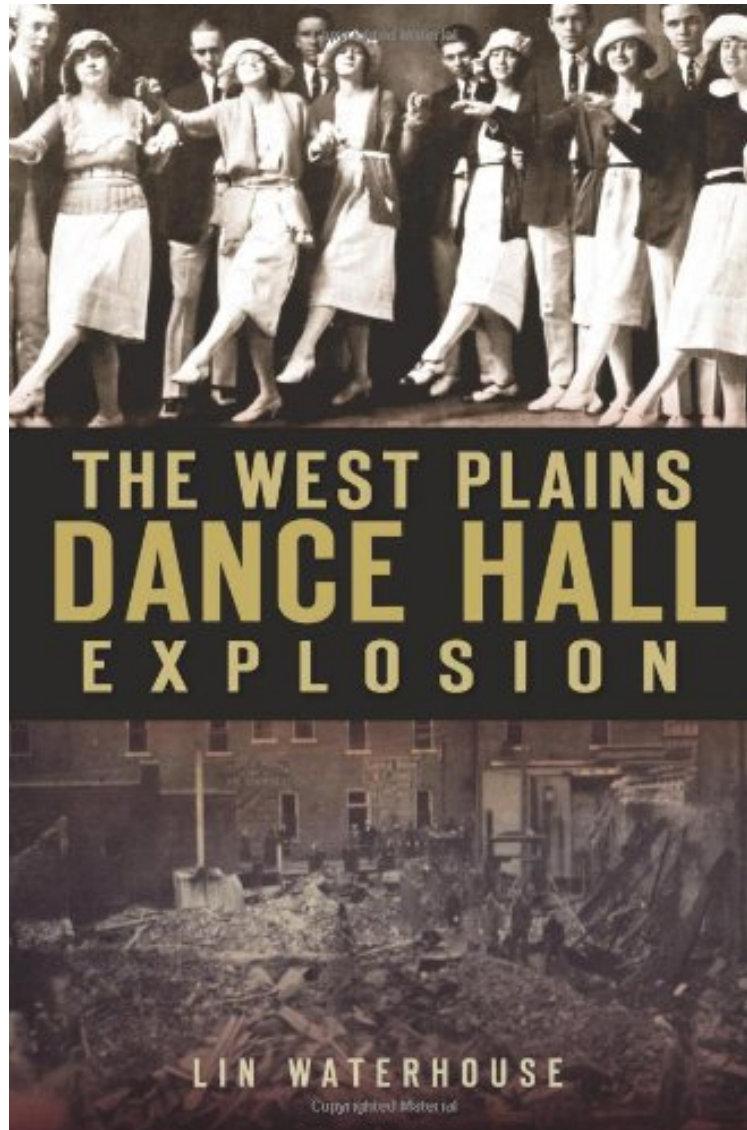


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WEST PLAINS DANCE HALL EXPLOSION (Disaster)

Lin Waterhouse

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Lin Waterhouse : WEST PLAINS DANCE HALL EXPLOSION (Disaster) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised WEST PLAINS DANCE HALL EXPLOSION (Disaster):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Takes You Along the Path Directly Into the FlamesBy JudyAnn LorenzI'm at a loss for decent adjectives for describing how well Lin Waterhouse has written this moving, dramatic tragedy in a midwestern community -- West Plains, Missouri.Readers become acquainted with the people who were looking for a convivial gathering that was typical of their community along with the people who were living nearby

and those who lived with the nightmare of survival. The class differences in terms of economy, but apparently not such divisive social terms as were prominent in much of society still in the decade of the 1920s. Using family memories, notes, testimony and photos from the community, Lin Waterhouse puts seriously realistic faces on the people (not characters, but real life people) who were living in West Plains, Missouri that night. A true cold case, there has been no determination of cause or identification of perpetrators for the Dance Hall Explosion. But, it wasn't a bad dream -- it really happened and 39 people died. Some never knew what hit them; many knew it more than any soul can endure. The author includes some basic foundational history of West Plains, including Civil War troubles for many residents. Today, we think of West Plains and think of the fine Missouri State University there, the thriving business community and happier history as a center for Country Music with native resident, Porter Wagoner who was a babe in arms (8/1927 -- 10/2007) on that terrible spring evening. Some people still stop for a quiet moment at the memorial headstone marking the grave field sheltering the victims that could not be identified. I admire the spiritual bravery of their survivors who simply committed them to hometown soil together from the tunes of this plain until the music of eternity. I highly recommend this book and this author. I'm proud to be personally and professionally acquainted with her and look forward to reading everything she writes. I bought this book on my Kindle and it is going to be a favorite that I will let my friends and family hold the precious Kindle for a chance to read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Informative read
By Natalie Conner
My father spent a great of his childhood in West Plains, and I was briefly employed by his childhood friend, the granddaughter and namesake of Kitty MacFarland. It was fascinating to read about this tragic, historic event that brushes up against my family's history. While the telling is sometimes a little dry, the author did a good job of bringing to life 80 year-old information without sensationalizing it.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great read!
By cindiejo
I purchased this book because I lived in West Plains as a child and remember hearing the stories and seeing the monument for the unidentified people who were killed in the explosion. This superbly written book gave me many facts, stories and theories that I never knew about this tragedy. I also discovered that two of my own ancestors were a part of this event and that one of them Ralph "Bus" Langston, was present during the explosion and ended up being the one person with the least injuries (all because he took a short break from manning the coat room). I think this book would make an excellent movie! Whether or not you have roots in West Plains I think anyone would enjoy reading this book.

The 1928 explosion that transformed a West Plains dance hall into a raging inferno sparked feverish national media attention and decades of bitterness in the Missouri town it tore apart. And while the story inspired a popular country song, the firestorm that claimed thirty-nine lives remains an unsolved mystery. In this first book on the notorious catastrophe, Lin Waterhouse presents a clear account of the event and its aftermath that judiciously weighs conflicting testimony and deeply respects the personal anguish experienced by parents forced to identify their children by their clothing and personal trinkets.

About the Author
Lin Waterhouse is a freelance writer who focuses on the historical curiosities of the Ozarks region. Her work has been published in the Ozarks Mountaineer, Ozarks Magazine, the Ozark County Times and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. After writing an anniversary piece about the mysterious 1928 dance hall explosion in West Plains, she continued researching the story that piqued her curiosity and offended her sense of historical justice. This book is the result.