

## RALLS COUNTY MISSOURI HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 3, May 2002

Dear Members and Friends of the Ralls County Missouri Historical Society:

Ralls County Historical Society will hold its regular meeting at the New London Grade school gym. The door will be open at 6:00 P.M. and a short meeting will begin at 6:30 P.M. As soon as the meeting is over Conrad Cheatham and Andy Sisk will present "History of the Shortline Railroad". Both Conrad and Andy have researched this former railroad that operated from Hannibal to Wentzville, with a spur to Perry. The history of the Shortline goes back to the earliest history of Northeast Missouri railroading and had many interesting events and owners. One of the owners was part of the Ringling family that owned the world famous circus. There will be a display of photos, maps, railroad items and a video of the New London depot from an old film. If you should have such items or stories please bring them with you to share with the group. Please forward this to anyone with an interest in railroad or local history. The presentation will be free and opened to the public. John Phil Conn will record the event and we will make a copy available to those unable to attend later. Thanks John Phil. I have e-mailed all of the local newspapers, radio and TV station about this event so the turn out should be good

### COURTHOUSE

In 2008 the Ralls County courthouse will be 150 years old and is the co-oldest active courthouse west of the Mississippi River. It is hoped that by that time the old historic building can be totally restored so there can be a major celebration of the 150 years of history that the old courthouse has seen. The county commissioners have spoken to me about researching the cost, funding and interest in such a project. Ralls County has a rare treasure and I hope all of the county would get behind an effort to show off our courthouse and county to the state and nation. Six years seems a long way off, but a major event like this takes a lot of work and planning. Any help with from our members or non-members would be welcomed and I hope I will hear from many of you. One thing we all can do is to make the public of the county and area aware of the courthouse and its history.

### COFFEE MUGS

The third versions of coffee mugs are now available. This version features the Catholic Churches St. Paul and St. Peters. St Paul built in 1860 is the oldest Catholic Church north of St Louis and known as the mother church of north Missouri. St. Peters was built just two years later in 1862 and is best known as the church that Father Augustus Tolton was baptized. Father Tolton was the nation's first black priest. St Peters is also known as Brush Creek. Be sure I get your mug before they are gone the first two versions are very much in demand since they have been sold out.

## **“LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE” AFGHAN**

There will be raffle for a “Little Red School House” Afghan to be given away at the “Time Was Days” in Perry on September 28. Tickets will be \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Tickets are available from Billie Mac Cearley, Imogene Karaff and Mary Beck or by mail by sending a check to Ralls County Historical Society, P. O. Box #182, and Center MO. They will also be available at our booth manned at local events. It can be seen at the May, July and September meetings and manned booths.

## **“RALLS COUNTY” HISTORY”**

As you may know by now the Goldena Howard “Ralls County” history is in and selling at Gaylord Winders office at the Courthouse in New London, Ralls County Library, Center MO, Perry State Bank (Perry only) and Garden of Angles Antique Shoppe in Perry. They are also available by mail at Ralls County Historical Society, P.O. 182, Center MO. 63436. The cost is \$50.00 each and an added \$5.00 if ordered by mail. The books came in early and caught us a little flat footed, but have recovered and have the preorders filled and publicity out to all the public.

## **HAM AND BEAN SUPPER:**

The Ham and Bean Supper drew a large crowd from all over the county and with one member coming from Kansas. We were able to sign up new members and sold a number of books to members and non-members. The meeting after the supper was well attended and we were able to discuss our projects, plans and got input from members on those items. There was a large and active group who stayed after the meeting. Thanks to all who helped prepare, sell and clean up. I would like to have more food events like this, but it takes many of the members away from the actual meeting so they cannot participate and enjoy the meeting. Maybe we could have it catered next time. I would like member’s input on this.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

The use of community service personal to help clean up the Cemetery at Madisonville and other projects is still being planned. We need someone in the Ralls County area that can coordinate this with the courts and probation personal. Please volunteer if at all possible so we can speed the project along.

## **DIRECTORS**

Directors who have agreed to fill the void in those positions till the next election in January; Debbie Allen, Joy Briscoe, Sue Delaporte, Sally Polc, Fran Watts, Bert Howard, Marsha Knudsen, Minerva Howard, Mike Hayden, Billy Cearley.

## THANKS

As you can see we have large amount of projects in the works and without the help of many members and non-members things could not get done. It is impossible to name all the people who have helped with out missing someone. Knowing this I want to try, I'm sorry for anyone I may miss

Jere Nelson at the "Garden of Angels Antique Shoppe" 110 South Palmyra, Perry has allowed us to put a display of Perry pictures and other items in her shop. Please stop by see the display and her line of antiques she has available in her two stores. The antiques shops in Perry have been one of our best supporters in allowing us the sell our books and items.

The Statler's and staff at the "Herald-Enterprise" have been a major help in getting our information out and to the public over many months. We are preparing a display of old Ralls County photos for them to display at their office. Thanks Gene, Judy and staff.

Gaylord Winder, Garden of Angels Antique Shoppe, Perry State Bank and Ralls County Library have allowed us to sell the "Ralls County" in offices and places of businesses. Thank for taking the time to help us.

Otis Rosenstengel for donation of windows for the old Perry bank at Perry.

Ralph and Fred Omer their always hard work on the bank and other projects

Sue Delaporte has spent hours typing articles into the computer to produce our next book.

Dave and Sally Polc for the large stack of Funeral/memorial cards and obituaries they donated to the society. We hope to get in some kind of file or order for people who want to use them for research. They go back into the 1940s and to almost the present. Anyone interested in seeing them at me know I'll begin them to the next meeting. Most of the people seem to be from north Ralls County and the Hannibal area.

Bill Cearley, John Roy Chipman and son for receiving and storing the shipment of the "Ralls County" History when they arrived.

Bill Cearley for attending class on funding and grants. This will be a big help in future.

Ron Evans family and Virgil Megown for the donation of an original 1878 Ralls County Atlas. The condition is very good and this will make an excellent source when we get our museum some day.

Imogene Karaff for her work in shipping the history books, banking, mail collecting and all the extra tines she does for the society.

## CALENDAR:

**Ralls County Missouri Historical Society: Regular meetings.**

**July 4, 2002 Perry Fish Fry?**

**July 15, 2002 at Center Christian church basement**

**September 16, 2002 at Perry VFW**

**September 28, 2002 “Time Was Days”? Perry MO**

**November 18, 2002 at New London courthouse basement.**

**If your town, club or group were planning an event where it would be appropriate to set up a booth about RCHS we would like to know about it. If you would be available for these events to man a booth please let you know.**

**Special meetings are being planned and notice of these events will on the following newsletters. This special meetings will be for speakers and many out of town members would like to have a day meeting so they would not have to travel the longer distant at night. These could be a picnic or join meeting with another historical societies.**

### **Society Minutes**

**The Ralls county Historical Society met March 18th, 2002 at the VFW hall in Perry Mo. From 5:00-6:30 pm a ham and bean supper with Corn Bread and homemade pies and cakes and Coffee, tea, or soda was served for a donation. The Cearleys and Omer’s did the ham and beans and Corn bread and members furnished pie, cake and drinks. Took in \$321.00.**

**At 7pm the meeting was called to order by Ron Leake Pres. The Minutes of the last meeting was read and approved. The Treasurer’s Report was read and approved. A big thanks goes to Ralph & Fred Omer and Bill & Billie Cearley for all the cooking and getting things together at the Ham and Bean**

**A thank you to Imogene Karaff for the great help in depositing money that come in for memberships and books to the Center Post Office.**

**Old business discussed was that the Books by Golden Howard “History of Ralls County” 1980 is being printed and should be here in early May. We are still taking prepaid orders \$50.00 plus \$5.00 if you wish it mailed to you. There is a limited number being printed. We will have pick up locations in Center, Perry, and New London and perhaps in Hannibal.**

**Books available from Ralls County Historical Society, P.O. Box 182, Center Missouri 63436**

**“End of a Way of Life” by Dee West and Okle Rouse two men who lived in the Salt River Valley covered by the Mark Twain Lake. They write of the families, legends, towns, churches, schools, caves and cemeteries moved or covered by the filling of the lake. There are photos of many of the people, homes, schools and churches of the flooded**

**valley. \$15.00 shipped**

**“Ralls County Missouri Settler and Settlements Volume #1, Lick Creek” This is collection of articles, speeches and letters published in Ralls County and other papers by early settlers in the Lick Creek area of Ralls County in the 1820-1860 years. The town of Perry was later formed from these settlers in the 1860’s. From 1904 to 1909 a Rev. Thomas Gallaher wrote 15 articles to the Perry “Enterprise” about the early families, schools, churches, events, hunting and much more about the life in the 1840s, 50s and 60s. The other articles tell of the early family stories, weather, Indians, wolves, Elk, travel and life on the very early frontier. There a lot of genealogy information in these book and tells of many families who live here for little while and moved to other areas. The book is 15.00 + \$2.00 for shipping.**

**“The Mark Twain Book” by Goldena Howard, This book concentrates on Mark Twain in Hannibal, early local friends, his family and family tree. It goes into the origins and connections of characters in his books to local people and places. It also covers many trivial and little known facts on Mark Twain and is a very interesting read. (\$15.00 + \$2.00 for postage)**

**FYI**

**The Hannibal Courier-Post will be featuring the society and books that we have for sale. They took pictures of the New London courthouse to go with the article. Thanks to the Courier-Post and staff for their support and help.**

**We would like to have information history of all the Old churches, schools and cemeteries in Ralls County If anyone has any information on any of the churches, schools, Cemeteries and or pictures they would share with us we would love to have them. If you wish us to make copies so you can keep the originals you may send information to RCHS at P. O. Box 182 Center Mo. or contact Mary Beck at 15585 Red Oak Trail Monroe City MO. 63456-3047 573-735-2155 mbeck@nemonet.com**

**Membership in RCHS is \$10 per person or \$15.00 per family per year Jan. 1 to Dec 31**

**Vote on Newsletter name will be held at the July meeting because of the limited time at this meeting. The named turned in will be in the next newsletter**

**Presidents Views;**

Because of the short meeting before the "Shortline" program I want to cover as much information as I could in this newsletter. On the plus side I'll have to make my views short. I just want to say are probably the fastest growing and most active small county historical society in state. This is because of the input and volunteering of the past months by members and friends. Thanks members and friends, please continue and we will continue to grow and show people what Ralls County can do.

### BIT OF RALLS COUNTY HISTORY

Perry Missouri "Enterprise" July 12, 1900

#### The Jester Trail

There is a rumor that the Jester case will not be for trail next Monday when it is called, but is likely to be dismissed, because the state has been unable to satisfactorily prove the death of Gilbert Gates. This rumor has reached considerable prominence, having been published in several papers in adjoining counties. This rumor is entirely unfounded. The prosecution will be ready for trail and so will the defense, both sides getting ready for trial.

The prosecutions claim that they have a strong case against the defendant and will prove the "corpus delecti" or the death of Gates beyond a doubt.

The dense insists that the prosecution will not be able to satisfactorily prove the Gates was ever murdered, or is dead. They say that it frequently happens that people disappear and are not heard of for many years and are given up for dead and after a long time appear alive and all right. In support of this they cite three instances, familiar to a great many of the readers of Ralls County, as follows.

First, the disappearance of Abner Knight. Shortly after the close of the Civil War, Abner Knight came to Ralls County from the state of Virginia; bring with him his wife and several children. For a number of years he lived in Saverton Township, Ralls County and about seventeen year ago, Mr. Knight decided to visit some relatives in the state of Georgia. Accordingly, he told his family goodbye and stated upon his mission. Some weeks elapsed and Mr. Knight's family, not hearing from him his relatives were written to as his whereabouts, word came that Mr. Knight had safely arrived had afterwards disappeared and that his people had no knowledge of his whereabouts and not long after this, intelligence was received from Georgia, a body or the remains of a man had been found which they had every reason to believe those of Mr. Knight. The belief of his death then became a settled conviction with his family and further inquiry was relinquished. Believing he was dead, Mrs. Knight, within a few years married Milford McElroy, of Saverton Township, this county. Mr. McElroy died a few years ago and his widow lives in Hannibal. A few weeks ago Mrs. Knight's daughter in Hannibal received a letter direct from his relatives in Georgia saying he was alive and living in that locality.

Second, the disappearance of Silas Carter, from Perry. Mr. Carter was raised in Ralls county and married here and they had one child. His wife died and about twenty years ago he was living near Perry with his mother. All at once he disappeared without any warning or telling any one where he was going. He never came back and after careful search he was given up as dead and supposed to have been murdered. About fifteen years after Carter's disappearance, one Mansfield

**King, who lived near Perry, at the time of this disappearance and who has a notorious criminal was arrested and put in jail at Clayton MO, for horse stealing and in jail Mr. King proceeded to make some very strong confessions, among which he stated that he had murdered Silas Carter and put him in Lick Creek. This confession was published in the St. Louis paper and drifted out to California and there it ran upon Silas Carter, alive and doing well. He read it and was induced by this incident to write back to his son, Peter Carter telling him of his disappearance and that he was then living in California. This was the first information as to Carter's whereabouts since his disappearance.**

**Third, the case of Eva B. Liter, who many years ago, moved with her husband from Ralls County to Montana and there they bought a farm of 160 acres. Not long thereafter, her husband perished in storm and Mrs. Liter wrote to her mother who lived in New London, that she and her two children would soon return to Ralls County Missouri. They never arrived and Mrs. Liter's relatives here made every search and investigation, to learn what became of these parties, but no trace could be found of them, except that they had started and were supposed to have been killed or perished on the way to the nearest station, as they would have to pass through a new and wild country in going to the railroad. After eighteen years had elapsed without a word as to what had become of the parties they were given up for dead. The relatives of Mrs. Liter, living in New London, to whom the land would descend under the law, in case dearth of her and her children, instituted proceedings in the court of Montana to recover the 10 acre farm in that State. The evidence was heard, as to the disappearance and supposed death of these parties and the case was finally taken to the Supreme Court of Montana and that court decided that under the evidence that Mrs. Liter and the two children were dead and decreed the land to relations. A few months afterwards to the surprise of everyone Mrs. Liter was heard from, she was living in the State of Nevada, where she had been postmistress for four years out there under Harrison's administration. Her two daughters were also alive, married and doing well, one of them had been living in St. Joseph Missouri for several years.**

**Whether Gates is dead alive remains to be determined in the course of the trail to begin next Monday --- Ralls County Record**