

# **RALLS COUNTY MISSOURI HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER Volume 2, Issue 2**

## **January 2003**

**RALLS COUNTY MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 182  
CENTER MISSOURI 63436  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~morchs/>**

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

The first meeting of 2003 will be held January 20 at the Center Missouri Christian Church basement. Door will be opened at 6:00 PM and the meeting will begin at 7:00 PM. Elections will be held and important items will be discussed, please try and attend if you can.

### **2003 Dues**

2003 dues are now due. They will remain at \$10.00 per person or \$15.00 for a family membership. Please if possible fill out a membership form or include your address, phone number (optional), e-mail address and family members if you get a family membership. Payments mailed should be sent to Ralls County Historical Society Inc., P. O. Box 182, Center MO 63435.

### **New Name**

Please notice our newsletter name above. Debbie Allen submitted the winning name and will receive two Ralls County Courthouse Coffee mugs.

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

January 20, 2003 at Center Christian church Basement

March 17, 2003 at Perry VFW

May 19, 2003 at New London courthouse basement

July 21, 2003 at Center Christian church basement

September 15, 2002 at Perry (annual meeting/picnic)

November 17, 2002 at New London courthouse basement

Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and meetings beginning at 7:00 p.m. except September meeting which is being planned.

Please send your groups events and date so we can add them to the calendar

### **CD of Pictures of Ralls County**

Mike Hayden has been working on mapping the cemeteries in the county and has also prepared a CD with historic photos of Ralls County. He will have it at the meeting so be sure and take a look. Thanks Mike.

### **Presidents Views;**

In 2008 our Ralls County courthouse in New London which is the co-oldest active courthouse west of the Mississippi river will celebrate its 150th birthday. Iron County's Courthouse was completed in 1858 too, but our building offices were used first. The Civil War was about four years away and the California gold rush was still drawing families west to make their fortunes when the building opened. I think it would be great to have this old landmark restored by 2008 so the county can celebrate this milestone and show off this point of county pride. For those

who are old enough can remember the great 100-year celebration which was a national and state event. Thanks to the good old Missouri pioneers who built her it is still in good shape, but it is starting to show its age. If steps are not taken soon, the county will not only lose a historic treasure, but a building that can be restored at a reasonable cost and not be replaced by a simply modern building. I have done some research and found that nearly 3,000,000 people drive up and down US Highway 61 yearly on the west side of New London. Many of these people are going to Hannibal and Nauvoo Illinois to visit and study history. With some promotion and a sign on the highway I'm sure many of these historic minded people would like to stop and visit the oldest active courthouse west of the Mississippi river. The courthouse has been the site of historic trials and visited by many nationally famous people Harry Truman and Thomas Hart Benton are two I can think of. For the Mark Twain fans, many of his boyhood friends and people he based his characters lived and some are buried in New London and other parts of Ralls County. Guided tours, books and people doing research could generate a lot of money for gas stations, grocery stores, restaurants other businesses and generate taxes for the county.

The county commissioners have selected an engineering firm to do a study on the cost of the restoration of the courthouse. Knowing the condition of the building and estimated cost has to be known to be done to know how much and if money for the restoration can be raised. Like many of the counties in Missouri funding for projects are limited and Ralls is no exception. The commissaries try to find the funding in the new years budget. The year 2008 seems like some long ways off, but it takes a long time for a building as big and busy as the courthouse to be restored. To insure that this important project can get off the ground I would like to discuss using some of the Ralls County Historical funds to pay for part or all the cost of the study if the county cannot find the money this year. If and when the county comes does up with the funding they could repay us. Please try and attend the January 20 meeting so I can get your valuable input on this.

## **Fagan School Project**

The Perry Missouri Grade School will be presented the plan to move the Fagan School the Perry School grounds at their regular meeting Tuesday January 21. I will be attending and any member would be welcome to show our support for the project.

## **Promotion of Area**

Below is part of an E-Mail I received from Louis Riggs. I like the idea of counties and other groups combined efforts to feature our area. The area is blessed with the draw of tourism to the Mark Twain sites and major ever improving highways. If all the organizations worked together we could make this area an attractive area for tourism and show off our rich history. A group of Shortline Railroad buffs made tour of the former line from Wentzville north and found out that they could not cover the area in one day. For this reason two or three day weekend may be needed to cover all the area and events.

A few folks are kicking around an idea to bring the Ralls, Marion and Pike County historical communities together on a single project centered on the Short Line. We're thinking of a tour of sites along the line, including the Center Depot, the Tunnel and caboose site at Frankford, picnic lunch on the Ralls County Courthouse grounds (tour of the Courthouse/Jail included), sites in Hannibal where the Short Line used to be, down to Ilasco for the Immigrant Memorial and a few words about the line which used to run to the Cement Plant, not sure about heading up to Lover's Leap for a look-see, back to Hannibal for an evening meal in a possible progressive dinner format using Harvey House menu/period wear (which would give the Hannibal Arts Council an opportunity to get involved, also). The more, the merrier on something like that.

From my standpoint, filling the better part of a day without reference to Mark Twain is not only doable, it's interesting (Twain was a steamboat fan anyway). If anyone would be interested, it might also be possible to put together a program about the Railroad strike of 1877 (Hannibal had its share of controversy then).

I'm going onto the Hannibal Chamber of Commerce Board in a few weeks and would be interested in conveying any thoughts you might have about redesigning the tourist brochures to better emphasize Ralls County historic attractions. We need an inclusive regional approach to tourism--there's so much more up here than Twain. I'm also taking a

look at putting together some manner of Civil War-oriented tour/brochure. Bloody Bill Anderson was active in Shelby and Monroe Counties in 1864, Grant camped at Florida, and Porter's recruiting trip throughout Northeast Missouri led to the Palmyra Massacre. There has to be a way to organize the material and promote it effectively under one umbrella

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

"Ralls County" by Goldena Howard (reprint of 1980 History of Ralls Co.) \$50.00 plus \$5.00 if mailed

"Mark Twain" Oliver and Goldena Howard \$15.00 plus \$2.00 if mailed

"End of a Way of Life" by Dee West and Okle Rouse \$15.00 postage paid (no more when supplies run out)

"Ralls County Missouri Settler and Settlements Volume #1, Lick Creek" \$15.00 plus \$2.00 if mailed

St. Paul and St. Peters Coffee Mugs The third versions of coffee mugs are still available at \$5.00 each. 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

## **Painting Missouri**

The "Painting Missouri" website <http://www.paintingmissouri.com/> was now featured Ralls County. Click on Journal on the home page, on the right side the journal page you can choose a county, check Ralls and see article on our county. Thanks to Billyo O'Donnell and Karen Glines.

## **Ralls County Cemetery**

McElroy Cemetery Township 53 north, Range 7 west, Section 2

Recorded April 5, 1980 by Okle Rouse, Fay Rouse, Fred Leake and Ron Leake

Irvin; Virginia, no dates only name

Lipp; A. B. Lipp, no date only name

Lipp; Robert, died June 1849

McElroy; Dr. I., died January 1850

McElroy; Mary, died January 1850

As time and space allows I will put small and family cemeteries in the newsletter. The first series will be from Salt River Township. If you have any such cemeteries you would like to feature e-mail or mail them to me. Ron Leake, 1276 Pequeno Lane, Fenton MO, 63026. If have any information or corrections please also send them.

## **Websites**

Below are some websites of organizations near Ralls county and families with Ralls connections. Other sites can be found at our own website

Pike County Missouri Historical Society <http://www.pastracks.com/pchs/welcome.htm>

Pike County Missouri Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 313, Bowling Green MO 63334

Meet 1:30 pm, 1st Tuesday of each month at 205 West Main, Bowling Green MO, there society library. Library hours are 1:00 pm-4:00 pm on Thursdays and 9:00 am-noon on Saturdays.

[www.pastracks.com/pcgs/welcome.htm](http://www.pastracks.com/pcgs/welcome.htm)

Great Rivers Genealogical Society <http://www.outfitters.com/~grgs/>

Isaac Ely Descendants

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~elymocharles/fam00010.html>

Maryland Catholic on the Frontier <http://www.pastracks.com/mcf/>  
McAfee-Glascock Family <http://www.my-ged.com/jmcafee>

## **Bit of Ralls County History**

1837 "GAZETTEER OF THE STATE MISSOURI"

By Alphonso Wetmore

Ralls County is bounded in the following: "beginning in the Mississippi river, east of the termination of the line between township fifth-six and fifty-seven; thence west to the first section line east of the range line between ranges seven and eight; thence south to the township line between townships fifty and fifty-one; thence east to the line between ranges four and five west; thence on a direct line to the southwest corner of section sixteen, township fifty-four, five west; thence on a direct line to a point in the Mississippi, opposite to the line between townships fifty-five and fifty-six; and thence to the beginning".

About three fourths of this county, in a state of nature, was covered with timber; but each farmer who settled in timber has found means to make his little prairie. Very little of the land of Ralls can be called bad and most of it is excellent. The most valuable millstreams are the branches of Salt River, and Spencer's creek furnishes much waterpower. These are the principal watercourses of the county, and they are several good mill-sites unproved, The County is well watered with durable springs, which furnish abundance of good limestone water. The minerals of the county are iron and sulphur and in the western part of the county coal is very abundant, and easily obtained. Limestone quarries are found in every part of the county. Wheat, rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, tobacco, and hemp are the principal products of the farms of Ralls,

The domestic animals, and such as are raised more or less for market, are horses, mules, neat cattle, sheep, hogs, and goats.

There are five towns in the county, viz;

1. New London, the seat of justice, contains a brick courthouse, Five stores, four grocery store, and one tavern; a church, a clerk's office, and a jail- which is of little use.
2. Saverton, situated on the Mississippi river, nine miles from New London, is the only steamboat landing in the county. It has three stores, and considerable forwarding business is done there.
3. Hurdsburgh (should be Hydesburg), on the state road leading from Palmyra to St. Louis, has one store, post-office, and tavern.
4. Cincinnati, a town on the north bank of Salt River, has two stores, a post-office, and tavern.
5. Newport, five miles above Cincinnati, on the same side of Salt River, has one store and a post-office.

There are three sawmills on Salt river; two on Spencer creek, and one on Turkey creek; four grist-mills, and two steam grist and saw mills, two wool-carding factories, and an oil-mill in New London. There is a Catholic chapel in Cincinnati, and in the western part of county. A college is being erected in the western part of Ralls. Common schools are well supported and constantly kept up. There are six or eight building in the county which are used as places of public worship, for all denominations, and Christian charity is cherished everywhere in Ralls.