

# Ralls County Historical

Volume 2- Issue 4, July 2003

RALLS COUNTY MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 182

CENTER MISSOURI 63436

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~morchs/>

## Dear Members of the Ralls County Missouri Historical Society:

### Newsletter change

So I can split the mailing to be able to communicate and conduct society business with only members there will be two different headings on the future newsletters and mini newsletters. The nonmember's letter will begin Dear Friends and the member's letter will begin with Dear Members. Both the newsletter and the mini newsletter will be the same for both members and nonmembers.

### July Meeting

Our July meeting will be Monday, July 21 at the Center Christian Church basement. The door will open at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. Kelly Bartlett from Palmyra MO will present a Power-Point about last years "Palmyra Massacre" in Palmyra. John M. Wade buried at the Muldrow cemetery near Perry MO was one of the 10 Confederate soldiers killed October 17, 1862. Other Ralls County families were affected by the event too.

### Membership News;

Member Linda Sue Galloway has begun history of the West Hartford school. She would like your help with the project. If you attended the West Hartford school, have information or pictures contact her at Hwy. Y, Perry MO, 63462, 573-565-3185

At Perry MO 4th of July Picnic, member Ralph Omer was presented a plaque by the Perry City counsel for his photos preserving, recording Perry history and his other contributions to Perry. Congratulation and thanks Ralph.

Member Edward Morawitz and Gene T. Waters found the Sugar Creek school/Christian Church location north of Center MO. The church was co-founded by an ancestor of George Waters and date back to 1833. The building was also use as a school and was one of the first in Ralls County. Thanks to Edward and Gene for a great job. If you have an interest or can contribute information on the school/church you can contact Gene by e-mailing him at [waterspg@swbell.net](mailto:waterspg@swbell.net)

I have received a number of volunteers to help with the micro filming of the Ralls County Clerks paper by the Missouri State Archive, but could use more. Ernie is waiting on them to contact him about a date to begin the work. They can use people to get the documents ready to film and to replace them after filming.

Ben Akers and Maxine Moore are planning a date to clean the Madisonville cemetery in the fall. This is a large cemetery and needs a lot of work, so let them or me know if you can help. We could also use tools like shovels, axes and other cutting tools. The date will after the first freeze to eliminate the weeds, snakes and ticks.

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

September 20, 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.

### Center Park Days

We will have a booth at the Center Park Days on July 26, please let me know if you would like to help at the booth or have a display.

### Short Line Railroad House Bill 738

We may have a "Short Line Railroad" display again this year if Representative Rachel Bringer's House Bill 738, which designates a portion of Missouri 19 as the "Short Line Railroad Spur Historic Trail," is signed by that time. Rachel sent word that it was on the desk of Governor Holden waiting his signature. We plan to send a delegation to the signing of the Bill. It may be signed near Kansas City because of the Bill it is attached too. If you are interested in going connect me

**September Meeting;**

On Saturday, September 20 daytime picnic meeting is being planned to be held at the Perry MO city park. It is hoped that out of the area members can attend.

**Lone Prairie School Book Now Available**

The Ralls County Historical Society now has available "Lone Prairie School 1892-1959, Ralls County Missouri" written by Helen Ruth Galloway Renner a graduate of the school. She was helped by many of the friends, students and teachers of the old rural school. This fifty-page book includes a detailed history of the former one room Ralls County rural school and has many photos of its former teachers and students. She includes biographical information on most of the known teachers. This school was located in southern Ralls County and after graduation the students went to both Perry and Vandalia High schools. It can be purchased by sending \$10.00 (postage paid) to Ralls County Historical Society, P.O. 182, Center MO. 63436. We hope to have the book available at other sites soon. Thanks Helen, great job.

**Area News**

Landmarks of Northeast Missouri Inc. have available two books. 1. "Recollections of Palmyra" is a reprint of articles written by Richard Tatlow from the Palmyra MO Spectator in 1905. The book is full of history, genealogy and facts on old Palmyra. If you are interested in the history of Northeast Missouri, this book would be a great book to add to your library. 2. "Unpublished Palmyra Massacre War Record From The National Archives." The book is a series of articles published in the 1990 Palmyra MO written by Ruth Hastings and the late Corbyn Jacobs. If you have any interest in the Palmyra Massacre or the Civil War in Northeast Missouri, this book is full of such information. Both books are \$5.00 each plus \$1.50 postage, but you can buy up to five books for the \$1.50 postage. Contact Landmarks Inc., 203 Dingle Ave., Palmyra MO 63461. You can also call 573-769-3053 or 573-769-2615.

**Ilasco Souvenir Book**

The Ilasco Historical Preservation Society is taking orders for the second printing of the Ilasco Souvenir Book until July 15. The book will sell for \$20 and must be paid in advance. If it is to be mailed, there will be a \$5 shipping and handling fees. After July 15, the cost of the book will be \$25, if there are any books available. The books will not be delivered and arrangements must be made to pick up the book if it is not mailed. Requests for books and payment should be mailed to Ilasco Area Historical Preservation Society, in care of David Polc, 62744 Brown Estates, Hannibal MO 63401. For more information, call Jim or Dorothy Tatman at (573) 221-6708, Anita Altheide at (573) 221-1773 or Sally Polc at (573) 248-1216. This book is full of pictures of the schools, churches and people in the area around this historical village.

Delbert Allen of Hannibal prepared a book on the history of the Mills Creek School south of Hannibal in Ralls County. There is a complete history of the school and many pictures of the schools and students who attended. Mills Creek operated as a high school at one time in to school and later in the Granger Hall across the road. Contact Delbert Allen [dfallen@areatech.com](mailto:dfallen@areatech.com) about getting a copy.

**Area Events**

July 20; Swinky Picnic Indian Creek MO

August 9; 23rd Salt River Folk life Festival, Florida MO

September 26-27 "A Walk Back in Time" September 26-27 Mexico MO

August 17; Utterback Reunion; Care-in dinner 12:45 PM Monroe City MO at the Monroe City Senior Center. The Ely, Scobee, Rouse, Crigler, Cowan, Edward, Miller and many other families all have ties to this family.

August 31, Spencer Creek Baptist Church will have a 125th Anniversary Celebration and have a carry-in luncheon. The church is 8 miles north of Vandalia on route P. There will be a Morning Service at 9:30, Worship at 10:30 and 1:00 the luncheon

September 27, "Time Was Days" Perry MO

September 28, "Old Perry High Reunion" Perry MO

October 17, 18, & 19; Porter's Raid at Palmyra MO sponsored by the Landmarks of Northeast Missouri Inc.

**Memberships;**

If you haven't renewed your 2003 membership please send your check to Ralls County Historical Society, Box #182, Center MO. 63436. The dues remain \$10.00 for an individual and \$15.00 for family memberships.

Ralls County Cemetery  
Isaac Ely Cemetery, Center Twp., township 55-range 6-section 27

Coleman; Elizabeth, born August 27, 1844, died September 11, 1844, daughter of J. & I. C

Ely; Isaac sr., died 1857 age 82 years, 3 months, 14 days

Ely; Mary J., died September 13, 1823, age 45 years, 5 months, 23 days (This is oldest death date I have found on a marker in Ralls County)

Glover; Thomas C., died 22, 1864, age 17 years, 1 month, 25 days, son of E, G. & E

See; Conrad, born December 23, 1761, died June 2, 1833, age 71 years, 5 months & 5 days

See; James, born May 29, 1798, died November 24, 1839

### **Presidents View;**

A large part of the history of Ralls County is being lost as the old rural schools disappear after being closed for more than forty years. To preserve as much history of these schools history as possible I will be forming a committee to record and preserve the history of these schools. Let me know if you would like to be a member of this committee. We have received a number of pictures of these schools and I have large collection of my own. I have also a number of articles and histories of the schools in the county too. The committees' job would mainly be to find and collect all the material possible about the schools in a file. I would also like to have volunteers who would like to write of a short or long history of a rural school they or members of their families attended. Look in attics, basements, and trunks for information, pictures, articles or any other material about the Ralls County rural schools. I will names the committee at the September 20 meeting.

### **BIT OF RALLS COUNTY HISTORY**

The follow genealogy was contributed by member Anita Gatson Allen, Thanks Anita. If you can contribute or would like more information you can e-mail her at anviallee@earthlink.net.

Butlers and Gatsons in Ralls County:

The first Butler known to us, was born in Bedford, England in 1551. We have 17 generations and are willing to share, but our ancestor: Dudley Butler (born in Kentucky) did not enter the history of Ralls County until 1820.

Like most of the families in the Madisonville and Spencer Creek area, the Butlers and Gatsons came to Missouri from Kentucky. Previously some family members had lived in Maryland, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, or Virginia.

With Dudley Butler's party migrating to Missouri, was the family of John Liter Jr. In this family was the teenage daughter, Matilda Liter who would become the wife of Dudley in October of 1827. To this union a large family was born. Their daughter Catherine Butler was the ancestress of many of the Evans, Wasson, Smith and Thompsons of Ralls County. Another daughter, Susan Butler was the forebear of Liters and Petefish branches of the family. Mary Ann Butler was the progenitor of another Fowler and Cox branch.

Dudley's son and my ancestor:

John Henry Butler (ggrandfather) was the father of ten children with Lucinda Francis Rice. Their descendants included the Ralls County families of Anderson, Fowler, Nichols, Tolbert, Webb, Clark, Dudley C. Butler, Coss and James Edward Butler. His first wife passed away in January of 1874 and he married Lizzie W. Johnson in December of the same year. One must remember that often the widowed persons had a number of children who required care, it was almost mandatory to marry again or find help to care for the children.

John Henry Butler married second: Lizzie Waddell Johnson. Lizzie's first husband Harrison T. Johnson had passed away at the age of 29 years leaving her with three children: John Richard Johnson, Mary Elizabeth Johnson (Mrs. Johnson Bentley Clark-mother of Genii (Mrs. Paul Kendrick), and Fannie R. Johnson (unmarried).

Upon the death of her first husband, Lizzie Waddell Johnson had married her brother in law: William Buster

Johnson (he had 8 children, which Lizzie raised when he died at 39 years of age.) Flo Mae Johnson Pierce was one of her second husband's grand children. Flo May's father being Joseph Kelly Johnson and her mother Flora A. Moore.

John Henry Butler and both of his wives and some of their children are buried at the Dudley Butler Cemetery near Madisonville on the Billy Evans (Ronnie Evans') farm.

To the union of John Henry Butler and Lizzie Waddell Johnson Butler were born four children of which two died at birth. My grandmother's only full brother, Jesse Butler, passed away unmarried at 23 years of age. My grandmother Pearl Cordelia Butler married James Thomas Gatson and they resided on the Butler Homestead in Ralls County.

Back to the original Ralls County Gatson Patriarch: John Gatson (gggrandfather) had settled in the area near Perry, Missouri in 1830. The Gatson School was established on his property, now at the junction of Roosevelt and Truman Road. His son, Willoughby Scott Gatson grew up in that community with some time at the Madisonville Community.

W.S. Gatson's son, James Thomas Gatson (grandfather) had clerked as a young man at a store in Madisonville, then the family of Sarah Elizabeth Self Gatson and Willoughby Scott Gatson moved to Vandalia and J.T. clerked there. Because he enjoyed farming, James Thomas Gatson returned to work as a hired man to the home of his future father in law John Henry Butler near Jassamine, MO. (Jassamine was located at the corner of Oriole Rd. on the property owned by Adam Gatson. They eventually purchased the balance of the farm from the other heirs and James Thomas Gatson passed away there in 1938. Pearl C. Butler Gatson moved to Vandalia in 1940, where she spent the balance of her years.

James Thomas Gatson and Pearl C. Butler Gatson were married in 1899. That same year a telephone line was strung from Madisonville to Vandalia and Flo May Johnson Pierce's father grew an experimental plot of soya beans for green forage for his chickens.

To the union of James Thomas Gatson and Pearl Butler were born Willoughby Henry Gatson and Dr. of Theology Curtis Lee Gatson. W.H. was my father and a farmer his entire life. Curtis was a minister of the Gospel. He passed away in South Dakota and is buried at Winner, my father at the Vandalia Cemetery.

During the Civil War, John Henry Butler (ggrandfather) served for a six month enlistment under Confederate General Sterling Price. The group marched out of Missouri and into the Boston Mountains of Arkansas, they had no battles during his tenure of enlistment. When his six months were up, he returned home. He took a loyalty oath and farmed. He then served in the Corn Stalk Militia, a group organized to protect a local area.

He built a log cabin on property he later sold to a Fowler.

The first substantial home on what was the Dan Wise farm, burned when Grandmother Pearl C. Butler Gatson was about three years of age. She was rescued from upstairs when the fire got out of control. She had been taking a nap, awakened, and in her fear crawled under her bed. She recalled watching the demise of the house from a cattle trough in the lot.

John Henry Butler had an economic down turn due to the purchase of some cattle from Texas that were infected with hoof and mouth disease. He took two of his younger sons to homestead in Baca County, Colorado, in 1889. His wife and two younger children came as soon as a suitable home was constructed. The family remained until drought drove them back to Missouri in 1896. He sold the homestead and all it contained for \$600, not even covering the cost of his improvements, which included a two story frame house. Several of his daughters or step daughters also homesteaded their 160 acres adjoining his.

Grandmother Pearl C. and Jesse Butler attended Minneapolis, Colorado, school while living in Baca County.

The Butler School House centered in the section between the Highway P and Oriole Road. Willoughby Henry Gatson (my father) and many others in the community attended this school. Each of W.H. & Lorene Gatson's four children attended and graduated from the eight grade at Butler: Carolyn, Evelyn, Anita and Arnold. Arnold was in the last class before the Audrain County R-I took in most of the Butler School District. Mark Twain Schools acquired the balance.

Previously a Fowler School, near present day Spencer Creek Baptist Church, had been the site of scholarly efforts. An evangelistic meeting was held at Fowler School in 1880. Fowler School was the site for the

organization of Spencer Creek Baptist Church April 18, 1878. Many community schools served the dual purpose of weekly lessons and Sunday religious services.

Willoughby Scott Gatson (gggrandfather) went to the Gold Rush in California in 1849 and remained for eight years. His father, John Gatson (gggrandfather) joined him there for two years. They returned by ship and came up the Mississippi River. W.S. Gatson did not wish to repeat the almost fatal journey he made when he ventured west with a Boyd. The two Gatson men brought home some nuggets sewn into the tails of their coats.

During the Civil War, Willoughby Scott Gatson served for 2 years in the Third Regiment of Missouri State Militia on the Union side. He furnished his own horse and its equipment during his tenure. He later received a pension for digestive disorders and arthritis brought on by exposure during the war. His minor daughter and widow received a small pension until Lizzie Gatson Nardin reached her majority.

His children:

John S. Gatson was a lawyer, he served as mayor of Vandalia, Judge and representative. His fiancée was killed in an accident and he never married. He was postmaster at Vandalia when he passed away.

James Thomas Gatson remained in Audrain and Ralls County his entire life.

The only daughter of Willoughby S. & Sarah Elizabeth Self Gatson was Lizzie Gatson, who married George F. Nardin, a fellow school teacher who became a vice president in Houghlin-Mifflin Publishing Company.

The above family buried at Vandalia Cemetery in Audrain County, Missouri.

The Butlers owned seven homesteads from Madisonville to the Spencer Creek Community. Dudley Butler's being the most northerly and the John Henry Butler place the most southerly.

Stuart Self, the father of Sarah Elizabeth Self Gatson (above) and his wife Nancy Silver Self helped start a Baptist Church (Zoar) in their home near Hannibal in 1837. They disagreed with a previous church and wished to send out missionaries. The church moved into Hannibal in 1841. The family also resided near Madisonville at one time. His brother and sister in law were charter members at Spencer Creek Baptist Church.

Grandmother Pearl C. Butler Gatson had many half siblings, only one full living brother and eight step siblings in their household. She mentioned that as many as seventeen children of the combined families ate meals at one time. She was next to the last of the living children.

(Deceased) W. Arnold Gatson's sons: W. Adam Gatson's and Greg S. Gatson's families remain in the Spencer Creek/Butler community.

Of the 1930-40's generation: V. Carolyn Gatson McBride resides in Vandalia. S. Evelyn Gatson Evans lives in Texas and Anita L. Gatson Allee at Versailles.

Compiled by Anita Gatson Allee