

Ralls County Historical

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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:

May Meeting;

Our May meeting will be Monday, May 19 at the Ralls County Court in New London in the courtroom on the second floor. As usual the door will open at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m... Jamie Page of Klingner & Associates will discuss the results of the study for the restoration of the courthouse done by his firm earlier this year. (See below) He will also take a brief walking tour of the courthouse to highlight some of the items discussed. This will be an excellent time for members and guests to see the work needed at the courthouse or get their first view of the historic building.

Courthouse Study Complete

The renovation study of the Ralls County Courthouse in New London by Klingner & Associates is complete. The report considered 1. Electrical HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), lighting, insulation, and widow replacement. 2. Structural improvements 3. Asbestos. The total for the project is estimated at \$1,225,000. A public county wide meeting will be held late this year to get public input and to discuss funding of the project. The above meeting above will only to preview the results of the study and discuss what the societies part is the project.

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.

Frankford Missouri School Reunion;

There will be a Frankford Missouri School Reunion Sunday, May 25, 2003 at the Frankford City Park. Registration will be at 10:00 a.m. and rolls call for class pictures at noon. In case of rain it will be moved to the Frankford grade school. There will be a get-to-together at the First Christian church 6:00 p.m. Saturday, May 24, \$6.00 per person. Tickets are now available for a benefit of two Frankford crocks to support the reunion; tickets are \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. Bring your lawn chairs. For more information e-mail Elaine Lippincott celip@sbcglobal.net

Ilasco Missouri Centennial;

The Ilasco Centennial will be held June 14, at the American Legion Hall in Hannibal. A souvenir school reunion book is being planned. If you have photos or information of grade and high school graduation classes of the former Ilasco R-1 school district contact David and Sally at 573-248-1216 or e-mail polc@socket.net. The special effort is being made to invite students from the following elementary school that were in the Ilasco district; Marble Creek, Stillwell Addition, Saverton, Centenary, Oak Hill, Flint Hill, Mills Creek and the Rumanian Hall. Photo and information are needed for this school also.

Help Needed;

Ernie Duckworth the Ralls County Clerk has contacted the Missouri State Archives and they will be microfilming records in his office soon. If you can be available, they could use helpers in preparing and refilling documents, if you are interested in helping interested please contact me (Ron Leake e-mail rwleake@aol.com, 1276 Pequeno Lane, Fenton MO, 636-225-8575)

New Research Source;

The Shelby County Missouri Historical Society will have a new museum at 107 South Center Street, the former Dimmitt-Presson Florist in Shelbina, MO. Plans are to open the new museum in early July 2003. The building is 22X75 with heat & AC and a bathroom. There will be 3 rooms, and 2 will be for displays and a 22X20 research library complete with a computer, copier and microfilm reader. All the resources of the Historical Society will be located in the research library.

Local Research Source;

The Mark Twain Birthplace Museum at Florida Missouri has a little known library which has a large amount of information the history of the Ralls and Monroe county area. There is a large collection of Photos of people and places. I recently found photos Anna Laura Hawkins Frazer and husband's home in Madisonville there.

Lone Prairie School History;

Helen Renner has completed her rough draft of the Lone Prairie School book and plans to have it available soon.

Short Line Railroad;

Representative Rachel Bringer's House Bill 738, which designates a portion of Missouri 19 as the "Short Line Railroad Spur Historic Trail," was recently passed by the House as part of Senate Bill 423. That bill is now in the Senate awaiting approval before being sent to the Governor for his signature.

Ralls Masonic Lodge #33

The Ralls Masonic Lodge is 150 years old the month which it one of the oldest in Missouri. There will be an open house from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the lodge above Ralls County State Bank at the corner of South Palmyra and East Lamb Streets on May 24th. At 6:30 there will be a banquet at the Center Elementary School with a speaker to follow. Sorry, but the banquet tickets where the sold by May 6

Ralls County Missouri Historical Society: Regular meetings.

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

Fagan School;

Ralls County School district like most of the districts in Missouri are having budget problems and for this reason the Fagan school move to the Perry Elementary School yard was been put on hold.

Ralls County Cemetery;

Geery Family Cemetery; Spencer twp. 14-55-4

Campbell; Margaret Frances, (Geery) w/o William, d. April 29, 1863, age 18 yr., 7 mo., d/o J. G. & E. H. Geery

Fisher; Laura A., d. September 21, 1872, age 4 yr., 2 mo., 2 da., d/o E. & M. J.

Geery; John, b. June 12, 1783 @ York Co. PA, d. July 6, 1860, s/o William & Catherine (Houts) Geery, 1/m Elizabeth Guthrie, December 9, 1805, 2/m March 20, 1822 Elizabeth Hicklin, 3/m October 11, 1831 @ St. Charles Co. MO, Elizabeth Costly/Costelo, 4/m October 31, 1844, Jane Pittman

Geery; Elizabeth, (Guthrie) b. February 20, 1783, d. September 1820

Geery; Elizabeth, (Hicklin) b. February ??, 1783, d. December 23, 1831 (December 23, 1830 bible)

Geery; Elizabeth, (Costly or Costelo) b. 1783, d. November 18, 1842

Geery; Elizabeth Harris, (Reed) b. May 13, 1818m d. June 12, 1867, age 49 yr., 2 mo., w/o John Gideon Blackburn

Geery; Mary Colwell, d. November, 22, 1843, age 3 da., d/o J. G. B. & E. H.

Geery; Elizabeth, d. October 3, 1877, age 26 yr., 10 mo., 11 da., d/o G. B. & E. H.

Geery; Infant s/o G. R. & E., b. & d. Sept ??, 1879

Geery; John Gideon Blackburn, b. September 25, 1817, d. September 28, 1889, m. June 9, 1842, Elizabeth Harris Reed

Webb; Clarence R., d. July 2, 1878, age 2 mo., 16 da., s/o E. A. & L. C.

Information from: Mike Weaver cemetery records and Geery family bible

Presidents Views; None this issue

Bit of Ralls County History; Center Herald August 11, 1955

Western Expansion

The latter part of the nineteenth century brought about many changes in the history of Missouri as well the entire west. This was the period during which many people were migrating westward. The East was beginning to be so thickly settled it was uncomfortable for the adventure living pioneer men and women. Land could be bought so much cheaper in the west, it was a real opportunity for the people who wanted to be farmers.

This was the period during which my step-grandmother came to Missouri from Princetown West Virginia. Early in the year 1869, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jenks and their four children loaded their most precious belongings into a wagon at Princetown. They were on their way to Shelby County Missouri to settle an estate that had been left to the family. After the real estate transfers were over, they planned to go to Kansas to make their home. The chief reason they left West Virginia, was to go to a place where they could buy cheap land.

They had some difficulty in transportation. They started out in wagons, then took a boat and finally had to go on trains and wagons again before they reached Shelby County. The state was grown up in prairie grass and wild shrubbery. At that time land in Shelby County could be bought for twelve and one half cents an acre. The county did not exactly suit them as they had given up the idea of going to Kansas. They wandered around and finally settled north of what is now Center.

Center, at that time was composed of one general store and a few scattered dwellings that went under the name of Jefftown. There was no post-office there then. There was a sort of post-office, tavern and general store about four miles southeast of Center where Mrs. Mary Boyd now lives. This place belonged to my great-grand grandfather and was the halfway place between Hannibal and Mexico. It was the stopping place for people on their way to Hannibal to sell produce. The original log house has been replaced by a frame structure within the last decade.

During that time Madisonville was the thriving of the two towns, Center and Madisonville. There were several stores and dwellings there. In case of illness it was necessary to go to Madisonville to get a doctor.

There began to be talk of a railroad through Jefftown in the next few years. This made the people want to build up the town and keep up with the rest of the country. There were several stores built and churches organized. The Methodist was the first church to be organized. It was probably built in the latter part of the eighties. The first Baptist church was located in the building over Calhoun Harness Shop; the present building being erected in 1898. The first Christian Church was organized soon after. The first building burned in 1913 and a new one was erected in 1914.

The first train came through the town in 1895. There were two post-offices: one on each side of the track. There was a dispute about what the town should be called. Some wanted it to be Center because it is about the center of Ralls County. Some wanted to call it Jefftown in honor of Jeff Ellis who first had settled there. It was finally decided it should be called Center.

In 1874 a number of years after my grandmother came to Missouri, my grandfather's people came for practically the same reason my grandmother's father and mother had come. My great-grandfather, Dr. R. Cole, wanted to go where he could buy land for his children. They had lived in Carrolton Illinois, in the same where the late Speaker Henry T. Rainey lived. My grandfather's older brother and Mr. Rainey were childhood playmates.

Dr. Cole brought his family to Ralls County Missouri and settled about six and one-half miles southwest of Center, Missouri on the place now owned by O.R. Jackson. Dr. Cole was a physician and Baptist minister who preached around all through this part of the country.

Perhaps one of the most interesting events of Dr. Cole's life in Ralls County occurred during the time when he was holding a revival meeting at Adiel church, a small country Baptist church located east of Madisonville, between Madisonville and Elk Lick. During this meeting the notorious Jesse James was in attendance at the service. He came to the Adiel neighborhood under an assumed name to find work. He worked at various farm homes never molesting anyone. Mr. Duncan Ellis, of LaJunta Colorado, tells an interesting story of him working for his father and himself. Mr. and Mrs. Ellis had gone to his father's house for a visit, Jesse James came there that night and asked to spend the night. They did not know at the time that he was Jesse James. Mr. Ellis was kind of behind in his spring work and this stranger offered to cut spouts and help him get started. He worked for him about a month and then left and went to work for neighbor by the name of George Fisher. He worked there about a month and left. He told Mrs. Fisher he was going to leave, but would not tell where to nor why.

He had been going under the name of Henry Hammond. When he left, he said that Frank Beavers, a circuit rider, also a relative of Cash and Claude Beavers, north of Vandalia, would be there that night and would know him by the name John O. Franklin. They did not know how he knew Mr. Beavers was coming that night, but he did come. When told that John O. Franklin had worked with him, Mr. Beavers looked as if he had been shot. Mr. Beavers said that Franklin had worked with him in a Sunday school in South Missouri. The detectives got after him and he was forced to leave. They later found he was Jesse James.

Mr. Ellis second daughter was a little baby, when Jesse James worked there. He was good to take care of her. One day he asked Mrs. Ellis if he might name her. He said he wanted to call her Lerah Morris for a girl he knew by that name. They called her that until she died.

Jesse James then disappeared from this part of the country.

Both my grandmother and grandfather have seen many changes in the time that they have been in Missouri and they think there will still be many changes. Landmarks that were here then are now gone and the things that have added since they have been are many.

Written by Mrs. Chas. Hawkinson around 1915