

Ralls County Historical

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July 2004

RALLS COUNTY MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 182

CENTER MISSOURI 63436

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

Ralls County Historical Museum and Library

120 East Main Street, Perry Missouri

Open Saturday 9:00-5:00 Sunday 11:00-4:00, Wednesday 10:00-5:00

Phone 573-565-2025

Dear Ralls County Members and Friends;

July 19 Meeting;

The July 19 meeting will be at the Ilasco Methodist church in Ilasco. The doors will open at 6:00 pm and tours of points of interest will begin at 6:30 sharp. The jail, former Al's Bar, Holy Cross Catholic Church and the Memorials to Ilasco and its people will be featured. The meeting will begin around 8:00 pm or as soon as the tours are completed. As you will see in this newsletter, we have many irons in the fire and I will have more details about these and other projects, so members please try and attend.

Dave Polc, Sally Polc and the Ilasco Area Historical Preservation Society have done an upstanding job in preserving the history and honoring the people of Ilasco.

September Meeting Change of Date;

The Perry City Park is not available September 19 because of the "Time Was Days", so the society annual picnic had to be moved to the next Saturday. September 25. Plans are being made to have Blues Hog cater the picnic. I will have more information later in a mini-newsletter and local newspapers. Sorry about the change

May Meeting;

The May meeting at the Historic Big Creek Church Presbyterian Church at Rensselaer was one of the best attended and informative meetings we have ever had. Mrs. Yochum and other members of the church presented a display of pictures, articles, artifact, books and documents of the history of Big Creek Church and the many schools of Rensselaer. Mrs. Yochum gave a very detailed history of the church and the families who help establish and made church want it is now.

Courthouse Meetings;

Two more informational meetings will be held in July to explain the 1/2 sales tax to fund the restoration of the 1858 Ralls County Courthouse. The tax measure will be voted on in the August Primary Election. Please try and attend these meetings and help support the courthouse project

On July 20 the first will be held at the Saverton Community building at 7:00 pm and on July 22 one at the Perry MO VFW also at 7:00 pm. Representatives from the county and others will be present to answer the voter's questions.

Museum Expansion;

Effective the first of August we have rented the adjoining shop east of our present museum-library. We have outgrown the present shop and items have been coming in weekly that need to be displayed or stored. We are working on getting a large collection of items and the Fox and Sac museum looks very favorable (see below). A donation will cover some of the added cost and books sales over e-bay should generate a steady income also. We have a number of fund-raising programs being planned and you will see some of them in this newsletter. Memberships and donations will continue to be our main source of income. The attendance increases weekly as people learn of the large amount of sources and items we have. If you have not been in the museum since the opening or at all, please stop in and see how we have grown.

Fox and Sac Museum;

We have met with Representatives of the Missouri Humanities Counsel, Fox and Sac Indian tribe and Pike County Historical Society about having a Fox and Sax museum. It may be a traveling museum or shared with Pike County and other historical Society in the area. We will be having more meetings with these and other groups later in the year. If you would like more information or if you would like to attend the meetings please contact me.

Book Store;

Details are being worked out for the Society to open a book store at the Visitor Center at the Cannon Dam. The only money we would need is the inventory of books, and there is a possibility that this would be donated another source. The store would be a great source of income for the Museum and other projects. We can get personnel to operate the store through Experience Works, at no cost if members don't want to volunteer.

Recipe Book;

A recipe book is being planned as a fund raiser for our museum and other projects. Please bring your recipes to the meeting, drop them at the museum or mail them to our Center MO address. PO 182, Center Mo 63436

New Monroe County Missouri History;

The Monroe County Historical Society is sponsoring, compiling and publishing *Monroe County... Then and Now* in commemoration of the county's upcoming 175th Anniversary in 2006. For more information contact Nancy Stone, phone 660-327-5302, email NaNa715@aol.com, or Mary McCollum, phone 660-327-4714, email mcclm@mcmsys.com. I will have pamphlets at the meeting.

Missouri Civil War Heritage Foundation;

We have been contacted by the Missouri Civil War Heritage Foundation, Inc., 503 E. Nifong Blvd #240, Columbia MO. 65201 website <http://www.mocivilwar.org/home/>

This group is working with the Missouri Division of Tourism on a tour guide of Missouri Civil War sites. Both Ralls County and all of northeast Missouri has many of these unheralded sites and this could be a way in get the public more aware of the part that Ralls and northeast Missouri played in this important part of history.

Just some of the Ralls County sites would be Goodwin Mill, Madisonville, homes of Col. Ralls, Absalom Grimes, Col. Tinker and burial sites of those men.

I would like one or more of our members to volunteer to work with this in finding and researching locations. I would work closely with this member or members in their work

Ralls County Cemetery; I'm, but because of time and space problems I will not have a cemetery in this newsletter, I will make it up to you in next one. Sorry

Bit of Ralls County History;

Perry Missouri "Enterprise" December 22, 1921

This week Boss Anderson and wrecking crew are engaged in destructive work on the old St. Paul schoolhouse, which is rapidly being demolished.

We were asked to write the obituary of this dear old historic Alma Mater, which we respectfully proceed to do, fully conscious of our unworthiness, for there is something sacred about the very name that speaks only to the tender and grateful pen of an alumnus especially when the hoary locks of time have made it venerable.

Attachment to school and school day, "be they ever so humble" is hardly outrivaled in strength even by the ties of home itself, thou the latter come first.

Their association always appeals to us and we lovingly give them a place in our memories.

It is no wonder therefore that a goodly number of people assembled for a farewell sitting, as at a wake before a funeral in the old days.

For well nigh two years this historic old building had been defunct, and ever since had laid in state, in solemn, solitary grandeur, for no one could have the heart to disturb the remains. Sentiment, however, like every thing else, runs its course, and so on December 8th the chopping axe eventually was a put to work on one of the oldest and most interesting country school in Northeast Missouri.

Coming into being in 1857, this little institution in its long and eventful career, had, according to report turned out more teachers than any other country school of its size in the state. Its original size was 16x15 feet and we are told by some of the old pupils that as many as 80 scholars congregated within this space at one time.

Later on in 1882 an addition was built on, the dimensions of which were 16x61 ½ feet thus giving the children more elbow room, thou the primitive structure too was not without its advantages as it offered less opportunity for the time honored privilege of throwing an occasional paper wad at the teacher.

The social and intellectual activities of the old school were always of a high order.

Perhaps the most memorable and enjoyable period of its existence in this regard as from 1885 to 1892 when a debating society held weekly meetings within its hallowed walls. Week after week, during those years, the little edifice to the intense delight and profit of packed crowds vibrated with the forceful oratory of some very capable debaters, in the persons of Redmond Hays. Kirtley Lynch, Mr. Speers, Jim Boyd, W. E. Cox, Jin Noonan, Theodore Burnett, and it would seem, as an all round debater, that Carrie Jones, was able to hold her own with any of her rivals of the masculine persuasion.

The old people still love to speak of those days and always mention with deep respect and affection gratitude the name of Miss Bettie Tatlow, who did so much for them. Delving into the archives of St. Paul recently we dug up, among other things of interest the following clipping from the Ralls County "Times" of 1886, which was then edited by M. Mayhall at New London. "To be present at the debating society at St. Paul school house on Friday eve last was our pleasure. We found the society in a flourishing condition. This society was organized by Miss Tatlow who worked perseveringly to make it successful and entertaining. Recitations, reading, a sermon by Rev. Watkins, with debate following, was the program after the usual opening exercises, for the particular evening. The paper, edited by Miss Mollie Smith, compared favorably with those of other societies. We very much appreciate perfection in reading and Mrs. Redmond Hays knows just how to please her audience and us. The selections in recitations were all appropriate and rendered in good style, especially Miss Abbie Lynch as this young lady entered into the spirit of her piece in the most pleasing and effective style. The Chinese emigration question was eloquently defended by Mr. Lynch, affirming that our country would be benefited by Chinese emigration. The negative was well represented by Redmond Hayes and Mr. Noonan, who captivated the house with their happy forcible Irish eloquence and sent the queried celestial to his empire there to remain, and Mr. Lynch and his

side of the question thrown in. The former we endorsed along with friend Kirt's defense, but we don't propose to give him up. As many of the working members were going to be called away, and particularly Miss Tatlow, the society thought best to adjourn sine die.

We won't try to describe Brother Watkins's sermon on this occasion fearing we might picture him so perfectly "his wife" would recognize the picture and find out he had been preaching (?) instead of singing."

Evidently Brother Watkins made a hit with the natives, as his name had been a household word around St. Paul for many a long year afterwards.

Referring to "the paper edited by Miss Mollie Smith mentioned in the clipping, it seems, each week one of the members of the society got up a paper, made up of original jokes, stories and poems chronicling the daily incidents of local interest.

In one of those papers appeared the following lines, but we were unable to discover whether they are to be credited to Miss Smith or not, nor were we able to identify the Jim referred to, whether it was Jim Noonan, Jim Boyd, Jim Fanning or Jim Reed, but extrinsic evidence at hand would point to the former, though the latter reluctantly admit that he "did get a kick in the pants from a cow about that time, to show there was no hard feeling:"

"Our smiling Jim with shining pail
Went gladly singing down the dale
To Where the cow with the brindle tail
Her Palate on clover, did regale
Right then, a humming bee did sail
Far over the soft and shadowy vale
To where our Jim with the shining pail
Was milking the cow with the brindle tail.
The bee sat down on the cow's left ear
Her Heels flew up through the atmosphere
And through the leave of the chestnut tree
Our Jim soared towards eternity."

John J. Lilly, who is now a priest in Springfield Missouri, taught in St. Paul in 1868. Father Lilly is a brother of James Lilly, north of Perry and is still in the harness in active service though 79 years old.

Bud Elliott is thinking of making a missal stand for him out of souvenir lumber from the old school, as he was one of his former pupils.

Though many substantial classes passed through the St. Paul school, which is now a happy memory, it is pretty generally agreed that the class of 68 was one of the most memorable. Surviving members of that class are: Uncle Bud Elliott, Matthew Elliott, Rosemond Leake, Nicholas Leake, Jim Reed, Squire Gardner, Grandpa Giboney, Jim Fanning, Pete Fanning, Charley Staats (Ohio), Ben Staats (Hannibal), Polly Haines, John Haines (Louisiana) Sante Haines (Sacramento), George Mudd, Hilary Leake (Hannibal), Tom Leake, Foley Spalding (Spokane).

By very many, both old and young, scattered over the country, the memory of the St. Paul old school will long be treasured, but by none will its name be more warmly cherished than by Jim Reed, to whom it always meant so much solicitude. He was not the only one though, who, at the gathering on December 8th joined, with tear dimmed eye in the chant "Bring Back The Old Days" as a requiem, but sob stuff was presently unheard above the noise of the merciless axe, which was irritating even as the dull thud of the cold earth rattling on a coffin. As in all things human, there is manifest, after a demise, a prompt concern for the "filthy lucre" and the property disposed of by will, so immediately after the school obsequies Thursday, pertinent questions were asked about the disposition to be made of the old school site. etc. It was learned that it reverts to the Wickerham estate, that \$22.50 is to be paid to the school board for the old school material by Boss Anderson who is using the same from a hennery.

The hens though seem not to be the only beneficiaries of the transaction for in the language of George Staats, "though the roasters around St. Paul always did believe that the sun rose in the heavens every morning for the express purpose of hearing them crow. Boss's cockerels are extra chesty

since their quarters assumed the make-up of a school." Be that as it may, it surely is a strange state of things when the passing of a school long in service, becomes an occasion for crowing. We rather share the sentiments of regret expressed by Mrs. Hays, (Hayes), when with bowed head, in passing the old school site as by a grave yard she fervently exclaimed "god be with the old school, and the old days and the old people." R.I.P