

# *Ralls County Historical Society*

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## **RALLS COUNTY MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**P.O. BOX 182**

**CENTER MISSOURI 63436**

**Phone 573-565-2025**

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

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

### **Museum-Library Grand Opening**

The grand opening of our new museum-library was a great success. About 80 people attended the event all day. We are presently open Wednesday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The location is 120 East Main Street, Perry Missouri. Please do not use this address for mail or correspondence, use the above Center, Missouri address only.

This project could not have completed and been successful without a lot of hard work by members of the society. I would like to specially like to thank them for their contributions of both sweat and ideas.

To maintain, improve and grow the museum we need volunteers as carpenters, word processors, librarians, receptionists and computer operators. Photos, books and other items are coming in every open day and help is needed to process, record and displaying these items. Already space is at a premium and displays need to be built. More open days are needed, especially during the summer, so help will be needed to operate and help researchers. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us by writing, e-mailing or calling the society at the above address. Also you can connect me at 1276 Pequeno Lane, Fenton MO. 63026, 636-225-6575, rwleake@aol.com. If you are unable to help in person because of distance or health financial contribution would help in maintaining the site.

A very special thanks goes out to all the members and nonmembers who have donated photos, books and other items. More items are needed from Center, New London and other parts of Ralls County.

The front window of the museum will feature Ralls County club, organizations and special displays on National holidays. If your group or organization would be interested in being featured please contact us.

### **Phone Number and E-Mail Address**

The phone number at the Museum-Library is 573-565-2025 and will be our business number. You can contact us during the hours the museum is open or leave a message. We will soon also have an e-mail address, which I will send in a later mini-newsletter.

## **Thanks**

We would like to thank the Perry Wednesday Club and the Perry 4H club for the landscaping at the old "Perry Bank" building at the Perry city park. Work was begun on the restoration of the building and should be completed soon. The restoration and landscaping will give us a great location for the Fourth of July, Time Was Days, and our annual picnic.

## **May 17 Meeting**

The Ralls County Historical Society will hold its May 17 meeting at the Historic Big Creek Church Presbyterian Church at Rensselaer, Ralls County Missouri. The doors will be opened at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m.. Following the meeting there will be a tour of the Church and the former Van Rensselaer Academy, now called the Little Red School House. The church was erected in 1866 and the school in 1852. The Van Rensselaer Academy was one of the first schools of its type west of the Mississippi River. The church address is 49515 Big Creek Lane and is about two miles south of US Highway 36 and 11 miles north of Center on State Route H. There are two driveways to the church, one on the east side of Highway H, south of the crossroad of H and Big Creek Lane. The second is southeast off Big Creek Lane immediately east of the crossroad. Parking is also available east of the Little Red School House and along the south side of the church as well as along the driveways. The public is invited to attend both the meeting and tour.

Because the meeting and tour will not be over until after dark and traffic would make it dangerous walking, the people wishing to visit the Big Creek Cemetery will need to stop there before the meeting and tour. The cemetery is across Highway H a little to the south of the church. Annie Laura Hawkins Frazer who is said to have been the inspiration for Becky Thatcher is buried there with her husband Doctor John W. Frazer.

There are number of issues that need to be discussed at the meeting, so if possible please be on time so we can finish our meeting and get right to the program. The Opening of book store at the Mark Twain Lake Visitors Center, Center Short Line Depot, Courthouse, changes in the Society bylaws and other subject will be discussed

## **Help Needed**

As in the past we will have a display at the local events like New London Park Days, Center Park Days and Perry Forth of July. If you can help at these events, please let us know as soon as possible.

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

**"Ralls County"** This 472-page history of Ralls County written by Goldena Howard contains a detail history of the county and its people from the time of the first prehistoric people to 1980, when the book was completed. The book contains not only a detailed history of Ralls County, but also has many photos and more than 90 pages of detail contributed genealogies of Ralls county families. (\$50.00 +\$5.00 for postage)

**"1908 and 1912 Perry Missouri Corn Carnivals"** Detailed articles and 34 historic photos of these two important events in Perry History. The estimated daily attendants at

these events were as big as 10,000 people. The pictures are of businesses, people and displays of both years of the events. There is a rare photo of Perry's "Short Line" depot and others of special trains operated to bring people for the 1908 Carnival. (\$10.00 + \$2.00 for postage).

**"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 MO "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 is a lot of genealogy information in this book and tells of many families who live here and moved to other areas. (\$15.00 + \$2.00 for Postage).

**"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)

### **2004 Memberships Are Due**

If you have not paid your 2004 dues please send your payment in as soon as possible, half the year is nearly gone. A single membership is \$10.00 and a family membership is \$15.00.

### **Future Meetings**

Plans are being made to have the July 19 meeting at or near Ilasco. The September 20 meeting will be the annual picnic at the Perry City Park. The November 15 site has not yet been set yet, please send in your ideas for a location or program.

### **Local Events**

There will be a "Primitive Artifact Weekend" at the M. W. Boudreaux Visitor Center at the Mark Twain Lake, June 19 & 20, 2004. The event will be put on by U. S. Corps of Engineers, Ralls Marion & Northeast Missouri Archaeological Society. There will be displays, collections, U of Missouri representatives and flint knappers. For more information call 573-735-4097

## **Ralls County Cemetery:**

### **Crawford Cemetery #32 (also known as Sims/Simms) Township 56 west, Range-4 west, Section 20**

- Crawford; Alice, dead August 22, 1856, age 11 years, 2 days, daughter of W. & N.  
Crawford; Elizabeth, died July 28, 1852, daughter of W. & N., age 3 months 27 days  
Crawford; Infant son of William N. & Mollie, age 5 days.  
Crawford; died August 20, 1888 or 83, age 6 months, 13 days, daughter of W. N. & Bettie  
Crawford; Mollie, born November 9, 1847, died February 7, 1874, wife of William N. Crawford & daughter of Luther M. George.  
Crawford; Nancy, died August 1, 1883, age 70 years, wife of Wilkerson  
Crawford; Scott, died April 12, 1864, age 6 months, 7 days, son of Wilkinson & Nancy  
Crawford; Sarah M., died August 31, 1846, age 5 years, 15 days, daughter of W. & N  
Crawford; William N., born January 3, 1847, died January 13, 1890  
Crawford; Wilkinson, died may 12, 1883, age 75 years.  
Estil; Martha, born August 27, 1856, died August 30, 1875  
Graham; Margaret Shortlee, died March 6, 1862, daughter of Captain Reynolds of Maryland, 1<sup>st</sup> married January 10, 1829, Wiley Jones Patrick jr., 2<sup>nd</sup> married April 29, 1855, William Graham  
Gregory; John A., died October 29, 1863, son J. R. & A. E., age 2 years, 6 months, 22 days  
Riley; Martha A., died September 24, 1871, age 34 years, 9 months, 25 days, wife of Jackson Riley  
Simms; Phamy, died July 1869, age 84 years  
Simms; Rodam, (Rhodam), born 1756 @ Stafford Virginia, died November 23, 1853. He served in the Lewis Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War  
Simms; Stark, (William Stark) died 1870, age 88 or 81 years. He severed in the War of 1812 and Indian Wars.

## **Bit of Ralls County History:**

### **Indian Chief Told Pioneer of Salt River Valley He Knew of Deposit Nearly a Century Ago Hannibal "Courier Post" Date unknown circa 1929**

Is there, somewhere in the vicinity of Hannibal, a valuable lead deposit? Some older citizens of this part of the country believe that there is and declare that a certain tribe of Indians knew where to find lead and made yearly pilgrimages to the spot.

If this is true the secret of the lost mine or deposit was buried with the old Indian chief who always companied the band on its journeys to this part of the country.

Alone in 1820 and for many years thereafter, Stark Sims, one of the prominent citizens in this part of the country in those days, owned a farm in Ralls county, not a great distance from Salt River, eight or nine miles from Hannibal and every year the old Indian chief, accompanied by a dozen or more of his braves, would make a trip to this

section of the country. It was a "peace party" and the chief said that they were on a "hunting trip." Several times the Indians would camp on the farm belonging to Mr. Sims and would then disappear in the hills south of Hannibal and would be absent for seven or eight days to reappear, nor loaded with game, but with an abundant supply of lead. Where the band went after they left the farm and went over in the hills south of this city, no one knows.

During the years that the Indians visited this section and camped on the farm of Mr. Sims, he and the old chief and his band, for he was always accompanied by the same band of braves, got pretty well acquainted with each other and the red man often smoked the pipe of peace with his "pale faced" brother.

One day when the Indians, who had been camped at the farm for a few days, were ready to depart for their "hunt" in the hills south of Hannibal, the old chief, holding a small piece of lead in his hand addressed Mr. Sims as follows:

"You have been good to us. We like you, come with me on 'hunt.' I show you. Better come now. Old chief getting old may not be able to follow trail long, may soon go happy hunting ground and come no more."

Mr. Sims was busy when the invitation was received and told the old chief that he would go with him next time, but there was no next time. When the band returned from the hills a few days later, they went to their own camp and it is supposed that some time during the year the old chief obeyed the call and joined his fathers in the "happy hunting grounds" the secret of the lead mine or lead deposit evidently died with him, for his band came no more to the hills below Hannibal to "hunt."

The years rolled on and Hannibal and the country around this city became more densely populated. Hills and valleys were opened up for settlers and the country was of course thoroughly explored, but no trace of a lead deposit or old abandoned lead mine was found.

When Jeff Snyder, who now lives at Oakwood, was a small boy his father owned a farm on Marble Creek, which is now a part of the cement company's land. One day Mr. Snyder found Jeff and his sister playing with what they said were "heavy rocks" proved to be pieces of lead. The children shower their father where they got the "rock" and Mr. Snyder found a number of other pieces of lead in the vicinity.

Where did those "heavy rocks" come from? Where did the Indians get their lead?

The place where the children found "the rocks" is estimated to be within a half mile of Mark Twain Cave.

All of the territory near the place where the children found the "heavy rocks" has been explored but no further signs of lead have been discovered.

Did the old Indian chief know of another entrance into these unknown and unexplored passages contain an abandoned mine or deposit of lead?

Geologists who have visited the big cavern declare that formations and quartz declare that lead is in the vicinity, but none has been found in the part of the cave that has been explored and which is traversed annually by thousands of tourist.