

Ralls County Historical

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March 2005

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 Friday 10:00-5:00, 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;

March Meeting;

The Ralls County Historical Society will hold its March meeting on the 21st at the basement of the Courthouse at New London. The doors will open at 6:00 p.m. so members and guests can view the Courthouse before relocation begins. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. and following the meeting Marsha Knudsen will present a program "100 years ago in Greenlawn" in historical costume. The program will include a history of Greenlawn, newspaper items about the town residents, old photos and true stories from people who remember the town. Marsha has organized the Restoration Group "Save the Greenlawn Chapel," and is working hard to preserve that piece of Ralls County history. The public is welcome to attend the meeting and see the Historic 1858 Courthouse before restoration begins.

I have tried to cover all ongoing and new projects in these Newsletters, so we can limit time spent at the meetings on these subjects. I will briefly discuss all items in old and new business at the first part of meetings. Following the planned programming time will be set aside to discuss in depth any and all subjects. This will allow time for members and visitors to enjoy the planned programming and leave if not interested in the discussions. We will try and limit the time of programs so as much time as wanted can be spent in the discussions

Greenlawn Chapel Restoration; Our speaker Marsha Knudsen this was taken on the task to restore this 112-year-old historic chapel. I sent an e-mail of an open letter regard this project from Marsha last month, but for those who didn't receive it go to our website a read the letter. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~morchs/>. I will send a copy with the mailed Newsletters. The society is acting as support to her and her project by providing her with pictures, information from our Greenlawn file, and our large e-mail network. We are looking forward to her results and will continue to help in anyway we can.

If you or a group you belong to would like our help with a project like this please contact us for help.

Dues for 2005; 2005 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 63436.

Courthouse; Following the April elections Offices at the courthouse will be moving to the former Cerf Brothers' factory in the first stage of the restoration. The county has asked for volunteers to help with the moving and I would like to see our members help because the county has worked hard with us on get this major project off the ground. I will be there myself, so contact me or a county office to volunteer

January Meeting; Those who attended the meeting saw the great progress on the Center MO Short Line depot. We should have electricity to the building soon so we can have lights and be able use power tools to speed up the restoration. NEEDS; carpenters, electric & clean up.

Museum/Library; The addition of Friday to our days open at the Museum/Library. This will begin right away and likely only for the summer. We started stocking the building in January, Grand Opening in April and expanded in August. The growth in items and usage old of the site has been better than ever thought. Just some of the items recently added are Perry High trophies' & pictures, an original pitcher, bowl & stand from the old Spalding Hotel and the Florida MO switchboard.

Work is nearly done on increasing the size of the library, research area and working space. Please stop in and see the changes, new items and give us your input and ideas

We now have a number of local cemeteries, books and other information on CDs.

There are number of historical novels based on local events and people, local biographies and Genealogies available for sale at museum/library. A Mini-Newsletter will be sent soon with information on these books available.

We have been inundated with queries for information on local history and genealogies. Because the large volume of material we have to research these queries correctly and the like of researchers most of this queries have been unanswered and are being worked on as time allows. NEEDS: librarian, greeter, clean up, computer, researchers and inventory work.

Old Perry Bank; As weather allows work will begin on refinishing the teller widows and preparing the bank for display and Perry Park events. NEEDS; painters, clean up carpenters

2005 Calendar of Meetings

May 16; Lloyd & Bonnie Screckengast

July 18

September 19 Society Picnic

November 21

Local Events; Will be sending in mini-Newsletter

Volunteers; I have listed the word NEEDS behind notes on projects in this Newsletter to make members aware skills needed on these projects.

Missouri Civil War Heritage Foundation; Information on the project has been limited and I have not been able to follow up what has come in because of society projects in the past months. I you have sent or know of information on Civil War site or event in Ralls or the surrounding area, please resend or contact me. NEEDS; Committee chairman and researchers.

Fox and Sac Museum; Awaiting information from Missouri Humanities Council on plans being made on this project.

Recipe Book; The book is being prepared for publishing

Presidents View; Because this Newsletter is bimonthly is impossible to get all the up to date news, new items at museum/library, local events and other information to the members and friends of the society. To help with this problem we will begin using the Mini-Newsletter again. Mini-Newsletter is e-mail sent by us to members and friends with society news, needs and information as is received. Because this will be limited to persons with an e-mail address, it's important that people mailed this Newsletter to send us your e-mail address if you have or have gotten one since becoming a member. If needed, information sent between Newsletters will be included in the next Newsletter. I would like to include in these Mini-Newsletters events, meetings, projects and information of other local, historical and genealogical groups. If you are a member of one of these groups contact me about getting our groups news and items included, NEEDS; Assistant Editor

Ralls County Cemetery;

Griffin #59; Saverton twp. 5-55-3 (Rev Gammon: "six miles east of New London, near Glascock stone house" "Ollie Griffin farm. Mrs. Davis: "5 miles east of New London" "Ollie Griffin resident on farm in 1940". Many more stones and fragments plowed up. NOTE: Ollie Griffin farm not shown in this area in 1946 atlas. Information varies on the sources used for this information

Barnard or Barnett; Jinnett, died September 1839, age 4 years, 1 month, 23 days

Fields; Larkin, died May 14, 1836, age 33 years, 11 days or 14 days, son of Jas. & M. S Fields

Fields Mary S., wife J. sr., died August 3, 1844, age 61 years

Fields Mary D. died September 28, 1843, age 5 years, 5 days daughter of Phillip & Lucy M.

Hornback; infant daughter of J. & M. A., died September 19, or 9 1836, age 10 days

Hornback; Infant son of J. & A., died July 22, 1845

Hornback Mahala Ann, died February 19, 1849, wife of Jas. Age 36 years, 7 months, 9 days

Hayden; W. H. died July 19, 1841, age 1 year, a day

Tompkins; Kasander K., died August 12, 1866, wife of ????, age 50 years or 55 years, 10 months, 22 days .

If you have information on this or any old family cemeteries that may not be recorded contact me.

Bit of Ralls County History;

Below is from "Short Line News" a newsletter prepared by Rev. Conrad Cheatham, the foremost expert on the Hannibal-St. Louis Short line Railroad. We will be posting all of his newsletters to our website soon. Conrad is the new President of the Lincoln County Historical Society and has been a big help to us on the Short Line.

When the Short Line people decided to build the extension to Perry and perhaps beyond they offered a deal to the area residents. They had decided to use the grade of the old Ralls County Branch Railroad from New London to Perry. This grade was constructed in 1872 under the direction of Richard Dalton. Dalton was associated with the St. Louis & Keokuk, a predecessor of the St. Louis & Hannibal. Dalton had the route surveyed and then the land owners were hired to build the grade through their property.

Twenty years later the officials of the Short Line asked for property owners to donate the 100 foot right of way/grade free and clear. In addition they asked for \$300 per mile from Ralls County residents to repair the old grade for rail service. In addition, they had to provide land in Perry and Center for depots and switching facilities. Various Short Line officials visited in and around the area promoting these requests. Local attorneys Judge J.B. Orr of Frankford and J.P. Wood of New London promoted the extension. The citizens agreed to all requests.

The St. Louis, Hannibal & Kansas City Railway was incorporated by the officers of the St. Louis & Hannibal on August 14, 1891 to build from the shops at Oakwood to downtown Hannibal and from New London to Perry. This new line was capitalized at \$280,000. The original plans were to utilize the M.K. &T. right of way into Hannibal but the Katy turned the Short Line down. The board of directors of the Hannibal Union Station denied the Short Line's request to enter that facility. The Short Line was forced to build its own track into town and to build its own passenger station. Construction on the Perry Branch started the first week in November 1891.

The winter of 1891-92 involved some extremely bad weather which delayed construction a great deal. It was difficult to work on the old grade which stayed muddy way up into the spring. The ties were ordered but the grade was too wet for them to be put down. The contractors were McDonald & Penfield of Fremont, Nebraska. These contractors brought in a large force of men and animals, but there was only a limited amount of work that could be done. The Company announced a completion date for January, but the weather delayed that and various other completion dates. On one occasion a Hannibal Journal reporter met a couple of officials at the junction site at New London and had to stand in mud up to their knees. This bad weather affected

operations on the main line with a number of washouts and derailments. Finally the first spike was driven in early May. Construction took off. Company engineer DuBois and his staff laid out the sites for the depots and other facilities in Center and Perry. J.D. Pitt and G.G. Thompson of Frankford had a contract to furnish ties for the extension.

The extension was completed and turned over to the company on July 25. An officials' train had been run from Hannibal to Perry a short time earlier. The first excursion was run on the 25th which was well patronized. According to the History of Ralls County a large crowd boarded at Perry, Center, and the flag stops. To collect fares the train was stopped in a field far enough from civilization to require a long walk for any who refused to pay. Conductor Stark ordered everyone off & then pay up to get a ride to Hannibal and back.

On July 29 The Frankford Chronicle reported that a special train was going to leave Perry on that date at 6:00 a.m. with 16 cars of stock heading to Chicago. This stock was being shipped by a Mr. Rogers, a stock dealer. The paper expressed the hope that this was the forerunner of future patronage.

The first agent at Center was John Thompkins, who was transferred from Eolia. Thompkins was from Peno and had been at Eolia since 1890. He was in the news a great deal in the summer of 1892 as he had married Minnie Tucker of Eolia in June and then in late July they were in Center where he assumed his job. (Incidentally, one of the last agents at Center was William Watts who attended the sign dedication in August 2003.) The first agent at Perry was P.L. Truelove who was transferred from Moscow Mills.

The first crew consisted of: Conductor - Lee Jackson "Snow" Stark, Engineer - Mert Tierney, Fireman - Walter Glascock, and Baggage Man - Frank Glascock. This crew was different from that mentioned in several newspapers a week or earlier. Locomotive # 10 was predicted to be assigned to the Perry Branch. The 2 Glascocks were brothers.

Mail service on the Branch began on September 20, 1892 with closed pouch service to Center and Perry.

The Perry Branch operations started July 25, By the end of August the newspapers reported that Engineer DuBois was at work with a crew surveying 3 possible extensions. The possible routes were Perry to Centralia, Perry to Renick near Moberly, and Perry to Mexico. These routes led some to speculate that the Wabash was behind the extension to Perry and that the Wabash was planning to buy the Short Line. One writer even claimed that the rail for the branch had been purchased from the Wabash and that it was rail that the Wabash had laid just a few years earlier. But we know now that the Perry Branch was never extended beyond Perry and the Wabash never purchased the Short Line, despite rumors every few years that the Wabash was considering buying the Short Line for years.