

Ralls County Historical

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July 2006

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;

May Meeting;

The May meeting was very well attended with many non-members and out of the area people wanting to hear the program. Nan Poage Prater presented a great program on the history of Spalding Springs and there was a large display of photos and others items from the spring's history. We have collected or copied these items and have more coming which we have on display our museum in Perry. If you have any photos, articles or stories of historic Spalding please let us know.

July Meeting;

The Ralls County Historical Society will have its July meeting on Monday the 17th at the newly restored Ralls County Courthouse in New London. The doors will be opened at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the basement meeting room. The public is welcomed to attend the meeting and see the results of the restoration of the 1858 Northeast Missouri Historic Landmark. Plans for the celebration of the 150th birthday of the courthouse in 2008 will be discussed at the meeting. If an organization, group or individual would be interested in the celebration, please try to attend or contact the society by calling 573-565-2025, 573-248-6147 or e-mail rwleake@aol.com. We would also like to hear from people who worked on or participated in the successful 1958 one hundred year celebration. Any photos or pictures of the 1958 event are wanted and can be copied and returned to the owner.

On August 4 the Fox and Sax display will be on display at our museum and library at 120 East Main Street, Perry MO and will be on display until after Labor Day. A reception at the museum is being planed for Saturday, August 5 with Sac and Fox representatives attending. There will be no charge for the viewing of the display and the museum will be open daily while the display is there. These hours and the information on the reception will be announced at a later date.

Courthouse Open House;

There was a good turn out for the open house of the restored Ralls County Courthouse on June 24. If for some reason you where unable to attend the open house or to attend this Monday meeting please stop by at your next convenience. We have a building to be proud of and will have for many years to come

Letter to our members;

Ron:

I am hoping you will let the people of Ralls County know that congratulations are due each and every citizen for the efforts of the entire county in the restoration of Ralls County Courthouse. As a direct descendent of Daniel Ralls, Col John W Ralls and Edgar Hays Ralls I am most appreciative to the entire population of Ralls for their sense of history, eyes to the future, and none the least, opening their pocketbooks to this noble cause. As you know, Col John Ralls and Edgar H Ralls served in official capacities in that stately building well over a hundred years ago. I was last in New London in April and it was amazing how almost "brand new" the beautiful old building appeared just on its exterior.

Thanks are in order, also, to you and the historical society, for the placement of the old state bank building in Perry's city park. This, too, reflects the real heart of your fellow Ralls citizens; and makes me especially grateful since it was founded by my g-g-grandfather, Thomas F Gill.

Although I am a native-born Texan, I am proud that such rich Missouri blood still flows in my veins. I am ever mindful of all the time, work and resources that you all put into keeping Ralls Counties' heritage alive and well.

Thanks so very much.

Lowell Graves; Lubbock, Texas

(Daniel Ralls/Mary Stone Ralls Ely > John Williams Ralls/Lucinda Silver Ralls > Edgar Hays Ralls/Mary Bell Gill Ralls > John Thomas Ralls/Ollie Johnson Ralls > Vera Ralls/C Wert Graves > Lowell Graves)

Museum and Library;

A friend of the society is willing to donate most of the cost of a computer program to catalog the items at our library and a member has agreed to pay the balance. Because of the weekly volume of items coming onto the museum a program like this is badly needed to track and record our inventory. If you have computer skills and would like help to on this project please contact us. It will likely be a fall and winter before we get the program up and running.

Center Depot;

Volunteers have been keeping the Center Depot open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. We will likely continue to keep it open as long as the weather allows. There will be a tractor pull near the depot on July 29 and we could need your help then.

Society Calendar;

September 16; Society picnic @ Center City Park

November 20;

Area Calendar;

July 15; Big Creek Presbyterian Church ice cream social from 6 pm to 8:30 pm

July 15; Ariel Christian Church Ice cream Dinner 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

July 29; Center Park Days

August 5th; Perry Cruise Night, down town Perry, 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. For more information call Dustin 573-565-5005 or go to www.perrymissouri.com. Sponsored by the Perry Area Chamber of Commerce

August 5th; Perry Fall All-town yard Sponsored by the Perry Area Chamber of Commerce

August 6: St Paul Ice Cream Social 4:00 pm at the church

September 9th; Perry MO "Time Was"

September 10; All Perry High Reunion, St William Catholic Church

If your group or organization has an event you would to include please let us know

Cemetery Project;

Nature was limited the cemetery workers to only the most dedicated be because of overgrowth, ticks and snakes, but there are few who continue. We have located at least two unknown cemeteries and other who have not been totally recorded, all which we have been in touch with the owner for permission. You should always get permission from the owners before going any of these sites.

President View;

The planning and organizing of the 150th anniversary of the Ralls County courthouse could be the largest and the most complex thing we have done in the societies history. We would be the umbrella origination with the support of all of the Ralls County clubs, organizations, churches, and businesses willing to participate. I have discussed this project with county wide businesses and businessmen and found all are looking forward to helping in any way they can. I will preview the steps I have taken so far and get your input at the Monday night meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting Monday night, please contact me by phone or stop and see me at the museum.

Society Members;

Reverend Richard Smith got a great writeup in the July "Rural Missouri" magazine for his research into slavery and African-American families of Ralls and northern Missouri. He is working on publishing a book the fall on his research. We will have as speaker at one of our meetings soon. His has received a lot of calls as a result to the article.

Linda Sue Galloway needs your help in finding Elizabeth Kane who taught at West Hartford School. She is researching for a book on the school and she would be grateful for any information or pictures you could share with her.

Gene & July Statler are celebrating ten years of owning and operation of the Ralls County "Herald- Enterprise". Congratulations on their anniversary and thanks for all the hard work and dedication in getting the news out each week. Their website is <http://www.rallscountypaper.com/>

Carolyn Little Trower continues to work on the Ralls County rural school records and pictures. If you can contribute any pictures, articles, records or any other information on any of the Ralls County rural or town school, please let us know.

Helpful Websites;

The "Lake Gazette" now has a website <http://www.monroecity.net/>

Check Monroe County Historical Societies website. They are publishing a Florida (MO) Scrapbook <http://www.rootsweb.com/%7Emomchs2/aboutus.html>

Volunteer need list:

Computer: Word processors, inventory, photo copying, and indexing,
Museum; Filing, greeter/front desk, genealogy research, librarian helper, making copies, helping with front window displays, and designing displays for the museum or special events and maintenance
Cemetery; Locating, cleaning, recording, researching and photographing stones.
Short Line; Greeters, researcher and maintenance
General; Workers for our displays at local events, public relations to promote the society and our projects.

Ralls County Cemetery; Wilson Cemetery, Spencer Township 55 north; 7 west; section.

Recorded by Ron Leake and Mike Weaver on May 6, 1995.

Alexander; Margaret A., born January 22, 1852, died July 16, 1881

Wilson; Elizabeth, wife of Presley, born 5, 1789, died August 10, 1875

Wilson; Presley, born February 28, 1777, died May 18,, 1839

Wilson; S. H., born July 4, 1861, died November 23, 1883

Wilson; William, born December 28, 1872, died April 7, 1873

Bit of Ralls County History;

May 31, 1906 Perry Missouri "Enterprise"

Below we publish a historical sketch of Perry, dating back years ago, written by one of the Entre Nous Club ladies and read by the writer at a regular meeting two weeks ago. The write up is very interesting.

The old "cross roads" which afterwards became the town site of Perry was a noted public meeting place for the people during the earliest settlement of the country. The first road surveyed from Hannibal to Columbia crossed the creek lower down, following a ravine abandoned on account of the shallow, safe ford further south. The "crossing" on early days, was a great camping and resting point for the numerous trains of emigrants going west.

As early as 1830 a small log cabin was built on the ground now occupied by the Palace Hotel. Some improvements were made by the first settlers. Locust trees that are still standing were planted. Quite a large orchard was set out in a ten-acre clearing where the residence of M. P. LaFrance is now located. There was a field in front of the log cabin and a little log stable stood about where Dr. Armstrong's house was afterwards built.

We first hear of a man named Wills, living in the log cabin at the famous fork on Lick Creek. A few adventurous pioneers had settled along Lick Creek, in the earliest years of the last century. The most noted of these was a hardy old Kentuckian and Indian fighter and trapper, by the name of Purvis. When he built his first cabin in the dense woods, about two miles west of the ford, the country was frequently visited by Indians. It was a famous hunting ground. Deer, antelope and buffalo were abundant. The old buffalo trail leading from the high prairies on the watersheds of the tributaries of the creek can yet be easily traced on the salt springs near the mouth of the creek. A Mr. John Hurly was one of the early settlers

Mr. Purvis in his old age delighted in telling of a trip he and Mr. Hurly made to attend a powwow in a grove near the head of the creek. They found several hundred warriors encamped and Hurly said "That it looked as if two or three deer and antelope were hanging against every tree, deer were so abundant that the hunter was seldom out of sight of a bunch of fat animals. Purvis killed several black bear in the woods just across the creek from where Perry stands. This rather remarkable character lived until the civil war broke out, dying after he had passed the century mark. He raised a family of twenty-two children and he said that his father and mother died when he was only a small boy but the "Chief" of nineteen brothers and sisters. All of these he maintained he raised and cared for before he became a wanderer.

Other early wanderers paused for a while along the creek in those days, but their names have gone down into oblivion, their memories perishing with the dust of the brave old pioneers who sleep the "Sleeps of Sleeps" in the field where the old log church once stood. Old people used to take of the Dooley's, Hobson's, Mace's, Green's and old Billy Goodlow, not forgetting droll "Uncle Joe" Harrison.

In 1830 or 1831 quite a large emigration came out from old Kentucky. They found one log house at the mouth of Bear Creek where Hannibal has since been built. The Abbys had come a little earlier and some of the older members of the Ely family and possibly "Uncle Billy Martin". From that day dates an area of good feeling and the beginning of a long series of happy days. The people poor but they were set of brave, noble and warm hearted men and women, the best that ever swung an ax or the shuttle of a loom in the wildness. The latch string at every cabin hung on the outside. At Abbys Spring they built a log church when Sunday came all flocked in the old church where they ate, drank of the cool waters. They listened to the sermons in deep earnestness and they believed and praised God. They were glad to see each other for they were honest, God fearing and happy. God bless them every one.

The Mormons driven from Independence and enroute to Nauvoo, trailed along the Lick Creek road for many weeks. Being little more than a band of vagrants and hypocrites seeking to live without labor, they soon became obnoxious to the people and it required constant vigilance to prevent a collision. They would boldly take property belonging to the settlers saying that they "Had orders from the lord and their Prophet" to do so. Old man Willis warned the Mormons to keep out of his orchard, but doubtless, thinking that the old man was without weapons and confident in the strength of numbers they continued their depredation. Again they were warned and again they defied the owner of the property. The irate old veteran coolly took his rifle from the rack and standing in his cabin door he blazed away and tumbled a saint from his saddle, that was the first tragedy more is the pity that it was not the last in the history of the town.

After the passing of Wills, the farm at the cross road changed owners many times. It belonged to James Fagan, Bill Campbell and T. J. Ells. "Uncle Jim" Fagan a good hewn log house a few feet south of the old cabin. He bought other land and he fenced a large field-cattle proof. He added stables and other buildings and planted more trees-locust which are now standing.

Jeff Ellis was the first man to sell goods at Perry. As early as 1854 he built a house where Judge Hubbard's residence once stood and he put a small stock of goods in the log house that Fagan built. About the year 1856 Ellis sold out to Frank Tomlinson, a merchant and farmer, who came out from Kentucky.

Ron Leake