

Ralls County Historical

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May 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 Ralls county Historical Society will meet Monday, May 15 at the Perry City Hall at 127 East Main Street the doors will open at 6:00 pm and the meeting will begin at 7:00 pm. The society's museum/library at 120 East Main will have an open house from 9:00am until the time of the meeting for society members and the public see the recent enlargements and improvements. The public is welcomed and encouraged to attend.

Nan Poage Prater will present a program one of the most historic sites in all of northern Missouri, Spalding Spring. The Spring and the area around it are rich in Native America, early salt manufacturing back to the late 1700's and resort history. Many will remember the Saturday night dance held there until the late 1950's. If you have any items or memories of Spalding Spring, bring them to the meeting to show and share.

I'm sorry that we were unable to have the meeting at the restored courthouse, but they will not be able to move back in completely till the end of May. We are planning to have our July meeting there, if their scheduling allows.

I'm also sorry that we had to cancel the March meeting due to the winter weather. We will also try and reschedule David James at another time

Spalding Springs Hotel Mugs;

We are selling a beautiful colored Mugs with a picture of a painting the old Spalding Hotel, for those with computers you can see one on our website. See the header of this Newsletter for the website address. They are \$10.00 each or two for \$18.00. We will have them at the meeting and they are also available at the Ralls County Library in Center, the license office in New London and our museum/library in Perry

2006 Memberships Are Now Due;

\$10.00 for single and \$15.00 for family membership.

Center "Short Line" Depot;

There is bad and good news for the fans of the St. Louis-Hannibal Shortline Railroad. The bad news is that Bill Watts the last known "Shortline" employee died May 4th in Troy Missouri. His contributions and memories of the "Shortline" were priceless, but

everyone who met him will miss him because he was just one great person and a gentleman.

The depot is now open to the public on Friday, Saturday and Sundays from 1:00 pm to 4 pm. I would like to have it open more days and longer hours in summer, but more volunteers are needed to do so. It also can be opened by appointment by calling the museum/library at 573-565-2025 or me 575 248-6147.

Jan Chipman

Member Mrs. Jan Chipman died April 29. She and husband John have been members for some time.

2006CALENDAR:

Ralls County Missouri Historical Society: Regular meetings.

July 17, 2006; New London Courthouse

September 18, 2006; Annual Picnic

November 20, 2006;

Fox and Sac Display; Word has been received from the Missouri Humanity Counsel that the Fox and Sac display will open on June 11 at the Mark Twain Museum in Hannibal. We will then have it by August 1st and display it till September at our museum in Perry

Clean ups, surveys and other cemetery projects

Anthony Elam was now digitally recorded Lick Creek, Wolfe, Fern Chapel, Muldrow and Pleasant Groves cemeteries.

What is believed to be the Hulses/Eads cemetery south of Center has been cleared by the owners. Many field stones which are believed marking graves have been found and a base for marker have been found. We plan on having a crew go out and probe for markers soon. Please contact us if you have any information on this site or who maybe buried there.

Cloyd Jackson and our community service people have been working on clearing the very old Madisonville cemetery for the pass few weeks. A major dent has been made but much more is needed both in both financial and personal help. Both wire and posts are needed to protect the site.

Area Events

The Ilasco Reunion will be held June 10, 2006 at the Quality Inn Suites, 120 Lindsay Road, Hannibal. Registrations will start at 5:00 PM and the dinner at 6:00 PM. More information soon.

The 175th celebration of Florida, Missouri will be Saturday, May 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Touted as the "175th Celebration of Florida & Florida Reunion" the event will naturally be at the town of Florida. On May 24, 1831, Florida was the first town to be incorporated in the newly formed Monroe County. The event is sponsored by Friends of Florida; Salt River Navigation Co. of Florida, Mo.; Monroe Co. Historical Society; Mark Twain Lake Project—US Army Corps of Engineers; & Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources.

A variety of activities are scheduled including crafts, reenactors, and music to include Lyle Crow and Friends. Celebration ceremonies will be at 1:00 p.m. Florida School will be open for viewing from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. A children's program with "take it home" activity will be ongoing. Food and drink will be available from the Monroe County Cattlemen's Association and the Florida churches.

Of special interest to former residents, will be the Florida Scrapbook project. Bring your treasured photos to have them scanned on site and included in the Florida Scrapbook which will be mailed following the Reunion. Cost with photo contribution to scrapbook is \$5. Cost without contribution is \$10. The Florida Scrapbook project is a "not for profit" endeavor. If you cannot attend you may submit or purchase online at www.rootsweb.com/~momchs2/

Bring your lawn chairs & come to Florida for a day of remembrance and fun!

Helpful Websites;

Missouri State Archives has made available the Missouri Death Certificates from 1910 to 1955 at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/deathcertificates/>. The home page of the Missouri State Archives is <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/> they many helpful sites to use in researching history and genealogy.

The Historical Society of Missouri site at <http://www.umsystem.edu/shs/> was many used useful sites

The Illinois State Archives also has an excellent site if you are work on that State <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases.html>

I will share more as space a time allows.

More Books for Sale;

We have two copies of Goldena Howard's "Vine and Fig Tree" available for \$20.00. The second book is a historic novel "Over The Hill by Gladys Flick for \$7.95. She is the late mother of member Richard L. Flick.

Ralls County Cemetery; Allison Cemetery; Jasper twp. 28-54-5

Allison; Elsey, born February 14, 1796, died May 14, 1888
Allison; Lucinda, died October 5, age 32 years, 1 month, 18 days, wife of Elsey
Allison; Maranda, died April 2, 1846, age 42 years, 2 months, wife of Elsey
Allison; Marshall, died April 15, 1843, age 8 month, 24days.

President View;

We as an organization are at the crossroads and we need your input on what direction we go. Our society has grown a handful of members in 1999 to too more than one hundred fifty members last year. During this time we restored the Center Depot restoration, moved the first Perry bank building into town, marked the Shortline railroad trail, campaigned for and got the restoration of the Ralls County Courthouse, successfully campaigned for the ½ cents sale tax to fund the project, published or republished four books, opened our new museum/library then double its size in less than a year, began first Newsletter, first business cards, first society website and others I have forgot. These projects were completed with little funding and with membership,

nonmembers or community service help. With our present membership and funding we will be able to maintain these projects and finish others we have begun. For us to grow as an organization and take on many of the bigger projects that are needed to preserve and restore the history of Ralls County we need to enlarge our membership and find more funding. I'm not in favor of raising the annual membership fees, but making a life time memberships for say \$100 and business memberships available. This way we would not discourage new members because an increase and also get the local businesses involved in the organization. I would like to hear from the membership's ideas of fund raising, so please contact me with your ideas. Remember our labor base is limited because many of our members live out of the area.

Bit of Ralls County History;

Perry, MO, "Enterprise" November 3, 1927, Pear Tree Planted in 1818 Bears Fruit

Center, MO, Oct. 7. In Ralls Co., upon a bleak hill overlooking Salt River, stands an old landmark, the Norton pear tree, which was planted in 1818 and has borne fruit every year since 1824.

A few yards in front of the pear tree is an old Norton homestead, built in 1826 of brick made on the farm. It was one of the most hospitable homes of the early 80's and the scene of much gayety, but it is deserted.

The Norton's were early pioneers coming to MO from KY. There's a story in their family that the pear grew from a switch carried by Mrs. T. M. Norton when she rode on horseback from KY with her husband to settle in MO. "But what really happened," says Miss Rolla Spalding of Spalding Spring, granddaughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. M. Norton, "was that my grandmother, after coming to MO, went back to KY on horseback for a visit. At that time she lived in MO for some years. On this visit she brought the much talked of pear tree and it was set out in 1818 on the Norton farm. I have heard my grandmother tell of bringing Gooseberry bushes from KY and garden seeds, too."

Miss Rolla Spalding's mother was Minerva Norton and her father was Robert M. Spalding owner of Spalding Springs, which are a few miles from the Norton pear tree.

Six generations of this branch of the Norton family have eaten pears from the Norton pear tree, R. I. Robertson, 4 years old, representing the sixth generation. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Robertson, of Oakwood, MO.

Of the Norton's, direct there are five generations. Until recently, W.R. Norton, grandson of T. M. Norton and his wife lived on the old homestead. However, owing to failing health and old age, they are now living with their son, L. M. Norton, in Rock Island, IL. W.R. Norton, 8 son of L. M. Norton, represents the fifth generation.

Closely interwoven with the history of the Norton pear tree are the lives and interests of old pioneer families. There were Spalding's and Coontz's. These families settled in and about this part of the country in the early nineteenth century. They located in every instance by a spring, the Norton spring being the famous of all.

This spring is well worth visiting today. Situated on a wooded hillside, about 100 yards from the house; it has never been known to "run dry." Summer and winter there's a large stream of water flowing from it. As it is only a short distance from the Norton Ford, on Salt River, it has been used by travelers since the early times. Now the new county bridge, which spans the river as the old time Ford, brings motorists who frequently stop to drink its water.

One of the old settlers in this community is Francis Little, whose husband, J. W. Little, has been dead for many years. She was married in 1857 and has lived all her life in this community.

“My father’s orchard (Levi Keithly’s) adjoined that of the Norton’s. I have canned pears from the Norton’s pear trees for more than 70 years,” she says. “The pear tree is small and sweet and tastes better to me any we have at the present day. They had no other name, just the Norton pear. Pear trees were scarce and Mrs. Norton always said she wanted all of her neighbors and friends to have and she divided with everyone. Each family received a generous amount. People came from a distance for them, many across the river. No one ever thought of paying for them, nor would the Norton’s have considered such a thing.

“I have a brother, Jacob Keithly, of Mt. Leonard, MO, who is 96 years old. He has eaten pears from that tree for more than 90 years. Each year I send him a jar of preserves canned from the old tree.”

The present owners of the old Norton’s homestead, Mr. and Mrs. M. V. Hart, live across the river and are direct descendants for the pioneers.

Ron Leake