

Friends of Rocheport, August 2014, prepared by Patrick Cronan

Meeting Notice and Quarterly Newsletter

General Membership Meeting.... Our next meeting will be Sunday, August 24, at the Community Hall. Our pot luck dinner will start at 5 p.m., with the meeting to follow. See you there! **Also please remember our Mum Sale, which will be held September 12-14, at the Community Hall.**

Donation Acknowledged.... The Friends of Rocheport recently received a donation of numerous antique photos, documents and historic items from Mary Allyn Haines. Ms. Haines is from Washington, D.C. Her connection to the Rocheport community is her grandmother and namesake, the late Mrs. Mary Prince Haines. The elder Mrs. Haines was a prominent Rocheport resident and came from a long line of distinguished Rocheport citizens. The Haines family has owned the yellow house on Third Street next to the Rocheport Community Hall (estimated to have been built around 1830) for many years. Mrs. Haines was very active in the Rocheport Christian Church and was the pianist for the church. The younger Ms. Haines inherited the Rocheport items from her family and wanted to share them with the Rocheport community so she arranged to donate them to the Friends of Rocheport.

The Friends look forward to displaying the items she donated in the Friends of Rocheport Historical Museum on Moniteau Street in Rocheport. The items include group photos of members of the Rocheport community in front of the Rocheport Christian Church and the Rocheport School that preceded the current building that houses the Rocheport Schoolhouse Bed and Breakfast. In addition, there are antique photos of the business district and a group photo of businessmen in the community.

The Friends of Rocheport is very appreciative of donations such as the one from Ms. Haines. If you or your family have any photos, documents or artifacts depicting historic Rocheport that you would like to donate or share with the community, please contact one of the members of the board of directors or give your contact information to the volunteer at the museum when it is open on Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. through October. You can find additional information about making a donation at www.friendsofrocheport.org.



More About the Rocheport Schools.... Adding to the information contained in the March newsletter, I recently came across a tuition sheet for the school for 1878, in one of the vertical files of the State Historical Society. Tuition was shown as \$15 per session for younger children, with the price rising to \$30 for the oldest students. (I do not know if a “session” meant the entire academic year, although that was implied.) Thus my assertion that free public education began after the Civil War seems to be misleading at best. Does anyone know when free public education began?

I still have not found any records for the Rocheport public school system. Suggestions are welcome. Call 698-3074 to reach me. However, one of the items donated by Mary Haines was a booklet titled *Seventy Years of the Rocheport School* which contains some of the language I quoted in the last newsletter.

After the newsletter was published, I learned that the town also maintained a school for black children, which I am told was at the top of the hill on Third Street. Does anyone know when that school began, or ended? Many of the smallest school systems in Missouri abandoned the “separate but [allegedly] equal” system prior to the Supreme Court requirement, because of the cost of paying for additional teachers. Did that happen in Rocheport? I have not found any photographs of the school students that show any black children.

My request for additions to the list of teachers proved relatively unsuccessful. The only additions I have are:

1914-15 J. L. Wyatt, Mrs. Wyatt, Edna Graves
1943-43 Edna Graves

Richard (Larry) Walker of Olympia, Washington has sent a long letter that contained (among other things) memories of the Rocheport School. Walker is the grandson of Alva Barnes, who was the MKT station master at Rocheport for more than 40 years. (There is a picture of the elder Barnes in our museum). Walker lived here from about 1940 until 1943 and has vivid memories of the town. I “will never forget Edna Graves, the elementary teacher whose motto was ‘*learn or die.*’ When I finally left Rocheport in 1943 for California, the state didn’t know what to do with me. By the time I was ready to enter the 3rd grade in San Diego, I was already reading at their 5th grade level and was capable of multiplication and long division. The state school system had no idea about what to do with me. So I coasted for the next few years.

Unfortunately what stands out most in my recollections is the horrendous winters and living without indoor plumbing (which didn’t arrive until after WWII)....”

150 Years Ago.... On September 7, 1864 the band of Bloody Bill Anderson stopped a freight train on the North Missouri Railroad near Centralia station. Four carloads of horses were stolen. It is reported that Isaac H. Sturgeon plans a levy of about \$15,000 to be imposed on local sympathizers to pay for the damages suffered from the attack.

On September 27, 1864 Centralia suffered another attack by Bloody Bill Anderson. You will remember that Anderson liked to hang-out in Rocheport, and even referred to the town as “my capitol.” Today we would call him a terrorist, although many in town agreed with his politics (at least). Anderson’s men were joined by those of George Todd and supposedly by the James boys. The group attacked a train at Centralia, carrying out the cold-blooded massacre of the 24 ill and injured, but unarmed, soldiers on board. [Other reports claim that a 25th soldier, a man named Tod Goodman, was left alive to report to the Union leadership what Anderson had done.] It is reported that some of the bodies were placed upon the train tracks and the engine moved over them. Some were scalped. It was death in a cruel manner, typical of Anderson. The train depot and some

cars were set ablaze. Pure terror and carnage was all that was left behind when they departed. Later that same evening, Major A. V. E. Johnson along with part of the 39th Missouri Infantry (that is, Federal supporters), about 120 relatively untrained men, arrived at Centralia. Upon seeing the smoking ruins of the depot and cars and the bloody, ghastly corpses of the slain, unarmed soldiers, the Major and his command went after Bill Anderson with a vengeance. The band of Anderson and Todd, said to number over 300 men, was encountered. [Other sources say Anderson had about 30 men.] After furious fighting, and the stampeding of Johnson's horses, the Union men were decimated. When it was over Johnson and 115 others lay dead. Anderson and Todd lived to spread their terror another day. Venturing into the scene the next morning were a Dr. Snead, Dr. F. G. Burton, W. Burton and Jacob Kanatzar. Eighty-three bodies were brought into Centralia. Seventy-nine were buried in a mass grave near the RR tracks east of town. Bodies were later removed and buried with honors at the Jefferson City National Cemetery. (SOURCE: *The Civil War in Missouri Day By Day, 1861-1865*, by Carolyn M. Bartels, copyright 1992 and published by Two Trails Publishing, Shawnee Mission, KS.)

In addition to these attacks, Anderson is known for raids at Renick, Huntsville, Fayette, into Chariton and Carol counties, and (with Quantrill) Lawrence KS. Anderson didn't limit his depredations to towns away from Rocheport. Here he is remembered for attacking the steamboat War Eagle, ambushing the steamboat Buffington tied up at dock, robbing Union stores and many civilians, and was reported to have drunk the saloons in town dry. A favorite pastime was to hide in the covered bridge that crossed Perche Creek, and to rob the stage coach or men on horseback coming to town from Columbia.

Comment: A reenactment is planned on September 13 & 14 this year at a field three miles south of Centralia. They plan to reenact the "Battle of Centralia" on Saturday, and a skirmish at Mount Zion on Sunday, with a dance and commemorative cannon fire on Saturday night. For more information call 573/682-5511. A one-time parking fee will be charged for the entire event.

Another Comment: Many federal soldiers, being recent immigrants from Europe or recently emancipated slaves, were unskilled with weapons. The Bushwackers, of course, had grown up using firearms. After the Civil War was over, a group of Northern sympathizers organized a club called the "National Rifle Association" to train the new citizens how to use firearms, to try to address the lack of skill of Northern troops.

Newsletter Changes.... At the last meeting of the general membership it was decided to gradually phase out the distribution of our newsletter through the postal service, and to join the 21st Century by using e-mail. The change is designed to save money. At the present time we are spending 19½ cents per newsletter to send about 775 copies of the newsletter to every Rocheport mailing address, and an additional 44 cents to send copies by first class mail to our members outside Rocheport (about 75 envelopes). If you have e-mail please send your address to for@friendsofrocheport.org to make certain you get future newsletters. If you don't have an e-mail address, please make certain that you have paid your dues for this year, and promptly pay your dues for next year. All paid members will receive a paper copy of the newsletter.

Another advantage to the change in delivery method will be that the newsletter will not be restricted to a single piece of heavy stock, but can be expanded as needed without additional distribution cost.

PLEASE JOIN FRIENDS OF ROCHEPORT.... This newsletter is sent to you because you are on our mailing list, not necessarily because you are a "member." If you have not paid your \$20 dues for 2014, please do so now! (Even if you are a lifetime member, we would appreciate an additional donation to help with the society's work.) The form below may be returned with your money, to make certain we credit you with this year's dues.

PLEASE MAIL TO PO Box 122, Rocheport, MO 65279 (or bring it to our General Membership meeting!)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail address: _____

PLEASE ATTACH \$20.00

GENERAL MEETING OF FRIENDS OF ROCHEPORT SOCIETY ON AUGUST 24. Pot luck dinner at 5 p.m. with meeting to follow. Please come!

Friends of Rocheport
PO Box 122, Rocheport, MO 65279

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