

150 Years: Remembering One of the Worst Civil War Battles on Missouri Soil

Over the next few weeks, the Shelby County Herald will be remembering the horrific Centralia Battle in which many Shelby County men lost their lives. On September 13 and 14, there was a reenactment of the battle in Centralia. More information can be found at www.centraliabatlefield.com/#reenactment or at the Shelby County Historical Society.

By Corby Cochenour
Herald Reporter

John Donahoo was 37 years old when he enlisted in the 39th Missouri Reg't. He was of tall stature at six feet and one inch and had blue eyes with light hair and a light complexion. He was married to Minerva and had five children, William Albur, born October 20, 1848; Thomas, born in 1850; Francis, born in 1857; Elizabeth, born in 1860 and Caroline, born in 1864. He worked as a blacksmith.

After enlisting, he served as a private for 29 days and was promoted to a sergeant on September 8, 1864. He was then killed in action at the Battle of Centralia on September 27, 1864.

Once again, a family was ripped apart and a woman was once again single trying to cope with the loss of her husband and the responsibility of five children. Financial obligations never end and widows and family members were left with trying to navigate their way through government entities to get their pensions. As most know today, anything government related is usually a lot of paper work and a lot of time invested. The benefit of today's

era is having more technology and the capability to communicate quicker.

In the 1800's those luxuries wouldn't have been available and everything would have been handwritten and communication would have been much slower.

In December of 1867, over three years since the battle, Minerva was still working on settling affairs to receive her pension. She had to appear in the Shelby County court to confirm the ages and birth dates of her children. Many documents from this time show physicians attending the court proceedings to confirm that they were present at childbirth and that the children do belong to the mother and late father.

In March of 1869, she married Raymond Lamphere. He passed away in 1874 and she never married again.

In the early 1900's, she was trying to file a claim for the restoration of her pension. Once again she had to have written affidavits and more. Most of the written documents stated that she was old and entirely dependent with no income, bad health and partially blind. In 1902,

an affidavit was filled out by F. R. Lamphere from Bethel confirming that he knew Raymond Lamphere, that Raymond never served in the military and never was divorced from Minerva.

Her daughter, Elizabeth and husband, Gilbert Meutaw had handled her certificate and pension. After Gilbert's death, both women searched diligently for Minerva's pension paperwork and were unable to find it. Affidavits had to be filled out to receive a new certificate for the restoration of her pension.

In Minerva's latter years, she moved to the Stoutsville area, where she was buried after her death. In the April 22, 1903 edition of the *Shelby County Herald* was a small paragraph where she wanted to thank those who assisted her in the restoration of John Donahoo's pension. She began to receive a monthly allowance of \$12.

After her death, Elizabeth received bills for the burial and the hearse that took her mother to the Stoutsville cemetery.

Anyone who has lost someone, can relate to the pain these people endured, the financial responsibility that can sometimes carry into the next generation, and the frustration of dealing with bureaucracy issues.