

150 Years:

Remembering One of the Worst Civil War Battles on Missouri Soil

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If you live in Shelby County, most likely you are related to someone else in the county, either by birth or marriage. The same was true in the 1800's. When men left their homes to fight in the Civil War, whether in Centralia or another battle, they most likely saw brothers, cousins, uncles, fathers, sons, and in-laws leave with them. Some lost their lives, and others had to come back home and not only deal with what they saw in battle but help family members that were left behind.

Carothers-Hardin

Sergeant James Harvey Carothers, born November 12, 1825, was the son of James and Sarah Forsythe Carothers. He was 40 years old when he enlisted. He was appointed cor-

SHELBY COUNTY HERALD -- Shelbyville, MO -- October 22, 2014
poral on September 8, 1864 and promoted to sergeant on January 21, 1865.

When he joined the Company G, 39th Missouri Infantry, U.S. Volunteers, he already had military experience. He enlisted in Shelby County in August and was under Captain William Glover. They mustered into service in Hannibal and left from there on September 14, under Major A.V.E. Johnson, and marched to Paris. They left Paris on the night of September 26 and headed to Centralia.

Carothers survived the battle.

Sarah Ann Carothers was born in 1845 and was the daughter of Armstrong Carothers and Elizabeth Helen Christian-wooster. She was also the niece of James Harvey Carothers. On April 11, 1861, she married John W. Hardin.

Hardin was born in 1836 in Shelby County and this hazel eyed, brown hair, dark complexion man was 28 years old when he enlisted. He had worked as a farmer. He served as a private for 30 days and was killed in action in Centralia on September 27, 1864.

He left behind his wife, Sarah, and infant daughter, Anna, who was born August 9, 1864. Sarah, as all widows, had to provide the paperwork, witnesses and documentation to receive her pension. On one of the court records, her uncle, James H. Carothers, appeared to confirm that he was at the wedding of John and Sarah.

The 1800's were no different from today, in the fact that mistakes on documents were made. Sarah had filed a declaration of increase for pension and her daughter's name was incorrect on the court documents. The following is from another court document: "declaration for increase says that the true and correct name of her said child is Anna W. Harding and not Ada W. Harding and that if said name was inserted as Ada W. Harding in either of the declaration for increase or original declaration the name was inserted through mistake or inadvertence of the gentleman that prepared the papers."

On February 12, 1867, Sarah married Marcus B. Blackburn. Blackburn was the son of

Sarah was able to find happiness again, but on July 18, 1895, tragedy struck again, when her second husband was run over in Oregon City. His eyes had been injured during the war and two years before his death, he went completely blind. With Sarah's age and health, she once again was faced with the paperwork of filing for pension.

Christman-McKinnon

Some of the Shelby County men were technically only children to the parents who lost them. Phillip Christman was only 18 when he enlisted in August 1864. He was from the Bethel area and his mother, Christina, said goodbye to her hazel eyed, sandy haired boy for the last time when he went to battle. He served as a private for 46 days before being killed in the battle at Centralia.

William Christman was a 23 year old, black eyed, sandy haired farmer who lost his life at Centralia. He was married to Matilda F. McKinnon who was born on November 14, 1843. They had one child W. P. Christman who was born August 3, 1862.

Matilda married William Vawter on April 5, 1866 in Shelbyville. They had three children, Colonel Vawter, born January 26, 1867; William Scott Vawter, born March 28, 1873 and Pamela, who died in infancy. Matilda died on April 16, 1899.

Matilda was the sister of Theophilus McKinnon who was a 25 year old farmer when he enlisted in Company G, 39. He was the son of William and Judith "Spirit" Brockman and the grandson of Theo McKinnon and Sarah Hamilton McKinnon. His father was a farmer in Bethel.

McKinnon survived the war but at the age of 26, on January 29, 1865, he lost his life at a hospital in St. Louis, to pneumonia.

Matilda lost her first husband, lost her brother, who survived the war, but shortly after, died from pneumonia, and an infant daughter during her second marriage.