

150 Years: Remembering Worst Civil War Battle 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 will be a reenactment of the battle in *Centralia*. More information can be found at www.centraliabattlefield.com/#reenactment.

The terrible massacre that happened during the Civil War in *Centralia* in 1864 seems so long ago, but if one can imagine what it is like to lose someone they care about, it can bring them closer to this time. In our world today, there are many great men and women who have sacrificed their lives and continue to make many sacrifices for our country. It was no different in 1864. These men received a \$100 bounty for their service, but that would certainly not ease the pain of losing someone you love.

One *Shelby County* resident not only lost one person she loved dearly, but two. *Harriett Matteson*, from the *Clarence* area, lost her husband *Charles Matteson* and her son, *Charles M. Jenkins*.

As you read this, imagine a 17 year old boy, small stature at 5'3" with blue eyes, light colored hair and a light complexion. This is the description of *Harriett's* son, *Charles M. Jenkins*. He enlisted on August 27, 1864 for three years, but only served as a private for 32 days before being killed in *Centralia*.

Harriett's husband, *Charles*, was 44 years old and a farmer. He enlisted on August 10, 1864 and lost his life at *Centralia* after serving as a private for 49 days. He was described as having blue eyes, dark hair and light-complexion. He was 5'9" tall.

The pain *Harriett* must have felt can not be grasped or explained in words. She died on April 20, 1902, but even through all she went through, her faith and her standing in the community was strong. An article in the *Clarence Courier* mentioned her death and had this to say about her, "Deceased was one of the oldest citizens of our city, and one of the best and most highly respected ladies of the community. She was a devoted member of the *M. E. Church* and possessed a true motherly

Christian character."

One of *Charles* and *Harriett's* other sons, *James Henry Matteson* was born in *Clarence* on February 14, 1862 and would have been two when his father was taken from him. According to his obituary in the June 24, 1925 *Clarence Courier*, he grew up in the community of *Clarence* and in 1883 he married *Miss Luzetta Culver*, a *Clarence* resident. They had four children.

It also stated that he professed religion and joined the *M. E. Church* in *Clarence* when but a young man, and soon became very active in the work of the church. He took special interest in the Sunday school work serving in the capacity as assistant superintendent for some ten or twelve years, and also being a teacher in the Sunday school for practically all the time he was connected with it.

Through *Harriett's* suffering and loss of two very special people, she must have had the resolve to raise her other children in a respectable and Godly manner.

Children who never met their father

When many of the men enlisted their wives were expecting. Depending on when these men left their homes, they may have never met their child before they were killed in *Centralia*.

James Etta Stalcup was born on September 17, 1864 to *Mary Ann nee Byars* and *James Stalcup*.

Caroline Donahoo was born September 18, 1864 to *Minerva*. Her father was *John Donahoo*.

Anna Harding was born on August 7, 1864 to *Sarah nee Carothers*. Her father was *John W. Harding*.

Laura Casey was born September 1, 1864.

The following children were born after the battle and never met their father.

Margaret Drennan was born on January 13, 1865 to *Lucinda*.

Her father was *William Drennan*.

Eleazer James Evans was born on October 20, 1864 to *Mary*. His father was *Eleazer Evans*.

Some Survived

There were many who lost their lives in *Centralia*, but there were also some men from *Shelby County* that survived. One of those was 1st Sgt. *E.L.C. Hawkins* (*Epaphroditus DeLacossett Hawkins*).

Hawkins was born in 1841 in *Shelby County* and when he was 21 on August 19, 1864, he enlisted. He was mustered in on September 8, 1864. He was described as having black eyes and black hair and a dark complexion. He was 5'10" tall. He survived the battle and lived until December 13, 1901. After the *Centralia* battle, he wrote a poem about the battle and it helps to sum up the pain and emotion the survivors must have felt.

The following is the poem *Hawkins* wrote:

"Centralia"

Another stern cold death chill,
With gleaming well aimed dart,

Hath plucked and frosted all the flowers,

In the garden of the heart,

And quickened every pulse anew, with painful fitful start.

Why? Well another seeming staunch built boat,

With fifty souls, from shore, Goes pushing down life's

troubled stream,
Is wrecked - twill rise no

more,

And life's hard fight, with all her crew is now forever o'er.

Yes, another day has left us,

A few short hours are gone,
And fifty warriors brave and

true,

Lie dead upon the lawn;

Alas! They'll in the morning miss the glorious burst of dawn.

Well, in the morning, sun-beams

Advanced their hearts around,
At night the owl's frightful

scream,
Had twice its hideous sound,

For fifty of our comrades dear, lay dead upon the ground.

Yes, the morning opened up on us bright,

And near us sang a lark,
But our dear boys when came

the night,
Lay motionless and stark,

And not a bright ray to the heart, came through the gloomy

Other Survivors

Besides *Hawkins*, there were other men who survived. Next week, the *Herald* will feature the *Murray* family from *Hunnewell* and some letters written after the *Centralia* Battle.

Those who survived are:

1st Lt. *Thomas Benjamin James*, born 1832 and escaped on a fast horse. He died June 25, 1919 and is buried at *Prairie View*.

1st Sgt. *E.L.C. Hawkins*, born 1841 and died December 13, 1901.

Sgt. *Charles W. Rust* born 1828 and died November 1876, buried at *Shelbyville IOOF*;

Sgt. *Jas. Harvey Carothers*, born in 1826 and died on March 18, 1892 and is buried at *Maplewood Clarence*;

1st Crp. *John Cleaver*, born 1837;

2nd Crp. *Elwood Fisher Miller*, born 1842 and died February 6, 1894 and is buried at *Pleasant Prairie*;

3rd. Crp. *John Baridley*, born 1829 and died December 3, 1917;

Joseph Archer Albin, born 1833 and died May 21, 1911, buried in *Lewistown*;

Isaac Bishop;

Wm. P. Casey;

Charles W. Conkron;

Daniel Forman, born 1844 and buried at *Taylor Township*,

was mentioned in the *Christine* letter;

James Q. Gibson, died November 15, 1893 and buried at the *Masonic Shelbyville*, was in the *Christine* letter and related to *Snowder*;

Elijah Hall, died October 11, 1864 after the battle, he is buried in *Shelby County*;

Cornelius Thompson Holliday, born 1845 and died January 8, 1925, buried in *Scotland County*;

Samuel Holderieath, born 1830 and died April 1881, buried at *Hebron Cemetery*;

John D. Layne, buried at *Shelbyville IOOF*;

Theophilus McKennon, died January 29, 1865, wife was *Frances Mitchell*;

Jasper N. McWilliams, died January 19, 1865;

John Murray, born 1837 and died October 14, 1904, buried in *Moberly*;

Jacob Otten, born 1836 and died December 10, 1917, buried at *Asbury Chapel*;

John A. Oldfather, born 1842 and died 1922, buried in *Edina*;

William Shelton, born 1826 and died January 13, 1865, buried in *Nashville, TN*, brother-in-law to *John Murray*, died from the measles;

William Jasper Skinner, born 1843 and died September 17, 1927, buried in *Phillips Cemetery*;

John Wesley Snowder, born 1832 and died January 5, 1905 and buried in *Howe, Indiana Territory*;

George H. Spease, born 1841;

Milby H. Timmons, born 1843 and died February 27, 1889, buried at *Wood Cemetery* in *Shelby County*;

Aaron Lewis Webdel, born 1832 and died February 23, 1923, buried at *Oak Ridge Cemetery*;

Andrew Jackson Whiteblock, born 1846 and died July 2, 1920, buried in the *Old Shelbina Cemetery*;

Lewis J. Wiley, born 1843 and died January 1, 1916, buried in *Edina*.