

SPECIAL EDITION
Forsyth Scout & Beecher Island Newsletter
In Conjunction with Fort Harker Days - 2010

On Friday evening, July 9 and Saturday morning, July 10, at Kanopolis, Kansas, in conjunction with Fort Harker Days, 2010, a gathering was held of descendants of the Forsyth Scouts, and others associated with the relief of the Scouts at Beecher Island, Colorado Territory in 1868.

Present this year were: Mary Lou (Eutsler) Percival, and her husband, Mel, of Salina. Mary Lou's brother, John Eutsler, and his son Archie Eutsler, of Wichita, descendants of Scout Andrew Jackson Eutsler. Lest we leave Mel Percival out, his late brother, Jack, married the late Mildred Smith, grand-daughter of Scout Chalmers Smith.

Leigh Geyer, a descendant of Scout Thomas Boyle was present.

Mickie Alderdice, of Conway Springs, Kansas, was present, representing Scout Thomas Alderdice's family, along with some of her friends and relatives.

Kirk Healy was present from Texas, representing Scout John Haley. Kirk and Archie Eutsler, old acquaintances, found out they both had relatives at Beecher Island.

Marilyn (Day) Child and her husband, Don, from Ventura, California, were in attendance, representing her great grandfather, Scout Barney Day's family.

Mary Smith of Ellsworth stopped by, but couldn't stay long. Her husband, Ralph is descended from Scout Chalmers Smith.

Last but definitely not least, was Jamilee (Page) Shank, her husband, Kay, and her daughter, Susan, representing the family of Scout Jack Peate. As a special treat, Jamilee displayed Scout Peate's Henry rifle that he carried on the relief of Beecher Island. I thought it added a lot to the event, as there was tangible evidence to be seen. For being a hundred and fifty years old, the rifle appears to be in remarkable condition.



Back Row L to R: Mary Lou (Eutsler) Percival, John Eutsler, Mickie Alderdice, Marilyn (Day) Child, Leigh Geyer, Jamilee (Page) Shank and her daughter, Susan. Front Row, Archie Eutsler and Kirk Healy.

On Saturday morning some of us met The Cowboy, Jim Gray, at the Fort Harker guardhouse. He gave a talk on the surrounding area and a walking tour of the old fort grounds. Along the way, we met Warren Robinson, of Hutchinson, Kansas, a great grandson of Buffalo Soldier, Reuben Waller, who was with Carpenter's relief column, lead to the Island by Scouts Peate and Donovan. Warren has compiled a very large collection of information on Trooper Reuben Waller. We spent some time reviewing Warren's nicely cataloged collection.



Jim Gray, on the fort tour.



Trooper Reuben Waller descendant, Warren Robinson, of Hutchinson, KS.

Back to Friday evening, after the introduction of the Scout descendants, Lt. Col. D. K. Clark, of the U. S. Army, Fort Leavenworth, gave a very informative presentation on the location of the site of the actual Beecher Island, as opposed to the long recognized site. He places it about seven miles upstream (westerly) from the marked location.



Photo courtesy of Lem Marsh



Lt. Col. D. K. Clark, U. S. Army, giving his presentation. (Notice Col. Forsyth & Lt. Beecher's projected images on the tent wall.)

A big thank you to Jim Gray, for organizing the reunion, and thank you to the Ellsworth County Historical Society for allowing our reunion to be a part of Fort Harker Days.

A special thank you to D. K. Clark, for his great presentation.

And an extra special Thank You to all of the Scout descendants, some who traveled great distances, to come and share their great history with us, and to all the others, who just came to be a part of this event.

I also need to acknowledge and thank the "Wild Women of the West", pictured at the top of following page. They add authenticity to the event.



Photo courtesy of Lem Marsh

And the cowboys, for adding an authentic feel to the event and to Zerf,



Photo courtesy of Lem Marsh

for providing music with his history laden cowboy songs.

The list gets longer, also, thank you to the men of McLain's Light Artillery (Scout Isaac Thayer's old unit). They brought and fired their field piece several times.



Photo courtesy of Lem Marsh



Photo courtesy of Lem Marsh



Jamilee and Susan, holding Scout J. J. “Jack” Peate’s 1860 Henry rifle carried on the relief of the Scouts.

Earlier I mentioned Mel Percival. Mel along with the author’s mother, Mary Jane (Meili) Day of Lincoln, KS, who was also present, grew up in Beverly, Kansas, and in their youth, knew Scout Jack Peate.

Scout descendant Leigh Geyer provided some nice buttons identifying the Scout descendants and historians. Thank you Leigh.

I hope everyone had a great time. I did. I plan to see you all (and hopefully more), next year at Fort Harker.

Thank you again to all who participated and attended.

Later,

Happy Trails

Mike