

Forsyth Scout & Beecher Island News
Special Edition
July 2009

On Friday, July 10, 2009, as part of the annual Fort Harker Days, we had the first known gathering of Forsyth Scout descendants at Fort Harker, Kanopolis, Kansas. It was terribly hot (typical Kansas weather), but I thought it was exciting to be able to attend this get together and meet everyone, some old friends, some new acquaintances.

A big **THANK YOU** to Jim Gray, The Cowboy, from Ellsworth, who organized and coordinated the gathering. Also a hearty thank you to the Ellsworth County Historical Society, for allowing us to use their facilities at the Fort during their event.



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Center, Leigh Geyer, a descendant of Scout Tom Boyle, to the left, Jim Gray, and to his left, Zerf, the singing Cowboy.

Also in attendance were Don Wells, a descendant of Scout Tom Alderdice's sister, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Jester, Jim being a great grandson of Scout A. J. Pliley. Ardell Smith, his wife Kathy and his daughter-in-law, Mary Smith, descendants of Scout Chalmers Smith. Mike Nelson. One of Mike's uncles married Scout Smith's granddaughter, and another uncle, married Scout Eutsler's great granddaughter. Larry Shirkey, an acquaintance of the Donovan family, represented them.



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L -R; Me, Don Wells, Jim Gray, James Jester, Gladys Jester, Leigh Geyer, Mike Nelson, Kathy Smith, Ardell Smith and Mary Smith.

As the early evening started, we went into the Jr. Officer's quarters to sign in, meet and visit. Remembering your history, back in August of 1868, Maj. Henry Inman signed up the Forsyth Scouts for the expedition. Well, on Friday evening, the Scout descendants signed in with Mark Inman Sietz, a descendant of Major Inman. Across the street was a large hamburger cookout. After eating we visited some more. Then, Zerf, the singing cowboy sang some "Songs of the Wild Kansas Frontier" and played the guitar. He did a great job. There was a lot of history in his songs.

After Zerf's performance, Jim Gray gave a short talk as an introduction. Then, I, gave a long winded talk about the Forsyth Scouts, and what is known about them and some of their lives before and after the Beecher Island battle.

Authors, Jeff Broome, and Jim Gray, were both also signing western history books that they have written.

There were other activities on Saturday, but I had to be back at work early Saturday morning, so I did not get to participate in any of them.

I thought it was a great time, and I hope that everyone had a great time, too. Thank you to everyone who took part. A Special thank you to the Jesters, they drove up from Missouri. Mike Nelson, Larry Shirkey and Jeff Broome, all drove in from Colorado. Again, thank you to Jim

Gray, Leigh Geyer, all the Smiths, and Don Wells.

I also want to acknowledge the cowboys. I apologize for not getting their names, but they did add a lot to recreating the time and the authentic atmosphere. Thanks guys.

Hopefully soon I can get another edition of the newsletter put together and sent.

Happy Trails,

Mike