

## 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](http://www.centraliabattlefield.com/#reenactment).

by Corby Cochenour  
Herald Reporter

September 27, 1864, the day in Centralia, many Shelby County men lost their lives during the Centralia Battle. The October 6, 1864 edition of the *Paris Mercury* said this, "The most of the men were shot in the head, and many of them were stripped of their pants and boots. The majority of the men were from Adair, Marion and Shelby Counties. Captain Smith, of Adair County, is supposed to be among the killed. The body of Major Johnston was recognized. The buttons had been cut off his vest, and a piece of the scalp of about the size of a dollar taken from the top of his head.

Who were some of these men that were from Shelby County? This week, a little more will be learned about Louis W. Marquette and John Joseph Christine.

Marquette was married to Lucy W. Turner, who passed away on August 5, 1923 at her son's, John R. Marquette, residence in St. Louis. Her obituary in the *Shelby County Herald* said this, "In 1858 she was married to Louis W. Marquette, who was a member of Company G, 39th Missouri volunteers and who was killed in 1864 in the Centralia Massacre. At that time their home was in Shelbyville. To this union was born the son mentioned above and a daughter, Fanny. Later, she married Nathan V. Williams of Centralia, Mo., who died thirty-two years ago.

"Mrs. Williams had been a reader of the *Herald* since it was founded, more than fifty-three years ago, and maintained an eager interest in the paper until her death. She was very proud of the fact that she got to read the first copy of the *Herald* that came off the press. Mr. Willard, the paper's first editor, was boarding at Mrs. Williams'

home and it was from him that she obtained the first paper."

Last week, the *Herald* told the story of the Centralia Battle from the perspective of Frank James. During James' return to Centralia and the area, he had conversations with many citizens. One of those citizens was a bright-looking boy, about 12 years old. According to many accounts, he shook hands with James and introduced himself as Marquette Richards; the grandson of Louis Marquette. James response was, "Well, son, you may be proud of your grandfather. He was about the bravest in Johnson's command. Arch Clements shot him near Sturgeon. He rode a dun horse which I learned down in Columbia the other day was afterwards bought by Dr. W.T. Lenior."

Publications described the interaction as, "No contrast of the day was more striking than that of Frank James and the grandson of his old enemy, the grizzled veteran and the mite of a boy."

According to a letter from the U.S. Pension Office, Marquette did serve in the Home Guard Militia of the State of Missouri, (under Lieut. Thomas Janes) for eleven months and three weeks just previous to his enlistment in the United States Service. John J. Christine enrolled in the 39th Regiment of Missouri on September 3, 1864, was mustered in on September 8, 1864 and was killed at the Centralia Battle on September 27, 1864.

Christine left behind his wife, Nancy Ellen Snowden, who later married Rev. Matthew Sandyle Smith, Sr. John and Nancy had four children, John, Andrew, William Thomas, Marie Frances and Celia Alice. On September 26, 1864, a day before Christine was killed, he wrote this letter to his family, My Dear Family,

I take the pleasure to write

you all a few lines, to let you all know that I am well at this time but I am very sore from walking yesterday from Shelbyna to Paris, where we are now. I don't know how long we'll stay here, we walked from Shelbyna to Paris from eleven o'clock until about nine in the evening, and I hope when these few lines come to hand that they will find you all enjoying the same God's blessings of health. I wrote a letter the 13th and the 15th, I don't know today where I'll be tomorrow. You had better not write until I write again.

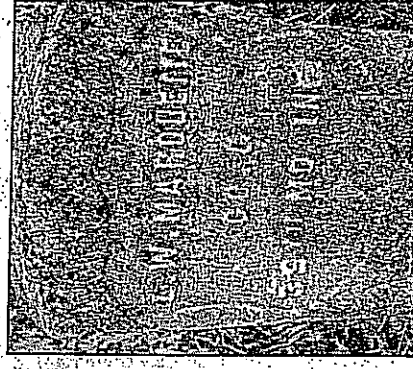
Shelby, County in a few days. I would like to see you all but cannot at the present time. I would like to hear from you all and know how you are getting along. By this time Nancy, I hope you are getting along as well as I do. I am getting along as well as I wish to be, if I never see any harder times than I do now. I'll do well, some of our boys, Company A, went out yesterday and killed some Rebels in the brush. Some are going out today, it may be that I'll go out tomorrow. Nancy, I want you all to do the best you all can and I will do the same. I think that I have done the best that I could.

I am not sorry for what I have done. I am with good boys, boys that will do right. Me and Jack Harding stays together in one tent, we eat together. James "Gibson is well, he is with us in Paris, him and Dan Foreman stay together. Jim sends his best love to his family and to you all. The letter I wrote yesterday in Shelbyna, I wrote to you about my clothes that I had sent them home with Jack Harding's clothes. I sent my clothes home with Jack's clothes: a pair of pants, coat, hat, socks, shirt, collars, and you can go and get them from his house. Nancy, I want you to sell the stock that you can spare and get for them what you can. We all have a

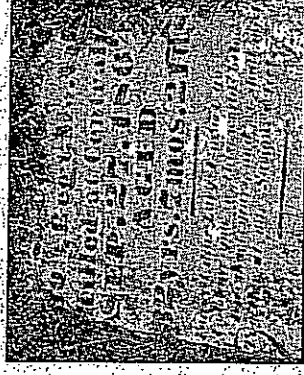
move to do without all of your stock. I don't care if you sell some sheep. If you can get four dollars or four and a half from them all, but the black sheep. I mean sell the wethers except one. Nancy, I want you all to take good care of yourself and don't be uneasy about me. Take good care of our children, I would like to see them all. I want you to make them work, Nancy. I don't want you to grieve about me. I want you

to take this world as easy as you can. I send my best love and respects to you all. Nothing more, I remain your affectionate husband. I would like to see my children". Celia Ann, Maria Frances, William Thomas, John, Andrew, Harve Brothers sends his best love to his family, he is well. Nancy, do the best you can. I would like to know whether the children go to the school or not. Jack Harding sends his best love and so forth to his family. He is well.

John J. Christine



Louis W. Marquette is buried at the cemetery in Shelbyville. His wife, Lucy's, tombstone is near his at the back of the cemetery.



Visit us at  
www.shelbycountyherald.com