



Whether fighting or not, Clay families felt the War

Some county Rebels saw battle. But all South supporters suffered at hands of Union army, history expert says

Jay Jackson hardly looked like a lecturer on Civil War history. His appearance was more that of a man, just indoors from battling the soggy, blanketlike heat on this late June day. He appeared to be losing the fight.

He apologized for his appearance, then held Friends of the Atkins-Johnson Farm members' attention with observations, personal conjecture and facts about Clay County, the Atkins family and the War Between the States.

First, though, he praised the Friends and the City of Gladstone for their restoration of both the Atkins-Johnson Farm and the historic Big Shoal Cemetery – acquired in 2005 and 2009, respectively. You're doing work, he said, that for some reason many people aren't interested in doing.

Jackson, who says he's "almost" 60, describes himself as a passionate consumer of all things historical since his boyhood: A former baby sitter, whose house was filled with old books and relics, whetted his lifelong yearning to know all

about the past.

"Thank you for going through all the trouble of preserving history and saving these grand places," he said smiling. "That way, other eight-year-old boys will be able to get interested in history the way I did."

Jackson is well-known in Clay
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Jay Jackson: Southern families like Atkinsons signed loyalty pledge, feared losing property.

The curtain's about to rise on restored A-J farmhouse

Members, clear your calendars for a special outing on Saturday, Sept. 25 – the grand unveiling of the newly redone Atkins-Johnson Farm home!

Friends of the Atkins-Johnson Farm will gather for a potluck dinner at 5 p.m. on the 25th at Happy Rock Park-West. Details will be announced, but be prepared to trot out your special recipes for all to try. After eating, everyone will travel to the Farm for a special tour of the restored house. Mark the date!



Thank-you, Gladstone, our BFF!



Friends' President Sharon Smith holds up the Best Friend Award (center, top photo) amid smiling Gladstone City Council and staff members on June 29. Recipients of this year's award (lower photo, back row, from left) Chris Helmer, Council members Mark Revenaugh and Carol Rudi, Richard King, Mayor Les Smith, Mayor Pro Tem Barry McCullough and Melinda Mehaffy joined with last year's winners (front row, from left) Charlie Johnson and Bonnie Belknap after the award ceremony.



Council enjoys fried chicken on the Farm

What better way to see and enjoy the newly restored Atkins-Johnson farmhouse than with Stroud's fried chicken and the trimmings! On June 28, the Gladstone City Council and staff, renovation architects and contractors (top right) ate a catered meal at the house on tables set up in two of the first-floor rooms (below right). Community Development employee Becky Jarrett organized the event and arranged flowers on the house's front porch.



Three are elected to Board

Three members – Tom Atkins, Chris Cox and Nancy Lux – were elected the Friends’ Board of Directors at the June 29 annual meeting.

Each will serve three years.

Farmers Market needs more volunteers

As summer dwindles, more help is needed to staff the Gladstone Farmers Market, which remains open for several more weeks.

Kathy King, the Friends’ market liaison and schedule coordinator, says the months of September and October are wide open, meaning that help is needed on all Wednesdays and Saturdays through Oct. 30.

Hours are 3 to 7 p.m. on Wednesdays and 7 a.m. to noon on Saturdays.

Email Kathy at campingkings@yahoo.com or call her at (816) 589-9593

‘Partying on the Prairie’ at Starlight



Friends members Melinda Mehaffy and Elna Cox (left) look over crafts instructions at Starlight’s “Party on the Prairie” June 23-24, and Sharon Smith readies a toy (below) for a young man. Rita Miller and Larry Newport (middle left) watch visitors as they browse pictures of the Atkins-Johnson Farm that were displayed preceding “Little House on the Prairie” at the theatre.



At left, Madge Newport helps a youngster with a project. Above, a city girl masters the whirligig.



All fenced in

The newly installed wrought-iron fence and archway now grace the historic Big Shoal Cemetery, thanks to the City of Gladstone. The fencing, which is on three of the cemetery’s four sides, is an accurate reproduction of what once enclosed the graveyard. A-J members, under Linda and David Smith’s direction, continue to clean and trim the grounds.

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County (he's lived here all his life) among Civil War re-enactors and history enthusiasts. And he knows something about restoring ages-old buildings like the A-J Farm - his Frank James Bank Museum building in Missouri City is just a step away from being placed on the National Register of Historic Places. He bought the building, which is a former bank and general store, in 1980 and has been restoring it since.

The border between Missouri and Kansas had been running blood-red with hostilities by the time the Civil War began in 1861. The desire for Missouri to stay clear of the war was short-lived, Jackson said: The fear that Union troops would occupy the county and seize the property of Southern sympathizers - like the Jonathan Q. Atkins family - soon loomed. To resist any Union invasion, Missouri Gov. Claiborne Jackson authorized the formation of the Missouri State Guard for resistance.

This history of the Guard was brief, although its members and Confederate regulars fought at the famous battles of Wilson's Creek, Lexington and Pea Ridge. Guard Units were absorbed into the Southern army in March 1862, and saw action in Mississippi and Alabama, Jackson noted. Records show that Jonathan Q.'s sons William Henry Atkins and Jacob Stone Atkins served with the Guard; incredibly, Jackson said, papers exist of Jacob Atkins's service between September 1861 and March 1862 - a remarkable find.

So what did Clay County farmers such as the



Friends President Sharon Smith presents Jay Jackson a membership to the organization.

Atkins brothers do when they returned from service, Jackson wondered aloud. All signed papers swearing loyalty to the Union, with forfeiture of property being the punishment for indication of nonsupport.

Some former Guard members joined with local guerrillas to comprise the Paw Paw Militia, which worked to subvert the Union's rule in northwest Missouri. Jackson doubts that Jacob Atkins was a Paw Paw member, instead concentrating on his return to farm life. Like all who had signed loyalty oaths, the Atkinses made sure they gave the local Union provost marshal no reason to seize their holdings.

"All Southern sympathizers in the county had to endure the constant threat that their lives could hang on whims of the local Union commander," he said. "That's all they could do.

"Endure."

Calendar

Monday, Aug. 2

■ A-J Board

6:30 p.m., Gladstone City Hall

Saturday, Sept. 25

■ A-J Farm potluck and house tour

5 p.m., Happy Rock Park-West, then A-J Farm



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