



THE HISTORY OF THE SHAMROCK RANCH

Welcome to The Shamrock Ranch situated in Ray County, Missouri, in the Fishing River Township that is part of Land Section 15 and 16 of Range 52 North and 29 West. The Ranch is comprised of 323 acres of land, including 120 acres of savanna grass rolling hills, lowland grass, and row crops and 203 acres of Missouri Highland Mesic Forest.

The Ranch's colorful history begins when Native Americans first used the land, as evidenced by the many arrowheads and "prees" made of chert and flint found throughout the cultivated fields. They did so until The Shamrock Ranch was settled into five different portions by five Western settlers.

- Daniel McCray, 80 acres – 1838 (Homestead signed by Martin VanBuren)
- William Tarwater, 40 acres – 1848 (Homestead signed by James Polk)
- William Craven, 80 acres – 1854 (Homestead signed by Franklin Pierce)
- Joshua Craven, 40 acres – 1854 (Homestead signed by Franklin Pierce)
- William Riley O'Dell, 80 acres – 1859 (Homestead signed by James Buchanan)

During the settlement period, many families and neighbors collaborated to work the land and grow their communities. William Tarwater's daughter, Mary Jane Tarwater, married a man named William Riley O'Dell who you see homesteading land next to the Tarwater family. William and Mary raised seven kids on their farm.

In the early 1860s, the Civil War took many young men to new geographies. William Riley O'Dell was one of those joining the war effort in 1862 as a Private; he went off to his native land of Tennessee with the 44th Voluntary Infantry of Tennessee. Private William O'Dell died before returning from the war in February of 1865 near Memphis, Tennessee, of typhoid fever.

One of the daughters of William and Mary O'Dell, Sarah Frances O'Dell, married James McAfee on December 18, 1873. James was the son of Elijah McAfee who lived near New Garden off Highway O. As a result, James McAfee purchased 40 acres of land from his mother-in-law and settled on the land to raise a family. By 1877, James had purchased another 80 acres of the current Shamrock Ranch from the William Tarwater family (Sarah's grandfather who had passed away in 1870) and 80 acres of the current Shamrock Ranch from William Craven. There is an old settler's home near the middle of the property that would have been on the Tarwater portion of the land that we assume was built by James McAfee around the time he purchased the land in roughly 1880. The homestead land of Daniel McCray was sold to James Roe (40 acres) and Ruben Roe (40 acres) by 1877, representing the eastern most portion of Shamrock Ranch that runs along Shoemaker Road.



By 1903, Mary O'Dell had passed away, and James and Sarah McAfee inherited her remaining 40 acres. James continued to expand his farm and purchased 40 acres from Hulda Craven around 1910; by 1914, he owned 203 acres of what is now The Shamrock Ranch. The second home on the land was built around 1915 by James and Sarah McAfee, which remains partially standing today.

Though Sarah passed away in 1923, James ran the farm with the help of his sons until he passed away in October of 1937. At this time, we have not researched how the land passed through the McAfee family after James' death. However, by 1970, Grover and Helen Clevenger had purchased the 203-acre McAfee Farm, 80 acres along Shoemaker Road owned by the Roe family, and an additional 40 acres from A.J. Helchel (NW corner of the property that was situated next to Grover Clevenger's father, Boyd G Clevenger, connected to the North). That land today makes up the homes along Klat Road.

Grover Clevenger was part of the large Clevenger family that descended from William A. Clevenger, who arrived in Missouri with his grandfather Richard in 1818. The Clevenger family was one of the first settlers in Ray County.

Grover and Helen Clevenger owned all the land that is now The Shamrock Ranch and lived in the house/cabin with the stone foundation. When visiting the Ranch, be sure to check out the 2014 pictures of the structure in our cabin history book kept in the living room of the cabin.

Grover Clevenger passed away in 1992, and Helen Clevenger passed away in 2012. In 2014, Jim Bedsworth of Butler, Missouri, purchased the land. Jim and his family started the first renovation of the 1920s cabin and worked many hours reclaiming the land from its many years of overgrowth. In 2016, the Crawford Family purchased the land for hunting purposes until they sold it to us (Mike and Denise Riley) in February 2019. We couldn't be more thrilled to have this gem of nature in our family.

When visiting, we hope that you get out of the cabin and into the true beauty of the land. Enjoy hiking through the large oak trees, sightseeing through the meadows, fishing in the ponds, and just taking in all of the wonderful nature that God has put together. Step back in time and experience what so many others before you have enjoyed throughout the years. As you do, I hope that you will get an opportunity to see some of the whitetail deer, rabbits, squirrels, bobcats, raccoons, coyotes, quail and many other creatures that God created for us to marvel at.

Denise and I truly enjoy sharing this with you and hope that you come back often.

Mike and Denise Riley