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THE RED-EYED RAVEN GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of the Author Tim Ritter



WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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WELCOME!

Happy New Year Everyone!



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I'm going to post about this on Facebook in a few days, but I wanted to give you an advance heads-up: I've uploaded several new videos on my YouTube channel. Some of these clips have to do with **Sarah Burning** sites, some pertain to local Ozarks history, and some of them have to do with family tales that may or may not end up being included in **Sarah and Orville**.

Also, YouTube has changed how addresses are created for a person's channel, so it's actually a bit easier to find me. Just go to YouTube and search @TimothyLRitter. It should take you right to me.

Stay tuned for February's issue of the Red-Eyed Raven Gazette. I've got news about other future writing projects, as well as an explanation about how this newsletter got its name! Care to guess?

As always, thanks for your encouraging messages sent when these newsletters are released. Your support is very much appreciated.

Sarah Burning News

For you *Sarah Burning* fans, here's something extra-special that is exclusive for newsletter subscribers...

I constantly find myself coming across old family photographs that have some detail previously missed or unnoticed. On the next page are three such photos which pertain to the old farmhouse site.

The top photo required a little digital monkeybusiness on my part. I've looked at the photo many times but never intentionally over-lightened it to see details of the house. Upon running the brightness all the way up on photo software, I was able to uncover this view of how badly the house needed an upgrade. You'll note I have it estimated at 1945. This was based on their appearance, especially Sarah's dark hair, compared to later pics which have a known date.

Notice how sections of the "siding" are missing and appear to reveal tarpaper exposed to the elements. One can only imagine how drafty and leaky the house was in this condition. I've often wondered what it was like to lie in bed upstairs in that house, late at night, with a thunderstorm raging outside. How many pans were scattered about to catch drips from the leaky roof?

The second and third photo below are interesting. Their development date, stamped "Dec 1955" appear to indicate that they were from the same roll of film, or if they were on separate rolls, were processed on the same day. I believe they were on different rolls and not taken on the same day.

The pic on the left appears to be of young Dennis, son of Norman, standing outside the lean-to carport which was located some distance behind the house. This is one of the best photos I've seen of the lean-to, showing how the columns were supported by what appears to be concrete blocks. The photo also shows another small shed section attached to the lean-to.

Now look at the photo to the right. That's Ray standing on top of a pile of lumber, with Neil standing behind him and Sarah turning toward the camera, shielding her eyes. It is believed that this pile of lumber was bought to build the front porch eave, and for other needed upgrades. A couple of other photos exist from this day, but I wanted to show this one in particular.

See the lean-to behind Ray? At first glance it appears that the adjacent shed section is not present. However, when I zoomed in on the photo, a tiny sliver of the far wall and roof was visible. It's a bit of an illusion, but the shed is definitely there.

A couple of other clues lead me to conclude that these two photos were taken on different days. First, because there are other photos from the day with the lumber and one includes Dennis, he is wearing different clothes in the photos. Second, if you look at the ground in both shots, the pile of lumber is nowhere to be seen in the pic with Dennis. Based on its location relative to the lean-to in the photo with Ray on the lumber, the pile is clearly not there in the photo with Dennis. The things on the ground in the left background in both pics changes too. So, these photos were taken on different days but were processed at the same time.

SITE PHOTOS



Orville & Sarah, c.1945

In this digitally overexposed photo, the dilapidated condition of the farmhouse at that time is visible.



DEC • 55



DEC • 55

The photo on the left appears to be Dennis, son of Norman, near the lean-to garage. The second photo shows Ray, Neil and Sarah. Other photos from this day exist, and it is believed that the new front porch was built, or at least started, on this day.



SARAH AND ORVILLE PREQUEL UPDATE

You might think that writing a book is a pretty straightforward process, but in reality it often is anything but straightforward. One of the challenges with nonfiction is that it often can go so many different directions, and finding the right approach is often a bit of a treasure hunt.

It was certainly that way with ***Sarah Burning***. I spent several years doing research, conducting interviews, and occasionally arguing with myself as I worked to bring everything together in a form that made sense and touched souls. It all finally took shape within just about a year of publication.

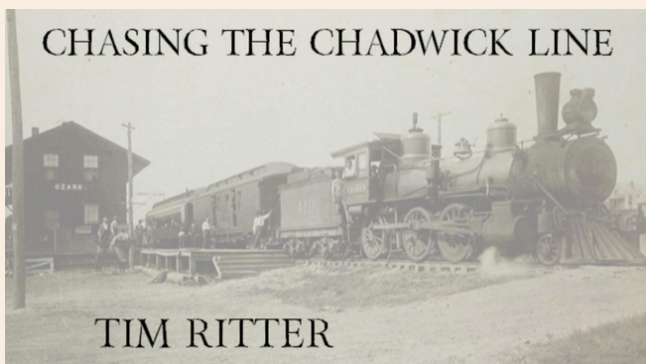
I've wrestled with myself in the same manner over ***Sarah and Orville***. How do I tell the story? How do I work in the letters from Sarah? How much do I include and how much do I leave out? To be honest, the story could go back another two generations, to Orville's wild and woolly paternal grandfather, or just one generation back to Orville's musical, storytelling mother.

At this point, ***Sarah and Orville*** very possibly will include all of it, in a narrative short story style that will throw in as much dialogue as possible. You'll get to learn more about Orville's family, the hardworking farm people who helped settle Douglas County, whose experiences and lifestyle shaped Orville into the man he became.



PRESENTATION UPDATE

If you or anyone you know belong to a group needing speakers, please give them my contact info!



Every month in this section I will highlight one of my current presentations. Here's another one:

Chasing the Chadwick Line

Railroad history seems to stir memories for most people. One railroad that operated in the Ozarks from the late 1800s into the 1930s was not only a mode of transportation of people and freight, it was the lifeblood connecting several communities. Fortunately, remnants of the old train line are still hiding in plain sight, if you know where to look for them. ***Chasing the Chadwick Line*** is a fun historic jaunt through Greene and Christian Counties for a glimpse of the railroad that once ran between Springfield and Chadwick, and the present-day odyssey to locate remains of the roadbed where the train once snaked its way through the Ozarks hills. This engaging presentation includes photographs and animated maps to enhance the journey.

SCHEDULE OF APPEARANCES

February 23, 2023 (tentative)

Location TBD

Ozarks Greenways Annual Meeting

Presentation: *Chasing the Chadwick Line*

March 18, 2023 - 10:30 a.m.

**Republic Branch of the Greene County
Library, Republic, MO**

Presentation: *The Northfield Bank Robbery*

April 28, 2023 - 11:30a.m.

**University Heights Baptist Church Senior
Education Program
Springfield, MO**

**Presentation: *Sifting Through the Ashes (30-
minute version)***

June 10, 2023 - Time TBD

**Between the Pages Writers Conference
Glendalough Convention Center
Springfield, MO**

***Joint nonfiction presentation with my good
friend and fellow author Paul Bass***

July 11, 2023 - Time TBD

**Glenstone Avenue Baptist Church Senior
Education Program
Springfield, MO**

Presentation: *Battle of Springfield*