

Ruby Robins loved Ozark County and its history.



Her generosity made this website possible

In 1959, Ruby Robins moved to Gainesville, Missouri, thus beginning a devoted relationship with Ozark County and its inhabitants that lasted the rest of her life. In that year, she and her husband, Fred, purchased the Ozark County Times and its related printing business from J. W. and Marjorie Daniel. They worked side by side to publish the weekly newspaper and manage the thriving printing shop.

After Fred died in 1967, Ruby served as the editor and publisher of the Times until May 1985, when Ruby retired and sold the business to Donna and Russell Walker.

An adopted Ozark Countian

She was born July 12, 1913, in Gary, Ind., to Carl H. and Edith Nord Matson. The family moved to Takoma Park, Md., when Ruby was a small child. She attained bachelor and master of arts degrees from the University of Maryland and taught English for six and a half years at Montgomery Blair Senior High School at Silver Spring, Md.

Ruby married Fred Robins in 1943 in Takoma Park. Upon his honorable discharge after serving with the U.S. Army in India and Burma during World War II, the couple made their home in Lexington, Mo., where he was an associate owner of the Lexington Advertiser News. When that newspaper was sold in 1949, they moved to Columbia, where Mr. Robins was employed in the University of Missouri Office of Public Information as director of university and student publications.

While living in Columbia, Mrs. Robins was employed as an associate at the State Historical Society of Missouri, where she wrote several articles for the Missouri Historical Review and also wrote the inscriptions for the large, two-sided historical markers that were erected in every county in the state by 1960.

Involved in the Community

During the years Ruby was active in editing and publishing the Ozark County Times, she also served several terms on the Gainesville Board of Aldermen. In 1979, she was cited in a Hootin an Hollarin ceremony as Ozark County and Gainesville Citizen of the Year. Mrs. Robins ardently supported programs advancing the welfare of Ozark Countians, especially their schools and youth organizations.

Ruby was a charter member of Ozark County's Chapter JP of the P.E.O. Sisterhood and was also a charter member of the Ozark County Genealogical and Historical Society. She became an authority on the history of Ozark County and served on the OCGHS's book committee, which in 1989 published A Survey of Ozark County Cemeteries – Ninety One Burial Sites. In 1991 the OCGHS book committee published A History of Ozark County 1841-1991, a 634-page volume that includes nearly 200 pages of county history and dozens of family histories submitted to the project by Ozark Countians. The book, now out of print, is available for study at the Ozark County Historium. More than 1,000 copies of the book were sold.

Mrs. Robins contributed editorial and promotional help to both books and wrote many of the cemetery histories in the cemetery book. She also wrote the core chapters on the history, settlement and development of Ozark County during its first 150 years for the history book, including chapters on topography, schools, mills and resorts.

Overseas Diary, a WWII record kept by her husband while serving in Indian and Burma, was also published by Mrs. Robins.

A bequest in support of Ozark County history

Ruby Robins died Aug. 6, 1999, at the Gainesville Health Care Center. Officially, her only survivors were one sister, Geraldine Howanitz, and six nieces and nephews. However, those who shared her love of the history of her adopted Ozark County home consider themselves Ruby's heirs, as well, because of the careful historical records and publications she left to the county in her will, along with funds to be used for preserving and promoting county history in the future...funds which made this website possible.