



## 'Pretty Polly' celebrates local tales

As a part of Pound Heritage Day, Roadside Theater will perform its musical play *Pretty Polly* May 28 at 7:30 pm at J.W. Adams Elementary School in Pound.

The stories and songs that make this original production were collected in the 1930s by the WPA Writers Project from Polly Branham Johnson who was in her 70s at the time.

Although Roadside member and co-author of the play Ron Short was not yet born at that time, Aunt Polly's stories are a part of his family's memory.

"My family helped settle the Pound area and Aunt Polly's Uncle Tan Branham's old place is located in the South of the Mountain, where some of my family lived," Short said.

"Clifton Branham is buried on our family's land, right beside

my Uncle Earl," continued Short. "When I was a boy, I used to run past his grave on my way to visit a neighbor lady who told me stories."

Short maintains that he's not the only one with connections to Polly's stories. He's sure that many folks in Wise and Dickenson counties will find the stories and music in *Pretty Polly* familiar because the play is about local memory.

Brenda Salyer, co-chairman of the Pound Historical Society, which is a sponsor of the *Pretty Polly* performance, would agree. "Just about everybody around Pound who's a Maggard or Fleming or Branham is probably related to Polly Johnson," she said.

"Clifton Branham, Polly's brother, killed my great-great Aunt Nancy, the daughter of my

great-great grandfather Tandy Branham."

Salyer is working on a book about Millie Branham, Tandy Branham's wife. She also worked on the Pound Historical Society's *History of The Pound* book which will be available by Pound Heritage Day.

"Events like Pound Heritage Day are important," Salyer said. "They give us a chance to celebrate our traditions, families, and the common issues we face in our community, and are a whole lot of fun to boot."

Roadside Theater invites audience members to share their family stories after the performance.

Advance tickets are \$6 adults, \$3 children and are available from the Appalachian Peddler in Norton, the Circuit Court Clerk's

Office in Wise, and the Robin's Nest, Country Carousel, and Adams Elementary School Office in Pound. Tickets may also be purchased at the door for \$8.

*Provided by Roadside Theater.*

**Right, Tandy Branham (1831-1863), son of Millie Branham, was killed by bushwhackers during the Civil War. His daughter Nancy married — and was killed by — Clifton Branham, the brother of Polly Branham Johnson, whose stories and songs form the basis of Roadside's production of *Pretty Polly*.**

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