

The Quarterly Bulletin of the
 Ripley County, Indiana, Historical Society, Inc.
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● The first meeting of the new year will be Sunday, January 11, 2009 at 2:00 at the RCHS Archives Library on the west side of the Versailles Courthouse Square. The program will be given by Dannie and Cheryl Welch who will show pictures and tell about their trip to Italy. Everyone invited to attend.

● RCHS is very fortunate to receive help in maintaining the RCHS Archives Library. Grants have been received from the Ripley County Community Foundation to be used to repair or replace the front door of the Archives Library and to help publish the Ripley County WWII Veterans book. The front door will soon be finished. The WWII book is progressing with a lot to do before it's completed.

● RCHS received a grant from The Rising Sun Regional Foundation of \$17,285 to be used to provide shelving and storage on the upper floor of the Archives Library. It very important to properly store and care for these precious county and family records. This project is in the planning and ordering stage.

THE FOLLOWING BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE:

		<i>Johnson Township Cemetery Index</i>	\$ 10
<i>Ripley County History, Volume 1</i>	\$65	<i>Versailles, IN School Life 1818-1966</i>	20
<i>Brown Twp.. Tales</i> by Alan Smith	20	<i>Osgood, IN Sesquicentennial 1856-2006</i>	17
<i>Tales of Versailles</i> by Alan Smith	16	<i>Come Visit</i> by Jean McClellan	25
<i>Vintage Postcards</i> by Alan Smith	20	<i>Jackson Township Cemetery Index</i>	13
<i>Brown Township Cemetery Index</i>	10	Shipping charges added for all books	3
<i>Milan, Indiana; A Storied Past</i>	16		

A soft cover, 95 page book published in 2004 for Milan's Sesquicentennial features many old beautiful pictures and Milan's history in story form by Darlene Gersterr & Roselyn McKittrick.

The research regulations and costs at RCHS are:

- Members may research at the Archives free, except for copying expenses.
- Members, as well as everyone else sending in a request for research must pay \$3 for each family name. This amount is to be sent with requests.
- Everyone must send postage or expect to be charged mailing cost.
- Research requests must be sent by regular mail.

Copy Cost:

- All Toph Papers are 35¢ each.
- 8 ½ x 11 copies are 25¢ each for first 4 copies, then 10¢ each after that (except Toph Papers)
- 8 ½ x 14 copies, known as legal size, are 50¢ each.
- 11 x 17 copies, known as ledger size, are \$1 each.
- Birth & Death Certificates from Health Dept. are \$10. Address is: Ripley Co. Health Dept. 114 N. Washington Street, Versailles, IN 47047

The RCHS Archives Library is open for public research weekdays 1 – 4 pm, except holidays, Pumpkin Show week (Sept.) and the week between Christmas and New Years. The Library will also be closed during inclement weather. Questions call 812-689-3031

Check your label to make certain your dues are paid up-to-date. If not, mail your renewal to
 RCHS or Beatrice Boyd, Treasurer, P.O. Box 83, Holton, IN 47023.
 Annual \$10; Life \$100.

Minutes

The Ripley Co. Indiana Historical Society met Oct. 12, 2008 at the RCHS Library on the Square at Versailles. In the absence of Pres. Cheryl Welch (whose husband, Dannie, had knee replacement) the meeting was called to order by V-Pres. Betty Roepke with 17 members present. The minutes of the July 13th meeting were read by Norris Krall in the absence of Sec. Frank Keenan (who with his wife is vacationing in Scotland). Motion to accept by Esther Edmondson, 2nd by Martha Benford, were approved as read. The Treas. Report was given and approved as read.

David Dreyer presented the Society with a PBS Home Video on "Life of African Prince in Slavery". A true story that took place in 1788 for 26 year old ABDUL RAHMAN IBRAHIMA SOU, based on a book written 30 years ago. David was involved in the production and was a narrator in the movie.

Norris Krall reported on the WWII Veterans Book with "Its a lot of hard work" but the directors have met with a representative from Ripley Co. Community Foundation in reference to a grant application. Betty reported we had received no grant from Tyson this year. The Museum has a new roof from 2007 grant from Tyson Fund. We have made a grant request to the Rising Sun Regional Fund to help with storage and shelving for upstairs.

The program was given by Betty Roepke on her hobby, postage stamps collecting. Betty started her collecting when she purchased an album for her son 34 years ago. She collects all, but mostly canceled stamps. Her oldest stamp is a 2¢ - 1883. She subscribes for a catalog every year. She had many samples and described many varieties of stamps. The extra stamps not used in her collection are saved and sent to the Oneida Baptist Institute in Oneida, Kentucky. This is a rehab center for teenagers in trouble. Friends help her in this endeavor, the stamps are kept in a box and when full she sends them to Oneida. They sell them to make money to help run the rehab. Extra stamps were passed around, each person taking one and the one matching the stamp in Betty's pocket won a prize. This was won by Ruth Pickett who received Kincaid note cards and Liberty Bell stamps which are good forever. Since Stamp Collectors almost never use their new stamps it saves the government, jokingly, Norris thanked her for her support of the government. It was a very interesting demonstration.

Refreshments served by Joan & Norris Krall of Center Township and visiting time were enjoyed by all. No Directors meeting.

Betty Roepke, Acting President – Bea Boyd, Acting Sec.

The Coffin Ride

A true story... according to Alan Smith, one of Versailles' avid historians. In 1830 a townsman named Bennet, who thought he was aiding his landlady get rid of rats, discovered too late that the real rat was his landlady. At the lady's request, he purchased some strychnine for her rat and mouse control. However, the landlady used it for spouse control—she gave it to her husband. Trouble set in fast, not only for the husband who rapidly stiffened up, but also for the tenant when the town doctor recognized the cause of death. Poor Bennet was promptly arrested, tried, found guilty and sentenced to hang. Pioneer justice being what it was, he was forced to ride to the hanging tree on top of the husband's coffin. Bennet's cries of innocence went unheeded and he was hanged. Years later the landlady on her deathbed confessed her crime. Bennet probably turned over in his grave.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Buzzin' With Bea~~~~by Bea Boyd

Changes!!

Monday December 15, 2008 – there is a sadness on the Courthouse Square. This was the last day of business at the Spencer-Tyson Drug Store. 24 years, as pharmacist has endeared Jon Strautman to the community. It is sad to see the store close but we will continue to see Jon at CVS. He will be an asset to the store. He is such a polite and friendly person. We wish him well.

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The only thing that doesn't change is the way the land was marked off for a future courthouse. Ripley County held its first court at New Marion. It was more of an organization than a day in court but it was important to the citizens to have a county government and county officials in position to carry on their assignment. The Commissioners first act was to levy a tax on the land at rate of 37½ % on 100, \$10 for tavern license and \$20 for vendors (sound familiar). The Judge was paid \$2 a day for 2 days and Grand Jury paid 75¢ for a day's work.

The plat for Versailles was recorded on 19<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1818. Then the lots were sold 4 in each segment around the square. 1 to 16 starting on S.E. corner of Square, proceeding left around the square. I remember 3 grocery stores, Braleys, Ferguson, Holzers, also Mildred Pratt's Dress Shop, Mrs. Fleming's Dress Shop, Roy Hunter's Hardware, Austin Theatre, Mr. Green's shoe shop, Mayme Spencer's Beauty Shop, Flo Pegee House, The Post Office, Spencer Drug Store, Bank of Versailles (now RCHS Library on lot 10), Dr. William's Dentist and Telephone office (were over the Bank Building and to reach them there was a wooden stairway on the outside), Dr. Dinsmore eye doctor, Old Anderson Medical building, John Purdum's furniture store and the Court House Inn (which is now called "Yellow Dog" which sounds like a pirates place from Treasure Island).

The first Court House was a two-story structure built in 1821 by George Craig at a cost of \$2000. The present Court House was contracted August 12, 1861 but because of the Civil War wasn't completed until 1863.

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The Assessor and Treasurer are trading offices before January 1, 2009. Since the township trustees are no longer assessing the County Assessor is in need of more space.

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As of January 1, 2009, Birth and Death Certificates at the Ripley County Health Dept. will be \$10 each.

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Mike Stratton, our friendly undertaker, will be doing a column "Looking Back" for the Osgood Journal starting January 2009. Mike is a genealogy and history buff.

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My persimmon tree bore fruit this year. I had planted the seeds over 30 years ago. Persimmons are rich in vitamin A, fiber, vitamin C, and also low in calories and very good in cookies and pudding which makes more calories.

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Thanks to the Sons of American Legion, Leora Weare Post 173 at Versailles, the Holton West Cemetery now flies a flag provided by them with grant funds by Rising Sun Regional Foundation Inc. It is the hope of Post 173 that the patriotic display of the Flag of U.S.A. will further honor the servicemen and women memorialized within our cemetery. Jeffrey Stegemiller, SAL Grant Project organizer, says they will offer further service by removing worn flags and making arrangements for them to be properly destroyed. There are 165 servicemen and women buried in the Holton and Holton West Cemeteries. The Holton West consists of 14 family cemeteries moved from Jefferson Proving Ground. There are 4 veterans from Civil War: James Hallet, William Furlow, Smith Furlow and Silas Gordon.

Have a good 2009 and remember the French Proverb. "To Speak Kindly does not Hurt the Tongue."

SPENCER-TYSON PHARMACY

The end of an era

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Versailles and the surrounding area sadly noted the closing of our most interesting and oldest business establishment, the Spencer-Tyson Drug Store on the Courthouse Square. The drug store had been providing friendly, efficient service to our community for longer than anyone alive can remember. It was a convenient location to get pharmaceutical needs, as well as a place to receive a smile with a friendly "Hello, how may I help you". According to local historian, the late Alan F. Smith, in his book *Tales of Versailles*, in the 1850-1860 period, Benjamin F. Spencer purchased a drug store on the northwest corner of First North Street and Washington Street, where the beautiful, historical, Alan and Catherine Smith home is today. Benjamin's nephew, J.A. Spencer, was employed as the pharmacist. In 1883, J.A. Spencer purchased the store from his uncle and operated it until his death in the 1920s. His widow, Margaret, operated the store for about 10 years until her death, then her son Roscoe became pharmacist and operated the store until his death in 1945. Then Brother and sister, Josephine and Ray Spencer became the owners and in January 1946, hired Alan F. Smith as pharmacist. In 1964, the vacated post office building across the street was remodeled and the drug store moved to its present site. Tyson was added to the name at this time to honor James Tyson, who had given Walgreen stock to the town of Versailles. The name of the store became Spencer-Tyson Pharmacy, an agency of the Walgreen Drug Company. Alan Smith later purchased the store and operated the business until he sold it to Jon Strautman & Associates in 1985. Jon, a pharmacist, operated the store until December 15, 2008. A very impressive record for any business. Jon's friendly greeting may still be enjoyed at the local CVS Pharmacy where he is continuing as one of the pharmacists.



SPENCER DRUG STORE 1867

Versailles Spencer Drug Store - 1903

Photo by Ursula Spencer



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