

The Quarterly Bulletin of the  
**RIPLEY COUNTY, INDIANA, HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**

Library – 125 Washington Street  
Museum – Corner of Main and Water Streets  
Versailles, Indiana 47042

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**VOLUME XXVIII**

**JULY 2007**

**NUMBER 3**

★The summer meeting of the Ripley Co. Historical Society will be at 2:00 on Sunday, July 8 at the Archives Library on the west side of the Versailles Courthouse Square. The topic of the program given by Wilbur Myers will be the "Flag" of the United States of America. Wilbur is a collector of information on many topics and an organizer of Holton's summer entertainment program, Music in the Park. Everyone is invited to attend.

★At the April meeting:

Owen Menchhofer was elected to the RCHS Board of Directors, representing Johnson Township. Owen lives on a beautiful farm and works for Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance at Osgood. Owen and wife, Della, are involved in many community and church activities and are the parents of two sons. Owen has been collecting family genealogy for several years.

A new position, Director at Large, was formed and William Gloyd of Osgood was elected to fill this new Directorship. Bill and wife, Sandra, live in Osgood. Bill has traveled a lot in his vocation as Manufacturers Representative. The last few years they have been very active in preserving Osgood history and instrumental in developing the beautiful Osgood Historical Museum where they serve as curators. The Gloyds are parents of four children.

RCHS is very fortunate to have a "complete" Board of Directors.

RCHS is interested in documenting a brief biographical sketch on each World War II soldier who entered the service from Ripley County or who lived in Ripley County after the War. We need, Name, Date of Birth, Township of present residence or Date of Death if deceased, Date of entry, Date of discharge, Highest Rank, Military Unit or Units, Theater(s) of service, Medals and/or Decorations awarded and a picture of the serviceman. Send the requested information (or as much as you have available) to RCHS P.O. Box 525, Versailles, IN 47042

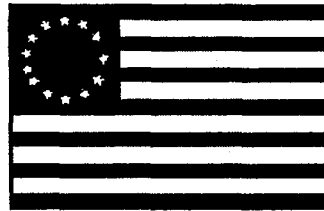
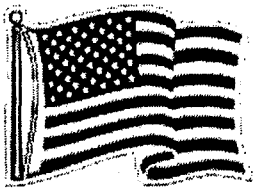
**THE FOLLOWING BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE:**

Ripley County History, Volume I	\$65	Vintage Postcards by Alan Smith	\$20
Ripley County History, Volume II	55	Brown Township Cemetery Index	10
(sold out)		Johnson Township Cemetery Index	10
Brown Twp. Tales by Alan Smith	20	Mailing fees added for all books shipped.	
Tales of Versailles by Alan Smith	16		

Check to make certain your dues are paid up-to-date. If not, mail your renewal to RCHS or to Beatrice Boyd, Treasurer, P.O. Box 83, Holton, IN 47023

**Dues:** Annual Memberships are \$10.00.  
Life memberships are \$100





## MINUTES OF THE RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 14, 2007

The Historical Society meeting was held Sunday, April 15, 2007 at 2: pm. There were 33 members and guests present. The meeting was opened with each person giving their name and Township.

The minutes were read by Henry Walker and were accepted as read. The treasurers report was given by Bea Boyd and was improved and accepted as given. The gas bill for three months was almost \$3000.00. Money received for covered bridge fund was raised from \$1250.00 to 1850.00. Cabin repair was \$14000.00. Katie Smith has designated that money from sale of "Tales of Versailles" be given to the Historical Society.

Nominations for Directors were: Franklin, Mrs. Esther Edmonson; Delaware, Mrs. Lois Workman; Johnson, Mr. Owen Menchhofer; Director at Large, Mr. Bill Gloyd. Nominations were closed and nominated directors were elected to serve.

Next meeting will be held July eighth, at the archives Building.

George Ammerman gave the program on railroads. He had worked for sixteen years for the New York Central. First as an Agent Operator, then later worked as Agent at Sunman. He had interesting stories of the work and also about some wrecks that happened. He also has a video, which wasn't presented because of lack of time. He answered questions about railroads and several members added to the stories. A very interesting program. Mr Ammerman was named a "Sagamore of the Wabash" by Governor Bowen and showed the Plaque which he received.

Meeting was adjourned and refreshments by Laughery Township were enjoyed.

Refreshments next meeting will be by Otter Creek Township.

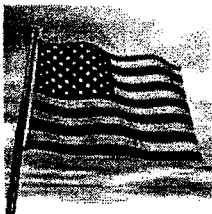
President, Betty Roepke Secretary, Henry Walker

## RCHS Board of Directors Meeting, April 14, 2007

Ten Directors were present at the meeting held following the regular meeting. Two new Directors Owen Menchhofer and William Gloyd were welcomed. The following officers were elected to serve for one year:

President, Cheryl Welch  
Vice President, Betty Roepke  
Secretary, Henry Walker  
Treasurer, Bea Boyd

Some of the business discussed was the roof and repairs needed on the museum, the removal of the annex house and storage needed for the items in the house. President Welch will call some work days for cleaning the cabin and sorting and moving material in the annex.





# BATTLE TO DEATH

Arriest Anderson Harrell  
R. 1, Box 171  
Holton, In. 47023

Now Mrs. O. Terry  
of Dearborn County

March 27, 1984

The account below was written by my father, Louis Ray Anderson, in 1939. I have the original copy in his handwriting. The Robert Birchfield he refers to was Robert Birchfield Jr., who was born August 25, 1804, and died November 7, 1895. His father, Robert Sr., was a Revolutionary War veteran. He had come to America from England, and he served as a private in Davis' Co., Locke's Regt., in North Carolina for 18 months between 1775 and 1783. He married an Indian girl, and Robert, Jr. was born in Kentucky. The family later migrated to Delaware Township; Ripley County, Indiana, where Robert, Jr. acquired 700 acres between Mud Pike and New Delaware. He donated land for the Delaware Methodist Church and Cemetery. My great-uncle Lewis Anderson, who told my father the story, was the grandson of Robert Birchfield, Jr.

## THE BATTLE TO DEATH

Having had a visit from my Uncle Lewis Anderson recently, and listening to his tales of pioneer days, I have been prompted to write this true story, the facts of which were told to Lew Anderson by Robert Birchfield, the Indiana pioneer hunter.

I shall turn back the clock to the year of 1820. It was early morning, and the frosts of October had turned the maple leaves a golden brown. As the first streaks of dawn crept over the vast forests of giant oaks and poplars, a youth, Robert Birchfield, might have been seen leaving his cabin for a day's hunt. I shall picture him thus: Rather below medium height, a little stalky perhaps, dark complected, with deep-set eyes and a Roman nose. He carried a cap-and-ball rifle of a rather large bore, with the usual powder horn and bullet pouch. Robert had decided to take the trail leading west to Laughery Creek, a stream of considerable size, about a mile distant.

As he pauses on the trail for a moment, he hears the chatter of squirrels as they feast on a nearby hickory tree. Suddenly from the underbrush nearby a giant dog comes bounding to his side. It is Bull, a trusted comrade of many hunts, whose lineage could be traced to bull dogs, feists, and curs. This dog was known far and wide as a great hunter. He was known to have traveled over forty miles alone, at one time, to return from Cincinnati, where he was being kept for a short time.

Although Robert was a natural-born hunter and a dead shot, the sport was not the only purpose of this early morning hunt. There was a large stone smoke house near the cabin that must be well-hung with venison for the coming winter. This morning Robert had in mind an open glade in a Laughery bottom, where deer often came to graze, and also a deer-lick some distance up the creek. The soil at these deer-licks contained a small amount of salt, and they were often of considerable size and depth owing to the constant tramping and licking by the deer. Robert reached the glade in the bottoms and bade Bull lie down by his side behind an old log, from which place they could command a good view of the bottom and also a trail that led down from the heavy-timbered slopes above.

Although Robert and his dog Bull waited for over an hour behind the log, no deer came to reward their patience. So Robert shouldered his rifle and, with Bull well in advance, they started to follow a deer trail that led to the salt-lick farther up the creek. Robert kept a sharp lookout for bear and panther tracks in the dust of the trail, for these ferocious animals, and the wolves, were a constant menace to his father's cattle and sheep.

As he followed the trail, he glanced ahead and was surprised to see Bull standing rigid in his tracks. At almost the same instant, he was startled by a low, ferocious growl and a blood-curdling wail. The sounds seemed to come from the creek a short distance ahead. Robert didn't realize at this time that he was about to see a sight that few hunters had ever seen. After giving Bull a reassuring pat on the head, he motioned him to follow closely at his heels.

Creeping stealthily forward, Robert parted the bushes at the point of a high cliff. At the center of a large log, which completely spanned the creek, stood two kings, each disputing the other's right of way. Robert had watched only a moment when the two kings, one a black bear and the other a panther, lunged at each other and fell to the water below.

They parted in the water and each climbed back to his end of the log and again met at the center. They clinched again and fell to the water as before, but kept fighting until the bear killed the panther. The bear came to shore but was chewed and clawed so badly that he died after taking a few steps.

During this battle to death, Robert made no attempt to shoot. No doubt in the excitement he gave no thought to the rifle. While this experience was outstanding, it was only one of many of its kind had by Robert Birchfield, the pioneer stockman and hunter.

#### NOTES

I had heard grandma tell this story when I was a little boy but had forgotten it. The highlights of the story are true:

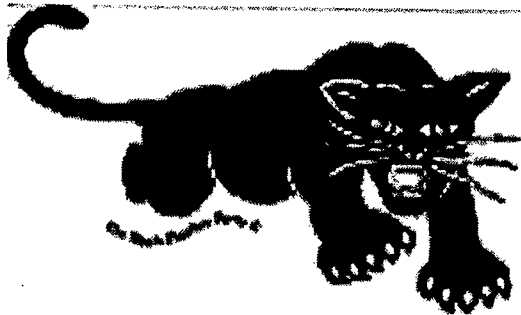
Robert Birchfield saw this fight.

He had a great hunting dog named Bull.

The stone smoke house is still standing.

February 13, 1939

Louis Ray Anderson



From The Hoosier Genealogist. June 1996 - Admissions to the  
Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children Home at Knightstown, IN  
From Ripley County

Butterfield, Allie 1884

Glaze, Elizabeth, & Lucinda J/Jane 1889

Gray, Alta Sara, Cordelia, & Rosetta 1889

Richardson, Harry L, Ralph, & Stanley 1888



**OFFICERS and DIRECTORS**

- Adams Twp. - Mrs Betty Roepke; 9644 E Co Rd 1300 N, Sunman, IN 47041
- Brown Twp. - Mr. Frank Keenan, 3241 E State Rd 62, Cross Plains, IN 47017
- Center Twp. - Mr. Norris Krall; 4499 N Old Michigan Rd, Osgood, IN 47037
- Delaware Twp. - Mrs. Lois Workman; 4823 N Co Rd 350 E, Osgood, IN 47037
- Franklin Twp. - Mrs. Esther Edmondson 7653 E Co Rd 800 N, Sunman, IN 47041
- Jackson Twp. - Mr. Andrew Scholle; 5448 W Co Rd 800 N, Osgood, IN 47037
- Johnson Twp. - Mr. Owen Menchhofer, 1970 E Co Rd 300 S, Versailles, IN 47042
- Laughery Twp. - Mrs. Helen Decker; 314 Crestview Lane, Batesville, IN 47006
- Otter Creek Twp. - Mrs. Beatrice Boyd; P.O.Box 83 Holton, IN 47023
- Shelby Twp. - Mrs. Cheryl Welch; 6453 S Co Rd 225 W, Versailles, IN 47042
- Washington Twp. - Mr. Henry Walker; 1721 N Co Rd 575 E, Milan, IN 47031
- Director at Large - Mr. Charles Wm. Gloyd, 1075 W St Rd 350, Osgood, IN 47037

Vice President

Treasurer

President & Museum Curator

Secretary

Lori Hoffman; 5565 E. Lower Dry Fork Rd. Madison, IN 47250  
 Bea Boyd, Henry & Jerry Walker, and Norris & JoAn Krall

Web Master

Newsletter Committee

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