

# 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

[www.seidata.com/~rchslib](http://www.seidata.com/~rchslib)

e-mail: [rchslib@seidata.com](mailto:rchslib@seidata.com)

---

**VOLUME XXVIII**

**OCTOBER 2007**

**NUMBER 4**

♦The fall meeting of the Ripley Co. Historical Society will be held Sunday, Oct. 14, at the Archives Library on the Versailles Courthouse Square at 2:00. The program on Indian relics, will be given by local member, Robert Kimball, of Holton. He will display part of his arrowhead collection.

Anyone with a related collection is invited to bring it and participate in a "Show and Tell" session.

Visitors welcome.

♦This newsletter is all about Native Americans because the program will be on Indian artifacts. Many residents in this area have collections of relics and are interested in the history. Many have references to Indians ancestors in their family genealogy. There are several interesting items about Indians from our County's history but ran out of space. Will use them at a later date.

♦The RCHS was, gratefully, the recipient of a beautiful history book of St. Paul Lutheran Church of Olean, Indiana. Title of the 263 page book is "Faithful To Our Lord Through Changing Times." The book was dedicated to Alice Louise Pegee McCoy, a long time devoted member who stimulated the interest of pastor Marcus Felde to compile and edit the church history. The book was published for their sesquicentennial celebration on September 2, 2007. Rev. Felde expressed his appreciation to the people who helped bring the book to fulfillment, especially, Martha Jean Jarvis for typing parish register records and transcribing the German words, Marilyn Jeffries, Kaye Hunger, and Ruth Hunger for searching and compiling the historical records, and Barbara Eades for collecting, scanning and preparing the photos of the confirmation classes, plus many others including his wife Christine. A time capsule was buried in the church grounds by a group lead by Peg Ehlers, daughter of Mrs. McCoy.

♦Alice McCoy was a member of the RCHS for many years, serving as, Director, Secretary, and was President at the time of her death in 2004.

♦ The 105<sup>th</sup> Versailles Pumpkin Show was held the last weekend of September. Our Director, Owen Menchhofer, impressed us with his many talents. He won First Place in one of the Pumpkin Baking categories. His prize included cash and a cute apron. Hope he will serve his prize winning dish at one of our meetings.

---

#### 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 HISTORICAL SOCIETY JULY 8, 2007

The July meeting of the Historical Society was held On Sunday July 8th with 25 members and guests, each giving their name and place of residence.

Minutes were read and approved with correction; the money for bridge goes to county and not the society.

Treasurers report was read and approved as read. The Tyson fund will be available for applying in the future.

Cheryl and husband repaired the log cabin window, it had shrunk:. If anyone is interested in Church pews from old house, also books get in touch with us.

New business: Servicemen Autobiographies. Norris would like to get it activated. Need photos, dates, places of service, family, and obituaries.


Question was asked about W.P.A. and Roosevelt privies. The C.C.C was also discussed, and the application for a Memorial in Versailles State Park.

Andy Scholle was asked about bids for repairing the Museum roof. Harold Hornberger was suggested with references. Andy will contact him.

Wilbur Meyers gave interesting information on the American Flag. The oldest flag was Denmark in 1219. US Flag was designed June 14, 1777. And this was proclaimed Flag Day in 1916. When you wear a flag pin it should be on left side, near the heart. When the Anthem is played all will stand and face the flag and salute. The present 50 star US Flag was designed by Robert Heft of Napoleon, Ohio.

Refreshments at October 14,2007 meeting will be by Shelby Township.

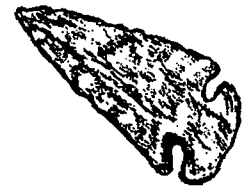
Meeting was adjourned.



The community was deeply saddened by the sudden death of Ruth Ann Swinney on August 19, 2007. RCHS will miss her very much. She was responsible for starting the project to obtain a statue of a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) worker for Ripley County. This statue is to be placed at the entrance of the Versailles State Park. Ted Tapp, Park Manager, and RCHS readily agreed to work with her on this project, but it was her idea and she did most of the paper work. A grant from the Rising Sun Regional Foundation was received before her death and another grant is needed to complete the project. Mrs. Swinney's daughter, Lisa Ebinger, is now doing the necessary work to finish her mother's project. This statue will commemorate an important part of our past and will also be remembered as a tribute to Ruth Ann Swinney's dedication in preserving the memory of an important time in our county's history. A few years ago Ruth Ann diligently worked with a committee of fellow graduates to publish the New Marion School and Community History Book.



## GRANDMA'S INDIAN STORY BY BEA BOYD

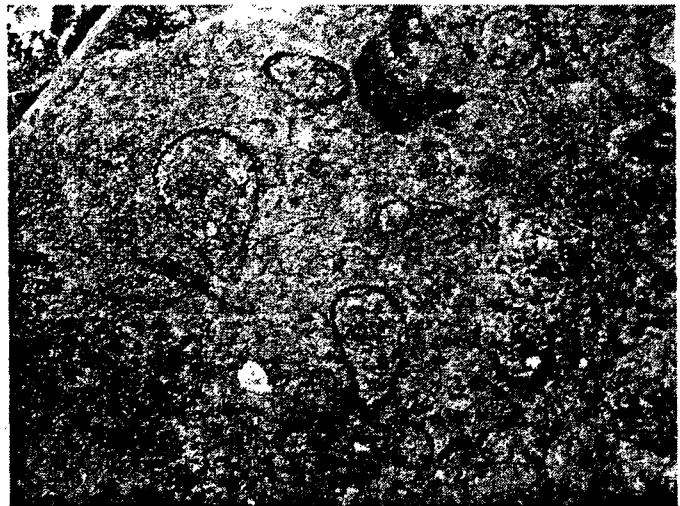


My Grandmother Beach was born in Otter Creek Township, on what we called the "old 40." The old forty joined our farm but by 1934 all traces of the pioneer homes that had been there in the 1850's were gone, except for a few foundation stones. Nearby Otter Creek meandered its way from north of the old 40 southwesterly, passed where the Holton Covered Bridge now crosses, on toward Jennings County draining into the Muscatatuck River.

Grandma told me that when the Indians were forced to move west as the settlers took over, they buried some treasures before moving. The place where they buried the treasure was designated by a large rock in a hillside close to the creek. It had an outline of a man's head on one side and a horses hoof on the other side. She also said that later some young Indian braves came back looking for the buried treasure. They looked all along the banks of Otter Creek, but could not find the rock.

As a child, with this story in mind, I kept checking out the rocks that looked different than the others. Finally I came across what I believed was the one. Moss had covered part of the side that had an indentation resembling a horse's hoof, the other side was partially broken off but there were some marks on it that looked like they had been carved. Surely they had been put there by the Indians! This was a find! So my sister Mary and I decided to do some digging, although our older brother, Jesse, had told us to leave the rock alone for we could cause a landslide on the hill. One day when Jess had gone to work in the field we decided this would be a good time to check out the rock. So armed with tools, a shovel, etc. we headed toward the rock. We were ready to dig when we heard, "You kids get on back to the house," which we did. Mother said, "There is probably nothing there but some beads and arrowheads."

Years later some South Ripley School Students heard the story about the Indian Treasure Rock. They spent a lot of time, as had the Indian Braves, searching up and down the Otter Creek banks. But to this date, if there is a treasure, it remains undisturbed in its hiding place.



\*\*\*\*\*

Grandma Mary Elizabeth Leach was born August 31, 1855 and married Francis Marion Beach in 1873. Her grandfather Filby came from England to S.C. He married Judy (unknown) who was born in S.C. Judy was supposedly an Indian, probably Cherokee. One of Grandma's many stories about their pioneer living included one about her uncle Richard who went to the spring near a cave on the Otter Creek bank when the Indians (believe it was Delaware Indians) caught and scalped him. He lived through the scalping but later they killed him.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROOF OF INDIANS LIVING ALONG THE OTTER CREEK

In 1884 a covered bridge (#81) was built over the Otter Creek about 1½ miles north of Holton in Otter Creek Township, Ripley County, Indiana. By the 1980's most of the covered bridges in America had been destroyed or retired to a visitors attraction only and replaced by more serviceable two-lane bridges. The Ripley County Commissioners became aware of the need for a new bridge over the Otter Creek. An Archaeological Study was required before the area could be disturbed. The reconnaissance studies were done by Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology of Indiana University in 1986 & 1987. A residual exposure of Laurel chert was identified in the small tributary, locally known as Cade's Branch, that flows into Otter Creek. This area was classified as a Raw Material Location (RML-274). This exact site is locally referred to as Elm Hole. Chert is flint-like quartz often found in limestone in south central Indiana and Kentucky. Flint is a rock that if hit correctly can be shaped into tools. This site, along the creek, was determined to be a base where for centuries, chert tools had been made.

A second prehistoric site (12 ri 34) located was approximately 300 feet in width and 800 feet in length. The artifacts, found in this area, indicated it was a food processing and cooking site. The availability of chert, water, animals to hunt, and fish, made this an advantageous spot for an extended camp site or base camp that was used repeatedly by possibly different Indian tribes.

These two sites were included in both the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures and the National Register of Historic Places. The Ripley County Highway Dept. found another place to build the new bridge. The old Covered Bridge has been retired, but kept in good repair.

### **Native American Tribes that lived in Southern Indiana**

Extended research has indicated that this area was inhabited by the Shawnee Indians and the Miami and Potawatomi Tribes lived in the central to northern part of the state. Of course, the tribes traveled around to hunting grounds and different living sites. Mound Builders of Mississippian Tradition lived on the northern shore of the Ohio River, roughly 400 to 700 years ago. They had a highly developed culture. There is a museum in Vanderburgh County called Angel Mound (Angel after the landowner). Many local settlers found mounds on their property. Another Indian museum is the Eideljorg in Indianapolis.

### **MORE ABOUT OTTER CREEK FROM BEA**

On the Beach farm near the Otter Creek is a small cave that had a spring of water. The Beach family got their drinking water there. As late as the 1930's, the ground around the cave was covered with flint rocks and countless arrowheads and other Indian artifacts. When the nearby field was plowed and planted the plants would sprout and turn yellow. But the last time Bea visited the area the field was in grass and no signs of rocks. In the picture is Bea's granddaughter, Rae Jean Nealis Auterson sitting in front of the cave. A big tree had fallen in front of the opening when picture was taken in 1981.







### 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

Web Master

Newsletter Committee

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

---

Non-Profit Org.  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Versailles, IN 47042  
 Permit Number 17

---

The Ripley County, Indiana,  
 Historical Society, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 525  
 Versailles, Indiana 47042