

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.rchslib.org

e-mail: staff@rchslib.org

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The Ripley Co. Historical Society will meet Sunday, April 10, at 2:00 at the Archive Library on the west side of Versailles Courthouse Square. The program for our next meeting is by Marshella Hartman on ~~ROLLS~~ Refreshments will be provided by Adams Twp., Betty Roepke.

The Ripley County Historical Society greatly appreciates and extends a heartfelt Thank You to the Ripley County Community Foundation and the assistance of Jennifer Black Darnell and Mike Kruse, for the generous aid of the Grant that allowed us to purchase an HP Pavilion computer. The computer was badly needed and the Ripley County Community Foundation was very gracious to provide the computer.

Research \$5.00 for non-members, and \$.50 per page copied.

The WWII War Veterans book, titled LEST WE FORGET, is still available. It can be obtained for \$35 at (1) Batesville Historical Society which is located on George Street next to the Post Office (during its open hours), (2) the Osgood Museum on South Buckeye Street (on Friday or Saturday afternoons) or in Versailles at the Ripley County Historical Society Library on the west side of the Courthouse Square (open every weekday afternoon from 1 to 4). Also, LEST WE FORGET can be ordered for shipment by mail for \$40. Checks should be made payable to Ripley County Historical Society. We give our heartfelt thanks to Joan and Norris Krall.

Members that are willing to receive the newsletter via email instead of postal mailing can do so by emailing RCHS with your request along with your email address. The email for sending your request is printed above.

Windows have been replaced in the RCHS Library. If you wish to donate \$250.00 for a window in your name, a memorial, or in honor of a loved one, send your donation and request to RCHS on the address below. A plaque will be made with the honored names inscribed. The windows have been installed. The difference in utilities cost are already showing. There is still time for donations.

The RCHS Archives Library is open for public research weekdays 1 . 4 pm, except holidays, Pumpkin Show week, also the week before and between Christmas and New Years. The Library will also be closed during inclement weather. The Museum will be closed for the winter months.

Questions call 812-689-3031

Mail your renewal for 2011 to RCHS at P.O. Box 525, Versailles, IN 47042

Dues: Annual \$15; Life \$150.

**THE FOLLOWING BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE:**

<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	<i>Johnson Township Cemetery Index</i>	10
<i>Milan, Indiana, A Storied Past</i>	16	<i>Lest We Forget WWII</i>	35
<i>Broken Wings</i> , By Robert Kelly	20		
Shipping Charges added for all books	5		

RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES  
January 9, 2010

The winter quarterly business meeting of the Society was called to order by President Cheryl Welch at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 9, 2011. Cheryl led all in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance. At President Welch's request, all attendees, some twenty-one folks, identified themselves by name and township of residence.

Secretary Frank Keenan read the minutes of the fall quarterly meeting of October 3, 2010, amending the version set forth in the 4th paragraph of the January 2011 newsletter, to reflect that Delbert Abplanalp also served on the work committee, which cleaned the Smith-Engel cabin for public viewing during the Pumpkin Show. A motion to accept the minutes, as amended, was made and seconded. Treasurer Owen Menchhoffer submitted his written Financial Report of the Society's income and expenses for the period 1/1/2010 through 12/21/2010. A motion to accept the Financial Report was made, and seconded.

President Welch commenced the business meeting with a special welcome to Helen Decker, and an expression of deepest sympathy on behalf of herself, the Board, and the Society's membership for the sudden death of her husband, Joe Decker. President Welch noted that to date six (6) window memorials of \$250.00 each have been made toward defraying the cost of the replacement windows installed at the Archives Building. Cheryl also advised that John Wolford, program presenter, had expressed to her his great appreciation for the good turnout for his program presentation this fall. Cheryl also noted that John has sent a program of his presentation, as well as many family papers and genealogy records for our archives.

Cheryl also informed us that the Commissioners have advised her that upon completion of the County Courthouse annex, all County records now kept at the Archive will be kept at the Annex. If so, we will lose our \$5000.00 stipend from the County.

On behalf of the Society, President Welch gave special thanks to Sandy Meisberger and Tom Krumm for putting together an especially interesting January 2011 Newsletter. Cheryl also expressed the Society's gratitude to the Ripley County Community Fund (RCCF) for their \$1000.00 grant for a new computer, which, thanks to Dannie Welch, is now up and running.

President Welch reminded everyone that dues (now \$15.00 per annum or \$150.00 for life) are due in January. There being no further business, Cheryl announced that Adams Township will be responsible for refreshments at the spring meeting, and the meeting was adjourned.

Following the business meeting the program was presented by Vice President Betty Roepke. Betty shared with us several interesting facts concerning the early history of the northern part of the County. One such fact was that Penn Town, founded in 1837, was initially called Pennsylvaniaberg, and only later was shortened to Penn Town. Sunman started as Sunmanville; Poston was renamed Dabney. The most amusing anecdote was Betty's reading from a diary entry concerning Sunman's sesquicentennial celebration, wherein the diarist noted that: "Nick Voltz sucked 4 dozen eggs in 15 minutes", and then the diarist wryly observed that "Nick might view himself as an incubator". At the conclusion of Betty's presentation, she received a warm round of applause.

Respectfully submitted,  
Frank Keenan, Secretary



1900 MILAN POST OFFICE



1900 UNITED STATES POSTAL WAGON

HISTORY OF POST OFFICES IN RIPLEY COUNTY  
BY TOM KRUMM

The first post office in North America was opened in 1639 in Boston. In 1775, Benjamin Franklin was the first postmaster general of the post office established by the Continental Congress. In 1833 Abe Lincoln was appointed postmaster of New Salem, Illinois. Other famous postmasters included Bing Crosby and Walt Disney.

The Cincinnati post office was established in 1794. In 1799, the first post office in the Northwest Territories was established in Vincennes. John Buchanan was the first person to acquire property in Ripley County in 1809. Matters with the Indians didn't really settle down until the conclusion of the War (1814). Indiana became a state in 1816, and Ripley County was established in 1818.

The first official post office in Ripley County was opened in 1819 in Versailles. Listed below are the 11 post offices currently open in Ripley with the year they were opened.

Versailles (1819)-postmaster-Jackie Hill  
121 South Washington Street

Napoleon (1820)-postmaster-James Reynolds  
8979 N. U.S. Hwy. 421

Cross Plains (1826)-postmaster Bonnie Hamilton  
8911 S. State Road 129

Milan (1836)-postmaster-Joyce Albrecht  
300 W. Carr Street

Friendship (Harts Mill) (1850)-postmaster-Carol Iceberg  
5918 E. Friendship Main Street

Batesville (1852)-postmaster-Marsha Boyer  
3 West George Street

Holton (1854)-postmaster-Carol Lovins  
812-689-6114

Sunman (1856)-postmaster-812-623-2266  
219 N. Meridian Street

Osgood (1856)-postmaster-Lynne Miller  
201 N. Walnut Street

Morris (1858)-812-934-4924  
4728 E. Morris Mill Street

Pierceville (1860)-812-654-2540  
4499 E. Street Route 350

In the beginning, mail was delivered to post offices in our county by independent contractors. One of the very first carriers, Nathan Waldon, was 14 years old, and delivered mail on a route beginning in Cincinnati and ending in Louisville for 30 cents a trip. On his first trip he was barefoot. The most popular route began in Vevay, went through Cross Plains, Versailles and Napoleon before ending in Brookville. Postage was paid for by coins as stamps did not exist before 1847. The postmaster paid the contractor if he had enough money. If not, he had to get funds from Uncle Sam. Postmasters were paid on a commission basis until 1864. Thus, individual post offices could not lose money.

Today, there are over 32,000 U.S. Post Offices in our country. In 2010, they lost over \$8 billion dollars. Over 25,000 locations are losing money today. They are manned with over 532,000 employees earning wages plus pension and medical benefits. They still use some contractors to move mail between towns as well. Some members of Congress are proposing closing 2,000 post offices in 2011. At this annual rate, it would take over 10 years to eliminate the locations losing money.

Our government did not write any rules on what was necessary for a post office to be opened until 1891. As a practical matter, they started by allowing most general stores to become a post office. Customers would make a request to open a post office and this was often enough to get approval. Over the years, 46 additional post offices were open and closed in Ripley County. They were Ballstown, Behlmer Center, Benham, Buchanan Station, Clinton, Correct, Dabney, Delaware, Delaware Station, Dewberry, Elrod, Finks, Gaff, Hermann, Haneys Corner, Hardings Store, Haven, Hopewell, Jamacoy, Johnsville, Kingswood, Laughery Switch, Lock-Springs, Lookout, Marble Corner, Muddy fork, New Carrollton, New Marion, Nicholasville, North Hogan, Oak port, Olean, Otter Creek, Otter Village, Poston, Plattsburg, Saint Magdalen, Spades, Springdale, Stringtown, Stumpkes, Tanglewood, Titusville, Vine Springs, Way, Westover. Many of these population centers no longer exist.

In early 1825, a few residences of Franklin Township wanted a post office but there wasn't a nearby general store. The local people expanded the space inside a hollow poplar tree and this was used as the Poplar+Post Office. Where there is a will, there is a way.

From 1799 to 1815, postage rates were 8 cents for 40 miles to 25 cent for over 500 miles. In 1851, local mail was 1 cent, and this was the first year stamps were available in our county. Citizens had to go to their post office to pick up their mail. Delivery routes to citizens did not start until 1864. Today, the delivery service to our county is excellent. Mail is delivered six days a week. In our county, the carriers go through snow on roads before they are plowed! One ounce can go anywhere in the country for 44 cents.

The volume of mail is going down at the rate of 10% per year because of email. No one knows what is going to be done to balance the U.S. Post Office budget. We need to find some people like those who created the Poplar+Post Office and support them. Ripley County could show the rest of the country how to get back on the right post office route.

# County, Indiana, Historical

Ripley



Society

## OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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