

THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF THE
Ripley County, Indiana, Historical Society, Inc.

Museum--Corner Main and Water Streets

Versailles, Indiana 47042

VOLUME XVII

JANUARY 1997

NUMBER 1

WINTER MEETING

The first meeting of 1997 will be January 12 at 2 o'clock in the bank building on the Versailles Square.

FALL MEETING

The Ripley County Historical Society met on October 13, in their newly purchased bank building on the square in Versailles. The meeting was called to order by the vice president, Julie Underwood. The secretary's and treasurer's reports were both read and approved. After paying many bills there was \$483.06 in the checking account.

During old business several things were discussed. Water leaks at the annex will be checked and fixed before the building will be open in the spring. Lights in the new building need to be checked and burned out bulbs be replaced; also the roof should be checked before winter.

Norris Krall gave a report and progress on the building purchase. Plans for purchasing the building had been met before the deadline. There are still several tax credits that are still available to people to help the RCHS reach their quota.

The society is most grateful to everyone. Organizations, individuals and the Tyson Fund in helping make the purchase possible.

It was brought to the attention by a member that it might be a good idea to have signs marking the place where the hanging tree once stood and at Gordons Leap. There is also need for a sign to mark the road where you turn to reach Buchanan Fort in Brown Twp. This matter will be checked to find the cost before anything is done.

Sandra Meisberger suggests the by-laws of the organization be placed on display.

The RCHS would like for all families to share their genealogy findings with the society.

No program was presented and no directors meeting was held. Brown Twp. will host the January meeting.

DUES ARE DUE AS OF NOW. If your 1997 dues have not been received this will be your last bulletin until the treasurer receives them.

The directors have voted a new policy. Any new member would be charged \$10.00 for the first year. All renewals are \$5.00.

THE BENJAMIN CHANDLEE COMPASS

Benjamin Chandlee, a Quaker from Nottingham, Pennsylvania, was a well known Clock and Scientific Instrument Maker. Benjamin was born on January 22, 1723 and died on September 18, 1791. Throughout Benjamin's life he made several surveyors compasses and related items but primarily specialized in "Grandfather" Clocks. Benjamin had 4 sons, who all specialized in Surveying and Scientific Instruments.

It is interesting to note that the birth place of the Chandleeps, Nottingham, Pennsylvania, was moved to Maryland after the establishment of the Mason-Dixon Line in 1768.

Very few examples of Benjamin's Surveying Instruments are known to exist. A good estimate is probably 10 to 15 in the entire Country. His Son's instruments are more numerous. Chandlee compasses are well known throughout the antique scientific instrument world for being very ornate, high quality instruments.

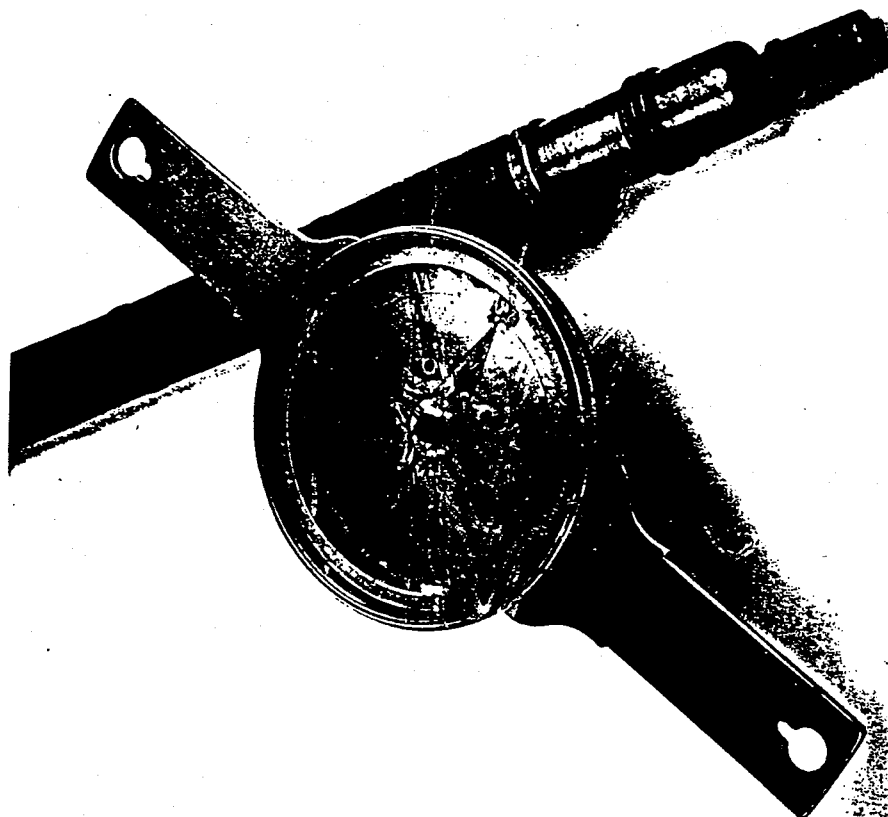
Most Colonial Surveyors were forced to import their instruments; compass, staff, and chain from England because the American Colonies did not have the tools or technology to make brass, silver and other precious metals that were needed for their manufacture. Secondly, most skilled Craftsmen chose to stay in England and not settle in the Colonies. The Chandleeps are one of the earliest known Colonial Instrument Makers. Typically their metals were shipped to the Colonies in bars or coin and then melted and shaped by the Craftsmen. Due to the difficulty of getting these metals, some Makers were known for building compasses of wood construction. Colonial instruments were usually much more expensive than English instruments and not of as great quality.

The Chandlee Compass belonging to Jeff French, was purchased from the Herb Thompson Estate in Versailles, Indiana. The compass had apparently been passed through Herb's Family beginning with a Joseph Hill, who was born in Fayette County, Pennsylvania in the late 1700's. Joseph later moved to New Marion in the early 1800's. It is not clear why Joseph or his descendants originally obtained the compass as none of them were County Surveyors or Government Surveyors in this area.

The compass was supposedly crafted between 1761 and 1768, the very time that the Mason - Dixon line was being run. That is evidenced by the fact that the compass is marked : B. Chandlee Nottingham, _____, which would seem to show that at the time the compass was built the Craftsman did not know which colony was in possession of Nottingham.

The Chandlee compass is a fine example of a pre-1800 surveyors compass. The face is silvered and ornately hand scribed. It is 14 and 1/2 inches in length with a 5 and 1/2 inch compass face broken into 1 degree increments. The compass is still in fine working order and rests on it's original wooden staff.

Surveyor's compasses such as this one were used to lay out almost all of the land in America from about 1720 to 1830. The original surveyors in Southeastern Indiana would have used instruments very similar to this one. Most of these instruments were subject to extreme conditions and rough use. The condition and preservation of this historic compass is a credit to the Hill-Thompson Family of Ripley County, whose forethought and preservation has left one more significant artifact of earlier times to help us remember from whence we came.



Our thanks to Jeff French for this ~~article~~ ~~article~~

Update from the Building Fund Committee.

The Building Fund received enough donations to purchase the bank building on the last day of September, 1996. We are trying to raise more money to repair the roof; put in a much needed drain on the north side of the building; replace and/or install more lighting; as well as some other minor repairs. We also need to purchase a new state-of-the-art computer and install a telephone.

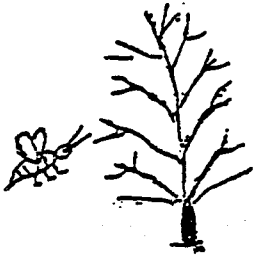
There are still some Neighborhood Assistance Credits (NAP) available. NAP donations made in 1996, of over \$100, will receive credits toward the Indiana State Tax for 1/2 the amount donated. Since this program is in effect until June, 1997, it allows donations made in 1997 to also receive 1/2 of the amount given as a tax credit against 1997 state taxes. It is perfectly acceptable for a person to make two donations and take two tax credits, one for each year. This is a great way to keep our money here in the community instead of sending it to Indianapolis.

The Ripley County Historical Society Building Fund Committee wishes to express heartfelt "Thanks" to all who have supported this project. A complete report will be published in the newsletter after the end of June. Since the opening of our new library in May, we have had researchers from all over the United States. We would like to invite everyone to visit our new Research Library and see how your money has been put to use.

A very special "Thank You" to the following who have donated toward our building since the last newsletter:

**Hope Austin
John Austin
Robert E. Boggs
In memory of:
J.W. & Orissa Gelvin Benham
and their four daughters
Neil & Marilyn Comer
Carol Ealey
Peggy Ehlers
Elrod Grain Services, Inc.
William & Alice Glover
Jack Grines
Chester & Genelle Henderson
Home Federal Savings Bank
Elizabeth Koester
Steven McCombs
Alice McCoy**

**John & Roselyn McKittrick
National City Bank
Neal Funeral Home
Osgood Lions Club
Ripley Publishing Co.
in memory of:
Harry W. Thompson,
Carlos "Barney" Craig,
& Herbert Thompson
Golda Reynolds
Charles & Betty Roepke
Berta Anna Steinkamp
Henry & Geraldine Walker
James Wheeler
Ray & Holly Willis
Douglas C. Wilson
Pamela Wygant**



ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ
 Z
 Z
 Z
 BUZZING' ROUND
 your
 Z
 Z
 FAMILY TREE
 by
 Z
 Z
 ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

Q:1:97 Harold J. Wilson, 1345 Wadsworth Dr. Florissant, Mo, 63031 would like some help from some of his relatives living in or near Napoleon. He is grandson of Frederick and Eva M. Haunuse Clemons. First: Frederick Clemens b 24/09/1824,d. 09.04/1890 and wife Louisa (Krummel) Clemens,b1829 d. 04/11/1884. both born Baden, Bermany. They are buried in the Napoleon Lutheran Cemetery.

I enjoy the notes from folks who send in their dues and sometimes I even get a letter. I always glean my letters for bits of history so I'd like to share with you some excerpts from a letter from Dorothy English since hers has reference to the Engle cabin that is now located on Lot #21 by the Museum on Water Street in Versailles.

"When we visited my grandparents, Great Uncle August Engle and his wife Louisa always came to see us--we never went to their place.(They were living in the log cabin then. Back in the 20's when I was in the seventh grade, we lived with my Hinghouse grandparents one year, and I attended the old Delaware School that my parents had gone to. I rode to school in a mule-drawn school hack that did not have regular seats-just straight boards down each side of the hack. Ten years later when I told one of my college professors that, he wouldn't believe me. I remember we had a good time riding to and from school--I even had a boy friend who sat beside me, but I can't remember his name." Mrs. English is a Life Member. The gorgeous loveseat, chair, table and bed at the Museum are gifts from her. Heirlooms of her families.

James and Barbara Gay from Rockport, Il were thrilled to find a linen roller towel woven by their gr-gr- grandmother while she was a young woman still living in Germany. This was on display at the Museum.

My neighbor, Claude Williams, a WWI Veteran passed away March 1971. Claude had placed the U. S. flags on the graves of the service men buried in the cemetery ever since I could remember every Memorial Day. Now, this may not seem important to some but it was to us. Well, that May Earl Gross ,also a veteran and I put the flags on the graves. It is then you begin to appreciate what volunteers do. It got dark and we still hadn't found John Brown. Well, Earl took over this duty and for 25 years has faithfully put the flags out and brought them back in. Last year he asked for someone else to be assigned. Thanks Earl for 25 years of faithful service. Mike Stratton and son Andy will be doing the flags starting 1997. There are 145 service men buried in the Holton Cemetery. This is the current count.

1996 was a busy year but seems like it flew by so fast there is just never enough time and yet when I think of all the things squeezed into 365 days, it bugs me.

Thanks to Helen Einhaus, who was working that day at the Genealogy Dept, I have 4 new cousins that I did not know existed. They were at the Versailles State Park for a Reunion.

Gotta go. I'll be at RChs on the Square from 1-4PM. See you there Mon.

RIPLEY COUNTY, INDIANA, HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
Box 525
Versailles, Indiana, 47042

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

Officers elected to serve until after the April 1997 meeting.

ADAMS Twp.; Mrs. Charles Roepke, 9644 E Co Rd 1300 N, Sunman, IN 47041
BROWN Twp.; Mrs. Alice McCoy, 5616 S St Rd 129, Versailles, IN 47042 SEC.
CENTER Twp.; Mr. Norris Krall, 4499 N Old Michigan Rd, Osgood, IN 47037
DELAWARE Twp.; Mr. Scott Smith, P.O. Box 274, Batesville IN 47006 PRES.
FRANKLIN Twp.; Dr. William Glover, 5611 E Co Rd 300 N, Milan, IN 47031
JACKSON Twp.; Mrs. Kathryn Manship, 3378 W Co Rd 600 N, Osgood, IN 47037
JOHNSON Twp.; Mrs. Julie Underwood, 998 W Co Rd 450 S, Versailles, IN 47042 V.PRES.
LAUGHERY Twp.; Mrs. Carolyn Hahn, 13403 N Delaware Rd, Batesville, IN 47006
OTTER CREEK Twp.; Mrs. Donald Boyd, P.O. Box 83, Holton, IN 47023 TREAS.
SHELBY Twp.; Mrs. Howard Lane, 7192 S Co Rd 400 W, Versailles, IN 47042 MUSEUM CUR.
WASHINGTON Twp.; Mr. Myron Kelly, 1028 S St Rd 101, Dillsboro, IN 47018
Miss Mary Manship, 3378 W Co Rd 600 W, Osgood, IN 47037 C.G.R.S.
Mrs. Alice Glover, 5611 E Co Rd 300 N, Milan, IN 47031 BULLETIN EDITOR

THE RIPLEY COUNTY, INDIANA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
Box 525
Versailles, Indiana 47042

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 17
Versailles, IN
47042
