

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

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**VOLUME XXIII**

**JANUARY 2002**

**NUMBER 1**

**JANUARY MEETING**

The January meeting will be held January 13, 2002, at 2:00 P.M. in the Ripley County Historical Society Building on the Court House Square in Versailles.

The Program will be presented by Pastor Marcus Felde of the St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Olean. He will speak of his six year's of service as a missionary in New Guinea. Make your plans now to be present for this very interesting meeting!

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**REMEMBER WE STILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING BOOKS FOR SALE:**

Ripley County History, Volume I	\$65
Ripley County History, Volume II	55
Tales of Versailles by Alan F. Smith	16
Vintage Postcards of Ripley County by Alan Smith	19
Brown Township Cemetery Index	10
Johnson Township Cemetery Index	10

**COMING SOON!**

**History of Brown Township by Alan F. Smith**

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Thanks to Willard Tucker and Don Hughes, we also have available a newly updated listing of the burials at the Union Flat Rock Cemetery. This listing includes all known burials plus some additional information about many of the deceased. Contact RCHS if you are interested in this update.

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Your membership expires on December 31 of the year shown on your mailing label. 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

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**Dues:**

New memberships are \$10.00 for the first year.  
Renewals are \$5.00 per year thereafter.  
Life memberships are \$100

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## RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The October meeting of the Ripley County Historical Society was held at the Archives Building on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> with 30 members and guests present. The meeting was opened by giving the Pledge of allegiance to the Flag.

Henry Walker read the minutes and they were accepted as read.

Bea Boyd gave the financial report \$2000.00 were received from Tyson fund and will be used to help pay for roof repair. Grant money received was to used to pay for repairs and restoration at Weakman Cemetery and also for partial payment at Prattsburg Cemetery. Money was received for Dues, copies, vol 1 & 2 books sold, donation for Levi Cemetery at Osgood. Also checks were issued for water, gas, electric, phone, postage, office supplies, new keys and mowing. Motion made and seconded to accept report as read, which was approved.

The workers who volunteer have been kept busy. Special thanks to the ones who have been reorganizing the records and the family histories. These include Allen Smith, Helen Einhaus, Helen Caplinger, George Stegner, also Norris Krall for work with the computer in getting out the bulletins. And thanks to all who come in and keep store during the week.

Katherine Lane has been in hospital but is now back at home. Our prayers for a full recovery. We want to remember Don Rice and Mrs Petty who passed away this summer also others .

Helen Inhauls gave a report on new work to be done with regard to preservation of cemeteries. There had been a meeting at Madison on what would be done. She introduced Andy Scholle of Osgood who is a new member and will be working on this project.

Andy gave a report on the Madison meeting The old cemeteries as well as recent ones would be located by GPS. This will make the locations always available, also records will be brought up to date. This will be quite a project as history indicates as many as 120 cemeteries in Ripley County. Rep Mark Lytle has bill proposed that would protect cemeteries but not much in force now. Data base on this should be upcoming by end of year.

Helen introduced Pat Smith of Greensburg who presented a slide program on cemeteries and symbols and monuments that have been used for centuries Some common ones were Angels, palm leaves, weeping willows, Tree of Life. Broken chain and broken rose stems to represent a break in the family circle. Also each carver used their own interpretation of these symbols. It was an interesting and well presented program. Many thanks to Mrs. Smith.

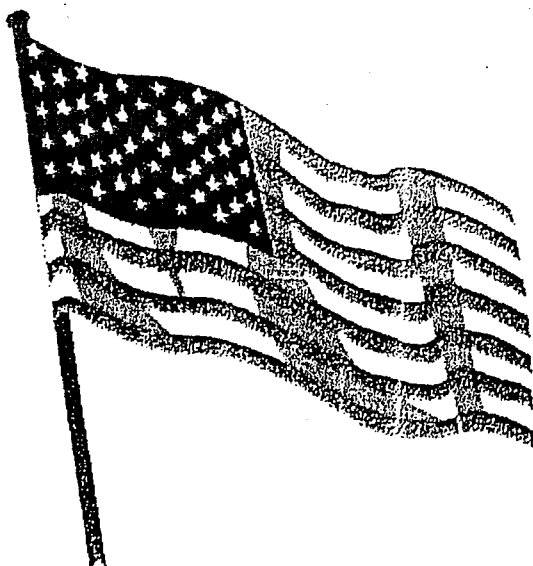
Refreshments of cider and cookies were served by Jackson Township. Next meeting will be in January with Johnson as host township.

President,

Alice McCoy

Secretary,

Henry Walker



## A Bit of Family History

I ask Aunt Eloise if she would help me with part of our family newsletter by giving me a story about something she remembers from our family history. This is the first of many stories. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

When Jean and Willard began going to school, they walked westward a country mile to the Brown School, so called because Howard and Lou Brown resided at that intersection which is a mile south of Lake William.

By 1929 when I entered school, the Brown School was no longer in use and students were transported by horse-drawn hacks to the Holton School located on the lot west of the Holton Christian Church. It was a two story brick building with a coal cellar. By then the second floor was no longer used and the first four grades occupied two rooms on the first floor with a third room used as a play room in bad weather.

Two drivers of our hack whom I recall were Tillie James and Forest Scott. The hack had wooden benches along each side and a cast iron stove in the middle of it. Karol Scott and Grover "Doc" McClure had long legs and sat on sides opposite of the stove to keep the smaller kids from falling against the hot stove.

Forest drove a team of mules and when school let out at 3:30 PM, the hack headed west on U.S. 50. Just beyond Forshey's Tavern. The B & O Railroad was quite close to U.S. 50 and often a westbound train seemed to run on our schedule. The engineer seemed to delight in blowing the whistle as the train sped past us. This scared the mules and Karol had to get out and grab the bridles to prevent a run-away. There was no regulation requiring the engineer to blow the whistle there because the nearest crossing was the long-abandoned Sam Shinolt Crossing.

One evening a car rear-ended us and knocked off the rear steps. None of us were seriously hurt but I remember

feeling a bit shy about jumping out the back door into Earl Grinstead's arms—he was the largest fellow on board and was appointed to help get the smaller kids out of the hack.

One winter day brought a heavy snowfall and the hack could take us only as far as Nick's Store because the road south past Huelson's to our corner was drifted shut. Dad met us at Nick's, put Willard, Jean and me on Old Nel, one of our plow horses, and led her through the fields and we got home safely. It must have been pretty hard for him to wear heavy rubber boots and lead the horse through the mile of deep snow in a raging blizzard.

One year, all students were given small pox vaccination shots. If it "took" you got a pus-filled area on your arm which was pretty sore and left a permanent scar. My arms were so skinny that Dr. Holton gave me the shot in my hip. Forest was so amazed I didn't complain about a sore arm that he called me "tuffy" for a few weeks.

In the second grade one day, Ardith Pickett decided she was going home with me and spend the night. I couldn't talk her out of it. When we arrived, Mother had a conference with me in the pantry and understood I hadn't invited Ardith. So Dad drove me and Ardith back to town and had a private conversation with Oral Pickett, Ardith's Dad, and left her at her home. If I'm not mistaken the next morning we had a new baby brother named Philip Dale Shaw.

I've been told parents of large families seldom have a dull moment and I'm sure Mother and Dad had their share of unexpected events to cope with.

By Eloise Shaw

Used by permission from Eloise Shaw.

## HISTORICAL FOLK MET LAST SUNDAY

### Hon. Carl Wood, of Indianapolis, Delivered the Principal Address

The June meeting of the Ripley County Historical Society was held at the Old Governor Harding Homestead at Old Milan Sunday afternoon. About 75 persons were present to enjoy the fine program arranged by the Franklin Township Pioneer Society.

The meeting opened by singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." It being Flag Day Miss Carrie Thackrey then gave the salute to the flag and the pledge of allegiance.

This was followed by roll call and the reading of the minutes of the last meeting.

Hon. Carl Wood, a prominent Indianapolis attorney, delivered the address of the afternoon on "Conditions and Customs of Indiana Folk in the Pioneer Days." Mr. Wood's address appears elsewhere in this issue.

Miss Frances Cain, a student of DePauw University, sang a pretty solo which was appreciated by all.

Dr. Robert Blair, of Denver, Colo., a former Ripleyite, gave a most interesting talk.

County Superintendent of Schools John S. Benham informed the society that he is considering the erection of a marker at Ft. Buchanan in Brown township.

The date for the pilgrimage into Brown township will be announced later by the committee.

A number of those who attended the meeting availed themselves of the opportunity to go through the Governor Harding Mansion which is now an historic shrine and is conducted by the Governor's granddaughter Mrs. P. A. Row, of Osgood.

From Versailles Republican June 17, 1925

## Conditions and Customs of Indiana Folk in the Pioneer Days

The following is the address of Hon. Carl Wood, of Indianapolis, at the meeting of the Ripley County Historical Society held Sunday at the Governor Harding Mansion at Old Milan:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

A short time ago I made a talk at the gathering at Pierceville, and I thought at that time, I said everything that could be said about the past and present citizens of Franklin Township. It seems that the committee in charge of this occasion did not think so and I was asked to talk again on Pioneer Life. This is a broad subject and I can only touch on the outlines in the short space of time allowed me.

Ripley county has furnished but few men of letters. The most noted of all of them was Governor Harding. He didn't belong to Franklin Township, to Ripley county, nor to the State of Indiana, but to the nation at large. We, who were born here, should be proud of the fact that he chose this township for his home, and continued to do so until the time of his death. It was here that he reared his family and it was near here that he chose for his eternal home.

The pioneer life of Franklin township was so interwoven with the life and history of Governor Harding, that a short history of his life will give us a great deal of the life of the township. In the last few years many things have been said and written about him. If we were to portray his life, the time in which he lived, his works, his deeds, and the results of all, we could not cover it, although our time should be unlimited.

We wish to thank all our volunteers and especially Lori Hoffman and Fran Campbell; both of whom have moved from our area. Lori has moved to Indianapolis and Fran to Seymour. Lori will continue to manage our Web Page. We hope to see Lori and Fran often. Thank You!

There arrived in Indiana, on a May day in the year of 1820, a father, a mother and thirteen children, sons and daughters. They came by boat. They had to travel that way as there was no other way to travel. When I say there was no other way to travel, I mean, at least west of the Alleghany Mountains. All the territory west was either wilderness or a swamp and the travelers in those days had to follow the streams. They came down the Ohio river, and just where they entered it, I am not informed. They stopped on the Ohio river at a point where Aurora now stands. They remained at the point of landing for a few days and then took up the march through the wilderness to find and settle a home. There was plenty of land at the stopping point, but it was low and swampy and not suitable for a home. Most everybody took to the hills in those days. The low lands were swampy and bred disease. The high ground was more healthy and furnished better homes. The people would have been better off had they taken sufficient ground for a home on the high ground and farming ground in the low lands. We have been and do see examples of this every day. Those that took part low lands fared better than those that took all hills. This goes back to the old principle that if the "hind sight had been as good as the foresight" we would all have fared better. People of those days had to have examples and precedents the same as we do now days. They followed the example of the earlier inhabitants, the Indians; they looked for high ground, close to a stream of water and especially to a spring of fresh water. And so our new arrivals set out for high ground and close to a stream of water. After about fifteen miles through the wilderness and the swamps they found what they wanted on North Hogan Creek.

There are two Hogan Creeks, one called North Hogan and one called South Hogan. Our people settled on North Hogan near where Old (North) Milan now stands. They at once commenced the construction of the cabin that was to and did shelter them for a long time. There was nothing to eat and they had to raise something to eat. There was plenty of wild game, but they couldn't live on meat entirely and had to have flour and meal, so that the raising of wheat and corn became an absolute necessity. The cabin was constructed, the home founded and they started out to assist in making what was to be one of the great

settlements of Indiana.

David Harding.

The father of this little band was none other than David Harding, and the woman, the mother of the Stephen Selwyn Harding, the others his brothers and sisters. As the children grew to manhood and womanhood, the males, other than the subject of our sketch, took up various duties, some professional, some farming and some merchandising. The females married and became the wives of the sturdy and industrious men, who were destined to and did make that part of Indiana, worthy of their names.

The subject of our sketch did his duty toward providing a place to live and assisted in getting something to eat and then turned his attention to the acquiring of learning and an education.

The history of the State, the county and his history are so closely connected that a brief history of Indiana and the county where the Harding family settled should be given. The State was admitted to the Union in 1816, the Seat of Government of Indiana was established at Corydon, Indiana the first General Assembly of the State met there in the year of 1817 and 1818 and at that session passed a law making it possible for Ripley county to be organized, and it was laid out, organized and named in the year of 1818.

Before that time all of this part of the state between the old Indian line, that is the west line of Dearborn county, and what has since been known as the New Purchase, belonged to Person county. This tract of country was known in the treaty, by which the Indian title became extinct, as Grouseland, or land of pheasants. It was doubtless the great quantity of birds that suggested the name.

The first meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Ripley county was at the house of Benjamin Brown, who resided not far from the present site of New Marion, in Brown township. They held their session under the trees, and there divided the county into three townships, Brown, Graham and Hogan.

Hogan township, indeed, all that district of country that was bounded on the north by Franklin county, on the east by the county line that separates Dearborn from Ripley county, and extending south about seventeen miles and from east to west about five miles and a half. It contained ninety square miles, or about 57,600 acres of land.

To be continued.

## Cemetery Database Project

Our county participation in the statewide cemetery registry is underway. Indiana Code 14-21-1-13.5 mandates that the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA) create a registry of all cemeteries and burial grounds in each county in Indiana. It has taken some time to determine the information required. We thought it would be easier to start with a small cemetery and we are hoping to get the most endangered cemeteries recorded as soon as possible.

Andy Scholle and Helen Einhaus have the Republican United Brethren Cemetery, aka Glass Cemetery in Jackson Township completed. Andy has measured and compiled a detailed map, and the state registry will list the latitude, longitude, USGS Map. Don Nealis, RCHS, will be restoring the few stones left in the old cemetery.

John Glass, who served as an early Legislator and wife Ann Glass, deeded the land in 1855, to Sylvester Dorsey, Robert Foster and William Stephenson, Trustees of the Republican United Brethren church.

## Underground Railroad Task Force Organizes

An organizational meeting was held in December to form a Task Force for the Ripley County Underground Railroad Project.

The Ripley County Historical Society will provide sponsorship and in-kind services; however, a much broader community support is needed to carry out the development of proposed projects such as maps, text for informational packages, brochures and proposed automobile tours. Ms. Coon stated there are six or seven sites believed to have sufficient documentation to merit historical markers to be placed in the year 2002. Additional documentation is being researched for several other potential sites within the county and this will require a revision of the technical report, "Underground Railroad Sites and Routes in Southeastern Indiana," prepared by Ms. Coon in 2001 for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, and the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

Attending the meeting were Diane Perrine Coon, Historian of Louisville, Ky.; Ken Knouf, U. S. Army (JPG), Joseph R. Robb, Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge, Gary Conant, Historic Hoosier Hills; Rick Gilland and Cindy Gilland, Chamber of Commerce; Cathy May and Katherine Taul, Ripley County Tourism Bureau, Helen Einhaus, County Historian, RCHS President Alice McCoy, Helen Caplinger, Norris Krall, Charles and Betty Roepke. Ms. Coon has been researching the Underground Railroad project for four years and her enthusiasm is most evident as she relays the importance and benefit the project will be to the county.

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**RCHS WISHES TO THANK THE TYSON FUND FOR ITS GRANT OF \$2,000 WHICH PARTIALLY FUNDED THE NEW ROOF FOR THE ARCHIVES / LIBRARY BUILDING. THE WORK HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED!**



Versailles, IN 47042

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C.G.R.S.  
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