

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

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► The July meeting of RCHS will take place at the Archives-Library building at 2:00 PM on Sunday, July 9, 2006. The topic for the program will be the Civil War given by Steve Malone, a self-taught local historian. Rev. Malone attended Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and was graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Rev. Malone has pastored five different churches and has been at Rock Creek Baptist Church for the last 21 years. He and wife, Judy, had managed the Southeastern Baptist Camp near Westport for 23 years before their move to their retirement home in Vernon recently. Everyone is invited to attend this interesting meeting.

► **Historical Markers** Two historical markers will be dedicated on Sept. 2, during the Osgood Sesquicentennial celebration. One recognizes the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad that was built through Osgood in 1854. A depot, freight house engine house, turntable, stockyards and siding were constructed at Osgood. Formerly known as Claytown, the town was renamed for A. L. Osgood, the Division Engineer of the O&M Railroad. The marker will be placed near the railroad north of the Library. The second marker commemorates the life of James Cravens, United States Congressman from Indiana who was an abolitionist. He was devoted to eliminating slavery. This marker will be placed on Harlan Avenue a few feet from Fairground Road at the site of the historical Mullin-Cravens house.

The markers are the results of the cooperation of the Ripley County Historical Society, Ripley County Tourism Bureau and financial assistance from the Rising Sun Regional Foundation. Historical research was completed by Helen T. Einhaus, Ripley County Historian and Diane Perrine Coon, historian at Louisville, Kentucky, as part of a five year program to identify the sites and people in the county associated with the Underground Railroad and Anti-Slavery Movement. As part of that program two Freedom Trails historical markers were dedicated in May 2004. One marker was placed at the Union Flat Rock Baptist Church in Jackson Township. The second marker was placed on the Courthouse Square at Versailles to honor Stephen S. Harding.

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		

Due to the increased costs of fuel, postage and supplies, it has become necessary to increase membership dues. Effective for memberships beginning in 2007, annual memberships will be increased to \$10.

Mail your renewal to RCHS or to Beatrice Boyd, Treasurer, P.O. Box 83, Holton, IN 47023

Dues: New memberships are \$10.00 for the first year.

Renewals are \$5.00 through 2006

Renewals are \$10.00 per year for 2007 and following

Life memberships are \$100

MINUTES OF THE RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Ripley County Historical Society met at the Archives on April 9, 2006 at 2:00. There were 25 members and visitors present. The minutes were read by Henry Walker and approved as read. The treasurer's report was given by Bea Boyd and approved as read. Cheryl Welch gave a report on the museum annex house. The mud was removed from the basement by 5 men from the Probation Dept. A thank you note was sent by Cheryl to the Probation Dept. But due to the heavy rains, mud and water has returned to the basement and the roof has a bad leak.

- ♦ Ryan Strimple did a project for his Eagle Scout rating. He interviewed 26 Veterans from World War II, Korean and Vietnam wars, These interviews were recorded on DVD's and a set was presented to RCHS. They are a great addition to our archives. Copies may be purchased by contacting the Versailles American Legion Post.
- ♦ The Covered Bridge Society will have a tour of bridges on April 29-30.
- ♦ The Underground Railroad marker honoring James Craven will be dedicated during the Osgood Sesquicentennial celebration on Sept. 2.
- ♦ Joe Decker complimented the newsletter article about the Iwo Jima Marine Memorial.
- ♦ It was noted that vandals have been removing the copper caps off the Underground Railroad Tour posts.

William Gloyd gave a program on the history of Osgood. They will be celebrating the Sesquicentennial beginning on August 30 until Sept. 4. The town was laid out in 1855 named Osgood after an O&M engineer. A Museum Society has been formed and thanks to the Reynolds Foundation they have a building. The Damm Theater, a landmark that many people recognize, will be remodeled and available for stage shows or movies. A mural will be painted that depicts the railroad and the old depot. They are remembering the past and looking to the future.

- ♦Next meeting July 9 at RCHS Library. Franklin Township will have refreshments.

Betty Roepke, President

Henry Walker, Secretary

OSGOOD'S RAILROAD MURAL

Osgood is busy sprucing-up for its Labor Day weekend Sesquicentennial Celebration. A beautiful mural depicting the town's Railroad Heritage has been painted on the side of the Card and Gift Gallery building along the Little Red Brick Road. The Library, also on the brick street, has recently received extensive remodeling and a large addition that includes an Indiana and local history room.





Continuation of mail route from Holton Post Office in 1926

Charles Furlow	Wright Edwards	Raymond Roland
Leonard Montgomery	Harry Grinstead	Will Hedrick
D. L. Freudenstein	No occupant	James Davis
Andy Rueff	James A. Jackson(Hack)	G. J. Stratton
Harvey O Neal (Criswell Box)		Robt Stratton
John Glauber	Hollis Stagg	Frank Stratton
Virgil Huelson	Emil Huelson	GeorgeHershaur
Fred Dudley	Nute Ellis	Frank Beach
Jess Davis	Nebraska P. O.	Amos Beach
John Delay	Henry Dobson	J. D. Lane
Virgil Henslse	Will Renfro	Gus Vanosdol
Louis Matz	Joseph M. Daugherty	Hamer McMinds
Grant Wilson	Carl Grinstead	Harry Davis
I. A. Baker	Fred Renfro	Joe Smith
Ernest Mathews	Frank Shaw	Roy Lane
Emerson Matthews	Virgil Beach	Zack Ralston
Ramy Jeffries	Joe McClure	B. D. Taylor
John White	Mike Stagg	Ed Taylor
Wm. Hannah	Harry STagg	F. M. Beach
Chas. Pafflin	H. C. Overturf	Everett Reese
Sherlie Detraz	Olan Beach	Geo. Hensler
John Fitzgerald	Henry Jeffries	Frank Heaton
John Cane	Rev. Jacob Daugherty	W. L. Donovan
P. A. Clerkins	Hamer Vanosdol	Elizabeth McClure
G. Ellis	Chas. Irvin	Wilson Connelly
Lafe Ellis	Glen Franklin	J. A. Booher.

The first part was in the April bulletin. I thought this would be of interest since this route covered what is now the north part of Jefferson Proving Ground.

Q- 07 Darline Duncan ,11535 Nisqually Pk.Lp.SE. Olympia,WA 98513 would like to correspond with anyone working on Surnames, Fortune, Becraft,Newman, Meyers, Roerty, and Ewings in & circa Ripley Co.,

Q-07 Thomas Young, 2509 Chickasaw Dr, London, Oh 43140 would like to hear from families Hawkins, McRae, Parkhurt, Fritsgerald.740-852-5898.

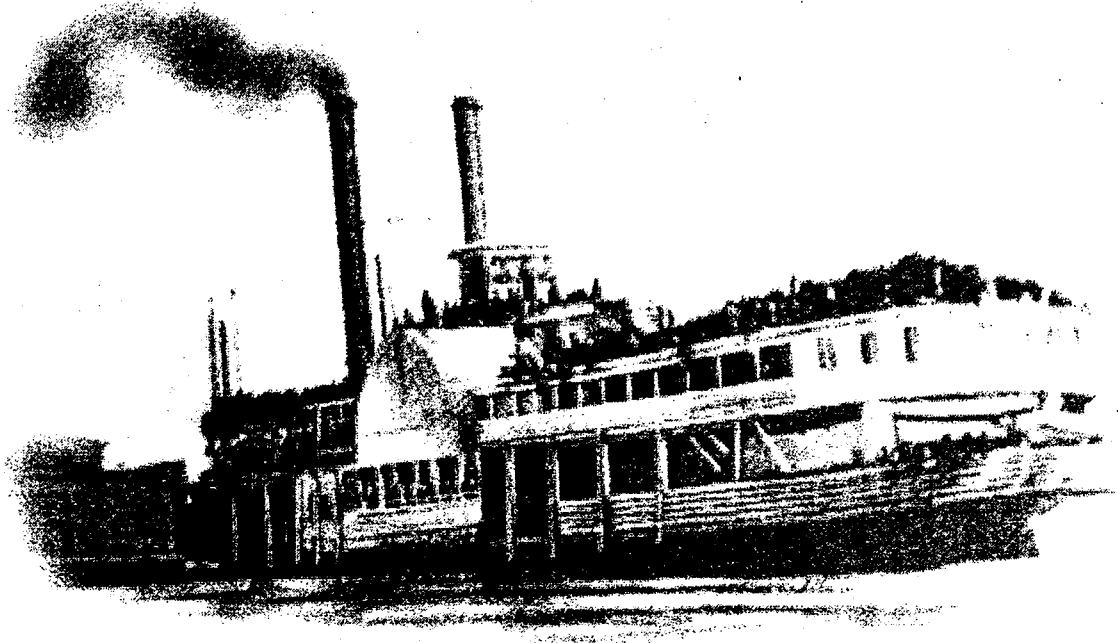
I was excited to hear on National news that the winner of the Flying Pig Marathon in Cincinnati on Sunday May 7 2006 was Cecil Franke. He set a new record for the race at 2 hours and 20 min. There were 4919 in the race with Franke who coaches Cross Country at Centerville In and lives in Dublin. In Franke is a Ripley County boy and in 1986 while at Jac-Gen-Del High School was a champion Trackrunner, also won the State championship for 3200 meter. His parents. Harvey and Claude Franke live in the Napoleon. In. area.

The Indiana Covered Bridge Society made their spring Pilgrimage to Southern Indiana. Not certain of the time frame that they would be reaching the Holton Covered Bridge, Several locals waited a few hours to see the group. They noted that the bridge was in need of some repairs. They bypassed the Versailles Bridge as they had an appointed time to arrive in Milan to visit their Museum.

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Ripley County has had its share of wind. A huge cedar was down at the Prattsburg Cemetery. One stone was knocked over but was not broken.

RIPLEY COUNTY'S CONNECTION TO THE SULTANA DISASTER APRIL 27, 1865



In 1836, the Charles and Pruea Hull family homesteaded in the Flat Rock Community in Jackson Township, Ripley County, Indiana. Charles's father, George Hull, and father-in-law, Job Judd, were both Revolutionary War Soldiers and Charles was a veteran of the War of 1812. By the time the Civil War began Charles and many of his neighbors were active in the Underground Railroad helping the run-a-way slaves reach safety in the north. There were eleven children in the Hull family and the six youngest sons enlisted in the Civil War. Daniel died, probably from dysentery, while serving with the 18th IN Infantry in Missouri in 1861 at age 22. Four other sons, Sylvester, William, Lorenzo, and Lemuel returned home to Flat Rock after the war was over.

The youngest son, Joseph Franklin "Frank" was taken prisoner by the Confederates while in the South. After the end of the war in April, 1865 the Union prisoners from Andersonville, GA and Cahaba, AL plus many from other nearby camps were moved by railroad to Camp Fisk located four miles from Vicksburg, MS. They camped there until released to start their journey home, most were from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Tennessee. One of the first things many of the prisoners did when they arrived at the parole camp was to write their families that they soon

would be home. These men had faced a combination of fighting and prison camp for up to four years. Many were starved and beaten and practically dead and desperate to get home. Frank Hull, who served in the 7th Cavalry, was in this group.

One way for the soldiers to return home was by steamboat on the Mississippi River. The federal government was paying \$5 a head to transport enlisted men and \$10 for every officer returned to the north. The **Sultana**, a big steamboat built in Cincinnati in 1863 with the capacity of 376, was working the cotton trade between St. Louis and New Orleans under the direction of Captain Mason. Upon hearing of the chance to make big money, the captain was determined to hurry from New Orleans to Vicksburg for a load of soldiers. One of the ship's crewmen discovered that one of the boilers was leaking. Other ships were known to be steaming north from New Orleans and could soon overtake the Sultana. The captain decided it would take too long to install a proper patch so he ordered the leaking boiler be given a quick temporary patch. There were so many Yankee soldiers desperate to get home that Capt. Mason loaded approximately 2,500 on the boat, every possible space was full. The Sultana departed Vicksburg April 24, 1865. Twenty year old Frank Hull was on board.

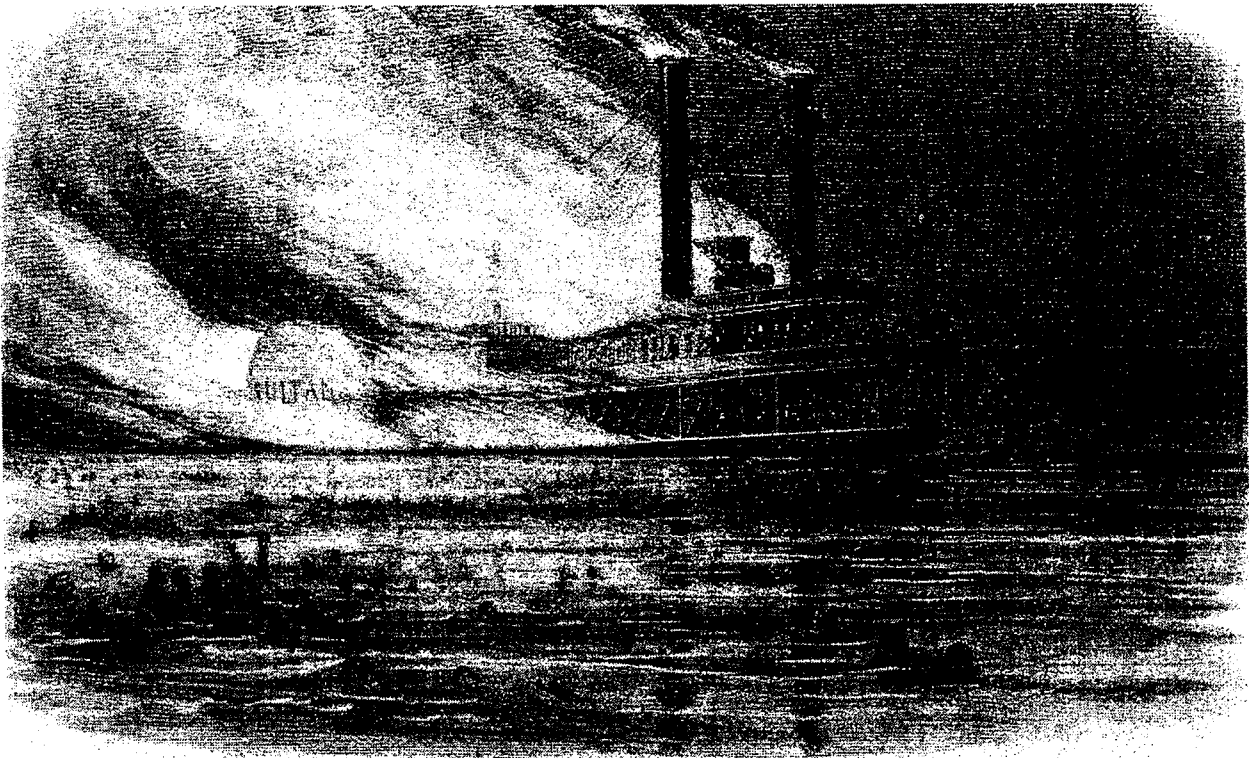
On April 26, 1865, the Sultana stopped at Memphis for coal then continued north toward its next stop at Cairo, IL. Around 3:00 AM on April 27th, just nine miles north of Memphis the Sultana exploded. The exact number who perished is unknown but it is estimated that 1500-1700 passengers perished. More died in the Sultana explosion and the subsequent fire than on the Titanic. Young Joseph Franklin Hull never made it home to Ripley County.

Researchers speculate whether the Sultana explosion was the result of human error or sabotage. Some believe that a famous Confederate saboteur, Robert Loudon, known as the "Boat Burner" put a coal torpedo on the Sultana. A coal torpedo is a piece of cast iron with the inside hollowed and packed with explosives and covered in coal dust. When shoveled into the boiler it exploded. Robert Loudon, a prisoner in Gratiot Street Prison was scheduled for execution when he escaped. He had many connections in Memphis and was known to have a grudge against Capt. Mason. Capt. Mason had been the captain of the boat that took Loudon's wife from St. Louis into exile. Loudon confessed to blowing up the Sultana on his deathbed.

The explosion did not get much newspaper coverage at the time. Other seemingly more important news took the headlines, such as: the death of President Lincoln (on April 9) and the killing of his assassin (on April 26); Lee surrendered at Appomattox (on April 14); Jefferson Davis was captured in Georgia (May 10); Johnston surrendered to Sherman (April 26); and the end of the 5 years of war. Historians may never definitely determine what happened to the Sultana, but all agree it was a terrible tragedy.

Thank You Luke. This article was inspired by a college project, by Luke Koors of Westport, Indiana, a student at Anderson University, Anderson, IN. Luke is a direct descendent of Charles Hull, as am I, (Joan Tucker Krall, RCHS newsletter co-editor). Unfortunately space does not allow us to publish his complete article. Luke's sources: National Geographic articles by Stephen Ambrose; The Sultana Tragedy by Jerry O. Potter; Return to Civil War St. Louis by D. H. Rule; Sultana by Wikipedia. Other sources: An item in Lester Tucker's records; Article from Peoples Magazine. Other internet research by co-editor, Norris Krall.

An Artist's conception of the Burning of the Sultana.





Versailles, IN 47042

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