

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

Library – 125 Washington Street
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Versailles, Indiana 47042

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OCTOBER MEETING

The October 13, 2002 meeting will be at 2:00 pm at RCHS Library Building on the square in Versailles. The Program for this meeting will feature:

- I. Don Nealis of Holton will explain about the restoration project for pioneer cemeteries in our area.
- II. Vernon & Doris Koenigkramer will speak about and show their antique collection, featuring ash trays and ice cream scoops.

REMEMBER WE STILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING BOOKS FOR SALE:

Ripley County History, Volume I	\$65
Ripley County History, Volume II	55
Brown Township Tales	20
Tales of Versailles by Alan F. Smith	16
Vintage Postcards of Ripley County by Alan Smith	20
Brown Township Cemetery Index	10
Johnson Township Cemetery Index	10

Mailing fees added for all books shipped.

There are still a very limited number of Dabney Church and Community History Books available. Cost is \$13 including mailing fees. Mail requests to Norris & Joan Krall, 4499 North Michigan Road, Osgood, IN 47037

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

Dues:

New memberships are \$10.00 for the first year.

Renewals are \$5.00 per year thereafter.

Life memberships are \$100

UNITED WE STAND!

Ripley County Historical Society

Minutes of the July 14, 2002 meeting

The July 14th meeting of the Ripley County Historical Society was held at the Holton City Park. The members and guests introduced themselves. Minutes were read by Alice McCoy and approved as read. Bea Boyd gave the Treasurers report. Different expenses for the quarter totaled to \$2642.00. She had all the different categories on a sheet for everyone to see. There were two outstanding bills, one for removal of the cedar tree that had blown over at the museum and one for the compressor on the air conditioner at the archives building, which had to be replaced.

It was mentioned that we are having trouble with the old copier.

Diane Coon gave an update on the Underground Railroad. She reported they had received \$23,000.00 grant from the Rising Sun Foundation.

No new business.

Maxine Hayes and her musical saws entertained the group. Everyone enjoyed the program and refreshments.

Next meeting will be at the archives building on October 13, 2002. Shelby Township will be hostess.

Alice McCoy
Acting Secretary

Underground Railroad Project Update

Research continues on the Indiana Freedom Trails Underground Railroad project and this will be ongoing.

Diane Perrine Coon, Project Director and a few members of our Task Force met at the RCHS on September 5, 2002, with the director of the Indiana Historical Bureau's historical markers program, the director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation and Archaeology Department, along with five other state officials. Following Diane's presentation regarding Ripley County, the state's comment was that they are overwhelmed and they commended the expansive work being done here.

We are submitting to the IHB and DNR copies of draft proposals for Ripley County potential sites-Flat Rock, Napoleon, Old Milan, Versailles Courthouse Square, Olean, the old Vine's Spring to Homer (now Delaware), and Pierceville area on current SR 350; also for the 2003-2004 cycle the Fugitive Trail in Osgood. We feel that we have adequate documentation for these sites. Diane is assisting Ken Knouf, U. S. Army JPG, and Joseph Robb, Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge, in submitting documentation for the two Shelby Township sites. Other areas where we are continuing to research for documentation include Adams, Laughery, Otter Creek and Washington Townships.

The state officials have demonstrated a great interest in our grassroots approach. We have involved fourth grade, junior high, and high school government and history teachers. Site committee members have been contacted to assist in selecting the appropriate site for each marker, taking into consideration the safety and traffic aspect, as well as the attractiveness of the site for tourism.

We have found that the people were networking throughout the county and surrounding counties. We appreciate and welcome any and all information. So, if information regarding the underground railroad has been passed down through the years to you, please let us know and we will check out all leads.

Helen Einhaus
County Historian

Solomon's "Nothing new under the sun" Holds true in Osgood Journal 9/3-40 years ago. A tour of Morgan's Trail was conducted by Hillforest Foundation. It traced the route taken by Gen. John Hunt Morgan on his raid through southern Indiana.

The new Funeral Home in Versailles on SR129 is now open. Owners Michael Stratton and Eric Karstater. Ribbon cutting ceremony was held Sept 10.

I have ordered the 1930 Ripley County census. Thanks to Mr. Henry Abplanalp's check which more than covered the cost of the film. Mr. A has been a Life member since 1976 and has sent many monetary donations to RCHS through the years. In 1989 he sent books compiled by him 1. Ripley County in 1890's and 2. Abplanalp family. Very interesting books.

GREAT WHITE FATHERS' INDIAN SOLDIERS.

Indian soldiers bore melodious, if complicated descriptive names. Among a few were:

Harry-cries-for-Rib, George-Sleep-from-House, Benjamin-Comes-out-Bear, David-Drops-at-a-Distance, Charles Owl-Walk-in-the-House, Wash Day Clouds: Isaac, His-Horse-is-Fast.

These make me think of one of our RCHS members, Robin-Kills-a-Hundred. She lives in Indianapolis and is a descendant of Isaac Levi.

This is Monday-and already there is much hustle and bustle going on in preparation for the Pumpkin Show. Since the exhibits of flowers, canned goods and needlework are exhibited in our RCHS building, much activity is going on and the rides are up on the square putting everyone in a festive mood except the ones looking for a parking space. This is a copy of the advertisement for the First pumpkin show

PUMPKIN CONTEST
OCT. 14, 1899, AT 1 P. M.
AT A. H. BEER'S JEWELRY STORE

Bring Your Pumpkins. Bring the Ugliest Ones You Have.

Don't Forget to Bring Your Children for We will have some of the Finest Music You Ever Heard.

I will make your visit a pleasant one and the music will all be free after 1 o'clock p. m.
No entrance fee. No charges for music
No monkey business. Everything will be done on the square.
We will have Josh Weatherby to give us some funny talk.
Come and enjoy yourselves a half day.



LIST OF PRIZES.

Filled Watch. 1st prize for heaviest pumpkin
Pine Clock. 2nd prize for largest pumpkin
Small Violin. 3rd prize for ugliest pumpkin
Silver Plated Gravy Ladle. 4th prize for 2nd heaviest pumpkin.
Half-dozen Nickel Tea-Spoons. 5th prize for 3rd heaviest pumpkin.

This will all take place at A. H. Beer's Jewelry Store, Versailles.

Copied from Dr. Roberts Book His Fees. 1876-1879.
Medicine .50
Call 1.00
Visit 2.00
Accouch 5.00

The 100th Celebration of the Versailles Pumpkin Show September 25 – 28, 2002

A Versailles businessman, Alfred H. Beer, who had a jewelry store on the west side of the courthouse square, was the instigator of the first Pumpkin Show held on October 14, 1899. Mr. Beer urged the local farmers and gardeners to enter his pumpkin contest project. The exhibits were displayed on two wagons parked on the curb in front of his store, directly south of the present day RCHS Archives Library.

Approximately one thousand people attended the event and late on the Saturday afternoon the pumpkins were judged and prizes given. Judges were Roland Holman, James Spencer and attorney John Roebuck. Prizes awarded were:

George W. Watkins, Elrod, received a gold watch for biggest pumpkin at 74 lbs. 5 oz.

Thomas E. Wilson, Osgood, received a fine clock for the biggest pumpkin in circumference - 5 feet 3 inches.

Henry Ballman received a small violin for the ugliest pumpkin

Henry Stegemoller received a silver-plated gravy ladle for 2nd largest pumpkin - 68 lbs.

Chris Thomas of Cross Plains with 3rd largest pumpkin at 64 lbs. received 6 nickel plated teaspoons

All prizes were donated from the Beer Jewelry Store. At the close of the contest, Mr. Beer announced plans for another Pumpkin Show next year. Since 1899 there has been an annual Pumpkin Show except for four years during World War II, when the nation was in a great struggle to preserve freedom and had no time for "just for fun" activities.

Over the years, the fall festival has grown to include a street fair with rides and numerous food, game, and information booths, Through the years different contests have been added which include many different garden products. The Queen Contest was added in 1950 and has grown to include, King, Little Prince and Little Princess contests. An Art Show and a pumpkin baking contest were added and have become very popular parts of the activities. The festivities now start on Wednesday and conclude on Saturday night with a street dance. Most of the time there is live entertainment on the grandstand for the enjoyment of the thousands of spectators. The high-light of the festival starts Saturday morning at 10:30, when a large parade of local school bands, theme floats, politicians, antique vehicles, police cars and fire engines, etc. promenade from one end of town to the other. Following the parade, the huge pumpkins are weighed-in on the courthouse lawn. The pumpkins have also grown from the first one at 74 pounds to the largest on record, which was grown in 2001 by Jim Gatewood from Fulton, Indiana which tipped the scales at 743 pounds.

This weekend event has also become a time for friends and relatives from far and near to visit their hometown and renew old acquaintances. Wouldn't Mr. Beer, who died in 1920, have been surprised to know that the little pumpkin show he started over a hundred years ago would become so important to his beloved town of Versailles?

Information from RCHS, Ripley Publishing Co. & Alan Smith's postcard collection
Written before the 2002 Pumpkin Show.

Founders of the Pumpkin Show!



*A. H. Beer
The Jeweler,
Versailles, Ind.*

The Beer Family

The Beer family were jewelers and silversmiths in Saxony, Germany. In the early 1850's Robert C. and Ernestine Beer immigrated to America and established a jewelry business in Olean, Indiana. In 1857, Robert moved his business to Versailles. After his death in 1897, his son, Alfred, became the owner of the business. Alfred Beer was destined to become one of the most enterprising businessmen of the County. It is believed the first man on the left side of picture is Robert and Alfred standing next to him. Probably included in picture are Alfred's wife, Laura and their grown children, Walter, Florence and Charles.

County Historical

Ripley



Society

Versailles, IN 47042

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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C.G.R.S.
County Historian

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