

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

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► The next **gathering of the RCHS membership** will be held at the Archives Library on the West Side of the Versailles Courthouse Square on Sunday, October 8, at 2:00. The quest speaker will be Marilyn Meisberger Browning of Versailles. Her topic will include some history on the Jefferson Proving Ground and St. Magdalene Church, including some of the effects the Proving Ground has had on the people who relocated and the neighborhood in general. She will include a time for questions and sharing. This should be of interest to many from this area. Everyone is invited to attend.

► The **Osgood Sesquicentennial History Book** came off the press a couple weeks before the Labor Day weekend Celebration. The 74 page softbound book contains history of Osgood and includes some early to current settlers. Helen Caplinger was in charge of compiling and editing the information. She states there is an interest in a follow-up book. Thanks Helen for a great job!! The book may be purchased for \$17 at the RCHS Archives Library in Versailles or the new museum in Osgood or by sending \$20 to Helen Caplinger, 237 E. Jefferson St., Osgood, IN 47037.

► The Historical town of **Osgood has a new museum**. Money from the estate of Gilmore and Golda Reynolds was left to Osgood to be used for improvements to the town. Many improvements have been accomplished, a historical museum, one of the latest projects under the direction of William Gloyd, was opened for the general public at the Sesquicentennial Celebration. The Reynolds' business building next to their home on Buckeye Street was remodeled and turned into a beautiful and informative museum. The museum will be open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

► **Several newsletters have been returned** for such reasons as: moved and no forwarding address; deceased; temporary away; etc. The RCHS has to pay for the return of these newsletters. Our goal is to have the current and correct addresses of all our members. If you move, please help us make sure you receive your newsletter by sending us your new address.

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 and renewals are \$10.00.

Life memberships are \$100

MINUTES OF THE RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Ripley County Historical Society met at the Archives Library at 2:00 pm on July 9, 2006, with 20 members and guests present. Meeting was opened with each person giving their name and place of residence.

The minutes were read by Henry Walker, a correction was made to include the O&M marker along with the James Craven marker. The minutes were then accepted.

Bea Boyd gave the Treasures report and it was accepted as read. Bea reported she had received \$5000.00 from the County for storage of records, and a claim for same amount in 2007 had been submitted..

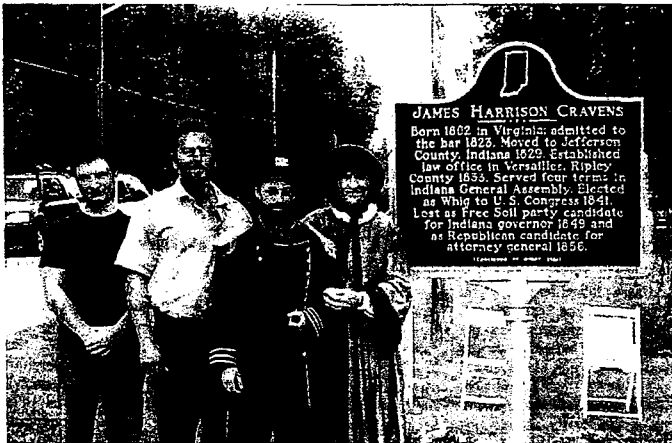
William and Barbara Hart visited last week and were rightfully disturbed about family pictures that had been entrusted to the Society. Norris Krall returned the pictures to them to be cleaned and restored. This solved the picture problem but not the mold problem. Two dehumidifiers have been purchased and are in service. Also plans are made to fix the leaks. This discussion will continue during the Directors meeting.

Pastor Steve Malone of the Rock Creek Baptist Church, Jennings County, gave the program on his family history during the Civil War. In addition to the war history he gave us some things to think about. What was the reason for the war? What would have happened if it had not been fought?

Several people also presented stories of family members who served and of the importance of families visiting the cemeteries and battlegrounds that we would realize the price that has been paid for our freedom. It was noted that in the Civil War there was 1 death out of 6.5 soldiers, in World War II it was 1 of 40. Such is the price of freedom. The meeting was adjourned.

Betty Roepke, President

Henry Walker, Secretary



**JAMES HARRISON CRAVENS MARKER
ON HARLAN STREET NEAR EAST FAIRGROUND RD**
With the Volz family who now live in the James Cravens home. Alicia Volz impersonated Mr. Cravens and spoke about his life.

Two Indiana Historical markers were dedicated during the Osgood Sesquicentennial Celebration on September 2, 2006 under the direction County Historian, Helen Einhaus and Diane Perrine Koons, UGGR Historian. The local Boy Scout Troop 638 and scoutmaster Gary Payne provided an Honor Guard presentation at the beginning of the ceremonies. The Napoleon Central House singers with director, Darla Stutler accompanied by Margaret Veatch entertained with several songs about trains and railroads. The marker commemorating the O&M Railroad was placed on O&M Avenue facing the CSX tracks. The ceremony concluded with the Cravens marker on Harlan Avenue. Many enjoyed the services.

Text on Cravens Marker - James Harrison Cravens Born 1802 in Virginia; admitted to the bar 1823. Moved to Jefferson County, Indiana 1829. Established law office in Versailles, Ripley County 1833. Served four terms in Indiana General Assembly. Elected as Whig to U.S. Congress 1841. Lost as Free Soil party candidate for Indiana governor 1849 and as Republican candidate for attorney general 1856. A well-known debater, he opposed extension of slavery. 1850 Fugitive Slave Act requiring citizens to return escaping slaves to their owners, and Article 13 of 1851 Constitution prohibiting blacks from moving into Indiana. Served briefly in Civil War. Moved to Osgood area before 1860; built home here circa 1865. Died at Osgood December 4, 1876.

Text on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Marker – Chartered in Indiana 1848 by the General Assembly. The people of Ripley County voted March 1849 to provide local financial support for building the railroad. Surveys of the Eastern Division (Cincinnati to Vincennes) began 1852. The town of Osgood was named to honor O&M division engineer, A. L. Osgood. Railroad was completed from Cincinnati to East St. Louis 1857. Depot, freight house, engine house, turntable, stock pens, and sidings were built at Osgood, which was considered the center of transport and commerce for Ripley County. Company was taken over by Baltimore and Ohio Railroad 1899-1900.



BEA'S BUZZING

It looks like we can say goodbye to our 90° weather. There is a nip in the air which means its time for the Pumpkin Show and "Get the bulletin out early." I don't know about you - but where does the time go to? It was just a year ago and Norman Myers was planning the First Myers Reunion. This was not just a one day get together. Family members gathered to clear off the Lewis Myers cemetery where Revolutionary Soldier Henry Myers is buried. Lewis Myers was an early settler of Ripley County. Thanks to the Ripley County Community Foundation a grant of \$500 was received which was used to raise Henry's stone from a sunken condition and place a concrete base under his stone, also two special recognition plaques were purchased and placed at the entrance to the cemetery. The Reunion was held at the Holton Community Center, with descendants from Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Florida and New Mexico attending on July 29th. Forming a convoy they traveled to the cemetery to conduct a memorial rededication Service. Norman Myers, third great grandson of Henry, wearing his 1777 Colonial Navy uniform with Chapter members of Ripley County D.A.R., Cheryl Welch, Ruth Pickett, and Sandra Meisberger, conducted a special rededication service Mr. Chris Robers, current owner of the Farm, located in Brown Twp, RC was also in attendance.

The Osgood folks removed the articles that were stored at RCHS since they now have their own museum which was opened during the Osgood Sesquicentennial with over 500 visitors. Reports are that the Sesquicentennial parade was outstanding. I was happy to see Business man of 82 years, Abe Schneider was named Grand Marshall of the Parade.

There was Standing Room only at James Tyson 150th Birthday Party on September 14, 2006, held at the Versailles Tyson Library. It was great to see the Fireman in uniform and the Boy Scouts. The "Young Confederates from South Ripley School, under the direction of Choral Director, Rae Jean Auterson, furnished the entertainment. The refreshments were catered by Linda and Doug Rump. The grant total was \$701,235 which was received by 14 organizations of Versailles. RCHS was the recipient of \$12,000 to be used to repair the Smith-Engel Cabin Versailles is very fortunate to have the Tyson-Versailles Fund. In 1926, 18,000 shares of Walgreen Stock established the Tyson Fund for Versailles. James Tyson always gave gifts on his birthday and the legacy continues.

The ArtDeco styled school (1938) and Auditorium (1950) was listed on The National Register of Historic Places from Jan 2006 thru July 2006. They match two other buildings in town that were constructed by Versailles Native and Walgreens co-founder, James Tyson. The Tyson M. E. Church, Tyson Library and Versailles School/Auditorium are all constructed of Glazed yellow-cream brick in ArtDeco/Moderne Style. The school has been converted to apartments for Senior Housing.

We now have on display at RCHS Library an antique Roll top desk. The desk at one time was used at the Court House. I have been told that at one time every office in the court house had a roll top desk. This desk had been in the Sheriff's Dept for circa 28 years. Thanks to our Sheriff, Bill Davison, for seeing that it will be preserved for generations to see.

Happy 150th Birthday - Osgood

In the 1800's Railroads were being built across America. In 1852, the train crews began to survey through a little settlement called Clay Town located on the "Plank Road" (which is modern day 421) in Center Township in Ripley County, Indiana. The Ohio & Mississippi Railroad was completed through Clay Town in 1854. With the railroad came more settlers and businesses. In 1856, the town was platted, lots sold and streets named after the local trees. It became an industrious railroad town. The name was even changed to honor A. L. Osgood, the O&M Railroad Civil Engineer. For one hundred and fifty years Osgood continued to be an important town in Ripley County. Following are excerpts from the Sesquicentennial History Book:

A leading railroad center in 1870. Trains came from Cincinnati, Ohio, bringing traveling men, better known as drummers, with trunks full of their wares. In the early days of the railroad there was a turntable located where the train could turn around and return to Cincinnati. The first hotel was the Ripley House which had 31 rooms, a dining room, office, ladies waiting room, bar, family bedroom, parlor, work rooms including kitchen, pantry, laundry with a brick oven to bake cakes, pies, and other pastries for the guests.

In 1883, Cyclone leaves death and destruction. A terrible cyclone that went like a bullet through Jennings and Ripley counties was the most devastating storm ever in this county. The whirlwind varied in width from 200 yards to half a mile and followed the line of the railroad track from North Vernon. Between Butlerville and Nebraska in Jennings County a heavy freight train on the track was being pulled by two engines and running at a rate of 25 mph. It was struck full force and eleven cars were actually lifted clear off the track and some carried fifty feet away and completely wrecked. The engineer reported that they were traveling west with the throttle valves wide open but when the whirlwind struck they were stopped suddenly as though they had run into an embankment. The cyclone did little damage to either Holton or Poston. The full force struck ill-fated Osgood and did a terrible amount of damage, taking two human lives. The cyclone continued on east as far as Hamilton, Ohio.

Osgood items of Interest from Versailles Republican- September, 1900

On the night of Tuesday the 19th at 1:15, a fatal accident occurred on the railroad work on the east bank of the Laughery Creek, three miles east of Osgood. Four persons were killed outright and two severely injured. The names of the killed are Oliver Landi, Eckerty, Ind.; Henry Minort, Oldenburg, Ind.; Gus Luste, and William Hughes, Louisville, Kentucky. The men injured were William Milford (?) with a spine injury and Bert Myers (?) who was caught by the foot and held to the ground. Drs. Freeman and Townsend went at once to the scene and cared for the injured men, who are doing nicely. The accident happened as the men were cleaning some dirt from the railroad track after a car of dirt had just been run out, and without a moment's warning the bank gave way and fell upon them with the above mentioned results. The bank was almost six feet of clay under which was quicksand and the sand gave away causing the accident.

September 18, Osgood, Indiana. The news was received here Friday that Will and George Andrews, sons of Isaac and Sarah Andrews of this place, were lost in the Galveston flood. A letter from the Captain of the boys said the whole fort was destroyed and out of Company A, Battery O, twenty-eight for the soldiers were lost, their boys among them. He wrote that they were model soldiers and were held in high esteem. Out of the Anderson's four sons only one is left and he is sick in San Francisco. Mr. and Mrs. Andrews have been our citizens for years and are held in high esteem by all and this blow falls heavily upon them. They have the sympathy of the entire community.

Obituary: Tuesday morning in his comfortable and beautiful home in Osgood, John Andrews 81, died suddenly of heart failure. Mr. Andrews came here about 40 years ago from Cincinnati. His business venture in the new location was milling and merchandising. He was a master carpenter by trade. Some of the beautiful residences he built in Osgood were for Col. James Cravens, Hon. W.D. Willson, John Eckert, and James M. McCoy. Mr. Andrews was a man of superior mental power and his character of highest honor. He was a loving husband, gentle indulgent father, and law-abiding citizen. We believe the spirit of Mr. Andrews will find rest in the Great Beyond. (Mr. Andrews was the grandfather of Will and George Andrews whose deaths were mentioned in the previous article.)

Happy 150th Birthday - Sunman

Both Sunman and Osgood celebrated their Sesquicentennial during Labor Day Weekend. The towns had great attendance and included many interesting activities. Both had a Civil War Living History enactment and entertaining parades. Sunman had a lot of period dress, a Civil War Wedding and a Beard Contest, a Time Capsule, an Original Platting play, and pioneer children's games. Of course, musical talent was a large part of the celebrations. David Dreyer, one of Ripley County's most talented and energetic historians, gave a talk about immigration and family descendents of Sunman. Fireworks ended festival activities.

Brief summary of some of Sunman history: According to some historians, the first settlers in the community were Richard and Dorcas Wortman, who migrated from Kentucky in 1815 and built a cabin in the forest about five miles west of the present town of Sunman. However; the first recorded settler was John Sunman who arrived from England c1819. Reportedly John Sunman first went to Philadelphia, traveled by stagecoach to Pittsburgh, from there by boat to Lawrenceburg, Indiana, which was quite a large settlement on the Ohio River. Most of the land available around Lawrenceburg was lowland and did not seem to satisfy Mr. Sunman. He was looking for rolling, well-drained land that would be better for the health of his family. He found what he was looking for in the area that later became Adams Township in Ripley County about one mile west of present day Penntown. He obtained a 200 acre tract of timberland land from the government and built a larger than usual log cabin. He made the necessary furniture for the inside and sent word to his wife in Holtby, England to bring the eight children and come to their new home in America. The family sailed from Liverpool, England in May, 1820 on the Ship "Nancy" bringing with them many boxes and trunks of tools such as adz, hewing axes, planes, chisels, chains, etc. It took six months for them to reach America. No doubt it was a very difficult journey and their youngest child died shortly after her arrival. Mrs. Sunman was quoted as saying, "When men choose to go to a new country, they should marry their wives there".

Gradually more settlers moved into the community and crude roads were cut through the forest. It was at the intersection of two of these primitive roads that a little village began to form. Soon the railroad was developed in this area and by 1851 had identified the crossroad as Smith's Switch, probably after a near-by Smith resident. This village was later called Vanness' Switch and after that Leffler's Switch. It was a gala affair with settlers gathered on both sides of the tract to welcome the first train to arrive at the crossing on October 3, 1853. The train consisted of a little wood burning engine and two wooden coaches with George Tyre, conductor and George Mathers, engineer. The railroad company was to become known as The Big Four Railroad.

The crossing was developing into an industrious little town with businesses and shops. In 1856, a prominent citizen James Vanness platted the town and called it Sunmanville in honor of his friend John Sunman and/or his son Thomas, who assisted with the surveying and planning. That name was kept until the first Post Office was established in the 1860's when the "ville" was dropped and the official name became Sunman. The town has remained active for 150 years.

Credits: Compiled from several different Sunman histories
The Sunman Herald Tribune, The Osgood Journal, Kate Rabb History and David Dreyer history published in the Ripley County History Book.



Versailles, IN 47042

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

- Adams Twp. - Mrs Betty Roepke; 9644 E Co Rd 1300 N, Sunman, IN 47041
- Brown Twp. - Vacant
- Center Twp. - Mr. Norris Krall; 4499 N Old Michigan Rd, Osgood, IN 47037
- Delaware Twp. - Mrs. Lois Workman; 4823 N Co Rd 350 E, Osgood, IN 47037
- Franklin Twp. - Mrs. Esther Edmondson 7653 E Co Rd 800 N, Sunman, IN 47041
- Jackson Twp. - Mr. Andrew Scholle; 5448 W Co Rd 800 N, Osgood, IN 47037
- Johnson Twp. - Mr. Michael Auterson; 549 W. Tanglewood Rd, Versailles, IN 47042
- Laughery Twp. - Mrs. Helen Decker; 314 Crestview Lane, Batesville, IN 47006
- Otter Creek Twp. - Mrs. Beatrice Boyd; P.O.Box 83 Holton, IN 47023
- Shelby Twp. - Mrs. Cheryl Welch; 6453 S Co Rd 225 W, Versailles, IN 47042
- Washington Twp. - Mr. Henry Walker; 1721 N Co Rd 575 E, Milan, IN 47031

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Treasurer
Museum Curator
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- Mrs. Helen Einhaus; 643 Columbia Avenue, Osgood , IN 47037
- Lori Hoffman; 5565 E. Lower Dry Fork Rd. Madison, IN 47250
- Bea Boyd, Henry & Jerry Walker, and Norris & JoAn Krall

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