

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

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● The fall meeting of the Ripley County Historical Society will be Sunday, October 12, 2008, starting at 2:00 at the RCHS Archives Library on the west side of the Versailles Courthouse Square. After the business session, a "Show and Tell" program will be given by Betty Roepke on her hobby collecting postage stamps. Betty is a philatelist. This is a very interesting and popular hobby. Everyone invited to attend.

● The RCHS was very disappointed to receive Andrew Scholle's resignation as Jackson Township Director. Andy was appointed to the board in the fall of 2003. He added enthusiasm and new ideas to our organization. Andy and wife have moved to Decatur County where he operates a surveying business. Best wishes, Andy, and thanks for all you have done for us.

● RCHS is very fortunate to find such an exceptionally interesting and knowledgeable historian to fill the vacancy on the board. Delbert Abplanalp has graciously consented to become our Jackson Township Director. Delbert and Dorothy live on their farm near Napoleon and are parents of Roger, Larry and Peggy. He took part in the Napoleon Sesquicentennial celebration in 1970 as the character "The Old Prospector" and was a big hit. He has assumed this title several times since when he would step back in history for a portrayal of days-gone-by. He gave a very interesting program for the RCHS on the Plank Road in January 2007. Delbert is sexton for St. John's Lutheran Cemetery. We welcome Delbert to our board.

● The WWII Ripley Co. Veterans book is progressing. The response has been phenomenal and the time to collect, process, write, and design is a time-consuming task. However, we are making progress and, God willing, the book will eventually be completed, hopefully in 2009.

● We have a guest "Ghost Writer" for this issue. Janet Wagner lives near Napoleon and is the Editor of the Osgood Museum monthly newsletter. We would like to collect ghost stories from all over the county. If anyone has any, please send them in or contact us at 812-689-4358.

● Another book has been added to the list of books available from the RCHS collection. The Holton School book "Past Tense" covering years 1852-1991 was printed after the school was completely consolidated with South Ripley school, it was sponsored by the Holton Alumni Association. It has 116 pages with loads of pictures and index. The book is in demand and several reprints have sold out. Another reprint has just arrived so there are now some books available, anyone wishing one, should send \$20 plus \$3 for s&h to RCHS, or stop in and pick up a book

THE FOLLOWING BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE:			
<i>Ripley County History, Volume 1</i>	\$65	<i>Johnson Township Cemetery Index</i>	\$ 10
<i>Brown Twp.. Tales by Alan Smith</i>	20	<i>Versailles, IN School Life 1818-1966</i>	20
<i>Tales of Versailles by Alan Smith</i>	16	<i>Osgood, IN Sesquicentennial 1856-2006</i>	17
<i>Vintage Postcards by Alan Smith</i>	20	<i>Come Visit by Jean McClellan</i>	25
<i>Brown Township Cemetery Index</i>	10	<i>Jackson Township Cemetery Index</i>	13
		Shipping charges added for all books	3

The RCHS Archives Library is open for public research weekdays 1 – 4 pm, except holidays, Pumpkin Show week (Sept.) and the week between Christmas and New Years. The Library will also be closed during inclement weather. Questions call 812-689-3031

Check your label to make certain your dues are paid up-to-date. If not, mail your renewal to
RCHS or Beatrice Boyd, Treasurer, P.O. Box 83, Holton, IN 47023.
Annual \$10; Life \$100.

MINUTES of the RCHS SUMMER QUARTERLY MEETING - 7/13/08

The summer quarterly meeting of the Society was called to order at 2:00 P.M., July 13, 2008, by President Cheryl Welch, who led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Each attendee identified themselves and their township of residence. Secretary Frank Keenan read the minutes of the spring quarterly meeting of 4-13-08. The minutes were approved as read. President Cheryl Welch announced that Treasurer Bea Boyd was ill and unable to attend the meeting, but had nonetheless prepared a report updating the state of the Society's finances since the last quarterly meeting. President Welch read Bea's report, and the financial report was approved as read.

Norris Krall gave a gratifying report of the ongoing success of the World War II Ripley County Veterans Project. Norris reported, for example, that while County Court House records reflect that some 40 County veterans died in the war, veteran information forms submitted to date reflect that some 82 County veterans were either killed-in-action; died of wounds; or died from other causes, such as training exercises. The membership was again reminded of the 7-31-08 deadline for submission of the forms outlining a service member's dates of service, rank, etc. Norris additionally reported that, to date, the Society has received information on over 3000 World War II County veterans, an approximately ten-fold greater response than that of Switzerland County, whose World War II Veterans Project is justifiably regarded as a great success. Norris reported that in light of the volume of information being received, it may well be necessary to publish two (2) volumes commemorating the County's WW II veterans. Norris indicated that he would check with some commercial printers and seek some "ball-park" book publication figures. Reminiscent of the adage that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," Norris stated that he had been informed that Franklin County is also starting a project to recognize their Veterans.

Further with respect to the need for volunteers, President Welch reminded members, and others in attendance, that due to recent vacancies, volunteers are needed to cover the Monday through Friday, 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. schedule at the Archives Building.

Following the business meeting, Vicki Dudley from Center Township presented a fascinating account of the South African Safari she and her family participated in this past spring with five other couples. Ms. Dudley had compiled a detailed diary of each day's adventures while on safari and shared her memories and observations of several of her diary entries, commencing with the fact that getting to South Africa *via* London, England, took a daunting 20 hours of flight time to cover the 8,500 mile journey. Additionally, Ms. Dudley shared many of the photographs she took on Safari, and mounted them on a triptych poster for all to see. Many of these photographs depicted the wild beauty of large herds of animals, such as zebras, and breathtaking sunrises and sunsets. Ms. Dudley explained how each member of the hunting party was allowed to choose the animal they wanted to hunt. Some chose various game or "big" game species, and others chose to bird hunt. Among the game and big game hunted, and successfully so, were: zebras; wildebeests; tsi sestets; giraffes; jackals; wart hogs; impalas; etc. among the birds successfully hunted were cormorants; quail; doves, guinea fowl; grouse; etc.

All meat from the hunt was prepared for eating over open fires and fed to the safari participants and the support staff. Vicki noted that every meal served was delicious.

Ms. Dudley explained that the safari party hunted both north and south of Johannesburg, South Africa. She explained that south of Johannesburg is open grassland plains or veldt, and north of Johannesburg is hilly to mountainous brush land, two very different environments. As Ms. Dudley explained, these differing environments create very different hunting conditions.

In addition to her exciting hunting experiences, Vicki shared some of her non-hunting fun experiences, such as her elephant rides and her visit to a lion farm.

Also of interest was Ms. Dudley's reminder that until 1994, the South African government enforced apartheid, that is, separation and differing rights, for the governing 10% Caucasian or Afrikaner citizenry, versus the 90% indigenous black citizenry.

Also of interest was her report that most of the South African farms are very large and that typically they grow corn, wheat, soybeans, bananas, and sunflowers. The principle livestock is sheep. Vicki also told us that she saw many baobab trees in South Africa, and she reminded us that baobab trees are the source of cream-of-tartar.

Upon conclusion of her presentation Vicki was given a rounding round of applause expressing our gratitude for the self-evident great amount of time and effort she put into such a memorable program.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 P.M., after which refreshments were served by Brown Township.

Respectfully submitted, Frank A. Keenan, Secretary

Bea's Buzzing by Bea Boyd



*The pair of lions in front of our RCHS Library have a new coat of paint recently done by Cheryl. Joan always wants the lions to look nice for the Pumpkin Show and she paints them but she has been overwhelmed with the WWII Veterans book project.

*The Ripley Co. Historical Society Museum, located at the corner of Water & Main has a new roof. Thanks to the money received from the Tyson Fund in 2007. The Museum is located in the old G.A.R. building which housed C.C. Wheeler Post #98, named for Charles C. Wheeler (Union) of Co. B. 68th Reg. Indiana Volunteer Infantry. Capt. Wheeler was mortally wounded at Dalton, GA on Aug. 15, 1864 from which he died on Aug. 22, 1864, at the age of 28 yrs. 5mo. 8da. I found this clipping in an April 1921 County paper. The C.C. Wheeler Post #98 G.A.R. met in their regular session at their Hall here on Saturday, with 11 members present. Following is the list and age of those present: B.F. Preble, 88; Benjamin Winson, 81; A.M. Wooley, 81; T.G. Day, 79; W.E. Johnson, 79; S.F. McMinds, 77; D.K. Marsh, 79; P.M. Seelinger, 76; Thomas E. Willson, 75; Smith Harrell, 72; James Brindley, 72. The combined age of all the men - 856 years. The "Boys" enjoyed a social hour or 2 with bean soup & coffee.

*Thanks to the staff at Tyson Library. They ordered the book "Tales Never Told Around the Camp Fires". If you are interested in true stories of Frontier America you would enjoy this book about outlaws and law officers. Persons from Ripley County, especially Osgood, would be interested in the story about Charles E. (Ed) Short, U.S. Deputy, who was killed in the line of duty 23 of Aug. 1891. His body was shipped by train back to Osgood and buried in the Greendale Cemetery. Much of the Ripley County information was credited to RCHS and Mary Manship.

👻 Ghost Stories I can remember when we used to have company, they would tell ghost stories. James W. Riley writes of listening to the witch stories that Annie tells about in Little Orphan Annie and the goblins that will get you "Ef you don't watch out". I was always fascinated by Washington Irving's "Legend of Sleepy Holler". Poor ole Icabod Crane. As kids we were told of the woman (headless, with her head under her arm) that was at Grandpa Beach's Haunted Spout (the spring that emptied out on the roadside by his farm). Since she only came out at midnight we never saw her but I think of her when I drive down that road.



👻 People around Holton thought the Covered Bridge was haunted but that was just some local boys running up and down the hillside wearing white sheets. I think the one scared the most was Cousin John, who lived in Forest Corner neighborhood. Once when he came to visit my brothers, they told him how haunted the bridge was and the spooky things they had seen there. He was driving the horse and buggy so when he started home, the boys ran to the bridge ahead of him, hid where he couldn't see them and started moaning and groaning. SCARED!!! He said later, "My hair stood on end and I kept shaking the reins to get the horse to move faster". These were the games people played before computers.

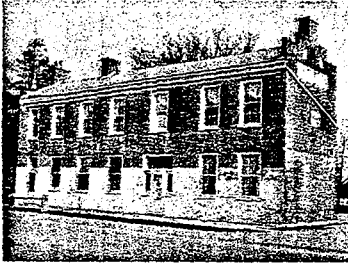
* Sunday afternoon, September 14, the winds from Hurricane IKE hit us with gusts of up to 75 to 80 mph. It did a lot of damage to buildings and trees and many lost their electricity. Some where without power for about 4 or 5 days.



* As of now, Sept. 23, the town of Versailles is getting ready for the Pumpkin Show. It is quiet today - but the noise will be coming.. HOORAY...

Scary Events at the Ye Olde Central House

The Central House is an 1830's Federal-style building located in Napoleon across from the town square. The original property owners were William and wife Frankie (Craig) Wilson. William platted out the town of Napoleon. He later sold the property to George Craig in 1822. According to a newspaper article at the Ripley County Historical Society, Doctor James Anderson built the



Central House building along with the Versailles Medical Building. In 1850, the property was sold to Dr. Samuel Hicks who then sold it to Joseph Muir in 1856, at a considerable increased value. Its earliest use was

that of a drover's inn and tavern. A drover's inn is a place for people to stay with pens to hold stock that were being driven to market. Though out the years, the building has been used for various different businesses. It was used as a stage coach stop between Cincinnati and Indianapolis, butcher's shop, gambling and pool hall, saloon, barbershop, doctor's office, and dining hall, and not necessarily in that order. The building is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

Because of its long history, the Central House has had some very interesting stories attached to it. Some of these stories are, of course, a little on the paranormal side. Patricia Hicks, one of the board members of a nonprofit organization that is preserving Ye Olde Central House, has had many experiences there.

In 1949, there were two apartment rooms located on opposite sides of the building. They were rented to Cecil Meyers and Stanley Foster. They told her of a night that both men were awoken in the middle of the night by a breath of air on their faces. They then heard children singing and laughing in the connecting room. Both men went to check on the sounds and found themselves just looking at each other at the exact same time across the room.

Other more recent occurrences happened to a couple

of seniors at Jac-Cen-Del. They wanted to write a paper about the ghosts at Central House for school. They were getting a tour of the building by Pat when they noticed that one of her sleeves became puffed out as she was coming down the stairs after checking the upstairs rooms for them. She also felt a rush of air go by her. The students also claimed to have seen the hands of an unwound clock go around several times quickly without anyone touching it.

During a recent murder mystery play, Diane Macek was giving a monologue for her character describing the murder for the performance, when a pump organ played two distinctly different and long notes with no one even touching the instrument. Many thought it was a part of the performance but it was not and it unsettled Diane.

After getting the House ready for the Living Histories Days held recently, Pat had locked up the building for the night and had 3 people helping her check to make sure that the lights were out. Later that same night, a neighbor called her to tell her that lights were on upstairs. She arrived to turn them off and was climbing the stairs when they suddenly went off by themselves.

Other things have happened at various other times, such as a rocking chair will move by itself, objects that were placed in one spot will be moved to another spot later on, and books on shelves will be stacked on the floor the next day. Pat notices that these events seem to occur more often after a remodeling project. And, she seems to only feel that rush of air when she is walking up or down the staircase.

She can not explain the incidences other than to believe it is the work of ghosts. She thinks it could possibly be a 13 year old girl who died of diphtheria when the Newman family owned the building in the early 1900's. Some people have told her that they think the ghosts might be two young boys that once lived there, but she has no knowledge of who they could be. Maybe, the events will continue until someone finds out about this real life mystery.

Written by Janet L. Wagner



The Happenings at the Cravens' House by Cathy Volz's

My family and I live in a Victorian house that has an interesting history. Our house was built in 1862, by an infamous owner. It once belonged to James H. Cravens (1802-1876) who was a lawyer and a very political person of his time. Mr. Cravens was a member of the Indiana State House of Representatives in 1831-1832, and 1846-1847. In 1839-1841, he was elected to the Indiana State Senate. He debated against the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act requiring citizens to return escaping slaves to their owners, and Constitutional Article of 1851 which prohibited blacks from moving into Indiana. This among other things made him a noted anti-slavery attorney and Abolitionist. He also was involved with the Underground Railroad with Stephen Harding. He was commissioned Lt. Colonel during the Civil War but resigned his commission due to ill health in 1863. After forming a militia unit for Versailles, he and his men were captured by Gen.



John Hunt Morgan during the famous Morgan's Raid in 1863. Cravens admitted to being an early abolitionist and Gen. Morgan threatened to hang Cravens and burn down the town of Osgood. Cravens' quick thinking and tart replies, one included, "Burn it down then, it never was much of a town" actually saved him, his men, and the town of Osgood. Even though he moved to Ripley County in 1833 and established a law practice in Versailles, in wasn't until 1865 that he had John Andrews build his two-story house on East Fairgrounds Avenue. He owned the home until 1875.

There have been many incidents that have happened in our house that we can not explain. And, I believe this house is haunted.

One of the first things that happened after we moved in was that the parlor seemed to be vibrating. The whole room just seemed to be shaking for no apparent reason. My mother was helping me clean the house and she also witnessed it. At the time, I just thought it might have something to do with some jets from the proving grounds that maybe, had flown over the house. I know that did not seem logical, but I did not have a better explanation. I really didn't think too much about it until other things started to happen.

One morning, I had done some laundry in the basement before going to work. Before leaving the house, I opened the basement door to see if I had turned the lights off. The only light on was above the washer and dryer. Rather than take care of it then, I called my daughter after I arrived at work to ask her to turn the light off. A short time later she called me back to tell me that she had gone to turn the light off but it was not on. She then went upstairs to take a shower. When she came



down stairs, the lamp in the living room was on and no one else was home but my daughter!

Another occurrence was when my son was home alone one evening going through some things in his bedroom. He was sitting on the floor rummaging through a box, when he felt like he was being watched, he looked towards the door and there stood a gentleman in a gray suit. By the time he looked towards the face, it just disappeared. Raye, my son, described the image of the figure as being wavy, as if you were looking at a hot road in the summertime.

My dog and I experienced an even stranger moment. One evening I went to bed so exhausted that as I dragged myself up the stairs I thought I'd never wake up once I was in bed. However, after about an hour, I woke to my dog barking like crazy and the television blaring! As I was trying to wake up, I tried to make sense of what was happening. I wondered why my husband had the television up so loud. Getting up from the bed, I then remembered that he was away from home at a town meeting. As I slowly, cautiously, made my way to the banister, the television became silent. By the time I got downstairs, the only noise I heard was my dog going nuts. Looking in the room with the television, the only thing that I could see was my dog with his fur all bristled up as though he was frightened of something that only he could see. About that time, my husband came home and the dog settled down. But, my husband and I both smelled the lingering scent of cigar smoke.

Other incidents have occurred as well. My son and I both have smelled the cigar smoke, as well as perfume upon several occasions. My daughter feels her bed move as if someone has just sat down on it. She also hears tapping on her headboard. My dog will frighten me by looking around as though he's following something with his eyes and when I follow his look, I do not see a thing. I have even heard footsteps upstairs when there is no one home except for me.

These things do not happen all the time or together, just randomly. I don't have any explanations for some of the things that have happened. We would like to think that we have visitors of a ghostly nature from time to time. The incidents seem harmless, so we don't mind.

Written by Janet L. Wagner



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