

**The Quarterly Bulletin  
Ripley County, Indiana, Historical Society, Inc.  
Library – 125 Washington Street  
Museum – Corner of Main and Water Streets  
Versailles, Indiana 47042**

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**VOLUME XXXIV**

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▲ The Ripley Co. Historical Society will meet Sunday, April 14, at 2:00 at the Archive Library on the west side of Versailles Courthouse Square. The program for our next meeting will be given by David Dryer, on the 183<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. Refreshments will be provided by Otter Creek Twp. members.

▲ Research \$5.00 for non-members and all mailed requests, and \$.50 per page copied for everyone.

▲ The WWII War Veterans book, titled LEST WE FORGET, is still available. It can be obtained for \$35 at (1) Batesville Historical Society which is located on George Street next to the Post Office, (2) the Osgood Museum on South Buckeye Street (on Friday or Saturday afternoons) or in Versailles at the Ripley County Historical Society Library on the west side of the Courthouse Square (open every week-day afternoon from 1 to 4). Also, LEST WE FORGET can be ordered for shipment by mail for \$40. Checks should be made payable to Ripley County Historical Society. We give our heartfelt thanks to Joan and Norris Krall.

▲ Members that are willing to receive the newsletter via email instead of postal mailing can do so by emailing RCHS with your request along with your email address. The email for sending your request is printed above.

▲ The Tyson Library is putting on a program starting March 11, 2013, on the Civilian Conservation Corps also known as CCC Camp during the WWII. CCC Camp members worked building roads, erecting telephone poles, helping farmers, planting trees, and building state parks. They spent a lot of time in Ripley County during the war helping our citizens. Keep an eye out for further information.

The RCHS Archives Library is open for public research weekdays 1 – 4 pm, except holidays, Pumpkin Show week, also the week before and between Christmas and New Year. The Library will also be closed during inclement weather. **NOTICE:** The Museum will be open Sunday Afternoons 2-4 p.m. Starting June 2<sup>nd</sup> through Pumpkin Show Saturday Sep. 28th. Questions call 812-689-3031.

**NOTICE:** 2013 Yearly Dues are due in January 2013. Mail your renewal for 2013 to RCHS at P.O. Box 525, Versailles, IN 47042 Dues: Annual \$15; Life \$150.

**THE FOLLOWING BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE:**

<i>Ripley County History, Volume 1</i>	\$65	<i>Versailles, IN School Life 1818-1966</i>	\$ 20
<i>Brown Twp. Tales</i> by Alan Smith	20	<i>Osgood, IN Sesquicentennial 1856-2006</i>	17
<i>Tales of Versailles</i> by Alan Smith	16	<i>Vintage Postcards</i> by Alan Smith	20
<i>Jackson Township Cemetery Index</i>	13	<i>Johnson Township Cemetery Index</i>	10
<i>Milan, Indiana, A Storied Past</i>	16	<i>Lest We Forget WWII</i>	35
<i>Broken Wings</i> , By Robert Kelly	20	<i>Assorted Jefferson Proving Ground Books</i>	
Shipping Charges added for all books	5		

RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES  
January 13, 2013

The Winter Quarterly meeting, held at the Society's Archives Building, 125 Washington Street, Versailles, on January 13, 2013, was called to order by President Cheryl Welch at 2:00 p.m. Cheryl led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the Fall Quarterly meeting were read by Secretary Frank Keenan and approved as read. Treasurer Owen Menchhofer distributed and read highlights from his Income & Expenses Report which was approved as written.

President Welch reminded all that RCHS annual dues are due in January, and also noted that twenty-four (24) replacement windows for the Archive Building's Memorial Windows Project have been paid for, the most recent of which was a memorial window from Cheryl's family commemorating Dannie and Cheryl's Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary. Here's a shout out to Cheryl and Dannie---who do so much for the Society---A Happy Fiftieth! Cheryl reported that CD's of the U.S. Census records from 1850 to 1940 have been ordered and will be paid for from some of the Society's recent RCCF grant monies, and that the Osgood Library has arranged for patrons to access [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

President Welch advised that the Society had received an electric "shut-off" notice from Duke Energy due to Duke's alleged inability to access the meters. Various arrangements had been made for Duke's meter reading, but all proved unsatisfactory due to Duke's failure to secure the building after the readings. President Welch advised that the matter would be discussed at the Board meeting following the program.

Under new business, Tom Krumm noted that a new writer's group had been formed, which meets on Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. at the Madison, IN Library. Frank Keenan noted that a three-part series entitled "The Abolitionists" was currently being broadcast on PBS television, and may be repeated this summer. This series address the phenomenon of the Underground Railroad, an interesting follow up to Tom Krumm's recent program on the Underground Railroad in Ripley County.

The spring meeting program will be presented by Otter Creek native David Dryer, veteran of the 183<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, on the Division's illustrious history and its many contributions to the security of our treasured freedoms. The program for the summer meeting will be presented by Delbert Abplanalp on the "Osgood Connections" to the County's "Hanging Tree" incident. Delbert has assured us that there will be no re-enactments, so all can attend without fear of being hanged.

After the meeting, Rosalind McKitterick gave an interesting presentation on button collecting, showing examples from her extensive collection, along with several books on collecting buttons. Among the more interesting were buttons from a mourning dress worn by Queen Victoria, and "Mississippi Pearls", buttons made from mother-of-pearl mined from Mississippi River beds of fresh water mollusks. Ms. McKitterick told us about two organizations for button collecting: The National Button Association, and the Indiana Button Association. The latter meets in Columbus, IN every spring.

Respectfully submitted,  
Frank Keenan, Secretary



Mr. and Mrs. John Hillenbrand, about 1908

Margaret & John Hillenbrand

### **HILLENBRAND FAMILY OF RIPLEY COUNTY**

By Tom Krumm

Germany is about the size of Montana with a population of 85 million. Andreas Hillenbrand, was born in 1779 and married Gertrudus in 1801. They lived in Germany near Frankenthal where they were farmers and shoe cobblers. Two of their sons elected to go to the US in 1835 when there were 38 different state governments inside Germany.

His oldest son, Wilhelm, was born in 1811 in Germany. He married Barbara and came to the U.S. Christopher, a second son of Andreas, also came to the U.S. Wilhelm and his wife had nine children. Wilhelm and his brother Christopher each bought 80 acres of land near Spades, Indiana (which is near Sunman) from the U.S. Government for \$1.25 an acre in 1837. Later, Wilhelm bought his brother's land and started farming. He was also a shoe cobbler.

In 1843, he and his wife, Barbara, had their first son, John. Wilhelm's wife Barbara died in 1854 when John Sr. was 10 yrs. old. John Sr. only went to grade school as there were no high schools near his residence. Wilhelm died in 1861 when John Sr. was 18 yrs. old. Since he was the oldest son, he inherited his father's land. He was also responsible for taking care of his seven year old twin sisters.

John Sr.'s two older brother-in-laws told John Sr. he should let them manage the land he inherited since they had more experience. John Sr. knew he needed help managing the land so he asked a neighbor, Mr. Sunman, the founder of Sunman, Indiana, to be the manager of the land. Mr. Sunman agreed to be John Sr.'s mentor, and John Sr. paid him by turning over the profits he earned primarily from harvesting the wood on the land. He preferred harvesting the wood and selling it to barrel makers and railroads rather than being a farmer.

In 1863, John Sr. married Margaret and they had five children: Mary, William, George M., John A., and Rose. John A. would feed the cows and pigs before going to school. He especially enjoyed running errands to the store where he could learn about what was going on in the neighborhood. His parents tried to send him to a private school in Illinois. He hated it and ran back to Indiana. His parents let him go back to public school.

As time went on, John Sr. bought additional land near Batesville. In 1876, he moved his family to Batesville so he would have more time to spend on his wood business interest. John A. then went to school at St. Louis Grade School. John Sr. marketed the wood products and became an investor in the American Furniture Company in Batesville. John Sr. helped organize the first electric utility and the telephone company in Batesville around 1890. His brother George M. became the Mayor of Batesville, and was re-elected for over 40 years.

In 1906, the Batesville Coffin Company was bought by George M. Hillenbrand out of bankruptcy. George became President and John A. was made Vice President. They focused on selling directly to the funeral home, and their services included delivery to the funeral homes. In 1918, they started making metal caskets which took over 85% of the casket market. This was done on an assembly line which was more efficient than other casket makers at that time. They kept growing until they became the largest casket manufacturer in the country.

In 1929, John A.'s son, William, was appointed CEO of Hill Rom. They sold hospital management on the benefits of having wooden hospital beds, stands, and tables compared to the all metal products being used at that time. William's brother, George C., became the number one Methods Engineer in both Hillenbrand Companies. He created more than 40 patents in his career. His wife and his grandmother provided the original funds for building Margaret Mary Hospital in Batesville.

The Hillenbrand Companies have been successful because they have invested in several different industries. They also continue to spend money on product research to remain the best in the casket and hospital equipment fields. Each year more people are electing to be cremated so Hillenbrand developed a line of urns to meet this need. They were also the first to come up with voice controlled hospital beds and stands. Four of John A.'s children became members of top management of the Hillenbrand Companies.

Today, there are only two Hillenbrand family members still employed, Ray and Gus, at the now two New York Stock Exchange Companies. They are both on the Board of Directors. The total net worth of the Hillenbrand families now exceeds 1.2 Billion dollars. Over the years, the Hillenbrand families have made sizable donations to Margaret Mary Hospital; St. Louis Church; YMCA; local parks; library; Notre Dame; Purdue; and all of the Batesville Cemeteries. Ripley County is a much better place to live because of what the Hillenbrand Family accomplished.

In the past couple of years, Hillenbrand Industries has also acquired four worldwide manufacturing companies that are outside the casket and medical equipment fields. They paid over 500 Million dollars to acquire Coperion, which is headquartered less than 60 miles from the birthplace of Wilhelm Hillenbrand in Stuttgart, Germany. Today, the Hillenbrands are the leading family in Ripley County.

## County, Indiana, Historical

Ripley



Society

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