

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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▲ The Ripley Co. Historical Society will meet **Sunday, April 10, at 2:00**, at the Archive Library on the West side of Versailles Courthouse Square. Refreshments will be provided by Laughery Twp. Helen Decker

▲ Research \$5.00 for non-members and all mailed requests, and \$1.00 per page copied for everyone. **VOLUNTEERS TO WORK AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARE BADLY NEEDED (NO PAY). CONTACT CHERYL WELCH IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN WORKING ONE DAY A WEEK FROM 1:00 TO 4:00 P.M., MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY.**

▲ The WWII War Veterans book, titled LEST WE FORGET, is still available. It can be obtained for \$25 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 \$30. Checks should be made payable to Ripley County Historical Society. We give our heartfelt thanks to Joan and Norris Krall. **NOTE:** Ripley County History Vol. II is no longer available.

▲ **Members that are willing to receive the newsletter via email, please contact RCHSL.** The email address for sending your request is printed above.

▲ A new novel is available at the Ripley County Historical Society by Don Morrison named “The Dark Line” which tells a story of the perils the American Slaves in Kentucky fleeing to Indiana via the Underground Railroad. The Book sells for \$20.

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 on Sunday Afternoons 2-4 p.m. through Labor Day & on Pumpkin Show Saturday Sep. 28th. Questions call 812-689-3031. **NOTICE:** 2015 Yearly Dues are due in January 2015. Mail your renewal for 2016 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</i> WWII	25
<i>Broken Wings</i> , By Robert Kelly	20	<i>The Dark Line</i> by Don Morrison	20
<i>Assorted Jefferson Proving Ground Books</i>		<i>Napoleon & Vicinity</i>	12
<i>Sugar Branch</i> by Don Morrison	16	Shipping Charges added for all books	5

By Frank Keenan, Secretary

The winter quarterly meeting was held at the Society's Archives Building on January 10, 2016. The meeting was called to order by President Cheryl Welch at 2:00 p.m. and she led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Frank Keenan read the minutes for the fall 2015 quarterly meeting, which were approved as read. Treasurer, Owen Menchhofer, distributed the treasurer's report and it was approved by attendees. He noted that the Society had received a donation of \$1,000.00 on behalf of the Leona Hahn Charitable Trust, and that all grant monies received by the Society have been spent within the time frame required by the grantors. Owen also reported that the necessary paperwork requesting a stipend of \$4500.00 for the Society (the same amount as last year) has been filed with the Auditor's Office.

President Welch reported that security cameras have been installed at the Archives Building, and that the Society has scanned the County's newspapers through and including 1941, and they are now accessible for research. She noted that copies of marriage licenses are available \$1.00 per page at the archives. Cheryl reported that the Eagle Scouts in Milan, with assistance from Rosalyn McKittrich, have undertaken a project to put up a sign in the County's cemeteries recording the World War II veterans that are buried there. She reported that the Directorships for Franklin, Jackson, and Johnson Townships expire in April 2016; and that Bill and Sandra Gloyd have moved to Versailles, leaving a vacancy in the Directorship for Center Township through to April 2018. Presently, Charlie Hughes is taking Bill Gloyd's place for Center Township. A nominating Committee will be appointed by President Welch at least one month before the April meeting, when the Committee will present its slate of proposed Directors to be voted on by members in attendance.

The program was presented by Warren Bruns, a retired river forecaster with NOAA. Warren noted that under President Jefferson weather data collection consisted of only the thermometer and the barometer. After the Civil War the National Weather Service was created and placed under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of War, assuring that weather data would be faithfully collected, given its importance in military operations. In 1890, jurisdiction was transferred to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Advances in forecasting technology, such as radar, satellites, and Doppler, have brought us to the sophisticated systems for the observation and prediction of the foibles of Mother Nature. Laughery Twp. will provide refreshments for the April meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Keenan, Secretary

HASSMER HILL THROUGH THE AGES

BY CONNIE J. KELLEY

In 1826 William Cornett from Kentucky took up residence in Versailles as a doctor serving the community for 40 years.

In 1833, he purchased land on a hill overlooking the town to the north in which he built a home. His hobby being Horticulture and Floriculture, he erected three buildings known as a "dogtrot", and purchased a boiler to add warmth for the nursery. Remains of this boiler can still be seen some 150+ years later at the "T" in the road where the nursery once stood. With all of this he turned farm ground into fertile woods and orchards with abundance of floral, raised from seedlings from his own nursery. Numerous burial plots can be found close to the nursery site.

In 1866, he sold his paradise on the hill to Elijah Stark, nephew of the founder of Stark Bro. Nurseries of Missouri. He was a carpenter by trade and built many homes in Versailles. While living in town he served as Ripley county Treasurer and Clerk for 6 years, after which he took up farming, purchasing an adjoining land in the valley along Laughery Creek. As his family grew he built a larger home down near the water but spent quality time at the house on the hill. With his children moving to Missouri he felt compelled to follow in 1885. He sold his properties to H. W. Stegemoller from Ohio.

Around the turn of the century H. W. Stegemoller deeded the farm to his son Henry Stegemoller. Henry moved into the new larger home on the valley farm and sold the land on top of the hill to Joseph A. Hassmer in March 1919. The Hassmer siblings had grown up in the Versailles area. Upon their father's death in 1884, their mother moved to Chicago while three of the older siblings moved to Lawrenceburg, IN where they all prospered. Upon the family reunion, they tore down the old house and built a huge southern colonial home in its place, one that all the siblings could enjoy. Brother John of Lawrenceburg was a carpenter and electrician by trade. Remnants of Cornett and Stark's additions to the hill still remained but Hassmer added more depth with the planting of 5000+ additional seedling trees. Water was abundant as the hill was blessed with four underground flowing springs. Indian mounds on the hill were explored by the Hassmer children and studied by Lawrenceburg archeologist.

In early 1930's, Joseph and sister Antoinette moved in with their sister Ann Cook in Lawrenceburg upon her husband's death and donated what would become known in history as Hassmer Hill to the government on February 22, 1937 to be used as a camp for youth, mainly 4-H members from surrounding counties. Construction plans of camp buildings were to be completed by CCC boys with aid of civilian construction workers. The camp was opened July 1, 1937. Seventy Ripley and thirty two Franklin County 4-H members attended that first year August 29-September 1. Youth participated in crafts, ping pong, horse shoe, nature hiking, swimming, canoeing, etc. Late January 1955 a fire broke out and the aging once Hassmer home burned to the ground within 2 hours due to defective wiring. The camp continued to be enjoyed by thousands of youth until the state announced on November 27, 1977 that they were closing it due to deterioration over the years and shortage of funds to do necessary repairs. Buildings were dismantled and burned to the ground November 30, 1977 with the mess hall the last to go on January 11, 1978.

Today the 4-H camp at Hassmer Hill is only a memory in the hearts of those who had attended during the years from 1937 to 1977. But the enjoyment of the hill will live on. An area biking club is in the process of establishing 16 miles of trail for mountain biking and hiking. So Hassmer Hill will continue to be enjoyed by future generations. And we can continue to marvel at the beauty of past additions by Cornett, Stark and Hassmer and all those who added to it wonder through years gone by.

Written by: Connie Kelley

County, Indiana, Historical

Ripley



Society

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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Sandra Meisberger & Cheryl Welch

Newsletter Committee

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