

**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 XXXV**

**April 2014**

**Number 2**

▲ The Ripley Co. Historical Society, **due to Palm Sunday and Easter**, will meet **Sunday, March 30, 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 Helen Decker on Egg Collection. Refreshments will be provided by Adams Twp. members, Betty Roepke is in charge.

▲ Research \$5.00 for non-members and all mailed requests, and \$1.00 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. **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 book has been donated to the RCHSL by Lyle C. Bultman, Naples, Florida. The title is "From Germany to Indiana, The Ancestors and Descendants of Oliver W. Bultman and Edna B. (Hoyer) Bultman." If anyone is interested in getting a copy can contact Lyle C. Bultman by phone: 239-682-7316, or by email: [lyleaki@yahoo.com](mailto:lyleaki@yahoo.com).

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:** 2014 Yearly Dues are due in January 2014. Mail your renewal for 2014 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 Minutes  
**October 13, 2013 CORRECTION**

The Correction concerns Norris Krall's Report

During the fund drive to raise funds for the purchase of the Versailles Bank Building, the Society was awarded a NAP (Neighborhood Assistance Program) Tax Credit Grant for up to \$40,000 for contributors to the fund drive. For each dollar contributed, the donor received a 50 percent credit on their Indiana Gross Income Tax Return. Thus an individual in the 28% tax bracket could contribute \$1,000 to the Society at a net out of pocket cost of \$220 after a Federal contribution deduction of \$280 plus a \$500 Indiana State Tax Credit.

On December 31, 1996 the Society received a gift of 100 shares of Walmart stock from Robert Boggs (a life member from Indianapolis, now deceased). He received a contribution credit of \$2,313, the value of the shares at that time. These shares grew from purchase of additional shares with dividends plus a 2 for 1 stock split on April 20, 1999 to a total of 249.904 shares in 2013.

The Treasurer asked Norris Krall, former director and treasurer of the Building Fund to assist in selling these shares. The stock certificate for the original 100 shares issued in the name of the Ripley County Historical Society Building Fund was removed from the Society's Lock Box and given to Norris to effect the sale. The remaining 149.9 shares were held in the records of Computershare, Walmart's Transfer Agent.

Norris executed the required documents as a director of the RCHS Building Fund, acquired the Gold Medallion Stamp on the documents and ordered the sale of the stock and forwarded all the documents by Certified Mail to Computershare, without charge. The stock sold on 9/27/2013 for \$74.23 per share less \$38 trading fees resulting in a settlement of \$18,512.37 or a gain of over 800% from the original gift amount 17 years ago.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to authorize Treasurer Menchhofer to invest the cash-out in a save investment. (In the past, the Society has typically invested cash assets into "certificates of deposit" from reputable institutions paying competitive rates of interest. Also noted is the fact that certificates of deposit are typically short term, ranging from mere months up to two years, after which they must either be renewed or cashed-out. Thus, should the Treasurer initially select a short term certificate of deposit, his decision to renew it would entail a review of the continuing competitiveness of the rate at that time being provided.)

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Keenan  
Secretary

RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES  
January 12, 2014

The winter quarterly meeting, held at the Society's Archive Building on January 12, 2014, was called to order by President Cheryl Welch at 2:00 p.m. Cheryl led the Pledge of Allegiance. Treasurer Menchhofer's report was presented and unanimously approved. At the winter meeting Norris Krall presented additions and corrections to the minutes with regard to the circumstances surround the Society's acquisition and disposition of its Walmart stock asset. It is an account considerably more complex than the account set forth in the minutes of the autumn meeting. It was published in the Newsletter immediately preceding the winter meeting and was presented at the winter meeting for approval. Accordingly, the secretary withdrew the minutes from a vote, representing that the autumn 2013 quarterly meeting minutes would be "revised" to conform to Norris Krall's corrections and additions, and submitted for approval at the Society's spring meeting.

President Welch reported that the boiler for the Archives Building had been repaired. She also reported that the Archives Building had passed an inspection conducted by the federal government's Homeland Security Agency. Cheryl also reported that the book scanner is now installed and operative. Following a discussion concerning the appropriate fee to charge for paper and/or electronic copies of Archive documents, Owen Menchhofer moved that the Society charge \$1.00 per page on all sizes of paper of a hard copy or an electronic copy. Sandra Meisberger seconded the motion. The motion passed. President Welch reported that, as has been the custom, the Society has received \$5000.00 from the County for the Society's storing of certain County records of significance to the County's history.

Frank Keenan reported that Perma Chink in Noblesville advised him that, while borate is not toxic, it is a preventative only and would not rid the Society's log cabin of an active infestation of power post beetles. Power Post Beetles and other wood eating pests require toxic insecticides and should be applied only by professional exterminators. Historic Madison has reported to him that they use "Mr. Pest" out of Madison for all their historic properties' extermination needs.

Following up on Joann Krall's suggestion that County school libraries and veterans organizations be offered a free copy of the Krall's "Lest We Forget" book, Duane Drockelman volunteered to take a copy to those veteran's organizations in the Sunman area. Bill Gloyd volunteered to take a copy to those organizations in the Osgood area. Helen Decker volunteered to take a copy to those organizations in the Batesville area. Further, with respect to "Lest We Forget", it is now on sale for \$25.00. Cheryl also reported that the Archives "Family Files" are now indexed by Surname only. It was also noted that the Ripley County History Book Vol. II is now "out-of-stock".

Following the meeting, Betty Roepke and Cheryl Welch displayed several "Old-Timey" items such as a corn husker; an awl for leather working; a bellows; and an old wooden toy that parts move as it is being pulled.

Shelby Twp. served refreshments. Due to Palm Sunday and Easter the **spring meeting will be held on Sunday, March 30, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.** Adams Twp. will be responsible for refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,  
Frank Keenan, Secretary

## THANK YOU TYSON FUND



The Ripley County Historical Society Library members and volunteers want to extend a very special thank you to the Tyson Fund Foundation board members for their generous grant. It was a great benefit for the Historical Society to purchase a scanner that enabled the volunteers to Scan and copy very large size books of documents and record them to the computer. It is so easy to print the complete document now and it has stopped the large amount of wasted paper.

THANK YOU AGAIN TYSON FUND

STEPHEN SELVYN HARDING



*I H. Selwyn Harding*  
*S. Selwyn Harding*

## STEPHEN SELWYN HARDING

By Tom Krumm

Stephen Selwyn Harding was born on February 24, 1808, in Ontario County, New York. He was one of 15 children including 4 step children of his dad, David Harding. According to family trees submitted to Ancestors.com, he was a third cousin thrice removed of President Warren G. Harding.

His father, David participated in the war of 1812, and he was captured by the Indians who were helping the British. David lost his land due to resulting financial problems. After the war concluded David felt he would be better off moving to the Indiana wilderness in order to hunt and grow enough food to support his large family.

The family built crude rafts and came down the Ohio River to Aurora arriving in 1820. Stephen Selwyn was 12 years old, and he was only able to go to school for a total of nine months. When he was 16, Stephen was hired as a teacher in Old Milan for \$7.00 a month plus board.

When he was 17 years old Stephen gave his first public speech in Old Milan on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. He knew he wanted to be more than a teacher so he started to go to Law school in Brookville, Indiana. He would walk home on weekends. In September, 1827, he passed the bar exam and opened up a law office in Richmond. He didn't have many clients so he had plenty of time to expand his knowledge base by reading many of the classics.

In 1828, Stephen decided to try establishing a law office in New Orleans. He gained firsthand knowledge of slavery and how it abused the concept of freedom. He witnessed several slave sales firsthand and developed an intense hatred of slavery. The blacks were treated like livestock at a farmer's auction. In less than six months, he decided he didn't want to practice law in New Orleans.

Stephen became a clerk on a boat going up the Mississippi and went back to his birth place in Ontario County, New York. He became acquainted with a Mormon founder, John Smith. He also met his wife Avoline Sprout. He decided to come back to Ripley County, Indiana to practice law. In July, 1830, Stephen was appointed the Ripley County Attorney, and had his office on the second floor of the Court House. He represented Ripley county in all legal matters during this period of time.

His oldest son Selwyn Stephen was born in 1831 in Old Milan, the first of nine children. On November 22, 1883, he purchased 80 acres on Old Milan Road near route 101. He built his beautiful two story home, which is standing (but the windows have been changed and the pillars on the front porch removed). In 1835, he opened the first Franklin Township post office inside his general store behind his house. In 1837, his father David died and he was buried in the Old Milan Cemetery.

Between 1837 and 1840, Stephen acquired over 500 additional acres in Franklin Township, and started a wheat mill and a saw mill. He continued practicing law in Versailles.

In the 1840's Stephen ran for Lt. Governor and Governor but was soundly defeated. The residents of Ripley County were pretty well split between for and against slavery. He gave several speeches on anti-slavery. His house in Old Milan became station number 7 on the underground railroad.

Stephen was an active member of the new Republican party in the 1850's and was well known to members at the state level. Over 20 of them wrote Lincoln and encouraged him to nominate Stephen to a responsible position.

Lincoln was worried that some of the western territories would become pro slavery. He appointed Stephen as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Governor of the Utah territory in 1862. The Mormons hated him because they wanted to be in control of Utah. Brigham Young felt he should be the governor of Utah. His backers got Lincoln to discharge Stephen Harding as governor.

Lincoln knew he owed Stephen for all of his work with the Republican Party so he appointed him Chief Justice of the territories of Utah and Colorado for most of two years.

In 1865, Stephen's term ended and he decided to come back to 4180 Old Milan Road to practice law as well as manage over 500 acres. He did this until his sight failed him in 1881.

Stephen S. died on February 12, 1891, and is buried in the Greendale Cemetery in Dearborn County. He was willing to stand up for what he believed to be right

County, Indiana, Historical

Ripley



Society

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