

The Quarterly Bulletin
RIPLEY COUNTY, INDIANA, HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
Library – 125 Washington Street
Museum – Corner of Main and Water Streets
Versailles, Indiana 47042

www.rchslib.org

e-mail: staff@rchslib.org

April 2020

Number 2

▲ **Quarterly Meeting**

The Historical Society will meet on March 29, 2020 at 2pm at the Archive Building. Notice the change of date. Our program for the meeting "Until All Know" presented by Della Menchhofer.

▲ **Library Hours**

The RCHS Archives Library is open for public research weekdays 1 – 4 pm, except holidays, Pumpkin Show week September 21-25, 2020, also the week before and between Christmas and New Year December 23, 2019-January 3, 2020. The Library will also be closed during inclement weather. **NOTICE:** The Museum will be open on Saturday mornings 9am-noon Memorial Day through Labor Day & on Pumpkin Show Saturday Sep. 26, 2020, 8:30 am - 10:30 am. Questions call 812-689-3031.

We will be CLOSED December 21st 2020 thru January 1st 2021. We will open for the new year on January 4, 2021.

▲ **Annual Dues**

Remember to renew your membership for another year. 2020 Yearly Dues are due in January. Mail your renewal for 2020 to RCHS at P.O. Box 525, Versailles, IN 47042 Dues: Annual \$15; Life \$150.

▲ **Research**

Research is free to all members and \$7.00 for non-members. Copies/scans are \$1.00 per page for everyone and can be sent via email or in paper form. To take pictures of copies a \$2.00 charge will be taken. Please make your research requests via email or regular mail.

▲ **Volunteers Needed**

We need volunteers to donate 3 hours of their time one day a week, Monday – Friday from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm. If you live in Delaware Township, please consider volunteering to be a director from your township. Contact Cheryl Welch if you are interested in filling any of these positions.

▲ **Books**

See our list of books available listed on the last page of this newsletter. The WWII War Veterans Book, titled *LEST WE FORGET* by Joan and Norris Karll 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 (3) 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). Checks should be made payable to Ripley County Historical Society. Books may be shipped for a \$7.50 shipping and handling fee.

RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

The winter quarterly meeting of the Society was held at the RCHS Archives Building on January 12, 2020. President Welch had left up the Christmas decorations for the attendees to enjoy. She called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M. and led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secretary Frank Keenan read the minutes from the October 2019 meeting, which were approved as read.

Treasurer Owen Menchhofer distributed the Treasurer's report, in which he pointed out cogent expenditures for the past quarter, including the installation of a new furnace, and a memorial for long-time member Helen Decker. The boiler for the old furnace remains in the basement, for want of a way to easily and inexpensively have it removed. Said report was approved by the members in attendance.

President Welch noted that the DAR had donated a new flag to the RCHS. The scanner is back in use, and thanks to Dannie Welch, the newspapers are now computerized.

Cheryl pointed out that pieces of marble are stored in the basement and requested that the Directors apprise the situation and decide what to do with them.

The Tyson Fund grant to RCHS for \$4100.00 will be put towards the cost of the cabin repairs. To date, the contractor has not found a log long enough to replace the greatly deteriorated bottom log.

Duane Drockelman brought to the group's attention that few, if any, visitors tour the museum during the Sundays when it is open. A suggestion was made by Duane that we have the museum open on Saturday mornings at the same time the Farmers' market is open, from 9 to 12 noon. It was recommended that a sign be placed at the market notifying people that the museum was open.

Duane so moved, the motion was seconded by Mike Stratton, and unanimously approved.

Victor Sarringhaus has worked in Napoleon to get more period furnishings for Central House, which was part of the Underground Railroad.

The fun-filled program, Ripley County History Trivia, was presented by Cheryl Welch, Duane Drockelman, and Barb Eades. Prizes were awarded to those who got the most correct answers to questions about Ripley County History, such as, "Who were the first people in Ripley County?" (Answer: Mound Builders). Also, we were asked to guess the names of towns from clues provided.

The society enjoyed brownies and cookies after the meeting.

The spring quarterly meeting will be held on March 29, 2020 at 2pm. Brown Township will be in charge of refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Keenan
Secretary



Ripley County History Trivia, presented by Cheryl Welch, Duane Drockelman, and Barb Eades was a fun addition to the January meeting. The winner of "Ripley County History Trivia" was Owen Menchhofer. Winners of "Names of Neighboring Towns" were Peggy Abplanalp 1st place; Josephine Keenan, 2nd place and Darlene Pettit, 3rd place.



Indiana Historical Society Festival Of Trees Winners

First Place – Penguin Pose, Indianapolis Zoo

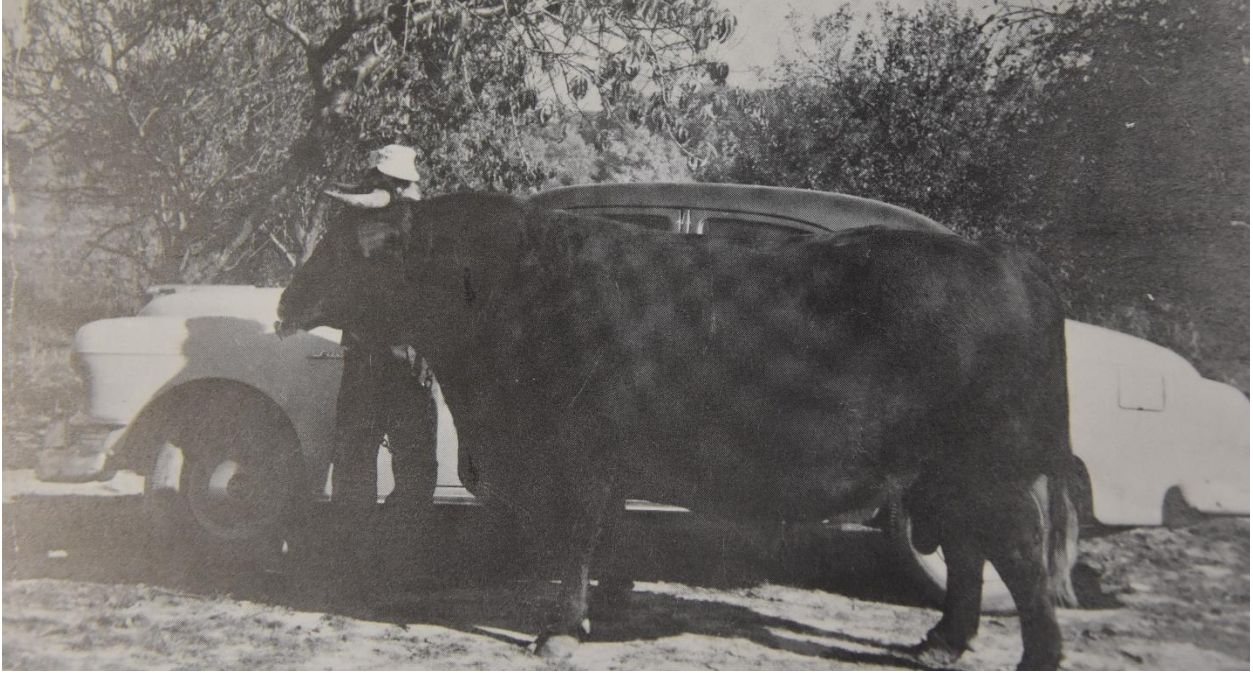
Second Place – Rocketing Around the Christmas Tree, Staff and Students of Neil Armstrong Elementary

Third Place – Y Camp Fun Around an Open Fire – YMCA of Greater Indianapolis/Flat Rock River UMCA Camp

<https://indianahistory.org> for more information on the Indiana Historical Society.

Lon Wooley and His Gigantic Cattle

by Barbara Eades



Fifty-three years after the death of Alonzo Wooley Sr. the story of Lon and his cattle still lives on, passed down by those who knew Lon and were privileged to see his cattle. I personally never saw these amazing cattle. Each year while attending the Indiana State Fair, one of the highlights would be finding the photo of Lon and his cattle on display in the Pioneer Building and telling our daughters about them. My husband Don, a friend Lon's grandson Ross, remembers Lon and his cattle. Don would go to the farm on the weekends when he was little. There were long lines of cars waiting to see gigantic cattle. A local store owner was selling Nehi and candy bars to those waiting. As a teenager, while hunting on the property, Donnie found some cattle bones. This was after Lon had moved to town.

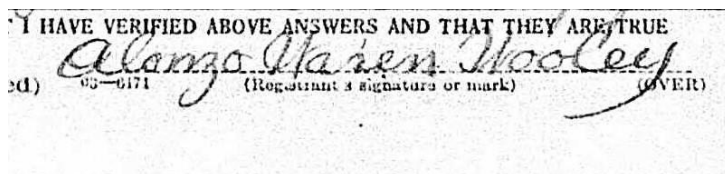


Weekends would have lines of cars waiting to view the gigantic cattle.



Alonzo Warren Wooley
Moore's Hill College, about 1893

Alonzo (Lon) Warren Wooley was born in Jefferson County, Indiana 18 Oct 1875 and spent most all his life in Jefferson and Ripley Counties. He attended school at Cross Plains. In his teens he went to Illinois to work as a feeder on a cattle farm. He returned to finish his schooling and attended Moore's Hill College where he studied philosophy, theology and literature. He was married to Jennie Alberding 5 June 1906. They had nine children and lived in a log cabin on his farm located about 2 miles east of Cross Plains where he raised his cattle. In later years he moved to town and lived with his son and daughter-in-law Alonzo Jr. (Tot) and Dorothy Combs Wooley. About 1960 he moved to Amelia, Ohio and lived with his son and daughter-in-law George Ross and Eleanor "Wendy" Winburn Wooley until his death 9 Jul 1967.



According to articles written about Lon during his lifetime, Lon took 2 of his Shorthorn cattle off the pasture and began experimenting with hand feeding. The bull, named Big Chief Redman and the steer named Lord Bozo grew to an estimated 3500 pounds each. The cattle were never sheltered, just chained to a tree in the woods behind his house. He carried buckets of water to them from a spring on the farm and gave them affection as well as all the high-potency feed they could eat. When asked what he specifically fed them he was quoted as saying "Oh, different grains and green stuff. Whatever they like best."



Weekends were busy with travelers to the hill farm and the rough log house that was the Wooley homestead. Trade journals, farm magazines and feed companies sent representatives to try to discover his secret feed. Indiana State Fair officials offered to pay Lon to bring his cattle to Indianapolis if he would tell his feeding formula. Lon would not consent.

By 1952 the Kentucky State Fair board had heard of the big cattle and sent a representative to entice Lon to bring his cattle to the Kentucky State Fair in Louisville (without disclosing his

feeding secret). Big Chief Redman and Lord Bozo were loaded into two trucks driven by Short Stegemiller and Bill Mathews. Lon rode with Bill and off they went to the fair for 10 days. I am sure in some forgotten archive there are fantastic pictures of this event.

An article located in the Versailles Republican, 1952, is a letter from K V Wagner, formerly of Osgood, living in Los Angeles, CA. The letter in part reads: "Opal and I saw a little bit of southern Indiana in southern California this evening and I thought you would be interested. We have the weekly habit of going to the downtown News Reel Show which is an hour and a half showing the latest news of the world. We were pleasantly surprised to see two large steers and Lon Wooley on his farm in Cross Plains. Opal says she remembers him when she was a child."

Seems like even though Lon did not like publicity, the news of his giant Shorthorns spread far and wide. As for his secret feed, Lon was quoted as saying "A calf all his life has a desire for certain foods and certain care. And if you satisfy those needs desires, you can grow big cattle just like I did." It just shows what a little bit of love and affection can do.



Lon and his friends left to right: Reuben Runner, Alonzo (Lon) Wooley, Joe Risk and Carl Uhlman.

Photo taken about 1958 in front of JC Brown's Garage, Cross Plains, Indiana

References: Various newspaper articles and photos donated to the Ripley County Historical Society by Alan Wooley, grandson of Lon Wooley and "Wooley Family History" written by George Ross and Eleanor "Wendy" Winburn Wooley, 1999.



Ripley County Historical Archive Building
Pencil drawing by Lily Welch.
Taken from a photograph for South Ripley Art Club.
Lily is the granddaughter of Dannie and Cheryl Welch,
President of the Ripley County Historical Society



NOTICE: New hours for the Museum located at the corner of Main and Water Street in Versailles, IN. We will be open on Saturday mornings 9am-noon May 30, 2020 through September 5, 2020 & on Pumpkin Show Saturday Sep. 26, 2020, 8:30 am - 10:30 am. Questions call 812-689-3031.

BOOKS FOR SALE

A Century of Schools	by Alan Smith	\$20.00
Adams Township Cemetery Directory		\$10.00
Broken Wings	by Robert Kelly	\$20.00
Brown Township Cemetery Reocrds		\$10.00
Brown Township Tales	by Alan Smith	\$20.00
History of Adams Township	by Harold Freeland	\$20.00
Historic Travel Guide To Ripley County	by Paul R Wonning	\$20.00
In Thse First Bright Days of Elvis Book I	by Josephine Rascoe Keenan	\$16.00
In Those Dazzling Days of Elvis Book II	by Josephine Rascoe Keenan	\$16.00
In Those Glory Days of Elvis Book III	by Josephine Rascoe Keenan	\$16.00
Jackson Township Cemetery Records		\$13.00
Johnson Township Cemetery Reocrds		\$10.00
Lest We Forget A Tribute ro the World War II Veterans of Ripley County		
	by Norris & Joan Krall	\$25.00
Milan, Indiana: A Storied Past 1854-2004		\$16.00
Napoleon & Vinicity Sescuicentennial 1820-1970		\$12.00
Old Timbers	by Chilton Thompson	\$23.00
Osgood Indiana Sesquicentennial 1856-2006		\$17.00
Passing Point	by Don Morrison	\$ 8.00
Revolutionary War Soldiers and Patriots With Ties to Ripley County Indiana		
	by Marlene Jan McDerment	\$34.00
Ripley County, IN Vintage Post Cards	by Alan Smith	\$20.00
Ripley County History Volume I		\$65.00
Ripley County History Volume II	(Paperback)	\$25.00
Passing Point	by Don Morrison	\$ 8.00
Story of the Bradt Fund, the F. Hale Bradt		
Family and their Versailles, Indiana Farm		
1906 – 2001		n/c
Sugar Branch #1	by Don Morrison	\$16.00
The Dark Line #2	by Don Morrison	\$20.00
Come Safe Home #3	by Don Morrison	\$20.00
Tales of Versailles	by Alan Smith	\$16.00
Versailles, Indiana School Life 1818 -1966	by Alan Smith	\$20.00
Wilbur's War (Abridged)	by Hale Bradt	\$15.00

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