

**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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**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**We are closed December 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 until January 8<sup>th</sup> 2018**

▲ The Ripley Co. Historical Society will meet **Sunday, January 8th, at 2:00P.M.** at the Archive Library on the West side of Versailles Courthouse Square. The program for our next meeting will be Given by Frank Keenen "Anecdote of His Time in Vietnam".

▲ Research \$7.00 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. **We are now printing the Ripley County History Book Vol. II**

▲ **Ripley County Townships Historical Information**

Duane Drockelman, is making a request to gather information from all the Townships to put together as a project, for the Ripley County Bi-Centennial for 2018. Would each representative Board member for their respective Township send information, such as: old communities no longer in existence, schools, churches, cemeteries, etc. Interesting old stories or historical events that occurred would be great. Individuals who are members also feel free to send any information. Please send to the Historical Society Archives by e mail or mail attention Duane by JANUARY 14 2018.

▲ **Ripley County to Celebrate Bi-Centennial with Numerous Activities**

A day to celebrate the two hundred years for Ripley County is scheduled to be held on Sunday, April 15, 2018 at the Ripley County Fairgrounds in Osgood. There are many and various activities being planned, so mark your calendars for the special event.

The Historical Society has agreed to have our museum, along with the Batesville, Milan, Osgood, and Sunman museums to be open for the two Saturday weekends prior to the celebration for special events. The Society will have the need for volunteers to assist on those two Saturday afternoons. There will be more information as to what activities will be taking place at the museums as plans are finalized.

▲ We have a NEW Volunteer for the Archives Diana Arnold from Laughery Township Welcome Diana.

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. Memorial Day through Labor Day & on Pumpkin Show Saturday Sep. 23rd. Questions call 812-689-3031.

**NOTICE:** 2018 Yearly Dues are due in January 2018. Mail your renewal for 2018 to RCHS at P.O. Box 525, Versailles, IN 47042 Dues: Annual \$15; Life \$150.

## RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

The autumn quarterly meeting of the Society was held at the RCHS Archives Building on October 8, 2017. The meeting was called to order by President Cheryl Welch at 2:00 P.M. following which she led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Frank Keenan read the minutes for the summer 2017 quarterly meeting, which were approved as read. Treasurer Owen Menchhofer's report was distributed to and approved by the attendees.

President Welch noted that the Society's "log cabin" was open to the public a total of four hours during the Pumpkin Show. Special thanks go to Cheryl and Jeri Walker for their Museum setting and Owen Menchhofer cabin sitting.

President Welch reminded attendees that the Directorships for Laughery and Delaware Townships remain vacant. Please notify Cheryl of anyone who might be interested in serving as a director for those townships.

Special thanks to Dannie Welch for the many, many hours he has put in operating the newly purchased Optical Character Recognition (OCR) device, thereby preserving and easing access to much of the Society's voluminous historical documents.

Cheryl suggested, and attendees agree, that the Society's first acquired micro film reader be scrapped, but that the Society's second acquired micro film reader be retained. Cheryl also noted that, thanks to the Society's new equipment, the Society's justly celebrated voluminous "Toph papers" are now readily accessible.

April 2018 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Ripley County. Celebration of the County's Bicentennial will be held at the County Fairgrounds in Osgood on April 15, 2018. Additionally, the Society's Museum will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on both April 7, 2018, and again on April 14, 2018. Volunteer attendants for those atypical open house hours are needed. President Welch's motion to raise the Society's current research fee from \$5.00 to \$7.00, starting next year, was seconded, and approved by all in attendance.

Several members of the Society continue to author various histories or historical fiction articles and books capturing days gone by. For example, Vice President Duane Drockelman is drafting an article for the County's Bicentennial; the County's Daughters of the American Revolution is issuing a book about Ripley County; and Josephine Keenan's second book in the Days of Elvis series, *In Those Dazzling Days of Elvis*, (not about Elvis, but set in the years when he first came on the scene) was published on June 12, 2017 and can be ordered by your bookstore or on Amazon.

An interesting program on flower pounding was presented by Eileen LaGreca. Several tried to make Bookmarks and it was fun for all.

The program for the January 14, 2018 meeting, will be "17 Yen Bay: A Tour of Duty in Vietnam," to be presented by Frank Keenan, Captain, Judge Advocate General's Corp, United States Army. Refreshments will be provided by Franklin Township.

Respectfully submitted,  
Frank Keenan, Secretary

## **Ripley County before the State of Indiana or the County Was Organized**

Let's go back years ago when the topography for this area was formed and how the changes have occurred over time. The terrain with valleys, slopes and flat areas are the result of the Illinois Glacier during the Ice Age that occurred and receded some 125,000 years ago. The Wisconsin Glacier appeared later but did not come this far south to have a major effect in this part of the state. The natural state of the area was now at the beginning of how our county would look. The county is underlain with limestone bedrock of predominantly two different types. The line separating the two types generally follows a line from the northwest corner to the southeast corner along the west side of Laughery Creek. Silurian limestone is found to west of that line and is mined from quarries and Ordovician limestone is on the east side and not quarried.

The soils found here are some of the oldest in the state and were developed under forest vegetation. The forests were dense and the tree species were determined by the lay of the land and its drainage characteristics. These virgin forests of tremendous huge growth are no longer found that consisted of white oaks and other oaks, hickories and beech that grew in the flats with walnut, poplar, ash and cherry being found on the slopes. The flat areas of the county were considered dark, wet and marshy where it was difficult for the sun to shine through the forest vegetation. The forests found today are a result of the heavy timbering in the past and different additional species are found.

The dense natural forest vegetation would then also determine the type of animal and bird populations and flora that were to be found by the first native Indians to live in the area. Animal species would have been bear, deer, wolves, panthers, wildcats, beaver, porcupines, wild turkeys, squirrels, and with numerous snakes. There were probably no bison or elk as they were usually found in herds and in large grass or prairie habitats.

It is estimated that the mound builders inhabited the area around 1500 AD and mysteriously disappeared. According to some of the early historical information written by Thomas Bagot in 1880 and by Ed Jerman, published in 1888 that is found in the Ripley County Historical Archives, there were supposedly 25 Indian mounds found primarily along the Laughery Creek corridor and some in other areas in the county. These mounds were classified as either temple, burial or living areas. The mound builders were from the Ohio Hopewell era and were considered peaceful hunters but also early farmers. There is a known and identified serpentine mound that is still partially visible today in the county. There were two Indian forts that are identified in the 1883 Ripley County Plat book in Delaware and Johnson Townships. These forts may be from the Mounds period but also could be from the more modern Native American period.

The more modern Native Americans that followed here in the county were primarily the Miami, Shawnee and Delaware tribes. These tribes were considered to be members of the woodland Indian tribes. These tribes were the primary inhabitants found in Ripley County when the first white man appeared. There were many conflicts and skirmishes leading up to and after, various Indian treaties were signed. During the period 1810-1812, militias were formed and there were 6 forts ordered to be built by the federal government to protect settlers coming to the wilderness in southeastern Indiana and southwestern Ohio from Indian raids. The 6 forts were: Fort Buchanan here in the county near Cross Plains, Fort McGuire just across Laughery Creek south of Farmers Retreat in Dearborn County at the mouth of Bear Creek, Fort Dowdens near Brookville in Franklin County, Fort Cambridge near Guilford and Fort Tanners at Lawrenceburg in Dearborn County, and Fort Vallonia in Jackson County.

This is the first article in a series to be written by Duane Drockelman in celebration of the Ripley County 2018 Bi-centennial. The information written in this and upcoming articles is taken from various historical documents found in the Archives history. Authors include: Violet Toph, Ed Jerman, Thomas Bagot, Harold Freeland, Allen Smith, Tom Krumm, David Dreyer and Minnie WyCoff. There are many other countless historical documents too numerous to be named that were and will be gleaned in the future for information.

## 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 Records		\$10.00
Brown Township Tales	by Alan Smith	\$20.00
History of Adams Township 1950	by Harold Freeland	\$20.00
Jackson Township Cemetery Records		\$13.00
Johnson Township Cemetery Records		\$10.00
Lest We Forget WWII	by RCHS	\$25.00
Milan, Indiana: A Storied Past 1854-2004		\$16.00
Napoleon & Vicinity Sesquicentennial 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 Country, 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	by Don Morrison	\$16.00
Take The River	DVD PBS Presentation	\$25.00
Tales of Versailles	by Alan Smith	\$16.00
The Dark Line	by Don Morrison	\$20.00
Those First Bright Days of Elvis	by Josephine Rascoe Keenan	\$14.00
Versailles, Indiana School Life 1818-1966	by Alan Smith	\$20.00
Wilbur's War (Abridged) by Hale Bradt		\$15.00

## *Ripley County, Indiana, Historical*



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