

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 XXXX

JULY 2017

Number 3

▲ The Ripley Co. Historical Society will meet **Sunday, JULY 9th, 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 Keenan anecdote of his time in Vietnam.

▲ 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. **We are now printing the Ripley County History Book Vol. II**

▲ We would like to thank the REMC's Operation Roundup program for the grant to purchase a new computer to help with saving our records and old newspapers.

▲ Ross' Run DAR purchased a new American Flag for the Archives, they hold their meeting here.

▲ **Wilber's War**, a three book series, on The American experience in wartime, captured by a son who visited the battlefields where his father fought, met those his father knew (both friend and former foe), and struggled to untangle the threads of his family's wartime legacy. The Book Can Be Bought at Amazon, and we have some.

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: 2017 Yearly Dues are due in January 2017. Mail your renewal for 2017 to RCHS at P.O. Box 525, Versailles, IN 47042 Dues: Annual \$15; Life \$150.

THE FOLLOWING BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE:

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|------------------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| <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> | 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 |
| <i>Ripley County History Vol. II</i> | 25 | | |

RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

The spring quarterly meeting of the Society was held at the RCHS Archives Building on April 2, 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 winter 2017 quarterly meeting, which were approved as read. Treasurer Owen Menchhofer's report was distributed and approved by the attendees.

Cheryl told that Director Duane Drockelman was doing better from his surgery on his knee. The new computer from REMC is working well. Thanks to the REMC grant.

President Welch presented a slate for the Directorships of Delaware and Washington Township for a three-year term, namely, Melvin Black for Delaware Township and Jerry Walker for Washington Township. It was unanimously approved by all those in attendance. Cheryl also reported that Society is in need of a Director for Laughery Township. Cheryl additionally reported that as of the spring quarterly meeting all the other directors have been filled.

President Welch additionally reminded attendees that the summer quarterly meeting would be held July 9, 2017, and, as in the recent past, will be an ice cream social. Center Twp. dessert.

The program was delivered by County resident Jim Newhart, a Civil War re-enactor. Jim was dressed in a Union soldier's uniform, and was surrounded by various equipment which was routinely issued to Union soldiers, such as a tent; a rifle; a "ti" canteen (Confederate troops' canteens were "wooden"), and eating utensils. Jim noted that Hoosier Governor Oliver P. Morton purchased from Britain the best rifle money could buy at the time, namely, the Enfield rifle, for every Indiana soldier.

Jim related numerous interesting anecdotes concerning the Civil War. One such anecdote concerned the fact that the women of the Confederacy saved their urine, and then shipped it by rail to Augusta, Georgia, where it was used as a component in gun powder. Another anecdote concerned the penchant of underage Union volunteers to put a piece of paper with the number "18" written on it into their shoes so that when they were asked by a recruiter if they were over eighteen (18) they could truthfully say that they were indeed "over eighteen."

Mr. Newhart also noted the incredible coincidence that the last Union soldier survivor and the last Confederate soldier survivor were both surnamed "Williams."

Following Jim's presentation, one was left with a profound sense of the great investment, commitment, and sacrifice of the citizen soldiers who valiantly fought to defend their respective beliefs during the Civil War.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Keenan, Secretary

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM D. WILLSON

The following brief biography of William Dailey Willson appeared in the March 28, 1917 issue of the Osgood Journal. Mr. Willson was without doubt one of the most successful and influential citizens of our county and the account of his life reads like a Horatio Alger fictional success story.

William D. Willson was born at Old Milan, Ripley County Indiana, December 31, 1840, the second oldest child of Obed and Sarah J. Willson.

When about six years of age his parents moved to Versailles, where they lived until 1854 when they moved to Osgood. At Osgood he worked in a store for his father and also for Harrison Smith. Being very ambitious, he worked at whatever he could find to do at odd jobs, and in 1856, at the age of 16, he helped mix the mortar and carried the hod in the construction of the first brick house built in Osgood. The house was built for Dr. Silas Thompson, who later moved to Versailles. The house is yet standing at the southwest corner of Buckeye St. and Fairground Ave. and is at present occupied by Mrs. Sarah J. Ruby.

The following year he went to Iowa in quest of employment and soon found a position assisting in surveying and locating the first railroad at Guttenbergard and Bellview. While thus employed he made the acquaintance of the circuit judge of that district, who, noticing his aptitude, prevailed upon him taking up the study of law and helped him secure a position in the county clerk's office and also assisted him in the study of law.

In 1860 he returned to Versailles, where he practiced law for many years, his parents having in the meantime moved to Versailles.

After many years of practice he moved to Osgood, where he has resided ever since. He was elected to the office of prosecuting attorney of the court of common pleas in 1864. About 1866 he was elected to represent Ripley County in the State Legislature. Two years later he was re-elected as Joint Representative of Ripley and Jefferson Counties.

About this time he became extensively engaged in the manufacture of staves, and it can be safely said that no other man ever bought and cleared away as much of Ripley county's timber as Mr. Willson. He also had extensive stave interests in Perry County. He sold many millions of staves to the Standard Oil Company. During one year he shipped over two million staves from Osgood, all of them having been manufactured south of Versailles. After about twenty years in the stave business he purchased a large tract of land adjoining Osgood on the south and engaged in the dairy business, which in a very short time developed into what is generally considered the largest dairy owned by an individual in the United States, and is composed of 1,140 acres, milking on the average of five or six hundred cows, the milk of which is sold to the large hotels in Cincinnati.

He also owned and operated the Osgood Flour Mill, in addition to his extensive dairy business, for about fifteen years. He was the largest individual taxpayer in the county.

He organized the Osgood Creamery, the first in the county, and organized and was president of the first bank in Ripley County, The Ripley County Bank.

Mr. Willson died March 24, 1917 at his home in Osgood. He leaves to mourn, his second wife, Mary Grace Willson, who he married in 1902. He was married to Olive Huffaker in 1862, who died in 1901. No children were born to either marriage. He also leaves to mourn two brothers, Thos. E. Willson, Osgood, and Charles H. Willson, Versailles; two sisters, Mrs. Mary Alice Maxwell, Los Angeles, California, and Mrs. Ella Thum, Denver, Colorado.

A short service which consisted of the reading of his obituary and a favorite poem, "After Death in Arabia", by Edwin Arnold, was held at the residence at 9:00 o'clock Wednesday morning, March 28, 1917, after which the remains were taken to Cincinnati for cremation, his request being that this be done, and his ashes thrown to the four winds on his farm. This request was carried out.

He was a self-made man, beginning life as a poor boy, but with a steadfast determination to succeed, and who rose to a place in the business world reached by a very few.
 (The first brick house in Osgood, built in 1856, is still in use today and is in 1980 occupied by Mrs. Helen Sembach. Mr. Willson's 1,140 acre dairy farm is known today as "The Neal Farms". Charles H. Willson was a well-known Versailles attorney and was for many years president of the Versailles Bank.)

MAGIC PEACH COBBLER

Melt $\frac{1}{4}$ pound butter in pan (the pan to bake cobbler in). Mix:

1 c. flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. milk

1 c. sugar

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder

Pour over melted butter (don't stir).

2 c. peaches

$\frac{1}{2}$ c. brown sugar

Put the peaches on top. Sprinkle with brown sugar. Bake 45 minutes.

Ripley County, Indiana, Historical Society



OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
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