

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, October 13, 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 Jim Waldo, on American Youth Outreach Unlimited (YNP). Refreshments will be provided by Washington Twp. members.

▲ Research \$5.00 for non-members and all mailed requests, and \$.50 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.

▲ Members that are willing to receive the newsletter via email, some will also have postal mailing. The email for sending your request is printed above.

▲ A New book is available! "Revolutionary Soldiers and the Wives of Soldiers with ties to Switzerland County, Indiana", Compiled and Edited by Marlene Jan McDerment. If you have ties to Switzerland County, you may be very interested in this book. The price is \$41.00 and can be ordered by mail. Send your name, address, phone No., Credit card info, or check payable to Switzerland County Historical Society, 210 East Market St., Vevay, IN 47043; Phone: 812-427-3560; Email: swcomuseums@embarqmail.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:** 2013 Yearly Dues are due in January 2013. Mail your renewal for 2013 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

July 14, 2013

The Summer Quarterly Meeting, held at the Society's Archives Building, 125 Washington Street, Versailles, on July 14, 2013, was called to order by President Cheryl Welch at 2:00 p.m. Cheryl led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes for the Winter Quarterly meeting were read by Sandra Meisberger in the absence of Frank Keenan. There was one correction made: The **Tyson Fund Grant paid for the new CD's for U.S. Census records from 1850 to 1940.** We all really appreciate them and give a **Big Thank You Tyson Board** for your generosity to The Ripley County Historical Society. They have been extremely helpful to aid the public when they come to research their family history.

Treasurer report was given by Cheryl Welch in the absence of Owen Menchofer. Reported that \$84.00 was spent on the copier, and the only problem was a bad toner kit. The last meeting Treasurer report was approved as read.

Cheryl pointed out the plaque of names that donated for the new windows in the RCHSL building. She also pointed out the new picture of the Busching Bridge hanging on the wall in the lobby. Cheryl reported that an antique clock has been donated to the Historical Society, which will be delivered within the coming week, from the late Wildman Family

Roselyn McKittrick reported that high school students may be interested in volunteering at the RCHSL during the summer months for college credit. Cheryl reported that the Court House Recorder's Office Manager, Ginger Bradford, stated that they are hoping to receive a new scanner for scanning large books and they are willing to share it with RCHSL if they are privileged to receive one. RCHSL are planning to put in for a Grant to purchase a smaller version scanner for copying dilapidated books at the RCHSL. Cheryl also stated for the need to get some of RCHSL old newspapers bound into books. Roselyn McKittrick suggested that she check with Ron Dee Publishing.

Delbert Abplanap and Cheryl will be going in October to the retired teachers meeting to talk about RCHSL. Cheryl explained where to get a key to the museum for volunteers that open the museum on Sundays. Bill Gloyd reported that the Damm Theater is hosting a play of re-enactment of the Underground Railroad featuring a slave lady that attended Ephram College at Lexington, KY. It was the first mixed race college. Roselyn McKittrick reminded everyone about the Milan Museum and that it needs to be advertised as local history to school history classes. Cheryl received a packet and note from David Dryer stating that he is writing a new book about the 83rd Infantry. Cheryl contacted the County Probation Office and they brought juveniles to the Museum building to paint the white columns. A big Thank You to goes to them!

Delbert Abplanap gave a program on the Hanging Tree. He talked about the Reno Gang coming from Kentucky to rob trains. They were finally caught near Seymour and hung some of them. A few got away and Lyle Levi was one of them. Lyle started up his own group, which all of them were from Osgood, and they would break into homes at night, torturing and robbing the residents. Delbert said that they did that to his great-grandparents. Lyle put their feet on a hot stove and beat them. He took their money and their guns. The Levi gang did that all over Ripley County. If anyone reported them, the Levi gang would come back a second time and torture them again, and sometime burn their homes. Finally, the law got word that they were planning to hit the Correct Grocery Store. The Sheriff and his men were waiting for them, some stationed outside and some hiding in the store. Some were captured and some got away, but later arrested by the evidence in their homes. A vigilante group came in the middle of the night and took the gang to the tree and hung five of them. He also spoke of an Overturf Gang. Refreshments of ice cream, cookies, and drinks were had by all.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Meisberger, for Frank Keenan



1941 St. Magdalen Catholic Church



2013 St. Magdalen Catholic Church

CATHOLIC CHURCH HISTORY IN RIPLEY COUNTY

By Tom Krumm

In 1818, when Ripley County was organized, there were fewer than 1800 white people in the county, and only a few were Catholics. Today, there are 28,583 people in our county, and approximately 11,400 of them are registered Catholics. Today, there are 8 Catholic parishes in Ripley County: St. Louis in Batesville, St. Anthony in Morris, St. Maurice in Napoleon, St. Nicholas near Sunman, St. John the Baptist in Osgood, St. Charles in Milan, St. Pius near Milan, and St. Magdalen in New Marion. By year end, there will only be six parishes. Roughly 35% of the Catholics go to church every weekend, which amounts to an average of 500 per church! Most of the churches are designed to handle around 300 people with the largest one being in Batesville, the only city in our county.

This fall, the two smallest Catholic churches in the county, St. Pius and St. Magdalen are being closed before the end of the year. There will only be two resident priests left in Ripley County. This concerned me greatly, but I learned that several of the protestant ministers in our county are also non-residents or are part time ministers.

One begins to wonder if the influence of religion in our lives is going up or down. I belong to St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon, and they just finished a fully paid for education and social center, worth a million dollars. The members of the congregation donated several hundred hours of work on the center, and this duplicates their ancestor's actions.

Using St. Magdalen as an example, they were recognized as a parish in 1847, and the members were expected to supply two hewed logs to help build their first church. It was located at a town inside the Jefferson Proving Grounds called "St. Magdalene". The town was surrounded by land owned by members of the Meisberger family. That name is still alive in our county. In 1865, the members built a stone church and a school and a convent, which were all torn down in 1941 when our government decided we needed a practice bomb range for WWII.

St. Magdalen was closed in 1941, but a number of the members were too stubborn to accept this as an ending. They kept bugging the bishop to let them reopen a church near the proving grounds. Marie Meisberger acquired a former bank building in New Marion, (the bank failed during the great depression in 1933).

In 1947, the bishop gave up and recognized them as a continuation site for the original St. Magdalen Church, in the old Bank Building. Many parishioners have helped expand and improve the building over the years. They have not had a resident priest since the original church was closed in 1941, but they have had weekend Mass every Saturday or Sunday until the present. The last mass for St. Magdalen's second time, will be Sunday, October 27, at 2:00 p.m.

Recently, most of the younger generation in the parish has moved away because there are only a few ways to support a family in the immediate area. In its history, the parish has supplied two priests, but neither one is alive today.

St. Magdalen is the second oldest Catholic Church in our county. St. Nicholas is the oldest Catholic church in our county and will have one of the two full time priests in the county.

County, Indiana, Historical

Ripley



Society

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