

The Quarterly Bulletin

Ripley County, Indiana, Historical Society, Inc.

Library – 125 Washington Street
Museum – Corner of Main and Water Streets
Versailles, Indiana 47042
812-689-3031

www.rchslib.org

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October 2025

HAPPY FALL

Number 4

▲ Quarterly Meeting

Our next meeting will be held **October 12, 2025**. The meeting will be held at the Archives at 2:00 pm. Our program “Barbara Fox, Inventor” will be given by Victor Sarringhaus.

▲ Library Hours



NOTICE: The library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 1 pm-4 pm. For those not able to visit us in person, email your requests for information to rchslib@gmail.com or regular mail to P O Box 525 Versailles, IN 47042. We look forward to serving your research needs.

NOTICE: The Museum is open by appointment only. To schedule an appointment call Cheryl Welch, President 812-621-0418, Duane Drockelman, Vice President 812-852-1313 or Barbara Eades, Secretary 812-701-9238.



▲ Annual Dues

Remember to renew your membership for another year. **2025** Yearly Dues are due in January. Mail your renewal for **2025** to RCHS at P.O. Box 525, Versailles, IN 47042 Dues: Annual \$20; Life \$150.

▲ Research

Research is free to all members and \$10.00 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. Research is free to all members.

▲ Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to donate 3 hours of their time one day a week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Contact Cheryl Welch if you are interested in volunteering.

▲ Books

See our list of books available listed on page three of this newsletter. The WWII War Veterans Book, titled *LEST WE FORGET* by Joan and Norris Krall 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), (3) in Versailles at the Ripley County Historical Society Library on the west side of the Courthouse Square (open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoon from 1 to 4), or (4) NOVEL HeARTs Bookstore, 133 Tyson Street Versailles, IN. 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 Ripley County Historical Society held their quarterly meeting July 13, 2025 at the Ripley County Historical Society Archives. Nineteen members were present.

President Cheryl Welch called the meeting to order and led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

The minutes from the last meeting were read by Secretary Barbara Eades. Owen Menchhofer presented the treasurer's report. The minutes and treasurers' reports were approved.

Old Business:

- Ripley County History Book: We are waiting for Tracy at Winters Publishing to complete the book. Final corrections have been made.
- Our website still has links that do not work. This was brought to the attention of the webmaster.

New Business:

- File Cabinets: Five drawer file cabinets were donated by Kathy Stratton. These will take the place of the four drawer we currently have giving us more storage space for family files.
- The Ripley County Board of Tourism has requested the Ripley County Museum be open one day a month during the remaining of the summer for tours. We will be open the first Wednesday of August, September, and October from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.. The museum is open for appointments by calling Cheryl Welch, President 812-621-0418, Duane Drockelman, Vice President 812-852-1313 or Barbara Eades, Secretary 812-701-9238
- Main Street Versailles requested permission to add benches in front of the Archives building.
- We have applied for a Tyson Grant to replace the remaining two windows upstairs in the Archives building.
- Mike Stratton and Owen Menchhofer have replaced nine Ripley County Historical Signs.
- July 26 will be "Taste of Versailles". The Archives will be open for this event.

The meeting was adjourned to the program.

Dan Goris presented a very informative program on Indiana and the Civil War.

Some interesting facts;

The first call was for 12,000 Hoosier volunteers for a 3 month war.

Indiana had over 210,000 join the service.

Over 15% of eligible Hoosiers served.

Indiana soldiers fought 308 battles in 16 states.

Indiana's war related deaths: 25,028 total; 7,243 from battles; 17,785 from disease.

Dan is willing to research any Civil War veteran.

The next meeting will be held at the RCHS Archives October 12, at 2:00 p.m. A follow up program, about the Civil War, will be presented by Dan Goris. Director at Large, Kay Koppel will provide refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Eades, Secretary

Note: The civil war program by Dan Goris will be presented at the January meeting. Victor Sarringhaus will present the program on local inventor Barbara Fox.

TYSON GRANT

The Ripley County Historical Society is grateful to the Tyson Fund and its Directors for approving our grant request to replace the remaining two windows at the Archive building.

This work will be completed soon.



Susan Underwood, Bob Meyer, Owen Menchoffer, Cheryl Welch and Barbara Eades

Barbara Fox, Inventor of the Fire Escape

by Victor Sarringhaus



Jacob Fox and his wife and five children emigrated from Brienz, Switzerland in 1852. They came to Napoleon and purchased the Gigos property next door to the Railroad House Hotel. Eventually moving to the west edge of Napoleon. One of the children was Miss Barbara Fox (c. 1842-1925). This lady of petite stature invented the fire escape "designed to save lives".

There was a tragic fire in Chicago in 1871. Many were concerned about the many deaths resulting from the fire. This event was the inspiration for her invention. Her design was fabricated by a local blacksmith, Frederick Bredemeyer, who hammered out the escape. She received national recognition for patenting a fire escape

in 1894. On October 12, 1895 she invited people to test it. People came as far as Cincinnati to witness the demonstration. Her apparatus was attached to a window of the fourth story of the 1879 John F. Heimsath Flouring Mill. Several individuals descended to the ground successfully.

Her family was well known for their yodeling, which could be heard in Napoleon from their country home. Barbara was a charter member of St. John's Lutheran Church of Napoleon. She was also a member of the St. John's Ladies Society. She died in 1925. Barbara was laid to rest in an unmarked grave in St. John's cemetery. There is currently an effort to raise funds for a grave marker for her.

BOOKS FOR SALE

A Century of Schools	by Alan Smith	\$20.00
A Wishful Eye	by D. L. McIntyre	\$15.00
Adams Township Cemetery Directory		\$15.00
Broken Wings	by Robert Kelly	\$20.00
Brown Township Cemetery Records		\$15.00
Brown Township Tales	by Alan Smith	\$20.00
Center Township Cemetery Records		\$15.00
Delaware Township Cemetery Records		\$15.00
Franklin Township Cemetery Records		\$15.00
History of Adams Township	by Harold Freeland	\$20.00
Historic Travel Guide to Ripley County	by Paul R Wonning	\$20.00
In These 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
Indiana's Fascination Museums	by Paul R Wonning	\$10.00
Jackson Township Cemetery Records		\$15.00
Johnson Township Cemetery Records		\$15.00
Laughery Township Cemetery Records		\$15.00
Lest We Forget a Tribute to the World War II Veterans of Ripley County	by Norris & Joan Krall	\$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		
Ripley County, IN Vintage Post Cards	by Marlene Jan McDerment	\$34.00
Ripley County History Volume I	by Alan Smith	\$25.00
Ripley County History Volume II	(Paperback)	\$25.00
Shelby Township Cemetery Records		\$15.00
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

Check out our Facebook page: *Ripley County Historical Society & Museum*
<https://www.facebook.com/people/Ripley-County-Historical-Society-Museum/61558493116775/>

RIPLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUMS

Ripley County Historical Society: Archives – P. O. Box 525, 125 N Washington Street, Versailles, IN 47042. 812-689-3031 Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 1 pm-4 pm. **Museum** – Open by appointment only. Website: <https://rchslib.org> email: rchslib@gmail.com

Osgood Historical Museum: 128 South Buckeye Osgood, IN 47037. 812-689-1876 Open by appointment only. Face Book: Osgood Historical Museum

Batesville Area Historical Society: 15 W George Street Batesville, IN 47006, 812-932-0999 Open Thursday & Friday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Saturday 9 a.m.-noon. Closed January & February. Website: <https://batesvillehistoricalcenter.org>

The Sunman History Museum: Located in the Town Hall on the north side of Sunman, opposite the fire station. Open Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Milan 54 Museum: Located 201 W Carr St. P O Box 54, Milan, IN 47031. Open Wednesday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Outside of these hours, an appointment can be made by contacting us via email or phone: milan54@frontier.com 812-654-2772.

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

Adams Twp. - Mr. Duane Drockelman, 10238 N. Adams Church Rd. Batesville, IN 47006	Vice President
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Washington Twp. – Mr. Gary Johnson, 1723 S Friendship Rd. Milan IN 47031	
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